

From Vermont's Backyard – Locally Grown!



Did you know that 9% of food purchased by the Vermont Department of Corrections comes from local producers? That's money invested right into the Vermont economy!

The [Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food, and Markets](#) (VAAFAM) mission is to facilitate, support and encourage the growth and viability of agriculture while protecting the working landscape, human health, animal health, plant health, consumers and the environment. VAAFAM supports this mission through a variety of ways, including: [grants](#), regulation, outreach & education, collaborative projects, and policymaking.

VAAFAM works with the Department of Corrections (DOC) to increase the amount of local food purchased for use in state facilities. DOC purchases nearly 9% of all food purchases from local producers. This partnership helps DOC better understand the opportunities available for purchasing Vermont product. Buying in Vermont helps the economy and also provides an opportunity for consumers to eat fresher product- which is particularly important for our most vulnerable Vermonters.

A law on local procurement in Vermont state government, passed in 2008, established the authority of Agency of Administration, VAAFAM, and Buildings and General Services to work together on increasing local procurement in state government through collaborative initiatives. This work has primarily focused on connecting producers and procurement professionals by identifying opportunities to buy more local products for use across state government.

Food is not the only way to purchase locally – Vermont’s robust forest economy means that wood energy is another viable way to support the local economy. Corrections purchases \$125,000 of Vermont firewood every year.

VAAFM understands that there may be budgetary constraints to purchasing local products, which is why the partnership focuses on three different kinds of work that can address purchasing at different levels: communication between agencies and state partner organizations, infrastructure changes, and legislative recommendations. Together this triad bring positive change for procuring additional locally sourced products. Some specific outcomes of this work include connecting Corrections to organizations that distribute local produce and increasing healthy food options at state parks.

Future work to increase local procurement in state government will take place through continued efforts to connect people and resources, the development of a Vermont product procurement guide for government buyers, and better outreach to Vermont producers about vending with state government. By leveraging our collective knowledge, this collaborative initiative will continue to move towards the goal of increasing the amount of Vermont products purchased by state government, which strengthens our rural economies, ensures everyone can access local food, and supports Vermont’s working landscapes.

For more information check out their website: [VAAFM](#)

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