

Neighborly Farms Lives Up to Its Name

Neighborly Farms, Randolph

Traveling around the country roads near the Vermont Technical College in Orange County, you'll encounter a number of dairy farms and one of them is Neighborly, both in name and in practice. Rob and Linda Dimmick started Neighborly Farms, an organic dairy farm that's home to about fifty Holsteins, over twenty years ago, and Linda admits that, "after farming twenty years you think you have it all figured out, and then you realize that you don't know anything." It seems that at this point, one of the things that the Dimmicks have figured out is how to work with their neighboring farms.

Neighborly Farms clearly isn't the only farm in their area. Just down the road are other small farms, including Turkey Hill Farm and Fat Toad Farm, both of which have decided that they can benefit from working together. While it's not uncommon for farmers to help each other out during emergencies or when there are big chores to be done, these neighbors work together on a regular basis. A few years back, the farms got together and decided that they would all use the retail space at Neighborly Farms to sell their products. Rather than offering just their own cheese at their store, the Dimmicks also began offering goat milk, honey, soap and even caramel from other nearby farms. Today, the other farms have their own small stores as well, where they also sell the Dimmicks' cheese, and Linda says that when visitors stop at her farm, she sends them down the road to the other nearby farms.

This entire story is also part of the Turkey Hill Farm website on a page devoted to "Building Community," so it is clear that the tradition of farmers supporting one another is alive and well in Orange County.



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Student Work Benefits More Than Just GPAs

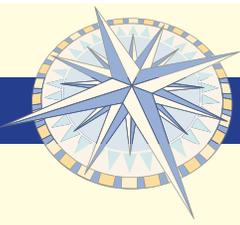
Vermont Technical College's Center for Sustainable Practices – Anemometer Loan Program and Farmers' Market and Hospital Collaboration, Randolph Center

The Vermont Technical College (VTC) recognizes that, as one of the largest business entities in the town of Randolph, it has a responsibility to contribute to its community. It does so by asking VTC students to put learning into practice to address real world issues.

The Vermont Anemometer Loan Program is one way in which the students at VTC gain experience while also benefitting the college's neighbors. Through this program, Vermont businesses, farmers and homeowners can request to borrow equipment from the college to determine whether wind power is a viable option for their property. In addition, they receive technical assistance from students to set up the instruments and to determine if the site is suitable for small-scale wind power. By the winter of 2010, the program had monitored twenty-five sites around the state. Donna Barlow Casey, the director of VTC's Center for Sustainable Practices (CSP), says that the school plans to expand the program. She says, "We often undertake



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projects on a small scale first and then determine what worked and didn't and how we could do it better." To this end, the school is striving to make the program a bit more user friendly while finding ways for the program to expand its scope.

Additionally, the CSP's Sustainable Agriculture division works both to provide local farmers with opportunities to sell their products and to provide the school's cafeteria and the local hospital with as much locally grown food as possible. Casey says, "We recognize that farms that sell a wider variety of products to a wider variety of people are more sustainable," so the school hosts a weekly farmers' market, giving area farms the opportunity to do just that. Gifford Hospital of Randolph also approached VTC for help in finding ways to use more local foods in their food services. The hope is that VTC's student-run farm actually will be able to provide some food both to the hospital and to the school's cafeteria. As the students learn to grow the food, they also learn some creative and helpful ways to distribute it that benefits their local community.

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Children are the Future for Fish and Game Club

Randolph Fish and Game Club – Conservation Camp Sponsorship, Randolph

The Randolph Fish and Game Club is the oldest continuously active club of its kind in Vermont, and, due to the support that the club offers to children, it's clear that it will continue to thrive for years to come. Each year the club sponsors a kids' fishing derby, it allows the children of adult members to be members of the club free of charge, it offers free hunter safety courses and it helps families to afford to send their kids to Green Mountain Conservation Camp.

The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department hosts the Green Mountain Conservation Camps each summer for children ages 12 to 16. These camps connect young people to the outdoors through activities including canoeing, fly fishing and spin casting, firearm safety, building bluebird boxes, hiking and more. Campers spend a week either on Buck Lake in Woodbury or at Kehoe Camp in Castleton. Members of the Randolph Fish and Game Club believe strongly in giving kids quality outdoor experiences, and each year they raise money to send kids to the conservation camps. They do so in some creative ways. Dale White, treasurer for Randolph Fish and Game, described a duck race raffle that the club organizes during Randolph's July 4th parade. Raffle participants purchase a numbered toy duck, and the duck that crosses the finish line in the river first, wins. Another camp scholarship fundraising event that was very successful was one where the prize was a beautiful cedar strip canoe donated by a craftsman from Greensboro.

White says, "As a club, we feel that every kid that wants to go to camp should have the opportunity to do so," and to his knowledge the club has never turned down any potential campers. He hopes that trend continues well into the future with creative fund raising and the kind generosity of the local community.



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