About 90% of Vermont’s total energy consumption is generated from non-renewable energy sources. Town energy committees, utilities, regional planning commissions, renewable energy businesses, nonprofits, state government, and many other stakeholders are interested in knowing how much renewable energy Vermont could produce. Historically, information on existing and potential renewable energy generation has been located in dozens of places, making it very difficult for Vermonters to accurately assess renewable energy potential.

To learn more about the Renewable Energy Atlas of Vermont, contact Scott Sawyer, scott@vsjf.org.

Consumers are increasingly asking questions about where the forest products they buy come from and how they are made. Many Vermont wood products companies are shifting their practices to take advantage of the emerging demand for sustainably managed products from sustainably harvested forests. At the same time, land ownership patterns in Vermont create challenges for aggregating a lumber supply for wood manufacturers participating lumber mill and wood manufacturing plant, as a result of this pilot project. One wood manufacturing plant has developed a line of Vermont-grown, FSC certified furniture and is marketing the line with this local forest-to-finished product story.

To learn more about the Harvest for Use Initiative, contact Ellen Kahler, ellen@vsjf.org.

About 90% of Vermont’s total energy consumption is generated from non-renewable energy sources. Town energy committees, utilities, regional planning commissions, renewable energy businesses, nonprofits, state government, and many other stakeholders are interested in knowing how much renewable energy Vermont could produce. Historically, information on existing and potential renewable energy generation has been located in dozens of places, making it very difficult for Vermonters to accurately assess renewable energy potential.

To learn more about the Renewable Energy Atlas of Vermont, contact Scott Sawyer, scott@vsjf.org.

Consumers are increasingly asking questions about where the forest products they buy come from and how they are made. Many Vermont wood products companies are shifting their practices to take advantage of the emerging demand for sustainably managed products from sustainably harvested forests. At the same time, land ownership patterns in Vermont create challenges for aggregating a lumber supply for wood manufacturers participating lumber mill and wood manufacturing plant, as a result of this pilot project. One wood manufacturing plant has developed a line of Vermont-grown, FSC certified furniture and is marketing the line with this local forest-to-finished product story.

To learn more about the Harvest for Use Initiative, contact Ellen Kahler, ellen@vsjf.org.

About 90% of Vermont’s total energy consumption is generated from non-renewable energy sources. Town energy committees, utilities, regional planning commissions, renewable energy businesses, nonprofits, state government, and many other stakeholders are interested in knowing how much renewable energy Vermont could produce. Historically, information on existing and potential renewable energy generation has been located in dozens of places, making it very difficult for Vermonters to accurately assess renewable energy potential.

To learn more about the Renewable Energy Atlas of Vermont, contact Scott Sawyer, scott@vsjf.org.

Consumers are increasingly asking questions about where the forest products they buy come from and how they are made. Many Vermont wood products companies are shifting their practices to take advantage of the emerging demand for sustainably managed products from sustainably harvested forests. At the same time, land ownership patterns in Vermont create challenges for aggregating a lumber supply for wood manufacturers participating lumber mill and wood manufacturing plant, as a result of this pilot project. One wood manufacturing plant has developed a line of Vermont-grown, FSC certified furniture and is marketing the line with this local forest-to-finished product story.

To learn more about the Harvest for Use Initiative, contact Ellen Kahler, ellen@vsjf.org.

About 90% of Vermont’s total energy consumption is generated from non-renewable energy sources. Town energy committees, utilities, regional planning commissions, renewable energy businesses, nonprofits, state government, and many other stakeholders are interested in knowing how much renewable energy Vermont could produce. Historically, information on existing and potential renewable energy generation has been located in dozens of places, making it very difficult for Vermonters to accurately assess renewable energy potential.

To learn more about the Renewable Energy Atlas of Vermont, contact Scott Sawyer, scott@vsjf.org.

Consumers are increasingly asking questions about where the forest products they buy come from and how they are made. Many Vermont wood products companies are shifting their practices to take advantage of the emerging demand for sustainably managed products from sustainably harvested forests. At the same time, land ownership patterns in Vermont create challenges for aggregating a lumber supply for wood manufacturers participating lumber mill and wood manufacturing plant, as a result of this pilot project. One wood manufacturing plant has developed a line of Vermont-grown, FSC certified furniture and is marketing the line with this local forest-to-finished product story.

To learn more about the Harvest for Use Initiative, contact Ellen Kahler, ellen@vsjf.org.

About 90% of Vermont’s total energy consumption is generated from non-renewable energy sources. Town energy committees, utilities, regional planning commissions, renewable energy businesses, nonprofits, state government, and many other stakeholders are interested in knowing how much renewable energy Vermont could produce. Historically, information on existing and potential renewable energy generation has been located in dozens of places, making it very difficult for Vermonters to accurately assess renewable energy potential.

To learn more about the Renewable Energy Atlas of Vermont, contact Scott Sawyer, scott@vsjf.org.

Consumers are increasingly asking questions about where the forest products they buy come from and how they are made. Many Vermont wood products companies are shifting their practices to take advantage of the emerging demand for sustainably managed products from sustainably harvested forests. At the same time, land ownership patterns in Vermont create challenges for aggregating a lumber supply for wood manufacturers participating lumber mill and wood manufacturing plant, as a result of this pilot project. One wood manufacturing plant has developed a line of Vermont-grown, FSC certified furniture and is marketing the line with this local forest-to-finished product story.

To learn more about the Harvest for Use Initiative, contact Ellen Kahler, ellen@vsjf.org.
Vermont’s food system is critical to our economy, identity, quality of life, and sustainability. Jobs throughout the entire food system represent 18.8% (or $5,581) of all private sector jobs and are connected to 13.2% (or 10,974) of all private businesses. Retail food purchases generated over $2 billion in sales in 2008. When measured by employment and gross state product, food manufacturing is the second-largest manufacturing industry in Vermont. However, a number of recurring issues, gaps, barriers, and emerging problems, have affected our food system, including the loss of dairy farms, rising energy and feed costs, the volatility of commodity markets.

In May 2009 the Legislature tasked VSJF with crafting a strategic plan to increase economic development in Vermont’s food system, create jobs in the food and farm economy, and improve access to healthy local foods. Over the last 18 months, VSJF staff and researchers conducted a statewide public input process that involved over 1,200 Vermonters to develop the F2P Strategic Plan. A $200,000 investment from Act S-4 (2009) and Act 78 (2010) leveraged an additional $220,000 in other state, federal and private foundation support.

The F2P Strategic Plan reviews current conditions and opportunities in Vermont’s food system and presents 33 goals and hundreds of strategies intended to fortify and coordinate all elements of the food system for all types of markets. Vermont’s major agricultural and food product output totaled $2.7 billion in 2007, the latest year of the Census of Agriculture. We estimate that the direct economic impact of just a 5% increase in farming and food manufacturing in Vermont would generate $135 million in annual output.

Agriculture. We estimate that the direct economic impact of just a 5% increase in farming and food manufacturing in Vermont would generate $135 million in annual output. In 2010, VSJF leveraged $500,000 in federal appropriations through the Office of U.S. Senator Leahy, to secure an additional $1.1 million in private equity to capitalize the new Flex Fund. With $1.6 million in committed capital, we are well on our way to reaching our goal of raising a total of $4 million to fully capitalize the Flex Fund.

Companies in rural areas like Vermont tend to be smaller and work on a less-than-global scale, offering a return on investment that does not always meet venture capital levels. These rural companies may need a form of “equity” to fuel growth but need it in lesser amounts and perhaps at lower returns than traditional venture capital requires. The VSJF Flexible Capital Fund L3C is the first of its kind in Vermont to focus on the risk capital needs of Vermont’s green economy businesses. These businesses need equity-like financing, they just need it in lesser amounts and at a lower return than traditional equity investors are willing to provide. By using royalty financing and subordinated debt, combined with technical assistance, at a Vermont scale, the Flex Fund hopes to encourage more lenders and investors to consider royalty financing as a viable instrument for financing growth stage businesses with a gap in their financing packages.

The Flex Fund will provide $100,000 - $300,000 in mezzanine financing (subordinated debt, royalty financing and/or warrants) to growth stage businesses in the renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, sustainable forestry, green technologies, and waste management sectors.

To learn more about the F2P Strategic Plan, contact farm2plate@vsjf.org.

To learn more about the Flex Fund, contact Janice St. Onge at flexfund@vsjf.org.

To learn more about the VBI, contact Netaka White, netaka@vsjf.org.

Vermont farmers spent nearly $33 million on petroleum and over $144 million for animal feed in 2007, the last year of the Census of Agriculture. About 54% of Vermont’s total energy consumption comes from petroleum, and well over $2 billion leaves the state for petroleum purchases. Our dependence on petroleum makes us all vulnerable to price increases and geopolitical events, while rising farm input costs are hurting our farmers. Through the Vermont Biofuels Initiative (funded by the U.S. Department of Energy secured by U.S. Senator Patrick Leahy) VSJF provides grants, contracts, and technical assistance to support the development of a biomass-to-biofuels industry in Vermont that uses oilseeds (e.g., sunflower, soybean and canola), microalgae, and biomass such as bulk wood pellets and perennial grasses, for fuel, feed, food and fertilizer.

VBI activities and outcomes of our local production for local use model, in FY10 included:

- Over $62,000 in grant making and contracts supporting 2 new biodiesel and offset blending facilities and 18 new bioenergy research and development projects to determine best practice for production of oilseed crops, perennial grass biomass crops, and microalgae as feedstock fuels.
- Improvements to on-farm oil and fuel quality and stability
- Total VBI expenditures having direct or indirect impacts on 32 jobs, FY10, and 228 jobs anticipated in FY11.
- More than 340 acres planted in oilseeds and over 126 tons of livestock feed and 1,500 gallons of biodiesel produced for use on Vermont farms.

Using the new VSJF Oilseed Profit/Loss Calculator, the costs to produce biodiesel and meal oil (for livestock feed or organic fertilizer) on five Vermont farms averaged $2.50 per gallon and $269/hm respectively. Ongoing efforts to improve practices will lead to reduced costs in the future.

To learn more about VBI, contact Netaka White, netaka@vsjf.org.

Grantee Profile: Carbon Harvest Energy

The Brattleboro landfill is the home to Carbon Harvest Energy’s (CHe) first landfill gas-to-energy project. On a crisp October morning the CHe owners, Don McCormick and his wife Kim Locke, introduced a wide-ranging group of business, government, and NGO leaders to the CHe Brattleboro project. The event culminated when Senator Patrick Leahy “threw the switch” on the facility, starting the generators that would consume the landfill (methane) gas to make electricity.

The Vermont Biofuels Initiative provided a grant to CHe to conduct research on microalgae that will one day consume the emissions (and the carbon dioxide they contain) from the gas-fired electric generators. Over the next few years, CHe’s Brattleboro facility will construct a greenhouse and aquaculture fish farm, producing tons of vegetables and fish protein annually for local distributors, including the Vermont Food Bank. The algae, which will feed on wastewater nutrients from the fish farm, and the heat and exhaust from the generators, will be harvested for its high oil content. A variety of value added products are in store, from omega rich foods and supplements, to fish feed, soil amendments, and bioenergy feedstocks.

Total VBI Funding Awarded: $234,515