



*A local voice at the national table*

## 2010 Annual Report

### From the President

**A** Farmers Union in New England? A new voice for New England farmers and fishermen in Washington, DC? What would it take to develop an organization for six New England states that would be relevant to the issues facing our farmers and fishermen? How would a New England Farmers Union chapter fit into the Farmers Union family, 108 years old and strong in the Midwest and Plains states? Could Farmers Union embrace fishermen along with family farmers? What could Farmers Union do for dairy farmers who are the anchor tenants for New England agriculture? And what could Farmers Union offer consumers in New England who are passionate about local and regional food?

First we needed money to build. In December 2009, the National Farmers Union Board of Directors stepped up to that challenge. Board members voted to invest cash and business development in New England over the next five years. This decision made it possible for the New England Farmers Union Board of Directors to plan for a future, and we started with a strategic plan and budget for 2010 to launch four areas simultaneously: organizational, membership, program and fund development.

We posted job descriptions, and by late March had hired a talented team. By June we had established regular, online and electronic communication with members through the Internet, Facebook and Constant Contact; we were issuing regular press releases and op ed articles to media in New England; and we had submitted applications to the IRS for the incorporation of two organizations - the New England Farmers Union trade association, and the NEFU Education Foundation, a tax exempt organization.

Members? We started 2010 with 863 members. They included cranberry growers, hook fishermen, Organic Valley dairy farmers, and individuals. We had no organizational members, no corporate sponsors. At the time of this report, we have 1,305 members, 22 organizational members, and eight corporate sponsors. See listings elsewhere in this report for our supporters and members. Thank you.

Program development? When we started 2010, NEFU had no programs. By year's end, we had launched a cooperative education project for New England community colleges. We presented modules about cooperatives as a viable business

model to students enrolled in sustainable agriculture and natural resources programs. Co-ops can benefit farmers and fishermen who want to pool resources. On the energy front, we are leading workshops in New Hampshire on the security and economic development benefits of renewable energy. Together with the Neighboring Food Co-ops Association, we brought National Farmers Union personnel to seven food co-ops to talk about agriculture and fisheries policy, and we also hosted another 14 farm tours and events to review farm and food policy. We also began to develop a New England carbon trading program with a \$202,000 grant from the US Department of Agriculture. Our proposal was one of 18 in the US to be funded.

For 2011, we will conduct 10 co-op education modules in Massachusetts, Maine, Connecticut and Vermont colleges and universities. We will facilitate 19 focus groups with farmers and fishermen in six states to identify carbon sequestration practices that can be sold on a regional carbon market, we will continue to develop educational modules on cooperative education and energy, and we will launch a series of events in six states on the next Farm Bill.

These programs are in service to our mission, "A Local Voice at the National Table." New England farmers, fishermen and concerned citizens need a stronger voice in Washington. Our nation's policies for those who farm our lands, fish our waters, and for those who benefit from their labors, often bypass our region. Much is at stake in the next Congress which will write the 2012 Farm Bill. We lost many friends of agriculture and small family fisheries in the November election. We will have to work hard and work together to make the case that New England agriculture and fisheries are creating jobs and growing the economy. With your enthusiastic involvement, we will succeed.

On behalf of the Board of Directors of New England Farmers Union, I thank you for your investment in our beginnings. Next year, let's stretch our wings a little farther. The future of New England's farm and fishing economy depends on it.

Annie Cheatham, President  
December 15, 2010

**New England Farmers Union** *A local voice at the national table*

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[www.NewEnglandFarmersUnion.org](http://www.NewEnglandFarmersUnion.org)

## ***Dear New England Farmers Union members:***

Congratulations on holding your first annual convention. On behalf of everyone at National Farmers Union, I would like to personally acknowledge your committed leadership and commend you on the growth of your organization in the last year.

I know other Farmers Union states are looking at New England Farmers Union with envy and a hope to learn something from your growth and level of activity. You should be very proud.

National Farmers Union is pleased to serve as your voice on the national level and is proud to represent you in our nation's capital. We will continue to advocate for strong beginning farmer programs and a new dairy policy that emphasizes the importance and value of profitable family farms and more stable prices.

You have been leading the way with supporting initiatives like USDA's *Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food* and the *Farm 2 Fork* project. Educating consumers about where their food comes from is critical to our success. Thanks for your work in doing so. We look forward to learning from you about how to engage consumers in our work.

With the 2012 Farm Bill on the horizon, all of us involved in agriculture need to work together to protect programs vital to both New England and U.S. agriculture and fisheries. All of us at NFU look forward to working with you in the coming years as we build our organizations together.

Best wishes for a great and historic convention.

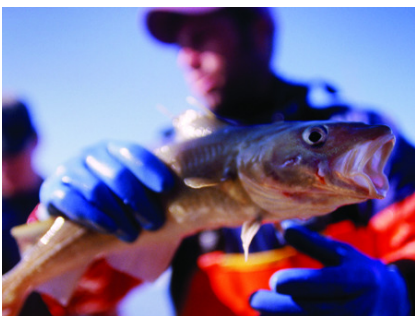
*Roger Johnson, President  
National Farmers Union*

## **Honoring Agriculture Champions in Congress**

New England Farmers Union (NEFU) has presented the 2010 NFU Golden Triangle Award to the following members of the New England delegation to the U.S. Congress:

- Senator Jeanne Shaheen, NH
- Rep. John Olver, MA
- Rep. Joe Courtney, CT
- Rep. Peter Welch, VT

The Golden Triangle, based on NFU's symbol - a triangle with "legislation" and "cooperation" forming the sides and "education" the base - is NFU's highest honor for government service. The award, given annually since 1988, is presented to members of Congress who have demonstrated outstanding leadership on issues affecting family farmers, ranchers and rural communities.



***"I was delighted to receive the Farmers Union Golden Triangle Award this year. Like so many Vermonters, the New England Farmers Union recognizes the importance of keeping our state's agricultural system economically viable, sustainable and locally-based. While Vermont's family farmers face great challenges, I believe that – working together – we can keep local agriculture strong in Vermont."***

*Congressman Peter Welch*

## NEFU Programs

In 2010 NEFU administered three programs: carbon crediting, cooperative education; and renewable energy education.

### ***Carbon Crediting***

NEFU began this program with a small grant from Farm Aid for education and outreach efforts in New England, with the goal of getting farmers signed up to NFU's carbon crediting program, and to develop crediting practices designed specifically for New England's agricultural acreage and sectors.

We then partnered with Winrock International to develop an NRCS Conservation Innovation Grant - which was ultimately funded - to develop carbon crediting practices that would also achieve concurrent production increases or cost savings for farmers in New England.

The project began in November and has three parts. NEFU will conduct outreach to New England utilities, colleges, and companies, follow up with meetings and presentations, and determine the potential market demand for a locally derived greenhouse gas offset that supports local farmers. We will then convene focus groups from seven major agricultural sectors in New England to identify practices that enhance competitiveness and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The most viable practices will be identified and existing application, verification, and certification protocols for each practice will be assessed.

### ***Cooperative Education***

With a Cooperative Education grant from the CHS foundation NEFU brought material introducing the cooperative business model to students in natural resources and agricultural fields at New England community colleges. NEFU contacted professors and department chairs at each of the 22 New England community colleges as well as four other regional institutions with details of the program. Five schools expressed initial interest and modules were developed for students in three classes at Mount Wachusett Community College, and one class in UNH's "ecogastronomy" double major. Modules for one of these classes were taught this fall, with the others scheduled for the spring semester. In 2011, NEFU will expand this program to agricultural vocational high schools and four-year colleges and universities with sustainable agriculture programs.

### ***Renewable Energy Education and Advocacy in NH***

The Energy Foundation worked with NFU to bring education and advocacy efforts on Climate and Renewable Energy to eight targeted states, one of

which was New Hampshire, where NEFU has spearheaded the project. The scope of work included scheduling and making presentations at New Hampshire venues on climate and renewable energy, and working with local media, all with the goal of raising public awareness and support for climate and energy policy. Three presentations have taken place this year and more are scheduled. NEFU also worked with NFU to broaden our scope of work to include underwriting on NHPR and e-communications to members of food co-ops, all guiding people to a web page on NEFU's site where more information and action steps can be found.

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***“If New England agriculture is to thrive, we need a progressive ally that effectively supports farmers on the local and the national level. That's why we're members of NEFU.”***

*Jim Gerritsen  
Wood Prairie Farm, Bridgewater Maine,  
NEFU Board of Advisors*

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## Setting Policy

An important task this year was to develop and assemble a comprehensive package of policy statements and positions into a single document not only to guide NEFU, but also to present a clear, public profile of the organization. The policy book will shape the future growth and influence of the organization as we address and promote state and federal policy issues important to the region's agriculture.

Creating a policy book from scratch presented a daunting but worthwhile challenge. The process enabled our young organization to engage our board, members and partners in a meaningful dialogue as we sorted through the myriad of issues facing farmers, fishermen, aquaculturalists, foresters and consumers across New England.

To help us get started, the Wisconsin Farmers Union (WFU) graciously shared their policy book. As a state chapter and one with an agricultural community not unlike our own, the WFU policy book provided us with a good example of the range of issues addressed at the chapter level. From a base of policy language on issues common to both regions, namely dairy, grazing and renewable energy, we then focused our energies on developing positions on issues of particular concern in New England, including fisheries, aquaculture, specialty crops, and agri-tourism. Developing our policy

book became not only an engagement opportunity with NEFU members, but also an organizing tool to reach out to allied organizations and potentially new affiliate members.

Many members requested copies of the draft document and responded with comments and suggestions that were integrated into the final version. Unveiled at our inaugural Annual Meeting on December 15, 2010, the NEFU Policy Book includes policy statements and positions covering agricultural products, including dairy, livestock, fisheries, aquaculture and forestry; management practices related to organic agriculture, animal welfare and husbandry and invasive species; government's role in agriculture from federal programs and regulations to state and local government relationships with agriculture; energy with a particular emphasis on renewable energy opportunities and agriculture's role in addressing climate change; international trade; cooperatives; land tenure; nutrition; economics and the family farm; and, the environment and the family farm.

As a working document to be reviewed and modified as issues and circumstances warrant, the NEFU Policy Book is an essential building block of the organization. It can be viewed on our website at [www.newenglandfarmersunion.org](http://www.newenglandfarmersunion.org).



***“Our New England farmers comprise our region’s food security and consumers must put forth the effort to support them in as many ways as possible, including giving them a voice in Washington. By joining NEFU, our cooperative’s 28,000 members can stay abreast of what’s happening and be responsive to the call for consumer input on issues critical to our farmers.”***

*Rosemary Fifield, Director, Education and Member Services Co-op Food Stores Hanover and Lebanon, NH; White River Junction, VT  
Founding Member, NEFU*

## Membership Report

2010 has been a year of tremendous growth for New England Farmers Union (NEFU) as we engaged in our first organized efforts to introduce New England farmers and consumers to the work of Farmers Union. We are fortunate to have the support of National Farmers Union (NFU), representing 200,000 members nationwide who are engaged in this important work.

Our membership, currently totaling 1,305 across all six New England States, has grown 50% since 2009. Individual Members include farmers, aspiring farmers, concerned consumers and students from our region. Organizational Members represent food co-operatives, community development corporations, buy local, renewable energy, and land preservation groups, among others. Affiliate Members represent organic dairy farmers, cranberry growers, fishermen, and food co-ops.

Together, this group of individuals and organizations with diverse interests and backgrounds has come together to help shape the policies that will guide New England Farmers Union's work over the coming years. It is the needs, the concerns, the voice of our membership that drives our work and defines our priorities. With our members' support, our local voice will be loud and strong at the national table.

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## Partnering with Co-ops

NEFU's commitment to the development of sustainable food production in New England has led to a natural partnership with the region's food co-ops. These institutions are creating strong and thriving relationships between their members, consumers, and local farmers, and we made it our goal to find ways to collaborate.

NEFU staff had numerous meetings with food co-op managers, creating strong relationships with ten food cooperatives that are now enthusiastic organizational members. "When I look at what our co-op is about, one of the top things we work for is providing access to healthy good food that is sourced in a way that is sustainable, as well as providing a diversity of products from farms," says Suzette Snow-Cobb from Franklin Community Cooperative, NEFU's first organizational food co-op member. "People in our co-op are

interested in how food is sourced, from farm to table, and they care about farmers' livelihood. Diversity of farms in our region is important to members of our co-op. NEFU works on helping with both."

Neighboring Food Cooperative Association (NFCA), a network of food co-ops committed to a shared vision, became an affiliate member of NEFU, connecting us to 22 food co-ops in western New England. NFCA member co-ops serve more than 80,000 passionate members that demonstrate a strong commitment to the local food economy, with purchases of over \$33 million in local products to date.

With the support of NFCA, member co-ops and their individual members, NEFU and our food co-op members have reached a number of milestones together:

- The creation of "Farmer's Share of the Co-op Dollar," a poster highlighting the gaps between retail prices of food and what farmers earn, and the value of co-ops in closing those gaps.
- A successful "Dairy Tour," a series of public events on dairy policy in August featuring National Farmers Union (NFU) Vice President of Government Relations, Chandler Goule.
- Involvement of members and staff from member food co-ops in a trip to Washington, DC for NFU's annual lobbying event.
- A 3-day tour by NFU Government Relations Representative, Brittany Jablonsky, for strategy sessions and meetings with food co-op members, farmers, farm advocates, and public health officials.
- Contributions by NFCA board, food co-op managers, and members to NEFU's first Policy Book, with significant work on policy language for cooperatives.

NEFU looks forward to continued collaboration with our food co-op allies. "I am looking forward to the partnership with NEFU," says Alice Rubin, General Manager of Willimantic (CT) Food Co-op. "It is important to be working with an organization that is involved in the politics of food, since food has never been more political than it is now."

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***“New England Farmers Union is an opportunity for the unique needs of New England family farmers to be heard by decision makers in the Northeast and in the halls of Washington.”***

*Noah Fulmer, Executive Director, Farm Fresh Rhode Island,  
NEFU Board of Advisors*

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<b>NEFU Financial Statement (unaudited) 2010 Through December 7</b>	
<b><u>INCOME</u></b>	
Beginning Balance January 1	\$ 10,000
Grant Income	\$ 168,000
Donations	\$ 21,000
Membership	\$ 23,900
Misc income	\$ 795
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$ 223,695</b>
<b><u>EXPENSES</u></b>	
Team Members, all contractors	\$ 131,000
Office	\$ 3,500
Supplies	\$ 3,000
Payment to NFU for members	\$ 4,750
Travel	\$ 6,000
Materials development, printing	\$ 3,000
Website and social marketing	\$ 4,000
Subscriptions, memberships, vendor fees, conventions.	\$ 2,200
Bank Fees	\$ 100
Board of Directors expenses	\$ 2,000
Insurance (liability and BOD)	\$ 1,000
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$ 160,950</b>
<b>INCOME-EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$ 62,745</b>

### **New England Farmers Union Board of Directors**

Annie Cheatham, President  
Ben Martens, Policy Analyst, Cape Cod Commercial Hook Fishermen Association, Treasurer  
Susan Phinney, Whole Foods Market, Secretary  
Cris Coffin, New England Director, American Farmland Trust  
Dorn Cox, Tuckaway Farm  
Erbin Crowell, Executive Director Neighboring Food Co-op Association  
Ida DeFrancesco, Joe DeFrancesco and Sons Farm  
Marge Kilkelly, Deputy Director, Council of State Governments, Dragonfly Cove Farm  
Steve Taylor, Taylor Farm, Inc.

### **New England Farmers Union Board of Advisors**

Noah Fulmer, Executive Director, Farm Fresh Rhode Island  
Jim Gerritsen, Wood Prairie Farm  
Jeff LaFleur, Executive Director, Cape Cod Cranberry Growers Association

## Founding Members of New England Farmers Union

Kalista Aird	Christine Corcoran	Kathleen Gorke	Mike McCusker	Judith Seelig
Do-han Allen	Dorn Cox	Mari Gottdiener	Cathryn	Lawrence Shearer
Peter Allen	Laurel Cox	Victoria Grahame	McDonough	Liz Sillin
Nina Antonetti	Erbin Crowell	Chip Hager	Michael Melcher	Josh Silver and
Susan Arends	Kyle Deaver	Ann Hallstein	Gregory Melnik	Nunia Mafi
Nancy August	Marydale DeBor	Jay Healy	Marion Miller	Lucas Sjostrom
Mollie Babize and	Ida DeFrancesco	Sarah Hewins	Maria Moreira	Michael Smith
Mary Quigley	Joanie Dickson and	Carol Hillman and	E. Morenon	Lockwood and Anne
Claire Bateman	Dave Hopkins	Bob Colnes	Barbara Niccoli-	Sprague
Rick Bean and Heather	Anne, Faith and	John Hoffman	Hiltz	Amanda and Mark
Damon	Peter Diemand	Scott Jackson	Bill Obear	St. Pierre
Pat Beck and Susan	Deborah Donaldson	Cynthia Jenkins	Tim and Noreen	Jennifer Stevens-
McQuaid	Andrew Draxler	Nicholas Jones and	O'Connell	Curwood and
D. Beck	Robert Eldredge	Margaret Christie	Joell and Mariah	Stephen Curwood
Sarah Belfort	Bobbie Emery	Virginia Kasinki	O'Malley	Brian Stone, Sr.
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Bertram	Mark and Jeanette	Charlie Kimball	Michael Petty and	M.A. Swedlund
Greg Bollard	Fellows	Jack Kittredge and	Valerie A. Tripp	Wendy Sweetser
Sue Bridge	Anders Ferguson	Julie Rawson	Susan Phinney	Andrea Szylvian
Matthew Burke	John Ferris	Ruth Kobell	Winton Pitcoff	Stephen Taylor
Richard Burke	Rosemary Fifield	Claire Kozower	Mary Clare Powell	Bob Wagner
Barton Byg	Jill Fitzsimmons	Laura Kramer	John Reinhardt	John Waite
Frank Carlson	Julia Freedgood	Stephen Kulik	Thomas Reynolds	Jessica Waters
John Carroll	Noah Fulmer	Paul Lacinski and	Marla Rhodes	Cameron Weimar
Warren	Lucinda Gallela	Amy Klippenstein	Ed Ritz	John and Marian
Chamberlain	Anne George	Jeff LaFleur	Bruce and Cynthia	Welch
Annie Cheatham	Kathleen George	David Lenson	Roberts	Dick Wollmar
Janet Clark and	John Gerber	Barbara Link	Ray and Pamela	Tom and Anne
Nort Salz	Jim Gerritsen	Sheila Lumi	Robinson	Yeomans
Jay Coburn	Robert Gibson and	Ed Maltby	Kathryn Ruhf	Betsy Yetter
Cris Coffin	Joseph Marquette	Michael Marotta	Tara Sad	Barbara Zheutlin
Dale Cole	Ann Gibson	Michele Marotta	William Sayre and	
Judith Colla	William and	Ben Martens	Lisa Bertoldi	
Dan Conlon	Constance Gillen	Kevin McAllister	Gary Schaefer and	
Jessica Cook	Steve Goodwin	Mary McClintock	Barbara Fingold	

## Organizational Members

Belfast Co-op Store (ME)	Hanover Consumer Cooperative Society (NH)	Rhode Island Center for Agriculture Promotion
Berkshire Co-op Market (MA)	Hunger Mountain Co-operative (VT)	and Education (RICAPE) (RI)
Brattleboro Food Co-op (VT)	Littleton Food Coop (NH)	River Valley Market (MA)
Concord Cooperative Market (NH)	Maine Dairy Industry Association (MDIA) (ME)	Rural Votes (MA)
Farm Fresh Rhode Island (RI)	New Entry Sustainable Farming Project (MA)	The Smithy (CT)
Franklin Community Cooperative, Inc. (MA)	Old Creamery Cooperative Inc. (MA)	Wild Oats Market (MA)
Green Start (NH)	Pioneer Gardens, Inc. (MA)	Willimantic Food Coop (CT)
	Real Pickles (MA)	

## Affiliate Members

Cape Cod Commercial Hook Fishermen's Association  
Cape Cod Cranberry Growers' Association  
Neighboring Food Co-op Association  
Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance  
Organic Valley

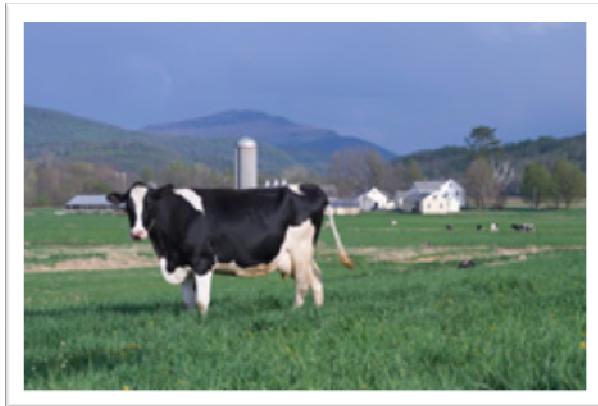
## Sponsors and Underwriters

Ben and Jerry's Homemade, Inc.  
Berkshire Co-op Market  
Bob-White Systems, Inc.  
Cabot Creamery Co-op, Inc.  
Country Folks  
Farm Credit East  
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National Farmers Union  
Stonyfield Farm, Inc.  
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***“I applaud the National Farmers Union’s innovative work to address the challenges and opportunities facing farmers across the country. I look forward to continuing to work with NFU to help shape a sustainable future for New England agriculture.”***

***Senator Jeanne Shaheen***



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*NEFU is an equal opportunity provider and employer.*