

The Vermont Farm Viability Enhancement Program

2007 ANNUAL REPORT to the Vermont House and Senate Agriculture Committees

January 31, 2008

“My farm business plan is something I am proud of.
I enjoy sharing it with others.”

—Paul de la Bruere, Swanton dairy farmer, 2007 participant

“The program is well thought of and every farmer
should be involved in it.”

—Mark Gagne, Swanton dairy farmer, 2006 participant

VERMONT FARM VIABILITY ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

Vermont Housing & Conservation Board

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*This report is made by the Secretary of the Vermont Agency of Agriculture,
Food and Markets, in collaboration with the Vermont Housing &
Conservation Board, pursuant to 6 V.S.A. § 4710(f)*

The Vermont Farm Viability Enhancement Program

Purpose and Program Description

The purpose of the Vermont Farm Viability Enhancement Program is to enhance the financial success and long-term viability of Vermont farms by providing business planning and technical assistance services to farmers. During the year-long process that culminates with the completion of a written business plan, the Program offers in-depth financial analysis, assistance in goal setting and an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses and opportunities of the farm business, and guidance and assistance in the development of a plan for meeting these goals. Additional analysis and assistance is provided as needed by each individual farm, such as farm transfer planning, cash flow or enterprise analysis, and technical assistance. In the years following business plan completion, the Program has been able to conduct follow-up visits and evaluations with nearly all farms. In addition, the Program has offered grants and further assistance for business plan implementation projects with funding through a private foundation and USDA Rural Development's Rural Business Enterprise Grant.

Farmers that enroll in the program are often pursuing some kind of transition or expansion, such as initiating new products or on-farm processing, expanding into new markets, constructing a new barn, transferring farm ownership, or examining energy efficiency. In some cases farmers may be preparing to apply for a grant or loan. In other cases farmers are simply interested in setting and documenting their goals, plans and finances with the assistance of a business planning professional. All enrolled farms are also offered technical assistance, in such areas as marketing, herd management, production, facilities design, or bookkeeping.

History

The Program was established at the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB) in 2003 and is a collaboration with the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets. The Program enrolled ten farms in 2003, and since 2004 has provided business planning services to approximately 50 farms each year.



PROGRAM PROFILE

Since the inception of the Vermont Farm Viability Enhancement Program in 2003, 162 farms have completed business plans through the Program. These farm businesses:

- Own or rent more than 20,800 acres
- Provide over 350 jobs
- One-third are conserved
- One-third are certified organic
- More than 50 percent are dairy farms
- 27 percent produce vegetables
- Many produce diverse agricultural products, including everything from maple sugar, sheep, goats and rabbits to berries, flowers, vegetable starts and mushrooms
- 16 percent are doing on-farm processing such as cheese, yogurt, wine, sausage, soup or pickles

In 2007:

- 59 farms received assistance developing business plans
- 44 farms received a follow-up visit and evaluation
- Implementation services were awarded to 44 farms*
- Implementation grants were awarded to 12 farms

*Implementation grants and services were offered through a competitive application process open to all farms that have completed a business plan with the Program.

Providing Implementation Assistance to Farm Viability Farmers

The Farm Viability Program offers assistance to farms that have completed business plans with the Program and want to implement changes that have been studied through the planning process. All implementation assistance (grants and services) are made through a competitive application process. Two sources of funding have made it possible for the Program to offer post-planning implementation assistance.

The first source of funding has been the Argosy Foundation. This private charity has made a total of \$145,000 available to the Viability Program over the past three years. The Program has used these funds to make grants to farmers throughout the state, specifically for capital costs related to the implementation of Viability business plans.

In 2007 the Viability Program awarded \$50,000 of Argosy funds to 12 farmers for on-farm capital projects. Thirty-five farms have received Argosy-funded grants over the three year period. These grants have helped: to construct new greenhouses and hoopouses for season extension; to purchase and install computer point-of-sale equipment for tracking retail sales and product inventory; to make improvements to an old barn on a dairy farm transitioning to organic; to construct refrigeration for seed storage; to purchase equipment and renovate facilities for on-farm dairy processing; to construct a potting shed on a diversified farm with a perennials enterprise; and to purchase sausage-making equipment for a new enterprise on a dairy farm.

The second source of funding for implementation assistance has been USDA Rural Development's Rural Business Enterprise Grant (RBEG) program. In 2007 the Viability Program was able to offer a wide variety of implementation services to farms for non-capital projects using funding the Program received through a RBEG grant from USDA. Forty-four farms were assisted using these funds. Projects ranged from completing farm business transfer plans or retirement plans; to designing new barns or on-farm processing facilities; creating a marketing plan for a new value-added product; designing websites; developing federal grant applications; evaluating energy conservation opportunities; and updating business plans and financial statements.

"The program has been vital to the success of the farm. The profits are small but the growth in the last year due to the work with Richard Wiswall and the program increased nearly 25 percent! I will be able to keep farming due to this program and what I have learned from it. Now we will focus on developing almost year-round profit centers on Anjali Farm, through education, special events and season extension ideas."

- Emmett Dunbar, South Londonderry vegetable farmer, 2006 participant

Program Impact and Performance

The Farm Viability Program gathers data with which to evaluate program impact through three tools: business plans, follow-up visit reports and farmer evaluations. Business plans include financial data for each participating farm, and are created and written through collaboration between the farmer and the service provider. Follow-up visits conducted the year following completion of the business plan provide updated financial information along with qualitative data for each farm, and the service provider collects this information in a report format. Farmers are also asked to fill out an evaluation at the conclusion of the business planning process, providing direct feedback from farmers regarding the Program and their experience with their service provider.

Change in Net Farm Income for 20 Farms in the Year Following Business Plan Completion



- Net farm income increased for all but two of the 20 farms.
- Average net farm income for the year the business plan was completed was -\$2,769.
- Net farm income increased the following year by \$20,985, for an average net farm income in the year following the business plan of \$18,216.

Net Income

One indicator of farm business viability is profitability. Based on some preliminary results the Program is clearly assisting farmers to be more profitable in the year following the completion of their business plan. Net farm income—in most cases net farm income from operations (NFIFO)—for each farm is collected in business plans, as well as in follow-up visit evaluations when possible. Over the past two years only twenty farms have had a thorough set of financial statements completed prior to or as a part of their follow-up visit. For these twenty farms we have net farm income data for the year that the business plan was completed as well as the following follow-up year, and this information is presented in the graph above.

The 20 farms in this graph are organized from the smallest (negative) change in income to the farm with the greatest change in income. Some of the farms that started in the red and ended in the red experienced a net increase in income, while two (farthest left) had a greater loss of income in the year following their business plan completion. While every farm is in a very different situation and is impacted differently by potential factors such as weather patterns and commodity prices, aggregating the data in this way shows us that in general the Program is resulting in increased profitability.

Distribution and Diversity of Participating Farms

Participating farms in 2007 were geographically diverse, coming from ten of Vermont's 14 counties. These farms also represent the diversity of Vermont's agricultural industry, producing a wide variety of agricultural products from apples, berries and maple sugar to dairy products, beef and compost. The graph on the facing page shows the percentage of the Program's 44 farms from 2007 that produce each agricultural product listed. Many farms produce more than one product. This graph includes all products, not just the primary product for each farm, thus the total percentage is not equal to 100 percent.

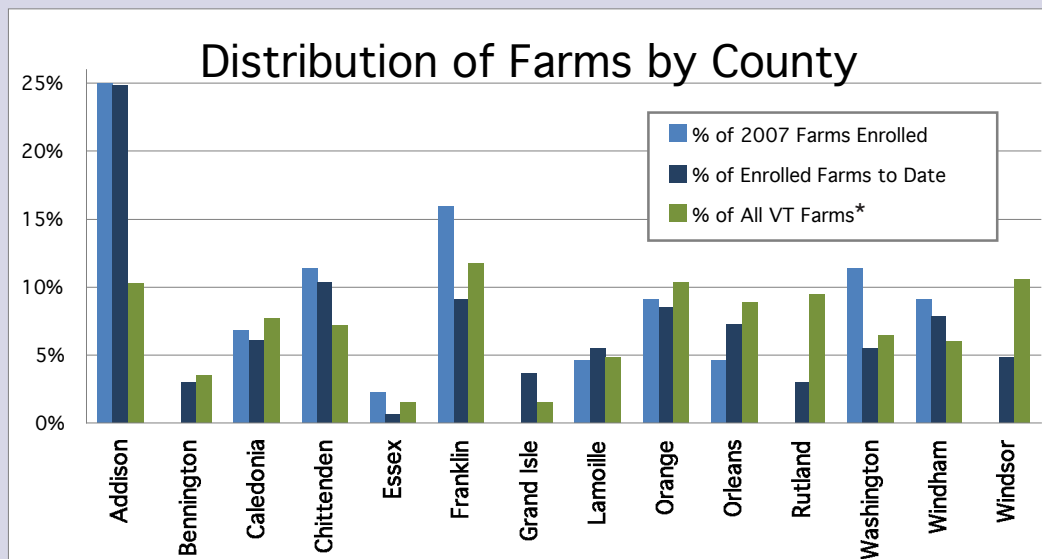
This graph demonstrates the distribution of Farm Viability farms by county for all farms participating in 2007 as well as over the history of the Program. This data is compared to a third bar representing the distribution of all farms in Vermont according to the 2002 US Census. The Program has served farms in every county of the state. With a disbursed network of service providers, the program is able to effectively serve all regions.

“Farmers need all the help we can get. This program helped us write a business plan which we desperately need and we hope to further the process with some grants.”

– Larry Scott, Newbury diversified livestock farmer, 2006 participant

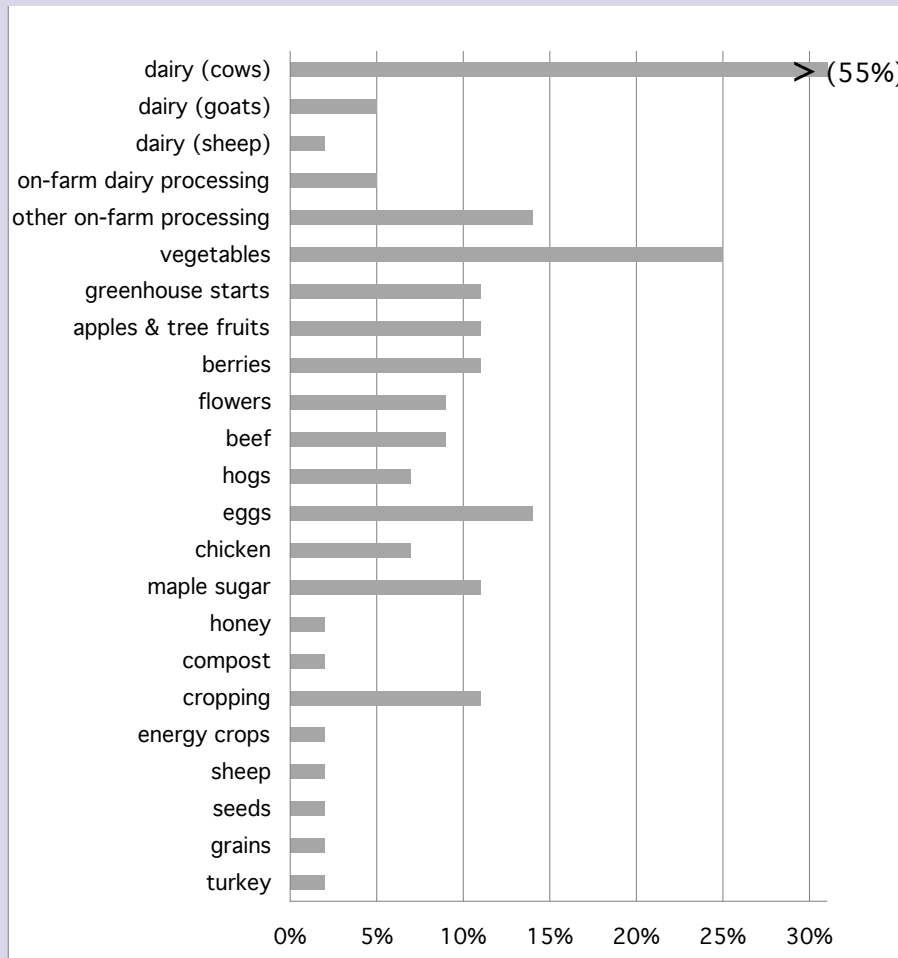
“Thank you for your service it is a valuable and under-utilized service.”

– Roger Waterman, Addison dairy farmer, 2006 participant



*2002 U.S. Census data

Agricultural Products Produced by 2007 Participating Farms



- The 2007 farms represent 13,019 acres of owned or rented farmland. The average farm size was 256 acres.
- These farms provide the equivalent of 168 full-time jobs in Vermont: 89 jobs for farm family-members and 79 non-family employees—an average of 3.8 jobs (FTEs) per farm.
- Forty-one percent (41%) of 2007 farms are organic. Also 41% (although not the same farms) are on conserved farmland.
- Fifty-five percent (55%) of the enrolled farms are cow dairies; there were also several goat and sheep dairy farms enrolled in 2007. Twenty-five percent produce vegetables, and 19% have on-farm processing for dairy, vegetable or meat products.
- Seventy-three percent (73%) of the vegetable producers are organic and 33% of the dairy producers are organic or transitioning to organic.
- Nearly 20% of the farms enrolled in 2007 are working on a farm transfer as a part of their business planning.
- The average net worth of these farms was \$419,250.

With Help from the Farm Viability Program, Woodcock Farm Cheese Company Expands

On Woodcock Farm in Weston, Mark and Gari Fischer graze their herd of East Friesian sheep on 45 acres of lush organic pastures. The Fischers hand craft sheep and cow milk cheeses with names like Weston Wheel, Summer Snow and Timberdoodle. They market their cheese to distributors serving New York, Boston and Chicago markets, and to local restaurants and farmers' markets. Their West River Feta, a tangy sheep milk feta, has won three awards from the American Cheese Society.

The Fischer's flock produces milk from spring through early fall. Over the winter, Mark and Gari purchase cow milk from the Taylor Farm in order to produce cheese year round, and to make some softer cheeses that can not be made with sheep milk. To create a certain firmness and taste, some cheeses are made with a mixture of sheep and cow milk.

In 2006, with assistance from the Farm Viability Program, the Fischers worked with UVM Extension Service staff on a business and marketing plan. Having learned to make cheese over the past eight years, they were ready to take the next step—to produce more and grow the business. Their goal is to be producing 15,000 pounds of cheese per year within the next few years. That's up from the 6,200 pounds produced in 2004 and the 8-9,000 pounds produced each year in 2005 and 2006. In 2007 the Woodcock Farm Cheese Company produced 11,000 pounds of cheese. Their marketing plan showed a strong demand for their products, justifying a facility upgrade to allow them to pasteurize their cheeses and to expand the variety of cheeses they make.

A Farm Viability Program Implementation Grant funded by the Argosy Foundation allowed them to purchase the equipment and expand their production facility. The award was matched by personal savings and a loan. The Fischers installed a large cheese making vat and a new boiler and heat exchanger to facilitate the washing and pasteurization process.

A second Implementation Grant in 2007 funded five days of technical assistance provided by a French cheese-making specialist from UVM. On-farm workshops were open to other cheese makers.

According to Mark, "The Farm Viability Program has been a motivating factor for every step of our business—from a business plan to implementation funds, to technical assistance. Their support has helped us to take steps that may have taken longer or otherwise may not have happened at all."

Today, the Fischers have more room for cheese making, storage, aging, and packing. Two new cheeses have won accolades from the American Cheese Society: Magic Mountain, a hard, aged sheep's milk cheese described as sweet and nutty and Timberdoodle, a creamy Havarti style with a slight lemony finish. Yum.



"We've learned to make cheese over the past eight years, and now we're ready to take the next step—to produce more and grow the business. Our goal is to be producing 15,000 pounds a year within the next few years."

—Mark Fischer



Top: Mark Fischer with curing cheese.
Below: Other cheese makers attended a 5-day clinic at Woodcock Farm with a UVM cheese-making specialist.

Vermont Farm Viability Program Application Procedure

Who is Eligible to Apply?

Vermont farmers who own or lease farmland are eligible to apply. Applicants should also have at least 3 years prior farm experience and \$10,000 or more of gross farm income in the previous year. These criteria may be waived in special cases. There are no fees charged to farmers enrolled in the Program.

What Services Are Available?

Business planning and targeted technical assistance are provided. Business planning is a tool that is used in much of the business world to evaluate strengths and weaknesses, to strategize for success, and to inform prospective lenders and investors about an enterprise. Now, more and more farmers are discovering the advantages of business planning.

What's Involved?

Applicants must be willing to devote time to a series of meetings with a farm business management consultant and with selected technical specialists. Meetings occur on the participant's farm. Applicants need to write down goals and objectives, provide data to the management consultant, and help him or her to make a complete assessment of the farm business. Farmers who have already identified possible directions for the farm business can often benefit most from the process.

The process begins with setting goals and identifying management problems or opportunities. A complete set of farm financial data is assembled from the owner's records. From there, the process may focus on production, markets, efficiency, infrastructure, or any other aspect of the farm operation. The final product is a written document that describes how the farmer expects to meet the identified goals and be profitable in the foreseeable future.

Here's How to Apply

A two-page application form is required of all applicants. After submitting an application, you may be contacted and asked to provide additional information. The application form is available from the service providers listed at right, or by contacting the Program at the address below. The form is also available on the website: www.vhcb.org/viability.html

Program Partners

Business planning and technical assistance services are delivered to farmers on the farm, and are provided by contractors or grantees of the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board. Additional farm business consultants and technical specialists are contracted directly by VHCB. The Vermont Small Business Development Center is another important partner, providing a variety of services through grantee organizations.

Subject to availability, a farmer who is accepted into the program may work with a consultant suggested by the program director or choose one of the providers below:

Intervale Foundation, Burlington

Particularly focused on farms interested in direct marketing, value-added processing, and agritourism.

NOFA-VT, Richmond

Works with dairy, vegetable and other farms that are either organic certified or transitioning to organic.

UVM Extension, statewide

Works with any type of farm, including traditional dairy. Collaborates with the UVM Center for Sustainable Agriculture.

Working Landscapes, based in Massachusetts

Available mostly in southern Vermont, focused on value-added, market development, farm transitions.

Individual Farm Business Consultants

The Viability Program also works with several independent consultants in Vermont.

Other Technical Assistance

Once enrolled in the Program, a participant may opt for additional assistance from professionals or farmer mentors who can help with strategies developed in the business plan. The Viability Program will pay for these services up to certain limits.

Program Development and Evaluation

Viability staff took on several initiatives in 2007 to improve the quality of the Vermont Farm Viability Program. The Program staff and Advisory Board drafted and adopted an improved set of requirements for business plans that all service providers must meet. Program staff worked to determine what farm data should and could be collected in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the Program on participating farms.

DATABASE DEVELOPMENT

A database is now in place to track data for all current and past Program participants, including information such as: geography, acreage, jobs, agricultural products produced, net farm income, and net farm worth. The results of this data collection are evident in the new types of information available in this year's annual report. In coming years our efforts will focus on improving consistency, continuity and quality of financial and other data collected for participating farms.

THE FARM FINANCIALS WORKBOOK

During the fall of 2007, Program staff developed a new and exciting tool for service providers and farmers to use in preparing financial statements and tracking farm financial information. Various service providers and UVM staff also assisted in this initiative by providing feedback and testing the tool with farm data in the field. While in the past we have had templates (in Excel) for a farm business balance sheet, accrual-adjusted income statement and cash-flow projections, we now have one Excel workbook tool that integrates these and has additional tools as part of a fully-integrated financial planning workbook. This new workbook incorporates and links the following financial statements so that many data and calculations are automatically completed by the program as you fill in the data: beginning of the year and end of the year Inventory and Asset Listings; beginning and end Balance Sheets; an accrual-adjusted Income Statement; a Cash-Flow Statement; and UVM's Farm Financial Scorecard which includes a variety of financial ratios and indicators.

There are two versions of this new Farm Financials Workbook: a version geared towards dairy and livestock operations and one towards vegetable and diversified farms. There has been an overwhelmingly positive response

by service providers, many in our network are using this new Farm Financials Workbook in place of other tools and software that they feel were less powerful, less specific and detailed, or less user-friendly. We hope that farmers will also find this workbook to be a useful tool – it will be available for them (and the general public) to download either through their service provider or from the VT Farm Viability Program website. We will be presenting this tool at the upcoming Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont's winter conference on February 16th and 17th, and also looking for other opportunities to share this tool with farmers throughout Vermont.

Also in 2007 the Vermont Farm Viability Program provided funding to UVM Extension for the development of their Dairy Management Teams Program.

DAIRY MANAGEMENT TEAMS

The University of Vermont Extension, Vermont Farm Viability Program, and the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets partnered this past spring to develop UVM's Agricultural Profit Team (APT) services for dairy farms. The new program will bring together teams of advisors appropriate to the individual farm to address various issues affecting the dairy's profitability over the course of one year through facilitated monthly meetings on the farm. This program works to solve specific farm issues rather than providing a written business plan, focusing on production and efficiency issues. Many farms that have started with UVM's APT services to address farm production problems have gone on to complete a business plan through the Farm Viability Program, and now we are finding that some farms that have completed a business plan are enrolling in the Management Teams program in order to implement production-related aspects of their business plan. The Farm Viability Program granted UVM \$50,000 to support the start-up of Dairy Management Teams. Approximately 20 dairy farms will be enrolled in this first year.

The Dairy Management Teams advisory group met frequently from April to September in 2007 to develop the Program. Farmer applications were received between October and December, and Program staff conducted site visits to these farms during December and January. Four teams have been trained and are in progress, meeting on the farm on a regular basis with facilitators and team

members. Facilitators for these first four farms include Louise Waterman, Agency of Agriculture; Sarah Isham, Vermont Economic Development Authority; Tony Kitsos, UVM Extension; and Steve Paddock, Vermont Small Business Development Centers. Team members include farm advisors such as veterinarians, nutritionists, farm lenders and UVM Extension staff. Three more farms will be trained to begin their Dairy Management Team on February 20th, and we expect that 20 farms will be enrolled by July, 2008. Production data is monitored throughout the year of Team meetings to compare improvement during participation in the Program, and we expect to report on the impact of this Program next year.

Summary of Funding for the Program

The Program’s funding is derived from commitments by the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board from the Housing and Conservation Trust Fund. This has been supplemented by federal funds administered by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), earmarked for Vermont’s program by Senator Leahy. In Fiscal Year 2008 the total amount for direct Program service (VHCB plus NRCS) was \$415,000, including \$350,000 from VHCB and \$65,000 from NRCS.

In addition, the Farm Viability Program has been able to offer business plan implementation assistance through two sources of grant funds in 2007. The Program received a Rural Business Enterprise Grant from USDA Rural Development to offer implementation services, and committed in 2007 approximately \$160,000 for more than 45 projects that will be complete by the end of September 2008. The Program was also awarded \$50,000 this year from the Argosy Foundation for the third consecutive year. These private grant monies were dedicated to helping diversified farmers implement their business plans through small capital assistance awards.

The VHCB Board has targeted \$350,000 for the Program in Fiscal Year 2009. Senator Leahy has once again secured an earmark for the Program, in the amount of \$233,000. Both of these figures are not yet secure, as the Governor’s budget proposal would significantly decrease VHCB funds and the President has warned that he may veto all earmarks from Federal appropriations. Regardless, we expect to have a decrease in funds for the Program in FY09.

**History of Farm Viability Program Funding:
State, Federal and Private Sources**

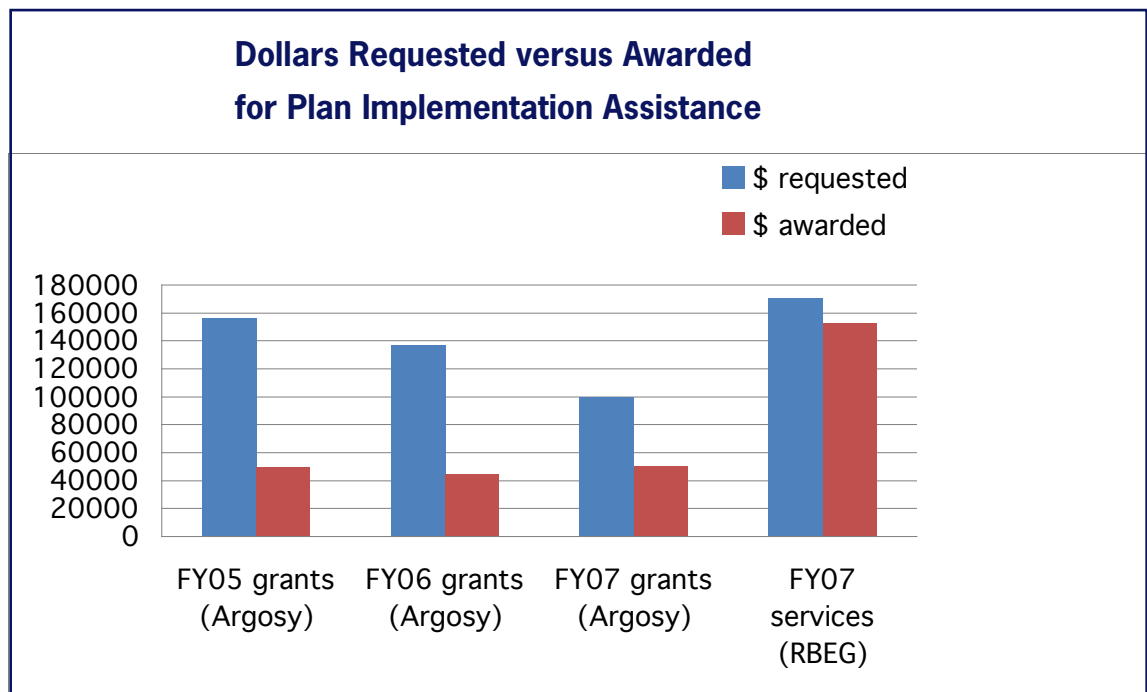
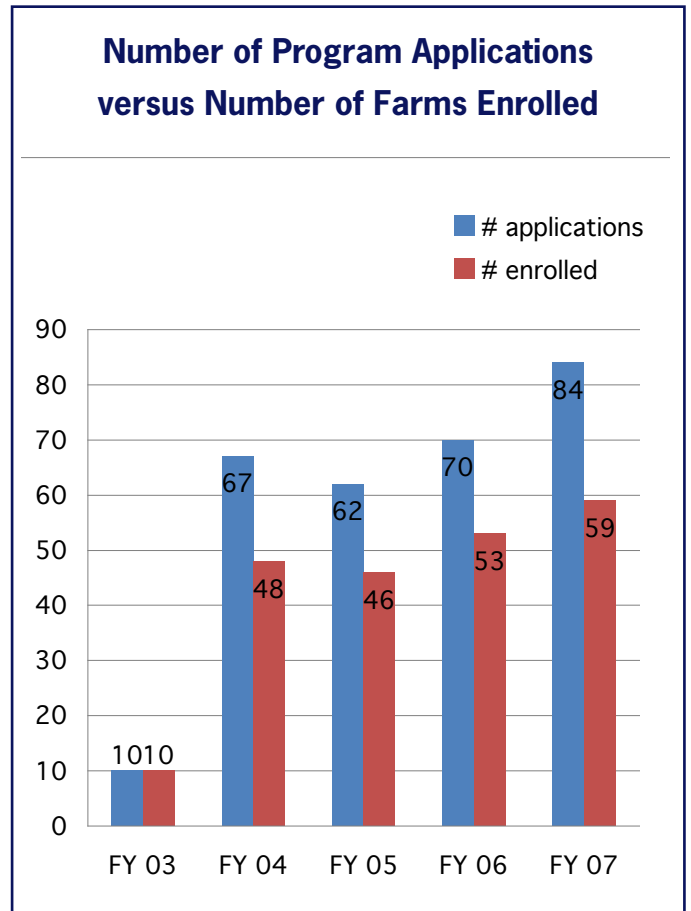
	VHCB	%	NRCS	%	RBEG Grant	%	ARGOSY	%	Total
FY03	\$100,000	100%							\$100,000
FY04	\$300,000	100%							\$300,000
FY05	\$409,165	72%	\$158,000	28%					\$567,165
FY06	\$400,000	59%	\$225,000	33%			\$50,000	7%	\$675,000
FY07	\$343,000	43%	\$282,000	35%	\$125,000	16%	\$50,000	6%	\$800,000
FY08	\$446,645	70%	\$65,000	10%	\$75,000	12%	\$50,000	8%	\$636,645
FY09	\$350,000	60%	\$233,000	40%					\$583,000

VHCB- Vermont Housing & Conservation Board
 NRCS - USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
 RBEG - Rural Business Enterprise Grant from USDA Rural Development
 Argosy - Private Foundation funds

Assessing Demand and Future Needs for the Program

Demand for this Program continues to be strong as evidenced by the number of farmers who applied in 2006. This year applications totaled 84; enrollees totaled 59. Most of the non-enrollees were referred to other programs primarily because they were either not eligible or were looking for services that the Program does not offer. Some may choose or are encouraged to reapply to the Program at a later date. The Program Director fields frequent calls from farmers looking for a variety of assistance, and referrals are often made to UVM Extension or other UVM programs, Vermont Small Business Development Centers, or other providers and programs.

The Program has offered implementation grants and services to farms that have completed a Farm Viability business plan through a competitive application process. We have not been able to meet the demand for this assistance, in particular for grants for capital improvements, as demonstrated by this graph which shows the dollar amount requested in each round compared to that awarded. In many cases we made awards to most of the applicants, but for less funding than they had initially requested.



Implementation Projects Funded in 2007

Forty-four farms that have previously completed business plans with the Vermont Farm Viability Program received further assistance for implementation projects. Projects funded range from farm transfer and retirement planning, to marketing and website design, financial and business plan updates, loan and grant applications, energy conservation and renewable energy assessment, farm improvement or expansion planning, and improving production efficiency.

Farm Transfer and Retirement Planning Projects

Projects include updating business plans; developing transfer plans; accounting and legal technical assistance; grant-writing assistance; and planning for partnership searches and development.

RECIPIENTS:

1. Jay & Janet Bailey, Fair Winds Farm, Brattleboro
2. Judy Clark, Applecheek Farm, Hyde Park
3. Virginia Hardy Cleland, Four Springs Farm, Royalton
4. Diana Doll, Stray Cat Flower Farm, Burlington
5. Robert & Elizabeth Kennett, Liberty Hill Farm & Robeth Holsteins, Rochester
6. Suzanne Long & Tim Sanford, Luna Bleu Farm, S. Royalton
7. Lorenzo Quesnel, Perry Brook Farm, Whiting
8. Michael & Lawrence Quesnel, M & L Dairy, Whiting
9. Paul & Frances Stone, Stonewood Farm, Orwell

Marketing, Value-Added Products and Website Design Projects

Projects include developing marketing plans; proposals for USDA Value-Added Producer Grants; website design, creation and test marketing; technical production assistance; designing marketing materials; in-depth financial analysis and planning.

RECIPIENTS:

1. Janet & Dannie Boyd, Boyd Family Farm, Wilmington
2. Rosemary & Gerard Croizet, Berry Creek Farm, Westfield
3. Kristan Doolan & George van Vlaanderen, Does Leap Farm, Bakersfield
4. Bianca Fernandez, Hope Roots Farm, Westminster
5. David & Maryellen Franklin, Franklin Farm, Brattleboro
6. Peter Johnson, Pete's Greens, Craftsbury
7. Melvin & Jennifer Lawrence, Polymeadows Farm, Shaftsbury
8. John & Lisa Roberts, Butterwick Farm, Cornwall
9. David Tansey, Scott Farm, Dummerston



Applecheek Farm, Hyde Park.

John and Judy Clark transitioned their dairy farm to organic and diversified, developing an agri-tourism business in 1993. They have a sugaring operation and raise meat birds, layers, and emus. They completed a business plan with funding from the Vermont Farm Viability Program. Their plan includes initial steps to transition farm ownership to their two sons and developing a kitchen and meeting facility to enable their son Jason to grow his catering business.

Financial Analysis, Business Plan Revisions and Loan Applications

Projects include further planning such as production analysis, enterprise analysis, marketing analysis and labor analysis; updating and revising business plans; in-depth financial and benchmarking analysis; assessing potential to purchase farmland; expanding plans for diversification; assistance in accounting and inventory management; and preparing loan applications and planning to finance infrastructure improvements.

RECIPIENTS:

1. Hank Bissell, Lewis Creek Farm, Starksboro
2. Christine Bourque & Adam Farris, Blue Heron Farm, Grand Isle
3. Thomas Case, Arethusa Collective Farm, Burlington
4. Russell Deberville, Washington
5. Alex MacLennan, MacLennan Farm, Windsor
6. Aaron & Chantale Nadeau, Top Notch Holsteins, Newport
7. Joy & John Primmer, Wildstone Farm, Pownal
8. David Pullman, Pullman Farm, Williamstown
9. Jeremy Russo, Russo Farm, Pawlet
10. Tyler Webb, Stony Pond Farm, Enosburg
11. Jonathan Wright, Wright Farm, Londonderry



Jeremy Russo, Mettowee Valley farmer

Jeremy developed a business plan with the Farm Viability Program in 2004, laying the groundwork for eventual purchase of Southwind farm. Since then, he has utilized the Farm Viability Program to help with an Enterprise Analysis for a farmstead cheese operation. An Implementation Award from the program helped him to rent a facility and purchase equipment for cheese making.

Energy Conservation and Renewable Energy Projects

Projects include evaluating energy needs and renewable options through energy audits or other tools and developing or reviewing grant applications, including for USDA Rural Development's energy grants program.

RECIPIENTS:

1. Christine & Tony Brown, Pembroke Heritage Farm, Randolph
2. Dan & Eugene Branon, West View Maples, Fairfield
3. Guy Palardy, Palardy Farm, Alburg
4. Larry Scott & Peggy Hewes, Ekolott Farm, Newbury

Farm Improvement and Expansion Projects

Projects include designing and engineering assistance for developing or renovating farm facilities; site planning for construction; improving and reconfiguring retail space; financial analysis and business plan updates to include improvements and expansion projects; energy assessments for construction, expansion or fuel transition planning; and bookkeeping and other technical assistance.

RECIPIENTS:

1. Mimi Arnstein, Wellspring Farm, Marshfield
2. James Bove, Chapin Orchard, Essex
3. Bill and Cathy Emmons, Cloudland Farm, Woodstock
4. Louis Hall & Jennifer Breen, Hall Farm, Orwell
5. Lisa Holderness & Jerry Smith, Deer Ridge Farm, Brattleboro
6. Kate & Kurt Ingwersen, Ingwersen Farm, Vergennes
7. Joey Klein & Elizabeth Ziegler, Littlewood Farm, Plainfield

Production Improvement Projects

Projects include technical assistance in production, grazing and herd management; cheese-making instruction; and developing a forest plan for a sugarbush.

RECIPIENTS:

1. Christa Alexander & Mark Fasching, Jericho Settler's Farm, Jericho
2. Ken Carter & Melissa Dion, Stone Hill Farm, Fairfield
3. Mark Fischer, Woodcock Farm, Weston
4. Jo-Anne & Thomas Ring and Charles Davis, Davis Hill Farm, Hyde Park

Implementation Grants Awarded in 2007

1. James Bove, Chapin Orchard, Essex. Computer point-of-sale system, \$4,036.
2. Janet, Bucky & DJ Boyd, Boyd Family Farm, Wilmington. Computer point-of-sale system, \$5,000.
3. Gerard & Rosemary Croizet, Berry Creek Farm, Westfield. Greenhouse & equipment, \$5,450.
4. Paul de la Bruere, De la Bruere Organic Dairy, Highgate. Barn and fencing, \$3,000.
5. Emmett Dunbar, Anjali Farms, South Londonderry. Hoophouses and farmstand construction, \$6,000.
6. Scott Green & Suzanne Young, Singing Cedars Farmstead, Orwell. Greenhouse construction and materials, \$6,000.
7. Adam Hausman, Adam's Berry Farm, Burlington. High tunnel construction, \$4,570.
8. Bruce Hennessey & Beth Whiting, Maple Wind Farm, Huntington. Walk-in freezer, \$2,000.
9. Lisa Holderness & Jerry Smith, Deer Ridge Farm, Guilford. Site and drainage improvements, \$3,500.
10. Royal Larocque, Royal Butcher, Braintree. Slaughterhouse renovations, \$3,500.
11. John & Lisa Roberts, Butterwick Farm, Cornwall. Dairy processing room construction and equipment, \$5,000.
12. Jeremy Russo, South Wind Farm, Pawlet. Dairy processing equipment and supplies, \$2,282.



Wellspring Farm, Marshfield.

Mimi Arnstein grows vegetables, flowers and berries on her farm situated along the Winooski River in Marshfield. Most all the produce from the farm is sold through the Wellspring Farm CSA, with over 100 members picking up their produce shares, either at the farm or in Montpelier. Mimi was one of the initial group of farmers enrolled in the Vermont Farm Viability Program, completing her business plan for the farm in 2003. In 2007 Mimi used an Implementation award for a marketing plan, to update her business plan and financials and for technical assistance for sales liability and production efficiency.



Christine & Tony Brown and Family, Randolph

In 2005, the Browns used funding from the Farm Viability Program to create a business and marketing plan for their organic dairy and vegetable operations. Expenses related to finishing a second greenhouse were supported with an Implementation Award, including insulation and a drip irrigation system. In 2007, an Implementation Award assisted the Browns to evaluate their energy needs and renewable options, to update and review their business plan and to develop a grant application.



Livewater Farm, Westminster West

Bill and Miriam Aquaviva have a diversified organic dairy. They sell their milk directly to Organic Valley, raise pigs and beef cattle, and produce maple syrup, pickled garlic, sausages and a variety of other on-farm processed items. After completing their business plan, they applied for an Implementation Award from the Farm Viability Program to help purchase sausage-making equipment, shown below.

“Some of our ideas have changed along the way, but with a business plan to look back upon, we can now understand our new decisions better. All in all, the Farm Viability business planning has helped to make a more realistic and profitable future for our farm.”

–Gari Fischer,
Weston sheep farmer
and cheesemaker,
2004 participant



Liberty Hill Farm, Rochester.

Robert and Beth Kennett have a 350-acre farm in Rochester. Their two sons work on the farm and the Kennetts have planned for a transition in ownership to the next generation as a part of their business planning work with assistance from the University of Vermont through the Vermont Farm Viability Program.