Your Hosts For Today’s Webinar:

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Glossary

- **Outcome**: identification and evaluation of the end result of an activity, plan, process, program or policy
- **Output**: the quantity or amount of deliverables produced
- **Indicator**: a tool, variable or instrument used to measure change in key factors or conditions
- **Metric**: a standard or unit to measure or assess performance, progress, or quality of a plan, policy, product, program or project
- **Benchmark**: standards used as point of reference for measuring progress or quality along the way to the outcome.
- **Dashboard**: a visual display, to tell you quickly how things are going; like an executive summary of information to help decision-makers
Data should be ...

- **Reliable** - sources are good, regularly available
- **Valid** - assumptions behind data collection are valid
- **Relevant** - the right data is used for the task
- **Credible** - credentials of data collectors and analyzers
- **Practical** - can be easily gathered on a regular basis
Impact Measurement Systems

EXAMPLES

• Results Based Accountability
  • Fiscal Policy Studies Institute
    www.resultsaccountability.com

• You Get What You Measure
  • Yellowwood Associates
    www.yellowwood.org

• Whole Measures
  • Center for Whole Communities
    www.measuresofhealth.net/

• Others?
DEFINITIONS

RESULT or OUTCOME
A condition of well-being for children, adults, families or communities.

INDICATOR or BENCHMARK
A measure which helps quantify the achievement of a result.

PERFORMANCE MEASURE
A measure of how well a program, agency or service system is working.

Three types:
1. How much did we do?
2. How well did we do it? = Customer Results
3. Is anyone better off?
Population Level Measures: The Vermont Story
Outcomes for All People: of a State, County, Community

The Farm to Plate Investment Act is meant to achieve 3 Outcomes over a 10 year period...

- Increase economic development in Vermont’s food and farm sector
- Create jobs in the food and farm economy
- Improve access to healthy local foods
Outcome: Increase economic development in VT’s food and farm sector

EXAMPLES OF INDICATORS

- Pounds of agricultural crops produced
- Pounds of value-added products produced
- Number of acres in active agricultural production
- The percentage of farms that have net positive farm incomes
- Food system wages are livable wages
Pounds of Agricultural Crops Produced

Source: USDA Census of Agriculture, USDA NASS, multiple years. *Note: fruit and vegetable production, other than apple and sweet corn production, are not included in this graphic due to small production values that would not be visible. Apple production, for example, which is represented by the small green line, accounts for 91% (3,547 acres) of noncitrus fruit orchard acres in Vermont. In comparison, berry farm production occurred on 705 acres, approximately 20% of the apple orchard acreage. Sweet corn production, which is barely visible on this graph, accounted for approximately 39% of all acreage in vegetable production in Vermont.
Food System Wages are Livable Wages

Median Hourly Wage (2012)

Hourly Livable Wage (2012)

Source: median hourly wage: Occupational Employment Statistics (May 2012); livable wage: Vermont Joint Fiscal Office 2012 Livable Wage (urban)
Outcome: Create jobs in the food and farm economy

EXAMPLES OF INDICATORS

• Number of net new private sector jobs created between 2010 - 2020
  • In 2009, more than 37,000 Vermonters are employed as cheese makers, brewers, bakers, butchers, grocery stockers, restaurateurs, chocolatiers, manufacturers, distribution drivers, vintners, and in other food related jobs.
  • By 2nd Q, 2013, 39,328 Vermonters are employed in these fields.

• Number of net new farm operator and farm labor jobs created between 2007 – 2017
  • In 2007, there were close to 20,000 Vermonters employed as farm operator or farm laborers
  • In 2012, there were? [waiting for the 2012 Census of Ag results]
2,200 net new private sector jobs have been created between 2009 and 2nd Q 2013.
Outcome: Improve access to healthy local foods

EXAMPLES OF INDICATORS

• Percent of households that are food insecure

• Percent of children enrolled in schools with Farm-to-School programs

• Rate of eligible households using EBT cards or Farm to Family cards at Farmers Markets

• The number of Vermont market outlets that carry locally grown or raised fresh food.
Percent of households that are food insecure

CHAPTER 2: GETTING TO 2020: GOALS AND INDICATORS FOR STRENGTHENING VERMONT'S FOOD SYSTEM

Results-based Accountability is a measurement framework that has increasingly gained traction. The RBA framework distinguishes between results for whole populations (i.e., population indicators) and results for particular programs, organizations, or services (i.e., performance measurements).

Throughout Chapter 2 we use quantitative and qualitative data to answer these questions, illustrate trends, and track progress toward accomplishing the 25 goals of the Farm to Plate Strategic Plan. For each goal we provide a brief synopsis—based on analyses provided in Chapters 3 and 4—that describes why the goal and associated strategies and actions are important. Each goal depicts population indicators that show the major trends that should accelerate up or bend down over time if our collective activities are impactful.
1. What are the quality of life conditions we want?
   Vermonters have access to fresh, nutritious, affordable food

2. How will we recognize it?
   Children eat fresh, nutritious food in school lunches

3. How can we measure those conditions?
   Percent of children in schools with Farm to School programs

4. How are we doing now?
   Baseline and story behind the baseline
5. Who are the partners?
   Schools, VT FEED, VT Farm to School Network, farmers, food hubs, food service management companies, VT Agency of Agriculture, Dept. of Health, Dept. of Education...

6. What works to do better?
   Committed school team, training, mentoring, planning time and resources, food preparation guidance, lesson plans, partnering with farms and distribution networks

7. What do we propose to do?
   Vermont Farm to School Institute - 10 schools, June, 2013
Building Farmers in the West

Building new farmer capacity within farm communities throughout the Western U.S.
BFW business development program addresses:

- Limited knowledge of strategic planning & management for ag businesses
- Few planning & budgeting tools for smaller-scale, fresh produce businesses
- Fewer production systems that align with consumer interest in new markets
- Emerging yet unfamiliar markets for high-value specialty crops
- Lack of information on entering new markets (price, consumer preference, packaging)
Desired program outcomes for new and beginning farmers that translate into creating sustainable agricultural businesses

1. Decreased information & transaction costs

2. Reduced barriers to entry into new markets
Pre-course evaluation

Post-course evaluation

Determines what participants learned & actions they intend to take

Post-mentorship evaluation

Pre-mentorship evaluation

Aligns mentor & mentee expectations & interests

Participant experiences shape progress toward farm business goals

Did BFW help participants develop sustainable & profitable businesses by decreasing costs and reducing barriers to entry?

1 year follow-up evaluation
Outcome #1: Decrease information & transaction costs for new farmers

A. Farmers have new knowledge to understand:
   • Risks and opportunities associated with direct and targeted wholesale marketing
   • How to complete baseline records and budgets that link production & marketing decisions

B. Farmers take actions based on that knowledge:
   • Use strategic planning to develop their businesses (including marketing, financial and production planning)
   • Develop enterprise or whole farm budgets
Measuring farmers’ new knowledge of risk & opportunity in the marketplace and of appropriate planning & management tools

Indicators:
- understanding risk in direct and targeted markets,
- maintaining financial records,
- targeting viable customers,
- using cost-effective promotional strategies,
- assessing operation-specific taxes,
- managing labor force (including seasonal labor requirements),
- complying with regulatory issues, and
- accessing community resources.
Measuring farmers’ **use of tools** to develop their businesses

**Indicators:**

- maintaining a business plan,
- following a financial plan annually,
- following a production plan annually,
- following a marketing plan annually,
- adopting new production practices,
- establishing new markets,
- improving business management practices, and
- improving recordkeeping & budgeting.
BFW participants reported their practices changed from taking the class.

- Follow a marketing plan annually
  - Before class: 20%
  - After class: 80%

- Follow a production plan annually
  - Before class: 40%
  - After class: 100%

- Follow a financial plan annually
  - Before class: 60%
  - After class: 100%

- Currently have a business plan for operation
  - Before class: 50%
  - After class: 80%
Outcome #2: Reduce barriers to entry into new markets

A. Farmers have new knowledge of:
   • Community business contacts and how to use them
   • Locating inputs to production (land, labor, water, etc.)

B. Farmers take actions based on that knowledge:
   • Assess seasonal labor requirements & better plan for labor-intensive produce crops
   • Implement their business plans
Measuring farmers’ knowledge of community resources

Indicators – knowing where/how to locate:

• tax planning advice,
• crop/livestock production advice,
• marketing strategy advice,
• business management support,
• land, labor, and water,
• irrigation system equipment,
• capital and credit,
• pest and weed management information, and
• scale-appropriate equipment.
BFW participants gained knowledge about community resources by taking the class.

- Business mgt support: Before class, 30%; After class, 80%
- Marketing strategy advice: Before class, 20%; After class, 80%
- Production technical advice: Before class, 40%; After class, 80%
- Tax planning advice: Before class, 20%; After class, 80%
- Capital/credit providers: Before class, 25%; After class, 70%
- Labor: Before class, 50%; After class, 80%
Measuring farmers’ use of community assets

Indicators that participants connect with specific community resources:

- applying for loan or grant program,
- using local technical support (NRCS, Extension),
- accessing mentorship and/or internship programs, and
- using other local resources (i.e., farm incubator programs).
Direct business impacts—growth in on-farm investments or assets

Percentage of respondents who increased:

- Infrastructure and equipment (irrigation, tractor, greenhouse, etc.)
  - 0%
- Customer base (number of customers)
  - 0%
- Range of product varieties grown
  - 0%
- Variety of marketing outlets used (CSAs, farmers' markets, etc.)
  - 0%
- Land area under production
  - 0%
- Number of farm enterprises (vegetables, livestock, flowers, etc.)
  - 0%
- Financing amount/options
  - 20%
- Number of employees
  - 0%
## Building Farmers in the West: Program Performance Measures

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>How much?</th>
<th>How well?</th>
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<td>282 participants in 7 states</td>
<td>98% recommend course to other new farmers</td>
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<tr>
<td>49% beginning farmers; 34% intermediate; 17% advanced</td>
<td>88% increased farmer network</td>
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<td>78% completed business plan</td>
<td>80% course value &gt; cost</td>
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### Is anyone better off?

- 83% said Building Farmers program improved their farming community
- 71% implemented new business management practices
- 51% said quality of life on farm improved
Be aware of possible bias in performance measures

• Pre- to post-course assessment bias may occur
• Number of respondents falls over time
• Asking is different than observing
• Assessing participant knowledge acquired through mentorships is difficult—required that we use multiple instruments
• Progress toward stated outcomes may be based on many factors—our program is just one of them!
What are your Questions?
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