

Request for Proposal

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Release Date: 8/9/2022**Response Due: 9/16/2022**

PROJECT DETAILS

Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center – Dairy Farm Production Education

The Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center (NE-DBIC) hosted at the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets (VAAFAM), seeks multiple contractors across the Northeast region to develop, organize, and implement educational opportunities for dairy farmers. Contractors will develop events, webinars, educational series, and/or conferences to increase farmer-focused production and business viability education.

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT

Name: Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center/ Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food, and Markets

Contact: Kathryn Donovan

Address: 116 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05620

Contact Phone: 802-585-4571

Contact E-mail: kathryn.donovan@vermont.gov

TIMELINE

Release Date: 8/9/2022

Contract Start Date: 11/1/2022

Responses Due: 9/16/2022

Contract End Date: 5/3/2024

Contract dates will be finalized during contract award process.

BUDGET

Maximum budget per project: \$35,000

Total Funds Available (for 5 or more contractors): \$200,000

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OTHER BUDGET COMMENTS / RESTRICTIONS / INCENTIVES

None.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

Incepted in 2019, the Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center (NE-DBIC), hosted by the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets (VAAFMM) is one of four national USDA Dairy Business Innovation Initiative centers. The NE-DBIC supports a wide array of opportunities for dairy farmers of cows, goats, and sheep, and value-added processors across the Northeast region of the United States including New England, Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania. The NE-DBIC has since invested heavily in projects focused on supporting farmers in transitioning dairy production systems to grazing models, forage enhancement, and other non-traditional farm management strategies. There are currently eight farmer cohort technical assistance groups across the region, serving approximately 100 farmers in Vermont, Maine, New Hampshire, New York, Pennsylvania, and beyond, with additional cohorts starting later in 2022. The NE-DBIC has also invested in direct technical assistance through projects with both Maine and Vermont Extension Services for farmers interested in transitioning to more grazing/forage-based production. NE-DBIC has, additionally, lead a farmer-focused learning journey to Missouri to learn about New Zealand-style grazing management methods.

Technical assistance providers are in tight demand in the Northeast and bringing in outside experts can be cost-prohibitive for those providers to supplement their knowledge, capacity, and financial resources and to meet farmers' needs, interests, and desires to take a modernized approach to business management. To supplement existing resources and respond to the growing needs of dairy farmers impacted with high inflation, scarcity in farm supplies, and supply chain delays, and the resulting increase in cost of production, this funding will allow service providers to access funds to fill gaps in knowledge and expertise to aid farmers in improved farm production practices and increased economically viability.

The contractors selected for these contracts will each propose an event, or series of events, that meets the needs of farmers that cannot currently be met by resources available to them. Employing untraditional methods for providing education in ways that overcome typical barriers and optimize participation of farmers is strongly encouraged, as is a strategy for recruiting participants.

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STATEMENT OF WORK

The NE-DBIC seeks to fund multiple contractors across the Northeast for the development of high quality, farm production education events and opportunities that address current and future challenges of dairy farmers and are focused on improving farm production and business viability. Contractors will manage all parts of the development, organization, and implementation of these educational activities and may sub-contract funds as needed to host successful events. Educational opportunities should complement and/or build upon other successful existing educational opportunities. Employing untraditional methods for providing education in ways that overcome typical barriers and optimize participation of farmers is strongly encouraged.

- Event Planning
 - Identify appropriate format, timeline, and educational topics based on regional dairy farmer need
 - Identify sub-contractors and negotiate contracts for lodging, conference/meeting rooms, transportation, meals, speakers, event management companies, hosting platforms, etc. as needed and in accordance with Federal Allowable Costs
 - Manage the full event schedule, supplies, and logistics
 - Develop a post-event survey to be approved by contract manager ahead of event
- Outreach and Promotion
 - Develop an outreach strategy to recruit target audience through multiple channels
 - Development and dissemination of a media kit to relevant stakeholders
 - Market opportunity to farmers through engagement with producer associations, state extension offices, business viability organizations, and other organizations as appropriate
- Event Management
 - Manage all event-related logistics, event costs, and sub-contractors in accordance with State and Federal requirements.

TARGET AUDIENCE

While events may be open to farmers in any state, they should be focused on the needs of active dairy farmers located in the Northeast (Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and/or Vermont).

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PERFORMANCE MEASURES & DELIVERABLES

Contractor will submit to NE-DBIC/VAAFMs contract manager all documentation outlined, unless otherwise agreed upon during the contract drafting process. The following deliverables and timeline below will be subject to negotiation with each selected contractor to reflect the scope and length of their individual proposed project.

- Contractor will conduct a planning meeting with NE-DBIC staff to discuss and finalize proposed timeline of activities within one (1) week of having an executed contract.
- Contractor will manage all event-related logistics, event costs, and sub-contractors in accordance with State and Federal requirements.
- Contractor will provide an interim report at least forty-five (45) days ahead of the commencement of the event(s) which will include:
 - description of the finalized educational delivery format; timeline/agenda/schedule of event(s); comprehensive list of speakers/subject matter experts that will lead event(s); title and description of all events/workshops
 - media packet for event(s) that is final and ready for stakeholder dissemination to promote the event (including press release, social media language, newsletter language, and imagery)
 - outreach strategy to recruit participants
- Two weeks ahead of event, Contractor will provide:
 - registration list
 - a draft of post-event participant survey to show impact for contract manager feedback and approval; must include, but is not limited to, questions provided by contract manager.
- Contractor will provide a final report that includes:
 - List of all registrants and project partners to include individual's name, business/organization, state, and email address.
 - List of places where outreach and recruitment of the event(s) took place and at least three (3) examples of materials disseminated through multiple communication outlets
 - An analysis of attendee feedback surveys, including raw survey data, which shows the usefulness of the material, effectiveness of the educator(s), and potential impact on their business.
 - Narrative that addresses successes, challenges, and recommended training and funding needs for the success of dairy farmers in the region.
- Contractor will maintain a responsive and professional communication with NE-DBIC staff and participants.

Statement of Work / Marketing Firm Work Request Form

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Please include the following with your response to this bid:

1. **Contractor background and experience.** Provide a narrative that addresses: 1) your team's knowledge, experience, and understanding of your region's dairy industry and/or farm management needs, including technical knowledge, and 2) your team's experience with the development, participant recruitment, and implementation of educational events for farmers.
2. **Resumes of project team leader and other key team members.** Resumes should be no more than 2 pages in length and demonstrate the contractor's background and experience related to this proposal. Do not include bios in place of resumes. Including related references is encouraged.
3. **Proposed project approach, timeline, activities, and educational framework.** Describe the target audience, current and future challenges this audience is facing, subject matter to be covered and its relevance to addressing those challenges, and a description of why those needs are not being met with existing resources. Detail the proposed format for delivery of materials and how this will meet the needs of farmers. Provide a proposed timeline of activities and approach to recruitment of participants. Outline how this will complement, build upon, and/or leverage existing technical assistance resources. Include expected outcomes and impacts of the project on the dairy sector.
4. **Project budget:** Please submit a budget that is both realistic and reasonable to complete the scope of services. Budget must tie specific activities to deliverables, with clear cost associated with each component of the proposal. Proposal shall include an hourly rate for estimated services and any related expenses to be billed, including all materials that need to be printed or purchased for attendees. All State of Vermont contracts are paid based on successful completion of deliverables and approval by the contract manager. Selection of a contractor will strongly consider realistic, necessary, and efficient use of funds.
5. **Proposals** should include all relevant costs required to complete the work as detailed above, note any travel requirements, and include necessary costs to meet insurance requirements of State of Vermont, Standard Attachment C. All costs and activities should conform to Section 8.0 Allowable Costs and Activities of the [2021 AMS General Terms and Conditions](#).
6. **A Certificate of Insurance** which meets the criteria as outlined in [Attachment C](#)
7. **An IRS Form W-9** signed within the last 6 months, if respondent is not currently a State of Vermont supplier
8. **Contractor's [Unique Entity Identifier \(UEI\)](#)** which should be obtained through SAM.gov