



Intervale Center Farms Program Application Packet



Intervale Farmers, 2008

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Application Process for Incubator Program

Step 1: Read over this packet and familiarize yourself with the Intervale incubator program and the policies and procedures.

Step 2: Complete the application contained in this packet. The application deadline is August 31st, 2016. The application process is expected to last at least three to six months from application date to final decision, depending on the time needed to write a business plan. It consists of the following steps:

Step 3:

Staff Review:

- Applicant meets with program staff in person or over the phone, which includes an introduction to the Intervale Center and Farms Program. All applicants will receive an information packet, which will include application materials, general information, sample lease, sample business plan and profiles and market channels of other farms
- Applicant will submit initial application form to program staff by deadline stated above. Applications are considered for tenure the following spring. (Note: The timeline does vary on a case by case basis depending on the progress of the business plan.)
- If the application is a good match for available opportunities in the Intervale and the farmer has necessary experience, staff will ask applicant to submit a full business plan and any relevant additional materials.
- Once the applicant's business plan has been submitted, Intervale staff will prescreen applications for completeness and basic ability to comply with contract and the following criteria:
 - Sound Business Plan that demonstrates good market opportunity
 - Minimal three years farm experience
 - Personal capacity to take risk: resources to cover living expense
 - Strong awareness of organic production criteria
- Applicants will be asked to visit the Intervale if possible
- If the applicant is applying for a business that involves livestock, they must include a Livestock Emergency Flood Management plan. See "Livestock Policies" in the appendices for more information.
- Staff presents application, business plans and supporting materials and makes recommendations to farmers.

Step 4:

Farmer Review:

- Existing farmers will review application, business plan and supporting materials
- Staff will provide farmers with electronic version of application and business plan
- Applicants make presentation at the farmer meeting that includes their business plan and supporting materials, such as charts, list of markets, etc. (all information

pertaining to new farm business will remain confidential). This in-person presentation is a requirement so that existing farmers have a chance to meet perspective farmers.

- Farmers discuss application and assess the compatibility of the application in relation to the following aspects of the proposed business:
 - Equipment and resource use compatibility with existing farms
 - Market focus and competition with existing farms
 - Traffic and land use issues
 - Openness to feedback and recommendations
 - Good community member and neighbor
 - Business plan provides measurable financial and social goals

- If application is approved, the new farmer will receive an orientation with the Farms Program manager and the land manager to familiarize them with the land options, water access, infrastructure, etc.
- Land will be assigned by the Intervale Center, and program staff will prepare contract and lease
- Contract and lease will be signed by new farmer and Executive Director (or his or her appointed representative)
- Typical lease terms will run from January to December. Special terms can be negotiated on case-by-case basis

Farms Program Introduction

Farmers at the Intervale share space and resources as well as take part in the community life. This section will present the mission and goals of the Farms Program and give an idea of how it came to be in its current form along with some of the guiding principles that govern the program.

The Farms Program is here to help with the logistics of shared resources, farmer meetings, land expansion, technical assistance, business planning, land transition, and more.

Mission of the Farms Program

The Intervale Center's Farms Program mission is to incubate and grow viable, independent farm businesses, to increase food security in Vermont and to serve as a model beginner agriculture development program.

Program Goals

- Accommodate up to 15 participating farms
- Build infrastructure necessary to fulfill mission and serve as a model agricultural development organization
- Provide professional program administration and technical support to Intervale farmers

Farm Categories

Two categories of farmers exist at the Intervale – incubator and mentor –to encourage information sharing and enable new farmers to learn from the ones who have experience with the land and equipment at the Intervale.

Incubators

Incubator Farms (year 1 through 5 at the Intervale) receive financial support in their first three years through lower prices for equipment, facilities and compost. This rate is billed at 80% of cost, the other 20% of which is subsidized through the Intervale Center. They pay in full for year four and five of incubation. They also receive advice, technical assistance and support from mentoring farms and Farms Program staff. When a farmer applies to become an Intervale farmer, IC program staff informs the farmer about the mentor program. Once the farm is accepted, IC staff assigns each incubator farm with a mentor farm, according to compatibility.

Incubator farms have a five-year limit to this status and are only guaranteed land in the Intervale for five years. For more information on farm tenure in the Intervale, please see the Policies and Procedures section of the Farmer Manual or ask Intervale Center program staff for clarification.

Mentors

The mentorship concept originated as a voluntary system organized by established farmers in order to collectively assist newer farmers in the Intervale. Over the years, this informal system has allowed flexibility among both mentor and incubator farmers to provide and access the appropriate kinds of mentoring and technical assistance on their own terms. It has also helped foster a culture of mutual dependence and cooperation among Intervale farmers.

Mentor Farms are mature farms that were established in the Intervale prior to January 1, 2005. They are paired with incubator farms to foster relationships and encourage the mentoring role. Mentor farms provide technical assistance to incubator farmers on crop plans, crop rotations, marketing, cultivation practices, equipment use, etc.

It is assumed that mentor farms should spend – and are spending - a minimum of 20 hours each year mentoring incubator farms and/or contributing to the common good of the community. These mentorship efforts are one of many valuable and unique parts of the farms program. Mentors are asked to report on how they spent their mentorship hours in annual farm reports, which are due each February.

Though incubators are encouraged to build their own relationships with neighboring farmers, all incubators are assigned a specific mentor who they can call when they have questions. This relationship is established by Intervale Center staff – in consultation with farmers - after an incubator has been accepted into the program but before they begin farming in the Intervale. Mentor farmers are expected to make the first contact with incubators to welcome them to the community and assess their needs. Subsequent meetings can be arranged by either party and are often informal. Mentors are also encouraged to report problems connecting with or advising incubators to Center staff.

What are common mentor tasks?

- Equipment follow up training and troubleshooting
- On-farm technical assistance, soil and production advice for incubator and enterprise farms
- Marketing and business management assistance for incubator and enterprise farms
- Utilizing unique skills to contribute to the common good of the community
- Mentoring or hosting a workshop for other beginning farmers in the state

Who are the mentors?

Intervale Community Farm

Diggers' Mirth Collective Farm

Stray Cat Farm

Sugarsnap

Half Pint Farm

Pitchfork Farm

The Intervale Center sometimes offers additional training opportunities for both mentors and/or incubators. If you have an idea for the training you would like, please let the Intervale Center staff know.

Farms Program Policies and Procedures

These policies and procedures are intended to present a predictable, consistent and equitable framework for Farms Program operations and to ensure staff and farmer input into all Farms Program decision making. The Intervale Center uses the document in conjunction with the farm leases and associated protocols to structure its oversight of the Farms Program.

Farms Program Application Process

The application process is expected to last at least three to six months from application date to final decision, depending on the time needed to write a business plan. It consists of the following steps:

1. Application submission:

- Interested applicants should begin by exploring our available land for the coming season and see if it aligns with their business idea. This document is available on our website as well as an application packet that includes land use policies and rental prices. Next they should look over our short application and submit it to Farms Program staff by August 31st for tenure the following spring. If application has questions along the way they can reach out to Farms Program staff over the phone, in person, or by email. This initial application asks about experience in farming, the idea for a farm business, long-term plans after the Intervale, and references. Note: Application deadlines can vary on a case by case basis. If you are interested in submitting an application and the deadline has passed, please contact Intervale Center staff.

2. Staff Review:

- After the application is submitted, applicant meets with program staff in person or over the phone, and receives an introduction to the Intervale Center and Farms Program. All applicants will be given an information packet, which will include application materials, general information, sample lease, sample business plan and profiles of other farms
- If the application is a good match for available opportunities in the Intervale and the farmer has necessary experience, staff will ask applicant to submit a full business plan and any relevant additional materials. Intervale Center staff can assist with development of the business plan if desired.
- Once the applicant's business plan has been submitted, Intervale staff will prescreen applications for completeness and basic ability to comply with contract and the following criteria:
 - Sound Business Plan that demonstrates good market opportunity
 - Minimal three years farm experience
 - Personal capacity to take risk: resources to cover living expense
 - Strong awareness of organic production criteria
- Applicants will be asked to visit the Intervale if possible
- If the applicant is applying for a business that involves livestock, they must include a Livestock Emergency Flood Management plan. See "Livestock Policies" in the appendices for more information.
- Staff presents application, business plans and supporting materials to farmers.

3. Farmer Review:

- Staff will provide farmers with an electronic version of application and business plan
- Existing farmers will review application, business plan and supporting materials
- Applicants make presentation at the farmer meeting in October or November, that includes their business plan and supporting materials, such as charts, list of markets, etc. (all information pertaining to new farm business will remain confidential). This in-person presentation is a requirement so that existing farmers have a chance to meet perspective farmers.
- Farmers discuss application and assess the compatibility of the application in relation to the following aspects of the proposed business:
 - Equipment and resource use compatibility with existing farms
 - Business plan provides measurable financial and social goals
 - Market focus and competition with existing farms
 - Traffic and land use issues
 - Openness to feedback and recommendations
 - Good community member and neighbor
- Intervale farmers make a recommendation to Intervale Center Staff
- If application is approved, the new farmer will receive an orientation with the Farms Program manager and the land manager to familiarize them with the land options, water access, infrastructure, etc.

- Land will be assigned by the Intervale Center, and program staff will prepare contract and lease
- Contract and lease will be signed by new farmer and Executive Director (or his or her appointed representative)
- Typical lease terms will run from January to December. Special terms can be negotiated on case-by-case basis

Farm Tenure

The Intervale Center seeks to provide long-term stability and land tenure for mentor farms and short-term land leases for the development of the incubator program. The Center is committed to developing the incubator program and ensuring that land is available annually for new incubators.

For the first three years, the incubator farm will be charged subsidized rates (80%) for goods and services and in the remaining two years, incubator farms will be charged full rates. After five years, incubator farms are required to relocate their farm off of the Intervale. On a case-by-case basis, land may be available for continued short term (1-2 year) leases.

Mentor farms who comply with program contracts, policies and procedures are eligible to stay in the Intervale indefinitely, pending the Intervale Center's control of the land and leases with the land owners. For more information on the Intervale's Mentor Farms, please refer to the Mentorship protocols in the Farms Program introduction.

Incubator farmers are encouraged to begin planning for transition away from the Intervale upon admission to the program. The Intervale Center is committed to assisting incubators in finding suitable, more permanent homes outside of the Intervale. If you have questions about land tenure and transition planning, please contact Intervale Center staff.

Subleasing Policy and Absenteeism

As stated in your lease with the Intervale Center, subleasing land is not permissible under any circumstance. You remain wholly responsible for the land you lease and its management, even if someone else is managing the land for you. If you are planning a sabbatical, it is encouraged that you talk with other farmers in the Intervale to determine a land management strategy for your land while you are away. If you cannot afford to pay in accordance with the terms of your lease during your sabbatical, you must terminate your lease. Land may not be abandoned during a sabbatical, and if such a situation arises, Intervale Center staff will take over the management of the land and you will be billed accordingly.

Farm Evaluation

Incubator Farm Self-Evaluation

Since the primary goal of the Farms Program is to incubate and foster viable new farms, Intervale Center staff will conduct a yearly in-person review of all incubator farmers. This review is to assist the farmers to self-evaluate and analyze their business objectives and make plans for the following season. This evaluation process will guide the longer-term business plan and future success of the farm. The evaluation process will look at the following criteria:

1. Did the farm meet the financial goals expressed in its business plan? Business plan goals will be structured toward enhancing farm profitability.
2. Did the farm meet the production goals set by its business plan?
3. If either goal was not met, does the farm have a realistic plan to improve production or income? Farms Program will review the plan to ensure that the farmer will be using a sound fundamental approach to meet business plan goals. All parties acknowledge that farming has many variables that can disrupt a realistic plan.
4. Does the farmer feel satisfied with the financial return from their time and financial investment in the business?
5. If the farmer is not satisfied, do they have plans to achieve a satisfactory return in the future? This may include financial or non-financial considerations. However, since the Intervale Center is interested in fostering viable farm businesses, some measure of financial return is expected from each farm.
6. Has the farm achieved a level of financial stability? Each farm defines their level of financial stability.
7. Is the farm satisfied with its relationship with the Intervale Center and the support they are receiving.

If a farm fails to complete the annual self-evaluation with incubator staff or it fails to meet its goals and has no realistic plan to more successfully meet them, the Intervale Center has the right to refuse a new lease.

Farms Report

Because of the nature of funding and programming for the Intervale Center, it is necessary to gather data from the farms for evaluation of programming and for use in promotional and educational materials regarding the IC. This information will not be used for evaluation of the farms themselves and individual farm data will remain confidential. The following information will be requested from each farm at the end of each growing season:

- Estimated amount of food provided to the local community (in pounds)
- Estimated amount of food donated or provided at reduced cost to low income community members

- Number of people employed (FTE, PTE)
- Number of new employees and/or owners
- Number and kind of wholesale accounts
- Number of CSA customers
- Number of farmers' markets where farm had a regular presence
- Farm's Gross Sales
- Net Farm Income
- Pests and diseases
- Infrastructure projects planned
- Feedback for the Intervale Center
- Any additional comments

A farm report form will be circulated to all farms in the winter each year to be filled out and returned to Center staff. The Farm Report is due February 14th, each year. Please contact IC staff if you have questions about evaluation. A copy of the Farm Report questions can be found in the Appendices.

Beginning in 2014, all mentor and incubator farms are encouraged to schedule a meeting in January or February with Intervale Center staff to discuss issues they may be having, questions they want answered, notification of major changes in their business or infrastructure changes, business planning questions, etc. A variety of Intervale Center staff could be present at the meeting including Farms Program staff, the Land Manager, the Success on Farms manager, the Community Relations Manager, or the Executive Director. Farms Program staff will send out an annual reminder that these are available and how to sign up.

Exit Interview

When incubator or mentor farms exit the Intervale they are asked to participate in an exit interview with Farms program staff. This helps the program learn from the experience of the farmer and use their experience and suggestions to continue to improve the program.

Farm Expansion and New Farms

All new farms (new farm entities registered as separate businesses) are required to go through the application and approval process. This is the case even if the applicant has been part of the Farms Program in the past. However, IC staff members reserve the right to decide that a new farm is not eligible for the Farms Program. The aim of the Farms Program is to allow new farmers to become proficient in farm and market management while cost sharing some of the expenses that can otherwise be prohibitive to prospective farmers. Since there is the possibility of experienced farmers, whether from farms within or outside the Intervale, who may be interested in farming at the Intervale, the IC and Farms Program has the following policy in place:

- Farmers who have more than two years of owner/operator experience in farming are not eligible for the Incubator Farms Program. The acceptance of a new or current farm's land request is subject to land availability.

Land Allocation

If tillable land is available, preference will be given to a new incubator farm. If no new incubator farm enters the Intervale then preference will be given to an existing incubator farm that is looking to expand in order to take advantage of demonstrated market opportunities and financially justified growth. In the case that available land is not suitable for incubator use; i.e., land is in need of remediation, or land is very far from farmer barn, or land is difficult to access by vehicle, preference will be given to an existing mentor farm. If there is no competing interest and the proposal is consistent with the mission of the Intervale Center, the land use proposal will be approved.

At the beginning of each year, Intervale Center staff will meet to finalize the map of land leases. In February of each year, IC staff will notify all farmers of open land and a timeline for submitting requests. Existing farmers will have until February 15th to submit requests for additional land. If there is no competing interest and the proposal is consistent with the Intervale Center mission, program staff will notify farmers of their land allocation. If conflict exists, follow policy on Land Conflict

Land Conflict Policy

If more than one farmer requests the same parcel of land, the following mediation will occur:

- Program staff will meet with farmers to find a joint solution
- In the event of an unresolved impasse, program staff and each party will submit position statements to the Land Committee
- The Land Committee will make the determination based on the following criteria:
 - Farm viability relating to location
 - Crops land/soil needs
 - Farm efficiency, production efficiency, layout
 - Compatibility with Intervale mission
 - Market Impact/competition considerations

All parties involved will have the opportunity to present to the Land Committee prior to decision.

Conflict Resolution Policy

The Intervale Center staff and participating farmers agree to mediate all problems with one another through face to face meetings. If an agreement cannot be reached, the individual must provide a written notification of the unresolved conflict to the other parties involved and cc: Farms Program Staff and IC Executive Director. This notification should occur within 15 days of the meeting. The Intervale Center will

provide a trained facilitator/mediator to attempt to resolve the conflict. The parties involved will be financially responsible for the facilitator/mediator.

Termination

The guidelines for termination are outlined in each farm's lease agreement. Anyone who believes there is cause for termination must file a written statement with the Land Manager. The Land Manager will review the complaint and discuss with the Executive Director. If the Intervale Center determines that an infraction has occurred but is reversible and curable, then the farm will be issued a notice of default. The farm will have a specified time, not to exceed six months, to cure the default. If the farm fails to comply in that time, the farm will be placed on probation for a period of time determined by the Intervale Center. If the farm still fails to comply, the Intervale Center will proceed with termination.

Involuntary Termination

While it is impossible to predict every eventuality, what follows is a list of behaviors that could lead to involuntary lease termination:

- Consistent and significant non-involvement in program requirements (i.e. farmer meetings, required work projects, etc.). Every Intervale farm should make every effort to have at least one representative attend meetings or group work days.
- Serious physical, verbal or emotional abuse of Intervale citizens
- Grievous misuse of Intervale Center and/or IFEC resources

Process for Discussing a Termination Proceeding

In keeping with the process spelled out in the lease agreements for consideration of breach-of-contract type terminations, the following process is recommended. Any party with a serious grievance should first attempt to resolve the dispute. However, there may be cases where this may not be appropriate, i.e. cases concerning allegations of abuse, etc. Farms are encouraged to describe the dispute in writing in order to reduce the potential for misunderstanding.

Instances of gross misconduct must be written down and submitted to the Land Manager. The party lodging the complaint may be an individual, a farm, program staff or a group of farms. The complaint must specify whether the misconduct is by an individual or a farm. Individual misconduct would cover those over which other principles of a farm have little control (i.e. assault); farm misconduct covers such things as persistent organizational non-cooperation.

Based on their findings and others' recommendations, the Land Manager will make a recommendation regarding termination to the Executive Director.

Intervale Center's Policy on Liquidation of Equipment

All farmers and Intervale Center staff will be notified of equipment for sale. Items will be auctioned to the highest bidder with a 15-day bid period. Staff will attempt to get items independently appraised and will use this information to determine opening bids.

Exit Procedures

The exit procedures for Intervale farms are outlined in the lease agreement. Please submit a letter of termination as early as possible; the letter must be received by the date stated in the lease. All farm equipment and supplies are expected to be removed at termination date. Anything remaining after March 31st will be sold or auctioned, or will be hauled away at the expense of the vacating farm. The farm's contact person(s) will also be removed from the Intervale farmer listserv within three months of termination. Program staff encourages vacating farmers to set up an exit interview with staff to share your experiences with them and check in about any resources or assistance you need to make your transition smooth and successful.

Security Deposit

At the beginning of each farms tenure we collect a security deposit when leases are signed. When farms exit the Intervale their security deposit will be returned if fields are left as stated in the lease agreement and no garbage is left behind. If not, the Intervale Center retains the right to keep the security deposit to pay for clean up.

Organizational Structure and Program Decision Making

Farms Program Staff

Intervale Center staff members wear many hats in relation to the Farms Program. They manage the land base and certain infrastructure, recruit incubator applicants and act as landlords and fee collectors. As program facilitators, they actively participate in program decision making and often make strong recommendations to farmers regarding program administration, policy and land allocation. They sit on the IFEC board, representing the interests of both the Center and Farms Program incubators. They also recognize that farmers can manage themselves and approach program facilitation with a hardy respect for the knowledge, talents and abilities of this vibrant community of farmers.

Farmers

To help develop policies, procedures and protocols directly affecting the farmers, all farms are informed of proposed changes to the Farm Manual and asked for feedback and approval. Participation by all farms is essential. Farmers will meet as needed to discuss issues affecting them such as protocols, procedures, etc. Farmer meetings to facilitate incubator initiations will take place as needed.

Procedures for Amending Farm Policies

These Farms Program Governance Policies and Procedures are intended to provide a predictable, consistent and equitable framework for Farms Program operations and to

ensure staff and farmer input into all Farms Program decision making. Below is the procedure to amend the Intervale Farms Program Governance Policies and Procedures.

Procedures:

- IC staff and/or a farm will notify all farmers at a farmer meeting that a procedural and/or policy issue has arisen that may require amending the existing Farms Program Governance Policies and Procedures
- Staff will draft an amended procedure and/or policy and share with farmers.
- Approval of the proposed changes can happen via e-mail if there is a consensus between farmers and Intervale staff, or by meeting if a vote or further discussion is necessary.

Policies and Procedure Enforcement Disclaimer

All parties will adhere to all lease requirements, policies and procedures. If a farmer fails to meet these requirements, program staff can issue a notice of default and or termination notice. The farm(er) who receives either a notice of default and/or termination notice will follow the procedures as outlined in the Farmer Lease agreement and restated above in the Termination section of this manual.

INTERVALE CENTER FARMS PROGRAM APPLICATION

- **Please submit this form electronically to maggie@intervale.org or by mail to 180 Intervale Rd, Burlington, VT 05401**

- **Please note that this application is just the first step in your Incubator Program application. Please read the “Application Procedure” for more information about all of the required steps.**

Names of All Farmers:

Business Name, if applicable:

Contact Person

Name:

Address:

Daytime Phone:

Evening/Weekend Phone:

Email:

Type of Business:

1. Please describe the farm you wish to establish in the Intervale. Tell us what crop(s), live goods or livestock you plan to grow, approximately what size you think your farm will be, etc.:

2. What markets are you planning on selling to? Why do you think your products will sell?

3. Tell us about your experience farming.

4. If you're accepted as an Incubator Farmer, how do you see your farm in three to five years?

5. The Intervale is located in a floodplain. How will your business survive a potential flood event? If you are planning to raise livestock, what will be your plan for moving your animals?

6. Is there anything else you think we should know about you at this juncture?

7. Please provide two references who we may contact.

Reference 1:

Name:

Address:

Title:

Relationship:

E-mail:

Phone:

Reference 2:

Name:

Address:

Title:

Relationship:

E-mail:

Phone:

Criteria for Evaluating Farm Performance for Incubator Farms

Incubator Farm Self-Evaluation

Since the primary goal of the Farms Program is to incubate and foster viable new farms, Intervale Center staff will conduct a yearly review of all incubator farmers. This review is to assist the farmers to self-evaluate and analyze their business objectives. Since business plan updates should be submitted each year for incubator farms, the evaluation process will serve to inform any adjustment that could be made to the following year's business plan. This evaluation process will guide the longer-term business plan and future success of the farm. The evaluation process will look at the following criteria:

8. Did the farm meet the financial goals expressed in its business plan? Business plan goals will be structured toward enhancing farm profitability.
9. Did the farm meet the production goals set by its business plan?
10. If either goal was not met, does the farm have a realistic plan to improve production or income? Farms Program will review the plan to ensure that the farmer will be using a sound fundamental approach to meet business plan goals. All parties acknowledge that farming has many variables that can disrupt a realistic plan.
11. Does the farmer feel satisfied with the financial return from their time and financial investment in the business?
12. If the farmer is not satisfied, do they have plans to achieve a satisfactory return in the future? This may include financial or non-financial considerations. However, since the Intervale Center is interested in fostering viable farm businesses, some measure of financial return is expected from each farm.
13. Has the farm achieved a level of financial stability? Each farm defines their level of financial stability.
14. The following data will be collected annually in our farm reports. Measurable criteria will include:
 - Gross Sales/Income
 - Total Expense
 - Cost of Goods (if appropriate)
 - Net Profit
 - Net Equity
15. How has the farm interacted with the other farms at the Intervale? Have there been equipment conflicts, land issues, etc.?
16. Has the farm been consistently meeting its production and financial goals as set by its previous business plans?
17. Does the proposed business plan anticipate any equipment, storage or land conflicts with any other Intervale farms? If so, how are these conflicts proposed to be resolved?
18. Has the farm been consistent in its soil management and in meeting the land management guidelines?

If a farm fails to meet the above criteria and has no realistic plan to more successfully meet its own goals, the Intervale Center has the right to refuse a new lease.

Intervale Center Land Use Protocols

Updated March 2017

All Intervale farms produce crops by following the organic standards set by the Vermont Organic Farmers (VOF) organization. The following land use protocols are additional standards that all farms in the Intervale must comply with.

1. Cover Crops and Rotation.

As the first step in the process of restoring the Intervale land, the Intervale Center will be responsible for cover cropping newly acquired fields for the first 3 years or until management is assumed by a farmer(s). Farmers must cover and rotate crops once they acquire land as a standard practice to maintain soil tilth and health.

Farmers must lease enough land for proper crop rotation. Intervale Center recommends for all non-perennial farmers an equal number of acres in cover crops as in cash crops. A minimum of 2/3 tillable acreage in cash crop and 1/3 tillable acreage in cover crop is required. A winter cover crop on all parcels is required whenever possible. Lease agreements will be the same for cash crop and cover crop parcels.

Perennial crop farms do not need to maintain this ratio of cover crop land. However, farmers must rotate perennials when feasible. Perennial crops require extra attention to under-sowing and compost applications. Practicing interplanting and companion planting is required to avoid a monoculture. After moving perennials, different crops must be grown or a cover crop planted in the interim. Any farmer(s) that require an exemption from these protocols must do so in writing. The Land Committee will review requests on a case-by-case basis.

2. Compost Application.

Organic matter such as compost is a valuable addition to the Intervale soils where the percentage of organic matter is low. Annual soil tests, taken in the fall by farms, will be used as a guide to determine the compost needs for each field. Proper compost application and soil management is the responsibility of each farm.

Farmers must spread compost shortly before planting in a field or over cover crops. Once applied, farmers need to manage their fields properly to conserve nutrients and organic matter. Compost may not be applied between December 15 and April 1. It is acceptable to apply organic mulches, which may include partially composted materials (not including manures), at any time.

3. Weed Management

Preventing weeds from reseeding and regenerating is essential to organic farm management. Acceptable means of controlling weeds are as follows: mulching, mowing, hoeing, cultivating and torching with flame weeders. Farmers may not use chemical substances to control weeds unless approved for organic use by VOF. Farmers are responsible for making regular field inspections for

weed growth. Fields, field edges, roadsides and around buildings are required to be regularly maintained. Areas determined mismanaged by Intervale Center staff will be subject to a written complaint submitted to the Land Committee.

4. Insect Management

Insect management requires attracting and encouraging beneficial insect populations as a means to balance populations of insect pests. Farmers are required to understand current organic methods of control. They should be versed in IPM monitoring techniques such as scouting. All farmers must work cooperatively and with Intervale to discourage pests.

Chemical pesticides that are not approved and regulated by VOF are not allowed. If new organic products appear on the market that VOF has not certified, the farmer(s) must present the pesticide to VOF for review. If VOF approves the pesticide, the farmer(s) must also receive approval of the Land Committee before using it in the Intervale.

Farmers must keep records of all pest controls in a log from year to year. This log is subject to inspection by Intervale Center staff. The Intervale may request this information for annual reporting.

5. Disease Management

The Intervale Center does not allow the use of chemicals, fungicides, or bactericides in Intervale operated land. Acceptable controls include: crop rotation, VOF approved organic fungicides, diseased plant removal and disposal, tool sanitation, restriction of foot traffic, cleanliness, black plastic mulch use and/or drip irrigation or watering at ground level.

Farmers need to be familiar with plant diseases and be able to identify them when they appear. Resources for plant disease identification are available through Intervale staff, other farmers, VT Department of Agriculture, UVM Diagnostic Lab, outside labs and textbooks. Farmers must keep records of disease infections and controls to provide for the Intervale Center in annual reports.

6. Irrigation

Water is available from the drilled well near the pumphouse, the drilled well in the home garden area, a temporary pump at the river and from natural precipitation. Hauling water from a source outside the Intervale is acceptable as long as it comes from an approved and tested source. Intervale Center staff will conduct water tests annually on all water sources.

Intervale is responsible for making sure all wells and water sources are operable and set up to accommodate main line hook ups. If mainline equipment is not available on a given field, the Intervale and the Farm will reach an agreement to accommodate water needs. Farmers must present irrigation needs to Intervale Center staff. The Intervale Center will devise an operating schedule based on the needs of every farm. Each farm is responsible for maintenance on their main line from pump to field.

7. Testing

Farmers must submit a yearly soil test during the Incubator years. Tests must include macronutrients, NPK, pH and CEC. Fields just coming into production must also include micronutrient testing. Yearly farmers must also test

for organic matter content as specified in the Compost Applications section of this document.

8. End of Year Reports

Farmers are required to submit an end of year report each year as part of this agreement. A form for this report will be submitted at the beginning of each growing season so that farmers will know in advance information that must be tracked.

9. Buildings and Improvements

As the Intervale is situated on a floodplain, many legal restrictions apply to construction in the Intervale. Any land improvements (moving or altering of soil, building construction, fence construction, growing or removal of trees or any activity that could impact the topography of the land) are subject to formal approval by the Intervale. Overnight camping or structures intended for those purposes are not allowed.

10. Soil Disturbance and Archeology at the Intervale Center

Prior to undertaking any activity on Intervale Center property that may cause soil disturbance greater than 18 inches (“soil disturbance activity”), farmers need to notify IC of the proposed location and nature of the activity.

- Notice must be given to the IC by September 15th for an activity to take place prior to May 31 of next season.
- Notice must be given to IC by February 1st for any activity from June 1 through the rest of the season.

11. Bee Hives

Farmers are allowed to manage or host bee hives on their leased plots but must ensure that the hives are registered with the state and must submit the registration with the Farm Report each year.

The Intervale Center’s Process

The IC provides notice to the Division for Historic Preservation (DHP). DHP uses the time between notice and proposed date of activity to review the activity to determine if an archaeological assessment is necessary and if so, to access the property so that DHP and/or its consultant may undertake and complete an archeological investigation or other archeological work (“archeological work”) regarding the potential archeological impacts of the proposed soil disturbance activity and any other potential alternative location for the proposed activity.

Upon receiving written notice from IC with respect to any soil disturbance activity pertaining to trellises, gates, temporary and permanent informational and directional signage, fence posts (involving installation of fewer than 50), emergency road repairs or planting of trees and bushes for cultivation (“Category 1 soil disturbance activity”), DHP shall complete any archeological work within 30 calendar days and provide any written report to IC

Intervale Center Livestock Protocols

April 18, 2014

The goal of this policy is to ensure the good health and humane treatment of animals kept on Intervale property and to provide a baseline standard from which everyone will operate.

All Intervale Center farms that produce livestock must be certifiable by organic standards set by the Vermont Organic Farmers (VOF) organization by the year 2013. Intervale Center farmers are further governed by the USDA's National Organic Program Final Rule. Farms that follow these standards, but decide not to be certified organic, must market and label animal products appropriately. The following livestock protocols are additional standards and exceptions for Intervale farms.

Requesting Livestock on your Farm. All farmers wishing to have livestock on their farm must submit a request to the Intervale Center, who will evaluate the request based on the policies below and based on available land and resources.

Animal Feed. All grain fed to livestock must be certified organic. Food scraps or food wastes are allowable if they meet the Vermont Agency of Agriculture Food and Markets guidelines (for swine regulations see Appendix A).

Food Storage. Properly packaged meats and eggs can be stored in shared coolers and freezers provided that they are contained so that there is no leakage from packages. Birds, eggs and other meat products must be labeled with product type, farm name, address and telephone number.

Buildings and Improvements. As the Intervale Center is situated on a flood plain, many legal restrictions apply to construction in the Intervale. Any land improvements are subject to formal approval by the Intervale Center.

Liability. Farmers who have livestock are responsible for any damage that livestock might cause to Intervale Center property, other farmers' crops, and any other damage caused by livestock. Payment must be made within 2 weeks of damage.

If a livestock operation becomes a nuisance to IC or farmers' property, the Intervale Center reserves the right to terminate lease agreements for the safety of the community.

Livestock Emergency Flood Plan

Each year there is a serious risk of land being flooding at the Intervale. To ensure the safety of livestock, any farm raising livestock must create an Emergency Flood plan with the IC Land Manager and submit it in writing to Farms Program staff. The plan must specify where the animals will go in case of a major flood event, how they will be moved, how they will be accessed, and how they will be fed and watered in that area.

Dispute Resolution. As specified in the Farms Program Manual, our dispute resolution policy is as follows. The Intervale Center staff and participating farmers agree to mediate all problems with one another through face to face meetings. If an agreement cannot be reached, the individual must provide a written notification of the unresolved conflict to the other parties involved and cc: Farms Program Staff and IC Executive Director. This notification should occur within 15 days of the meeting. The Intervale Center will provide a trained facilitator/mediator to attempt to resolve the conflict. The parties involved will be financially responsible for the facilitator/mediator.

The mediator will provide a written summary of conflict to IC staff. If mediation fails, the written summary will be forwarded to the Land Manager and the Executive Director who will work together to make the final determination. The Land Manager and the Executive Director will attempt to come to consensus in all decisions, but if that fails, disputes will be presented to the Land Committee for final decision.

Additional Resources. The regulatory texts of the National Organic Program standards are available on the USDA's National Organic Program website, <http://www.ams.usda.gov/nop>. A slightly more readable summary of standards can be found on the NOFA VT website: <http://www.nofavt.org>.

Appendix A

Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food, and Markets: Policy on Swine Garbage Feeding

Revised April 1, 2013

Background

Vermont state statutes do not allow the feeding of prohibited food waste to swine or the supplying of the waste itself to others for the purpose of feeding to swine. Prohibited food waste is defined in 6 V.S.A. § 1671 as all waste material derived from the meat of any animal (including fish and poultry) and refuse of any character that has been associated (handling, preparation, cooking, disposal, or consumption) with meat and meat products. The purpose of this law is to prevent the introduction into Vermont of economically devastating animal diseases transmitted through this practice, with the Foot and Mouth Disease outbreak in the United Kingdom serving as an example of how this can occur. This guidance document was developed based on input from the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food, and Markets' (VAAFMM) State and Assistant State Veterinarian and Meat Inspection Program managers, in consultation with USDA-APHIS-VS' Veterinary Medical Officer and Animal Health Technician. The development of this document in support of existing statute was deemed necessary based on reports of noncompliance detected during VAAFMM retail inspections and USDA site inspections, as well as an increasing number of inquiries fielded from swine producers and recyclers in anticipation

of implementation of Act 148.

High-Risk Feed Sources

The determination if organic waste (such as produce, bread products, certain dairy products) is acceptable to collect and feed to swine depends on the nature of the brick and mortar establishment that would be providing the waste. Any establishment where meat (cooked or raw) is present or could be present is considered a high-risk source. Examples of high-risk sources include grocery stores, cafeterias, and bakeries. Bakeries are considered to be a high-risk source as they often serve sandwiches or pastries containing meat. Contamination can occur in grocery stores and cafeterias through the cross contamination by workers who handle meat and then handle produce, dairy, or bakery products or by the placement of meat-containing products in containers/barrels with non-prohibited waste, such as produce. Once a product has been contacted by meat, it is considered to be contaminated; removal of the meat does not remove the contamination that has already occurred.

The Agency of Agriculture strongly recommends that these types of establishments do not provide organic waste to farmers if it will subsequently be provided to pigs as a feed source. Stores that do provide such material should have policies and protocols in place that prevent contamination and they should be in communication with the Vermont Agency of Agriculture for review of the prevention practices. Stores should contact the Animal Health Section of the Agency at 802-8282-2421.

Other Feed Sources

As the law allows the feeding of processed dairy products to swine, it would be acceptable provide this type of waste, including pasteurized and unpasteurized whey. It is also acceptable to provide bread products from a bread manufacturer's outlet.

Best Practices

VAAFM asks that farmers who feed waste to swine maintain an awareness of the statute and ensure that they do not feed their pigs meat or meat products, waste that contains meat or meat products, or waste that has been contaminated by meat or meat products. VAAFM asks that facilities that provide organic waste to producers ensure they are not providing contaminated materials to producers who feed waste to swine as they are violating 6 VSA 1671 and are subject to administrative penalties. Please communicate with individuals who source organic waste from your establishment to ensure compliance with the statute.

Compliance and Enforcement

VAAFM is charged with administration and enforcement of the provisions of this chapter, and is authorized to adopt and enforce all rules and regulations it deems necessary to carry out the purposes of this chapter. At the time of this writing, the Agency has not adopted rules on this practice; as a result, all guidance language may be found in the applicable portions of 6 V.S.A. VAAFM is authorized to cooperate with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), which has compliance and enforcement responsibilities for this practice due to the Swine Health Protection Act. In all instances,

USDA enforcement parallels state statute so there is variability in allowed practices between states. For more information or if you have questions, please call the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food, and Markets at (802) 828-2421.

Statutory References

Title 6 Chapter 113 Feeding Prohibited Food Waste to Swine

§ 1671. Definition

For the purpose of this chapter, "prohibited food waste" means all waste material derived in whole or in part from the meat of any animal (including fish and poultry) or other animal material, other than processed dairy products, and other refuse of any character whatsoever that has been associated with any such material, resulting from the handling, preparation, cooking, disposal, or consumption of food, except that such term shall not include waste from ordinary household operations which is fed directly to swine raised exclusively for the use in the household of the owner of the swine by members of the household and nonpaying guests and employees. (Amended 2003, No. 37, § 4.)

§ 1672. Feeding of prohibited food waste

No person shall feed prohibited food waste to swine or supply prohibited food waste to others for the purpose of feeding it to swine. (Amended 1989, No. 256 (Adj. Sess.), § 10(a), eff. Jan. 1, 1991; 2003, No. 37, § 4.)

§ 1675. Inspection and investigation; records

Any authorized representative of the Vermont agency of agriculture, food and markets or United States Department of Agriculture is authorized to enter at reasonable times upon any private or public property for the purpose of inspecting and investigating the feeding of prohibited food waste to swine. (Amended 1989, No. 256 (Adj. Sess.), § 10(a), eff. Jan. 1, 1991; 2003, No. 37, § 4; No. 42, § 2, eff. May 27, 2003.)

§ 1677. Penalties

A person who violates any of the provisions of, or who fails to perform any duty imposed by this chapter, or who violates any rule or regulation adopted hereunder shall be fined not less than \$10.00 nor more than \$100.00 for each offense. Each day upon which such violation occurs constitutes a separate offense. In addition thereto, such person may be enjoined from further violation. The secretary may also seek administrative penalties under section 15 of this title for violations of this chapter. (Amended 2003, No. 37, § 4; No. 42, § 2, eff. May 27, 2003.)

2017 Land and Infrastructure Rental Rates

Item	Annual Fee for Mentor Farms	Annual Fee for Incubator Farms (yr 1-3)	Unit of measurement
Land	\$210	\$168	Per Acre
Water Access (if using well water)	\$285	\$228	Per Meter
Water Rate (if using well water)	0.0051	.0051	Per Gallon
Land Management Fee	\$775	\$620	Per Farm
Propane	Market rate	Market rate	
Greenhouse Lot (tenant pays for installation of electricity, gas, and water. IC pays for water access and water per gallon)	\$400	\$320	Per Lot
Cooler Pallets in IC owned cooler	\$320	\$256	Per Year
Hay Barn Basement	\$9.50	\$7.60	Square Foot
Farmer Barn Loft Space (May-Oct, 1/2 bay minimum)	\$430/bay	\$344/bay	Bay = roughly 1/3 loft
Farmer Barn Access Fee (Wash Station Access)	\$310	\$248	Per Farm
Farmer-Owned Cooler space (for the installation of farmer-owned coolers & assoc. costs)	\$310	\$248	Per year
Corn Crib	\$330	\$264	Per Year
Bunker	\$115	\$92	Per Year
Metal Barn	\$170	\$136	Per Year
Food Hub Cooler Pallet	\$75	\$75	Per month