

The Quest for B(eph): Sourcing from Local Farms

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Land Acknowledgment

We respectfully acknowledge that Williams College stands on the ancestral homelands of the Stockbridge Munsee Mohicans, who are the indigenous peoples of the region now called Williamstown. After being forced from their homelands, the Mohicans continued as a sovereign Tribal Nation in Wisconsin, where they currently reside. We honor and respect their ancestors, past and present, as we, the Williamstown community, become a more inclusive and equitable space for everyone.



Content Warning

Throughout this presentation we will be discussing:

- Slaughter of Cattle
- Meat yields and various cuts
- Logistics of meat production



If you find any of these topics distressing, you are welcome to take the space you need, no questions asked.

Project Goals

1. **Determine** the feasibility of meeting Williams' beef demand
2. **Address** logistical complexities of transition
3. **Build** a comprehensive, equitable plan and potential timeline
4. **Engage** with the College's Strategic Plan to meet the College's sustainability pillars

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graph LR; A[Farmers] --> B[Slaughter/Processing]; B --> C[Distribution]; C --> D[Consumer]
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Farmers

Slaughter/Processing

Distribution

Consumer

Roadmap/Process

- History of Agriculture in the Berkshires
- Challenges in Farming
- Challenges in Williams Dining Services
- Williams' Sustainability Pillars
- Potential Solutions



Hilltop Farm, Pownal VT

Farming in the Berkshires

- Abundant Pastures
- Soil Quality
- Growing Season
- Farmland Loss

*Local Dairy and Cattle farms
are struggling!*



Sweetbrook Farm

Berkshire Beef and Dairy Industry

<i>USDA, 2017, Berkshire County</i>								
	Heads of Cattle per Operation							
	1-9	10-19	20-49	50-99	100-199	200-499	500+	Total
Beef	65	14	10	3	-	-	-	92
Dairy	13	3	5	5	6	3	1	36

Local Beef Supply

- Small Family Beef Operations
- Dairy Culls

21% of commercial beef nationally comes from the dairy industry, so we cannot discount our local dairies in this project of beef purchasing!

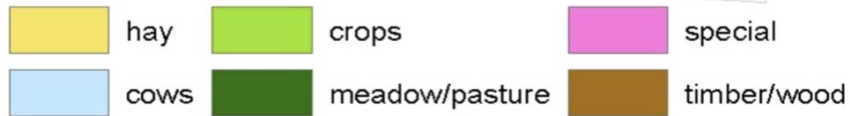
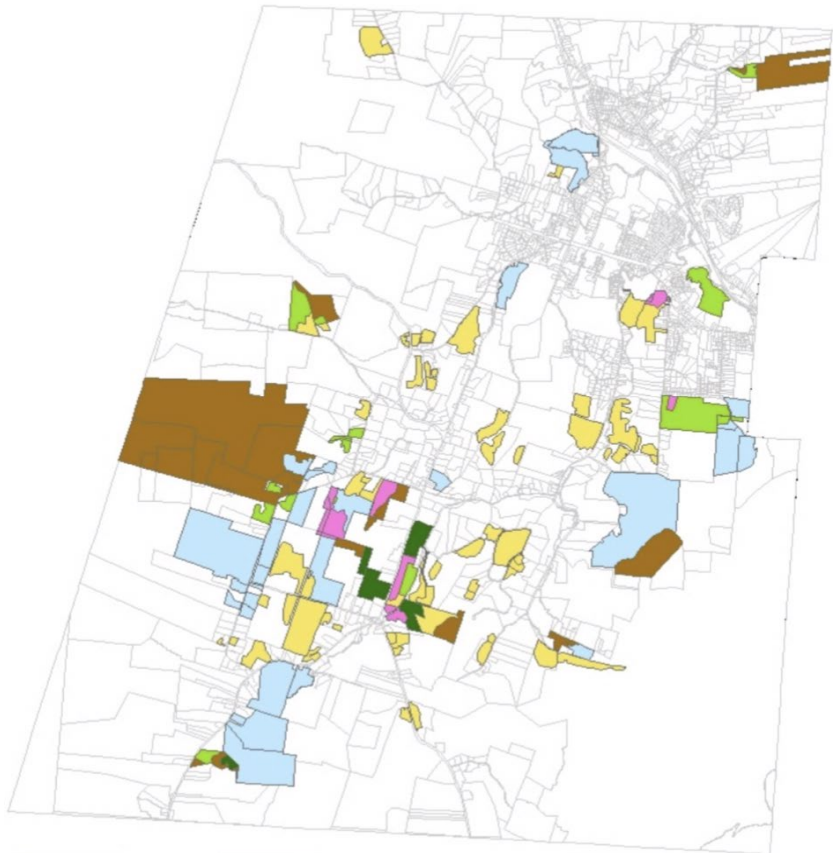


(<https://www.dairybusiness.com/dairy-cattle-a-big-part-of-us-beef-supply/>)

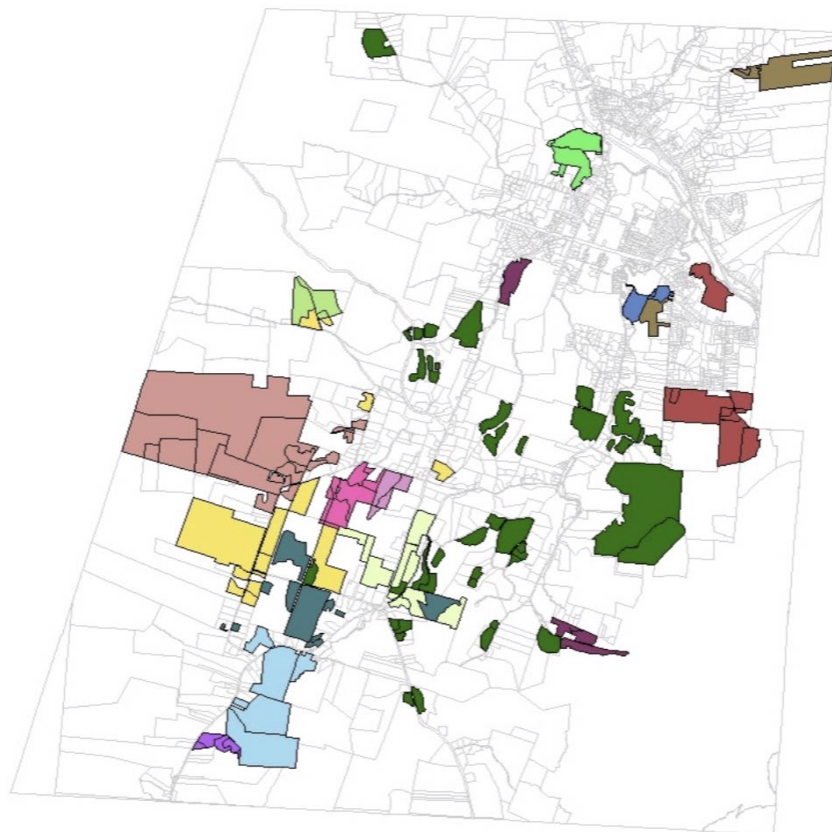
Hilltop Farm

(Elizabeth Bigham, Juan Rebolledo, Nicholas Sommer, 2020)

Agricultural Use



Farms in Williamstown



Farm	Location	Operation	Farm Size (acres)	Herd Size	Scaling Up Potential
Hilltop	Pownal, VT	Dairy, beef, maple syrup, pork, chickens	500	33 cows for beef + another dairy herd	Yes
Cricket Creek	Williamstown, MA	Dairy, beef, pork, farm store	500	~80 dairy animals	-
Hemlock Farms	Williamstown, MA	Beef	360	-	40 cows max.
Sweetbrook	Williamstown, MA	Beef, maple syrup, farm stand	120	7 heifers, 6 feeders	20-40 heads, sell 12-14 heads wholesale
Chenail's	Williamstown, MA	Dairy	400	180	Max Capacity
Fairfield	Williamstown, MA	Dairy and Crops	1400-1800	450	Scale up Beef

Farm Practices: Grass -fed Beef

- Farm-Grown Feed
 - Finishing
- Rotating Pasture
- Regular Health and Safety Inspection



Sweetbrook Farm

Farm Practices: Dairy



Hilltop Farm

- Grass or grain-based feed
- Safe Housing Density
- Regular Health and Safety Inspection
- Animal lifespan
- Culls

“The Foodprint of Dairy,” https://foodprint.org/reports/the-foodprint-of-dairy/#section_2

Regenerative Cattle Farming

Holistic farming practices to improve air and water quality, increase biodiversity, and sequester carbon in the soil

1. ecosystem resilience
 2. soil health
 3. farm productivity
 4. economic & environmental benefits
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Beef: The Epic Journey from Farm to Plate

Farmers

- Dairy or Beef
- Finishing

Slaughter/Processing

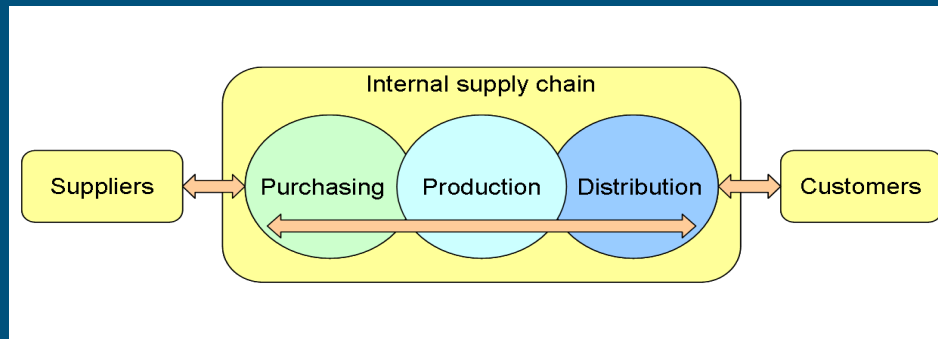
- Certification
- Process into various cuts

Distribution

- Storage/Freezer
- Transportation
- Institutional Partnerships

Consumer

- Enjoy!
- Provide consistent market



Williams College Beef Usage

Cuts	Pounds Per Year (Yearly Average)
Ground Beef	23,000
Hamburger	6,000
Eye Round	6,000
Top Round	4,000
Beef Brisket*	2,000
Short Rib*	1,000
Flank Steak*	1,000
Total	43,000

In sum, to meet (meat) current usage would look like 100+ of heads of cattle!

Holy Cow!



Current Purchasing Impacts

- Large Corporate Distributors (with large CO₂ footprint!)
 - 3x/week delivery
 - Far freezers
- CAFOs
- GMO Grain Feed, Monocropping
 - Feed transportation across country



Why Source Local Beef?



Cricket Creek Farm

- Preserve agricultural land
- Support local economy with **market resiliency**
- Food access
- Better food safety

*Investment in regenerative agriculture is investment
in sustainability!*

Peer Institutions to Look to



- Smith/Hampshire/Mount Holyoke/Westfield State
 - “Whole Animals for the Whole Region”
 - \$250k Kendall Foundation Grant
- Middlebury
 - Direct beef purchasing from farms
- UMass Amherst
 - “UMass Healthy and Sustainable Food System Initiative”
 - \$485k Kendall Grant to renovate dining facilities, permaculture conference, increase local purchasing



University of
Massachusetts
Amherst

BE REVOLUTIONARY™

Sourcing Local and **Williams** Strategic Plan

1. Define academic excellence
2. Provide complete education
3. Expand access & affordability
4. Engage alumni
5. *Substantially increasing our commitments to Sustainability and to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Accessibility as fundamental society challenges*



Supply Questions in Sourcing Local Beef

- Volume
- Consistency of Markets
- Distribution Partners

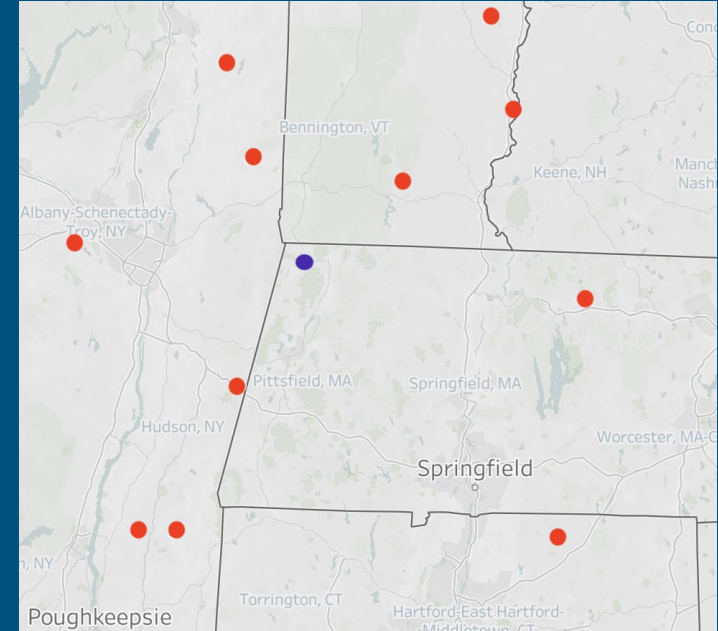


Cricket Creek Farm Store

Logistical Problems

- Processing
- Storage
- Delivery

So what can we do to help scale up all links on the custody chain?



Map of USDA certified Slaughterhouses.
Courtesy of the USDA.

Our Proposals for Meeting Demands

Starting Small

- Zeroing in on Ground Beef
 - Highest % yield per animal
 - Largest portion of Dining needs
- Staggering the Timeline
 - Reasonable speed on both purchasing and production ends
 - Yearly expansion goals and consistent opportunities to re-evaluate and re-affirm relationships!



Timeline for Scaling Up

Phase 1: Pilot Program

Purchase beef from local producers for special events

Summer/Fall
2023

Fall 2023-Spring 2025

Phase 2: Contracts and Scaling Up

Phase 3: Partial Implementation

Local Beef on Students' Plates

Fall 2025



Ultimate Fantasy

Boss Level :

Source 100% of Beef Needs Locally

Pilot Program

Direct Purchasing

- Williams purchases directly from individual farms.
- Highlights local farm at special events.
- Introduces community to local beef.

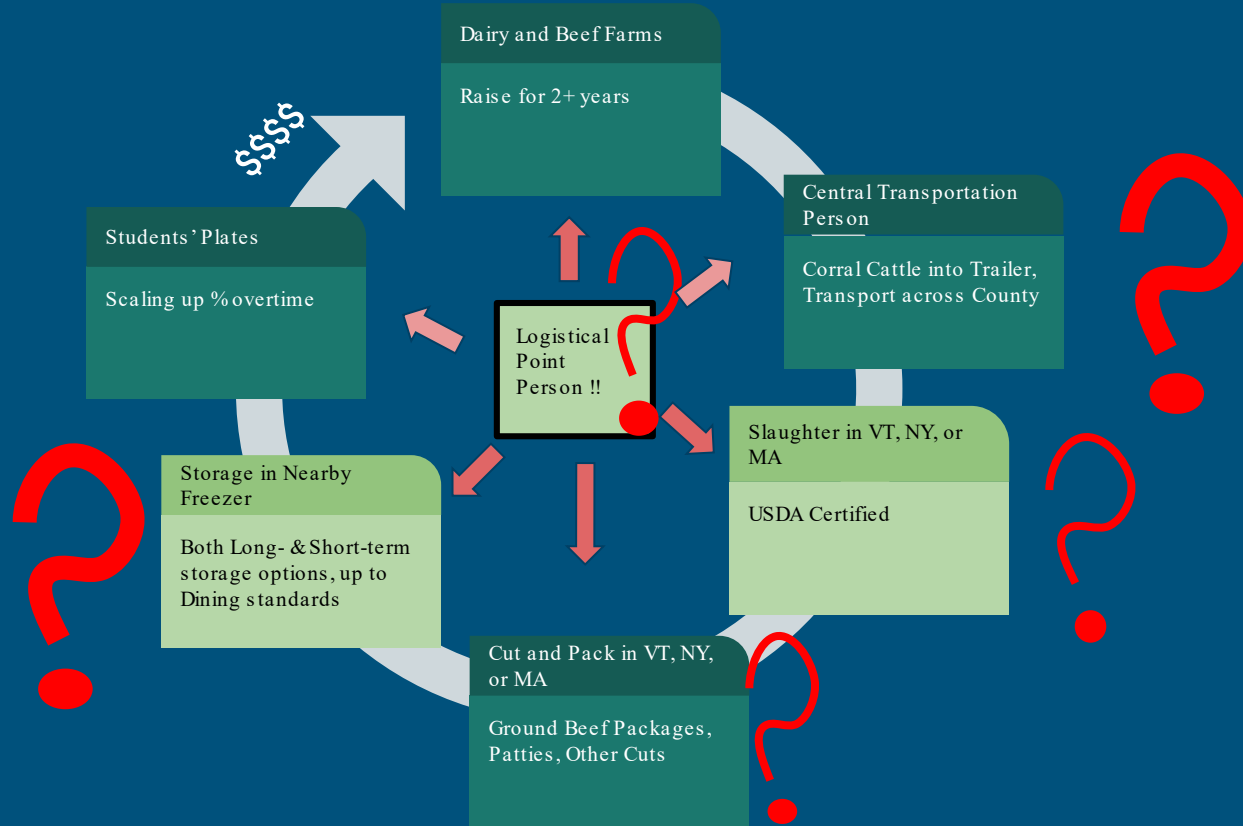
Short-Term Storage

- Distribution partners
- Onsite storage
- Farm storage

Special Events

- First Days BBQ, Parents Weekend, Commencement, Reunion, First/Last Day of Classes
- Grilling on-site
- Farmers present at event!

Supply Chain for Williams B(eph)



Potential Partners

- Processing Relationships
 - Hilltown -- Canaan, NY
 - Eagle Bridge -- Eagle Bridge, NY
 - Higley Hill -- Wilmington, VT
- Distribution Infrastructure
 - Tory Hill
 - Southshire Meats -- Bennington, VT
 - Ginsberg's
- Transportation
 - Farmer point-person
 - Large enough trailer
- Storage
 - Williams Freezer
- Funding/Up-Front Investments



Project Impact Wrap -Up

In buying local beef, Dining Services supports:

- **Protecting** agricultural land
- **Minimizing** carbon footprint from transport
- **Building** relationships with local farmers
- **Investing** in regenerative farming economy
- **Retaining** social and economic diversity within the rapidly gentrifying Berkshire County
- **Improving** student Dining Experiences
- **Connecting** students to the foods that fuel them



Special Thanks!

- Averill Cook -- Wendling Farm
- Crystal Gardner -- Hilltop Farm
- Jay Galusha & Justin Jennings -- Fairfield Farm
- Wally Chenail -- Chenail Brothers Farm
- Topher Sabot -- Cricket Creek Farm
- David Young -- Young Farm
- Sarah and Darryl Lipinski -- Sweetbrook Farm
- Temesgen Araya -- Williams Dining Director
- Mark Thompson -- Executive Chef
- Mike Webster -- Tory Hill CEO
- Ashley Randle -- Dept. Commissioner MDAR
- Donald Campbell -- Vermont Land Trust

And of course, Professor Sarah Gardner!

Sources (check out our report for more!)

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