

About the research

Our project is taking place on a 400-acre Champlain Valley diversified beef farm with long previous use as a dairy operation. Its recent history includes heavy tillage and synthetic inputs, and the increased frequency of extreme weather events, which both have contributed to soil erosion and disaggregation and resulted in degraded fields. The Center's research team is helping the current farmers recover the soils by monitoring and researching soil health and pasture forage ecosystems as they relate to the production of high-quality, grass-fed, grass-finished beef.

We see pasture-based farming as an inseparable triad of well-functioning soils, abundant and high quality forages, and healthy livestock animals in a constant and balanced rotation. The four fields under study were previously managed as hay or crop fields, with no livestock presence. The data below reflects the changes in sampled soil organic matter after animals were added to these fields and managed in an active rotation.

2015 SOM %