

Vermont

Business Programs • Value Added Producer Grant

With Faith in Fertile Ground, Maple Wind Farm Grows Up

Bruce Hennessey, co-Owner of Maple Wind Farm in Richmond, Vermont, was not born into an agricultural family. He did, however, learn to love the land and its creatures during a childhood reared in upstate New York. Following his heart outdoors, his career as an experiential educator and camp director culminated in the idyllic farm he now operates with wife Beth Whiting. Recently, with help from a \$250,000 grant received through the [USDA Value Added Producer Grant program \(VAPG\)](#), they'll be able to support and expand Maple Wind's operations by selling directly to consumers.

"Beth and I bought land in (nearby town) Huntington while I was still directing the same kid's camp in the Adirondacks I loved during my childhood," Bruce remembers. "We wanted to establish a travel adventure service, but we also wanted to use the land more purposefully. The adventure business lost out."

Maple Wind Farm produces '100% Grass-fed beef and pasture-raised, non-GMO pork, chicken, turkey and eggs—all raised on lush, green Vermont pastures.' Though the diverse, wholesome products reveal high-quality care and the health-conscious ethos of those who do the caring, the farm was anything but when Bruce and Beth signed for the title in 1999.

"The first problem was just getting the place to a point of operation," Bruce explains. "It was a hilltop farm, so the land is steep and sloped with rocks and stones and it's impossible to brush hog. I'm used to having horses as grazers, but we regenerated the soil with rotational sheep and cattle grazing, like the practices popularized by Alan Savory and Stan Parsons. As part of the value we offer, the regeneration and sustenance of the Earth is one of our selling points."

The VAPG will allow Bruce and Beth to add regional retail markets to their local wholesale accounts, with products stocked from New England village stores to metro New York grocery chains. VAPGs help agricultural producers increase income through processing and marketing new products, and creating and expanding marketing opportunities.

Another reason for Maple Wind Farm's success is the people of their community. "We're blessed by a tremendous amount of support from neighbors that we've intentionally developed around the farm and our products. Beth is a huge part of that. There have been a lot of challenges over the years but every time we had the social capital to get some help."



Bruce Hennessey and Beth Whiting use sustainable agricultural practices to raise their beef, chicken, turkey and pork on Maple Wind Farm in Richmond, VT

Date of Obligation: 8/30/21

Congressional District: Rep. Welch, Vermont; Sen. Leahy and Sen. Sanders

Impact:

Bruce Hennessey and Beth Whiting received a \$250,000 Value Added Producer Grant to expand markets for their pasture-raised meat products sold under the Maple Wind Farm label in Richmond, VT. Soil regeneration and healthy food are top priorities for this industrious pair.