Check out our recent work, including some good news and significant gains! Together we are cultivating more autonomy over our food and lands, while serving our communities and each other.

“You rocked it this session. Deep thanks from the trenches - so much of what you were able to accomplish this year greatly impacts our family farm.” – RV member Margaret Loftus, Crossmolina Farm, Corinth

**Raw Milk:** Act 22 allows for the sale of raw milk by tier two producers at other farms’ farmstands and CSAs in VT as of 7/1/21. This bill provides a meaningful increase in market access for raw producers and in turn significantly increases the economic viability of selling raw milk by increasing consumers’ access to this product.

**On Farm Slaughter and Meat Processing:** H.420* doubles the allowances for on-farm slaughter of livestock: from 5 to 10 cattle, 15 to 30 pigs, 40 to 80 sheep & goats or a total combined live weight of 12,000 lbs. Farmers supported increasing the allowances for on-farm slaughter in testimony about the increased bottleneck for meat processing. The bill also repeals the law’s “sunset” and thereby secures this important practice in perpetuity. H.420 also includes the charge to draft future legislation to allow for CSA programs with animal shares to make the practice more accessible.

**Soil Health, Payment for Ecosystem Services, & the Climate Council:** We actively attend & inform the Ag. & Ecosystems subcommittee of the Climate Council, helping shape the VT Climate Action Plan. We co-initiated a statewide Soil Health Policy Network that facilitates policy discussions & information sharing. We also informed the PES & Soil Health working group with legal research in partnership with the Center for Agriculture & Food Systems & White River NRCD. H.420* extends the working group until 2023. Our aim is to increase farmer voices in decision-making.

**Adequate Shelter:** Rural VT, NOFA-VT, and many farmers sought to ensure that existing animal welfare standards related to adequate shelter requirements in VT did not prohibit appropriate grazing and livestock management, proposing alternative language based on the National Organic Program. Based on our advocacy, the Senate Ag Committee included language in a related bill - H.421/Act 38 - which clarified that accepted animal husbandry practices will not be subject to adequate shelter requirements, meaning that graziers will not be subject to violations if their animals do not have access to shade and shelter at all times.

**URL / Poultry Foraging:** S.102 has been signed by the Governor and provides a pathway for the agricultural use of food residuals as laid out in the organics management hierarchy of the Universal Recycling Law (URL). The definition of farming in Act 250 and the Required Ag Practices now includes composting up to 2K cubic yards/year of food residuals. This resolves a jurisdictional dispute and allows farmers who practice compost foraging to regain markets.
of diverted food residuals. This practice reduces feed costs, produces valuable soil amendments, and incentivizes diversification. We also advocated to hold the Agency of Natural Resources accountable for protecting the priority uses of organics more broadly.

**Cannabis:** Act 164, VT’s existing tax and regulate cannabis law, facilitates the development of a consolidated and concentrated cannabis marketplace, without distributing access and wealth by centering small businesses, farmers, and communities of color. With the VT Cannabis Equity Coalition, we worked to bring racial, economic, and agricultural equity to amend Act 164, as well as move our own bill, H.414, with little success in a challenging environment. In the near term, we will continue to organize and educate in preparation for the Cannabis Control Board's public rulemaking process, as well as municipal decision-making around the state.

**Ag Innovation Board:** H.434* assigns many functions of the Vermont Pesticides Advisory Committee to an Ag Innovation Board primarily charged with monitoring, researching, and making recommendations related to the use of pesticides, synthetic fertilizers, and agricultural plastics. We worked with allies to affect many aspects of this bill, in particular its board membership and refining its focus to three primary areas.

**Healthcare:** H.430* will expand the Dr Dynasaur Healthcare program to include income-eligible pregnant people & children regardless of immigration status and will be implemented in 2023. The bill also sets up a grant program to assist with medical bills in 2022. Privacy protections & culturally appropriate outreach & language access are also specified. Thank you Vermont Legal Aid, Migrant Justice, and others for their leadership.

**Corporate Land Grabs and Land Access:** Corporate farmland investment and acquisition globally and locally compromises communities’ food and resource sovereignty, and contributes to inequity and consolidation of the food system. We have been working with a national Anti-Land Grab group to coordinate a response to the VT Pension Investment Committee’s $100 million investment into TIAA’s farmland acquisition subsidiary Nuveen, and to organize and educate about this issue. We continue to participate in the Farm to Plate Steering Cmte and Chair the Farm to Plate Farmland Access & Stewardship Working Group.

**Small Farm Action Days:** Our first virtual Small Farm Action Day series in partnership with Action Circles and NOFA-VT created three advocacy training sessions and two joint hearings for farmers to address their concerns with legislators.

* As of 5/26/21, these bills have been delivered to the Governor and await his signature.

**Note:** This list is not comprehensive. For more information, including our solidarity efforts, visit our website and social media!