

Intervale Community Farm – 2022 Ends Report

29 JANUARY 2023

INTERNAL MONITORING REPORT

E – INTERVALE COMMUNITY FARM ENDS

ADOPTED: 10/2000 LAST REVISED: 1/29/2023

SUBMITTED BY FARM MANAGER ANDY JONES

Global End: Community Supported Agriculture, centered at our Intervale Community Farm.

OVERALL COMPLIANCE (6/6)

Interpretation/definition. ICF is organized to feed and engage people, centrally CSA members and co-op member-owners, in the life of the farm. This inclusive social relationship, coupled with the uncommon economic model of paying up front for a non-specific quantity of food, together define community-supported agriculture at Intervale Community Farm. All ICF activities support, or at least do not hinder, the development, operation, and success of our Intervale-based community farm.

Data:

Our Intervale location continues to be the physical and social center of all ICF activities from growing to distribution, education to community service.

Our Ends polices measure our progress across several target areas. ICF continued to thrive and achieve in 2022 due our high caliber staff, CSA member and co-op member-owner commitment, and a favorable growing season.

End #1: A variety of local, organic produce and related food products for CSA members of ICF.

COMPLIANT.

Interpretation/definition/goals. This is our pre-eminent end: grow the food that CSA members want to eat in terms of quality, selection, and cost.

We achieve ‘variety’ if ICF offers a rotating selection of 8 or more crops for at least 16 summer pickups and 12 or more crops for at least 10 winter pickups, something of which is a green other than cabbage. As a minimum, ICF should distribute for 20 summer share weeks (40 pickups), and 12 (24 pickups) winter share weeks. We use Vermont’s statutory definition of “Local,” as applied to food, which mostly boils down to grown and produced in Vermont.¹ We are certified organic by USDA-accredited certifier Vermont Organic Farmers, LLC.² ‘Produce’ means all consumables we offer at the ICF: vegetables, herbs, fruit, flowers, and bedding plants. ‘Related food products’ are those that fit our ends and in which CSA members express significant

¹ Definition from Act 146, enacted into law July 2, 2020.

² Vermont Organic Farmers, LLC (VOF) is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont (NOFA-VT). Farm Manager Andy has served on the VOF Review Committee since 2020.

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interest, i.e., bread, goat cheese, eggs. Operationally, we refer to these ‘related food products’ collectively as ‘supplemental products.’

Desired Long-Term Outcomes and short-term goals. Annually we aim to implement our seasonal crop plan that is based on what CSA members want to eat, while achieving target share values and reasonable production costs. Long-term, we aim to increase the diversity of available crops, reduce production costs, and improve production congruence with surveyed opinions.

Data:

Priority. ICF staff worked around 17,400 hours in 2022, excluding vacation, sick time, and holidays, down from nearly 19,000 hours total in 2021. About 85% of those hours were directly involved in growing food and distributing it to people, with the remaining 15% in administration, planning, and outreach. We welcomed 640 summer shares in 2022 and 271 winter shares for the 2021-2022 season.

Variety: Our 2021-2022 winter share and 2022 summer share both met targets for variety.

Our summer share ran 21 weeks, from June 6th through October 27th, providing 8 or more crops 20 of 21 weeks. Overall crop diversity was solid, with a strong start in June and few significant production problems except for sweet corn and September salad and broccoli.

Our 2021-2022 winter share ran for 14 pickups, 11/04/21-5/19/2022, and we met our diversity target for all but the final week. Overall diversity was strong throughout, successfully providing something green in addition to cabbage every pickup.



An August small summer share.

Survey results and share value show that many of the most desired crops comprise a large portion of the economic value of the share. Topping survey preference rankings, salad mix ranked first in summer 2022 dollar valuation; tomatoes ranked second on the 2022 summer preference survey and placed second in summer 2022 dollar valuation. Many other crops correlate well. 2021-2022 winter share preference and values also correlate well, to the best of our ability to tease out carrots, potatoes, etc., from the ‘roots choice’ category.

As much as any single data metric, congruence between preference and dollar value corresponds to high CSA member satisfaction and high CSA retention. Operational work priorities are pinned to the preference-to-value equation: we prioritize tomatoes over turnips.

Local. All food distributed by ICF in 2022 was grown or produced within 50 miles of ICF.

Quality. Quality consists of member perception and objective measurement, both important.

CSA member opinion is generally favorable: 96% of 2022 summer CSA members rated produce quality as ‘excellent’, and 4% opining ‘good’, while 2021-2022 winter share produce rated

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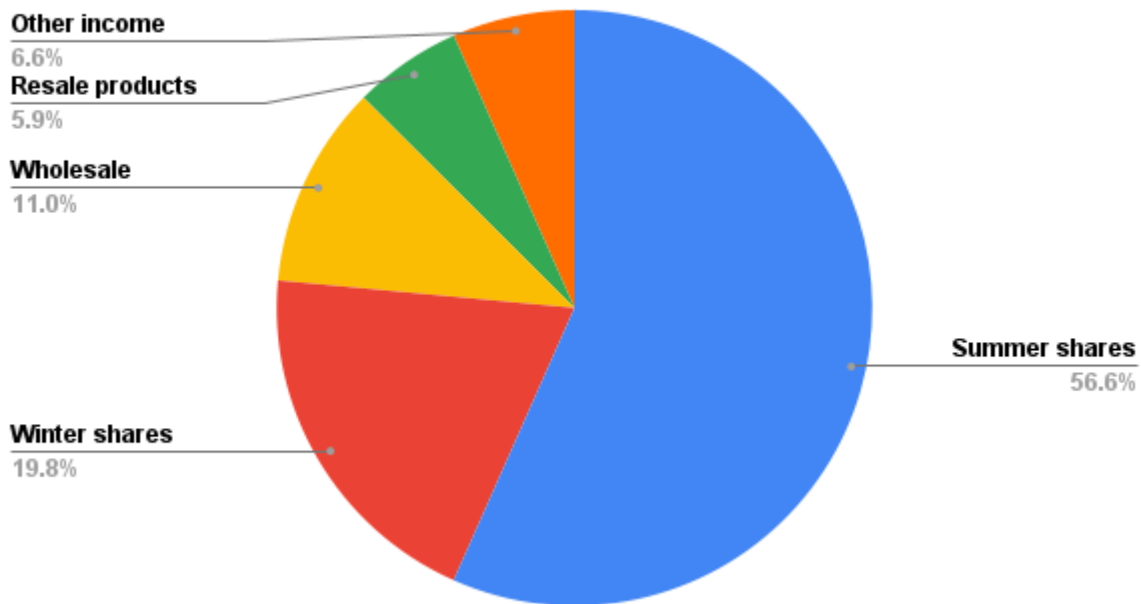
‘excellent’ according to 91% of respondents, with 8% deeming the produce ‘good.’ Further details are available in the 12/19/2022 L1 Member Service and Value monitoring report.

ICF produce is high quality, and we work to improve annually. Our long-term trend is toward grading more strictly, which happens as we improve our overall quality and yield in the field. With strong gleaning relationships, this does not equate to increase waste.

Nutrition arguably should be a component of our quality metric, but hasn’t been. Increasingly, evidence points to many organic foods as providing modestly higher nutritive value than conventional analogs, though precisely why this is so and how to manage for that end is not well studied. Nutrition scientists agree on this: eat more vegetables!

Food safety isn’t generally seen as an aspect of quality, but it is important. In 2022, ICF continued accreditation with the Vermont Vegetable & Berry Growers’ Association Community Accreditation for Produce Safety (CAPS-VT) program, and successfully completed our first official inspection under the federal Food Safety Modernization Act Produce Safety Rule.

ICF 2022 Revenue Sources



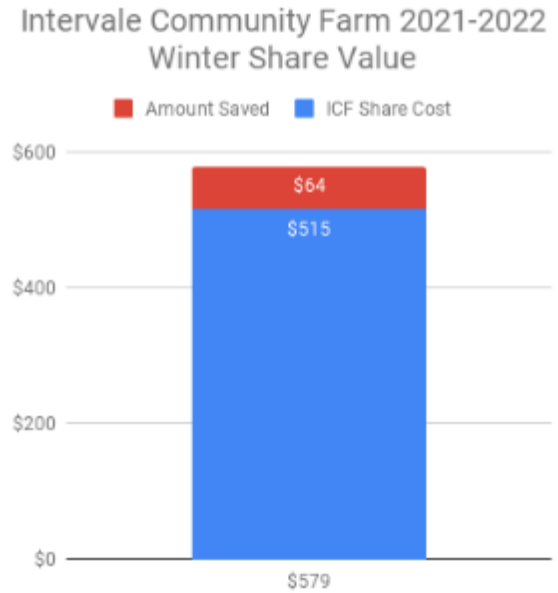
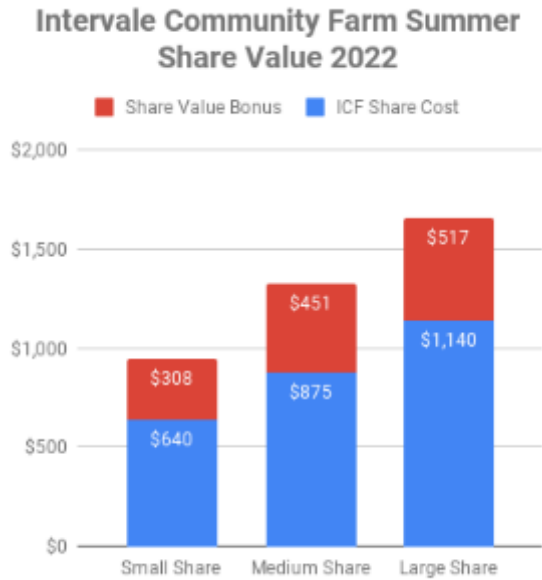
ICF CSA Members. Total produce sales to ICF CSA members totaled around 83%/\$650,000 of total revenue, with 11%/\$83,000 of our 2022 output sold to wholesale produce channels.

Organic. ICF was certified organic in 2022 by Vermont Organic Farmers LLC. View our organic certificate at the [USDA Organic Integrity Database](#).

Related Food Products. In 2022 ICF offered for sale (either directly or indirectly) Trent’s bread, Pigasus Farm Eggs, and Does’ Leap Farm organic goat cheese, and Singing Cedars Farm organic beef.

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Performance against short-term goals and long-term outcomes. Share value calculations for 2022 Summer Shares return a 48% bonus using our standard yardstick, around our recent average. In 2018 the ICF board set 40% as an appropriate summer share bonus target after



years of 60-75% bonuses. Our 2021-2022 Winter Share value penciled out at a 12% bonus, near our multi-year average. Ten percent is the Board-directed winter share bonus target.

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End #2: A thriving farm ecosystem.

COMPLIANT

Overall interpretation/definition A thriving farm ecosystem features living soil, clean water, healthy plants, and biological diversity, all while producing bounteous crops. It uses renewable energy efficiently, minimizes use of hazardous materials, and works to solve the climate crisis.

The Wild Farm Alliance developed a farm ecosystem assessment tool for farmers and organic inspectors, “[Positive Organic Indicators and Red Flags](#)”, which provides a useful framework for evaluating ecosystem health at Intervale Community Farm.

Key metrics in the handbook:

- Fostering soil biodiversity and soil conservation
- Conserving water
- Maintaining and improving water quality on farm and in riparian areas & wetlands
- Incorporating biodiversity in cropping systems
- Maintaining & protecting natural areas & wildlife and managing for biodiversity

These mirror the basic principles of **agroecology**, a systems framework for considering and operating in agricultural systems, which also adds:

- Optimize energy use and minimize waste

Fostering soil biodiversity and soil conservation.

ICF leases 55 acres of land from Intervale Center and annually grows around 22 acres of vegetables.

Roughly 38 acres are reliably farmable, with another 7+/- of moderate-to-high risk. The remaining acres are roads, wetlands, parking, tunnels & buildings, field edges, etc.

We foster soil biodiversity by growing soil-improving cover crops (grasses, legumes, and broadleaves) on 95% of our acreage annually and by growing 8 unrelated family groups of vegetables which we spatially rotate around the farm each year. This results in a wide variation in soil organisms, rooting depths and habits, and ground cover.

We operate with fairly high surface residues (aka ‘trash’ in the parlance), which helps feed soil organisms, retain moisture, and reduce wind and water erosion. 90-95% of ICF winters over with cover crops providing erosion protection and nutrient retention. Long term, we continue to explore methods and tools that would allow us to effectively crop with higher surface residues.

Soil compaction levels are managed through proper timing and approach of field tractor tillage; soil compaction measurements show few areas of significant concern.

Conserving water

Considerable water is required to grow and wash vegetables. Post-harvest washing uses at least 50,000 gallons annually. In drier years, ICF uses an estimated 1.5 million gallons (4.6 acre-feet) of irrigation water; even in wetter years we still use a few hundred thousand gallons. This averages out to about 68,000 gallons per acre (0.21 acre-feet) of field vegetables annually. For

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Drip irrigation lines in tunnel lettuce.

comparison, average use in the Salinas Valley, CA for one crop of lettuce is 1-1.5 acre-feet; lettuce around Yuma, AZ, typically uses 3-4 acre-feet.

Depending on the crop, ICF uses sprinkler irrigation, with delivered water efficiency of 50-60%, or drip irrigation, with water efficiency 85-90%. While the higher water efficiency of the drip line is appealing, they require replacement every couple of years, generating waste, while the sprinkler system will last indefinitely. We have some opportunity to conserve water with better pipeline and some additional dripline, but sprinklers are important in certain crops and will continue to be needed.

Climate change forecasts project longer dry spells, making it unlikely ICF can consistently reduce irrigation water use, which can vary substantially annually. Ultimately, the most efficient use of irrigation water is to hold more rainfall in the soil by increasing our soil organic matter and reducing tillage, illustrating how various conservation efforts interrelate.

Maintaining and improving water quality on farm and in riparian areas & wetlands

Agricultural water pollution breaks down into surface runoff and leaching into groundwater. At ICF we aim to prevent water quality from deteriorating, while also improving our practices around riparian zones & wetlands.

ICF has relatively low potential for surface runoff from our sandy, flat fields. Robust riparian forest buffers 75'-200' wide protect our acreage from river erosion. These buffers meet or exceed best practices for river corridor protection, and extensive use of cover crops minimizes the acres of erodible bare soil.

To reduce nutrient leaching, ICF matches nutrient applications carefully to crop need, and also benefits from the fact that organic fertilizers are generally less soluble and less subject to leaching. When combined with regular use of cover crops to soak up leftover nutrients following vegetable crops, ICF has a strong nutrient retention approach.

ICF owns and/or uses four wells in the Intervale for field crop irrigation, tunnel irrigation, indoor watering, and washing. These wells are tested annually, and pump out safe, potable water of reasonably good quality.

We would prefer higher quality water for irrigation in our main field, the Tower Field. In Tower, ICF irrigates with Winooski River water, which has all of the potential contaminants of the entire Winooski River watershed: farm runoff in Cabot to water treatment plant discharges in Burlington, and everything in between. Fortunately, high contaminant levels in rivers tend to follow quickly on the heels of precipitation events, and those same precipitation events typically reduce or eliminate our need to irrigate. Nor have there been any documented food safety outbreaks on other produce farms in Vermont. Ultimately, eliminating Winooski River water would significantly reduce the limited food safety risks presented by surface water, as well as reduce the carbon footprint of our irrigation water use.

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Incorporating biodiversity in cropping systems

ICF grows about 30 different vegetable crops, rotating land between these crops on a 4-10 year schedule. While we have some larger blocks of a single crop up to 2 acres, these bigger blocks often have multiple species within each unit and are surrounded by yet different crops and cover crops in most cases. Field sizes at ICF also dictate that many planting blocks are near enough to adjacent hedgerows, field rows, or unplanted areas to benefit from adjacent biodiversity.



Diverse Brassica block: 3 kales, 3 cabbages, broccoli

ICF used a variety of pest control and pest avoidance strategies this season, from crop rotation and variety selection to pest exclusion and timing-based avoidance. We sprayed 30 times in 2022, indoors and out, primarily employing selective (as opposed to broadly toxic) materials to reduce non-target ecological impact and preserve biological diversity. We are upgrading our Harnois tunnel ventilation in 2023 and expect that will reduce our future need for organic fungicides in our tunnel crops.

We purchase and release beneficial arthropods to control certain pests in our tunnels and in some field crops. We are also seeing increasing levels of background control of some caterpillars and moths with wild predators; this may be due in part to our management focus on habit.

Maintaining & protecting natural areas & wildlife and managing for biodiversity

In 2022 ICF worked with Intervale Center to enhance two locations to make them friendlier to pollinators and birds. The approach added species and habit diversity, aiming to achieve a mid-height 10-20' shrubby buffer between production fields and the tall hedgerow trees. In consultation with the UVM Extension Pollinator specialist, we also added several new species of cover crops to our fields to broaden cover crop bloom diversity for pollinators.

In addition, we have altered our mowing practices for border areas and uncropped sections of the farm, aiming to mow late in the season, approximately annually, in order to provide pollinator habitat and forage for more of the year. We've also begun to consider how our management of edges and cover crops can evolve to provide pollen and habitat resources continually from April through October.



Multi-species clover cover crop mix

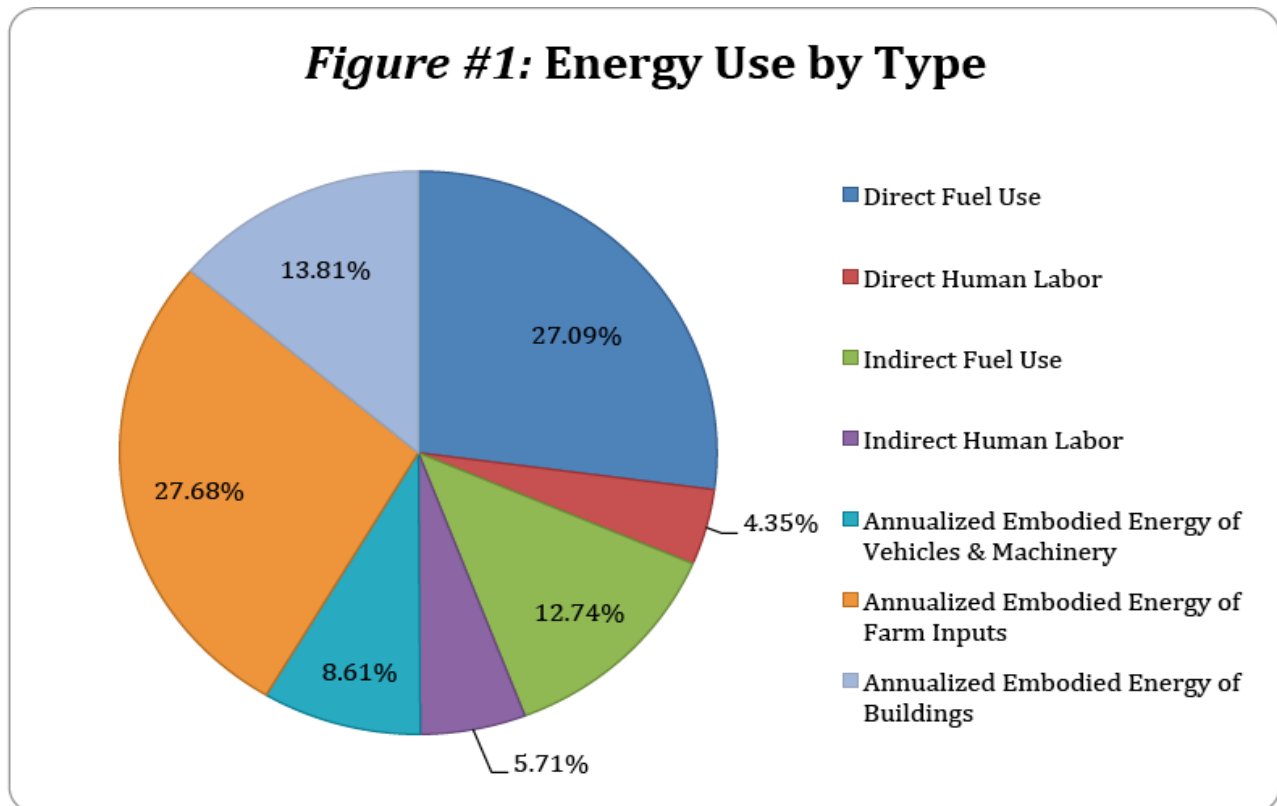
Deer are the major exception in our wildlife-positive approach, with feeding damage averaging around \$10,000 in crop losses, though 2022 was less. Our primary approach is to exclude deer from our vegetables, and consequently we spend many dozens of hours annually managing our perimeter electric fences. A targeted Intervale deer hunt has been on the slow burner at Intervale Center

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and the City for the past couple of years and may not come to pass, though most wildlife and conservation biologists would agree with farmers that it would be a boon to the Intervale.

Optimize energy use and minimize waste.

Prior Ends reporting focused on reducing the input energy relative to the output energy, i.e. the net comparison between the fuels and supplies and the food we harvest. This is challenging to measure on an annual basis. Lucky for us, Eric Garza from the UVM Gund Institute performed such an assessment in 2012-2013 (pie chart below). ICF has changed quite a bit since then (think all of our Harnois, WashPack building, etc.) but it still provides a useful conceptualization of our energy use.



Measuring our aggregate annual energy use is somewhat easier, though still a big effort if we want to be accurate, since we would need to tease out use from background influence. Energy used to pump irrigation water can vary 100% from one year to the next, and refrigeration energy can vary 25-30% year over year with temperature swings. What we can readily do is assess practices and evaluate improvements in our major use areas.

With our 2021 solar panel installation, we can now directly power many farm operations with our own solar energy, and we will continue to aim to use that generation as much as possible by thoughtful siting and conversion of more processes to electric power.

Heating. We heat our propagation greenhouse, Redtop, and Wash Pack. Fundamentally, greenhouses are akin to heating a giant plastic bag when it is windy and 0 F. Our 2009 biomass furnace quit late in 2022, and we are replacing it with a more efficient unit, with the goal to increase the share of heat provided by renewable wood pellets beyond our typical 40-50%.

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Redtop & Wash-Pack are both heated with propane. The Wash Pack radiant floor system is designed such that it could be driven by other input energy sources (e.g. heat pumps) as those options improve or become available. Redtop would require a full retrofit.

Cooling. We've selected refrigeration components with the highest commercially available efficiency at the time of installation. Right now, we wouldn't see much efficiency benefit from replacing components, though that will change at some point. Our oldest unit dates from 2006.

Transportation energy on-farm is fairly stable, though the 500ish gallons of gas used in a year astounds, given that our trucks rarely leave the farm. Off-farm, ICF continues to slightly encourage carpooling, cycling, and walking through our Greenstamps program to reduce energy use getting to and from the farm, which we could promote more widely. The sidewalk and Intervale Road improvements in the 5-year pipeline would make walking and cycling more attractive. An electric car charging station is another option to consider, though this likely would only change the location of their car charging, not the actual energy used.

Tractive Power. ICF tractor energy use is relatively stable, though we can reduce it. As we reduce our weed seed bank, increase soil organic matter, and reduce tillage, we trim the number of trips through the field and the number of hours pumping water. Our electric cultivating tractors are great, but both limited in their present configurations. Evolving battery technology should allow us to improve those tractors in the next few years, and potentially to convert our other two weeding tractors. Few options exist for larger tractors, though this will change at some point and ICF should consider relatively early adoption of those options.



Weeding Brassicas with our Electric Farmall C

Acquiring an electric forklift in 2022 improved safety and access, as well as reducing use of our diesel forklift tractor and rental of IC's diesel skid steer.

Irrigation. Compared to 10 years ago, a larger percentage of our land is irrigated by wells with electric motors than by tractor-powered pumps, significantly improving efficiency and reducing petroleum use. Ultimately ICF would like to replace all diesel pumping with electric motors, which would require tens of thousands of dollars in investment. We probably could find grant funding for some and might be able to share the cost with farm neighbors.

Minimize waste. We also aim to employ used, renewable, degradable, and non-hazardous materials. About 30% of energy used in agriculture in the US is used to produce conventional nitrogen fertilizers. By using organic methods, we avoid that big energy cost from the start. While many of our potassium fertilizers are mined products, much of our nitrogen fertilizer has been from waste products: pelletized egg farm waste (chicken manure), and soybean meal remaining after oil extraction.

Our field utilization of crops has improved over the last several years with our strong gleaning partnerships and improving harvest quality. Both have reduced how much actually stays in the

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field. When adjusted, our root crop harvester also results in a much larger percentage of most root crops leaving the field, increasing overall yield and donations.

ICF uses several tons of disposable agricultural plastics annually. So far, agricultural plastics are neither readily recyclable, nor are their bio-based or biodegradable analogs permitted for use by the USDA National Organic Program. That may change in the coming years, and we would readily accept the higher cost to eliminate disposable plastic mulch, one of our weightiest disposable inputs.

Climate change

The macro climate forecast for the Northeastern US is for increasingly warmer and wetter conditions. Despite that general trend, predictions are for summers somewhat warmer and punctuated by significant lapses in precipitation, with a lot of said precipitation falling in larger, less predictable events. Winter months are forecast to be much warmer, and constitute most of the overall warming likely to happen. These predictions match NOAA records and ICF observations over the last 30+ years.



ICF barn during 2011 T.S. Irene flood

Forecast climate changes will require more irrigation in many summers, as predictions show the overall evapotranspiration (ET) rate exceeding the forecast average rainfall for longer periods. Flooding will increase in potential severity as heavy precipitation episodes increase. While flooding frequency is also predicted to increase, whether this is more in-field flooding causing waterlogged soils and disease outbreaks, or the Winooski River spilling into our fields more often is uncertain. With Lake Champlain surface lake levels predicted to decline over time as surface evaporation and watershed ET rates increase faster than precipitation, lower lake levels will likely result in lower river levels, thereby providing more capacity for water in the river channel before flooding begins.

Adaptation

Intervale Community Farm is actively working to adapt to our already altered climate. As described above, a farm ecosystem with vegetated soil, diverse crops, and robust riparian buffers will lay the groundwork for ICF to weather climate variation in future years. Similarly,

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Our newly acquired electric forklift.

are our most likely mitigation approaches.

Much is discussed about carbon sequestration on farms, but this is unlikely to be a major future direction for ICF. We work continually to improve our soil management, but given our land base, scale, and horticultural constraints, we will probably not be storing lots more carbon in our soils. We do have the opportunity, as exemplified by the pollinator enhancement projects noted above, to consider altering unused field sections, borders, and edges to sequester carbon in added trees and shrubs.

our investments in cold and warm storage affords ICF the ability to adapt our harvest schedules to respond to challenging weather. Tunnels and hoop houses allow us to alter environmental conditions to enhance for crop growth, instead of being completely at the mercy of ambient conditions. Irrigation system expansions and improvements we have already made will serve us in the future as we manage around drier summer conditions, while flood resilient building design and careful farm rotation choices provide further insurance against inundation losses.

Mitigation.

While ICF cannot meaningfully alter the climate trajectory on our own, we can be part of collective climate action to reduce negative future impacts. Generating solar electric and using biomass for heat are important contributions to this effort, as is using the most energy efficient hardware and systems available. Transitioning our farm equipment fleet and more irrigation to electric power are future investments that

End #3: A vibrant and interactive community of farmers/producers and eaters.

Interpretation/definition. While “eaters” can include nearly anybody, I take this policy primarily as a mandate for fostering meaningful relationships between and among staff and all members. As a place-based organization, “vibrant and interactive” implies a relationship with the physical farm as well as the people. A vibrant and interactive community also implies some level of knowledge about ICF, and a certain level of happiness and satisfaction with membership.

Data: Relationships & community. CSA pickup is the primary vehicle for connecting people, land, and food. Workdays and social events can also be important, though primarily as additions to a pickup-based approach.

Much of ICF is organized around CSA pickup and community. Our summer and winter share distribution venues are organized not only for efficiency, but also to enjoy connection and beauty. Picnic tables, a sandbox, a field of flowers, the Kid’s Garden, pick-your-own info, vegetable artwork, little libraries, etc., are just a smattering of appealing hooks ICF provides for those looking to engage with friends and fields.



ICF summer CSA pickup.

Workdays organized by Board members

Bonnie Acker and Mark Twery continued apace, bringing dozens of people out to trim hedgerows, weed PYO crops, and work together at ICF. Our 2022 pizza night and annual meeting was well attended and appreciated.

Considering who isn’t a part of this community is the question to shape our future plans. We are working with NOFA-VT to pilot a Spanish language interpretive program for our 2023 summer CSA. While this is a small step and unclear of the impact, broadening our language accessibility at least provides an invitation for some non-English speakers.

Other barriers to community abound; transportation, affordability and cultural suitability are discussed in End #6 below.

Data: Knowledge of and Satisfaction with the Farm. CSA member surveys can provide some insight about whether people feel part of a community. Results show ICF CSA members are ‘very satisfied’ summer and winter, year after year. Details abound in the 12/19/2022 L1 Member Service and Value monitoring report.

Progress toward long-term goals: ICF should continue to encourage people to gather and enjoy each other, the farm, and the wider Intervale, at least as much as we do more. We have the opportunity to do much more, always limited by staff capacity.

As it is, ICF does a good job bringing all members together enough for widespread satisfaction, as well as providing some additional information and opportunities through newsletters, workdays, events, and such. That said, we have far less membership involvement than we might with a wider breadth of outreach, storytelling, workshops, and information.

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End #4: Sustainable and fulfilling jobs for staff.

COMPLIANT.

Interpretation/definition: ICF aims to provide employment that is enjoyable, stimulating mentally and physically, provides a reasonable wage and security, and fosters personal growth.

Desired Long-Term Outcomes and short-term goals. Our annual goal is to foster a dynamic, supportive, and productive workplace, while providing meaningful raises to returning staff and fair compensation to all.

Long term ICF aims are to increase compensation, stretch the length of seasonal jobs, and also grow the number of year-round positions. Improving work ergonomics and further distribute management responsibilities are additional ongoing objectives that improve job sustainability and fulfillment.

Data: ICF has an amazingly talented, hard-working, and committed staff with many years of experience; half the 2022 staff had been with ICF seven or more years. Recent employee appreciations that ICF “values and prioritizes a learning culture” and “makes me proud to be a part of it,” typify comments from meetings with staff. Retention of 12/14 employees from 2021 to 2022 speaks to some level of job satisfaction.



11/14ths of ICF's 2022 staff

ICF tallied 5.4 full-year positions in 2022. The largest opportunity to add 12-month positions is figuring out how to wash crops after storage instead of prior to storage, but this presents a number of obstacles, and we don't have immediate additions planned. Six of eight 2022 seasonal employees started 2020 or earlier.

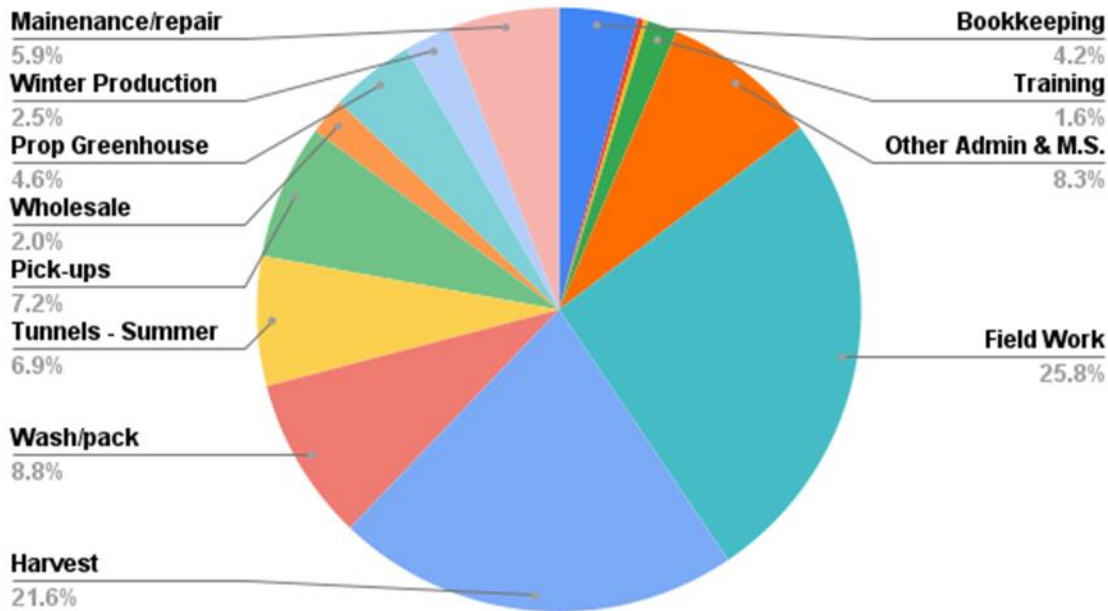
Starting wages for seasonal staff in 2022 were \$15.00/hour, up from \$14.00/hour in 2021, and \$13.50/hour in 2020. Starting wages rise to \$16.00/hour in 2023. Seasonal staff wages ranged from \$15.00-19.50/hour; full-year staff ranged \$17.00/hour and a nominal \$30.83/hour. These figures exclude the 2022 year-end bonus of \$0.75/hour for all employees. Future wage growth is a function of increasing both the total size of our budget and of the percentage dedicated to staffing, as each provides a hedge against the other in the event that things don't go according to plan. In keeping with direction from the ICF Board, pay increases have been weighted toward returning employees over raising starting wages for new employees.

In 2022 ICF increased vacation pay for hourly employees substantially, equaling accrual rates of salaried staff. In effect this doubled vacation for many and provides even first year seasonal

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employees with a paid week off during the growing season. Everyone is happier and more productive with a break from ICF. Employees used 1140 hours of vacation in 2022, up from an 822 average of 2020+2021, representing a cost to ICF around \$7,000.

ICF 2022 Labor by Category



ICF Employees worked a total of 17,400 hours in 2022, excluding sick time, holidays, and vacation.

In the interest of equity and with the experience of COVID absenteeism in recent memory, ICF changed to an as-needed paid sick time policy in 2022. We want sick employees to stay home and heal. Unsurprisingly sick time use increased, from a 2020+2021 average of 380 hours to the 2022 figure of 660 hours, representing an increase of around \$6100. While this is a substantial increase, ICF will continue with this policy with some tweaks. We do need to add some parameters on long-term maladies in 2023, which were absent from our 2022 policy.

ICF maintains a SIMPLE IRA retirement plan, which provides employees earning more than \$5,000 at ICF in any prior year a tax-free vehicle to save for retirement. ICF matches employee contributions up to 3% of wages. In 2022, 11 of 14 eligible employees participated in the plan.

ICF examines starting a health insurance plan annually. So far, the math continues to point toward using whatever money we can dedicate to payroll to improve wages instead of paying for health insurance. Effective midway through 2021 was a substantial hike in the subsidy rates for individual health plans purchased through Vermont Health Connect/Affordable Care Act; in 2022 these improved subsidies were extended through 2025. Under most scenarios for employees earning less than about \$104,000 annually (everyone at ICF), employees take home substantially more money by receiving higher wages and purchasing their own plans with the improved subsidies baked into VHC. We will consider this annually, as things will change.

ICF continued to invest modestly in ergonomic and safety improvements in 2022: more small containers for harvest and packing, our new forklift, additional mechanical harvesting, and consideration and experimentation in wash-pack process.

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It is a privilege to have a farming job for which one is fairly compensated, works reasonable hours, and enjoys a supportive work environment. While not without difficulty, financial stress, or uncertainty, ICF employees have better working conditions and compensation than most agricultural workers, a regrettably low-wage industry. ICF continues to pay employees better, employ people for more of the year, and organizing work in a more fulfilling and empowering manner. That said, improving staff compensation will continue to be a top priority in ICF organizational & financial planning.

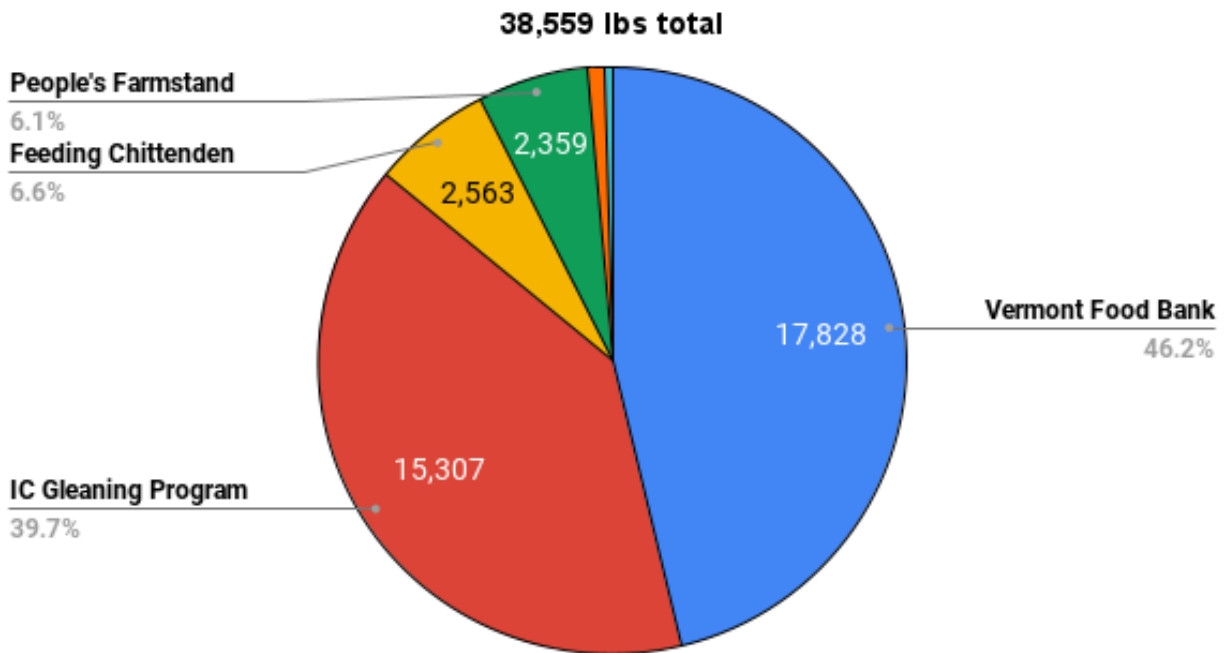
End #5: Benefits for the wider community.

COMPLIANT.

Interpretation/definition. ICF contributes to the wider community in many ways: food donations & gleaning, sharing of staff expertise and mentoring, school food field trips, research collaborations, internship placements, and a stable market for other farms. Our ‘wider community’ is primarily local, and directed toward those engaged in agriculture, food security, and education.

Long term goals. ICF hasn’t made specific long-term community outreach and community connection goals. We have aimed to increase the quantity of produce we donate, forge strong relationships with other organizations, and contribute our work and our voice in a manner that will change the food system for the good.

2022 ICF Donations & Gleaning Recipients



Data: Direct Donations. In 2022, ICF donated 38,559 pounds of produce to various recipients, up from 37,549 lbs. in 2021. Donations fluctuate annually, a function of which crops we have available (heavy or light, e.g., potatoes or salad mix?), the quality of those crops, and the labor available by the gleaning teams.

This was our 26th year of growing seedlings for the Chittenden Community Action seedling giveaway in May, and we again provided around 6000 total seedlings of tomatoes, peppers, melons, cabbage, and broccoli. We also supported the Huertas Project and the Vermont Community Garden Network with assorted seedlings, as well as other minor recipients.

Supporting Farming & Farmers. Historically, ICF serves as a technical resource and lending/leasing partner for farms in the Intervale and beyond. Just as a learning culture is important internally, we aim for that in the wider agricultural community. ICF continued as a host farm for students from the UVM Farmer Training Program in 2021, hosting 24 students for Thursday harvest and workshop from June-October. Our on-farm agricultural

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research projects were fewer this year, though we still hosted projects examining cucumber beetle control, wireworm management and pollinator counts.

On average, ICF receives 1-2 inquiries a week from local and distant farmers on some topic or another ranging from horticulture to business management to personnel; this work continued apace in 2021. ICF presented a few workshops in 2022 through NOFA-VT, VVBGA, and UVM Extension. Andy serves on the Board and Executive Committee of VVBGA as the Treasurer, and as a member of the VOF Review Committee for organic certification. Aly is a member of NOFA-VT's Farmer Resilience Grant program review committee.

Economic partners. In 2022, ICF purchased \$36,387 in local food from Trent's Bread, Does' Leap Farm, and Pigasus Farm, up about \$5,000 total from 2021. Though we receive several requests annually from new vendors, we typically do not offer other items unless they will clearly have significant demand and be logistically manageable at pickup.

Abenaki Land Link Project. ICF again grew vegetables for the Abnaki Land Link Project in 2022, growing winter squash and flint corn. We also earmarked an addition couple thousand pounds combined of ICF potatoes and carrots for Chief Don Stevens to distribute to members of the Abenaki community.

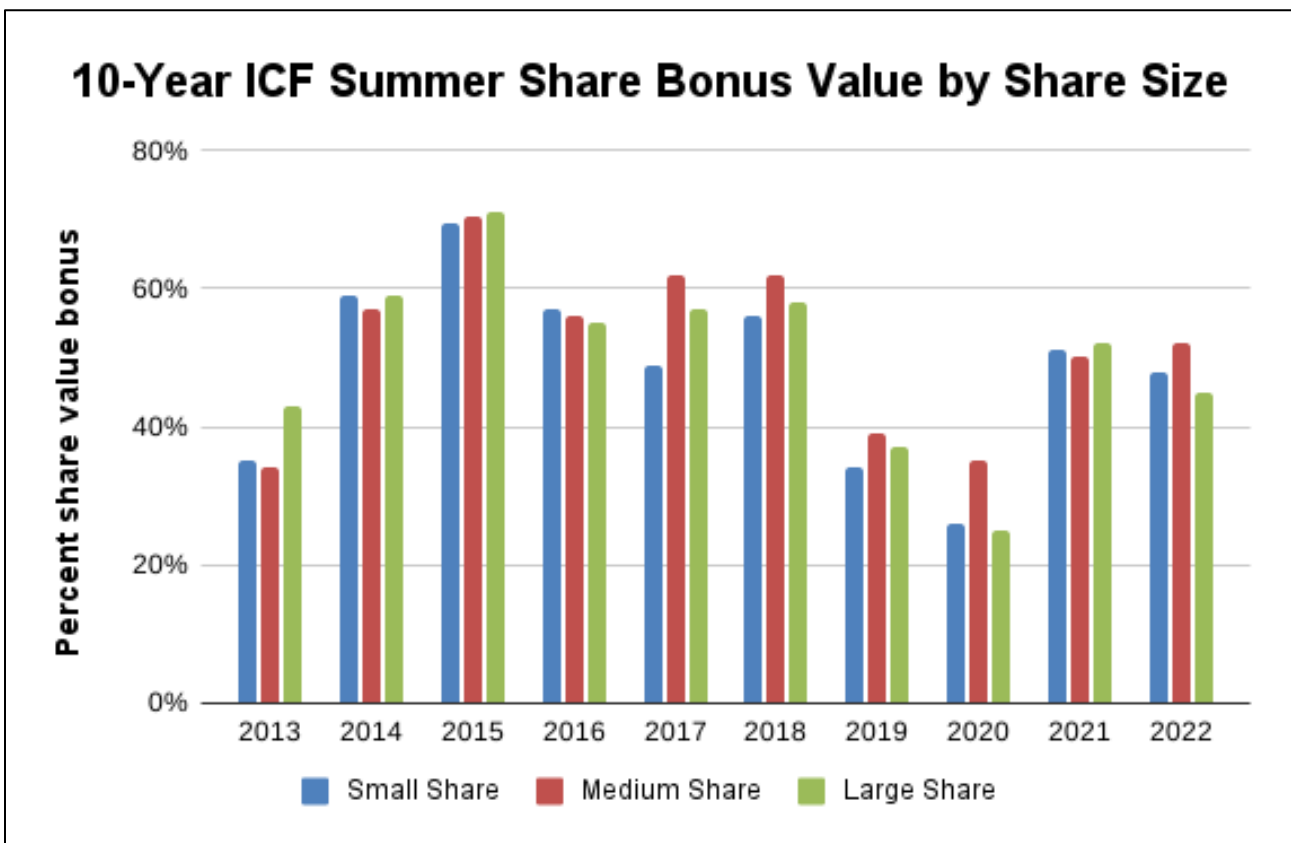
Other community partnerships. In 2023, we plan to continue working with the above organizations, and consider other partners as our goals develop and opportunities arise. ICF's strength lies in growing food, so any new partnerships will likely revolve around that.

End #6: A community farm accessible to an economically diverse membership.
COMPLIANT.

Interpretation/definition: Accessibility has several parts: affordability, transportation, awareness, and cultural suitability. An economically diverse membership would reflect the breadth of income levels in the greater Burlington community.

Data: **Affordability** at ICF has two parts: our share price vs value³ and our subsidy schemes.

Ninety three percent of recent years’ survey respondents rated ‘Economic Value’ as ‘very important’ or ‘significant’ in their list reasons to join ICF, suggesting that even those undeterred by our share prices do consider the cost of ICF produce. Aiming for the board target annual summer share value bonus of 40%, ICF raised our summer share prices 7% from 2021 to 2022, and 8% from 2022-2023. This has made our standard summer share less affordable, but as the share value summary chart shows, ICF is still a very good value for those looking for local, organic produce.



Historically, winter share values fall more consistently in the 10% range, which the Board identified as a reasonable target, though 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 have been closer to 20%.

³ We calculate share value by averaging prices from farmers’ markets, City Market, local supermarkets, and other relevant sources, using local, organic produce prices. When those are unavailable, we use local, conventional pricing, then non-local organic prices, and finally, non-local, conventional prices. For member-selected “roots choice” or “greens choice,” we use a weighted average value based on the proportions we distribute. PYO crop values are adjusted for member harvest labor, crop popularity, and typical picking rates. Each member will deviate from calculated share values based on their own crop selections and PYO behavior, but this approach provides a reasonable estimate.

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ICF reduced our Supported Share subsidies from 50% to 33% beginning in 2020, primarily to allocate more total resources to improving staff wages. Supported summer share numbers were also reduced stepwise by attrition to 5% of summer shares from the historical 10% of total, 33 shares for summer 2022. Affordable produce is easier for consumers to source through other channels in the summer months, so we opted to keep our winter share numbers higher, as a percentage of total. Supported winter shares remained at 10% of total target, though we were short at 19 shares/7% in winter 2021-2022. Even with reduced subsidies, our 33% discount and 40% (target) bonus combine to make ICF produce about as affordable as any purchase option. To improve our affordability for non-supported share households, ICF offers flexible and extended payment options to anyone requesting such, which is noted in our signup info and monthly statements.

ICF continued to serve participants from the NOFA-VT Farm Share Program (NOFA-VT's supported share program), as well as distributing to 259 participants in the NOFA-VT's Senior Farm Share program, which supplying low-moderate income seniors with small quantities of produce weekly from mid-July through mid-September.

In 2021-2022 we continued our winter delivery share program through the Family Room, funded by Vermont Food Bank and serving New American households already receiving home food delivery from the Family Room. From mid-January through early April, ICF delivered shares weekly to the Family Room for home distribution. In consultation with Family Room and VFB staff, ICF selected culturally appropriate vegetables, constrained by what we had available. The program structure has changed somewhat for the winter of 2022-2023, and future funding is not assured.

Data: Transportation. We have not directed much attention toward ensuring transportation or reducing it as a barrier. We know of a few individuals not joining ICF due to lack of transportation, but do not know the size of this pool. Rideshare service vouchers could provide an opportunity to assist supported share households, potentially underwritten by outside funding.

While a sidewalk hardly solves our transportation barriers, it would help by making the bus line on Riverside a better option, though with the bus stop still 0.6 miles uphill, I am not sure it would improve access much in real terms. The sidewalk will eventually happen, as will improved cycling infrastructure.

We could work to encourage carpools, though unless we can publicize this engagingly in our outreach and marketing materials, I don't think it would likely reduce transportation barriers for households with low-income. People will not join if they don't feel as though they can get to the ICF consistently, so they'd need to know about a good carpooling option when considering whether to join. Of course, encouraging carpooling has many other benefits germane to Ends #2&3.

Regular share delivery has been a non-starter since the 1990s, but it seems likely we could reach different people if we chose to begin delivery. Of course, vegetables are a major part of what is great about Intervale Community Farm, many other wonderful aspects would be lost with delivery. Delivery is more conceivable for the winter share, where many of our non-food qualities are absent, and I think there would be some slice of the winter share membership that would embrace this. This is particularly a possibility right now, as the Intervale Food Hub will stop retail CSA home delivery by April 1, 2023.

Data: Awareness of ICF is largely word-of-mouth. For years we have made miniscule efforts for marketing and outreach beyond our email list. As a business, we are in the enviable position of not needing to spend staff time or money crafting outside marketing materials, paying for advertising,

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etc. While a wise use of resources, it leads to a self-reinforcing membership demographic, as current members encourage their friends and families to join. If we want to expand the range of ICF members, we will need to put more effort into outreach and marketing.

NOFA-VT's Farm Share program brings members that are outside of our membership bubble, and their networks could be good for us to build on, even if NOFA-VT doesn't have the funding to place more participants at ICF. Likewise, we have a budding relationship with the Family Room, which might also be an avenue to explore.

Publicizing our supported shares more widely is always tempered by our limited supply. With our new subsidy levels and reduced number of shares, it would certainly result in turning away some current supported shares in favor of new people. It is somewhat heartbreaking to turn people away, and in prior years we have avoided publicity in part to reduce disappointment.

Data: cultural suitability. The foundational CSA identities of shared risk, pre-payment, and limited selection presuppose a particular cultural perspective, as well as an economic one. While we can change our outreach, our payment policies, and such, it will be important for us to consider how inclusive we can be with our on-farm CSA model and with crops that we currently grow.