NORTHEAST DAIRY BUSINESS INNOVATION CENTER

# Program Overview

# What is the NE-DBIC?

- One of four USDA funded regional centers
  – Vermont, Wisconsin, Tennessee, and California
- At least 50% of funds go out as grants
- Focus on development, production, marketing, and distribution of regional dairy products
- VAAFM awarded competitively in 2019 and eligible for non-competitive funds through 2023
  - $38.7 million awarded to date

# NE-DBIC Team

- **Laura Ginsburg** – Lead, Dairy Development and Innovation
- **Kathryn Donovan** - Center Program Manager
- **Rebecca Brockett** – Grants and Contracts Administrator
- **Brockton Corbett** – Grants Specialist
- **Ben Eldredge** – Grants Specialist
- **Katie Spring** – Outreach and Communications Coordinator
- Julia Scheier, Kim Burns, and Trevor Audet

# Investment Strategy

Investing in farms and processors to promote the development, production, marketing, and distribution of dairy products supported by market research and technical assistance.

1. Connection to Consumers
2. Business Management
3. Support for Rural Communities
4. Leadership in Climate-Forward Strategies

# Projects & Investments

2019 – 2022

# Education & Events

- Dairy herd management technical assistance
- Dairy farmer technical assistance cohorts
- Production education for cheesemakers
- Missouri Learning Journey
- SIAL Canada tradeshow pavilion

# Project Spotlight:
# Dairy Farmer TA Cohorts

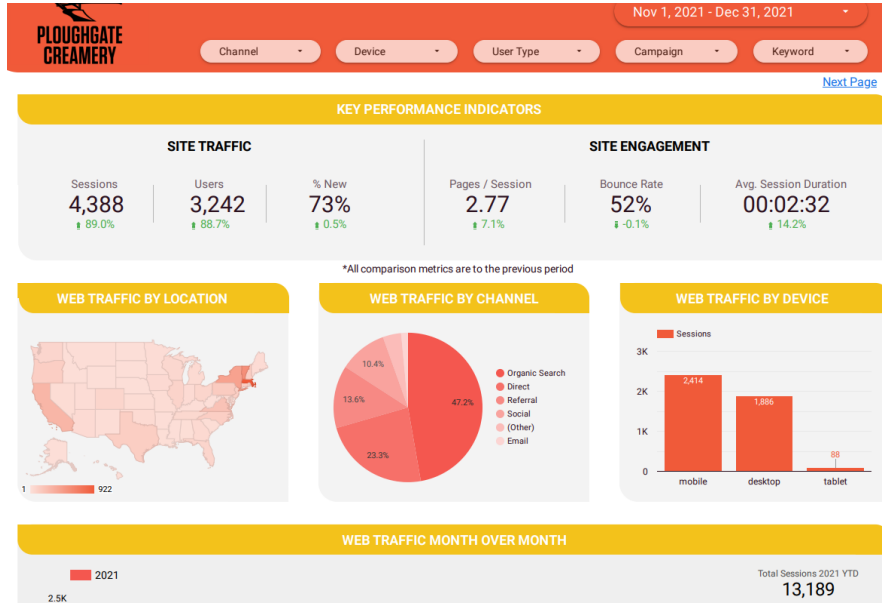
- **Goal**: provide cohort-structured education to dairy farmers to increased grazing quality or quantity, home-grown forage enhancement, develop alternative herd management approaches, innovate staffing and business management, and/or build marketing and education focused on dairy production practices.
- **Funded projects**:
  - University of Vermont (VT only) – 2020
  - White River Natural Resource Conservation District (VT/NH) – 2021
  - Pennsylvania Sustainable Agriculture (PASA) and Cornell (PA/NY) – 2021
  - Organic Valley (PA/NY/VT/ME) – 2022
  - Cornell (NY only) – 2022
  - University of Vermont (VT/NY) – 2022
  - Conservation Performance (VT/NH/MA/PA) – 2022
  - University of Maine (ME) – 2022
- 130+ farmers participating
- **Outcomes to date:**
  - The Cleveland Farm (UVM 2020 cohort) realized feed cost savings of $34,000 during first year - Scott says, “I’m very pleased with how this went. I should have done this ten years ago.”
  - Access to DBIC earmarked grants to help implement project and improvements developed in cohort period

# Competitive Grants

- Multi-Business Agritourism
- Dairy Marketing and Branding
- Goat & Sheep Dairy Supply Chain
- Dairy Food Safety and Certification
- Business Viability and Technical Assistance
- Packaging Innovation
- Farm and Processor Innovation
- On Farm Milk Storage and Handling
- Existing Processor Expansion – January 2023

# Project Spotlight: Marketing & Branding Grants

- **Goal**: provide professional services to value-added business to support marketing and brand development through labeling, e-commerce, social media, imagery, and strategy
- **Funded projects**:
  - 2 rounds, 23 grants totaling ~$845,000
  - 5 Vermont grantees:
    - Bridgman Hill Farm
    - J&R Family Farm dba Nothin' but Curd
    - lu•lu Artisan Ice Cream (Harmack LLC)
    - Ploughgate Creamery
    - Von Trapp Farmstead
- **Grant impacts:**
  - We exceeded our dreams and goals for this grant! In 2020 we did $17.6k in online sales. In 2021 with the help of our team through this grant we did $40k in online sales. We increased our customer visits by 69%.



# Project Spotlight:
# Dairy Packaging Innovation Grant

- **Goal**: to reduce the use of virgin plastic in the dairy supply chain by supporting modernized packaging initiatives that prioritize sustainability, scalability, and marketability

- **Funded projects**:
  - AgriMark/Cabot (VT)
  - Big Picture Farm (VT)
  - Cellars at Jasper Hill (VT)
  - Stonyfield (NH)
  - Vermont Creamery (VT)

- **Details:**
  - $1.1 million in funds granted
  - 2-year projects
  - Educational/information sharing required

# Research and Development

- New England distribution network study
- Goat dairy development needs
- Consumer perception study and marketing toolkit
- Sensory and microbial research of specialty cheese
- Goat and sheep consumer demand
- Specialty cheese quality milk supply/demand

Project Spotlight:

# Strengthening the Regional Value-Added Dairy Distribution System

## *KEY FINDINGS & STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS*

FINDING

*The Northeast's value-added dairy supply chain works well for many buyers and producers, but it shows signs of brittleness.*

STRATEGY

BUILD RESILIENCY

- Take a holistic view of distribution as a process that includes producer readiness, marketing and sales strategies, relationships and more.
- Apply a long-term view and broad goal of increasing resiliency and reducing brittleness in distribution networks to all industry investments and efforts.

- **Goal**: understand the current functionality of New England dairy distribution, accessibility to processors, and areas of needed development or support
- **Funded project**:
  - KK&P completed a study and released report with presentation in April 2022
- **Outcomes to date:**
  - Identified strategic directions, developed case studies, and possible interventions, using models in other areas to support how implementation could happen and potential results
  - Integration of findings into the USDA recommendations and future DBIC projects

# Funding Totals

- Applications Received – 387*
- Total Request - $18.48 million

- Total Awards – 119
- Total Funds - $6.97 million
- Average Award - $62,000

- Vermont Applications
  - Received – 118 / $6.9 million
  - Awarded – 42
  - Total Funds - $3.69 million
  - Average Award - $63,000

# Contact


## Laura Ginsburg

Laura.Ginsburg@vermont.gov

*agriculture.vermont.gov/dbic*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