

# Dairy Farm Innovation & Alternative Management Grant

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## 2022 REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

The [Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center](#) (NE-DBIC) announces the availability of funds through the Dairy Farm Innovation Grant & Alternative Management program. This grant program will provide grants to dairy farmers to implement a wide variety of innovative and alternative management styles. A portion of the funds available will be prioritized for farmers who have received technical assistance (TA) from NE-DBIC funded Grazing Transition, Forage Enhancement, and Alternative Business Management TA providers. Grant funding is also available to farms who have not received this TA to implement similar projects.

Grants are available to applicants in all 11 Northeast states: Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

## KEY DATES

RFA Release Date: November 8, 2022

Application Opens: December 1, 2022

Application Deadline: February 2, 2023 at 2:00 PM ET

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# CONTACT

## PROGRAM QUESTIONS

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## WEBGRANTS TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

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Support is generally available during business hours: Monday–Friday, 7:45 AM to 4:30 PM ET. Assistance may not be available shortly before deadlines.

## RESOURCES FOR APPLYING

- WebGrants Guides and resources for registering and applying can be found on our [Resources for Applicants and Recipients webpage](#).

## REGISTERING IN WEBGRANTS

Applicants that have not previously registered in WebGrants will need to allow 1-2 business days for their registration to be processed. During that time, applicants will not be able to login to start an application. Please plan your application process accordingly.

## SUBMISSION POLICY

It is the applicant’s responsibility to adhere to all application instructions including the submission dates and times included in this request for applications (RFA). The Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center via the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets (VAAFMM) will accept the last validated electronic submission through the grants management system, [WebGrants](#), prior to the posted deadline as the final and sole acceptable submission of an application.

Submission or re-submission of incomplete or delayed applications after the posted deadline, barring exceptional circumstances will not be accepted.

**WebGrants will prevent applications from being submitted after the cut-off time.**

## SUBMISSION CONFIRMATION

When an application has successfully been submitted, the applicant will receive a confirmation email from <[agriculturegrants.vermont@mail.webgrantscloud.com](mailto:agriculturegrants.vermont@mail.webgrantscloud.com)>. Please add this email address to your “safe senders” list. If you do not receive this confirmation, please check your junk or spam folder.

# **I. PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

## **QUICK FACTS**

### **THE NORTHEAST DAIRY BUSINESS INNOVATION CENTER**

The Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center (NE-DBIC), hosted by the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets (VAAF), is one of four USDA-AMS Dairy Business Innovation Initiatives (DBII) in the nation. The NE-DBIC serves the 11-state Northeast region which includes Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont by supporting dairy businesses through projects that promote the development, production, marketing, and distribution of dairy products. Projects target dairy farms and processors while providing additional support through market research and technical assistance. Since its inception in 2019, the Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center has received \$31.72 million to support projects in the Northeast region of the U.S.

### **ELIGIBILITY SUMMARY**

Licensed dairy farmers (producers) who are located in the Northeast region of the United States may apply for this grant if they both produce milk within the Northeast and are in compliance with all required state and federal standards. Technical assistance providers and producer associations who directly serve regional dairy farmers may also apply on behalf of farmers.

### **AVAILABLE FUNDS**

Up to \$900,000

### **MINIMUM & MAXIMUM AWARD**

Minimum: \$15,000

Maximum: \$75,000

Match: A 25% (cash and/or in-kind) match commitment is required.

Grant funds will be distributed to grantees over three payments throughout the course of the grant project. Unless otherwise arranged with the grant program manager, default payment structure of this grant is 50% of grant funds upfront, 30% of funds mid-project, and 20% of funds once the grant is complete.

### **PROJECT LENGTH**

Grant periods will range from 12 - 15 months, depending on the project.

### **FUNDING SOURCE**

Funds are available through the Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center which is made possible by funding through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) through awards AM200100XXXXG003 and AM21DBIVT1011-00.

### FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

The NE-DBIC's Dairy Farm Innovation & Alternative Management Grant program will provide grants for dairy farmers to access resources and technical assistance to support the implementation of community- and climate-forward production strategies. Projects funded through this grant program should take a whole farm system approach and increase collaboration with other farms or dairy sector stakeholders. Grants will allow dairy farmers to make improvements to their management strategies and/or to implement innovative practices on farms.

This grant will fund a wide range of projects across farm production and business operation models. Projects may address improvements in areas such as, but are in no way limited to, creating new models for collaborative/cooperative milk production or handling, increased new and young farmer engagement, alternative business ownership/management models, development of green technologies, farm-scale appropriate technology improvements, or creating a culture of continuous improvement.

Projects coming from farmers who have received Grazing Transition, Forage Enhancement, or Alternative Farm Management Technical Assistance will receive priority access to \$400,000 of the available grant funds. Improvements made with this grant funding should result in improved ecological and/or economic outcomes. All grantees will be expected to participate in and/or lead educational opportunities about their projects to benefit the broader dairy community. Projects that directly benefit more than one farm will score more competitively.

### ELIGIBILITY

#### ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Applicants eligible for these funds are:

1. Dairy farmers (producers) that:
  - a. are headquartered or based in the Northeast; and
  - b. produce milk within the Northeast; and
  - c. are licensed dairy operations in compliance with all required state and/federal standards
2. Producer associations that represent, supports, or promotes dairy products originating from the Northeast
  - a. For the purposes of this grant, a producer association group, also known as a trade association, industry trade group, business association, sector association, or industry body, is an organization founded and funded by businesses that operate in a specific industry
3. Technical service providers (e.g., university extension or viability organizations) are eligible to apply if:
  - a. The group of dairy businesses they will work with is clearly defined in the application; and
  - b. The businesses receiving services are located in the Northeast

## SECTION I: PROGRAM OVERVIEW

While the following are not required to apply, if applicant is awarded, they will need to provide:

- Certificate of Insurance listing the VAAFM as an additional insured
- Current IRS Form W-9
- Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number acquired via SAM.gov. *Applicants who do not already have a UEI number are strongly encouraged to start this process during the application period to ensure a timely start to their grant, if awarded. **There are currently significant delays.*** If a producer association or technical service provider is applying on behalf of farmers and plans to subaward funds to farmers directly, the applicant and farms must all have UEI numbers.

### FUNDING PRIORITIES

Project approaches should address at least one of the following funding priority areas:

- Project will support adoption of new farm practices that enhance ecological outcomes, improve animal health, and support farmer well-being
- Project will enhance collaboration and learning between farmers and encourage young/beginning farmer participation
- Project will serve as a pilot or demonstration of new technologies or approaches to support early adoption

### ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

Competitive applications in this round should be pursuing alternative models or strategies that expand or enhance their farm operation and not just adopt existing technologies for the purposes of labor savings. For example, a farm may want to purchase a robot because they cannot find labor to milk the cows. A robot could be an acceptable use of funds if it means the farmer then can do something else - more time to focus on enhancing forage production, increased animal health outcomes, or utilization of data for informed decision making. Another example is if a farm wants to invest in a feed pusher to decrease their diesel usage. They need to be able to explain how a robot doing the same thing (e.g., no associated additional practice changes) is innovative.

Eligible activities may include, but are not limited to:

- Utilization of new technologies to improve animal health, enhance labor efficiencies, reduce energy costs, and/or increase utilization of the farm's land base
  - Wearable technologies (animal movement trackers)
  - In-line milk metering and testing systems
  - Satellite driven technologies for geo-fencing
  - Technology driven pasture and forage management
  - Robotic equipment
  - Technology supported animal housing and cow comfort improvements
- Adoption of non-standard animal management practices

## SECTION I: PROGRAM OVERVIEW

- Group housing and feeding of young stock
- Utilization of bedded pack housing and/or wood chip pads
- Milk handling and non-traditional approaches to consolidating milk
  - Community milk house
  - Hiring a contractor or technical assistance service to identify partnerships, needs, and feasibility for new milk handling opportunities
  - Conversion from tie stall to parlor/robot milking
- Farm transfer, ownership, and/or training
  - Hiring an expert to help develop non-traditional (for the US) strategies for farm transfer and support for the next generation including share milking, cooperative/collaborative models, or other novel approaches
  - Training, apprenticeship, or other educational opportunities to reach new/young farmers
- Water, waste, and manure management improvements
  - Installation of water reclaim/reuse systems
  - Solid-liquid separation storage and utilization strategies
  - Increasing time animals spend outside in managed areas
  - Improving cleaning procedures of animal housing (scrapers, flush systems, gutters)
- Conversion or pilot testing of electric-powered equipment to replace fossil fuel powered equipment
- Technological advancements associated with improved production practices, soil management, nutrient management, financial analysis, greenhouse gas emissions, and crop production
- Other ideas and projects are welcome within the bounds of what the NE-DBIC is able to fund
- Farmers who have participated in cohort based technical assistance are eligible to apply for the following activities in order to expand or enhance the work completed with the TA provider:
  - Implementation and/or improvement of grazing practices or land stewardship
    - Increasing pasture species diversity
    - Converting tilled or annual cropland to permanent pasture
    - Transitioning to silvopasture
    - Creation of riparian buffer zones, windbreaks, or hedgerows

### REQUIRED PROJECT CRITERIA

Effective applications will address the following:

1. Application demonstrates that improvements made with this grant funding will result in improved ecological and/or economic outcomes.
2. Project is replicable and relevant to other farmers.
3. Applicant clearly outlines their plan to participate in and/or lead educational opportunities about their projects to benefit the broader dairy community.
4. Application demonstrates that the participating farmer(s) and any project partners are committed to embracing a continuous improvement approach.

## SECTION I: PROGRAM OVERVIEW

5. Technical assistance providers or other partners such as watershed groups or young farmer organizations that will also benefit from grant activities are listed as partners with letters of commitment included.

### EXAMPLES: ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

1. *A farm wants to pilot geofencing for their managed grazing herd and will offer education sessions for other farmers to understand the technology's opportunities and challenges*
2. *A cohort group of farmers supported by a technical service provider will rent equipment to establish perennial pasture or forages. The farmers will also establish areas of silvopasture. Outcomes that include increased species diversity, water quality, and animal health will be tracked and shared.*
3. *A group of farmers concerned about farm transition collaborates with a service provider to bring in a professional to discuss alternative ownership and transfer models. The expert develops legal and financial documents for the farmers to use as they adopt the new model. The farmers bring on young or new farmers who are interested in beginning their career through the identified model and provide educational opportunities in collaboration with their local producer associations.*
4. *A group of small farmers wants to explore developing a community milk house to streamline milk pick-up for their processor and ensure their long-term ability to ship milk. They work with their processor to hire a consultant to identify the best location, ensure adherence to milk handling regulations, and support for milk quality. A portion of funds are then used to purchase equipment or supplies to outfit the shared milk house.*
5. *A farm wants to trial an electric tractor or skid steer to replace their diesel-powered machine. The farmer rents the equipment, documents benefits and challenges, and provides an opportunity for other farmers to experience using the equipment.*
6. *A farm is shifting towards tightening their calving windows and seeks to adopt group calf housing and mob feeding using a New Zealand model. They purchase supplies to adopt the new system and receive technical assistance from a service provider on animal health practices. The service provider then hosts a field day to demonstrate the system to other farmers.*

### INELIGIBLE PROJECTS

- Projects not primarily located within the Northeast
- Projects that solely support the production/sales of raw fluid milk meant for human consumption without pasteurization
- Projects that seek to replace or upgrade existing infrastructure without otherwise innovating farm production practices
- Projects that do not contain or are unwilling to support educational opportunities about the grant funded project
- Projects that use grant funds for:

## SECTION I: PROGRAM OVERVIEW

- Construction or purchase of construction associated materials
- Purchase or lease-to-own of land/building/facilities
- Purchase of general equipment (specialized equipment is allowable)
- Purchase of vehicles
- Purchase of animals (purchase of genetics may be allowable)
- Unallowable costs/activities as outlined in the [2021 AMS Terms and Conditions](#) (8.0 Allowable Costs and Activities).

### EXAMPLES: INELIGIBLE PROJECTS

1. *A farmer wants to purchase a robotic milker because they cannot find adequate labor.*
  - a. *Why is this ineligible? While the purchase and installation of a robotic milker is eligible, their use is not considered innovative given widespread adoption of the technology. To make this an eligible project, the farmer must demonstrate how the conversion to robotic milking will allow for other practice changes, such as increased grazing, improvement of home-grown forages, or a conversion of calf rearing practices.*
2. *A farmer wants to use funds to build a bedded pack barn to house their animals to improve animal comfort, increase water quality, and decrease daily labor.*
  - a. *Why is this ineligible? Construction and design projects are not allowed per USDA AMS terms. The farmer could use funds for technical assistance to learn how to utilize the new housing system or could purchase equipment or supplies for the housing system.*
3. *A group of farmers want to work together to attract young/beginning farmers to work on their farms. The farmers purchase ads in industry publications and provide funding to attend the Extension trainings.*
  - a. *Why is this ineligible? Projects focusing on young/beginning farmers must include aspects of farm transfer, equity building, and educational opportunities. Farmers need to demonstrate a commitment to alternative ownership or transfer and should include technical assistance from an outside expert.*

### MATCHING FUNDS

All proposals must show matching funds which represent at least 25% of the grant request to go toward the grant project. For instance, for a grant request of \$20,000, the applicant must demonstrate at least \$5,000 in match. Matching funds may be contributed by the applicant or by another organization and must take place during the grant period. The 25% required match may be any combination of cash and in-kind funds in any expense category.

**Examples of cash match** include funds in the bank, funds contributed by another organization, bank loans, other non-Federal grant funds, applicant labor, and compensation of employees. Labor rates should be in line with current market rates.

**Examples of in-kind match** include goods or services provided during the grant period for which no expenditure is made (e.g., contractors, consultants, supplies, or equipment provided pro bono for the



## SECTION I: PROGRAM OVERVIEW

project; volunteer labor; and/or donated supplies that are not part of the normal cost of doing business). In-kind contributions must be made during the grant agreement period and be directly related to the project.

Match waivers can be requested as needed. Applicants are encouraged to use their time or their family's time spent on the project as in-kind match.

### Example of an eligible budget:

Expense Category	Grant Funds Requested	Applicant Contribution - Cash Match	Applicant Contribution - In-kind Match
Specialized Equipment	\$15,500		
Supplies	\$4,000		
Contractual/Consultant			
Training			
Travel	\$500		
Personnel			\$4,500
Fringe Benefits			
Other		\$1,000	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$20,000</b>	<b>\$1,000</b>	<b>\$4,500</b>

## LETTERS OF COMMITMENT/SUPPORT

At least one letter of commitment or support is required for this application. Letter(s) of commitment are required from 1) any project partner and 2) all match contributors that are outside of the applicant's business. If there are no match sources outside the applicant's business, the applicant is exempt from this requirement.

**Letters of Commitment** should articulate project partners' involvement and identify the contributions they will make to ensure the project's success. This should include all participating technical service providers and any other farmers engaged in the project whose participation is required to meet expected outcomes. Applications from cohort farmers are required to have a letter of commitment from their technical assistance provider in addition to other letters of commitment required for the project.

Match contributors, such as lenders, should provide a letter that describes their contributions and assigns value to their match commitment (including financial or in-kind support). Please add a Letter of Commitment for any match contributors outside of the applicant's business that are secured at the time of the application. If there are no match sources outside the applicant's business, the applicant is exempt from this requirement.

## SECTION I: PROGRAM OVERVIEW

**Letters of Support** should explain support from businesses or organizations that are connected but not directly engaged in project work. This could include but is not limited to milk processors, other farmers or producer associations who will benefit from the knowledge gained, and retail outlets. At least one letter should be provided, except for applications from cohort farmers which are exempt from this requirement. Additional letters of support are welcome, but not required.

### SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Include any additional information that shows the impacts of this grant such as evidence of cost or energy savings, impact on business viability, quotes for work included in the proposed activities, or other relevant information about the business or the project. etc. **Quotes or bids are required for all specialized equipment purchases and installation services covered by grant funds.**

### HOW TO APPLY

All applications must be submitted via the WebGrants system at [agriculturegrants.vermont.gov](https://agriculturegrants.vermont.gov). No paper applications will be accepted. Applications will be accepted from December 1, 2022 – February 2, 2023 at 2:00 PM ET.

Applicants that have not previously registered in WebGrants will need to allow 1-2 business days for their registration to be processed. During that time, applicants will not be able to login to start an application. Please plan your application process accordingly.

Be advised that technical assistance with WebGrants may not be available shortly before deadlines; please plan accordingly.

### APPLICATION REVIEW

Applications will be reviewed by a multi-state NE-DBIC advisory committee comprised of representatives from Northeast state agriculture agencies/departments, agriculture extension agencies, and dairy-industry stakeholders. See Section III: Scoring Criteria.

### AWARD INFORMATION

All applicants will be notified of the NE-DBIC decision of whether to award funds to their project. Awards will be approximately 6 to 12 months in length.

## SECTION I: PROGRAM OVERVIEW

### KEY DATES

#### DATES MAY BE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

<b>November 8, 2022</b>	Request for Application (RFA) released
<b>December 1, 2022</b>	Application released
<b>February 2, 2022 at 2:00 PM ET</b>	Application closes
<b>March 2023</b>	Applicants notified of award status
<b>April 2023</b>	Estimated grant project start date
<b>Mid-project, date will depend on project</b>	Interim report due
<b>Between May 31, 2024 and August 30, 2024, depending on project</b>	Project end date
<b>30 days after end of project</b>	Final report and survey due

## II. FULL APPLICATION

The application content is listed below but may be subject to change. Please reference the [WebGrants Application Guide](#) for guidance on completing your application in the WebGrants system.

### APPLICANT INFORMATION

#### Applicant Information

- Business/organization name, legal entity (e.g., LLC, sole proprietor, etc.), primary contact information

#### Applicant Eligibility

- Is the applicant headquartered or based in a Northeast state (Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, or Vermont)? If yes:
  - Does the applicant produce milk that originates within the Northeast?
  - Is the applicant a licensed dairy operation in compliance with all required state and federal standards? If yes:
    - What dairy animals make up your herd/flock?
    - How many milking animals do you maintain?
    - Describe your long-term goals for your farm and what are you doing to achieve those goals?
  - Does the applicant ship milk to a dairy processor?
- Does the applicant process their own milk?
- Is the applicant a dairy producer association that represents and promotes dairy products originating from the Northeast? *For the purpose of this grant, a producer association group, also known as a trade association, industry trade group, business association, sector association or industry body, is an organization founded and funded by businesses that operate in a specific industry.* If yes:
  - Describe your producer association, addressing: 1) founding members, 2) how association is funded, 3) industry scope covered by the association, and 4) association activities.
  - If your association encompasses products other than dairies, describe how you will ensure that the project will benefit dairy only.
  - Does this association receive funds from producer check-off dollars? If yes:
    - What percent of the association's annual operating budget comes from producer check-off dollars?
- Is the applicant a technical service provider that supports dairy farmers in the Northeast?
- Describe your farm operation or the farms you will be working with in terms of size (gross sales, number of employees, production volume), markets, and number of years in business.

## SECTION II: FULL APPLICATION

### Entity History

- Has your business/organization received any federal or state grant in the past 5 years?
- Have you or your project partners received any (federal, state, or other) grants **for this specific project** in the past 5 years? If yes:
  - List the grants received
  - Describe the work done under these grants
  - How will the work in this grant differ from and/or build upon that work?
- Have you applied for, or do you plan to apply for, other grant(s) in conjunction with this grant? *Leveraging other funds to complete this project is encouraged.* If yes:
  - Please list the other grants you will apply for/have applied for in conjunction with this grant
- Will you be using loans to supplement this application? If yes:
  - List any loans you will apply for/have applied for in conjunction with this grant.
- Has your business/organization ever been unable to complete or adhere to granting requirements for a grant you were awarded? If yes:
  - Describe the circumstances that prevented you from completing/adhering to the requirements of your grant(s)
- Since 2019, have you received technical assistance through a NE-DBIC funded technical assistance cohort? If yes:
  - List your cohort TA provider's name and organization
  - How will this project build upon or complement the improvements you have made through your cohort?
- Describe why you and your staff are qualified to complete this project, as proposed
- Rate your business/organization's experience in implementing similar past work/projects related to farm innovation. *(Select from dropdown: significant experience, some experience, no experience)*
- Do you currently work with a farm business planner to support the financial health and future planning for your business? If yes:
  - Enter their name and organization
- Have you received technical assistance in the preparation of this project, or do you plan to receive related technical assistance during the course of this grant project? If yes:
  - List name/organization providing relevant technical assistance

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

### Project Description

- Summarize your project in a couple of sentences
- Provide a project description which comprehensively describes your vision of this project. Describe the 1) issues you plan to address and why they are relevant and important, 2) goals for the project, 3) outline of activities you would like to include, 4) opportunities that you see for partnership, 5) who will benefit from the project and in what ways and, 6) desired outcomes. Include any background or context, as needed:

## SECTION II: FULL APPLICATION

- The work conducted under this grant must have an educational/information sharing component to benefit the greater Northeast dairy sector. Describe in depth how 1) the work done under this grant will be shared, be made accessible, and/or replicable to others, and 2) who will be the target audience.
- Describe the current stage of this project
- Describe the stage do you intend to reach by the end of this grant
- Identify 1-3 funding priorities, as defined in the RFA, that your project addresses and provide an explanation of how your project aligns
- What challenges do you anticipate and how do you plan to adapt to them?
- What would be the consequences of not receiving this funding?

### Workplan

- Provide a detailed list of activities and their timeline for completion for this grant project. Include at least 5 key project activities. For each activity:
  - Detailed description of the activity
  - List key personnel responsible
  - Estimated timeframe and/or date of completion
  - How will you be able to show that you have successfully completed this activity?

## EXPECTED OUTCOMES

### Expected Outcomes & Impacts

- Describe how you will evaluate the success of your project, including metrics you will track to show your progress.
- Estimate the number of dairy farmers that will benefit from this project
- Estimate the number of non-dairy businesses/organizations that will benefit from this project:
- How does this project demonstrate impacts beyond the grant period?
- How many new or existing outlets do you expect consumers to use to buy your business's dairy products for each of the categories below? If not applicable to your business/organization, enter zero (0)
  - Number of farmers markets
  - Number of grocery stores
  - Number of wholesale markets
  - Other outlets
    - If other outlets, please list
- As a result of this grant, do you expect an increase in revenue for your business/organization? If yes:
  - Please estimate the increase in revenue (in \$)
- As a result of this grant, do you expect an increase in sales for your business? If yes:
  - What is the percent increase in sales that you anticipate from these grant activities for your business? (e.g. If your sales were \$50,000 before & \$60,000 after:  $(\$60,000 - \$50,000) / \$50,000 \times 100 = 20\%$ )

## SECTION II: FULL APPLICATION

- Identify all expected positive ecological outcomes and/or animal health improvements that occur as a result of this grant.
- Will the volume of milk moving into the supply chain increase due to this grant project? If yes:
  - Estimate percent increase over your business's current volume.
- How many jobs are expected to be maintained due to this grant?
- How many jobs will be created because of this grant project?
- Explain project impacts to young and/or beginning farmers
- Do you expect to see cost savings or energy savings from this project? If yes:
  - Please give any information about your anticipated cost savings or energy savings

## LETTERS & SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

### Letter of Support

Letters of support should explain support from businesses or organizations that are connected but not directly engaged in project work. This could include but is not limited to milk processors, other farmers or producer associations who will benefit from the knowledge gained, and retail outlets. At least one letter should be provided, except for applications from cohort farmers which are exempt from this requirement.

Additional letters of support are welcome, but not required.

### Letters of Commitment (required)

Letters of Commitment should articulate project partners' involvement and identify the contributions they will make to ensure the project's success. This should include all participating technical service providers and any other farmers engaged in the project whose participation is required to meet expected outcomes. Applications from cohort farmers are required to have a letter of commitment from their technical assistance provider in addition to other letters of commitment required for the project.

Match contributors, such as lenders, should provide a letter that describes their contributions and assigns value to their match commitment (including financial or in-kind support). Please add a Letter of Commitment for any match contributors outside of the applicant's business that are secured at the time of the application. If there are no match sources outside the applicant's business, the applicant is exempt from this requirement.

### Supporting Documentation

Upload the following as they pertain to the project:

1. If you are purchasing specialized equipment, a current quote is required for the equipment and any associated installation costs. Specialized equipment costs over \$5,000 per item.
2. Any additional information that shows the impacts of this grant such as evidence of cost or energy savings, impact on business viability, or other relevant information about the business or the project.

## SECTION II: FULL APPLICATION

### PROJECT BUDGET

#### Budget Table

Please complete the following budget table, listing all grant requests and match contributions. Totals will appear once the grid has been saved.

- **Allowable Costs:** Grant funds requested must align with the allowable costs detailed in the [2021 AMS Terms and Conditions](#) (see 8.0 Allowable Costs and Activities).
- **Match contributions:** Projects are required to provide at least 25% in match as cash and/or in-kind sources. (e.g. \$20,000 of requested funds requires at least \$5,000 in match contributions.) Match costs do not need to adhere to AMS allowable costs.

#### Sample Budget Table

Expense Category	Grant Funds Requested	Applicant Contribution - Cash Match	Applicant Contribution - In-kind Match
Specialized Equipment	\$15,500		
Supplies	\$4,000		
Contractual/ Consultant			
Training			
Travel	\$500		
Personnel			\$4,500
Fringe Benefits			
Other		\$1,000	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$20,000</b>	<b>\$1,000</b>	<b>\$4,500</b>

### BUDGET NARRATIVE

#### Budget Narrative

Budget narrative should reflect what you have outlined in your budget table. Grant funds requested must align with the allowable costs detailed in the [2021 AMS Terms and Conditions](#) (see 8.0 Allowable Costs and Activities).

Please ensure that values associated with the following questions align with your budget table.

- Total funds requested for this grant. *Must be between \$15,000 and \$75,000.*
- Amount of matching funds. *Projects must demonstrate at least 25% cash/in-kind match.*
- List each 1) match source, 2) each contribution amount (and specify if it is cash or in-kind), and 3) describe how the contribution will be used to accomplish your project activities. *Note that all outside match contributors must provide a letter of commitment for their match.*
- Are all matching funds/contributions committed at this time?



## SECTION II: FULL APPLICATION

- If not, provide the sources that are uncommitted and timeline/plan for securing these commitments

*Complete the following questions only for expenses that are covered by grant funds (not matching funds, which should be detailed in questions above). Please thoroughly describe each category for which you are requesting grant funds, answering all parts of each question.*

- Are 'Specialized Equipment' expenses included in the 'Grant Request' column of your budget table? *Equipment is for items with a per unit cost over \$5,000, otherwise it should be categorized as supplies.* If yes:
  - Specialized equipment: List each piece of equipment (with description if needed) and for each, indicate: 1) grant funds requested per piece, and 2) justification for how this equipment is necessary for the success of this project.
- Are 'Supply' expenses included in the 'Grant Request' column of your budget table? *Supplies include materials, supplies, and fabricated parts costing less than \$5,000 per unit.* If yes:
  - Supplies: List each supply (with a description if needed). For each, provide: 1) per unit cost, 2) # units purchased, 3) grant funds requested, and 4) justification for how this supply is necessary for the success of this project
- Are 'Contractual/Consultant' expenses included in the 'Grant Request' column of your budget table? If yes:
  - Contractual/Consultant: List each anticipated contractor/consultant service. For each, provide: 1) grant funds requested, 2) description of services, and 3) justification for why the services are necessary for the success of this project
- Are 'Training' expenses included in the 'Grant Request' column of your budget table? If yes:
  - Training: for each training, provide 1) description, 2) estimated cost, and 3) justification for how the expense is necessary for the success of this project
- Are 'Travel' expenses included in the 'Grant Request' column of your budget table? If yes:
  - Travel: For each trip: 1) list expense types (airfare, car rental, hotel, meals, mileage, etc.) and associated grant funds requested, 2) number of travelers, and 3) justification for how this travel is necessary for the success of this project
- Are 'Personnel' expenses included in the 'Grant Request' column of your budget table? *Personnel costs are for owners or staff time directly related to the grant project.* If yes:
  - Personnel: for each individual whose time can be directly attributed to grant activities, provide 1) individual's title and role, 2) hourly rate, 3) expected number of hours, 4) grant funds requested
- Are 'Fringe Benefit' expenses included in the 'Grant Request' column of your budget table? If yes:
  - Fringe Benefit: for each of the project's salaried employees, provide the 1) fringe benefit rate and 2) grant funds requested
- Are 'Other' expenses included in the 'Grant Request' column of your budget table? If yes:

## SECTION II: FULL APPLICATION

- Other: Include any expenses not covered in any of the previous budget categories. Be sure to break down costs into cost/unit and provide justification for how the expense is necessary for the success of this project

### III. SCORING CRITERIA

#### REVIEWER SCORING CRITERIA

##### Project Proposal (70 points)

Project overview and workplan illustrates an impactful and realistic project that is responsive and replicable, supports education and/or educational opportunities, and has clear ecological, animal health, and farmer well-being impacts.	25 points
Applicant provides clear and relevant reasoning for timely need for funding and can show that they have a reasonable plan for sustaining the activities implemented in this project past the grant period.	15 points
All required letters of support/letters of commitment, and supporting documentation meet the requirements outlined in the RFA and clearly illustrate that the grant funds will be a sound investment.	10 points
Applicant has leveraged other resources to support this grant project such as technical assistance, business assistance, partnerships, loans, and/or other grants.	10 points
Applicant demonstrates that their project is well-aligned with funding priorities and provides details to support that.	10 points

##### Budget and Expected Outcomes (30 points)

Budget and budget narrative are realistic and sufficient to accomplish the work proposed.	10 points
Applicant has leveraged the required percentage of match contribution and provided sufficient detail.	10 points
Applicant provides reasonable expected outcomes via: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A useful plan for evaluating the success of their project including appropriate metrics to track.</li> <li>2. Proposal includes at least one (1) of the following:                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in sales</li> <li>• Increase in revenue</li> <li>• Job creation and/or retention</li> <li>• Increase in volume of milk moving into the supply chain</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	10 points

## IV. GRANT MANAGEMENT & REPORTING

### GRANT AGREEMENT & PAYMENT

Prior to receiving funding, successful applicants must sign a grant agreement with the Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center via Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets (VAAFAM) indicating their intent to complete the proposed project and authorizing NE-DBIC/VAAFAM to monitor the project's progress. The grant agreement will include provisions (terms and conditions) set by the State of Vermont as well as any program-specific requirements. Review [Attachment C - Standard State Provisions and Contracts and Grants](#) (12/15/2017 Revised).

Prior to commencement of work and release of any payments, grantee will be required to submit:

- A. A certificate of insurance consistent with the requirements set forth in Attachment C of the grant agreement. [Not required if grantee has a current certificate of insurance on file with the Agency of Agriculture.]
- B. A current [IRS Form W-9](#) (Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification), signed within the past six months
- C. A Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number, acquired through SAM.gov
- D. Documentation verifying pledged matching funds, as applicable.

### GRANTEE PAYMENT SCHEDULE

Unless other arrangements are made with the grant manager, payments will be made on the following schedule:

- **Initial payment: 50%** of the total grant will be paid to the grantee upon receipt of certificate of insurance and Form W-9, confirmation of Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) via SAM.gov, and a claim submission in WebGrants. Failure to submit all required documents and an executed copy of the grant agreement within 30 days of receipt may result in the loss of awarded funds.
- **Second payment: 30%** of the total grant will be issued upon approval of grantee's interim performance report by the grant manager and receipt of a claim in WebGrants.
- **Final payment: 20%** of the total grant will be issued upon approval of grantee's final performance report, the completion and submission of a survey provided by the grant manager, and receipt of a claim in WebGrants.

The final performance report is due no later than 30 days after the grant end date. Final invoices must be submitted to the State within 45 days of the grant expiration date. Invoices submitted before the completion of an interim or final report will not be paid until the report has been received, reviewed, and accepted by the grant manager. The State cannot reimburse the grantee for work performed after the expiration date of the grant.

### REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

The following reporting is required under this grant program:

1. Grantees will submit an Interim Performance Report mid-project which may include but is not limited to:
  - a. Summary of status of grant activities
  - b. Description of successes and challenges
  - c. Discussion of any modifications deemed necessary and justification for changes
  - d. Documentation of any marketing/promotion of project
  - e. Photos/documentation that demonstrates grant activities.
  - f. Expenditures to date
2. Grantees will submit a Final Performance Report and complete a survey no later than thirty (30) days from the grant end date. Final reports may include but is not limited to:
  - a. Summary of achievements from this project including impacts on the community, public, and other businesses/organizations
  - b. Description of any challenges or changes to the project
  - c. Lessons learned from this project
  - d. Opportunities that arose from the completion of this project
  - e. Plans to build on the work completed under this grant
  - f. Representative documentation and photos representative of the full breadth of activities under this grant
  - g. Final expenditures
  - h. Project outcomes:
    - i. Results of grantees measurements of success
    - ii. Sales increases
    - iii. Increases in revenue
    - iv. Jobs maintained/created
    - v. Volume of milk moving into supply chain
3. A post-grant survey will include questions which pertain to metrics regarding the following:
  - a. Increase in consumption of and access to dairy projects
  - b. Increase in sales of dairy products
  - c. Development of new market opportunities for dairy producers and processors
  - d. Dairy farmer/processor satisfaction of grant activities

The NE-DBIC/VAAFM reserves the right to utilize and/or summarize information and photos provided through these reports to use on publications/promotions.

NE-DBIC via VAAFM reserves the right to modify reporting requirements during the project. Information submitted in any report under this program will be a public record. Failure to adhere to reporting requirements and deadlines may disqualify the grantee from future grant opportunities through the NE-DBIC or State of Vermont.

## CERTIFICATE OF INSURANCE

A certificate of insurance (COI) is a common requirement for businesses and organizations; most agents are familiar with it. The State of Vermont must be listed as an additional insured on the grantee's policy. We recommend forwarding the insurance requirements below to prospective insurers for accuracy:

*Insurance: Before commencing work on this Agreement the Party must provide certificates of insurance to show that the following minimum coverages are in effect. It is the responsibility of the Party to maintain current certificates of insurance on file with the State through the term of this Agreement. No warranty is made that the coverages and limits listed herein are adequate to cover and protect the interests of the Party for the Party's operations. These are solely minimums that have been established to protect the interests of the State.*

*Workers Compensation: With respect to all operations performed, the Party shall carry workers' compensation insurance in accordance with the laws of the State of Vermont. Vermont will accept an out-of-state employer's workers' compensation coverage while operating in Vermont provided that the insurance carrier is licensed to write insurance in Vermont and an amendatory endorsement is added to the policy adding Vermont for coverage purposes. Otherwise, the party shall secure a Vermont workers' compensation policy, if necessary, to comply with Vermont law.*

*General Liability and Property Damage: With respect to all operations performed under this Agreement, the Party shall carry general liability insurance having all major divisions of coverage including, but not limited to:*

*Premises - Operations*

*Products and Completed Operations*

*Personal Injury Liability*

*Contractual Liability*

*The policy shall be on an occurrence form and limits shall not be less than:*

*\$1,000,000 Each Occurrence*

*\$2,000,000 General Aggregate*

*\$1,000,000 Products/Completed Operations Aggregate*

*\$1,000,000 Personal & Advertising Injury*

*Automotive Liability: The Party shall carry automotive liability insurance covering all motor vehicles, including hired and non-owned coverage, used in connection with the Agreement. Limits of coverage shall not be less than \$500,000 combined single limit. If performance of this Agreement involves construction, or the transport of persons or hazardous materials, limits of coverage shall not be less than \$1,000,000 combined single limit.*

*Additional Insured. The General Liability and Property Damage coverages required for performance of this Agreement shall include the State of Vermont and its agencies, departments, officers and employees as Additional Insureds. If performance of this Agreement involves construction, or the transport of persons or hazardous materials, then the required Automotive Liability coverage shall include the State of Vermont and its agencies, departments, officers and employees as Additional Insureds. Coverage shall be primary and non-contributory with any other insurance and self-insurance.*

*Notice of Cancellation or Change. There shall be no cancellation, change, potential exhaustion of aggregate limits or non-renewal of insurance coverage(s) without thirty (30) days written prior written notice to the State.*