



Strolling of the Heifers



Why eat local food?

Not just because it tastes better and is healthier, but because **knowing your farmers and food producers is good for your soul.**

Because knowing where your food comes from helps you **understand your connection** to your community, your bioregion, your Earth.



The inspiration

“Only, you have to do something about this,” Dwight Miller told his neighbor, Orly Munzing, back in 2001 as they strolled through Miller’s Dummerston, Vermont orchard. “Farmers are slowly going out of business. People don’t know where their food comes from. If they knew how hard farming is, they’d support their local farmers.”

Munzing took Miller’s words to heart, and then she had an inspiration. She had recently visited Pamplona, Spain, site of the famous Running of the Bulls. As a way of honoring and supporting

local farmers, she envisioned a slower, friendlier, female version of the Running of the Bulls – the Strolling of the Heifers. Farmers would bring their heifer calves, lead them up the historic Main Street of nearby Brattleboro, and afterward, there would be a festival where people could meet the farmers and learn about local foods.



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A parade turns into a movement

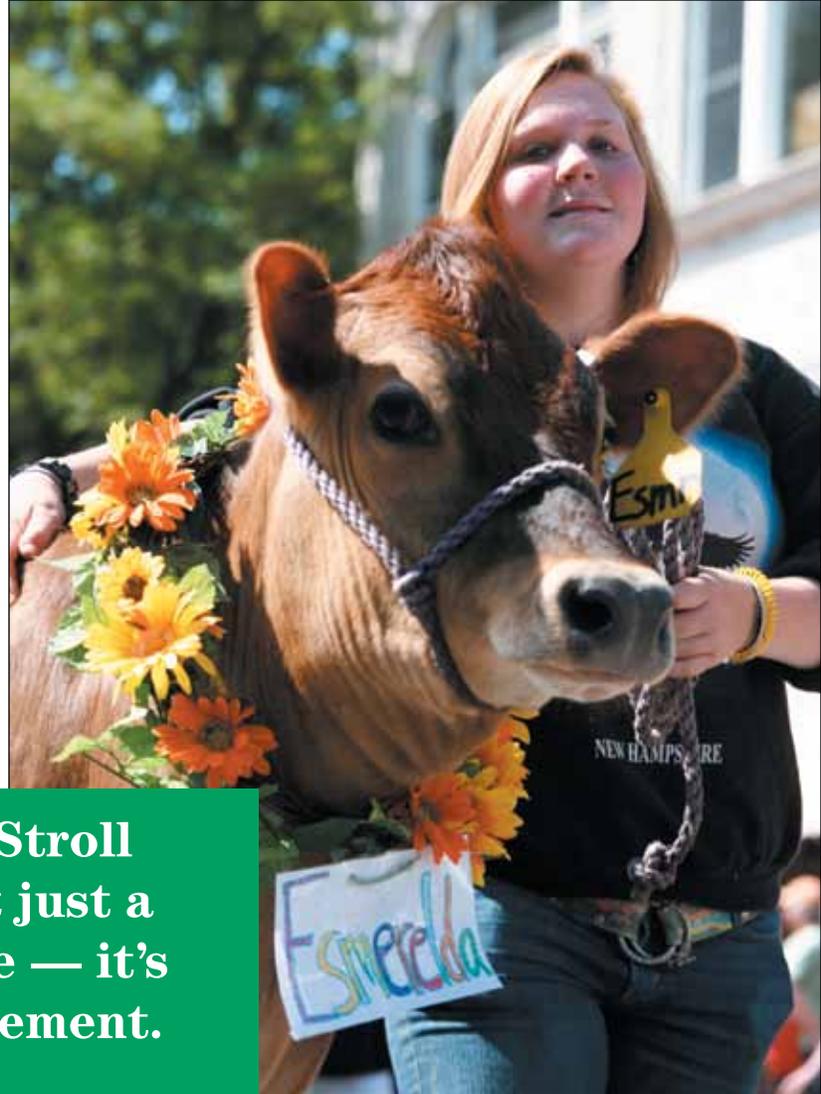
Munzing went to work with a team of volunteers, and the first Strolling of the Heifers parade and festival took place in 2002. The word “locavore” had not yet been invented (it came along in 2005).

But from the beginning, the point of Strolling of the Heifers was to support and sustain family farms by connecting people with healthy local food, and by showcasing the farmers and food producers who bring it to them.

The annual Stroll Weekend

Today, Strolling of the Heifers Weekend (June 7-9, 2013) is the centerpiece of our annual cycle of programs and events – it's the big, fun, public way we offer for people to connect with farmers and producers of healthy local food.

It's a weekend of fun and education for the whole family, built around the world-famous, agriculturally-themed Strolling of the Heifers Parade, which takes place Saturday, June 8 at 10 a.m. sharp on Brattleboro's historic Main Street. The



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parade features scores of lovable heifer calves led by future farmers, followed by many other farm animals, bands, tractors, floats, clowns and much more. When it's

over, the crowd follows the parade to the all-day 11-acre Slow Living Expo for food, music, dance, demonstrations, exhibits and fun, all related to our mission of sustaining family farms by connecting people with healthy local food.

The weekend also includes a Friday Night Street Festival, the Tour de Heifers – a set of scenic and challenging farm-to-farm cycling tours, and the Farm/Food/Fiber Tour, a self-guided exploration of farms and food producers in our region.





What We Do

Now in its second decade, Strolling of the Heifers has grown from a small-town parade into a regional movement with year-round programs and events.

The Stroll is not just a parade – it's a movement. We work year-round to encourage entrepreneurship and innovation at farm and food businesses, to connect people and organizations of many kinds around sustainable living and resilient communities, and to promote the value of local food systems, local thinking and Slow Living.

Here's an overview of our focus areas and accomplishments:

Educational Grants

In the early years of the Stroll, from 2002 to 2007, the organization offered small educational grants to Brattleboro-area teachers, to help them bring agricultural topics into the classroom. Ranging from school gardens to class trips to farms, these programs became so popular that in most cases they became part of the schools' standard curricula and the Windham County Farm-to-School program.

Beginning Farmer Apprenticeships

A program to place at-risk youth into farm-based summer apprenticeships, the Beginning Farmer

Apprentice Program (BFAP), was launched in 2009 with a USDA grant secured by Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, and operated for several summers with support from private foundations. As a result of discussions that began around BFAP, the Windham Regional Career Center in 2011 launched its Program in Agriculture and Sustainable Foods (only the second Vermont career center to offer one), and BFAP was folded into its community mentorship program.

Locavore Index

Our Strolling of the Heifers Locavore Index, first published in 2012, is an annual ranking of the 50 states in terms of their commitment to local foods. Its purpose is to encourage local-food advocates in all states to work for improvement



in access to healthy food from local sources such as farms, farmers markets and CSAs. Widely publicized, stories on the 2012 Index appeared in many newspapers and websites, and spawned many posts on food-related blogs around the country. Vermont, the Stroll's home state, ranked No. 1 in the index, followed by Iowa, Montana, Maine and Hawaii.

Art & Music

We strongly believe the arts are an integral part of building sustainable communities. We invite artists of all kinds to participate in our Parade, our Slow Living Expo, our Slow Living Summit, and other events and programs. Right now (through May 2013), the Strolling of the Heifers Farm Art exhibit graces the halls of Brattleboro Memorial Hospital. A new Farm Art show at multiple Brattleboro locations will have its grand

opening during Stroll Weekend. And at the Slow Living Expo on Parade day, people enjoy the sounds of some of our region's best musicians!

Slow Living Summit

Exploring more mindful communities: The Slow Living Summit is a conference focused on the development of nurturing and mutually supportive communities, bioregions and economic systems. It happens each year just before Stroll Weekend, in the congenial environs of downtown Brattleboro. At the Summits we have heard from many great speakers and thinkers, including Bill McKibben, Charles Eisenstein, Woody Tasch, Gary Hirshberg, Sen. Bernie Sanders, Gov. Peter Shumlin, David Orr, John Restakis and many others.



Business Plan Competition

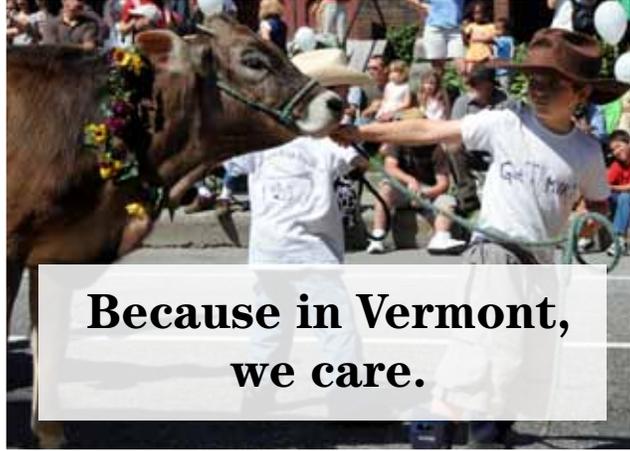
Our Farm/Food Business Plan Competition spurs innovation and entrepreneurship at family farms, specialty food producers, restaurants and other food enterprises throughout Vermont. Launched in 2011 as a southeastern Vermont regional program (in partnership with the Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation), the competition expanded to central Vermont in 2012 (in partnership with Vermont Technical College), and will go statewide in 2013. We're proud of the success that many of our past winners have had in improving and expanding their businesses.

The Vermont Brand

A highly recognizable brand and logo that promotes the quality and values of Vermont-originated food and forest products – this something we are working to establish in

collaboration with a group of Vermont farmers and food producers. A natural addition to our program and event offerings, the branding project is consistent with our mission of supporting farmers and food producers by connecting people with healthy local food. The companies that display the Vermont brand will pledge

to aspire in their business practices to bring you products that represent a quality of life that all Vermonters are proud to present to the world. Because in Vermont, we care.



**Because in Vermont,
we care.**

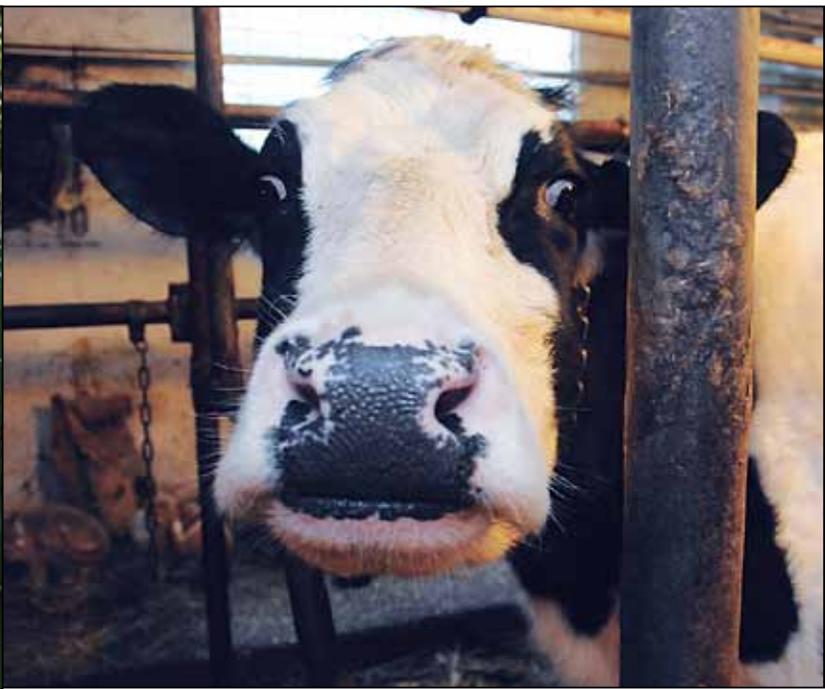




Microloans for Farmers

A farm-oriented microlending program, The Strolling of the Heifers Microloan Fund, was launched in 2008 using the proceeds of several benefit concerts featuring the legendary

folksinger Pete Seeger, his grandson Tao Rodriguez-Seeger, Guy Davis, Paul Winter, and John Sebastian. The program “graduated from the Stroll” in 2011, and continues to be operated by The Carrot Project of Somerville, Mass., which has expanded it throughout New England.





Strolling of the Heifers

Leadership and Contacts

Honorary Chairs:



Gov. Peter Shumlin



Sen. Patrick Leahy



Sen. Bernard
Sanders



Rep. Peter Welch



Roger Allbee, former
Vermont Secretary of
Agriculture

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Maurice Casey
Joe Famolare
Steve Sayer
Greg Worden

Founder and Executive Director:



Orly Munzing
105 Partridge Road, E.
Dummerston VT 05346
Office & Cell: 802-258-7070
Email: orlymunzing@gmail.com

