



Vermont COVID-19 Agriculture Assistance Program

Dairy Application Information Sheet

General Information

Governor Scott signed legislation ([S. 351](#)) authorizing \$25 million in Coronavirus Relief Funds to establish a dairy assistance application as part of the Vermont COVID-19 Agriculture Assistance Program. \$21.2 million will be available as direct payments to eligible dairy producers (cow, goat, and sheep's milk) and \$3.8 million is allocated for eligible dairy processors (i.e. bottled milk, cheese, yogurt, butter, ice cream) to cover losses and expenses related to the COVID-19 public health emergency. On July 17, 2020, the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets (AAFM) will begin accepting dairy assistance applications from dairy producers and processors to reimburse their costs of business interruption caused by the COVID-19 public health emergency.

Recipients of State Coronavirus Relief Funds (CRF) will only be eligible for one State grant award. As a result, if you plan to apply for a dairy grant, you should not apply for other CRF fund grants through the Agency of Commerce and Community Development, the Department of Taxes, or other State programs.

All applications must be received by October 1, 2020. Please also note that although applications will be processed in the order they are received, we expect to have adequate funding for all eligible dairy producers and processors to take advantage of this program. Please be careful and take your time when completing this application to ensure that your information is complete and accurate. Rushed and incomplete applications may result in denials or the need to reapply, which may impact or delay your potential grant payments.

Please find answers to frequently asked questions related to the dairy assistance applications below.

Eligibility

Q1: Who is eligible to apply for this Vermont COVID-19 Agriculture Assistance Program?

A: Dairy farmers and dairy processors who were operating as of March 1, 2020 are the eligible applicants to apply for the dairy assistance application. Dairy farmers are referred to as "milk producers" in S.351. In the enabling legislation, eligible applicants are defined as follows:

Milk Producer: a person, partnership, unincorporated association, or corporation who owns or controls one or more dairy cows, dairy goats, or dairy sheep and sells or offers for sale a part or all of the milk produced by the animals.

Dairy Processor: a person, partnership, unincorporated association, or corporation who owns or controls any place, premises, or establishment where butter, cheese, cream, buttermilk, infant formula, ice cream, yogurt, or other dairy products identified by rule by the Secretary are processed for sale.

Q2: I am a dairy producer or processor, does that automatically make me eligible?

A: Generally yes, but not always. A milk producer or dairy processor shall be eligible to qualify for assistance if:

- i. the milk producer or dairy processor is currently producing milk or dairy products; or
- ii. the milk producer was producing milk on March 1, 2020, and subsequently ceased production, but demonstrates a good faith plan to restart production of milk or of another commodity;
- iii. the milk producer or dairy processor is in good standing with the State; and
- iv. the milk producer or dairy processor accurately demonstrates economic harm that accrued on or after March 1, 2020 and before December 30, 2020 by providing evidence of lost revenues or expenses related to business interruption caused by the COVID-19 public health emergency.

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Dairy farmers and producers may apply for both federal and State aid, but cannot be paid for the same loss or expense twice. So, insurance coverage and federal grants that cover the same losses or expenses will need to be deducted from any State award.



Q3: What does “good standing” mean for this application?

A: “Good standing” means you do not have an active enforcement violation that reached a final order with AAFCM or with the Agency of Natural Resources (ANR), and that you are in compliance with all terms of any current grant agreement or contract you have with AAFCM and/or ANR.

Q4: How does my business’s participation in other State and/or federal programs (CFAP, PPP, EIDL, PUA, etc.) impact this process?

A: While we want to cover all eligible losses and expenses, federal and State law prohibit the use of these grant funds to cover the same loss or expense twice. Moreover, you cannot receive two State grants from CRF funds. As a result, you cannot receive a State dairy grant if you are receiving CRF funds from another State program to cover COVID-19 related losses. In addition, you cannot receive funding for those losses or expenses covered by insurance or paid by another federal program or grant. (If you received a loan or advance payment that you are expected to repay, you do not need to deduct that loan or payment from your eligible losses.)

You absolutely can receive insurance and/or federal aid and still be eligible for assistance here—you just cannot be paid twice for the same loss or expense. If insurance or a federal

or non-CRF funded State grant only covered part of your losses or expenses, this grant fund can pay the remainder of any loss or expense up to the grant limits.

If you applied for another form of assistance but have not heard back yet, you are not eligible to be reimbursed for the same loss in this application. If your insurance or federal aid request is subsequently denied and you did not receive your maximum potential grant under this program, each applicant is allowed one supplemental (total of 2) application prior to October 1, 2020, and you could request reimbursement for those uncompensated costs/losses in that supplemental application.

Q5: What are some examples of compensable losses and costs?

A: ALL compensable losses and costs must have been incurred since March 1, 2020 and be related to the COVID-19 public health emergency. The following are some examples of potential expenses or lost revenue that could be included—with appropriate documentation and if they are related to the public health emergency—in your application:

- Milk price declines
- Other milk loss deductions
- Other loss of income
- Product losses
- Additional costs
- Purchase of additional personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Purchase of additional cleaning and sanitation supplies
- Workplace modifications to accommodate social distancing
- Worker housing adaptations to accommodate social distancing
- New marketing or design services
- Purchase of new equipment
- Update in packaging materials or increase in shipping costs



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How To Apply

Q6: I think I qualify. Where do I apply?

A: You can find the Vermont COVID-19 Agriculture Assistance Program application link on the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets website: agriculture.vermont.gov/vermont-covid-agriculture-assistance-program

Q7: What kind of information will I need to complete my application?

A: For your dairy assistance application to be marked as complete, you will need to provide all the following information, upload documentation, and explain each loss or additional cost:

All dairy applicants

- Your Agency-assigned unique identification number which will be provided to you in a letter or email during the week of July 13, 2020;
- Completed and signed W-9 form, either mailed to our Agency or uploaded with the application;
- Documentation of other federal or state aid applied for or received (PPP, EIDL, Dairy Margin Coverage Program); and
- Documentation of all additional expenses or lost revenue since March 1, 2020 that you plan to submit as part of your application.

Dairy producers only

- Milk price payment stubs you received for January 2020 and for March through the date of your application (or no later than through September 2020).

Dairy processors only

- Comparison of manufactured milk volumes between month(s) in 2019 and 2020 when you plan to claim related losses; and
- Comparison of processed dairy product sales between month(s) in 2019 and 2020 when you plan to claim related losses.

Q8: What if I need assistance completing or submitting my application electronically? Who can I call?

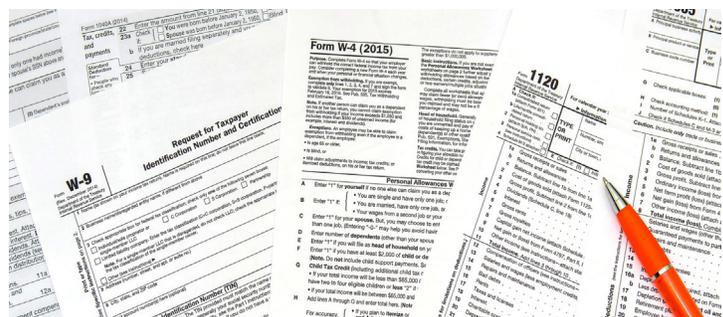
A: We recognize that an online application may be challenging for some businesses. Therefore, a select group of Vermont Farm and Forest Viability business advisors are prepared to assist interested dairy farmers and processors in completing applications. To request assistance from a Farm Viability Business Advisor in submitting your application, please complete this intake form surveymonkey.com/r/8ZG3WFJ, email mariah@vhcb.org or call 802-828-1098.

You will need to share your unique identification number with a selected business advisor and ensure that you have all required documentation available to upload and submit.

The Vermont COVID-19 Agriculture Assistance Program application will allow you to partially complete an application, save it, and return to the electronic form at a later time to continue working on and/or finish and submit your application.

Q9: What if I already mailed my W-9 form to AAFM as requested in May and June?

A: If you already mailed your W-9 to AAFM and the information was complete and verifiable, the information should auto-populate in your application when you enter your unique identification number. If you submitted a W-9 form but your information does not auto-populate in your application, you will need to complete, sign, and upload a W-9 form within the grant application.





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Q10: I did not mail in my W-9 form ahead of time. How do I complete one?

A: Visit irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fw9.pdf to download a W-9 form. When completing your W-9 form, please keep in mind the following requirements:

- It must be physically signed within the last six months (and cannot be electronically signed);
- It cannot have any information crossed out, written over, or covered up except as specifically directed;
- It cannot be partially typed and partially handwritten; and
- It cannot be completed using multiple colors of ink.

Once you complete and sign the W-9 form, you will need to upload the form within your grant application.

Q11: I still have some questions about this assistance program. Is there someone I should reach out to?

A: Absolutely! AAFM staff are happy to help if you have questions about the application. Please send an email to agr.covidresponse@vermont.gov and a member of our Assistance Program team will get back to you expeditiously. You may also call us at (802) 828-2430 with general questions.

AAFM has a series of resources and FAQs available to interested agricultural applicants. The Agency will also be hosting webinars for dairy producers and processors to attend and ask questions. You can find these resources and webinar dates listed on our website at: agriculture.vermont.gov/vermont-covid-agriculture-assistance-program

Q12: How quickly after I submit my application can I expect a payment?

A: If all the required information is provided in your application and you are eligible for reimbursement, a check will be mailed by the Vermont Department of Finance and Management approximately 2-3 weeks after you electronically submit an application.

Our Agency's review team may need to contact you for clarification or additional information regarding your

application. This will typically occur through the email address or phone number provided with your application.

It is possible that only some of your claimed losses and/or expenses will be deemed eligible for reimbursement. The better that you are able to demonstrate your losses and/or expenses and explain how they relate to the COVID-19 public health emergency, the easier it will be to evaluate your losses and issue the grant payments.

Q13: If there are additional expenses, or my application is denied, can I re-apply, and by when?

A: The application deadline is October 1, 2020, and applicants can apply as soon as the application is posted and available. If you do not receive your maximum potential grant after completing your initial application, you may apply for additional relief by October 1, 2020 by completing a supplemental application. The supplemental application would be for any additional losses or expenses you incur related to the public health emergency. Each applicant is limited to a maximum of one initial and one supplemental application, and both must be submitted by October 1, 2020. A request to upload additional information or to further explain a pending application does not constitute an additional application.

