



BRATTLEBORO FOOD CO-OP ANNUAL REPORT 2025





President's Report

Michelle Meulendyk,
Board President

The Board of Directors fills a unique role for the Co-op. As an elected body of shareholder representatives, we serve as trustees for our 9,400+ shareholders. While we don't manage the operational details of running the store, the Board is responsible for clarifying the purpose of the organization and its goals (or Ends) and ensuring, through Policy Governance, that the Co-op is meeting those Ends.

Another important role of the Board is hiring the General Manager (GM). This year, we've embarked on a new search — our third in five years. A few of our Board members have been present for all three! Transitions can lead to uncertainty, but our amazing staff and management teams have ensured that your in-store shopping experience is consistent and welcoming, and that our ongoing commitment to our community never wavers.

Under Policy Governance, there is a dynamic, collaborative interplay between the Board and GM. While the Board defines policy, the GM has wide latitude in interpreting and implementing those policies. This allows the GM, alongside management and staff, to use their expertise to solve operational challenges and to curate your in-store experience, without micro-management from the Board.

Through regularly-scheduled monitoring reports to the Board, the GM provides pertinent data to demonstrate compliance with, and accomplishment of, each govern-

ing policy. In this way, your Board of Directors can monitor both GM and store performance while evaluating the relevance of our policies.

While delivering on our values is an important marker of success, the dollars and cents are what allow us to keep serving those Ends. Independent grocery stores are in endless competition with mega-retailers and discount grocery markets. We may not have their buying power, but we (and you) represent an unparalleled dedication to our community's economic growth, community development, and social and environmental responsibility.

From credit unions to farm collectives, labor movements, and grocery co-ops, cooperative action has always been "of the people, by the people, for the people". While grassroots, cooperative endeavors vary in shape and size, they are all founded on the same principles: member-ownership, democratic leadership, and community advocacy.

At BFC, that democratic principle is realized in the election of a shareholder Board of Directors. Shareholder participation is the backbone of cooperative, democratic governance. We, your Board of Directors, are the people you pass in the aisles; we are your neighbors, we could be your farmers, your healthcare workers, your downtown shop owners. We are you, and we need your ongoing participation and commitment to ensure the future of Brattleboro Food Co-op.

See our work in the Food For Thought, attend a couple of Board meetings, and maybe next year...run for a seat on the Board.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE YEAR

This year, we welcomed three new Board members!

Sheena Tesch shares a deep-rooted commitment to food advocacy, and currently serves as the operations manager for the Putney Foodshelf.

Lee Halpern, currently Interim Executive Director at Food Connects, brings a dedication to supporting sustainable, local food economies.

Kevin Brennan offers the Board a wealth of experience in program/organizational leadership and financial management, as well as perspectives gained from decades as an international educator.

New members bring important perspectives, vision, and skills to the Board, helping us better understand and represent our community, develop the Co-op's purpose, and deepen our knowledge and application of Policy Governance.

The Annual Retreat

Every year Board members dedicate one Saturday to participate in a facilitated development and planning session. Each year, the retreat is shaped to meet the current needs of the Board. With a full third of our Board members new, this year we focused on understanding the fundamentals of policy governance, implementing effective policy monitoring, clarifying the purpose and role of

our committees, and of course, just getting to know each other a bit.

Another GM Search

It has been a tumultuous few years for top leadership at the Co-op. While each of our GMs have demonstrated a deep dedication to our purpose, each found that life had other plans for them. Every GM search is unique, as candidate pools vary and each transition brings new needs to the fore. As a volunteer Board, it takes time for us to move through each stage of the search and interview process with thoughtful deliberation, and we look forward to welcoming our next General Manager.

ENDS POLICIES

The Brattleboro Food Co-op, an organization modeled on cooperative values and principles, exists to serve its shareholders' collective needs for:

- An open, inclusive, and welcoming marketplace
- Access to and education about goods and nutritious food that are ecologically sound and responsibly sourced
- An organization that contributes to a just and resilient local economy
- An enterprise that engages in sustainable and regenerative environmental practices



From the GM: The Year in Review

Emilee Hobbs, Director of People & Culture/Interim GM

50 Years of Community. 50 Years of Cooperation. 50 Years of Us.

Dear Shareholders, Staff, and Friends, Fifty years. It's hard to believe how far we've come since a handful of people decided to create a small buying club in 1975. What started as a simple idea — neighbors coming together to share good food — has grown into a vibrant community hub with over 9,400 shareholders, 150 employees, and a \$26-million operation that continues to be guided by a simple truth: we exist to serve our community.

This year has been a celebration of that journey. From our 50th anniversary events and storytelling projects to our partnerships with local farms and producers, we've spent the past year looking back with pride and looking forward with purpose.

Our Ends in Action

Our Ends policies guide everything we do, and 2025 was no exception. Here's how we've brought them to life this year:

A Thriving Community: We expanded our Food for All program and partnered with local organizations to improve food access, providing discounts and education for hundreds of families in need.

Local Economy Support: Over a quarter of our sales came from local

products, directly supporting 350 nearby farmers and makers.

Environmental Stewardship: We began planning for solar energy projects, electric car chargers, major refrigeration updates, and made strides toward reducing waste and single-use plastics.

Inclusive Ownership and Employment: We continued to prioritize pay equity and professional growth for our staff. Our unionized workforce and management teams worked together to strengthen communication and ensure fairness and respect for all employees.

Education and Engagement: Our 50th anniversary events, local producer spotlights, and in-store storytelling have brought members together and reminded us why this Co-op is more than a grocery store: it's a place to connect, learn, and belong.

A Year of Financial Focus

In the midst of all this reflection and celebration, we've also stayed focused on financial stability. This past year, our team worked hard to manage tightening margins, control rising costs, and make thoughtful decisions about repairs and infrastructure maintenance. Thanks to those collective efforts, we were able to close out FY2025 with a positive net income of \$44,000. In a challenging retail environment, that result is a testament to the dedication and discipline of our

staff—and our shared commitment to keeping this Co-op strong and resilient for the future.

Honoring Our Staff — Past and Present

The heartbeat of the Brattleboro Food Co-op has always been its people. For fifty years, our staff, past and present, have been the foundation of everything we've accomplished. It is their passion, creativity, and commitment that make the Co-op not just a grocery store, but a trusted community hub and a gathering place where relationships are built and values come alive.

Every department, every shift, every interaction with a shopper or a vendor is shaped by the care and skill of our team. Our produce is fresher, our deli meals are tastier, and our shelves are fuller because of the pride our staff takes in their work. It's the small things — a warm greeting at checkout, a recommendation from someone who knows our local farmers by name, or a smile from a baker who started their morning before sunrise — that create the experience our community treasures.

To all of our current employees: thank you. Thank you for your hard work, for your resilience during times of change, and for your willingness to go above and beyond to ensure that the Co-op continues to thrive. You are not just employees; you are stewards of our mission, the face of our values, and the reason so many people choose to shop here.

To those who have worked here in years past: we honor you. Your efforts helped build the Co-op into what it is today. The lessons you left behind, the

relationships you built, and the culture of care you instilled are woven into the very fabric of who we are.

A special note of gratitude goes to all prior General Managers and Board Members of the Brattleboro Co-op, who have served with unwavering dedication. Their leadership carried the Co-op through both successes and challenges, leaving a strong foundation for the future. I want to personally thank them for their service, vision, and care for this community.

Stability and Collaboration for Brattleboro

The Brattleboro Food Co-op is more than a store, we are an anchor institution for this town. Through economic ups and downs, we've remained a source of stability, connection, and resilience. We recognize that a thriving Co-op means a thriving Brattleboro, and we are committed to continuing to invest in the health of our local economy and the well-being of the people who call this place home.

Collaboration has always been at the heart of our success, and going forward, we will strengthen partnerships with local businesses, farms, nonprofits, and town leaders to address challenges and create shared opportunities. We know that the future of Brattleboro is stronger when we work together, and the Co-op is proud to be a critical part of that story.

Looking Ahead as Interim GM

As I have stepped into the Interim General Manager role, I do so with

both humility and determination. It's a privilege to guide the Co-op during this moment of reflection and renewal, and I'm committed to building on our strengths while preparing us for the future.

The next 50 years will require us to evolve while staying true to our cooperative values. Together, we'll:

- Deepen our sustainability efforts, from solar initiatives to more efficient waste systems. One of our most exciting projects underway is a major refrigeration upgrade, which will not only improve reliability and product quality but also dramatically reduce our energy usage and emissions. This is an important step in our climate resilience journey, and we are incredibly grateful to Sarah Brennan, our Board Administrator/Sustainability Coordinator, for her leadership in moving this work forward.
- Enhance the customer experience. We know that for many of our shoppers, the Co-op is more than a place to pick up groceries, it's part of their daily routine. Looking ahead, we'll be focusing on making the in-store experience more intuitive, welcoming, and efficient. This includes better signage, streamlined layout improvements, improved product mix and availability, and a renewed emphasis on friendly, consistent service.
- Invest in our people. One of our top priorities is ensuring that every staff member is in a position where they can use their strengths, grow their skills, and feel proud of the work they do. We're realigning roles, developing clearer pathways for advancement, and providing training

and support so that our team can thrive, because when our people grow, the Co-op grows too.

- Grow our community impact, expanding food access, education programs, and local partnerships that align with our Ends policies.
- Strengthen collaboration by ensuring that the Co-op remains a reliable partner and an active participant in Brattleboro's continued resilience and regeneration.

We are also beginning to reimagine what it means to be a cooperative in a changing world. This includes strategic planning around technology, workforce development, capital investment, and how we tell our story in ways that invite more people in.

What Cooperation Means to Us

Cooperation is more than part of our name, it's the foundation of how we operate, how we make decisions, and how we show up for each other. At the Brattleboro Food Co-op, cooperation means listening deeply, leading with care, and working together to build something stronger than any one person or department could build alone. It means honoring diverse perspectives, lifting each other up, and sharing responsibility for our collective success.

In a world that often feels divided, cooperation is our quiet form of resistance, and our most powerful tool for lasting change.

Thank You

We wouldn't be here without you — our shareholders, staff, board,

shoppers, and community partners. This Co-op is yours. It thrives because you show up, share your ideas, and care about something bigger than a single transaction.

The foundation we've built over the last 50 years is solid and now, the work of shaping the next 50 begins. With thoughtful planning, bold vision, and deep community connection, we're ready to move forward together.

The next 50 years start now. I'm honored to walk this path with all of you.

With gratitude, cooperation, and excitement,

Emilee Hobbs

Director of People & Culture/Interim General Manager

108

people are employed by the Co-op, full-time

41

are employed by the Co-op, part-time

Staffing #s in FY 25

Commitment to Community

Our shareholders contribute 200+ volunteer hours each month at 35+ community partner organizations.

Thank You for Rounding Up!

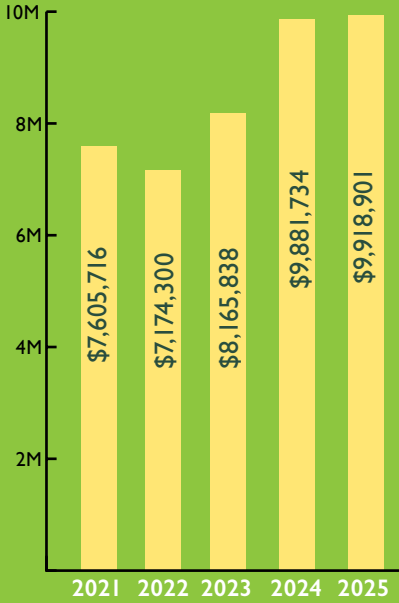
In FY25, shoppers contributed \$54,592 to these local organizations through our Round Up for Change Program.

- Brattleboro Women's Chorus
- Broad Brook Community Center
- Epsilon Spires
- Groundworks Collaborative
- Inner Fire
- Kiwanis Club of Brattleboro
- Loaves and Fishes
- Neighborhood Roots Food Collective
- NOFA Vermont
- Out in the Open, Inc.
- Project Feed The Thousands
- Sojourns Community Health Clinic
- Visiting Nurse & Hospice for VT & NH
- VT Foodbank
- Yolande Henry Community Fund

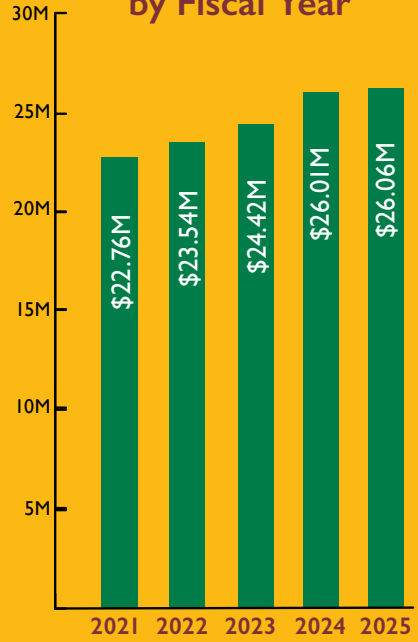


**Round up
for
change.**

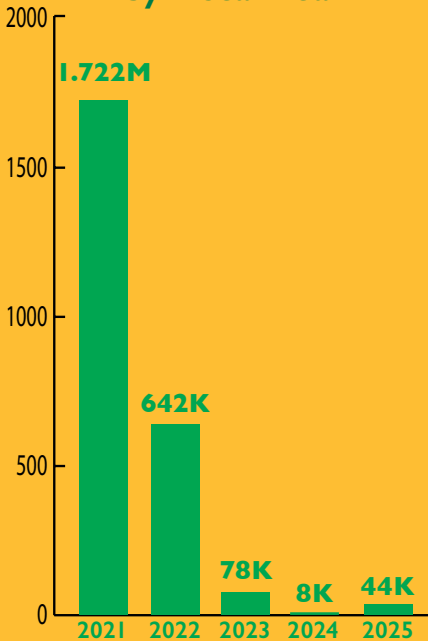
Operating Expenses by Fiscal Year



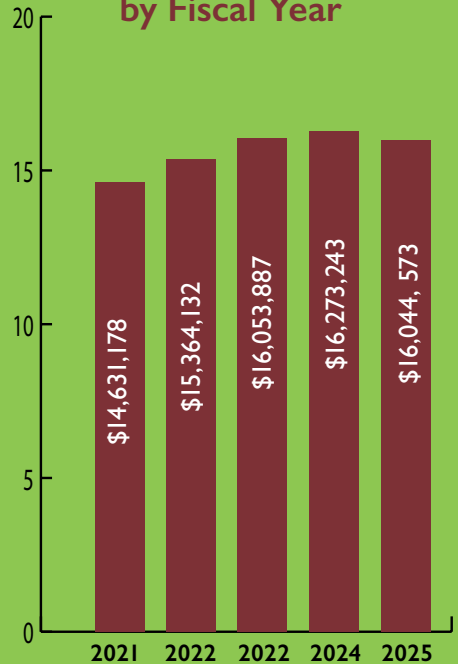
Sales by Fiscal Year



Net Profit (Loss) by Fiscal Year



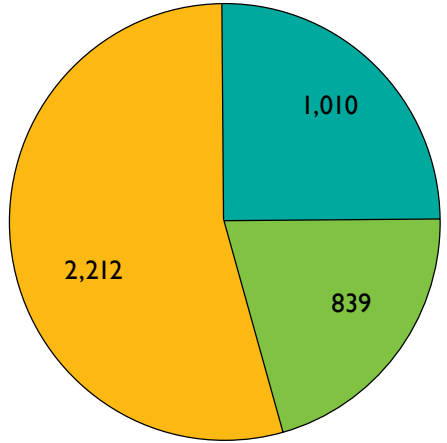
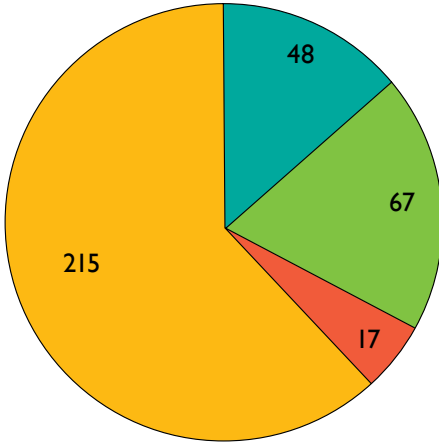
Cost of Goods by Fiscal Year



26% OF FY25 SALES WERE LOCAL PRODUCTS (from Vermont or within 60 miles of the Co-op)

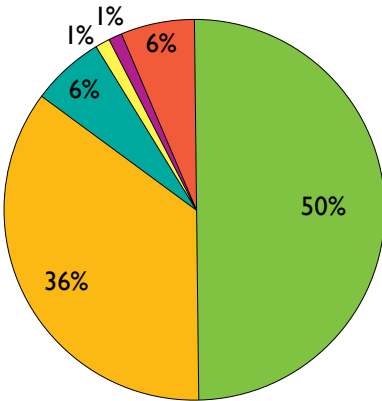
We sold products from 346 LOCAL PRODUCERS in FY25

We carried 4,061 LOCAL PRODUCTS in FY25



■ Grown/Raised in VT
 ■ Made in VT
 ■ Local 60 (60-mile radius of BFC)
 ■ Hybrid VT (offers both Grown/Raised and Value-Added Product)

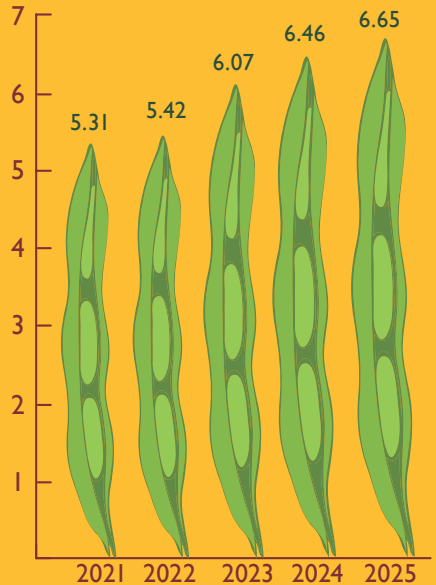
Gross Profit Distribution



■ Gross Profit
■ Personnel
■ Occupancy/Depreciation
■ Debt/Taxes
■ Community
■ Day to Day Ops

5-Year Sales of Local Products

by Fiscal Year, in millions





Treasurer's Report

Kevin Brennan
Board Treasurer

As I look back at past Treasurer's Reports, a pattern emerges—one that FY25 fits well. Once again, we experienced a year of transition. We began the year excited about having a new General Manager. We end it in search of another. And the beat goes on.

In the end, FY25 closed with a net profit of \$44K (as of the soft close), a much stronger result than the initially budgeted \$128,000 deficit. The pathway to that profit, however, was anything but smooth. Costs stayed high in the first part of the year, while sales lagged. In response, the GM and Finance Director reforecasted the budget, showing a projected deficit of more than \$249,000. The Board approved the reforecast, and leadership took action to adjust course. This work bore fruit in the final quarter of FY25, as it saw strong cost controls, enough to deliver a modest profit for the year.

While 4th-quarter results saw sales exceed the reforecasted budget, annual sales actually fell slightly, down just under 1% from FY24. This points to savings on the cost side as being the prime driver of the year's profit. Personnel costs, including health insurance costs, came in below both budget and reforecasted levels, as well as below FY24 levels. COGS (Cost of Goods Sold) produced a better margin than FY24, though not as high as budgeted for. Other expenses largely offset one another, without major surprises.

A few unexpected events helped shape the year. On the positive side, we finally received Employee Retention Credit funds initially applied for in 2021-2022. (ERC is a federal program that offers tax credits to encourage businesses hurt by the COVID-19 pandemic to

retain employees.) These added a net \$1.75 million to our cash flow. On the downside, a June 2025 cyberattack on a major supplier left our shelves understocked, cutting into revenue. Facility issues also arose, notably disintegrating drainpipes that forced urgent plumbing repairs to avoid a store closure.

The Co-op's aging infrastructure continues to be a concern. To address one element of this, we began a \$1.4 million refrigeration systems replacement project at the end of FY25 (initial price subject to increase). This long-anticipated investment, mentioned in last year's Treasurer's Report, is supported by a \$500,000 USDA REAP (Rural Energy for America Program) grant. The project will reduce maintenance costs while expanding the Co-op's refrigerated space, all while reducing environmental impact over time. Importantly, ERC funds will allow us to undertake this project without costly outside financing—potentially improving our position to refinance our mortgage at better rates in FY26.

Meanwhile, we continue to offer discounts to working shareholders, many of whom serve through our Commitment to Community partners. In June 2025 alone, 19 Commitment to Community partner organizations received 236 hours of volunteer support from BFC shareholders. Over the year, 35 organizations have benefited from this partnership.

Our commitment to local engagement also shows in our sales: locally produced goods continue to rise as a proportion of total sales—up a percentage point to 26% in FY25.

As we celebrate our 50th year, the Brattleboro Food Co-op remains a vital, engaged, and resilient part of the local economy.

Financials at a Glance

BALANCE SHEET

ASSETS	FY 2025	FY 2024
Current Assets	\$5,065,556	\$2,364,988
Property & Equipment <i>(net of depreciation)</i>	\$6,024,363	\$6,284,475
Other Assets	\$818,441	\$840,864
Total Assets	\$11,908,361	\$9,490,328
LIABILITIES	FY 2025	FY 2024
Current Liabilities	\$2,354,822	\$1,832,616
Long-Term Liabilities	\$3,674,643	\$3,840,635
Total Liabilities	\$6,029,465	\$5,673,251
Shareholder Equity	\$5,878,896	\$3,817,077
Total Liabilities & Equity	\$11,908,361	\$9,490,328

Note: FY25 numbers shown on this report reflect preliminary, internally produced numbers and expense classifications, which are currently being reviewed by our external CPA and are subject to adjustments and deferred tax items that may be made as a result of that review. FY24 numbers reflect adjustments made after final CPA review.

Statement of Shareholders' Equity

	Common Stock	Paid-in Capital	Retained Patronage	Retained Earnings	Total
Balance at June 30, 2024	\$823,152	\$10,750	\$1,027,367	\$1,955,432	\$3,816,701
Net Shares Issued	14,146				14,146
Donated Capital		–			–
Net Income/(Loss)				2,102,771	2,102,771
Balance at June 29, 2025	\$837,299	\$10,750	\$1,027,367	\$4,003,480	\$5,878,896



Education Outreach

Lisa Nichols, Education Outreach,
Demos, and Events

We have continued our Demo program, featuring outside vendors and our own staff. Our monthly Taste and Votes have been very fun for all involved. Customers of all ages take their vote seriously. They are mindful as they taste the samples, and their delight in the shared experience is palpable. They cast their ballots in the enormous, historic BFC Ballot Box.

We have very much enjoyed hosting school field trips to the Brattleboro Food Co-op. For longer visits, we offer a full cooking class. For shorter visits, we plan a local foods scavenger hunt, and then offer samples for the students to try.

In the spring of 2025, the Brattleboro Food Co-op collaborated with The Academy School on a grant to create take-home cooking kits for kids to use with their parents. With custom projects for each grade level, the kits are designed to dovetail with the students' curriculum while fostering a love of good, local food. To our delight, the Academy School has agreed that the cooking kits may be shared with other local schools in FY2026. We are very excited about the possibilities for local students!

We hosted an event called Bread Fest on Saturday, March 1st. This event included a talk by Jonathan Stevens, author of *The Hungry Ghost Bread Book*, a bread baking competition, and tastings by local bakers. The store was grateful that professional bakers Noah Elber and Sarah Schuldenfrei


were willing to serve as judges. The competition winners received gift bags with bread-related items from six local vendors. We also hosted our second Wellness Fair this year. We are getting into the swing of offering large-scale events at the Co-op, because they add lots of excitement to the store and allow us to meet new folks.

We've continued hosting monthly kids' and adults' cooking classes. At each class, every participant prepares a complete two-serving recipe to eat on the spot or bring home with them. Cooking and eating together fosters connection, and each class is a sweet and unique community. Artist Melissa Morgan-Oakes created a gorgeous quilted wall hanging for the cooking classroom. Folks of all ages enjoy connecting with it when attending a class.

Brattleboro Food Co-op's education program is lucky to have a team of a dozen dedicated volunteers, who have amplified the reach and improved the delivery of our educational programs. Whether in our cooking classroom or at their elementary school or non-profit, each student always makes their own complete food creation. With hands busy and personal investment in their projects, students are successful and proud of their accomplishments. This level of coordination would not be possible without our skilled volunteers.

By the Numbers

- 317 plates at a BFC cooking class
- 247 folks participated in special event (BFC anniversary cupcake decorating, Winter Carnival cocoa, Wellness Fair, Bread Fest, Botanical Bar Craft lecture, Plant-a-Seed for Earth Day, Nourishing Skin Creme workshop, and a volunteer party)

- 107 cooking kits sent home for elementary kids to prepare with their parents
- 94 demos
- 8 Taste-and-Vote events
- 10 school field trips to the Brattleboro Food Co-op
- 35 outreach trips to local schools and non-profits 



Sustainability

*Sarah Brennan, Board Admin/
Sustainability Coordinator*

In FY25, the BFC was awarded two grants — \$500,000 from the USDA’s Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) and \$9,400 from The Vermont Low Income Trust for Electricity — to help us replace our entire refrigeration system to one that, unlike our current setup, will have a minimal impact on our climate emissions.

We’re currently using R404A, a refrigerant common in grocery stores, that has a global warming potential (GWP) of 3,922. This means that its impact — its total contribution to trapping heat in the atmosphere — is 3,922 times stronger than carbon dioxide (CO₂), which has a GWP of 1.

Why does this matter? Refrigeration equipment in a grocery store is always on, and day-to-day wear and tear is inevitable when equipment needs to be going 24/7. And that wear and tear, in the form of corroding pipes and valves, leads to refrigerant slowly escaping. In fact, we lost 378 pounds of R404A from leaks in 2024.

There are energy implications as well: As a system loses refrigerant, it takes


more energy for the cases and freezers to maintain the correct temperatures. Given that half of a typical grocery store’s energy is spent on refrigeration, imagine how much more expensive a failing system is to keep running. Plus, when case temperatures climb too high, there’s the risk of spoiled food.

Over the course of 2026, we will be replacing all the coolers and freezers on the retail floor, as well as the equipment servicing the walk-in coolers and freezers behind the scenes, and all the piping and associated equipment. Our new system will use CO₂, a natural and non-toxic refrigerant. Some stand-alone components, such as prep tables in the Cheese and Deli departments, will use R290, a propane-based refrigerant with a GWP of just 3.

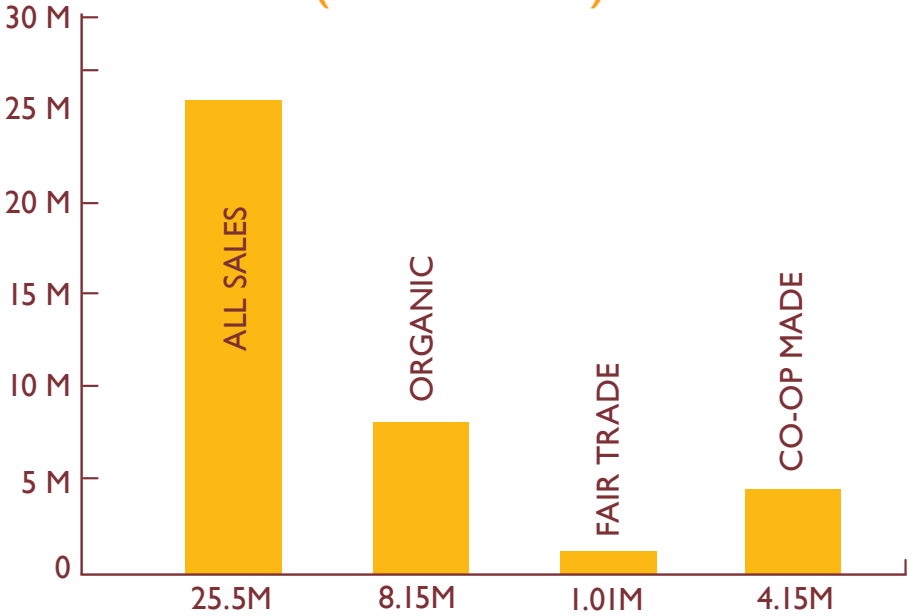
Did you know that food loss and waste account for 8-10% of annual global greenhouse gas emissions? In FY25 we diverted over 19,000 pounds of unsellable food to local pantries and food shelves.

On the renewable energy front, we have partnered with Norwich Solar to purchase our electricity from a solar array being constructed as this Annual Report goes to print.

In the spirit of “reduce, reuse, recycle,” we’ve piloted a space for shoppers to donate clean, lidded glass containers for others to reuse in our Bulk Department.

And we continue to divert waste from the landfill through our partnership with Terracycle, a company that specializes in recycling hard-to-recycle packaging that would normally end up in the landfill. 

Organic, Fair Trade, and Co-op Made (Includes Deli)

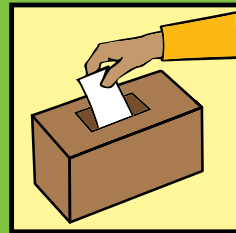


Organic, Fair Trade, and Co-op Made			
	ORGANIC	FAIR TRADE	CO-OP MADE
# of products	5,332	1,063	1,378
# of producers	759	117	18
% of all products	21.2%	4.2%	5.5%
% of all sales	32.0%	4.0%	16.3%
sales	\$8,155,883	\$1,013,363	\$4,154,480
Note: a product can be one or more of these, and may also be local.			

VOTING

for the Brattleboro Food Co-op
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
starts on Monday, September 29 and
runs until Monday, October 13.

Visit our website, click on the voting email we send, or vote in store.



Scan this QR code, or go to
bfc.coop/elections/
for more information about Board
candidates, and how to vote.

Annual Meeting

Monday, September 29, 5-7pm
at the Brattleboro Museum and Art Center

*Food, Prizes,
Cash Bar,
Keynote Speaker,
Information Stations*



**3 ways to
RSVP:**
Scan this QR Code,
go to [bfc.coop/
annual-meeting/](http://bfc.coop/annual-meeting/), or
call 802-246-2821.

**VOTE for the Board of Directors
from September 29 through October 13,
in store or online.**

