

# MOTHER EARTH NEWS

BUILD A  
DIY PALLET  
CHICKEN COOP  
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## Increase Community Security

Creating healthy communities is also a goal of Theresa Snow, the founder of Salvation Farms ([www.SalvationFarms.org](http://www.SalvationFarms.org)), a nonprofit in Morrisville, Vermont, that takes its name from Theresa's belief that small, diversified farms are our salvation, "the cornerstones and centerpieces of healthy, wholesome, and stable communities."

So, although Salvation Farms is not a farm itself, it coordinates with dozens of farms across Vermont to glean surplus crops that would otherwise be lost and move that food into nearby communities. Salvation Farms has helped establish a collective of gleaning programs that share resources toward building a broader gleaning system across the state. Further, it has set up a hub for processing compromised produce that must be preserved or distributed quickly. Through these efforts, it saves 50,000 to 70,000 pounds of food per year, which it reroutes to more than 40 agencies and food programs.

Theresa grew up in a farming family, and later attended Sterling College for its focus on ecology and agriculture. And while that backdrop factored into her founding of Salvation Farms in 2004, it was her work with AmeriCorps doing disaster relief in New York City about six weeks after 9/11 that saturated her love of agriculture with a sense of urgency—and introduced her, for one day, to the concept of gleaning. Back at home, after having witnessed profound societal vulnerability, she experienced post-traumatic stress. Seeing her struggle, a farmer she worked for said he had extra greens and asked Theresa whether she could do anything with them. She recalled her daylong experience gleaning in AmeriCorps, and an idea took shape. "I could organize people to come and help me pick what you're not going to sell," she said to him. "And we can move those into the community in a way that doesn't compete with your markets and helps people understand more about what's available locally and seasonally."

Theresa says Salvation Farms aims to create models others can adopt. And while growth hasn't been the nonprofit's intent, its partnerships and collaborations have allowed it to grow through the sharing of ideas and infrastructure. And Theresa has achieved her dream of increasing long-term community security by giving rise to an alternative food system. "I think that we can't lose sight of the fact that if anyone is vulnerable, we all have that potential to be vulnerable," she says.



Theresa Snow founded a gleaning program that recovers unused food and moves it into local communities.

Salvation Farms saves 50,000 to 70,000 pounds of surplus crops from being lost per year.

