

# CHARLOTTE AGRICULTURAL LANDSCAPE STUDY 2021

## KEY FINDINGS

A project of the Charlotte Land Trust. The complete report is available at <https://www.charlottelandtrust.org>

### 1 DIVERSIFICATION

Charlotte has an increasing range of farm enterprises selling a wide variety of crops and value-added products. Vegetables, fruits, grains, honey, maple syrup, eggs, and flowers are part of the mix. Value-added products, such as wine and flour, are helping to increase farm income.

### 2 HOUSING

Charlotte's high property values and lack of affordable housing are impediments for farms. Farmers noted that finding affordable housing for themselves and their laborers was difficult.

### 3 FARMING METHODS

A large percentage of Charlotte farms are using organic methods, as well as innovative techniques for soil health and nutrient management. Many Charlotte farmers now use hoop-houses and/or greenhouses to improve productivity or lengthen the growing season.



### 4 NETWORKING

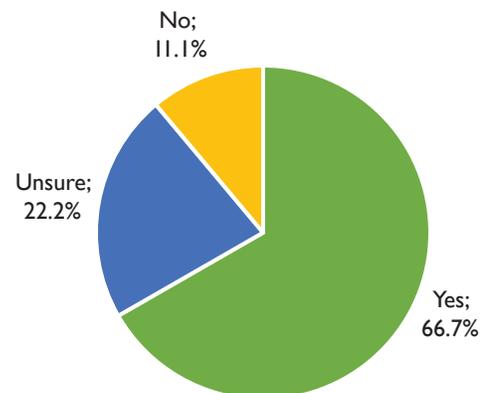
There is a strong farmer-to-farmer support network in Charlotte. In addition to sources such as the Extension Service and other state and local sources, farmers value the support they receive from their peers. New farmers in town noted that the strong network was a major factor in attracting them to Charlotte.

### 5 AGRITOURISM

Agritourism — such as educational experiences, events, or recreation — is being used to broaden outreach and business. New state and local regulations have provided more flexibility, but there is still some confusion among farmers about what is allowed and how to maneuver the permit process. Farmers noted some conflict with neighbors over aspects of agritourism and retail sales.

### 6 CONSERVATION

Conservation is an essential tool for the continued vitality of farming in Charlotte. 66% of respondents said that conservation helped make their farm viable. Farmers noted that conservation was important in the transition plans of their farms to the next owners.



Land Conservation Enabling Financial Viability (N=18)

## 7 TRANSITIONING FROM DAIRY

There were 11 dairy farms in Charlotte in 2017, but only 2 today. Farms raising meat animals, primarily beef, have become a leading type as dairy has diminished. This trend has implications not only for the farm economy, but also the landscape as dairy farms typically use large acreage. Beef and hay production are filling that gap.

## 8 DIRECT SALES

Direct-to-consumer sales are important, with at least 19 Charlotte farms providing this channel. Farmstands, CSA's, and similar outlets help make local farms more financially viable. This was especially important during Covid, when farmers lost income from wholesale accounts with stores and restaurants.

### Farms & Agricultural Operations in the Town of Charlotte

- Roads
- - - Town Boundary
- ▭ Parcel Boundaries
- Farm Locations
- Railroads
- Streams
- Easement with Vermont Land Trust, Charlotte Land Trust, Lake Champlain Land Trust, VRC, or WICB
- Town Conservation Agreement
- Conservation easements with VLT and the Town
- Town owned land with VLT easement
- VLT owned land
- Open Space Agreement with the Town
- Town owned land
- State owned land
- The Nature Conservancy
- Whalley Woods Natural Area - Town Owned
- Pease Mountain Natural Area - Town/LVM



Conserved and open space data provided by Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission

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