

Healthy
Farms,
Healthy
Kids



The
Potential
to Increase
Local Food
Sourcing
in Vermont
Schools



**Vermont's
Agricultural
Landscape**

The Health of Our Children

- Rising Levels of Obesity & Diet Related Diseases
- Chaotic School Food Climates
- Inequities in Access to Food



Schools as Providers of Nutrition

- National School Lunch Act- 1946
- Nutritional Requirements
- USDA Commodity System



1941 School Lunch- USDA archive

Hot Lunch!

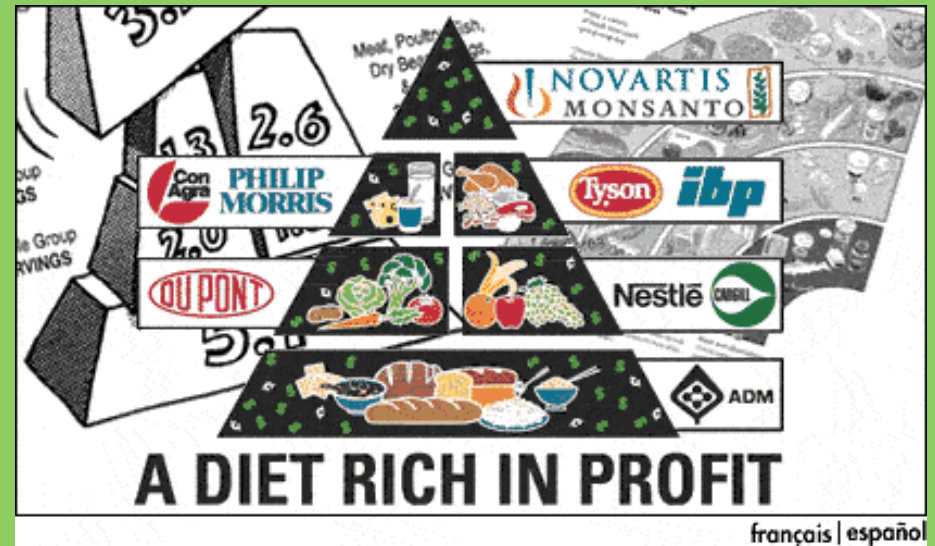
- Lunch Ladies
- Sloppy Jos
- Chop Suey



- Tater Tots
- Broccoli Hurdle
- Chicken a la King

Corporate Influence in Schools

“Given their purchasing power, large numbers, potential as future customers, and captive status, it is no wonder that food companies view schoolchildren as an unparalleled marketing opportunity.”



National Farm-to-School Programs



- **Multiple Problems, Multiple Benefits**
- **Improve access to nutritious food, especially for lower income kids who are reliant on the school lunch program**
- **Prevention-oriented strategies to obesity & diet-related diseases**
- **Support local agriculture and family farms**
- **Food systems approach**
- **Create better understanding of agriculture, & healthier relationship to food**

Azuma & Fisher, 2001.





NATIONAL FARM-TO-SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Berkeley, CA

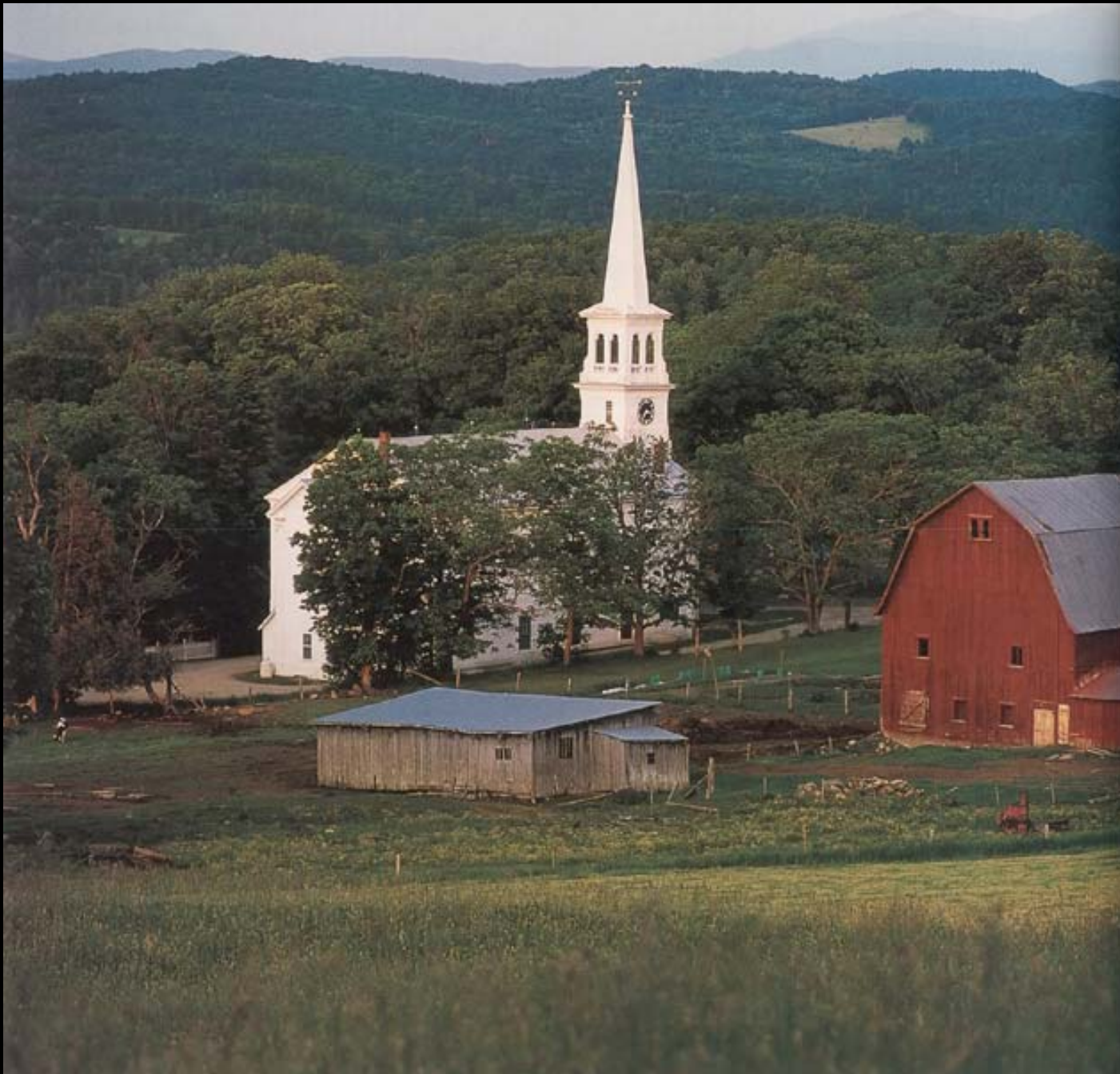
Santa Monica-
Malibu, C A

Florida

New York State

Hartford, CT

Bates College



**Benefits
for
Vermont?**



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Vermont Strengths

- **Schools closely tied to communities**
- **Existing support for community agriculture, partnerships**
 - **Environmental appreciation & stewardship**
 - **Working farmland close to many schools**
 - **Strong agricultural heritage**
 - **Minimal Supporting State & Local Policy**
 - **Related State Educational Standards**

Increased Health & Nutrition

- When local = fresh, eating habits change
- Need supplemental classroom nutritional education
 - Gardens
 - Farm Visits
 - Taste-test education
 - Food based curriculum



Economic Benefits

- Direct Markets for Farmers
- Increased in-state production & processing
- Farmland preservation

Environmental Benefits

- Reduced Transportation Distance
- Reduced Chemical Reliance
- Reduced Food Waste
- Increased Environmental Awareness & Knowledge



Community Food Security

“the underlying social, economic, and institutional factors within a community that affect the quantity, quality, and affordability of food”

- Access to Affordable School Food
- Livable Wages
- Safe Working Conditions for Farmers
- Supporting Community Business

F.E.E.D.

Food Education Every Day



- K-6 Schools
- Integrated & Standards Based Curriculum
- Community Leadership Team
- Connections between farms, cafeterias, classrooms, gardens, & community

Current Farm-to-School Policy

- NATIONAL
 - 2002 Farm Bill
 - USDA Initiatives
- STATE
 - Local purchasing for State-funded institutions
 - Failed Challenge Grant
- LOCAL
 - District & School Level Food Policy

Strengths & Opportunities

- Child Nutrition in Crisis
- Potential Market for Farmers
- High Interest & Desire for Change
- Experiential Education Works!
- Success with FEED Approach



Recipe For Success

Making Farm-to-School Work in Vermont

- Communication among the C's
- Visible & Hands-on
- Food Policy
- Distribution Mechanism
- Creative Funding
- Scale Up



Barriers: Organization & Logistics

- Higher Cost of Local Food
- Lack of Distribution Systems
- Lack of Statewide Coordination
- Little Room for School Experimentation
 - Use of Commodity Foods
 - Risk of Changing Food Served without support
- Issues of Scale

Barriers: Attitudes & Perceptions

- Apathy & Inertia
 - Valuation of Food Service Providers
 - Climate of Lunchroom
 - Time to eat
- Local = Organic?

Conclusions & Recommendations

- Continue to Generate Excitement!
 - Publicize Current Programs
 - Tools & Strategies -> Schools
- Involve Students!
- Coordinated State Level Effort
 - VDA -- FEED
 - Child Nutrition -- Donated Foods



Conclusions & Recommendations

- Local Distribution Mechanism
 - Farmer Cooperatives
 - Quantity, Delivery, Processing
- Supporting Policy & **Funding**
 - State Commitment
 - National Pressure
 - Section 4303 funds
 - School & District Level Action & Support!

Love & Gratitude

- Enid Wonnacott, Elizabeth Zipern, Abbie Nelson, FEED crew and NOFA staff.
- FEED teachers. VT farmers.
- Vermont School Teachers & Food Service Personnel
- Jo Busha, CNP
- Holly Peake, Donated Foods
- Marty Spaulding
- Antonia Demas
- Harold Ward
- Eleanor, Sarah, Nisa
- Josey, Aryn, Sarah R-B
- Simon
- Sara Gilbert & GIV kids
- Mom, Dad, Shirley, Alan, Derek & Morgan, Fran & Harold
- John Roper & the OIP
- Norton Utilities
- Adam Sandler

