

FARM & FOOD INITIATIVE

CONSERVATION LAW FOUNDATION



WWW.CLF.ORG CLF FACT SHEET

For a thriving New England



Financing Agriculture in Vermont

In Vermont, agriculture is a key component of the state's economy and character. However, a challenge to farmers involves accessing the financing they need to flourish. With recovery from the credit crunch still slow, banks and other traditional sources of capital may be reluctant to take risks on smaller-scale farming operations. CLF Senior Attorney Anthony Iarrapino recently participated in a collaboration with farmers, attorneys, accountants and investment professionals that is aimed at helping publicize and demystify the various community-financing tools that farmers can utilize as they seek to start up and/or grow their farms.

clf

conservation law foundation

By addressing New England's regional food system, we can begin to tackle some of our region's most pressing environmental and health issues, and make our region more resilient to the impacts of climate change already underway. That's why Conservation Law Foundation (CLF) and CLF Ventures are working together to shape and foster the development of a robust New England regional food system.

The Challenges

Healthy, nutritious food is vital to the wellbeing of all New Englanders. And local agriculture, from working farms to small plots in urban and rural neighborhoods, holds tremendous promise for promoting public health and the environment across the region. However, from Hurricane Irene to record-breaking heat, climate change is reshaping New England. Rivers have been redrawn, billions in property damages lost, and roads and farmland have been wiped out. Together these are the unprecedented impacts of climate change that challenge our communities, including our food systems.

In addition to climate change concerns, social inequities impact food system dynamics. Many of our region's low income communities and communities of color lack access to healthy foods, and survival as a small farm can be like swimming upstream, where globalization and economies of scale favor large operations outside the region. Food lies at the intersection of many of New England's most pressing challenges.

The Solutions

CLF Farm & Food Initiative

In 2010, CLF launched its Farm and Food Initiative, building on CLF's past efforts to foster a regional agricultural economy through a variety of market, legislative, regulatory, coalition-building and other efforts to strengthen the business of local farming. Housed within our Healthy Communities and Environmental Justice Program, the Farm and Food Initiative sees sustainable agriculture businesses as a key component in creating a more carbon-resilient, healthier, and economically vibrant New England.

A New England Regional Food System

To build a robust regional food system, multiple policy and market barriers must be overcome. CLF is undertaking a comprehensive analysis of these barriers and ways to counter them. CLF is working to build leadership capacity and political infrastructure to support stronger local food systems, as well as working with investors, entrepreneurs, and other stakeholders to cultivate opportunities to creatively meet financing needs.

KEY WORK

JOIN CLF TODAY!

Conservation Law Foundation relies on contributions from its members to do the work of protecting New England's environment, preserving our natural resources, building healthy communities and promoting a vibrant economy. To become a member of CLF today, use the "Donate" button at clf.org or click "Support CLF" to learn about more ways to give. You can also contact: Devon Parish, dparish@clf.org

CLF

62 Summer St
Boston, MA
P: 617.350.0990
F: 617.350.4030
E: e-info@clf.org

CONTACTS

Jennifer Rushlow,
Staff Attorney,
Director of Farm and Food Initiative
jrushlow@clf.org

Jasmine Tanguay,
Associate Managing Director, CLF Ventures
jtanguay@clf.org



clf

conservation law foundation

HIGHLIGHTS



Urban Agriculture

- Together, CLF and CLFV have brought their complementary expertise to bear, analyzing policy and market barriers to a regional food system and the job creation potential and environmental benefits of sustainable food businesses. 'Growing Green', a recent CLF/CLFV study of policy and market barriers related to urban agriculture in Greater Boston, showed promising economic development potential. This study is available at : <http://www.clf.org/growing-green>.



Growing Robust Networks for Food System Development

- CLF Ventures developed a business plan for the Rhode Island Food Policy Council (RIFPC), a statewide collaborative body that coordinates advocacy, communication, education and outreach, research and on-the-ground initiatives that increase the state's community food security.

- In early 2013, together with Federal Street Advisors, CLFV gathered interested investors, experts, and entrepreneurs from New England to address critical issues in growing and financing sustainable food businesses. This convening enhanced the knowledge needed by local funders and investors to help small-to-medium sized farms and food businesses access capital to finance their growth.



Resource Development for Sustainable Food System

- CLFV is developing tool-kits aimed at helping decision makers in municipal government support stronger food systems.

- CLFV is providing technical assistance and developing educational resources for food hubs and the farms that serve them in urban and rural areas across New England. CLFV has developed a model to identify the most suitable locations for new food hubs in New England. We will provide our results to policy-makers, entrepreneurs, and investors to inform discussions about food hub placement and food system development.



Zoning for Agriculture

- CLF is working to optimize municipal zoning regulations so as to improve the viability of agricultural production in New England's communities.

- CLF is partnering with developing suburbs to improve zoning regulations in order to protect existing agricultural lands as well as promote and increase agricultural production.

- CLF is analyzing existing zoning regulations in New England's major metropolitan areas, identifying best practices and areas for improvement with the goal of putting more urban land into agricultural use.