The Stories:

Farmers from Addison, Orange, and Franklin Counties opened their farms and records to us. Here are their stories.

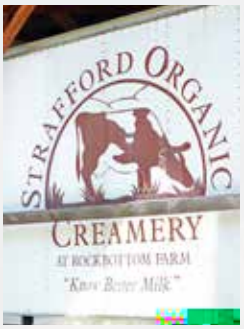
Happy, healthy, pro table animals are the central goa
livestock farmers. Bedded pack housing can be a p
that goal.

Simply put, bedded pack refers to accumulated be
materials and manure under covered housing. e farr
using a bedded pack starts with an initial thick laye
bedding, adding more daily or weekly. e herd is hou
on the pack during the dormant season, lounging, lo
and eating there. e bedded pack ends up being sever
thick by spring. In the winter, it provides a comfortable
for the herd to spend the cold months, storage for ma
and, a er composting the pack, a superlative amend
for pastures and hay elds.

Dairy herds on bedded pack have lower incidenc
mastitis and other health issues, and the system may
less labor and fuel inputs than a conventional housing
manure storage system. And favoring the long-term b
to elds and pastures, the pack makes great compo
fertilize pastures and hay elds; using composted bed
om a pack system can provide healthy organic ma
and biological activity that may improve soil quality a
resiliency to drought and pest damage.

is publication will explore bedded packs in a few wa
We'll look at how ve grass-based dairy farmers use p
each farmer has a di erent management style and
di erent challenges. We'll cover basic management
for building and using a bedded pack. And along the
we'll review the numbers – what it costs and why, and
composted bedded pack can mean for pasture fertility

e pack has been cleared out of Earl Ransom's barn. (Photo courtesy of J. Brown)



(Photo courtesy of J. Brown)

Fournier Farm in Swanton, VT:

Earl Fournier in ont of his pack barn.
(Photo courtesy of J. Brown)

Guy explains the management of his bedded pack. (Photo courtesy of J. Colby)

Dancing Cow Farm in Bridpor, VT:

Table 1: A snapshot of ve Vermont dairy farms using bedded packs.[1]

	Choiniere Farm	Fournier Farm	Dancing Cow Farm	Rock Bo om Farm	Swallowdale Farm

[1]

Do I have enough vertical space?

What are you going to use for bedding? the biggest question

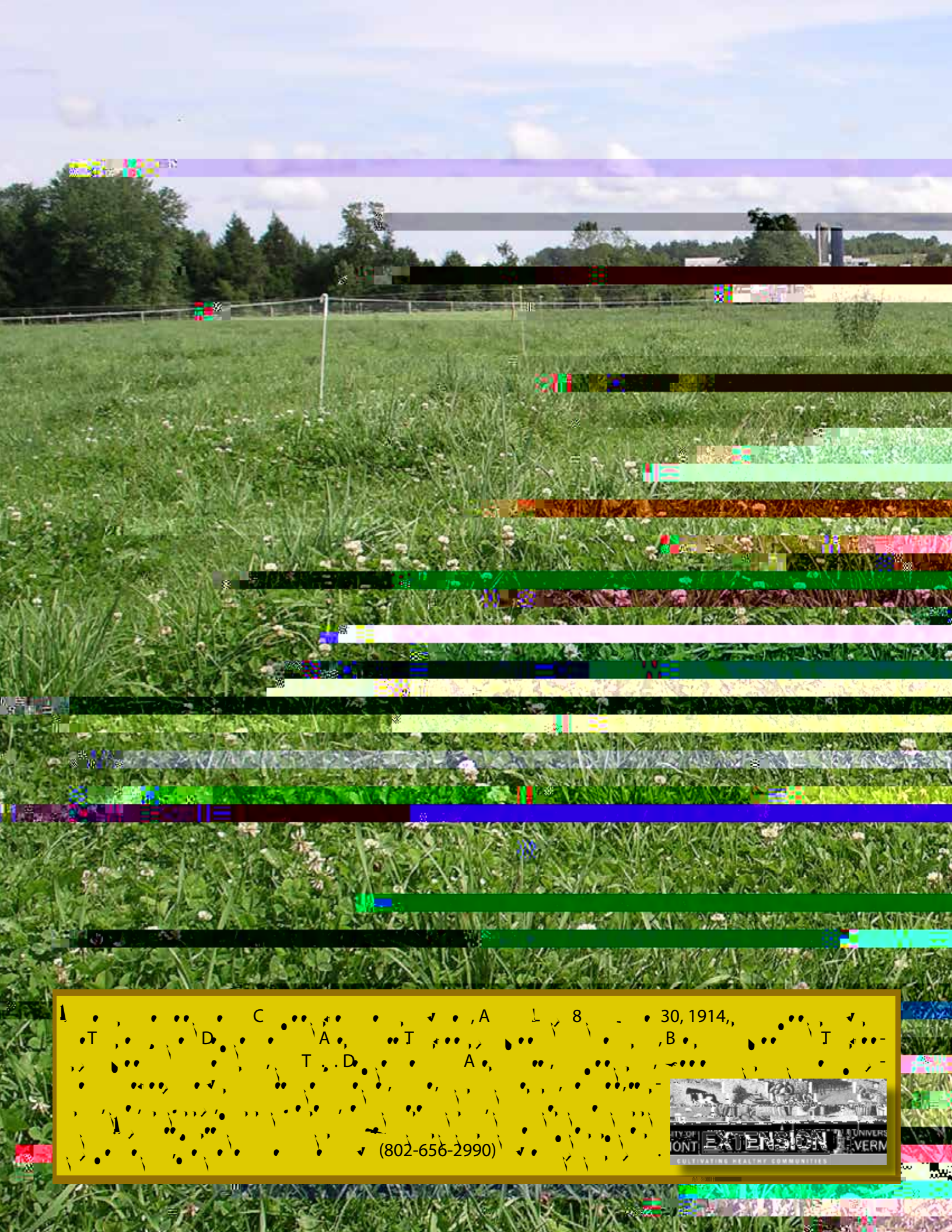
Spreading pack materials. (Photo courtesy of J. Colby)

(Photo courtesy of J. Brown)

To pack or no to pack

Using a long-tipped thermometer, Guy Choinier
examines the temperature of the bedded pack as it
composts in place. (Photo courtesy of J. Colby)

Cows relax by the adjustable walls in Guy Choiniere's barn. (Photo courtesy of J. Colby)

Economic Analysis o Bedded Packs on Five Dairy Farms in Vermont

C	115	90	180	80	$105,000		$40,726	$5.03	567	21	0.07
	153	25	237	160	$75,000		$9,914	$2.23	42	0.75	0.01
	40	25	360	266	$18,750		$31,450	$3.49	69	1	0.01
	95	47	190	96		$6,500	$14,761	$3.27	206	5	0.02
2*	95	47	190	96		$6,500	$19,945	$4.42	206	5	0.05
	172	80	180	116		$300	$14,935	$2.07	210	7	0.03
					$62,500		$22,357	$3.22	219	6.95	0.03
					$75,000		$14,848	$2.75	206	5	0.03
					$105,000		$40,726	$5.03	567	21	0.07
					$18,750		$9,914	$2.07	42	0.75	0.01