



## NH Local Foods: Tracie's Community Farm



According to USDA Deputy Secretary Kathleen Merrigan and NH Commissioner of Agriculture, Lorraine Merrill, "one out of three New Hampshire farms has a woman as principal operator: nearly a 50 percent increase since 2002, and more than twice the national average." They credit the success of women farmers in NH to the creative approaches they use, like Community Supported Agriculture (CSAs). Per capita, NH ranks second in the nation for its numbers of women farmers.

For the past fifteen years, Tracie's Community Farm has been producing diversified organic vegetables on its thirty-three-acre farm located in NH's Monadnock region. Owner/operator Tracie Smith also runs a 320+ family summer CSA (Community Supported Agriculture), a 90 member fall CSA, and a 30+ member spring CSA along with a farm stand and farm store. She manages and helps educate a hardworking, enthusiastic, self-motivated team of employees and volunteers.

Tracie studied Environmental Horticulture at the University of New Hampshire and began farming at age 19. Over the years Tracie's vision of sustainable farming has been put into practice at her farm that provides local, healthy food for the surrounding community as well as education for employees, volunteers and local residents.



Tracie began working with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service in 2010 to create a Conservation Plan for her farm. Since then, she has implemented numerous conservation practices with NRCS financial assistance including: building a high tunnel to extend the growing season, reduce energy consumption, improve plant condition, eliminate pesticide use, and minimize organic matter depletion and soil erosion. Also with NRCS help, she built a roof runoff structure to collect runoff from the high tunnel and prevent soil erosion and excess water from impacting the crops growing in the structure, along with an underground outlet to discharge the collected runoff from the high tunnel at a stable outlet to prevent soil erosion. On her land, she planted and maintains grassed and lined waterways and conservation cover and cover crops to minimize erosion and nutrient loss.



Tracie's Community Farm CSA and the surrounding community share in a mutually beneficial relationship where members purchase a share at the beginning of the season, providing the farm with money to buy seeds and supplies, and a guaranteed customer base throughout the season. In return, members receive a share of the farm's freshly harvested, local, quality, in-season produce each week from people they know and trust, while keeping agriculture alive and well in their community. By supporting your local farms, like Tracie's, you are investing in keeping food available in your community into the future. Tracie also created a share care fund to supplement the cost of shares to families in need. Last year, members donated \$1,160 to help pay for part of the shares of three families and two large family shares for the Jaffrey Food Pantry.



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To create a diverse, living environment for healthy plant growth, Tracie adds compost and other organic matter. In order to protect the delicate balance between beneficial insects and pests, the greater environment, and the health of those who come in contact with the vegetables, her farm does not use herbicides, chemical insecticides, or fungicides. Pest problems are prevented through crop rotation, row covers, and timely cultivation. Cover crops are used to prevent erosion, add organic matter to the soil, and to capture nutrients that would otherwise be lost to leaching.

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**Some local foods available at the Farm: Mesclun, Herbs,  
 Baby Lettuce Mix, Chard, Kale, Raspberries, Blueberries,  
 Flowers, Bread, Eggs, Maple Syrum.**

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service  
[www.nh.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.nh.nrcs.usda.gov)