

farm to plate



STRENGTHENING VERMONT'S FOOD SYSTEM

At a Turning Point:

Strengthening Vermont's Producer and Processor Associations

Prepared By:

Jake Claro, VSJF



Composting Association of Vermont



Vermont Sheep and Goat Association



PRODUCTION + PROCESSING WORKING GROUP



Key Messages

- ▶ Producer and processor associations are membership-based organizations that may provide peer-to-peer learning opportunities, policy advocacy, technical assistance, industry education, and marketing support.
- ▶ The challenges faced by the 15 producer/processor associations interviewed have occurred during a time of significant market growth and public interest in local food and Vermont products. This underlines the critical need to nurture strong producer/processor associations that can actively advance the interests of Vermont food producers and processors.
- ▶ The challenge for many associations is converting the passion and knowledge of its membership into sustained organizational stability, with the added challenge of doing so with constrained budgets and administrative capacity.
 - 🍏 A combination of small pools of board participants who cycle in and out of officer positions combined with a lack of term limits creates a dynamic that leaves leaders susceptible to burn-out and the association susceptible to stagnation.
 - 🍏 A common issue amongst associations was not clearly articulating membership benefits on their websites.
 - 🍏 The long-term fiscal integrity, specifically examining revenue diversification opportunities and membership rates needs to be addressed.
 - 🍏 Trade associations are generally not adept at creating unified responses to policy developments or current events that effect their respective sectors.
 - 🍏 Seven of the 15 associations expressed a need for either a new website, consultation on how to use websites effectively, difficulty with using existing content management systems, or advice on how to use social media more effectively.
 - 🍏 A major finding of the interviews is the critical support role played by service provider organizations like UVM Extension, VAAFM, and NOFA Vermont.
- ▶ Developing the internal capacity of associations will improve the delivery of services that associations provide to their network of members, which will have downstream impacts on the food system supply chain. Conversely, the more developed the market sector is, the greater likelihood that an association will be able to support its own staff and provide comprehensive services to its members.
- ▶ After this report was originally published in October 2013, VSJF and the [Vermont Agriculture Development Program](#) pursued and received funding from the [Working Lands Enterprise Fund](#) to work with associations to build capacity. The program will offer 9 in-depth half day group training sessions over an 18-month period covering organizational development, financial sustainability, policy development, and branding and website development.

INTRODUCTION

Chapter 4, Section 4, *Food System Business Planning and Technical Assistance*, of the *Farm to Plate Strategic Plan* summarizes the range of business planning and technical assistance services currently available for food system organizations in Vermont. **One of the information gaps identified in this section was an understanding of the needs, interests, administrative and leadership capacities, challenges, and opportunities facing Vermont's producer and processor associations.**

Producer and processor associations are membership-based organizations that may provide peer-to-peer learning opportunities, policy advocacy, technical assistance, industry education, and marketing support. A *Producer and Processor Association Support Task Force* of the *Production and Processing Working Group* was formed to assess the needs of these organizations.

The leaders and/or coordinators of fifteen producer and processor associations (Table 1) were interviewed in-person or by phone to learn about their organizational structures, capacities, and needs. The interviews also served as an initial effort for the *Farm to Plate Network* to form closer relationships with producer and processor associations.

A number of important needs relating to governance, membership development, dues and budgets, and branding emerged over the course of the interviews. The results of this report provide important information for addressing three goals of the Farm to Plate Strategic Plan:

- 🍏 **Goal 7: Local food production—and sales of local food—for all types of markets will increase;** www.vtfoodatlas.com/getting-to-2020/7-food-production
- 🍏 **Goal 11: Vermont's food processing and manufacturing capacity will expand to meet the needs of a growing food system;** www.vtfoodatlas.com/getting-to-2020/11-processing-infrastructure
- 🍏 **Goal 19: Business planning and technical assistance services will be highly coordinated, strategic, and accessible to Vermont's food system businesses;** www.vtfoodatlas.com/getting-to-2020/19-business-planning-and-technical-assistance

The following analysis and recommendations were identified as priorities by the Producer and Processor Association Task Force.

Table 1: Associations Interviewed

Association	Website	Interviewee
Composting Association of Vermont	www.compostingvermont.org	Pat Sagui, <i>Executive Director</i>
Farmer's Watershed Alliance	http://farmerswatershedalliance.com	Roger Rainville, <i>Chairman</i>
Meat & Poultry Processing Association		Sean Buchanan, <i>Treasurer</i>
Vermont Beef Producers Association	www.vermontbeefproducers.org	Phil Wagner, <i>Vice President</i>
Vermont Beekeepers Association	www.vermontbeekeepers.org	Kim Greenwood, <i>Vice President</i>
Vermont Brewers Association	www.vermontbrewers.com	Kurt Staudter, <i>Executive Director</i>
Vermont Cheese Council	www.vtcheese.com	Rachel Fritz-Schaal, <i>Coordinator</i>
Vermont Farmers' Market Association	www.vtfma.org	Erin Buckwalter, <i>Direct Marketing and Food Access Coordinator</i>
Vermont Grass Farmers Association	www.uvm.edu/~pasture/?Page=vgfa.html	Jenn Colby, <i>Pasture Outreach Coordinator</i>
Vermont Retail & Grocers Association / Vermont Specialty Foods Association	www.vtgrocers.org www.vermontspecialtyfoods.org	Jim Harrison, <i>Executive Director</i>
Vermont Maple Sugar Makers' Association	http://vermontmaple.org	Matthew Gorden, <i>Executive Director</i>
Vermont Sheep & Goat Association	http://vtsheepandgoat.org	Mary Lake, <i>President</i>
Vermont Tree Fruit Growers Association	www.vermontapples.org/vtfga.php	Terence Bradshaw, <i>President</i>
Vermont Vegetable and Berry Growers Association	www.uvm.edu/vtvegandberry/?Page=WelcomeVVBGA.html	Vern Grubinger, <i>Technical Advisor</i>

GOVERNANCE, MEMBERSHIP, AND BUDGET

🍏 Governance

Nine of the 15 associations (Table 2) interviewed expressed either a broad need for organizational development, or specific needs in board and/or leadership development.

Table 2: Associations Expressing Organizational Development Needs

Association	Type of Org. Development
Vermont Beekeepers Association	Board/leadership development
Vermont Cheese Council	Leadership development
Vermont Farmers' Market Association	Leadership development
Vermont Grass Farmers Association	Organizational/board development
Vermont Grocers Association	Board development
Vermont Maple Syrup Makers' Association	Organizational/leadership development
Vermont Sheep and Goat Association	Board/leadership development
Vermont Tree Fruit Growers Association	Organizational/board development
Vermont Vegetable and Berry Growers Association	Organizational development

Several associations expressed a need to sustain board involvement and to avoid board burnout. The associations that most clearly expressed difficulty with sustaining board numbers or having tired boards tended to not have board term limits, and did not have **University of Vermont (UVM) Extension** support or a paid executive director position (Table 3). Seven of the 8 associations that have term-limits, for example, have either support from **UVM Extension** or a paid executive director, and none of these associations expressed problems with board fatigue or sustaining board participation.

Table 3: Associations Without Term Limits

Association	UVM Extension Support or Executive Director
Composting Association of Vermont	Yes
Farmer's Watershed Alliance	Yes
Meat and Poultry Processors Association	No
Vermont Beef Producers Association	No
Vermont Brewers Association	Yes
Vermont Sheep and Goat Association	No
Vermont Tree Fruit Growers Association	Yes (part-time executive director)

The implication is that a combination of small pools of board participants who cycle in and out of officer positions combined with a lack of term limits creates a dynamic that leaves leaders susceptible to burn-out and the association susceptible to stagnation. Because term periods are indefinite, and hence undefined, there is little impetus in the association to develop leadership capacity outside of the immediate pool of serving board members and officers.

There are opportunities for associations to share approaches and learn from one another. For example, to address concerns regarding turnover with boards that have term limits, some associations have adopted mechanisms to ease leadership transitions and retain institutional knowledge. Practices include advisor positions that are not required to be filled, formal processes for extending the service term of an association officer, or past president positions that facilitate smooth transitions and the efficient transfer of institutional knowledge.

Recommendation: *Provide organizational development support to associations, with a focus on instituting structures for leadership development and transition. Explore the idea of providing selected associations with extended organizational consulting.*

🍏 Membership Development

Six of the 15 associations (Table 4) interviewed expressed a need for membership development assistance. The **Vermont Grass Farmers Association**, the **Vermont Beef Producers Association**, and the **Vermont Cheese Council** expressed the strongest need for membership development assistance.

Five out of 15 associations had stable membership numbers over the last 3 years, 5 of 15 had increasing membership, and 3 of 15 had decreasing membership. Of the remaining two associations, the **Vermont Farmers' Market Association** had its first year of paid membership and so did not have historical data,

while the **Vermont Beekeepers Association** did not know whether or not membership had increased or decreased over the last 3 years.

While associations differ in who they offer membership to, (e.g., 6 of the 15 associations interviewed offer membership to non-producers), a **common issue amongst associations was not clearly articulating membership benefits on their websites.** Though benefits are usually listed clearly on sign-up forms, they are not clearly articulated before opening the form. "Join Us" web pages should be used to make a compelling case for joining the association to prospective members. There are also cases where association websites do not have clearly indicated "Join Us" pages. Including a prominently featured "Join" tab in the navigational structure of the website is an easy step that these associations can take to streamline joining the association.

Table 4 : Associations Expressing Membership Development Needs

Association
Farmer's Watershed Alliance
Vermont Beef Producers Association
Vermont Beekeepers Association
Vermont Cheese Council
Vermont Grocers Association
Vermont Tree Fruit Growers Association

Best Practices: Membership and Technology

Two of the organizations reporting increased membership over the last 3 years specifically attributed the establishment of a new website or list-serv as contributing to their membership increases. One of those associations, the Vermont Sheep and Goat Association, manages membership sign-ups via PayPal, a practice that the Vermont Beekeepers Association is moving to this year in order to streamline membership administration.

Recommendation: *Work with associations to help them improve articulation and prominence of membership benefits, and explore how associations can expand their membership base via website improvements.*

🍷 Dues and Annual Budget

Dues structures adopted by interviewed associations were nearly evenly split, with 7 associations offering flat-rate membership, and the other 8 using a tiered-rate system that has rates that vary by membership category (e.g., producer, industry, associate) and by the size of the producer or organization within each category.

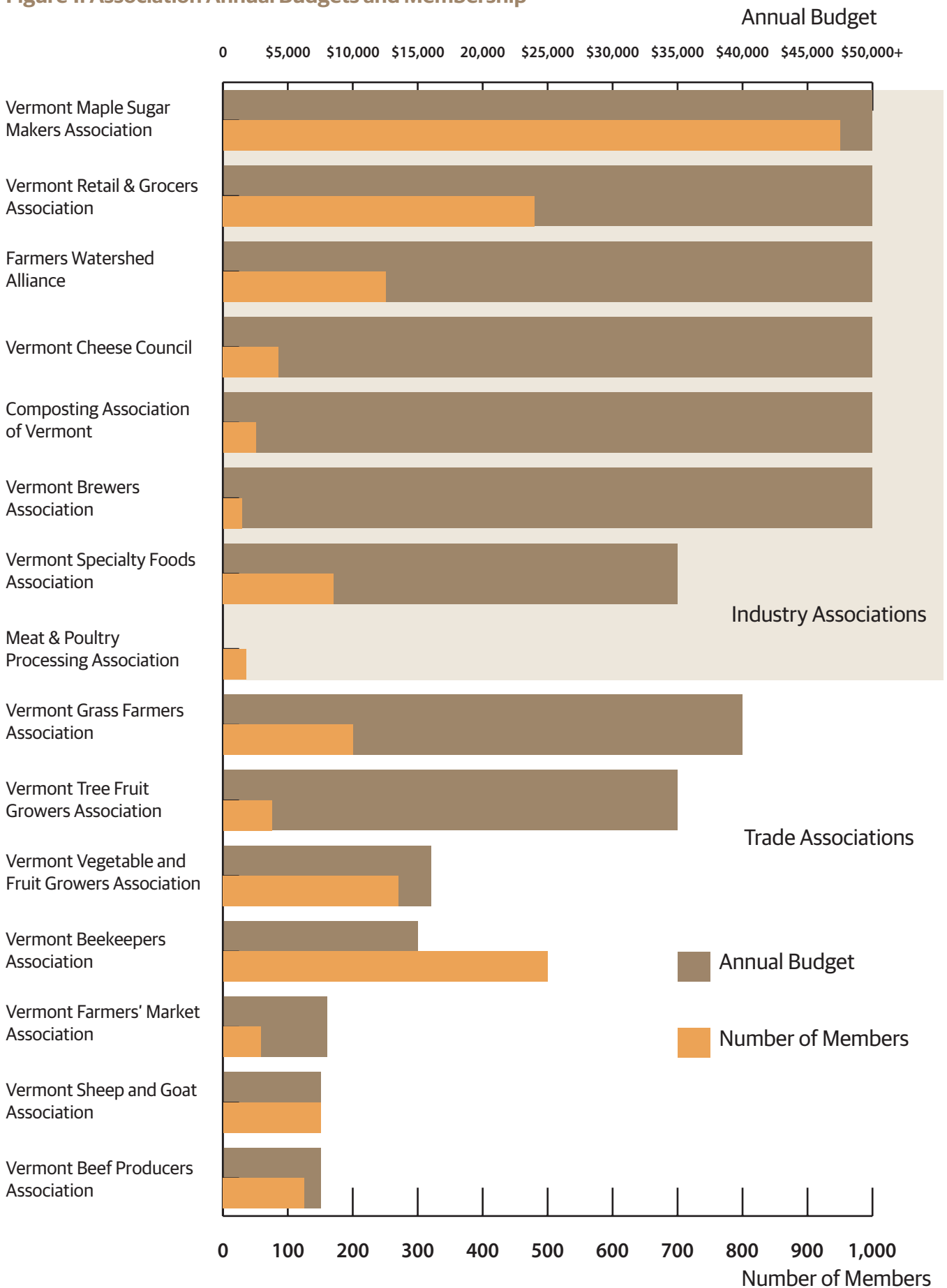
Five of the 8 associations using a tiered system can be characterized as industry associations, as their membership is made up of organizations that are at different stages of production along the supply chain (e.g., producers, manufacturers, and input suppliers). Horizontally integrated trade associations only include members of the same production stage in the supply chain. Industry associations using a tiered structure tended to have the largest budgets, with 4 of the 5 having budgets of \$50,000 or greater, and one having a budget between \$20,000 to \$50,000. Figure 1 shows the budget disparities between industry associations and trade associations, and also displays membership numbers in relation to annual budgets.

Budgetary issues cited by interviewees included revenue diversity as well as operational and programming costs. With regards to revenue diversity, associations with imbalances tended to rely either on membership fees or grants. Membership fees contribution to associations' annual budgets was highly variable, ranging from contributing 5% to 95% of an association's annual budget. It is difficult to determine if membership rates are optimally set from a revenue perspective, and what opportunities exist for revenue diversification.

Key Question: How can associations develop earned revenue generation models?

Pat Segui of the Composting Association of Vermont talked about the perpetual difficulties of fundraising, as her association relies on grants to fund 80% of the budget. Segui said that a series of workshops introducing business thinking and earned revenue models to associations would of great help, and is an idea worth exploring further.

Figure 1: Association Annual Budgets and Membership



While associations like the *Vermont Cheese Council*, the *Vermont Brewers Association*, and the *Vermont Grass Farmers Association* generate significant revenue from their respective festivals and annual conferences, some associations are constrained in how they can diversify through these means. The *Vermont Beef Producers Association*, for example, is already a co-sponsor of the *Vermont Grass Farmers Association's* annual grazing conference. However, the *Vermont Grass Farmers Association* bears the risks of the conference and is thus responsible for any losses but also keeps any profits generated from the conference (the majority of the *Vermont Grass Farmers Association's* budget, both comes from and goes to the annual conference).

Though there are associations that are over-reliant on grants for funding, there are others that feel they are not adequately accessing grant funding, and in not doing so they are unable to diversify their revenue streams. Five of 15 associations interviewed voiced a need for assistance in grant writing or in identifying available grants. **Associations feel that they are missing out on funding opportunities because they don't have an adequate sense of grant schedules or even their eligibility for certain grants.**

It is not clear how some associations are balancing basic operational and programming costs, if they are generating adequate revenue from their membership base, or if they are fully leveraging association funds. The latter point is raised because two associations specifically stated that adhering to a budget was not the issue, but rather that they realized they could either be raising more money than they are, or doing more with the money that they already have.

Recommendation: *Work with associations on long term fiscal integrity, specifically examining revenue diversification opportunities and membership rates.*

Recommendation: *Create, and keep updated, a clearinghouse page that lists all association relevant food system grants.*

CAPACITY NEEDS

👤 Staff Capacity Needs

Association programs and services can generally be categorized as production-related technical assistance, education, networking facilitation, marketing assistance, political advocacy and lobbying, and insurance offerings. Some associations comprehensively offer all of these services, while others are focused on one or two particular service areas. Generally, vertically integrated industry associations with larger budgets offer the full range of programs and services. Horizontally integrated trade associations, focus their efforts on one or two service areas.

Trade association program and service offerings, as a result, vary more widely than for industry associations. Complicating the issue is the fact that, in situations where a trade association has direct *UVM Extension* support, it is difficult delineating between services that the association is providing and services that *UVM Extension* is offering. The relationship between the two is

often fluid. Associations may, for example, sponsor an event, and *Extension* will coordinate it, either by leading the event directly, in conjunction with an association member, or by contacting and bringing in outside technical assistance providers.

The partnership between trade associations and *UVM Extension* typically involves the association focusing on providing networking, peer-to-peer technical assistance, and equipment exchanges—much of which is increasingly being done via list-servs. Additionally, trade associations with *UVM Extension* support—and those without it—offer conference and workshop discounts and small research grants. *UVM Extension* partners provide technical assistance, workshop and conference coordination, and many of the published outreach and technical materials. In some cases, *UVM Extension* also provides website infrastructure and management.

Interestingly, many trade associations that currently do not have direct *UVM Extension* support, but at one time did, continue to utilize the expertise of former *UVM Extension* or staff in some capacity—either on a voluntary or contractual basis.

A number of associations stated a need for additional staff hours. Of note, four livestock related associations—the *Vermont Grass Farmers Association*, *Vermont Beef Producers Association*, *Vermont Sheep and Goat Association*, and the *Meat and Poultry Processing*

Key Question: What opportunities exist to expand UVM Extension or VAAFM capacity to assist association development?

Interviews revealed that many of Vermont's agricultural producer associations benefit considerably from the capacity of UVM Extension, the Vermont Agency of Agriculture (VAAFM), and NOFA Vermont to provide programming, technical services, and operational assistance. In cases where producer associations have lost UVM Extension or VAAFM support, they have turned to former staff to assist with service provision. Associations that have lost UVM Extension or VAAFM staff support also reported that they are spending time on administrative tasks like membership management, workshop coordination, and web management that would be better spent on program development and strategic planning. These are activities with opportunity costs that could be alleviated with re-dedicated UVM Extension or VAAFM state support.

This raises a question about the role that UVM Extension and VAAFM could play in the organizational development of producer associations that currently do not have direct support from either. UVM Extension's and VAAFM's partnerships with associations have proven to be successful. However, with questions about the longevity of the current economic climate of austerity, should the assumption be that associations that currently don't have direct support will never have direct sector specific support from UVM Extension or VAAFM due to interminable funding constraints? Answering this question clearly for associations will in turn clarify their strategic needs and priorities, and shape the strategies pursued to strengthen associations.

Association—conservatively have a collective need for 25 hours a week of administrative work. Additionally, it was reported by Jim Harrison, Executive Director of the **Vermont Retail and Grocers Association**—which has a partnership agreement with the **Vermont Specialty Foods Association**—that the additional work that could be done for the **Vermont Specialty Foods Association** would require about 30 hours a week. Harrison stated that more could be done on getting members into high profile regional trade shows and expanding regional market penetration of member businesses. It is important to note that the **Vermont Specialty Foods Association**, at one point, had **Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets (VAAF)** staff support.

Recommendation: *Determine a long-term strategy for association development that includes an examination of whether or not additional Extension or state capacity should be pursued, and how such an effort could be coordinated if determined to be the long-term path of development for associations.*

Recommendation: *Facilitate discussions amongst sector related associations in order to explore and evaluate options for sharing staff and/or resources.*

🍏 Policy Capacity and Needs

Policy capacity is an area that is important to associations because it provides members with institutional access to the political process that they would not necessarily have as individual businesses.

The inability to formulate unified messages and policy positions can be an indirect hindrance on membership renewal and expansion. If associations cannot demonstrate efficacy in the realm of policy, a major benefit is lost, and so too a major source of appeal of being a member of the association.

Policy capacity and advocacy involvement arose as more of an issue for trade associations than it did for larger industry associations that have dedicated in-house staff who follow policy closely during the legislative session. Policy and advocacy for producer associations that have **UVM Extension** staff is complicated by the fact that **UVM Extension** staff cannot lobby on behalf of the association. In these situations, **UVM Extension** often provides education on policy and regulatory implications, while the association is expected to develop and advocate for its policy positions.

Best Practices: Legislative Committees

The Vermont Beekeepers Association and the Vermont Grape and Wine Council have established legislative committees to formulate policy positions and ensure that their associations have a voice in emerging policy debates.

The Vermont Tree Fruit Growers Association reported that a legislative committee would be helpful in spurring on the association to become more active in policy discussions. Likewise, the Vermont Vegetable and Berry Growers Association reported that they could do more strategic planning by meeting one more time a year. In doing so, Vern Grubinger believes the association could inform policy makers more than it currently does.

Associations are often not adept at tracking policy developments and proactively formulating policy positions. The challenge of effectively staying in front of policy developments was not unique, however, to trade associations. Both the **Vermont Cheese Council** and the **Meat and Poultry Processing Association** said that it would help to have a system for monitoring policy developments for all food system associations.

Trade associations are generally not adept at creating unified responses to policy developments or current events that effect their respective sectors. One association reported that in response to on-farm slaughter issues, members representing the association at different times made conflicting statements about the position of the association. Phil Wagner, Vice President of the **Vermont Beef Producers Association**, said that while the **Green Mountain College** [*ox slaughtering controversy*](#) made the association aware of the need to present official unified responses on policies and events effecting the association, they are looking for assistance on how to actually do that effectively.

It is worth noting that two associations, the **Vermont Tree Fruit Growers Association** and the **Vermont Sheep and Goat Association**, categorized involvement in Farm to Plate as political. There was a feeling that participation in Farm to Plate inserted the association's voice into important discussions that would potentially have beneficial policy impacts.

Recommendation: *Establish a webpage that aggregates policy developments and informs association members on general policy trends so they can more proactively participate in the policy process.*

Recommendation: *Work with associations to prioritize policy development through either legislative committees or devoted board meetings to policy development and discussion.*

Recommendation: *Recruit association members to join Farm to Plate Working Groups to improve awareness of food system developments, develop association leadership, and to give associations a voice in the Farm to Plate Network.*

🍏 Information Technology Capacity and Needs

Seven of the 15 associations (Table 5) interviewed expressed a need for either a new website, consultation on how to use websites effectively, difficulty with using existing content management systems, or advice on how to use social media more effectively.

Of those reporting some form of website assistance, there was an awareness that current association websites are either dated or lack aesthetic appeal. Some associations reported that their content management systems were difficult to use and resulted in unnecessarily lost time. Also, some association websites lack clear navigational structures, making it difficult for visitors to the site to find important resources and even join the association.

Table 5: Association IT Needs

Association	IT Needs
Meat and Poultry Processing Association	Website development
Vermont Cheese Council	Content management/social media
Vermont Farmers' Market Association	Effective utilization of website
Vermont Maple Sugar Makers Association	Social media
Vermont Sheep and Goat Association	Content management
Vermont Tree Fruit Growers Association	Website development/social media
Vermont Vegetable and Berry Growers Association	Website development

The issues of website appearance, effective utilization of the website, and clear navigational structure are closely linked. Associations have focused more on getting a website up and running, and have not necessarily gone through a process of identifying what they want their websites to accomplish and who they want their sites to serve.

For example, are the sites primarily for association members, consumers, or a balance between the two? Clarifying intent and audience helps to determine the overall design of a website, which entails aesthetics, functionality, and navigational structure.

Many association websites need updating, but the process of doing so should try to include broader discussions about association branding and marketing. Recognizing that websites are increasingly becoming the face and brand of organizations, associations would benefit by approaching the development of websites from a branding perspective—even if the site is only intended for producer members, as the quality of the brand is important to recruiting and retaining members.

A web project worth examining further is the Vermont Council on Rural Development's [e-Vermont Community Broadband Project](#). As part of the project, a number of municipal websites were updated using the WordPress platform, and municipal officials were trained on how to use the new sites.. With only a handful of associations needing similar services, a project of this type would not require significant funding to implement, though care would need to be given to the particular and unique branding needs of each association.

Best Practices: Website Platforms and Templates

Many association websites were developed before integrated website platforms like WordPress, Drupal, or Joomla became popular or even existed. The Vermont Maple Sugar Makers' Association website uses WordPress, and features a modern WordPress template. Templates can give association websites an affordable option that provides both immediate aesthetic appeal and easy content management if they are unable to pay for more comprehensive web development services.

Recommendation: *Encourage associations to seek web consulting services to redesign websites, improve website utilization, and improve overall association branding. Examine the e-Vermont model's applicability to updating association websites.*

Recommendation: *Pursue the utilization of standard content management platforms, such that content management is efficient and easily transferable to other members, and to allow for the possibility of having multiple sites managed by one webmaster.*

NEXT STEPS

Conversations with producer and processor associations revealed much more than this brief report covers. Vermont's producer and processor associations are rich with history, production knowledge, and insight on Vermont's food system, all of which came out in conversations with association leaders. **The challenge for many associations is converting the passion and knowledge of its membership into sustained organizational stability, with the added challenge of doing so with constrained budgets and administrative capacity.**

A major finding of the interviews is the critical support role that service provider organizations like *UVM Extension*, *VAAF*, and *NOFA Vermont* play in either establishing or maintaining the organizational stability of associations. Without these service providers effectively providing staffing capacity through partnership agreements, associations without paid executive directors are left functioning with volunteer support from the officers of their boards. Volunteer capacity and enthusiasm can quickly be exhausted, particularly when associations lack term limit structures that ensure stable periodic transfers of leadership responsibilities. A result of these circumstances is that associations have less time to devote to strategic activities, which can lead to, for example, poor branding and uncoordinated political engagement.

Service providers like *UVM Extension* and *NOFA Vermont* have also partnered with associations on research interests that have tangible impacts on production practices and require ongoing outreach and education. Many associations expressed particular research needs, while others market small research grants as a benefit of being a member. Or, for example, the *Vermont Sheep and Goat Association* reported that with adequate guidance there are many association members capable of conducting or participating in research projects.

The VAAF may model future partnerships with additional associations on the agency's involvement with the *Meat and Poultry Processing Association*. VAAF's role with the MPPA has centered on developing the industry through enhancing producer-processor partnerships and professionalism. The MPPA was recently awarded a \$15,000 Working Lands Grant to improve IT systems for inventory management, ordering and scheduling; bring in processing experts from other regions to provide targeted consulting; and develop a website for communication and information sharing. VAAF, in collaboration with the association, is building infrastructure for both the association itself and individual members in order to improve their performance in the marketplace.

There are also partnership opportunities for marketing. *DigInVermont*, for example, is a project of the *Vermont Council of Agricultural Associations* (formerly the *Vermont Agriculture and Culinary Tourism Council*), which includes organizations like the ***New England Culinary Institute, Shelburne Farms, VAAFAM, NOFA Vermont, UVM Extension***, and a number of producer and processor associations. The VCAA has evolved since the DigInVT project with the assistance of VAAFAM and now operates as a peer network for producer and processor associations that facilitates information exchange, collaboration, and professional development opportunities. With a particular focus on marketing and promotion, the VCAA is well positioned to advance additional inter-association marketing partnerships.

Increasing partnerships between associations as outlined above may contribute to the joint market development of multiple food product categories—and it is market development that ultimately will provide stability to associations. **As demonstrated by larger industry associations, the more developed the market is the greater likelihood that an association will be able to support its own staff and provide comprehensive services to its members.** Associations are critical partners for market development because they can provide researchers and UVM Extension staff access to a significant population of participants, they can quickly transmit production innovations to members, and can quickly communicate market needs and opportunities to VAAFAM staff, technical assistance providers, and policy-makers. The key in the coming years for association sustainability is solidifying existing partnerships and forming new partnerships with the service provider community to leverage resources in a highly coordinated fashion.

FARM TO PLATE NETWORK

At a Turning Point: Strengthening Vermont's Producer and Processor Associations

Credits

At a Turning Point was prepared by Jake Claro.

Production and Processing Working Group Co-Chairs:

Ela Chapin (Vermont Farm Viability Program) and Jackie Folsom (Vermont Agriculture and Forestry Development Board).

Production and Processing Association Support Task

Force Chair: Eric DeLuca

Funding for this report was provided by: VSJF

We would like to thank the Technical Assistance for Producers and Processors Working Group members—particularly task force members Eric DeLuca, Beth Holtzman, Chelsea Bardot Lewis, Sam Fuller, and Londa Nwadike—and especially the producer and processor association leaders who graciously made the time to participate in this report.

Layout and Design: Jake Claro

For more information:

Vermont Food System Atlas

www.vtfarmtoplate.com/network/producer-processor-association-support

The



Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund

*was asked by the Vermont
Legislature to write the*

farm to plate
STRATEGIC PLAN



The

farm to plate
NETWORK

*is tasked with turning the
Plan into action!*



*All Farm to Plate materials
are located at:*

www.vtfarmtoplate.com