

For immediate release 5/30/24

2024 VT Agriculture Hall of Fame

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Vermont Ag Hall of Fame Announces 2024 Inductees

Essex Junction, VT- It is with great pleasure to introduce the 2024 Vermont Agricultural Hall of Fame Inductees. With over 20 years of history and over 100 inductees, the Ag Hall of Fame is an honored tradition among Vermont farmers and growers, service providers, and dedicated employees. Over the last few years the categories have been expanded to include an Emerging Leader under the age of 40, an Ag Innovator and up to three inductees in the Lifetime Achievement category. The thoughtfulness of each nomination makes for competitive judging each year. The 2024 inductees will be celebrated during the Champlain Valley Fair later this summer.



2024 Emerging Leader: This category highlights those who are stepping up to become the next generation of agricultural leaders in Vermont. Age 40 or younger (born after June 1, 1984), these individuals demonstrate a deep commitment to Vermont's working landscape and are poised to lead our Ag community into the future. They are remarkable for their service, youthful energy, and dedication to Vermont agriculture.

Brian McGarry, Farmer. *Enosburg Falls, VT*

2024 Ag Innovator: Those in consideration for this category have demonstrated a fresh and forward-thinking approach to agriculture. They are making or have made a significant, positive impact on Vermont, in areas such as but not limited to: growing the local economy, promoting stewardship and conservation, improving community health and nutrition, developing new tools and practices, and using alternative models in business and land ownership. They are notable for their unique perspective and unconventional approach. (Age is not a factor for consideration in this category.)

Ellen Kahler, Service Provider, *Starksboro, VT*

2024 Lifetime Achievement: This category recognizes those who have made a significant contribution to the advancement, improvement, or development of Vermont agriculture over the course of their long career. Nominees shall have played an active role in Vermont agriculture for at least thirty years.

- **Dr Albert Moraska, DMV (1939-2010)**, Service Provider. *East Charlotte, VT*
- **Paul Doton**, Farmer. *Barnard, VT*
- **Russel Allen (1931-2022)**, Orchardist. *Westminster, VT*

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About the Inductees

2024 Emerging Leader: Brian McGarry

Brian returned from Virginia Tech with a degree in Dairy Science and partnered with his parents, Ed and Diane, full time in 2018. Since then, he has been leading the way in exploring new technologies by testing and implementing them on his farm. Brian has volunteered to participate in product testing specifically geared towards full farm sustainability measuring whole farm impact of greenhouse gas emissions and environmental effects. Brian jumped in, tried the product and provided detailed feedback before it is added to the National FARMS ES Program. Brian started implementing no-till/cover cropping which goes hand in hand with reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Brian is working hard to reduce his environmental impact and aside from partaking in these programs, he shares his findings with others as an active member on the Agri-Mark/Cabot Creamery Sustainable Farms Committee. Vermont is fortunate to have Brian looking out for the future!

2024 Ag Innovator: Ellen Kahler

Ellen has dedicated the last near 20 years bringing the Farm to Plate movement to where it is today. As the executive director of the Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund (VSJF), she brought Vermont's local consumption of local production up from 5% up to 16%. That is significant considering Vermont's growing season and rural access to markets. Ellen's work has set the stage for other food system work with new efforts focused on scaling up to include all of New England. With her role at VSJF, Ellen has been able to participate as a voice in the Working Lands Enterprise Board. Her knowledge of food and Vermont food systems gave her a unique understanding of how these funds can best be used with Vermont's working landscape in mind!

2024 Lifetime Achievement: Dr Albert Moraska DMV

Like most Vermont farmers, Dr Moraska worked 24/7/365 responding to farm needs over the last 44 years. He made Vermont home in 1969 after graduating from the University of Pennsylvania. As Vermont diversified, he moved with the changes and learned how to care for other critters besides dairy cows. Vermont's weather could not slow him down as traveling was part of the job description as an on farm veterinarian. Naturally, cancer treatments would not slow the good "Doc" down either as he would keep making farm calls throughout his diagnosis. Dr Moraska made efforts to improve Vermont with volunteer work as a life member of the Vermont Veterinary Medical Association, Chair of the Large Animal Education Program and the Charlotte Planning Commission for 22 years. He was awarded the David Brown Conservation Award, Vermont Public Service Award and the Community Citizen Award by the Charlotte grange. These attest to the type of dedication Dr Moraska had for Vermont and Vermont agriculture. He also worked to inspire the next generation as a mentor allowing farm kids, university students and 4Her's to ride along and gain experience in the field. Dr Moraska set the gold standard and is missed in his profession and community.

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2024 Lifetime Achievement: Paul Doton

Paul has spent many years serving his dairy friends and his community through various efforts. Since the mid 1990's, he has been on the Agri-Mark Board of Directors finding a balance between the needs of the cooperative and the best interest for the members. Through it all, he has worked to inform the members and keep strong relationships with fellow farmers. Paul has been Vice Chair of the New England Dairy Farmer Board, a member of the Yankee Farm Credit Board, on the Vermont Milk Commission panel, and on the Dairy Management Inc Board of Directors. On his own farm, Paul has worked to implement sustainable practices like redirecting milkhouse waste into multiple septic leach fields, use firewood from his land to fuel a wood boiler for all hot water, and started using cover crops to reduce runoff and increase soil organic matter. Paul works to improve Vermont through environmental groups as well by belonging to the Connecticut River Watershed Farmers Alliance and Payments for Eco-System Services and Soil Health Working Group. As a community member, Paul has served as the Barnard Justice of the Peace for many years. Paul is a true leader seeking betterment for Vermont agriculture!

2024 Lifetime Achievement: Russel Allen

Russel Allen was a true Vermonter and innovator within the orchard community. Early on, he and his brothers pruned orchards all over New England. They developed their own method of efficient pruning and grafting styles still used today. Russ developed a tool known as the “Allen Pole Pruner” which can still be purchased as a preferred device due to its lightweight features to reach higher areas. Russ became passionate in sharing his grafting knowledge with other growers. The art of grafting saves time and money for orchardists shifting varieties by attaching a small piece of one variety onto another established tree. He generously shared his expertise with other orchardists of all sizes and levels. Russ served on the Vermont Tree Fruit Growers Association for many years, an organization that is about to turn 128 years old! Russ left a mark on a Vermont heritage crop and is missed greatly.

Congratulations to the 2024 inductees and a big thank you to the presenting sponsors!



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About the Champlain Valley Expo

The Champlain Valley Exposition is a 501(c)(3) not for profit organization with a mission of serving the people of Vermont and the region by promoting agriculture, education, arts and culture, commerce, and entertainment activities. Since 2003, the Expo has hosted the Vermont Ag Hall of Fame, which honors Vermonters who have made significant achievements to Vermont's working landscape. For more information, visit <https://www.vtaghalloffame.org>