

Media Relations

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N.H. Farm to School Receives Funding for State Gleaning Work



N.H. Farm to School, housed at the Sustainability Institute at UNH, received New Hampshire Charitable Foundation funding to bring farms and volunteers together to glean unused produce from local farms to donate to state food banks, public schools and others in need. Credit: N.H. Farm to School.

DURHAM, N.H. – A grant to New Hampshire Farm to School, housed in the Sustainability Institute at the University of New Hampshire, will facilitate an unusual initiative aimed at reducing food waste and bringing fresh, local produce to those in need. The grant from the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation, for more than \$38,000, will support gleaning, the collection of leftover crops from farmers' fields.

With roots in the Bible, gleaning involves picking produce from farmers' fields after the fields have been commercially harvested or on fields where it is not economically profitable to harvest. With this grant, N.H. Farm to School will coordinate the state's first regional gleaning networks to harvest and gather fresh produce from New Hampshire farms and distribute it to those in need.

"Gleaning is a great way to engage community members in getting local food to those in need," says NH Farm to School coordinator Stacey Purslow. "It provides fresh, nutritious food to organizations that often lack the resources to serve and distribute anything other than processed and packaged foods." Last year, the state's

only organized gleaning effort, the Veggie Volunteers coordinated by Carroll County Cooperative Extension, gleaned nearly 12,000 pounds of produce from one farm.

N.H. Farm to School will conduct an informational workshop for potential participants (farmers, volunteer gleaners, and potential recipients), provide technical assistance and support for gleaning groups, and track the amount of food gleaned and distributed and the participation of volunteers. At least four new community-based gleaning groups will be in operation in the state by the end of 2013, with N.H. public schools, food pantries, and the N.H. Food bank receiving the fresh produce that is gleaned.

Volunteer gleaners will come from church groups, students who need community activity hours, summer campers, UNH Cooperative Extension Master Gardeners, parents and their homeschooled children, college and university student groups, retirees, and other community groups and non-profits.

N.H. Farm to School is a statewide program housed at the Sustainability Institute at UNH that connects N.H. farms and schools. Farm to school connections enable schools to serve healthy, locally grown foods in their cafeterias, integrate farms, food, and nutrition into their curriculum, and explore food and agriculture-based learning opportunities. Learn more at www.nhfarmtoschool.org.

Such sustainable food system work is a key component of the Sustainability Institute at UNH. Sustainability is a core value of UNH, shaping the university's culture, informing its behavior, and guiding its work. As a nationally recognized leader, the Sustainability Institute acts as convener, cultivator and champion of sustainability on campus, in the state and region, and around the world. Learn more at www.sustainableunh.unh.edu.

The University of New Hampshire, founded in 1866, is a world-class public research university with the feel of a New England liberal arts college. A land, sea and space-grant university, UNH is the state's flagship public institution, enrolling 11,800 undergraduate and 2,400 graduate students.

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Photograph available to download:

<http://www.unh.edu/news/releases/2013/mar/gleaning.jpg>

Caption: N.H. Farm to School, housed at the Sustainability Institute at UNH, received New Hampshire Charitable Foundation funding to bring farms and volunteers together to glean unused produce from local farms to donate to state food banks, public schools and others in need.

Credit: N.H. Farm to School

Media Contact: [Sara M. Cleaves](mailto:Sara.M.Cleaves@unh.edu) | 603-862-0172 | UNH Sustainability Institute

Secondary Contact: [Beth Potier](mailto:Beth.Potier@unh.edu) | 603-862-1566 | UNH Media Relations | [@unhnews](https://twitter.com/unhnews)

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