

Updated October 12 , 2020

The Western MA Regenerative Food System is part of a Northeast movement to support healthy soil/climate/people/food.

Our vision is to grow 30% of Western MA food regeneratively by 2030 (that's why we call it "Thirty by Thirty"). We aim to:

- Connect/support local farms
- Train farmers in regenerative practices
- Expand infrastructure for distribution, refrigeration, storage
- Educate all ages about regenerative food and farming (partners so far: UMass, Sterling College, Bennington College)
- Ensure access to quality food for all
- Grow awareness of systemic racism and other inequities in the food system
- Honor indigenous history and peoples of our region
- Fill in edges by addressing energy and transportation (e.g. distribution with solar-charged electric trucks)

Regional vision:

Southern VT hub is well underway (some partners: [Food Connects](#), [Studio Hill Farm](#) and other farms and organizations).

Soon: Albany, NY area

Later: Rest of MA and other New England states

Ultimately: The Northeast region, linking with mid-Atlantic

To learn more, inquire about a Listening Session

Our Working Group meets monthly

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Financial support may be available through Regenerative Food Network, a business of [Ambata Capital Partners](#). Michael Philipp and his colleagues bring an investment and development perspective from their history of building renewable energy projects. They believe they can help farmers, food producers, and local communities come together with the right investors to enhance the scale and efficiency of their current operations. They believe this journey will provide economic benefits to the community, healthy food for the region, and climate resilience for the planet.

More details:

A group of vertical partners (meat, dairy, grain farmers) will help create a viable business model. For example, farmers in a 30-50 mile radius can share processing, distribution, and marketing infrastructure. The network can expand by adding multiple nodes in other regions. Farmers in eastern NY, NW Mass, and Southern VT have 2 options:

1 - Participate in the initial nodes being built if you are close enough to share the **processing infrastructure** being built in Bennington, VT ( phase 1).

2 -Work with Ambata Capital Partners to identify your own group of farmers and become one of the expansion nodes of the Regenerative Food Network plan (phase 2)

Finance infrastructure will be based on loans/debt, equity and grants so that the community gets what is needed in efficient ways. Ownership models will vary, depending on how each producer/group wants to be involved and how far up the vertical. As of May 2020, Ambata is partnering in Vermont with Jesse McDougall, [Studio Hill Farm](#) (meat and sheepskin), [Naga Bakehouse](#) (grains), [Larson Farm](#) (dairy). Then they will build out shared infrastructure that multiple farmers can use. Options can be just farming and selling or being involved with a group of local farmers that have a stake in the project (e.g. cooperative model). Also, tying together the three verticals means profits going back to farmers in the community through the Foundation.

This regenerative holistic approach will be needed more than ever in a post-COVID world which will necessitate intense institutional experimentation, a need for deep systems thinking and sensitivity to food access/sovereignty all while taking care of the soil - in order to provide for a just and healthy human future on this planet.

Ambata comes at this from the renewable energy and project finance perspective and have a long interest and involvement in conservation through WWF and Nature Conservancy so it was great to discover the possibilities for transforming our food system to not only be solution to climate change but also the positive effects it can have on human health, rural economic development, and social justice too.

RFN takes a big picture view and partners with farmers, food producers, food systems companies and workers, and communities to identify and empower the great work that they are doing individually and find ways to multiply their impact by connecting them together and supporting them through a regional network of independent but interconnected local regenerative food systems. RFN aims to act as a catalyst and to bridge the gaps that exist today in areas like education, finance, and infrastructure.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UJpR-GHyuFA>  
<https://jeffersonhub.com/regenerative-food-network-webinar/>