

THE CENTER FOR AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS: THE FIRST THREE YEARS



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

“The work that Vermont Law School has undertaken in Food Systems is a critical piece that had previously been absent. Their [collaborative work] with UVM and others working in Food Systems is an important dimension that is and will continue to serve the growing food systems movement at the community, state and national levels for the overall public good.”

DR. DOUG LANTAGNE
DEAN OF UVM EXTENSION
& DIRECTOR OF UVM'S FOOD
SYSTEMS INSTITUTE

IN JANUARY 2012, through the generous support of the GRACE Communications Foundation, Vermont Law School (VLS) formalized the Center for Agriculture and Food Systems (CAFS), a catalyst for change to the nation's agricultural model. The result has been an incredibly successful national initiative that blends elements of a think tank, advocacy organization, legal clinic, and training ground for change leaders.

The challenges facing farmers and entities engaged in and advocating for sustainable and community-based agriculture have not changed since CAFS began; if anything, they have become increasingly complex. There is a continued need for reliable, easily accessible and relevant legal resources, including trained experts and practitioners to create and support a food system that is generative, equitable, and nourishes community.

The difference today, however, is that CAFS provides responsive and innovative leadership in addressing these evolving needs, across multiple platforms and diverse constituencies.

VLS provides an essential and productive home to CAFS through its understanding of the complex food movement landscape, commitment to social progress, and deep experience as an environmental sustainability thought-leader, researcher, and convener. With VLS as its foundation, CAFS trains the next generation of advocates while innovating creative legal and policy solutions to help fuel system change.

The following objectives have guided VLS in the creation of CAFS over the last three years:

- ❑ Establish an academic center with a deep and diverse curriculum, and engage students in research, projects, partnerships, and advocacy.
- ❑ Create and disseminate legal resources to an array of food system stakeholders, including farmers, food producers, food entrepreneurs, and consumers.
- ❑ Deliver expert commentary and analysis regionally, nationally, and internationally, including convening sustainable food systems advocates, non-profits, and legislators.

Not only has CAFS achieved these key objectives, but we have built a program that is at the forefront of food system law and policy education. We have also established CAFS as a vital collaborative partner to leading organizations and individuals working toward the shared goal of just, healthy, and sustainable food systems. Our guiding operational framework has been critical to these successes: CAFS conducts its work flexibly and responsively, continually learning and refining its approach to empower the students it trains and communities it serves with leading edge legal resources.

PROGRESS & ACTIVITIES

“Advocates on the West Coast actually said that it was ‘incredible’ that we were doing this, because several groups in the past have tried and could not provide such comprehensive and reliable information due to the time and resources it takes to tackle a project like the National Gleaning Project.”

AMBER LEISURE-EARNHARDT
RESEARCH FELLOW, CAFS

THANKS TO THE INVENTION, innovation and reach of CAFS, farmers, nonprofits, advocates, and, ultimately, their consumers, all profit from more intuitive, accessible, and innovative legal resources. CAFS houses the most comprehensive sustainable food and agriculture law and policy program in the nation. Led by sustainable agriculture expert Professor Laurie Ristino, CAFS is innovating not only legal and policy solutions that challenge the industrial food system, but also ways to deploy these solutions through design, technology, and communications. This entrepreneurial spirit also fuels the curriculum, which is the most comprehensive in the nation and available both residentially and on line.

Through its powerful work, CAFS is teaching next-generation advocates how to make the power of the law relevant and accessible to sustainable food system stakeholders by lowering the barriers to legal and policy solutions. Three objectives have guided our growth, as follows:

OBJECTIVE 1

Establish an academic center with a deep and diverse curriculum, and engage students in research, projects, partnerships, and advocacy.

OUTCOMES

The success of CAFS has involved the steady cultivation of talent, curriculum development and strategic administration, and planning for sustainability.

1) TALENT

CAFS and VLS faculty and staff devote in excess of 5,000 hours of professional time, and in excess of 10,000 hours of graduate student time, annually to provide legal resources to farmers and to the entities and agencies working to develop a sustainable agricultural effort.

Faculty and Staff

Reflecting its 360-degree approach to food system teaching and advocacy, CAFS is led by a team of lawyers with expertise in the areas of law that inform food and agriculture systems.

Director Ristino is an expert on the nexus between the environment, climate change, and food production; Associate Director Professor Laurie Beyranevand is an expert on food safety and policy; and Clinical Lead Professor Jamie Renner is an expert on legal design and clinical education, as well as global food security.

In addition, CAFS is supported by two Program Officers, both with education and experience with food systems: Sarah Danly, Officer for Legal Design and Technology, and Rebecca Valentine, Officer for Management.

Graduates

Even though CAFS is only three years old, our program has begun to bear fruit in the form of our graduates who are food system leaders.

KARA SHANNON, JD '15

Certificate in Agriculture and Food Systems Law and Policy

Kara Shannon, Manager for the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animal's (ASPCA's) farm animal welfare campaigns, was among the first to earn CAFS's Certificate in Food and Agriculture Law and Policy. Kara's experience working with Jamie Renner and the clinical team to develop user-friendly, accessible legal tools for farmers has been invaluable in her role at ASPCA. As campaign manager, she creates public facing and consumer facing campaigns that break down the complex legal and regulatory landscape into accessible, usable communication that can be used to effect change.



"I can't speak highly enough of CAFS and its incredible professors. Working with CAFS gave me the experience and expertise to be a successful advocate for agricultural animal welfare."

JACK HORNICKLE, JD MELP, '15

Certificate in Agriculture and Food Systems Law and Policy

Jack enrolled at Vermont Law School in 2012 to acquire the skills that would allow him support regionalized food systems and advocate for small farmers. During his time at VLS, Jack served as a legal intern for:

- FARMroots, where he revised leases, drafted curriculum for the Farm Beginnings course, and researched farm labor law.
- Natural Resources Defense Council in New York City, where he focused on state-wide and urban issues of food and agriculture.
- Foscolo & Handel, PLLC, a boutique law firm based out of Sag Harbor that represents small food entrepreneurs.

Today, Jack works for GrowNYC, a sustainability resource for New Yorkers that provides free tools and services anyone can use to improve the city and its environment. In his role as Business Planning Specialist at GrowNYC, Jack assists Greenmarket producers with cash flow management, business formation, land tenure, and farm succession.



SOPHIA KRUSZEWSKI, JD '13

Sophia is a policy specialist at the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC). NSAC is an alliance of grassroots organizations that advocates for federal policy reform that supports small and mid-sized family farms, protects natural resources, promotes healthy rural communities, and ensures access to healthy, nutritious foods for everyone. Sophia's work primarily focuses on conservation programs for working farmland, commodity payments and crop insurance reform, and climate change and energy issues.



Students

Since the inception of CAFS, VLS has been steadily graduating food movement leaders. Moreover, now that our concentrations in sustainable agriculture and food policy and law have been approved, accredited, and implemented, we are welcoming entire cohorts of students into our programs. In the fall of 2015, VLS welcomed its first official class of 12 students into the CAFS degree programs. Last spring, it graduated its first JD students with Certificates in Food and Agriculture Law and Policy. In the last year, CAFS also welcomed its first two LLM fellows, who are studying and working part-time on CAFS projects, as part of our effort to train a highly skilled and motivated cadre of top legal advocates committed to food systems change.

Interest in CAFS degree programs is strong and we anticipate increasing the number of students in the MFALP, LLM, and JD certificate programs in 2016.

GABRIELLA “GABI” STEIER, CLASS OF 2017

Gabriela is Vermont Law School’s first Distance Learning LLM student and works as an LLM Fellow on CAFS’s Land Tenure Project. Holding a JD from Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, Gabi is also pursuing a doctorate in comparative law from the University of Cologne. Since 2015, she has taught food law and policy at Duquesne University School of Law, and she is also a visiting professor at the University of Perugia in Italy, where she teaches EU-US comparative food law in the Department of Political Sciences. Gabriela is co-founder and partner of Food Law International, LLP, which promotes scholarship in international sustainable food law and policy. She has published widely on international food law and policy and is the editor of the forthcoming textbooks *International Food Law and Policy* (Springer 2015) and *International Farm Animal, Wildlife and Food Safety Law* (Springer 2016).



Scholars and Thought Leaders

CAFS is attracting leading practitioners and scholars in the food movement, bringing this knowledge to our students and faculty and staff while creating fertile opportunities for collaboration. In the summer of 2015, VLS welcomed Janelle Orsi, a distinguished scholar, legal innovator, and founder of Sustainable Economies Law Center. Next summer, CAFS welcomes Professor Justin Marceau from the University of Denver, who recently successfully defeated Idaho’s “ag-gag” law.

JANELLE ORSI

Distinguished Scholar, Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems

Janelle Orsi served as the 2014 Distinguished Summer Scholar for Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems. A graduate of U.C. Berkeley’s Boalt School of Law, Janelle’s firm is based in Oakland, California, where she specializes in helping individuals and organizations share resources and create sustainable communities. Her law and mediation practice works with social enterprises, non-profits, community gardens, cohousing communities, ecovillages, and others working on innovative change. Janelle is also the founder of the Sustainable Economics Law Center, whose mission is to cultivate a new legal landscape supporting community resilience and grassroots economic empowerment. In 2012 Janelle was named to The (En)Rich List, which notes individuals whose contributions “enrich paths to sustainable futures.”



“The CAFS Food & Agriculture model is pushing the bounds of clinical legal education. Structured to marry advocacy, design and technology, the clinic is not only able to reach and impact wide audiences but is teaching students how to do the same. They are democratizing legal information and modeling entrepreneurship in the process.”

CHRISTINE CIMINI

ASSOCIATE DEAN, EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON LAW SCHOOL

2) CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT & STRATEGIC ADMINISTRATION

Degrees

VLS is now providing critically needed education and degrees in food systems law and policy, rooted firmly in environmental sustainability and innovation and rigorously independent. VLS recently earned accreditation from New England Association of Schools and Colleges, and approval from the American Bar Association for a new Master of Food and Agriculture Law and Policy (MFALP) and LLM degree programs in Food and Agriculture Law and Policy. During this same period, the faculty of Vermont Law School approved a JD Certificate in Food and Agriculture. VLS offers one of only two LLMs in the country (the other is the University of Arkansas).

Courses of Study & Access

In less than 2 years, CAFS has been able to ramp up its course offerings to nearly 40 credit hours, both residentially and online. Students are now studying the intersection of environmental, agricultural, and food law as they relate to food production, distribution, and sale; and learn the legal and advocacy skills needed to effect change in their communities and the world.

Clinic

CAFS launched the Food and Agriculture Clinic in the fall of 2014, led by Professor Jamie Renner, staffed by JD, LLM, and as of September, highly qualified master’s (MFALP) students. The clinic is an experiential arm of the CAFS program. Students in the clinic participate in interviewing, collaboration and partner management, and learn the skills of effective public communication. They receive training in entrepreneurship skills like project management, grant management, media, marketing, and branding—expertise that will help them launch and maintain a successful career in the non-profit and advocacy world. A unique feature of the clinic is its trans-disciplinary use of design, technology, and communications to provide legal resources tailored to specific stakeholders.

VLS STUDENTS partner with leading organization like the Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont (NOFA-VT) and the National Farmers Market Coalition to develop a “Farmers Market Toolkit,” an online resource that helps farmers market leaders across the United States understand and navigate the complex but common legal challenges involved in starting and running farmers markets.

CAFS Business Development & Partner Cultivation

From CAFS’s inception, Director Laurie Ristino recognized that networking would be an essential component to ensuring the relevance and sustainability of the Center. Given the proliferation of activity in the food movement, Professor Ristino considers it a critical part of her job to be constantly plugged in, by understanding the major trends, thought leaders, data drivers, and influencers, she regularly assesses how CAFS might offer “value-added” services and resources, or catalyze change in the movement.

Professor Ristino embraces continuous learning and a disciplined approach, focusing on establishing CAFS’s singular reputation, pursuing mutually beneficial partnerships, and attracting entrepreneurial projects. CAFS’ rich project roster and ability to raise funds are a testament to her success in these areas (see Objective 2, page 9). Importantly, Professor Ristino and her team have learned several critical lessons that guide their business development efforts moving forward:

- ❑ Ensure a targeted and strategic approach, identifying products and productive partnerships that will be most impactful.
- ❑ Partner with organizations that expand and complement the CAFS/VLS skills base, and teach this to students. Addressing complex problems and translating them to diverse audiences often requires creative, previously unexplored solutions. CAFS is highly receptive to varied and alternative perspectives and expertise.
- ❑ Assertively position CAFS. In service to all the good we do, and seek to do, we are a start-up business; this means we are constantly seeking opportunities to communicate our values, field test our concepts, secure a distinctive, competitive position in the legal arena and connect prospects with our work.

“Each year, we’re excited to collaborate with CAFS to produce a national guide for state legislators, administrators, and advocates on how to build robust farm-to-school systems through state initiatives. The CAFS team is special because they go beyond the law, always improving their work to be more responsive and useful to efforts impacting policy change. The guide has become a staple to the perennial legislative advocacy efforts of NFSN and farm-to-school leaders nationwide.”

ERIN MCGUIRE
POLICY DIRECTOR
NATIONAL FARM TO SCHOOL NETWORK

3) PLANNING FOR CAFS SUSTAINABILITY

CAFS continues to innovate, grow and establish its value in the food systems marketplace. As such, over the past three years CAFS has effectively leveraged the founding support of the GRACE Communications Foundation to win several restricted grants. In total, CAFS has received in excess of \$3M from private and public funders. See below for a summary of our success in attracting government, foundation and other support.

Summary of grants received:

- ❑ GRACE Communications Foundation (2012–2015) to establish the Center for Agriculture and Food Systems Program.
- ❑ Vermont Community Foundation (2013-2014) Food Labeling Sites (Dartmouth College, partner)
- ❑ National Institute of Food and Agriculture (April 2014) for a Farmer’s Market Governance Toolkit (NOFA VT and Farmers Market Coalition, partners)
- ❑ National Agriculture Library (August 2014) for Land Tenure and Gleaning Resources (various partners)
- ❑ National Farm to School Legislative Survey (March 2015) (National Farm to School Network, partner)
- ❑ Kellogg Foundation (June 2015) Blueprint for a National Food Policy (Harvard Food Law and Policy Clinic, partner)
- ❑ National Agriculture Library (August 2015) Leasing App and Community Food Works (William Mitchell Public Health Law Center and Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity, partners)

As we look toward 2016 and beyond, we are building upon these successes by diversifying and broadening the scope of our philanthropic outreach, considering earned-income models, and ensuring permanent support for CAFS.

Efforts will include:

- ❑ Pursuing additional unrestricted and project-based support from foundations (private, independent, family, operating), government entities and partners.
- ❑ Exploring a progressively-based, consultation fee structure; for example, we already are in discussion with the United Nations to develop an organic certification legal framework for the nation of Mauritius.
- ❑ Phase-in for the eventual absorption of the CAFS clinic into the VLS budget. (Various CAFS projects will always be partially funded/underwritten by outside partnerships and grants).

“Too often, the food movement is not able to fully capitalize on the solutions it is generating because the information barrier is too high for those who could benefit the most. We believe these are tragically wasted opportunities. Our work democratizes social innovation in the food space by using the law in combination with design and technology. In other words, we invite stakeholders to the information.”

Laurie Ristino, CAFS Director

OBJECTIVE 2:

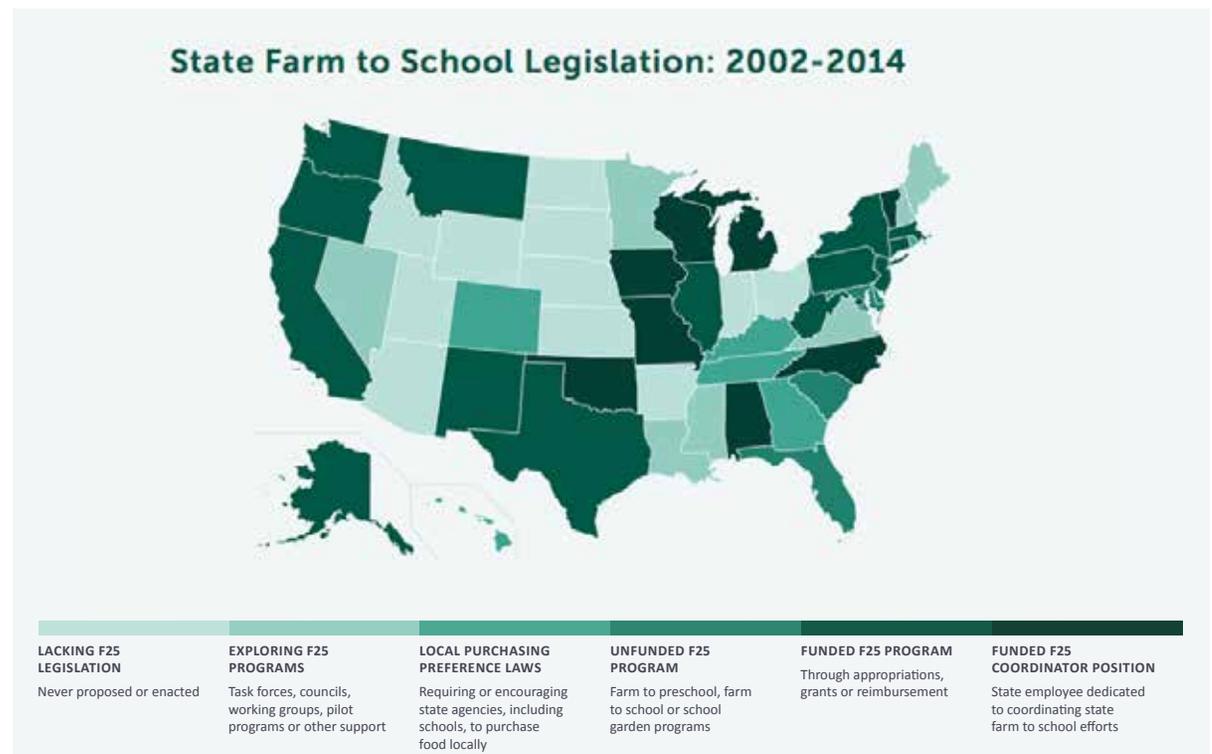
Create and disseminate legal resources to an array of food system stakeholders, including farmers, food producers, food entrepreneurs, and consumers.

CAFS recognizes the urgent need for clearly presented, easily available, easily understood, and widely broadcast resources to untangle the web of data and legal information. CAFS is one of a handful of leading edge educational institutions, including Stanford Law and Design Schools and Harvard’s Berkman Center, that use technology, design, and media to innovate solutions. Moreover,

the tools we are creating will illuminate areas of the law that are relevant, usable, and replicable in communities across the country.

To this end, for each project CAFS undertakes, we use one or more of these strategies in creating our legal resources for our stakeholders:

1. Aggregation and screening of diffuse information;
2. Analysis and synthesis of complex information; and
3. Creation of new legal and policy solutions.



“Having an ‘official’ report that documented the lack of state policy was a real leverage point during our meeting with the Governor’s office, bringing diverse partners around the table and building momentum for our collective work.”

STEPHANIE HEIM

MINNESOTA EXTENSION, SPEAKING ABOUT THE NATIONAL FARM TO SCHOOL SURVEY

CAFS RESOURCES COMPLETED



Labels Unwrapped

- ❑ **Project:** Online site - “Your Rights to Know: Guide to Food Labeling”
- ❑ **Funding Resource/s:** Vermont Community Foundation
- ❑ **Need/Goal:** Help consumers make informed choices about food by increasing their awareness about food labeling.
- ❑ **Challenges:** Ensuring that the site was consumer-friendly
- ❑ **Result:** Partnership with Dartmouth College Digital Arts, Leadership and Innovation to launch a more relevant, streamlined site (www.labelsunwrapped.org).
- ❑ **Impact:** Labels Unwrapped has been well-received and garnered social media and press upon its release this summer, including Associated Press and National Public Radio coverage.
- ❑ **CAFS Learning:** Although its legal research and information has always been legally robust, CAFS is focused on improving how the law is communicated – through intentional design and public interface.



Farm to School: National Farm to School Legislative Survey

- ❑ **Project:** State Farm to School Legislative Survey, a state-by-state summary of every enacted, defeated, or pending farm to school-related bill from 2002-2014.
- ❑ **Funding Resource/s:** Partnership with the National Farm to School Network (NFSN)
- ❑ **Need/Goal:** Help advocates learn about and replicate the wide variety of existing state farm to school laws, policies, and programs.
- ❑ **Result:** Complete survey can be found at www.farmtoschool.org/Resources/F2S-Survey-2014.pdf
- ❑ **Impact:** Survey was downloaded more 3,150 times; National Farm to School Network and CAFS have renewed the partnership to further refine the resource and target underserved communities through tailored communications strategies (Spanish language resources) and legal tools.

“CAFS walked us through New Mexico’s legislative process to scientifically document the farm-to-school appropriations, understand our position relative to 10 other states and help us build our own efforts, strategies, and legislation. Many thanks to you all for helping us do our best and build relationships and partnerships.”

**PAM ROY, FARM TO TABLE
AND THE NEW MEXICO FOOD
& AGRICULTURE POLICY COUNCIL**



National Gleaning Project

- ❑ **Project:** A multi-year endeavor addressing various issues associated with gleaning (state and national laws and regulations) and providing resources to food donors, advocates, organizations and individuals involved in gleaning or seeking to develop a program.
- ❑ **Resources:** USDA National Agricultural Library
- ❑ **Need/Goals:** Reduce food waste, incentivize and/or remunerate farmers, restaurants, and other establishments to increase food donations to charitable organizations, address issues of food insecurity, and support local economies.
- ❑ **Impact:** The National Gleaning Project is a hub of legal information, best practices and innovative ideas, reducing the resource barriers to organizing and implementing gleaning programs. On-line, centrally located resources elevate the gleaning model of food waste reduction, community development, and social justice for the food insecure.
- ❑ **CAFS Learning:** Over the next two years, CAFS will continue to add to this resource with additional materials and case studies, ensuring access through outreach and dissemination with the intention of creating a national network of gleaning organizations.



Global Fisheries in Crisis

- ❑ **Project:** Global Fisheries in Crisis Infographic
- ❑ **Resources:** Partnership with New England Aquarium
- ❑ **Need/Goals:** Highlight global seafood sustainability challenges and provide action items for consumers, advocates, and industry.
- ❑ **Impact:** Infographic (environmentallaw.vermontlaw.edu/resources/infographics/global-fisheries-in-crisis) distributed on-line and via social media, received mention in several on-line media outlets, including Huffington Post and Triple Pundit.

Creating a Stronger Food System

- ❑ **Project:** 2-part infographic series: Challenges in our Current Food System & The Future of Food
- ❑ **Resources:** Leveraged existing VLS resources.
- ❑ **Need/Goals:** Highlight the most pressing concerns in modern food production and changes needed in the current food system.
- ❑ **Impact:** Shared online and via social media: broad distribution within the sustainable food and agriculture community.

“Having the resources of VLS’s Center for Agriculture and Food Systems in our backyard is a privilege. It is clear to us that CAFS’s research is inspired by the innovative food system work occurring here in Vermont.”

THERESA SNOW, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
OF SALVATION FARMS,
A VERMONT GLEANING ORGANIZATION

CAFS RESOURCES IN PROGRESS



Farmland Access Legal Project (FALP)

- ❑ **Project:** Develop legal tools and resources to help lower barriers to farmland access for new small and mid-sized farmers in New England – a threshold barrier to farming.
- ❑ **Resources:** USDA National Agricultural Library as the funder, partnership with BCM Environmental
- ❑ **Need/Goals:** Address the critical legal resource gap around farmland tenure through web and print materials, providing assistance to new and established farmers as they seek to acquire land access for farming.
- ❑ **Anticipated Impact:** Many of the resources created will be relatable and scalable elsewhere in the nation.
- ❑ **CAFS Learning:** We will present the information in several ways, including case studies, downloadable model documents, and checklists. This is an example of how CAFS is identifying food system innovations that work.

How to Use a Lawyer (for Farmers)

- ❑ **Project:** Three interactive, consumer-friendly technology-based components: a web-based informational wiki, a website with an interactive decision tree, and a mobile app that also will contain an interactive decision tree.
- ❑ **Resources:** USDA National Agriculture Library and VLS Center for Legal Innovation
- ❑ **Need/Goals:** 90% of those facing legal issues are unaware that they need legal assistance. Farmers, food entrepreneurs, and others working in the sustainable food system need easily accessible, low-cost, legal information.
- ❑ **Anticipated Impact:** These web-based tools will: 1) help educate and empower farmers about the legal implications of their work; 2) provide accessible and user-friendly legal information; and 3) save costs by assessing the farmer’s needs before they use a lawyer.

“CAFS has not only taught me about the legal complexities of our food system, but is helping me change it by connecting me with leaders like UN Special Rapporteur for the Right to Food Hilal Elver. I had the privilege of researching and writing parts of her new report on Gender and Food Security.”

MELISSA SHAPIRO, JD CLASS OF 2016

Farmland Lease Assistant

- ❑ **Project:** A mobile application to help farmers reduce the cost of legal services by building a lease agreement through an initial, free assessment of the farmer’s needs.
- ❑ **Resources:** USDA National Agriculture Library and VLS Center for Legal Innovation (CLI)
- ❑ **Need/Goals:** Agricultural lease agreements are essential to farming, and especially critical for new farmers who do not have the resources to own their own farmland. The automation of agricultural lease considerations can make an often unaffordable and inaccessible legal service both affordable and easier.
- ❑ **Anticipated Impact:** CAFS and CLI plan to keep the lease assistant open source, inviting broad feedback to improve the beta. The Lease Assistant will be available on the National Agriculture Library (NAL) and VLS CAFS/CLI websites.
- ❑ **CAFS Learning:** The Farmland Lease Assistant is a natural outgrowth of CAFS’s Farmland Access Legal Project and addresses a fundamental farmer need. Together, the three resources – Farmland Access, Lawyer Guide, and Leasing App – support the critical need for a new generation of farmers who grow food in both an environmentally and economically sustainable manner.



National Food Policy: Kellogg National Food Policy Blueprint

- ❑ **Project:** A strategic legal framework to consider a national food strategy involving the creation of a platform for stakeholders to voice their opinions, concerns, and issues.
- ❑ **Resources:** W.K. Kellogg Foundation and Harvard’s Food Law and Policy Clinic (partner), as informed by the proposal of Bittman, et al., “How a National Food Policy Could Save Millions of American Lives.”
- ❑ **Anticipated Impact:** A trusted information source through which the executive branch can create new national food policies that contribute to more favorable health and environmental outcomes nationwide.

“This conference was transformative for me. I saw connections between issues and within my own experiences and passions I had never seen before.”

CONFERENCE ATTENDEE

UVM-VLS FOOD SUMMIT ON THE RIGHT TO FOOD



The collaboratively developed UVM Food Systems Summit received coverage from prominent outlets including Civil Eats, Good Food Jobs Gastrognomes Blog, VTDigger, WCAX, and UVM Communications. The summit also generated hundreds of tweets and retweets throughout the event from Yale Sustainable Food (3,084 followers), Vermont Farm to Plate (2,334 followers), keynote Smita Narula (649 followers), and many others.

OBJECTIVE 3

Deliver expert commentary and analysis regionally and nationally, and convene sustainable food systems advocates, non-profits, and legislators.

Learning exchanges and media/communications channels are critical avenues through which CAFS disseminates information across broad audiences. CAFS staff, faculty, and students prioritize this work as a core part of the CAFS mission to bring accurate, relevant, accessible information about food systems into the hands of the public.

OUTCOMES

1) Demand for our Thought Leaders

- ❑ In the last two years, CAFS faculty have published articles or been interviewed or quoted in more than 20 regional and national media outlets on a broad range of food systems topics (See attached for selected appearances).
- ❑ In the last year alone, CAFS faculty and fellows have presented at seven national conferences, including at Harvard, Yale, Duke, University of Oregon, Stone Barns, Seattle University, and Closing the Hunger Gap.

2) Shared Learning

CAFS brings together stakeholders in the sustainable food movement through convenings, conferences, and panel discussions.

- ❑ **Global Food, Local Solutions**, held at Vermont Law School in March 2015, looked at food justice and the challenges related to food safety, food security, and food sovereignty in disenfranchised communities.
- ❑ In partnership with the University of Vermont, CAFS brought together scholars, practitioners, and food systems leaders at the 2015 **UVM Food Systems Summit**. With keynote speakers Raj Patel, Claire Kremen, and Smita Narula, the conference focused on the right to food.
- ❑ CAFS brought global food activist **Vandana Shiva** to VLS to support Vermont’s ground-breaking new GMO labeling law.
- ❑ **Food and Drug Administration listening session** for the implementation of the landmark law: Food Safety Modernization Act
- ❑ **TMDL 2.0 Conference**, Vermont Law School, Fall of 2015, Director Ristino facilitated a ground-breaking panel on Vermont’s new TMDL to clean up Lake Champlain by addressing agricultural run-off.

LESSONS LEARNED

IN CONSIDERING various challenges we have overcome since CAFS's inception, the following three have delivered profound learning opportunities that have positively shaped our approach and priorities.

1. EXPLAINING HOW LAW MATTERS IN THE SUSTAINABLE FOOD MOVEMENT

We began creating legal products and media at the beginning of CAFS, including experimenting with video, social media, and even a radio show called "Food Radio." These experiments taught us how vital communication is to scaling change by making legal resources and products relevant and accessible to stakeholder groups. We were humbled and inspired by learning that compelling messaging is not easy to do – especially when it comes to the law in generating sustainable food system solutions – but it makes all the difference. We learned from nonprofits, companies, and leaders that were making more compelling advocacy resources than we were.

We have, therefore, been in a constant cycle of learning and improvement. We use our public speaking engagements, scholarly writing, teaching, and products to continually refine our work. We are very excited about the future and see only possibilities – not limitations – for making the law a more effective force for change in food and agricultural systems and all they touch: the environment, people, and animals. The Farm to School National Survey is an example of this: our next report will target particular populations and experiment with dual language (Spanish/English) resources.

2. CLIENT-CENTERED INFORMATION DELIVERY.

At the heart of CAFS's advocacy and legal resources is a deep desire to make legal resources that work for those on the front lines of the food movement. We did not initially anticipate the powerful role that technology, communications, and design could play in the development of usable legal resources. Our Farm to School Survey and Labels Unwrapped website, for example, taught us to re-evaluate our approach to legal advocacy and use lessons from design-thinking and communications to produce stakeholder-centered information. At first this was outside of our comfort zone and represented a somewhat radical approach among law schools. CAFS' entrepreneurial staff and start-up mentality, however, have helped us nimbly pivot into digital platforms and the use of legal visuals. We have embraced these cutting-edge techniques enthusiastically. We now work with a web developer for technology-driven projects and will release the beta of our resources in January.

3. SCREENING FOR EFFECTIVE COLLABORATIONS.

There is no lack of organizations that want to collaborate with us, but experience has taught us that some partnerships will be more robust than others. We are therefore developing processes to help identify which projects, leaders, and organizations best fit our goals, objectives, and approach. Further, we seek to increase our value to organizations like Animal Agriculture Reform Collaborative, which is serving a vital role in coordinating and convening advocacy organizations on the issue of animal agriculture. Bottom line: we want to ensure that our expertise is effectively and efficiently leveraged to further efforts that are mutually beneficial and synergistic.

THE FUTURE OF CAFS



“I’ve come all the way to congratulate this law school. What you have done is, in our times, path breaking.”

DR. VANDANA SHIVA
INTERNATIONAL ACTIVIST, *pictured with*
CAFS DIRECTOR LAURIE RISTINO

The Pillars of Our Model, Moving Forward...

ENTREPRENEURIAL LEARNING

Over the last several years, we have learned an enormous amount about how CAFS can best meet the needs of the sustainable food and agriculture community by providing free legal products that fulfill unmet needs and complement – rather than replicate – the work of our colleagues and partners. As noted earlier, we seek to aggregate and synthesize information in ways that others cannot, as well as to create new tools and products to train better food system leaders, moving legal teaching forward while also advancing the movement. We are continuously learning, adapting, and pushing ourselves to take creative risks, assess outcomes, and refine our approach.

MEDIA MATTERS

Nearly everything we do includes, by design, an audience feedback loop that helps us identify gaps in our approach and refine our projects. By actively seeking this feedback, we have learned that our focus on mass communication, media, and legal technology is adding value to the food and agriculture movement. For example, we use Google analytics to track public use of our digital assets; and in our toolkit development, we use focus groups, convenings, and conferences to assess effectiveness and

refine content. We also engage partner organizations that represent specific stakeholder populations to determine how to make our tools relevant to different groups.

BEYOND SINGLE-USE

We are not interested in solutions that only help one individual. We believe that we can be more effective by helping many. We invite stakeholders into discussion around the legal tools and resources they need, listening for what might be helpful, scalable, and accessible to multiple constituencies. We then map out products that are intuitively accessed and utilized.

Moreover, our projects address multiple aspects of the healthy food movement – helping with the structuring of local food systems but also encouraging communities to more closely engage with the process, such as growing their own food and/or considering environmentally sustainable practices. This holistic approach distinguishes our far-reaching value as conscientious, values-driven legal innovators.

STRATEGIC GROWTH

A thoughtful focus on several mission-driven areas ensures our continued impact. Priorities include:

- ❑ Strengthening, deepening, and diversifying our faculty through cost-effective means, including partnerships with our accomplished graduates.
 - ❑ Enhancing our Food and Agriculture Clinic to teach more students the skills required to become leaders in food systems advocacy.
 - ❑ Improving our management infrastructure to facilitate faculty residential teaching, academic writing, and expert commentary.
 - ❑ Continuing to refine our legal product development to provide information to communities that is replicable, scalable, and applicable to their needs.
- ❑ Pursuing a sustainable model through broad and varied funding sources, entrepreneurial ventures and partnerships, and a longer-term plan to integrate CAFS within the VLS structure.
 - ❑ Identifying partners and advocacy where our legal knowledge and advocacy approach can add value and help effect meaningful change.

We are incredibly grateful for our partnership with our generous funders – for connecting us with the resources, support and expertise to firmly establish CAFS as a critical innovator, thought leader, and educator in the sustainable food movement. We eagerly anticipate our continued work together.

PUBLICITY

Objective 3: Deliver expert commentary and analysis to the media, and convene sustainable food systems advocates, non-profits, and legislators.

“After my workshop, a woman shared that the tools I presented gave her hope that there was a way she could start to farm. Presenting real solutions to real people who are ready to use them in the real world is the whole reason I went to law school in the first place, and CAFS is doing just that.”

CARRIE A. SCRUFARI, ESQ.
VERMONT LAW SCHOOL CENTER FOR
AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS LLM FELLOW

SELECTED INTERVIEWS & COMMENTARY

LAURIE RISTINO, DIRECTOR

Farm Bill

Allegheny Front Environmental Radio, Jan. 22, 2014

Business Responses to Climate Change

VT Digger.org, Feb. 4, 2014

Food For Thought

Huffington Post Food for Thought Live, Feb. 17, 2014

Farmers Markets a State Agricultural Fixture as Numbers Level Off

Vermont Public Radio, May 27, 2014

Vermont Brand Adds Value, but Rules for Claiming Connection Complex

VT Digger, Feb. 22, 2015

California Drought

Eco Perspectives Blog, *Vermont Journal of Environmental Law*, February 2015

Do We Need More Food Transparency?

Huffington Post Live, March 16, 2015

All Dried Up: Tensions Rise Over Water Shortage in Vermont: America's Food Relocalization Laboratory

Civil Eats, May 12, 2015

9th Circ. Pesticide Ruling Holds EPA to High Standard

Law360, Sept. 18, 2015

LAURIE BEYRANEVAND, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

Vermont Poised to Pass GMO Labeling Law

Politico, April 16, 2014

GMO-Labeling Initiatives Fall Short in Colo., Ore.

ClimateWire, Nov. 5, 2014

The FDA's Determination on Artificial Trans Fat: A Long Time Coming

Health Affairs Blog, June 23, 2015

Vermont Law School Site Helps Consumers

Decipher Food Labels

Associated Press, July 13, 2015

Food Notes: A Modern Take on an Old-Time Product

Valley News, July 15, 2015

Businesses Learn There are Tax Incentives and Laws to Help Them Recycle Mountains of Food

ClimateWire, July 22, 2015

Steak a Claim: Environmental and Animal Welfare Labeling, Eating Matters Podcast, Heritage Radio Network, Oct. 1, 2015

Chipotle Says it Dropped GMOs.

Now a Court Will Decide if That's Bulls—t

Mother Jones, Sept. 11, 2011

JAMIE RENNER, CLINICAL DIRECTOR

Law to Farmer

The Bridge, April 17, 2014

The Gastronomes

Good Food Jobs blog, May 19, 2015



Clinical Lead Jamie Renner, right, spoke at Seattle University's Law Review Symposium about making the seafood industry more sustainable. Pictured with him are Professor Samuel Wiseman, Florida State University, and Professor Andrea Freeman, University of Hawaii.

SELECTED ACADEMIC ARTICLES & BOOK CHAPTERS

Laurie Ristino, Director

Food Security: Concept, Challenges, and the Role of Attorneys, *Environmental Law Reporter*, July 2015

Laurie Beyranevand, Associate Director

Breaking Down Barriers to Local Food Distribution in Urban Centers, *Urban Agriculture: Policy, Law, Strategy, and Implementation*, ABA Book Publishing 2015

Agricultural Biotechnology and NAFTA: Analyzing the Impacts of U.S. and Canadian Policies on Mexico's Environment and Agriculture, *NAFTA and Sustainable Development: History, Experience, and Prospects for Reform*, Cambridge 2015

SELECTED CONFERENCES & CONVENINGS

Laurie Ristino, Director

Food Security and Climate Change, American Association of Law Schools, Jan. 3, 2015

Carrots and Sticks: Moving the U.S. National Food System Toward a Sustainable Future, Duke University, Jan. 23, 2015

Panel Moderator, **The Right to Food: Power, Policy & Politics in the 21st Century**, *UVM Food Systems Summit*, June 16-17, 2015

Food, Agriculture, and Drought: Implications of Water Supply Scarcity on Food Production and Policy Solutions at the Federal, State, and Local Levels, *Drought in the American West Symposium*, University of Oregon School of Law, Sept. 25, 2015

No Food Without Nature, *Harvard University Food Law Student Leadership Summit*, October 2015

The Food Movement: How We Got Here and Why it Matters, *Yale Forum*, Nov. 5, 2013

Laurie Beyranevand, Associate Director

Using Urban Agriculture to Grow Southern New England, *Southern New England American Planning Association Annual Conference*, September 2015

The New Foodralism, *Yale Food Systems Symposium*, Nov. 14-15, 2014

The Impact of FSMA on the Global Food Supply, *Summer Academy in Global Food Law and Policy*, Spain, Summer 2014

The [In]significance of the Monsanto Rider to the Farm Bill?, *Yale Center for Environmental Policy Frontiers in Food and Agriculture Series*, January 2014

Regulation of Food Advertising: The Natural Label, *Food and Drug Law Institute Conference on Food Advertising*, November 2013

The New Food Movement: Gleaning, Liability, and FSMA, *American Agricultural Law Association Annual Conference*, October 2013

Jamie Renner, Clinical Director

Potential Impacts of FSMA on Small-Scale Farmers Across the World Who Import Food to the U.S., *Food Safety Modernization Act: The Future of Food Litigation*, *Miami School of Law's Inter-American Law Review Symposium*, Feb. 2015

Keeping Seafood Companies on the Hook: Re-tooling the Corporate Partnership Model for Improved Sustainability, *Seattle University Law Review Symposium*, March 2015

Opening Remarks, **The Right to Food: Power, Policy & Politics in the 21st Century**, *UVM Food Systems Summit*, June 16-17, 2015



A convening of movers and shakers in law, policy and media, all brought to Vermont Law School. Pictured from left: **Jenny Rushlow**, Staff Attorney for the Conservation Law Foundation; **Laurie Ristino**, CAFS Director; **Janelle Orsi**, Executive Director of Sustainable Economies Law Center; and **Zoë Schlanger**, Newsweek Reporter and VLS Environmental Media Fellow.

CARRIE SCRUFARI, LLM FELLOW

Generally Recognized as Safe—Until They're Not: Why the FDA Never Subtracts Food Additives From GRAS, *Yale Food Systems Symposium*, October 2015

Farmland Access Project, *Stone Barns Young Farmers Conference*, December 2015

AMBER LEASURE-EARNHARDT, RESEARCH FELLOW

The National Gleaning Project: Resources for Gleaning Organizers and Advocates, *Workshop for Food Justice*, Michigan State University conference, May 15-16, 2015

OTHER EVENTS

One or more CAFS staff members in attendance

Land Tenure Convening with American Farmland Trust, Land Trust Alliance, BCM Environmental Land and Law PLLC, hosted by Vermont Law School, February 2015

Right to Food: Power, Policy & Politics in the 21st Century, *UVM Food Systems Summit*, June 16-17, 2015

Bridging the Past, Cultivating the Future: Exploring Sustainable Foodscapes, Agriculture, Food and Human Values/Association for the Study of Food and Society Annual Conference, June 26-27, 2015

Closing the Hunger Gap, national conference hosted by the Oregon Food Bank, Sept. 13-16, 2015

TMDL 2.0, *Vermont Journal of Environmental Law*, hosted by Vermont Law School, November 2015

FDA Listening Session on the Food Safety Modernization Act, hosted by Vermont Law School, November 2015