

## A3: Provide essential and urgently needed investments in agricultural supply-chain infrastructure



To save Vermont’s current farms, the State must immediately invest in supply chain infrastructure. This vital investment will also modernize and strengthen the viability of farming and food production for the future. “Supply chain” here refers to off-farm shared physical resources such as creameries, storage and refrigeration facilities, slaughter facilities, and a related distribution network including roads and trucks.

Surviving in the food system marketplace today requires sophisticated and efficient infrastructure. Farmers must respond to consumer trends, food safety regulations, and packaging and marketing needs while grappling with labor availability, and downward price pressure from wholesale buyers. Given the small scale of many Vermont farms, market access will depend on a robust combination of on-farm plus shared off-farm resources. Small and midsized farms have to compete in a highly consolidated marketplace in which large national and global agribusinesses leverage their scale to restrict market access and, additionally, are subsidized and supported by federal policy and investment. Providing state funding for diversified farming and supply chain infrastructure helps to level the playing field and enables our smaller farms greater access to in-state and regional markets.

### Keep in Mind

Farming and food production are much more capital intensive than ever before. Supply chain infrastructure investments would also ensure a more decentralized and regionally focused food system, which will be more resilient in the face of climate change and other emergencies.

## Strategies

### STRATEGY A3.1

**Allocate funds for expansion of distribution infrastructure (cold, frozen, and dry storage as well as cross-docking capacity, strategically located in different parts of the state) and related technology. This will enable small- and mid-scale producers to meet consumer demand, and more easily and affordably get their products to in-state wholesale buyers, plus New England and New York markets. ⚠**

### STRATEGY A3.2

**To increase producer access to Vermont distribution networks and in- and out-of-state markets, dedicate substantial funding to VAAFMs Agriculture Development Program, to support larger scale infrastructure and processing investment needs of meat, maple, grain, produce, and perennial crop industries. ⚠**

## VOICES OF VERMONTERS

“Would love to see an action plan that provides support for VT food producers and make sure that food is getting into the hands of Vermonters that need it. Can we invest in strengthening our farms and food production, then creating channels to get food to Vermonters in a sustainable, long term way?”

“I think COVID and its lingering effects have shown that food security is not just about access but also supply chain resilience. I think work on food security should take both into account.”

“We have been learning recently due to COVID, inflation, our climate crisis, etc. that supply chains can and will be disrupted. In Vermont, we need state legislation to support Vermont farmers—perhaps even subsidize Vermont farmers so that they can scale their operation, processing, and storage capabilities—and sell food at a lower price.”

“Increase the state’s capacity to produce/process/use local foods as well as move foods sourced from outside the state.”