



## About the Neighboring Food Co-op Association

The Neighboring Food Co-op Association (NFCA) is a network of food co-ops committed to a shared vision of a thriving regional economy, rooted in a healthy, just and sustainable food system and a vibrant community of co-operative enterprise.

### Membership

The NFCA includes over **30 food co-ops and start-ups in Vermont, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Massachusetts and Connecticut** (for a map, visit [www.nfca.coop](http://www.nfca.coop)).

Our co-ops are member-owned and democratically governed grocery stores ranging from large, multiple storefront retailers to smaller community markets and start-up initiatives that have not yet opened their doors. Most of our co-ops have been in operation for more than 20 years with a couple founded in the 1930s and '40s. Despite our difficult economy, **many of our member co-ops are expanding** and new stores have been launched in just the past few years.

Co-ops have also been leaders in the development of **natural, organic, local and Fair Trade food movements** in our region, across the country and around the world.

### Shared Economic Impact

Our food co-ops have a combined **membership of more than 80,000 individuals, employ over 1,500 people, and have annual revenues of \$200 million** ([nfca.coop/about](http://nfca.coop/about)). An independent study found that in 2007, when the NFCA included just 17 co-ops, our association already had a significant impact on the regional economy:

- **Support of Local Economies...**
  - Aggregate **sales were \$161 million** (2007), with a median of \$3 million and an average of \$9.5 million. The median growth rate over the previous three years was 14%.
  - Purchases of more than **\$33 million in local products**, including \$10 million in fresh farm products, \$18 million in locally-processed foods and \$5 million in other products.
- **Stable Employment and Services...**
  - **\$28.6 million in employee wages**, with the average wage being 18% higher than the average for food and beverage stores in the same states.
  - Co-ops had **lower staff turnover** (36%) when compared to supermarkets (59%) and **more staff employed fulltime** (62% compared to 43% in supermarkets).
  - Taken together, member food co-ops in Vermont are among the **top 25 employers** in the state.
- **Support of Local Government and Infrastructure...**
  - ... including \$7.3 million in sales, excise, and other taxes, \$434,000 by employees, and \$500,000 in property taxes.

### What We're Doing

The NFCA facilitates collaboration among our member co-ops, promotes co-operative enterprise, and partners with likeminded organizations to advance our vision. Special projects include **Healthy Food Access** for underserved communities and **Regional Sourcing** initiatives focused on local artisan cheeses and frozen fruits and vegetables ([nfca.coop/projects](http://nfca.coop/projects)).

Following on the momentum of the UN International Year of Co-operatives in 2012, we are working to promote the International Co-operative Alliance's vision for a **Co-operative Decade** and co-ops becoming the fastest growing business model by 2020 ([nfca.coop/decade](http://nfca.coop/decade)).



### Partnerships & Networks

The NFCA works with networks across the region such as the Northeast Organic Farming Association, the Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Working Group and Vermont's Farm to Plate initiative. As an affiliate member of the **New England Farmers Union**, we are committed to joining the voices of producers and consumers in seeking policies that support family farming and fisheries, and co-operative enterprise as a tool for sustainable food systems and communities.

The NFCA is committed to **collaboration among co-ops**, working with partners including the National Cooperative Grocers Association, Cooperative Fund of New England, Organic Valley, Cabot, Deep Root Organic Co-op, Equal Exchange, UMASS Five College Federal Credit Union and the Valley Alliance of Worker Co-ops. The NFCA is a founding member of the **Valley Co-operative Business Association** and a participant in the **University of Massachusetts Co-operative Enterprise Collaborative**.

### Board of Directors & Staff

The NFCA is a second level co-operative and our work is guided by the shared vision of our member co-ops and overseen by an elected board of directors. Our staff includes Erbin Crowell, Executive Director, and Bonnie Hudspeth, Membership & Outreach.