

Vermont Vegetable and Berry News February 23, 2016  
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## REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

(Benson) It's been a good winter for greens production. The December warmth boosted growth and made for more stockpiled January winter greens. We've seemingly moved beyond the extreme cold and toward the longer days we need for renewed growth. Plugs on the heated benches look great and we'll be transplanting next week. Our 52 week per year winter market is strong and growing. Winter sales have even begun to exceed summer sales some weeks. I suspected that would happen as the summer marketplace becomes more crowded and as folks realize that, amazingly, they can have greens every week of the year. It seems to take a year 'round market to do the best job of capturing and holding onto customers. What a great opportunity for local producers to enhance or expand winter production. Looking forward to the 2016 summer season. The conference in NEVFC Manchester and the VVBGA meeting in Fairlee were both exciting and inspiring so I have lots of hope and confidence about the year if you missed these the meetings the talks are posted at:

<http://www.newenglandvfc.org/> and  
<http://www.uvm.edu/vtvegandberry/VVBGAMeeting2016Presentations.html>

(Westminster West) Walking the muddy and frozen fields today to check out the garlic and other issues, I don't like we have now! Thankful for the snow cover we had for a while and wonder if this means an earlier spring? Happy we re-skinned almost all the greenhouses and installed new inflation motor; no more squealing and low pressure! Houses are nice and drum tight now, along with lower fuel prices, happy campers here! Still analyzing last year's numbers, as procrastination is my favorite winter sport, trying to sharpen my focus on profitability and trying to deal with the rising cost of labor. Looking at some new equipment, flammers, cultivators and trying to match those needs against my budget as not to overspend. It was a nice season of winter meetings, seeing all my old friends and fellow travelers on the farming path. We have many trays of seedlings up and transplanted, including tomatoes for grafting both for our use and other growers. Trying new soil germination mixes, including adding Essential Microbes (EM) and Rootshield along with Actinovate in the bulk mixing. Over the years we have reduced soil-borne diseases almost entirely by practicing good sanitation and the use of beneficial bacteria. But I hardly ever use a control to test these out, I should! A few new crops this year, a few new wholesale accounts, otherwise welcoming back the same old crew now and looking to getting back to a daily regime for the next 9 months! Happy spring to both the old familiar faces and all the new ones as well, good luck to us all!

(Jericho) High tunnel yields of winter greens are some of our best ever, and combined with our decreased winter workload from not having to move much snow and remay on a daily basis, we're happy for the mild weather (except those of us that ski). But we are wondering what the insect pressure will be like this spring. Finding ticks on the dog in February makes us think the other insects are likely having an easy time of it too: cucumber beetles, flea beetles, etc. Who knows what's waiting for us in the field margins. With new land acquired we're moving into some long-term field rotations to help build soil and break pest and disease cycles with multi-year perennial cover crops, having found over the years that short-term one season or partial season cover crops just don't do enough for soil building, though they help with soil maintaining.

(Argyle NY) Over the past month here at Pleasant Valley Farm there has been more regrowth in tunnels than we have ever seen in January and production/markets are better than previous two years. We have full supply of all the greens, including salad mix, even doing a little wholesale each week. We cut the first Salanova seedings on Sept. 1 and for the past three weeks they have wintered well and are supplying nicely while the regular salad mix lettuces are re-growing. The parsley bed has been a success with good weekly demand. Giant Italian and Jewel did well but now we can't get Jewel. Anyone else doing some? Varieties?

We have been doing greenhouse seedings of arugula, salad mix and mustards since Jan. 15 in strip trays and then transplanting the whole strips to the tunnels where old Asian greens etc. come out. This new system works well and is quicker to produce, though at this time of year go to direct seeding. Spinach has done well with only a little Cladosporium and crown mites, bo/F2 12 Tf1 0 0 1 12

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through any cold weather. Once we get past the

## BIO-FUNGICIDE / BIO-STIMULANT SURVEY

The Northwest Crops and Soils team from UVM Extension is preparing for the upcoming season of research trials. They need farmer input to better guide a trial on bio-fungicides and bio-stimulants. A bio-stimulant is a product applied to plants to stimulate natural processes, improve nutrient efficiency, and/or increase stress tolerance. A bio-fungicide is a plant or microbial-based product applied to plants to prevent or treat fungal damage. These products have been becoming more popular and the team would like to evaluate their efficacy in hops and cucurbit crops for downy and powdery mildew. Please take this very brief survey to help shape their research. Thank you! <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/bioapplication>

## RECALL AND TRACEABILITY WORKSHOP: March 11, Montpelier VT

Larger produce buyers, such as Whole Foods, are beginning to ask for more detailed recall plans as part of the Produce Traceability Initiative. This day-long workshop will include interactive exercises based on real produce outbreaks, the components and legal aspects of recall plans, discussion of different traceability systems, hands-on exercises to develop your own crisis management plan, and time to write your own recall plan. Thanks to VAAFMM funding, this workshop is FREE and includes meal and a Traceability Manual. Register by Feb. 24 online at: <http://recallandtraceabilitywkshp.eventbrite.com> or by phone: 802-656-5459.

## SAVE THE DATE: GAPS CERTIFICATION WORKSHOP April 5, Barre VT

Are you considering GAPs Certification, or want to learn about writing a GAPs plan? UVM Extension, in collaboration with Cornell Extension, will be offering this in-