

AGRiVIEW



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Winter Spreading Ban Starts December 15

By Sonia Howlett, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

The annual winter manure spreading ban begins at midnight on Friday, December 15 and lasts until midnight on March 31st. This ban on spreading manure or other agricultural waste through the winter months is designed to protect water quality. The Required Agricultural Practices (RAPs) also prohibit manure spreading on saturated, frozen or snow-covered ground before or after the ban.

By law, farmers need to ensure that their manure storage is drawn down enough for the duration of the winter spreading ban or that they can stack solid manure in a way that will not lead to water quality impacts. Medium and Large Farm



Operations are required by rule to have 180 days of waste storage capacity.

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets is aware that farms across Vermont experienced unprecedented rainfall this summer, which has reduced manure spreading windows and

stressed manure storage capacity. However, the winter manure spreading ban is still in place.

If you anticipate having an issue before or during the ban, please contact Nate Sands at 802-224-6850 or Laura DiPietro 802-595-1990 for assistance with manure management options. Reach out as

soon as possible – the earlier you communicate with us, the more time we all have to engage in a solution.

Solutions often include helping to identify additional storage locations or other alternative options. An emergency exemption issued by the Secretary of Agriculture for winter manure spreading during the ban or on frozen or snow-covered ground may be considered for emergency situations. However, this emergency exemption is a last resort. The Agency will always seek alternative solutions where possible before issuing an exemption. Regardless of exemption, under NO circumstance can manure or agricultural waste ever make its way to surface water.

Please reach out now so we can help you resolve any manure storage and application concerns before they become an issue.



Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

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THE VIEW FROM 116 STATE STREET

As we close out 2023, I suspect many are not disappointed to see this year leave us and welcome in the year 2024. This past year will be the year remembered for severe weather. From a hard freeze in May to a soggy filled summer this year which tested our farmers and producers like no other. Vermont's farmers sustained millions of dollars in damage because of these two weather events. Recovering from the flood will be the focus of much of our work in 2024. We will continue to seek aid from federal and state programs that help our farmers get back on track.

We will be keeping a close eye on feed issues for livestock. The summer was not kind to those harvesting feed for cows, sheep, goats, and horses. In case

you have not seen it we now do have an on-line resource for those selling feed or those looking for feed. The feed finder has been a popular resource for those in need of hay, corn, or silage. This resource includes prices and contact information for those looking for feed this winter. You can find it at here: <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/new-feed-finder-marketplace-connects-farmers-need-available-feed> This service is free and we hope to continue this service well into the future.

It is the season for your local Christmas Tree grower. Our growers support our working landscape and work year-round to provide us with that perfect tree for our home or office. If you get a chance, take a few hours to visit a choose or cut operation, or even send a tree in the

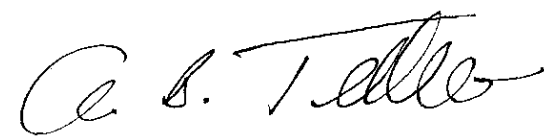
mail. Some of our growers provide that service as well. Nothing screams Vermont like a fresh Christmas tree this time of year.

We will encourage the public to support our farmers and small businesses during the holiday season and into 2024. Vermont is blessed with incredible high quality nutritious food and products. From meat to dairy to maple these products can easily be found in retail stores, co-ops, winter farmers markets and farm stands. If you want to send something special to

a friend or family far away, many of our businesses can do it for you. E-Commerce is another way you can support our small businesses across the Green Mountains. You can ship just about anything these days.

We are grateful for those who continue to feed us and those who support Agriculture. Wishing you a safe, productive, and healthy December and we are looking forward to a calm and prosperous 2024.

Vermont has earned it.



Anson Tebbetts,
Secretary, Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

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This Month's Recipe

Brown Sugar Pound Cake

Makes one cake

Ingredients

3 c. flour
1 tsp. baking powder
1/4 tsp. salt
3/4 c. butter or margarine,
softened
2 c. packed light brown sugar
1 tbsp. vanilla extract
3 large eggs
1 c. milk

Directions

Preheat oven to 350.
Grease and flour 10" tube/
bundt pan.
Combine flour, baking
powder, and salt in a bowl. Stir
well with a whisk. Beat the butter
in a large bowl at medium speed
until light and fluffy. Gradually



add brown sugar and vanilla, beating
until well-blended. Add eggs, one
at a time, beating well after each
addition. Add flour mixture to sugar

mixture alternately with the
milk beating at low speed.
Begin and end with the
flour mixture.

Spoon batter into
prepared pan. Bake at 350
for 65 minutes or until
wooden pick inserted in
the center comes out clean.
Cool in pan for ten minutes
on a wire rack and remove
from pan. Cool completely
on a wire rack. Sprinkle
powdered sugar over top of
cake.

Note: At the holiday, we
use four 3"x6" loaf pans which is
great for gift giving. Baking time
will vary.



Vermont PSA Grower Training Course Coming This Winter

Grow your farm's food safety culture

By Kiera Ebeling, Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

There are many things to look forward to in 2024, one of those things being a Produce Safety Alliance (PSA) Grower Training to be held in Vermont. This one-day training, hosted by University of Vermont Extension and the Vermont Produce Program, focuses on understanding good agricultural practices and the Produce Safety Rule, incorporating these practices into your daily routine, and creating a food safety culture on your farm!

Our time together will look like

presentations on the components of the FDA Produce Safety Rule (and why it exists!), how to develop and implement a food safety plan, and an opportunity to connect with other growers. Breakfast and lunch will be provided. By the end of the training, you should be able to identify and reduce produce safety risks on your farm. You will also receive a certificate verifying your completion of the course.

This course is open to all growers, farmworkers, gleaners, and those who support farms. If you or someone on your farm has already completed the PSA Grower Training, please consider

attending as a refresher or sending another employee. Not only can this training enrich your farm's food safety culture and employees' working knowledge, it also serves as professional development that your employees can carry with them throughout their farming careers.

This training satisfies the FDA Produce Safety Rule requirement for covered farms that "at least one supervisor or responsible party" completes food safety training "recognized as adequate" by FDA (21 C.F.F. 112.22(c)).

The Vermont training will be offered at minimal cost to attendees; for more information about the PSA

Grower Training Course and other training options, including an online course, visit the PSA website at cals.cornell.edu/produce-safety-alliance/training/grower-training-course.

To be notified via email or phone when registration opens for the Vermont training, contact Kiera Ebeling at kiera.ebeling@vermont.gov or 802-461-6152. Registration information will also be available on our website at agriculture.vermont.gov/produce.

The training will be delivered in English; please contact us for translated materials or other accommodations.

Vermont Farm & Forest Viability Program Water Quality Grants

By the Vermont Housing & Conservation Board

The Vermont Farm & Forest Viability Program, a program of the Vermont Housing & Conservation Board, has grant funds available for on-farm capital improvement projects that have a positive impact on water quality. Eligible farmers can apply for \$5,000 to \$50,000 in funding. Please note, this award maximum is an increase from prior years.

Applications will open on November 27, 2023, and will be due by January 19, 2024. Viability staff are hosting two virtual information sessions to answer questions on:

- **Friday, December 8, 2023** from 12pm-1:30pm
- **Monday, January 8, 2024** from 3:30pm-5:00pm

These grants are designed to

help farm businesses undertake projects that improve on-farm water quality, help farms comply with water quality regulations, and improve overall farm viability. All awards require a 1 to 1 match, and

grantees will be reimbursed upon the completion of the project.

More information is available on the Vermont Farm & Forest Viability Program website at: <https://vhcb.org/our-programs/vermont-farm-forest->

[viability-program/grants/water-quality-grants](https://vhcb.org/our-programs/vermont-farm-forest-viability-program/grants/water-quality-grants).

Please share with eligible farm businesses and direct any questions to Betsy McGavisk at Betsy@vhcb.org or 802-828-5562.



DAIRY BUSINESS INNOVATION CENTER

Current Grants for Dairy Processors Across the Northeast

By Ali Boochever, Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center



As part of an ongoing effort to increase sustainability and resilience of the dairy supply chain across our 11-state region, the Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center (NE-DBIC) announces two current and one upcoming grants for cow, goat, and sheep dairy farmers. Look for the Request for Applications (RFA) for the grants below this month, plus our full funding calendar, on our website: nedairy-innovation.com/grants

Farm Improvement & Modernization Grant

This grant for dairy farmers will fund a wide range

of projects that prioritize long term farm viability and their ability to adapt to climate and economic challenges. Projects at all stages and levels of complexity will be considered, but the most competitive projects will include direct involvement of a service provider, business planner, farm succession planner, or technical assistance provider to demonstrate a strategic, long-term approach to their grant project investment.

The application period

will be open until December 7, 2023 at 2PM ET. Awards will range from \$15,000 - \$100,000 with a 25% match commitment.

Dairy farmers across the 11-states of the Northeast are eligible to apply. Current and former farmer participants from NE-DBIC cohort farmers will receive priority for \$695,000 of the funds from this grant. Total funds available in this round: \$1,495,000.

On-Farm Milk Storage & Handling Grant

Northeast dairy farmers looking to access funds that support the purchase of equipment and other related costs that will improve milk storage, handling, and energy efficiencies will be able to apply for this upcoming

funding opportunity in the fall. This grant provides funds for farmers to purchase needed supplies related to long-term farm viability including streamlined milk pickup, efficient milk storage, and improved handling abilities for both farmers and their processors.

The application period will be open until January 18, 2024. Awards will range from \$15,000 to \$50,000 with a 25% cash or in-kind match requirement. Total funds available in this round: \$800,000.

Dairy Food Safety & Certification Grant

This funding opportunity will provide grants for dairy farmers, processors, and/or producer associations to take actionable steps to improve

the safety of dairy products. Projects funded through this program will support increased production safety standards with the goal of accessing new markets. Food safety activities under this grant should build upon baseline state and federal compliance requirements to further improve product consistency, safety, and quality of dairy products.

The RFA for this opportunity will be released December 12, 2023. Awards will range from \$10,000 to \$50,000 with a 25% cash or in-kind match requirement. Total funds available in this round: \$500,000.

For more information about these grants, contact the NE-DBIC team at agr.dairyinnovation@vermont.gov

New Jobs Bulletin Board Hopes to Connect Job Seekers with Available Agriculture Jobs

By Scott Waterman, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets recently began offering agriculture employers the opportunity to advertise their open employment positions on the Agency's website. Each job is posted by the employer through an online entry portal. This page is specifically designed to connect agricultural sector employers with potential employees in a user friendly, free format.

The page allows employers to include helpful details about their positions like duration (seasonal vs. year-round) and included benefits such as housing. All submitted job postings are reviewed for completeness and published bi-weekly. The Agency will post each job for two weeks unless otherwise

continued on page 15

Maple 100: That's a Wrap!

By Kristen Brassard, Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

The Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets extends an *extra sweet* thank you to all who participated in this year's Vermont Maple 100! From September 15 - October 15, approximately 100 different businesses across the state shared unique maple products and hosted sugarhouse tours, concerts, tastings, giveaways, and much more.

This year's event saw many changes and improvements inspired by past participant feedback, including the addition of Maple 100 road signs offered for free to all participants, and more marketing dollars targeted in-state to reach Vermonters and tourists who

were already here looking for tasty adventures. Overall, the marketing campaign reached more than 2 million people and far surpassed engagement found on similar promotions! We even joined forces with @EatVermont to highlight different Maple 100 offerings throughout the state on social media.

Consumers were invited to participate in filling out a Maple Meander passport, which encouraged them to visit a variety of participating businesses. One lucky winner won a basket from Lake Champlain Chocolates and another from Dakin Farm! We thank these generous businesses (Maple 100 participants themselves!) for their donations.

The Maple 100 is made possible by a USDA Acer Marketing grant and is one of many ways the Agency

of Agriculture supports the maple industry. In four years, this event has introduced

thousands of consumers to the wide variety of ways to use maple, beyond just as

a breakfast sweetener. Stay tuned this spring for updates on the 2024 event!



A jug of maple syrup, a lemon, a bottle of vodka, and a cocktail with a lemon wedge are displayed on a wooden table.

The Pesticide Applicator Report is going digital.

This change will allow:

- Fast delivery,
- Easy click links to resources,
- Electronic fillable quizzes for CEU credit submission, and
- Saving time and money.

The Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets wants to ensure you receive the Pesticide Applicator Report (PAR). Please confirm your email address with the Agency using the link, <https://forms.office.com/g/fNFGigN3FF>.

If you have any questions, please email agr.pest@vermont.gov or call 802-828-1732.

Please adjust your email settings so that email coming from agr.pest@vermont.gov will make it to your inbox and avoid it arriving in your Junk email box. You can also always find the latest, and past PARs with quizzes by scanning the QR code.



Pesticide Applicator Certification Exams

By Stephanie Smith, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

Are you ready to take a Pesticide Applicator certification exam? Have you studied the appropriate materials? Do you know which exam or exams you need to become certified or licensed? Are you 18 or older? Please register online at least a week (7 days) in advance or by contacting the Certification & Training coordinator at 802-828-1732. All exams are given by the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets. Scan the QR Code to schedule.

- All exams are CLOSED BOOK
- Please bring a calculator
- Please bring a current, state-issued, picture ID (required)

There is no cost to sit for (take) exams, *however* there is a fee for obtaining certification.



Montpelier
Every Wednesday
9:00 am – 12:00 pm

Williston
Bi-weekly
1st and 3rd Thursdays
9:00 am – 12:00 pm

St. Johnsbury
Monthly
Every 2nd Thursday
9:00 am – 12:00 pm

Rutland
Monthly
1st Tuesday
1:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Newport
Monthly
1st Thursday
9:00 am – 12:00 pm

Brattleboro
Monthly
1st Thursday
9:00 am – 12:00 pm

Snow is Coming — Time to Think About Barn Roof Safety

By Cornell University Extension

When the snow comes down heavy and hard, it's time for farmers to start thinking about barn roof safety.

Heavy snow can put barn roofs at risk, but snow removal must be performed carefully. Removing snow without the proper approach can actually cause more damage by creating an unbalanced load. Remember, your number one priority must be to protect your own safety!

Farmers are encouraged to consider these safety tips, provided by Cornell University, when considering snow removal from a barn roof.

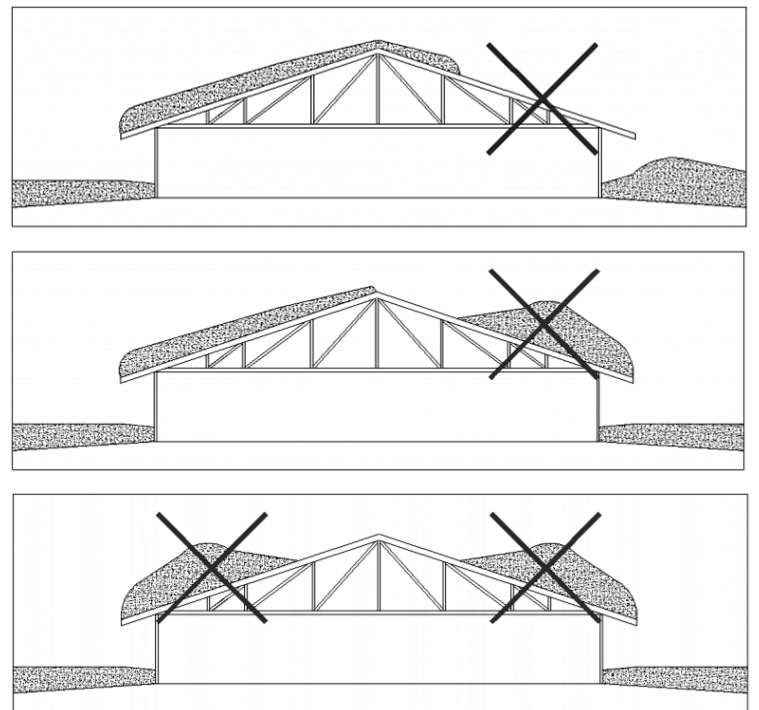
Do...

- DO consider a systematic approach. You need a plan! For a diagram of the best way to remove snow from your barn structure, see this tip sheet from Cornell
- DO listen for creaking or moaning – if your barn is built from wood, unusual sounds may indicate there's trouble afoot
- DO look for bending or bowing rafters, headers, or columns. There are often visual cues to be found if you look carefully at the structure
- DO ask for help. You can't do this alone. Who is your back up? Is there anyone in your community with expertise

or equipment, who might be willing to help?

Don't...

- DON'T remove snow unequally from the roof. Unbalanced loads can create even more problems.
 - DON'T pile snow atop the roof. Do not simply move the snow from one area of the roof to another
 - DON'T attempt to clear the snow yourself! Make sure there are others nearby, helping and watching, in the event of a problem
- Most importantly, **do not put your own safety at risk.**
- For a full overview of the best way to remove snow from a barn roof, visit [http://](http://blogs.cornell.edu/beefcattle/files/2014/11/SnowRemoval-1f91q43.pdf)



blogs.cornell.edu/beefcattle/files/2014/11/SnowRemoval-1f91q43.pdf

Vermont farmers are

critical to our landscape, heritage, economy, and communities. We have *none to spare!* Be safe!

Pilot Project Brings Local Organic Milk to Schools

By Katie Spring, Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center

With funding from an NE-DBIC Processor Research & Development Grant, Miller Farm is now providing organic milk to local schools.

To celebrate the launch of the project, over 100 students from the Windham Northeast Supervisory Union visited the farm in Vernon. From wagon rides to butter making, students learned about dairy farming and where their milk comes from as they toured Miller Farm. The field trip ended

with a school-made lunch: pizza, ratatouille, local corn, apples, and cups of milk produced by the cows and farmers they met that day.



Peter Miller, far left, Harley Sterling and Secretary Anson Tebbetts and students from Windham Northeast Supervisory Union raise a toast to organic milk from the Miller farm at school.

Through the Processor Research & Development Grant, Miller Farm, in partnership with Windham Northeast Supervisory Union

(WNESU), is transitioning a minimum of three elementary schools and one high school from serving milk in cartons to serving local organic milk in bulk dispensers. The goal is to establish a new scalable market model that will increase institutional demand for regional dairy products while simultaneously improving nutrition, food safety, and reducing waste in public schools.

By investing in new processing equipment, Miller Farm has been able to make meaningful progress in just a few months. That progress is bolstered by a range of organizations supporting the

project, including NOFA-VT, Northeast Family Farm Partnership, and Farm to Institution New England.

With a goal of delivering 100 gallons of bulk milk per week to area schools, this initial pilot stage will run through summer 2024. After, Miller Farm will share the results of the pilot project with assistance from project partners to the Northeast dairy sector, farm-to-institution communities, and the general public.

For now, students are enjoying the local milk deliveries and connecting the dots between farm to plate.

Application for Trade Show Assistance Grants Opens December 1st

By Kristen Brassard, Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets welcomes applications from Vermont agricultural and forestry businesses for Trade Show Assistance Grants. These grants provide businesses with funds to exhibit and sell their Vermont products at trade shows targeting out-of-state buyers. These matching grants can partially offset the expenses associated with exhibiting at trade shows. Trade shows are wonderful opportunities to promote Vermont's incredible food, forestry,

and agricultural products with people from around the region and the world. They provide excellent opportunities to network with wholesale buyers and expand into new domestic and international markets.

Funding may be used to reimburse up to 50% of the following expenses: travel; marketing assets and booth design; registration fees; booth fees; furnishings; utilities; shipping/freight; and other marketing costs (samples, printing, etc.). Trade show(s) must target buyers outside of Vermont and be in the business to business/wholesale format. Direct-to-consumer shows are not eligible for TSAG funding.

Applicants may include up to five trade shows in their yearly marketing plan, requesting a total of between \$2,000 and \$5,000 in eligible reimbursements for shows that take place between April 1, 2024 and March 31, 2025. Businesses may not apply for funding to support attendance at trade shows they have already attended five or more times.

Eligible applicants are Vermont-based agricultural and forestry businesses that meet the following criteria: (1) Business is registered with the Vermont Secretary of State and has been in business for over one year, with an address indicating that they perform substan-

tial functions in Vermont; (2) Business has three or more wholesale accounts; (3) Business's products meet the Vermont Local Definition as defined in Act 129.

The Working Lands Enterprise Initiative has allocated \$50,000 to support Vermont businesses to execute their yearly tradeshow marketing plans. Applications will be reviewed through a competitive process. Eligibility does not guarantee

funding will be awarded.

To learn more about this opportunity and review the full Request for Applications (RFA), please visit agriculture.vermont.gov/grants/tradeshow. The application will be open from December 1, 2023 through January 15, 2024.

For questions regarding this grant opportunity, please contact Kristen Brassard at kristen.brassard@vermont.gov.

For Agricultural Events and Resources Visit:

- The VT Agency of Agriculture Events Calendar: <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/calendar>
- UVM Extension Events Calendars: https://www.uvm.edu/extension/extension_event_calendars
- Vermont Farm to Plate Events Calendar: <https://www.vtfarmtoplate.com/events>
- Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont Events Calendar: <http://nofavt.org/events>
- DigIn Vermont Events Calendar: <https://www.diginvt.com/events/>
- Agricultural Water Quality Regulations: <http://agriculture.vermont.gov/water-quality/regulations>
- Agency of Ag's Tile Drain Report available here: <http://agriculture.vermont.gov/tile-drainage>
- VAAFM annual report available here: http://agriculture.vermont.gov/about_us/budgets_reports
- Farm First: Confidential help with personal or work-related issues. More info call: 1-877-493-6216 anytime day or night, or visit: www.farmfirst.org
- Vermont AgrAbility: Free service promoting success in agriculture for people with disabilities and their families. More info call 1-800-639-1522, email: info@vcil.org or visit: www.vcil.org.

For more agricultural events visit our *Funding Opportunities & Resources for Businesses* webpage at: http://agriculture.vermont.gov/producer_partner_resources/funding_opportunities



A crowd walks through a trade show.

Slicing Your Tires and Reducing Breeding Bugs Too!

By Scott Waterman, VT
Agency of Agriculture, Food
and Markets

This fall, the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets introduced the public to its new tire-slicer, the mission of which is to reduce the number of waste tires on our landscape and eliminate the mosquito breeding environment they sustain while providing the resulting sidewalls to Vermont farms.

The diesel-powered machine, which can be towed behind a pickup truck, is much like a giant can-opener that slices the sidewalls off a tire, creating two sidewalls and a tread. It is operated by trained employees of the Agency and has been featured at two different events recently: the annual Wheels for Warmth event and a special flood tire cleanup effort promoted by Governor Phil Scott. Many of the tires collected were



Steve Dwinell and Patti Casey work the tire slicer at the flood clean up event in mid October.



Tire mounted and ready to have the sidewalls removed.

used to create feed silage weights for farms.

As part of introducing the slicer to the public this year, the Agency is developing a program to create access to the slicer for the state's farms who wish to reduce their intact tire use. The Agency is working on how to bring the slicer to farms that are interested in reducing mosquito-breeding habitat while creating

more manageable and user-friendly bunk weights. Water inside uncut tires can breed mosquitoes continuously during the warm summer months. The mosquitoes that breed in tires can carry West Nile virus and other human and veterinary diseases, as well as being a terrible nuisance. Sidewalls are also easier for farmers

to move and store, reducing labor cost and time for the important farm task of protecting feed.

So far this year the Agency has created about 2,000 sidewalls from the two events. These have been provided to many Vermont farms.

Interested in this program? Please contact

Patti Casey by email at patti.casey@vermont.gov or by phone 802-522-6858.

You can also visit <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/public-health-agricultural-resource-management-division/plant-health-and-pest-management-4> for more information on the Agency's tire-slicer program.



Sidewalls ready for use on the farm.



THE VERMONT AG BULLETIN

Grants, Learning, News & More

The Agriculture Development Division publishes a weekly newsletter featuring grant opportunities, workshops/webinars, and news, for its subscribers. The Agency encourages you to sign up to receive the newsletter. You can also find the form and past issues by going to <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/administration/vaafm-news>.



\$12 Million Infusion Bolsters Northeast Regional Dairy Processing

Substantial Funding from the Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center is a Catalyst for Dairy Sector Resiliency

By Katie Spring, Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center

Dairy processors across the Northeast are receiving an important investment intended to build resiliency and spur industry growth in our region. The Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center (NE-DBIC) announced on Wednesday, November 8, 2023, that 35 businesses have been selected for over \$12 million in awards through the Existing Dairy Processor Expansion Grant.

With total funding of \$12,287,001 across eight states, individual awards range from \$25,852 to \$1 million. Those selected for awards represent processors of all sizes: from farmstead creameries to multi-state businesses and co-ops. Through a rigorous selection process, applicants were divided into three tiers based on production volume. Successful applicants in Tiers 1 and 2 went through two written applications, followed

by a virtual presentation of their projects. Tier 3 applicants asking for over \$150,000 also gave virtual presentations. Each application was reviewed by a minimum of three dairy sector experts from across the Northeast.

In Vermont, ten processors have been awarded grants:

- **Agri-Mark Inc., dba Cabot Cooperative Creamery**, Tier 1, will automate their cracker cut cheddar cheese line and double the capacity of the line to 12+ million pounds of cheese annually.
- **Cellars at Jasper Hill**, Tier 2, will expand their cold storage facilities to create additional space to receive milk and make cheese.
- **Maplebrook Farm**, Tier 2, will install equipment to increase yield and their ability to process more fluid milk.
- **Vermont Farm and Cheese Collaborative**, L3C, Tier 2, will re-open a closed dairy processing plant to produce a variety of private label cheeses.

- **Vermont Farmstead Cheese Co.**, Tier 2, will increase their capacity for soft and hard cheesemaking which will increase their raw milk intake by 30%.
- **Wilcox Ice Cream**, Tier 2, will install modern automated ice cream equipment to increase product volume and efficiency.
- **Ice House Farm**, Tier 3, will expand their farmstead goat dairy cheese processing capacity by purchasing and installing a custom designed cheese

continued on page 12

VEDA: Supporting Vermont since 1974.

Through our low-interest financing programs, we have been fortunate to provide more than \$2.6 billion to businesses in our (almost) 50 years. Contact us today to see how we can help your business grow.



Vermont Economic Development Authority
veda.org | 802.828.5627



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VERMONT VEGETABLE AND BERRY NEWS



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www.vvbg.org

Reports From The Field

(Hinesburg) Outdoor fall greens and hoophouse greens look good. I expect that the supply of fall greens is up, because wholesale orders are light and fall CSA signups are not where we'd like. October farmstand traffic has been up the past 2 Octobers. Mild weather helps. Winter cutworm damage seems lighter this year, or is it the bed prep, tarping, flaming sequence? No sign of aphids in the hoophouses. Pushed garlic planting back an additional few days this year.

(Rochester) In the spring of 2022 we cut nine hundred of our blueberry bushes down to the crown in the hope of eradicating, or largely eradicating, the stem blights *Fusicoccum* and *Phomopsis* which had widely infested our Jersey, Blue Crop, and Blue Ray varieties. For several years we had treated them with lime sulfur in the spring to apparently no effect, so we decided to forego two years of yield in the hope the plants would rebound free

of these diseases. It seems to have worked. Most of these plants have responded with strong upright growth that at this stage appears to be very healthy and have now formed what appear to be excellent buds that will fruit next year. Going forward we will probably do the same to other plants that are struggling or stressed as we find them during the pruning process.

(Guildhall) 2023 has been our longest harvest in quite some time. We started October 2, and have been just crawling thru it since. As I write, we've only 2 acres to go, so very nearly done. We started on a 20-acre field of clay that, though it didn't technically flood, had standing water in it most of the summer. The incredible amount of clumpy soil coming up the harvester kept us in first gear the whole way and meant unloading trucks took 2 hours instead of 40 minutes.

Quality was a mixed bag on that field. No rhizomorph or scab, but silver scurf on the Soraya, and hollow heart in Soraya, Waneta, and Algonquin chefs. Gold Rush, Peter Wilcox, and Marcy did well avoiding the hollow. Quite a lot of rot in the Waneta on that field as well. On the sandy fields all varieties did significantly better. In particular, for reasons unknown, the Red Norlands this year were the best I've ever grown. On the whole yields were significantly lower than usual. On the clay yields averaged 28,000 lbs, on the sand 35,000 lbs. This is in contrast to our usual averages which run north of 40,000 lbs.

Markets are alright. In general our markets are steady. However we sent samples to the repacker at the terminal, perfect goods, truly perfect. Repacker offered \$24 a cwt and he wouldn't budge. I think we need \$30 to cover all the extra expenses and flooded acres this year, but watching 120k lbs not get sold because of 6 cents a lb is pretty darn lame.

(Burlington) Nice to have a warmer drier October to wrap up our wet season. On balance, things turned out better than I expected in mid-July, due in part to the favorable conditions. I am interested to see how long we can reasonably store the short-season summer cabbages we replanted after losing all of our storage cabbage in the field.

While we had Brussels sprouts survive flooding, they were set back enough that a large number of them did not size up enough. Grandevo seems to be keeping our modest cabbage aphid population under control. Replanted carrot and beet crops have been great, and we harvested almost all of them out without significant loss to deer. Winter greens look good in the tunnels, though we are struggling with some aphids in our herbs and kale.

Sales have been solid for our winter CSA shares, despite our advertised reduced offerings. Somehow less butternut, fewer and smaller cabbages, and a reduced portion of root vegetables isn't deterring our signups. Summer CSA shares finished strong with a lot of high-quality October crops. I am curious to read the results of our summer

CSA survey and see how our membership thought things turned out.

Agricultural Engineering Updates

Andy Chamberlin and Chris Callahan, UVM Extension

Now that the season is slowing down it's a good time to think about remotely monitoring your greenhouses or coolers so you can spend a little more time by the wood stove and less time out in the elements checking on things. Our blog post on this topic highlights some of the options to meet this need, see <http://go.uvm.edu/monitoring>.

Fall is also a great time to start thinking about upgrades and improvements for the next year. If you are considering a wash pack upgrade, we have over a dozen post harvest case studies from small to large scale operations who've made improvements that worked well for their operations. Read lessons learned, see photos of equipment or videos from growers who shared their projects here: <https://go.uvm.edu/phcs>

We have four new YouTube videos out which answer common questions regarding cleaning and sanitizing. We highlight

the four steps to cleaning and sanitizing. What is an appropriate detergent for farm use? Safely dispensing sanitizers and how to use sanitizers on a produce farm. See <https://go.uvm.edu/agengyt>. For additional cleaning resources in various formats visit <https://go.uvm.edu/scrubresources>

New episodes of The Farmer's Share: <https://thefarmersshare.com>: Paul Chamberlin – Chamberlin's Garden and Farm Market: EP12. The Naked Acre Farm Home Front: Ryan and Genica: EP13

2023 High Tunnel Conference

The "Revitalizing Your Tunnel Vision" conference will be held December 6 and 7 at the Fireside Inn and Suites, West Lebanon, N.H. This conference is for high tunnel vegetable growers and agricultural service providers of all experience levels. Take advantage of this opportunity to fine-tune your high tunnel crop production skills and visit the trade show. Registration is \$100 for first farm attendee, \$75 for each additional registrant from the same farm. Check out the conference agenda at <https://www.uvm.edu/~htunnel/events.html> and register online at <https://bit.ly/TUNNEL23>



CLASSIFIEDS

To place a classified ad in *Agriview* sign up to be a paid subscriber — visit our website: <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/administration/vaafm-news/agriview/advertising-agriview>

Email: Ag.agriview@vermont.gov, phone: 802-828-1619. Deadline for submissions is the 1st of each month for next month's issue. Example: January 1st deadline for February issue.

Cattle

Organic Freestall Holstein herd.

Closed herd over 30 years. Vaccinated, no Johne's or Staph A. Some cows tested for A2. AI bred. Select sire power. Fall freshening. Our cows are calm and we want them to go to a good home. Joel Pominville, Middlebury, Vt., 802-377-0039 (12)

Jersey & Jersey/Holstein cross dairy cows, Some A2, in NW Vermont; farm certified Organic since 2005, Grass-only since 2012. Cows are vaccinated, Negative for Johnes, and include 5 first-calf heifers. Contact (802)-868-2356 (farm landline) or (802)-370-1051 (girlfriend's cell) with questions. (12)

Grassfed dairy cows for sale, bred for spring 2024. Pure jerseys and Normande/Jersey crosses; Currently making 25-40#/day, OAD milking,

100% grassfed, bred to grass Holstein/Jersey dairy bull, preg checked. \$1,800 each or \$1700 each for 3 or more. All are good cows, selling because we have too many spring calving and just bought some fall calving. Location: Keeseville, NY, Contact: Ashlee 518-645-2697 info@northcountrycreamery.com. Craigslist ad has more info and photos: <https://plattsburgh.craigslist.org/grd/d/keeseville-dairy-cows-for-sale-bred-for/7660494699.html> (12)

Equipment

Set of tracks and boogie wheels to fit MF-50 or similar tractors: \$250, Harland McKirryher, River Dell Farm, 802-767-2602. (12)

15 ton brock grain bin, 18.9 Brock grain bin, 5 ton Victoria grain bin, 4 ton brock grain bin, 7 ft back

blade, John Deere KBA, Flex auger. 802-624-0143 (3)

Hay, Feed & Forage

We have 1st and 2nd cut wrapped round bales for sale. \$45 each. We do not have trucking but can load. Great for dairy or beef 802-563-2150 (12)

Certified Organic 2nd cut wrapped round bales. 802-592-3356 (12)

Hay for sale sm. sq bales 1st cut summer 2022 \$5 per bale, nice dry & dust free, good for horses. 2nd cut 2023 \$6 per bale. 4x4 round bales 2023 1st that are wrapped, they are mostly dry \$45 per bale. Take all 60 \$40 per bale. Call 803-223-5747 leave a message. (1)

Round Alfalfa Baleage all cuts. Forage test available. Round soybean baleage. Some Grass dry round bales. Call for pricing & delivery options. Phone 518-497-6837 or 518-319-7061. (1)

FRANKLIN COUNTY

Good quality hay 1c & 2c from western US & Canada. Alfalfa orchard and orchard sweet grass. 18 to 20% plus protein. Large bales and organic by trailer loads. Large or small square bales of straw whole



or processed at farm we load or direct delivery by trailer load. 802-849-6266 or 802-373-5217 (12)

Wanted

Used 13" diameter scalloped disc harrow - 802-793-3688

Help Wanted

Caretaker for beautiful "hobby" farm in the Upper Valley of Vermont, Woodstock area. Onsite private, detached

housing provided. Part or full time duties. Perfect for retired person or couple. Basic horse experience preferred. References required. Make inquiries by email: morganmiltimore@gmail.com or telephone 603-548-3890. (3)

2 - 32" "spoked" steel farm/implimenty wheels. Please call 802-365-4000 (3)

For Immediate Release

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets have received an application for a Milk Handlers license from the following entity: Lake Champlain Chocolates, of Williston, VT to process, package, buy/sell, and transport ice cream within the State of Vermont. If anyone has germane information as to why or why not this company should or should not be licensed those comments are to be sent to:

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture Food and Markets
Dairy Section Office
116 State Street, Montpelier, VT 05620-2901

All written comments must be received by January 31, 2024.

At that time the Agency will make a determination as to whether a hearing will be held. If we determine that a hearing is necessary and you wish to attend please write to the above address attention Dairy Section.

HAVE FEED?
NEED FEED?
BUY / SELL

FARM FEED-FINDER MARKETPLACE

HELPING CONNECT FARMS AND FEED

<https://agriculture.vermont.gov/farm-feed-finder-marketplace>

\$12 Million Infusion

continued from page 9

aging system.

- **Larson Farm**, Tier 3, will replace their yogurt filler with a new, larger model to increase labor efficiency and product quality.
- **lulu Artisan Ice Cream**, Tier 3, will overhaul their current ice cream plant to increase and streamline ice cream and gelato production.
- **Parish Hill Creamery**, Tier 3, will expand their cheese aging capacity and streamline processing.

This one-time infusion of funding is a direct result of the Northeast Dairy Taskforce, convened by the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets (VAAFAM), at the request of USDA Secretary Vilsack. Charged to provide an actionable response to Danone/Horizon cutting milk contracts with Northeast dairy farmers, the regional taskforce recommended investing “catalytic levels of funding into existing

successful track-record processors positioned to scale production quickly.”

The USDA subsequently awarded the NE-DBIC an additional \$20 million to address the stability and viability of Northeast regional dairy. The Existing Dairy Processor Expansion Grant does just that, funding specialized equipment to help processors increase the use of regionally sourced milk and expand regional dairy processing capacity.

“USDA is proud to be a partner with Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets in their ongoing efforts to support the region’s dairy businesses through the Northeast Dairy Business Initiative,” said USDA Under Secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs Jenny Lester Moffitt. “This funding will expand markets for dairy producers, ensure a steady supply of dairy products to consumers, and make significant contributions to the region’s economy.”

Over 3,200 dairy farmers will benefit from

this processing expansion, stabilizing and expanding options for their milk and increasing the amount of local dairy on store shelves throughout the Northeast.

“The funding will have significant impacts for Vermont’s producers, helping bolster and stabilize production,” said Vermont Governor Phil Scott. “This will help Vermont’s world-renowned dairy industry grow and prosper and continue making Vermont proud.”

“Dairy delivers for Vermont and the Northeast. Our farmers are committed to producing a high-quality product, but they need support. These investments are great for our processors, farmers and consumers,” said Vermont Secretary of Agriculture Anson Tebbetts. “By investing in new and existing products these grants will keep milk, butter, cheese, yogurt and ice cream in our stores, schools, and homes. We are grateful for the support from USDA & Congress for this partnership.”

The following dairy processors have also been selected as recipients of the grant:

Maine:

- Casco Bay Butter Company
- Giffords Ice Cream
- Balfour Farm
- Cosmic Goat Farm and Creamery

Massachusetts:

- Agri-Mark Inc dba Cabot Cooperative Creamery
- Cooper’s Hilltop Farm
- Grey Barn Farm
- Mapleline Farm

New Hampshire

- McNamara Dairy
- Super Secret Ice Cream
- Swallow Ridge Farm

New Jersey

- Valley Shepherd

New York

- Byrne Dewitt
- Chaseholm Farm Creamery
- Ronnybrook Farm

- Trinity Valley
- Roc-Star Ice Cream Products

Pennsylvania

- Clover Farms Dairy
- Turner Dairy Farms
- Backpack Yogurt
- Pleasant Lane Farms Creamery
- Anonymous Plain Sect Cheesemaker
- God’s Country Creamery
- Perrystead Dairy

Rhode Island

- Wright’s Dairy Farm

Find the full list of recipients and their planned expansion project details by visiting the NE-DBIC website here: <https://nedairyinnovation.com/processor-expansion-awards/#Recipients>

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Grant recipients and Agency staff at the announcement on November 8, 2023. From left to right; Kiera Ebeling – NE-DBIC, Ali Boocheever – NE-DBIC, Katie Spring, NE-DBIC, Ben Eldredge – NE-DBIC, Kathryn Donovan – NE-DBIC, Laura Mack - Lu.Lu Artisan Ice Cream, Kent Underwood - Vermont Farmstead Cheese, Secretary Anson Tebbetts, Andy Kehler - Jasper Hill, Rachel Fritz-Schaal - Parish Hill Creamery, Sarah Healy – Cabot, Laura Ginsburg, NE-DBIC Lead, Cricket Jacquier - Agri-Mark Board Chair Mercy Larson - Larson Farm, Eugene Audet and Paul Doton.

Learning and Success with Vermont Pay for Performance

By Lauren Weston, Franklin County Natural Resources Conservation District

The Franklin County Natural Resources Conservation District (FCNRCD) has worked with 23 farms in Franklin and Grand Isle County (out of the 56 total enrolled farms across Vermont) since early 2022 on the Vermont Pay for Performance Program. We have been serving as technical assistance providers to these farmers to assist with data entry, data upkeep, verification, and reviewing management alternatives to help farmers access this novel program and receive benefits from their land stewardship practices.

This process has created an opportunity for the FCNRCD to develop relationships with farmers who we previously had not been in contact with and to deepen relationships with other farmers who we may have partnered with

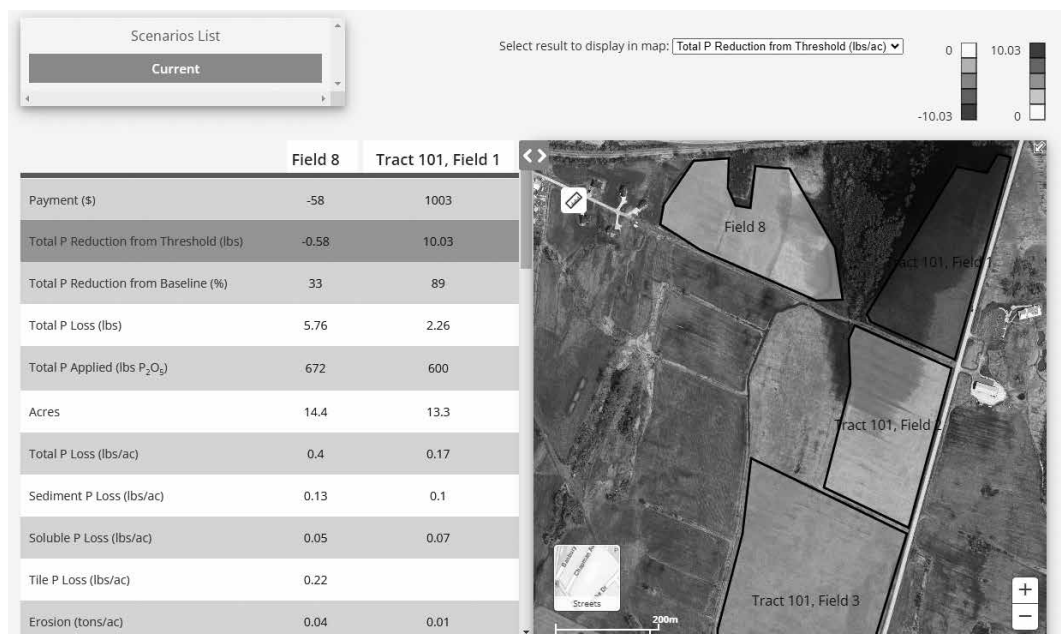
in the past. By helping a number of farmers keep their Nutrient Management Plans up to date with annual manure samples and soil samples every three years, we have been able to assist farms with their eligibility for the Vermont Pay for Performance Program.

We have been meeting with our farmers in the program at least three times each year to discuss their plans for the upcoming growing seasons, changes to the lands they are managing such as which fields they might be renting, and connecting again at the end of the growing season to discuss what practices and results actually happened on their fields, even if they deviated from their original plan.

This program accounts



The Vermont Pay for Performance program supports Vermont farms to reduce phosphorus runoff from their fields compared to assumed historic land use. Rotational grazing and managing land as perennial sod is one strategy that participating farmers have been using to reduce their runoff. Other successful strategies used include nutrient management planning, cover cropping, tillage reduction and manure injection.



for the realistic on-the-ground factors affecting farmers and allows for changes from planned to actual management, such as a wet spring leading to late corn planting and possibly impacted cover cropping timing in the fall.

Most of the farmers that we have partnered with have found success in the program and have enrolled in the long-term cohort of performance payments based on their on-farm phosphorus reduction strategies. We've been seeing that most farmers are already implementing practices to reduce phosphorus losses from their fields above and beyond what had been assumed at the time of the writing of the Lake Champlain Phosphorus TMDL; they have been taking care of our lands and waterways.

Our farmers are receiving thousands of dollars in payments, varying widely by farm, of course, but which shows that the farmers and

land managers are doing their part to help improve water quality and create viable, sustainable working landscapes. Guy Choiniere of Choiniere Family Farm says that "the PFP program has been a pleasant surprise! Even though we have an all grass farm... this program provides a lot of incentive and rewards for using best management practices such as nutrient management planning and rotational grazing".

The Farm Phosphorus Reduction Planner (FarmPREP) tool being used in this program is one step on the path towards trying to better understand what is actually happening on the ground in discrete locations, rather than generalizing impacts across the whole state. The tool indicates that some areas are indeed more sensitive to land management than others when it comes to Phosphorus. There are certainly many more leaps to make to achieve comprehensive performance

The FarmPREP tool (shown here being used on a hypothetical demo farm) provides field-by-field results for phosphorus loss based on the field soils and slope, weather, and current or planned management of a farm.

measurements, but this effort is a novel step along that journey. FarmPREP itself has also already grown to include pasture and grazing in addition to annual crops and hay.

FCNRCD is viewing this program as both a water quality tool and a farm viability tool for our farmers. In alignment with many ongoing statewide discussions about Payment for Ecosystems Services and compensating land managers for the non-market-driven benefits that they bring to the landscape, this program is funding farmers for the good work that they are already doing and further incentivizing improved changes to land stewardship. We hope to see the working landscape continue to thrive in Vermont into the future, and look forward to working with more farms who apply to the Vermont Pay for Performance program in the upcoming funding round, which will be released in January.

Vector Surveillance Update for 2023

By Patti Casey, Vt Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

The 2023 Vector Surveillance season was a busy one. The Agency's stalwart team of six field staff spent more time than usual collecting ticks and mosquitoes and the staff at Vermont Agriculture and Environmental Laboratory were similarly taxed. Staff worked with the VT Dept of Health (VDH) Laboratory and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Ft Collins, CO to test ticks and mosquitoes for pathogens.

Tick Surveillance

VDH Pathogen Prevalence Spring Tick Survey

The Spring Tick Surveillance in partnership with VDH ran May 5 through June 21. These ticks are collected from 48 established sites every spring. They are counted, identified to species, and tested for four different pathogens that can cause Lyme disease, Anaplasmosis, Babesiosis, and Miyamotoi disease. Ticks are still being counted and identified. Pathogen results for the black-legged ticks (BLT) are pending; American dog ticks (ADT) are not tested.

VT Agency of Agriculture Statewide Town Density Tick Survey

Staff continue to collect ticks from every VT town over a 5-year period, visiting 25-30 established sites each spring and fall to track



population numbers, geographic expansion, and infection rates in ticks. The 2023 spring season ran from April 26 through June 22. Agency staff collected 122 BLTs and 39 ADTs. BLTs will be tested for five pathogens this winter (the four previously mentioned plus Powassan, or Deer-Tick Virus). The annual fall surveillance is underway.

Fall Asian Long-Horned Tick Survey

The Agency is partway through a study in partnership with VT Fish & Wildlife to inspect harvested deer in southern VT for Asian Long-Horned Ticks (ALHT), a highly invasive tick species not yet reported in Vermont, but which has been found in an adjacent New York County. ALHTs are a wildlife and livestock pest of significance. So far, none have been found on the deer that have been inspected.

Mosquito Surveillance

Agency staff collected and identified to species more than 160,000 mosquitoes statewide (about double the historic average) and submitted over 4,000 mosquito



pools for testing. (A pool is 1-50 mosquitoes of the same species collected from the same location on the same date and tested for two pathogens, Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) and West Nile Virus [WNV].) The collection season ran June 26 through October 20.

This year saw an outbreak of EEE in Franklin and Grand Isle counties. Our program did not find EEE in any other areas, but staff detected EEE in 14 mosquito pools from 7 sites in the northwest between August 8 and September 25. One EEE horse death was reported from the area. The Agency collected more than double the historic average number of Vermont's primary vector mosquito species (*Culiseta melanura*), and historic flooding resulted in impounded waters that bred large numbers of mosquitoes.

The Agency was poised to conduct an aerial adulticide treatment of the affected areas should VDH have declared an elevated risk to human health, but this was not the case. The Agency's Public Health and Ag Resource Management Division (PHARM) is put-

ting in place the required permits and contracts if an aerial treatment is deemed necessary in the future, as EEE tends to increase and then decrease in an area every few years.

The Agency also found 11 WNV+ mosquito pools between July 25 and September 28, and one WNV+ horse. No human WNV cases have been reported to the Agency this year.

For more information, visit the Agency's website, and remember to practice personal protection against tick and mosquito bites:

- Cover up with long sleeves and pants, tuck pants into

socks or wear gaiters

- Use an EPA-registered insect repellent or treat your clothing with permethrin
- Limit outdoor dawn and dusk activities when mosquitoes are active
- Put clothing in a dryer on high for 15 minutes, shower to remove crawling ticks after being outdoors
- Do a daily tick check
- Repair broken screens and remove all standing water from your property

For more information, you may contact Patti Casey via email patti.casey@vermont.gov or by phone 802-522-6858.

Agency Contact Numbers

Phone numbers for Agency programs are listed below. You are always welcome to call our main line at 802-828-2430. We will do our best to route you to the person most able to answer your question quickly and accurately.

Program Phone Numbers

Act 250	802-461-6798
Animal Health	802-828-2421
Business Development	802-828-1619
Dairy	802-828-2433
Enforcement: Water Quality/Pesticides	802-828-2431
Feed, Seed, Fertilizer & Lime	802-828-5050
Licensing & Registration	802-828-2436
Meat Inspection	802-828-2426
Northeast Dairy Business	
Innovation Center	802-522-3186
Pesticide & Plant Health	802-828-1732
Produce Program	802-522-7811
Vermont Agriculture & Environmental Lab	802-585-6073
Water Quality BMP	802-828-3474
Water Quality Grants	802-622-4098
Water Quality Reports	802-272-0323
Weights & Measures	802-828-2433
Working Lands	802-917-2637

Cousins Compete For Vermont At National 4-H Dairy Judging Contest

The National 4-H Dairy Judging Contest, November 4, fielded 17 teams with 56 participants from across the country, including a three-member team from Vermont.

The annual contest was held at the North American International Livestock Exposition in Louisville, Kentucky. Competing on the state team were Gabriel and Morgan Michaud, East Hardwick, and Natalie Michaud, Greensboro Bend. They were coached by Joanna Lidback, Barton.



Northeast Kingdom 4-H'ers (left to right) Morgan and Gabriel Michaud, East Hardwick; and Natalie Michaud, Greensboro Bend; represented Vermont at the National 4-H Dairy Judging Contest in Louisville, Kentucky, on November 4. (photo: Leslie Michaud)

Upcoming Grant Opportunities

The Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets is pleased to be able to help you more easily identify upcoming grant opportunities. Please go to <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/grants/calendar> for more information.

Programs Open Year-Round

Farmstead Best Management Practices (BMP) Program

Technical and financial assistance for engineered conservation practices on Vermont farms.

Jenn LaValley

Jenn.LaValley@vermont.gov

802-828-2431

Pasture And Surface Water Fencing (PSWF) Program

Technical and financial assistance for pasture management and livestock exclusion from surface water on Vermont farms.

Mary Montour

Mary.Montour@vermont.gov

802-461-6087

Grassed Waterway and Filter Strip (GWFS) Program

Technical and financial assistance for implementing buffers and seeding down critical areas on VT farms.

Sonia Howlett

Sonia.Howlett@vermont.gov

802-522-4655

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

Implementation costs of vegetated buffers and rental payments for maintained buffers on VT agricultural land.

Ben Gabos

Ben.Gabos@Vermont.gov

802-461-3814

Phil Wilson

Phillip.Wilson@vermont.gov

802-505-5378

December

Goat & Sheep Dairy Supply Chain Development Grants

Grants to improve the regional conditions for goat and/or sheep dairy products

Kathryn Donovan

Kathryn.Donovan@vermont.gov

(802) 585-4571

Dairy Food Safety & Certification Grant

Grants to support food safety projects including specialized equipment purchase, supplies, food safety training, and certifications

Ben Eldredge

Ben.Eldredge@vermont.gov

(802) 522-9478

Trade Show Assistance Grants

Grants to help food and forestry businesses identify, plan, exhibit, and sell their Vermont products at out-of-state and international trade shows

Kristen Brassard

Kristen.Brassard@vermont.gov

802-522-3742

Jobs Bulletin Board

continued from page 4

informed by the employer that the job should remain posted. We encourage anyone seeking employment, or if you know of anyone seeking an agriculture job, to visit this site for newly posted jobs available now. We also hope any employer will consider this site an opportunity for posting your agriculture job to include in your out-

reach efforts.

For those seeking potential employment in agriculture or related field, please visit the Agency's website here: <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/vermont-agricultural-employment-opportunities>

For employers who wish to post jobs, please visit the Agency's website here: <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/farm-agriculture-sector-employment-opportunities>



2023 'Fantastic Farmer' Award Recognizes Hartland Dairy and Cheese Operation

A. Pizzagalli Family Farm Fund continues support for Vermont Agriculture and Heritage

By Scott Waterman, VT
Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

Nestled near a hillside in Hartland, Vermont, sits land that has seen agricultural uses since the 1770s. Now home to Cedar Mountain Farm and Cobb Hill Cheese, this land continues to support Vermont's agricultural traditions with an eye toward the future under the watchful leadership and experienced hands of Kerry Gawalt. Emphasizing sustainability, stewardship, education, diversity, value, and heritage since 1999, Gawalt exemplifies all the qualities needed to receive the third annual 'Fantastic Farmer' title and a significant award of \$5,000 from the A. Pizzagalli Family Farm Fund.

While working to restore and maintain a healthy farm system on the centuries old agricultural land in Windsor County, Cedar Mountain Farm and Gawalt manage draft horses, maintain a dairy cow herd of 60 Jerseys, manage 72 acres with 26 varieties of vegetables and herbs on a one-acre plot. Additionally, the property hosts a 1,000-tap maple sugaring operation, and supplies milk for Cobb Hill Cheese, an award-winning artisan cheese brand owned and operated by Gawalt and the farm.

"I really love working with cows, caring for the land,



From left to right: Maeve Leslie-Gawalt, 2023 Fantastic Farmer Kerry Gawalt, Stephen Leslie, Maisy the Jack Russell

and sharing what I know about farming. I have been very lucky to have had some amazing mentors during my life. Farming and nature have been a part of my world since birth," Gawalt said. "Many people have influenced me and shared their knowledge of animals, farming and cooking over the years. I am fortunate to have the opportunity to work in agriculture and hope to continue to share my love of farming with others. Vermont has a wealth of agricultural history which I am always learning more about every day."

The 'Fantastic Farmer' title is one of three annual award programs supported by the A. Pizzagalli Family Farm Fund. Including the Vermont Barn Painting Project and the High-Quality Milk Awards, the mission of the Fund is to support farmer efforts to grow their business, cultivate, and deliver their

products to the consumer, in a way that respects the heritage, culture, and stewardship that our farmers and farming community strive for every day.

In March, The Vermont Dairy Industry Association (VDIA), announced the 2022 Vermont High-Quality Milk Awards. The awards recognize the dairy farmers who produced Vermont's best quality milk in 2022. These farmers were recognized at the annual Vermont Dairy Producers Conference, held for the first time in-person since the beginning of the pandemic.

These awards were presented to:

- **1st: \$2,500 – Howmars Farm** – The Gates Family
- **2nd: \$1,500 – Essex Farm LLC** – The Essex Family
- **3rd: \$1,000 – Dubois Farm Inc.** – The Dubois Family

Also this summer, four barns around the state received a fresh coat of paint

through the Vermont Barn Painting Project, with two more approved. These barns were painted by their owners, who then received an \$8,000 micro-grant from the A. Pizzagalli Family Farm Fund. This program reimburses barn owners for improving and preserving their barns and farm property for future generations and improve their roadside appeal across Vermont, for their local communities, visitors, and tourists.

"The goal of the A. Pizzagalli Family Fund is to support and reward Vermont's hard working agricultural entrepreneurs, maintain the integrity of barns across the state, and preserve Vermont's vistas for visitors and Vermonters alike," said Lisa Pizzagalli. "The Pizzagalli family thanks our farmers for their hard work and looks forward to these programs benefitting more agricultural families in the coming years."

"We are grateful for all these programs that are helping our farmers. These investments by the Pizzagalli Family are making a difference across Vermont. These dollars are supporting our hard-working farmers and improving our rural economy. We are fortunate to have these grants," said Agriculture Secretary Anson Tebbetts.

The Vermont Barn Painting Project, with support from the A. Pizzagalli Family Farm Fund and partners, will continue the program next year and beyond. Any Vermont barn owner who may have interest in the program should visit the Vermont Barn Painting Project to learn more.

- VIDEO: Fantastic Farmer 2023 | Cedar Mountain Farm
- Kerry Gawalt, Q&A about Cedar Mountain Farm practices
- To nominate or apply for the 2024 Vermont Fantastic Farmer Award, please visit: <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/administration/fantastic-farmer-award>
- To find out more about the High-Quality Milk Awards, visit: Vermont Dairy Industry Association 2023 Vermont High-Quality Milk Awards.
- To learn more about the Vermont Barn Painting Project, visit: <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/administration/vermont-barn-painting>