



STATE OF VERMONT

AGENCY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD & MARKETS

Office of the Secretary

Telephone: (802) 828-1619 Fax: (802) 828-2361

October 20, 2011

Dear NEASDA Reception Attendee,

It's been several months since the NEASDA meeting took place in Vermont, and as our thank you letters were ready to be sent, Tropical Storm Irene arrived in our state with much force. As you know, Vermont's communities and farms were hit especially hard, and our recovery efforts will continue for quite some time. What has resulted from this natural disaster is an amazing resiliency, demonstrated by Vermonters across the state, in great part due to the outpouring of support from thousands of volunteers, businesses, organizations, and state employees, all of whom stepped up to the plate to help rebuild Vermont. One effort that was quickly mobilized by the Vermont Agency of Agriculture and the Vermont Community Foundation is the [VT Farm Disaster Relief Fund](#). To date, two rounds of payments have been sent to VT farmers.

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude for your participation in our celebration of agriculture at the NEASDA Vermont Specialty Food Reception. Our NEASDA team worked hard to showcase some of Vermont's finest farms and foods, and to bring together leading experts for cutting edge discussions on the Farm Bill, National Dairy Legislation, Vermont's Farm to Plate strategic plan, and Regional Initiatives that are models for the nation. A highlight of NEASDA was surely our spectacular display of Vermont foods at the reception!

It truly is an exciting time to be involved in agriculture. Vermont is putting its stake in the ground as a leader and model for the country that represents a robust, economically viable, socially and environmentally responsible and healthy food system. The renewed partnership between the VT Agency of Agriculture and VT Agency of Commerce and Community Development will vertically integrate the surge in emerging agricultural businesses and the economic development boom occurring in the Vermont food system.

Thank you for your engagement and support of the Vermont Food System. I am excited to continue our great work and partnerships moving forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Chuck Ross", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Chuck Ross
Vermont Secretary of Agriculture

