

AGRiVIEW



Published monthly by the Vermont Agency of Agriculture • www.Agriculture.Vermont.gov

A Vision for School Composting in the Upper Valley

By Carina Huang, VT Agriculture, Food & Markets Intern

The Upper Valley Super Compost Project (UVSCP), which was supported by a 2023 Farm to School and Early Childhood Vision Grant, is an innovative example of how we can work across generations to solve problems on the local scale while building communities and relationships.

At the edge of the Sharon Elementary School parking lot stands a wood pavilion. This is where Cat Buxton, the project director of the Upper Valley Super Compost Project, has spent a great amount of her time in the past year. Next to her stand three compost bins made from locally milled hemlock, where all the compost activities of Sharon



Elementary take place.

Buxton is a passionate educator, composter, and member of the Farm to School movement in

Vermont for over 20 years. For her, Farm to School means knowing where our food comes from and

where it goes. “Our health and planetary health are all part of this cycle of awareness,” Buxton said. “It also means maintaining the economic health of our farms, supporting communities with locally grown food.”

Composting is an important part of the farm to school cycle that you might not have heard much about. When school composting is done well, it starts in the cafeteria, is integrated into science and math curriculum in the classroom, and then ends up being used in school gardens. Some of the food produced in those gardens then gets consumed in the cafeteria, and the cycle continues. On-site student-run school compost systems can provide environmental benefits and cost-savings for schools while developing interdisciplinary project-based learning.

A large part of the Farm to School and Early Childhood Vision Grant for the UVSCP went towards upgrading the compost system in Sharon Elementary School in

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Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

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An Open Letter to the Vermont Farm Community

We are reaching out to share some additional information regarding likely changes to water quality regulation on farms. As you may have heard, the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has directed Vermont to shift certain permits currently issued to farms by the Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets (AAFM) to having similar permits issued by the Agency of Natural Resources (ANR). EPA has determined that this change is important to ensuring that Vermont is fulfilling its obligations under the federal Clean Water Act.

While this change ultimately will

have little impact on the continuity of farm operations, we – AAFM and ANR – would like to provide clarity on how this change came about and how we will ensure farmers are kept in the loop on changes to permits and regulations going forward.

As you may be aware, the Conservation Law Foundation petitioned EPA in 2022 over concerns about the regulation of water quality on farms. Since then, the EPA has conducted its own investigation and analysis of agricultural water quality in Vermont. This September, the EPA responded to the petition with a summary of its findings, which found that ANR was not fulfilling its obligations under the federal Clean Water Act.

Specifically, EPA identified that ANR needed to take a larger role in conducting routine farm inspections, reviewing nutrient management plans, and issuing permits to any farms found to be discharging.

EPA has directed ANR to prepare a corrective action plan, a draft of

which needs to be submitted to EPA in December of this year. We are working across our agencies to develop an approach that's responsive to EPA's concerns while providing continuity for Vermont farms and being mindful of the importance of providing regulatory clarity. We will keep the agriculture community informed of this work as it goes forward, including sharing a draft of the plan when it's submitted to EPA this December.

We understand that this change may create uncertainty for you and your business, but please know

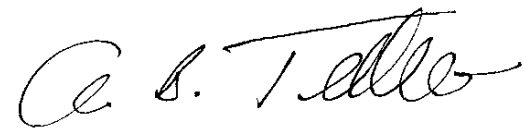
AAFM and ANR are committed to working together make sure any necessary change is as smooth and straightforward as possible. The State's options are limited, but we are dedicated to finding a path forward with EPA that doesn't duplicate or complicate permitting requirements and ensures Vermont farms continue to thrive.

We hope this helps clear up some of the uncertainty around this issue. Please don't hesitate to reach out to either of us with any remaining questions or concerns you may have.

Sincerely,



Julie Moore
Secretary, Agency of Natural Resources



Anson Tebbetts
Secretary, Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

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AGRIVIEW

(UPS 009-700)

Agriview is Vermont's Agricultural Publication of Record.

It is published monthly by the
Vermont Agency of
Agriculture Food & Markets,
116 State Street,
Montpelier, VT 05620-2901

Telephone: 802-828-1619

www.Agriculture.Vermont.gov

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This Month's Recipe

Phyllo and Cranberry Cream Cheese Bites

Ingredients

- 15 mini fillo dough shells, thawed
- 3 oz cream cheese, softened
- 1/4 cup(s) cranberry sauce (bet you have some left over!)

Directions

- Fill the thawed shells with softened cream cheese.
- Add a small spoonful of cranberry sauce on top and serve.
- Enjoy!



A Local Vermont Holiday Feast Is at Your Fingertips

By DigIn Vermont

With the daylight hours decreasing and the holidays fast approaching, the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets and the Vermont Fresh Network (VFN) are looking towards a traditional Thanksgiving dinner that Vermont's local farms can help prepare. Ingredients from the turkey to the stuffing, cranberry sauce, sweet potatoes, pies and local beverages spirits can be found at a farm, farmers market or store near you! The time to order your local bird is now!

Vermont is home to many turkey farms and diversified farming operations raising turkeys across the state, just in time for Thanksgiving and the holiday season. According to the National Turkey Federation, nearly 88 percent of Americans eat turkey at Thanksgiving. The average weight of turkeys purchased for Thanksgiving is 16 pounds, meaning that approximately 736 million pounds of turkey were consumed



in the United States during Thanksgiving in 2016. In Vermont, nearly 48,000 turkeys and chickens were produced in 2016.

To help locate your dream bird and other ingredients to grace your holiday table, check out the Vermont Fresh Network's Local Holiday Meal Finder. And to add a little extra "spirit" to the spread, visit VFN's Cider and Wine Pairings for the Holiday Table!

"Buying a Vermont turkey supports our rural communities. We are grateful for our farmers for their commitment to producing fresh food during this season of giving thanks," said Agriculture Secretary Anson Tebbetts. "Thank you, farmers, for feeding us on this day and every day."

The Vermont Fresh Network can help connect you to a local farm and farmer near you, for a fresh Thanksgiving feast for your family. You can also find farm fresh dinner ingredients for your turkey dinner at the same time.

"Thanksgiving is a time for us to celebrate with our family, our

friends and our farmers. A Vermont farm raised turkey, and a locally sourced Thanksgiving dinner offers the freshest ingredients for a truly delicious meal and supports our rural economy," said Tara Pereira, Executive Director of the Vermont Fresh Network, "And food grown in Vermont pairs perfectly with our local wine and cider."

Along with local turkeys, produce and spirits, the Vermont Fresh Network can connect you with more local products for your holiday meal and beyond. Visit [DigInVT.com](https://diginvt.com) - an interactive website for authentic agricultural and culinary events and experiences in Vermont.

Vermont Fresh Network Local Holiday Meal Finder: <https://diginvt.com/localholiday>

Vermont Fresh Network Cider and Wine Pairings for the Holiday Table: <https://diginvt.com/blog/pairings-for-the-holiday-table/>



DAIRY BUSINESS INNOVATION CENTER

\$3.45 Million Investment Comes to the Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center

By Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center

The USDA is granting \$3.45 million to the Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center (NE-DBIC). One of four Dairy Business Innovation Initiatives (DBI), the NE-DBIC serves dairy farmers and processors across 11 states, including: Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont. These funds directly support dairy farmers and processors with modernization, innovation, and increasing efficiency and sustainability across the dairy sector.

From decreasing the use of virgin plastic in dairy packaging to boosting milk quality and bringing local milk to local schools, these grants have immediate and long-term positive impacts for individual businesses and the entire supply chain.

This additional \$3.45 million will expand the NE-DBIC's ability to provide grant funds to dairy farmers and processors for innovation and modernization projects.

"The Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center team appreciates the USDA's ongoing support and funding. The DBI funds offer a chance to invest throughout the dairy supply chain, fostering



resilience and innovation in the region's dairy industry. These new funds will allow us to support many additional projects that will benefit dairy farmers and processors and bolster long-term viability," said Laura Ginsburg, Dairy Strategy and Innovation Manager, Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets.

New York State Agriculture Commissioner Richard A. Ball said, "The Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center is a critical partner in our work to support New York State's talented dairy producers and processors, who provide significant contributions to New York's agricultural industry, the economy, and the health of our communities. I congratulate the NE-DBIC on receiving this additional support from USDA and look forward to seeing the projects they fund in New York, and across the northeast, help our

dairy producers to continue modernizing and increasing the long-term sustainability of their businesses."

"As a result of the Northeast-Dairy Business Innovation Center, Massachusetts dairy farms will continue to update their marketing, branding, and on-farm infrastructure, adapting to the modern needs of producing the highest quality products," said Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources Commissioner Ashley Randle. "To date, over \$2M has been awarded to 20 grant projects in Massachusetts. With this latest funding announcement, our state and regional dairy economy will be able to make further investments to ensure the sustainability and growth of the industry. We're grateful to USDA for their support of the Northeast-DBIC."

"Pennsylvania's 4,000-plus dairy farmers face ever-

increasing challenges from changes in the marketplace, technology, and climate," Pennsylvania Agriculture Secretary Russell Redding said. "A historic level of investments in conservation and innovation from both the USDA and Pennsylvania are working together to multiply the impact of the farmers' own investments to modernize, diversify, and meet consumer demand to stay competitive and succeed."

"Investing in dairy is important to our rural communities because it supports a working landscape," said Vermont's Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets Secretary Anson Tebbetts. "We are grateful to have these dollars to support our dairy farmers and processors in Vermont and the Northeast. The Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center is making a difference for farmers, processors and those who

love dairy. We will put these investments to good use."

Two NE-DBIC grants are open this month: The Innovation in Dairy Processing & Packaging Grant and the On-Farm Milk Storage & Handling Grant. Additional grants will open this winter, with funding programs for farmers and processors to invest in specialized equipment.

The NE-DBIC's investment and project strategy promotes innovation and resiliency for regional production of dairy products across an 11-state Northeast region. Established in the 2018 Farm Bill, NE-DBIC is hosted by the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets, and is funded through the USDA-AMS.

For questions, please contact Laura Ginsburg by email: Laura.Ginsburg@vermont.gov or by phone at 802-522-2252.

Current and Upcoming Dairy Grants

By Ali Boochever, Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center

At NE-DBIC, our goal is to help dairy farms and processors innovate to become more sustainable and resilient. Whether you're looking for funding to purchase specialized equipment, to implement an innovative practice, or to receive technical assistance, consider applying for an NE-DBIC grant. Access full details and Requests for Applications online at nedairyinnovation.com/grants

Open Funding Opportunities

Dairy Trade Show Assistance Grant

This grant will provide funds for dairy processors and/or producer associations to exhibit and sell value-added dairy products at domestic and/or international business-to-business trade shows. This grant will support established value-added dairy processor businesses and producer associations in increasing exposure and promotion of their regionally produced dairy products.



Grant funds will cover the cost of attending up to five tradeshows including registration, travel, costs of product samples, production and distribution of sell-sheets and other marketing materials, professional branding and design services, trade show booth set-up, and more. Trade shows must occur before June 30, 2025.

Applications are currently being accepted on a rolling basis until November 28, 2024 at 2 PM ET or until funds run out. Awards will range from \$5,000 to \$20,000 with a 25% match commitment. Approximately \$150,000 total funds are available this round.

On-Farm Milk Storage and Handling Grant

This program will provide grants for dairy farmers to access funds that support the purchase of equipment and other related costs that will improve milk storage, handling, and energy

efficiencies. The focus of this grant is on the purchase of specialized equipment. Applicants may select from a pre-approved list of eligible equipment. Projects funded by this grant will streamline milk pick up, create efficiencies around milk storage, and improve handling for both farmers and their processors.

The application period is open until December 5, 2024 at 2 PM ET. Awards range from \$15,000 to \$50,000 with a 25% match commitment. Approximately \$1,500,00 in total funds are available this round.

Prepare for the December 15th Winter Spreading Ban

By Brittany Cole, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

The annual winter manure spreading ban begins on Sunday, December 15 and lasts until Tuesday, April 1 – a full 107 days. 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 December 15th and after April 1st.

The best thing you can do to be prepared for the spreading ban is to spread your manure when you have

the opportunity. Ideal conditions for spreading are dry conditions with non-saturated soils, before the snow falls.

While we can all hope for a sunny and dry fall, reality has a way of catching up with us. If you anticipate having an issue before or during the ban, please contact Laura DiPietro for assistance with manure management options at 802-595-1990. The earlier the communication is made, the more time there is to engage in a solution.

An emergency exemption from the Secretary of Agriculture for spreading on frozen or snow-covered fields, or during the winter spreading ban can be issued to farms for emergency situations only. This emergency

exemption is always a last resort, and where possible the Agency always seeks alternative solutions, such as transfer to another waste storage structure before issuing an exemption. There are additional requirements as

part of emergency exemption and under no circumstance can manure or agricultural waste ever make its way to surface water.

Spread your manure when you get the chance before the ban goes into

effect! And if conditions change and that looks like will not be possible, please reach out to resolve any manure storage and application concerns before it becomes a major issue. Laura DiPietro: 802-595-1990.

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza in Dairy Cows

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

Since early March 2024, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Drug Administration, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and State veterinary and public health officials has been investigating an illness among primarily older dairy cows.

Vermont veterinarians continue to monitor the situation as it develops

and are learning from other states and officials around the country. As of June 7, 2024, no cases have been detected in Vermont and no links to affected states have been identified.

For more information, the latest updates and resources, please visit the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets website here:

<https://agriculture.vermont.gov/HPAinDairyCowsAnEmergingAnimalHealthIssue>

Wrapping Cheddar Better: Cabot Creamery Introduces New 30% Recycled Packaging

By Katie Spring, Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center

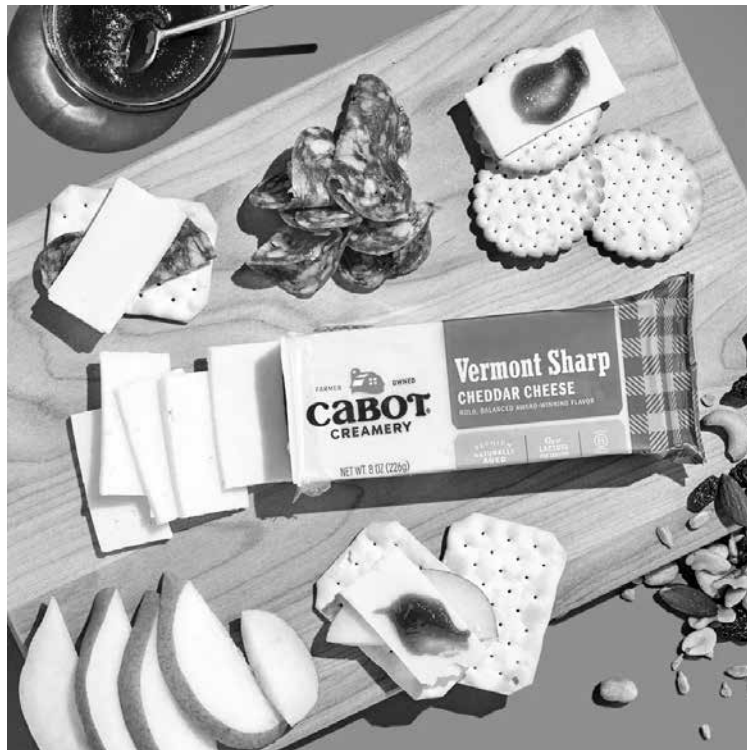
When the name “Cabot” is mentioned, most people think of cheese.

For the 105-year-old award-winning cheese company, that’s how it should be. But lately, Cabot Creamery Cooperative is making headlines for something else: packaging.

Cabot is transitioning their 8-ounce cheese bars to a 30% post-consumer recycled (PCR) packaging.

As Certified B Corp, Cabot’s commitment to caring for the environment encompasses the entire cycle of cheesemaking – from farm fields to store shelves – and cheese packaging plays a substantial role in their work to increase sustainability across the dairy supply chain. The shift to 30% PCR film comes from Cabot’s research into sustainable packaging, funded by a \$323,875 Dairy Product Packaging Innovation Grant from the Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center.

Over the course of two years, Cabot worked with packaging manufacturer TC Transcontinental to test three types of film: post-consumer recycled (PCR), recycle-ready, and compostable. Their goal was to reduce the use of virgin plastic in dairy packaging. They also needed the cheese wrapped in the film to maintain flavor, shelf life, and meet food safety requirements.



Trial runs took into account how each film performed on Cabot’s packaging equipment, including speed and sealing efficacy. Cabot set aside samples of cheese in each film to evaluate shelf-life and conduct in-house sensory testing. They

also shipped samples to TC Transcontinental and the Center for Dairy Research for additional analysis. The remaining cheese samples were shipped from Vermont to Connecticut to see how the packaging would hold up on the road.

The recycle-ready film ran into challenges on the packaging equipment. Requiring a slower rate, the film couldn’t be run efficiently, and attempts at a higher speed resulted in improper seals. The compostable film saw similar issues. Though it was able to run at the correct speed, its stiffer structure led to cracking, again disrupting the seal. While the compostable option isn’t ready for commercial use, TC Transcontinental is continuing to research and develop this option for potential future use.

Despite these challenges, Cabot found the PCR film to run well on all of their packaging equipment, seal properly, maintain product quality, and hold up to shipping and handling. The trials were so successful that Cabot is fully transitioning all 8-ounce bars of cheese over to this new film in late

2024.

This packaging change will lead to a 23% decrease in fossil fuel emissions, and a 19% decrease in water usage.

Grant projects like this not only make a difference for a single company, but also have ripple effects across the dairy industry and the environment at large. Cabot’s collaborator, TC Transcontinental, is one of the largest flexible packaging companies in North America. Their research into food-grade packaging that increases recycled content and decreases virgin plastic means other food manufacturers will have expanded options to choose from. As Cabot wraps up this grant project and moves their new 8-ounce packaging into the world, they now move their sights to other cheese sizes as they continue their mission to increase sustainability.

Announcing the 2024 Dairy Marketing and Branding Services Grant Awards

By Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center

The Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center (NE-DBIC) is pleased to announce the 2024 Dairy Marketing & Branding Services Grant Awards. This grant increases the exposure and promotion of regionally produced dairy products, through projects guided by marketing and

branding professionals. Funded projects include conducting consumer research, developing e-commerce websites, and creating new signage and packaging.

Seven dairy businesses from across six states were selected for awards. Individual award amounts will range from \$35,055 to \$50,000 with a total of \$311,355 in overall funding.

In Vermont, the Vermont Cheese Council will be awarded \$41,000 to hire a contractor to develop and begin to implement a digital marketing strategy with tactical plans that are suited



to the Vermont Cheese Council’s size and budget, and to train Cheese Council staff to continue implementing the strategy beyond the grant period.

This grant is expected to open again in Spring 2025. Learn more about the program and about the other grantees on the NE-DBIC website at nedairyinnovation.com/2024-dairy-marketing-branding-awards/

Nutrient Management Planning Classes Coming up!

By Susan Brouillette, UVM Extension

Do you want a Nutrient Management Plan (NMP), or are you being required to have an NMP? Are you in compliance with the NMP requirements and the NRCS 590 Standard? Is your NMP up to date?

If you have any questions about the NMP or wish to create one or update your existing one, please feel free to contact Susan Brouillette at UVM Extension by email at susan.brouillette@uvm.edu or by phone at 802-656-

7611. You can also contact your local Conservation District Office.

We will be holding the 2025 NMP classes in January and February (it is a 6-week course). We have not determined the schedule or locations yet. If you are interested in attending the class, please let Susan know at your earliest convenience.

There are also basic NMP course requirements that need to be done prior to taking the class in January that include:

- Current manure analysis
- Current soil analysis (no older than 3 years) for all

fields on the farm

- A completed Land Treatment Plan (field maps, RUSLE2 values, etc.)

Given these course requirements and time to

complete them, it is time now to start getting ready for the 2025 NMP classes.

If interested in the NMP, or taking the 2025 class, or gaining help with completing the course

requirements, or gaining help to update your current NMP, please feel free to reach out to UVM Extension (Susan) at 802-656-7611 or 802-524-6501 or your local Conservation District office.



School Composting

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Windsor County. With the old system too small and labor-intensive to handle the large amount of food waste produced daily, the grant made it possible for Sharon Elementary to build new facilities on the edge of the school that are both more efficient and more pleasant to work with. "The amount of the grant is just what we needed to build the building, put the surfacing in, get the bins in place, and buy some of the supplies," Buxton said.

Compared to the old system, the new facility has the capacity to process larger particles including meat and bones, which usually takes a longer time and releases odor without sufficient airflow. The new compost bins are about double the square footage of the old

one. The larger volume allows for more microbial activities and helps raise the temperature inside the bins, thus building an ideal environment for aerobic organisms to thrive. The design of the new bins also incorporates more oxygen into the cycle, which reduces unpleasant odors.

Having been in place for six months, the new facility is running smoothly and serves as an engaging learning experience for the students. During the school year, student volunteers bring unconsumed food from lunch to the bin. By following the designed recipe, students learn the science behind composting in an outdoor classroom. The lead student volunteers also play roles as peer educators, encouraging younger kids to get involved.

Buxton launched

the Upper Valley Super Compost Project to bring thoughtfully designed compost systems to many schools in the Upper Valley, combined with education and training for students to maintain the systems. "Because we got the grant and were able to build this system, it gave us a sort of proof-of-concept model to show that what we were thinking was going to work. And now that it's been functioning for six months really well in the school, we feel very confident now bringing this to other schools in the region."

Buxton started by spending a year building trust and relationships with the school and delivering knowledge on why composting is important as part of a local climate solution. And the work doesn't end with the

installation of the facility. Once the facility is up and running, there are also monthly check-ins to supply teachers, students, and administrators with what they need to maintain the system. Communities and relationship building is a large part of the effort too. This is a long-term process that will hopefully influence the way people treat and perceive food waste and climate solutions.

"We're practicing what we preach and leading by example to show kids and community members that we can make a difference doing simple things and by changing our behavior. That's what I'm really proud of" Buxton said.

The design and construction of the Sharon Elementary School composting system was supported by a Farm to

School and Early Childhood Vision Grant. The physical system, the educational curriculum, and the lessons learned from this pilot will serve as the model that will be replicated at other schools in the Upper Valley in subsequent stages of the Upper Valley Super Compost Project.

The Farm to School and Early Childhood Vision Grant is designed to uplift creative agricultural education initiatives that center youth leadership and community engagement. Vision Grant projects are innovative and can be scaled or replicated to other educational communities in Vermont. To learn more about the Farm to School and Early Childhood Grants program, visit agriculture.vermont.gov/farmtoschool.

Supporting Innovation and Service: New England Mobile Slaughter

By Julie Boisvert and
Joni Bales, VT Agency of
Agriculture, Food & Markets

In 2022, the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets held an informational and Q&A virtual forum for those interested in on-farm slaughter or who had questions about it. The Agency's Meat Inspection Chief Julie Boisvert conducted the session, addressing misconceptions and answering questions from attendees. One attendee took this virtual meeting as an opportunity to make a difference in Vermont.

That attendee, Connor Barnes, proposed an approach to on-farm slaughter where he would work directly with farmers to ensure humane treatment of the animals and to promote high standards. Chief

Boisvert worked closely with Barnes to realize his vision, guiding him through many of the nuances and regulatory requirements of the Vermont meat and poultry industry. Working with the Agency's Meat Inspection Program and authorized custom processors to alleviate the requirements that owners be present during the slaughter, this approach to on-farm slaughter maintains regulatory requirements throughout the slaughter process and meets a need in Vermont and New England for on-farm slaughter services. It is the work of the Agency's Meat Inspection program to provide guidance and education for any and all new and existing businesses within the meat and poultry industry.

Today, the business Barnes envisioned has taken root. New England Mobile Slaughter is a custom

mobile livestock slaughter truck, able to operate in Vermont and other New England states, bringing a valuable service to Vermont farmers who want to have their livestock slaughtered on the farm in a clean and efficient way. Connor is in the process of expanding his New England-based business, and the Agency is pleased to introduce Connor to Vermont livestock owners and livestock processing business owners.

Barnes, who is originally from Connecticut, worked in Oregon for several years on a cattle ranch and a mobile slaughter unit. This experience was fundamental to his learning how to handle the animals professionally and humanely. He imagined bringing this service back to New England and built his business and his truck from the ground up. He started with a box truck that he outfitted with rails and a boom that rotates 360° so that it can

be operated by one person. Since the carcasses hang inside the clean truck, they do not pick up dirt, debris, and fecal matter which leads to unsanitary conditions and pathogenic bacteria. This also means less time spent trimming, and less meat lost to the trimming process once the carcass reaches the custom processing plant. To construct his truck, he worked with repurposed materials and bartered his time in exchange for what he needed to buy. He worked for a slaughterhouse to buy welding on the truck. Barnes says it's been very gratifying to see the puzzle pieces come together.

Barnes believes farmers will see the value and convenience of the slaughter unit coming to the farm, and not having to load and haul the animals for miles and miles. One of his favorite parts of the process is talking to the farmers, hearing what they have to say. Once the animals have been

slaughtered, Connor will drive the carcasses to the Custom processor the owner has chosen to have them cut into the steaks, chops, and ground products they desire. Being a Custom Slaughterer licensed by the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets Meat Inspection Program means that he must



Left: building of the custom slaughter mobile unit. Above: finished mobile unit, approved by the Agency, performing on-farm slaughter with carcasses ready for transport to local custom processor. All photos provided by Connor Barnes, New England Mobile Slaughter, LLC.



Agronomic Training Grants Available Now

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

Interested in learning more about agronomy, soil health, or agricultural water quality? Eying an event out of state or internationally that discusses innovative practices you would like to implement on your farm, but concerned about the expense?

The Farm Agronomic Practices (FAP) program is most known for supporting practices like cover crop or rotational grazing, but this easy to access program also provides Agronomic Training Grants to farmers, farm employees and service



providers. These grants support people supporting or managing Vermont farms to attend events or other instructional activities that further their knowledge of agricultural water quality. Eligible events may focus on

state or federal agricultural water quality regulations, the impacts of agricultural wastes on water quality, and/or best practices to reduce agricultural impacts to water quality. Attendance at lobbying or advocacy events

is ineligible.

Successful applicants will receive reimbursement for up to 100% of travel, registration and housing costs for attending eligible events. You can even bill for some of the farmwork you may have

to hire out in your absence (such as relief milking) at \$25/hr. Individuals are limited to \$2,000.00 in agronomic training funding per calendar year through this initiative.

All applications and expenses are subject to review by the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets to ensure that they meet eligibility requirements and that costs are reasonable.

Applicants must apply at least 45 days prior to the event. Apply now to request funds for any event attendance planned this winter or next year!

Learn more and apply at <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/fap/training>

Mobile Slaughter

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follow the same regulations as brick-and-mortar custom slaughterhouses.

While Barnes is currently based out of Connecticut, where he lives with his fiancé, he can serve a Vermont clientele under certain circumstances while he works to expand his business across New England. If an individual or group of Vermont farmers would like to schedule a slaughter appointment with New England Mobile Slaughter, there are prerequisites that must be met. A scheduled appointment must be made three weeks in advance, there must be a minimum

of 10 pigs or 6 beef or 10 sheep scheduled for the appointment, and livestock owner(s) must have pre-identified and scheduled an appointment with a butcher who can process those carcasses. This enables Barnes to transport carcasses directly to the processing facility in a sanitary and efficient manner. He values the ability to truly reach out to farmers where they are located, and he doesn't mind

the time on the road and considers himself a bit of a connoisseur of gas station food. Barnes is also a history buff and loves snowboarding in the winter so he's very happy to be back in the seasons of New England. Welcome home, Connor!

For more information on Connor and New England Mobile Slaughter, LLC - please visit the website found using this link: <https://nemobileslaughter.com/>



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State of Vermont
Executive Department
A Proclamation

WHEREAS, Vermont has been celebrated for its rich dairy history, with Enosburg Falls once hailed as the dairy capital of the world, and remains a cornerstone of innovation in the dairy industry; and

WHEREAS, Franklin Foods, originally founded as Hahn’s Cream Cheese Company, has played an integral role in this legacy since 1899, pioneering the use of iced railroad cars that allow high quality cream cheese to reach locations across the east coast such as New York City; and

WHEREAS, Vermont cream cheese soon became the cornerstone of the iconic New York-style cheesecake; and

WHEREAS, for 125 years, Franklin Foods has exemplified the spirit of Vermont’s dairy tradition, evolving into a leading manufacturer exclusively producing cream cheese and contributing to the state’s reputation for excellence in dairy products; and

WHEREAS, today, Franklin Foods continues to uphold Vermont’s dairy heritage, producing millions of pounds of cream cheese each month, with its products enjoyed by over half of Americans annually; and

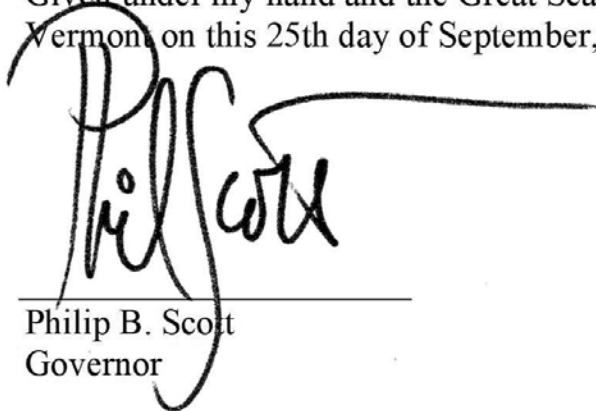
WHEREAS, the continued success and innovation of Franklin Foods reflects the enduring importance of the dairy industry to Vermont’s economy, culture, and global reputation for quality goods; and

WHEREAS, the State of Vermont takes pride in celebrating the 125th anniversary of Franklin Foods and its contributions to maintaining Vermont’s high standard within the dairy industry

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Philip B. Scott, Governor, hereby proclaim the 26th day of September, 2024, as

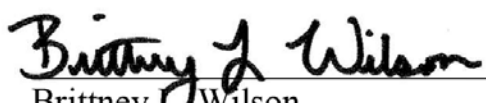
CREAM CHEESE DAY
in Vermont.

Given under my hand and the Great Seal of the State of Vermont on this 25th day of September, A.D. 2024.



Philip B. Scott
Governor




Brittney J. Wilson
Secretary of Civil and Military Affairs

CLASSIFIEDS

To place a classified ad in *Agriview* sign up to be a paid subscriber, visit: <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

American Milking Devons for sale, Registered 4 yr old cow, with calf. \$2700. Bull calf for sale, \$1500. Yearling heifer calves for sale, \$1500, located in Leicester, VT. We use rotational grazing methods, using single strand electric fencing. Heifers have been worked with and do well on a lead. All are used to going in and out of the barn as we milk our cows daily. Call or text for info and pictures: Liza at 802-558-6944 (12)

Jersey/Guernsey cross heifer due to freshen in April. From A2 sire and dam. Friendly and well handled. Waterville VT. Call or text: 802-730-0604 or lucyrogersvt@gmail.com. (12)

3 angus bulls for sale currently about 6 months old. Call for more information 802-558-8196. (1)

Add Hybrid Vigor to your beef operation. Pure bred Naturally Polled Beef Shorthorn Bulls for sale. 18 months old and ready to go to work. Red, Docile, likes to be combed. Used to single strand electric fence, 100% Grass Fed. Shorthorns are fast growing and hardy to Vermont climate. Whatever you are using for your beef market, Shorthorn genetics will make it better. \$2700.



Beautiful 2024 Red and White Roan Shorthorn Bull Calves, ready to leave after weaning. Ready to breed next summer. \$2,500. Greenfield Highland Beef, Plainfield. Call or text for pictures and more info. 802-279-9014 (2)

Equipment

Row PTO potato digger 500., 6' tandem disk harrow 250. , Hercules 3/4 hp. engine best offer, economy engine 3/4 hp, jd 500b backhoe \$1,500. Call 802-446-2125 leave message. (11)

Bulk tank for sap or cattle (water), 600 gallon sunset, 16 to 40 feet sunco elevator, Delvial 1.5 horse power pump. Sickle 451 New Holland mower, 32 ft hay elevator on wheels, 10ft KBQ John Deere transport horrors, 15 ton gran bin. 19 ton grain bin, 13 ton grain bin, 7.5 ton grain bin, 10.5 Fisher snow plow. Call 802-624-0143 (1)

Kubota tractor model L 345-DT, 34 HP, loader, 4W/D, chains, snowplow, forks, plows, shop manual, clean \$11,995. York rake 4ft, 3pt hitch, solid \$695. IH Finish mower 5ft, 3 blades, new \$2995. Dir scoop 3pt, J. Deere \$495. NH 1 row chopper #77 3pt solid \$995. Sprayer 300 gals with pump \$995. 802-483-2870 (1)

**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>.

Cast iron stone boat heads (Sargent Osgocht) and 2 simplex No. 22 railroad jacks \$150, 802-365-7620 (1)

Blooming onion cutter with SS pans. Great for fairs, farmers markets, parties. 802-365-4000 (1)

542 Agri Metal feed cart. 50 kilowatt generator like new. 2 Furrpow plows good shape. 600 Sunset bulk tank vacuum

for sap. 1.5 vacuum pump. 802-624-0143 (2)

Equipment and supplies for small-scale home dairy production in very good, scrupulously clean condition. Price negotiable. Pownal, VT 802-823-5654 7am-7pm (2)

Hay, Feed & Forage
4x5 round bales 1st & 2nd cut. Mixed grass & legume. 802-265-4566 (2)

CHITTENDEN COUNTY
June 1st, June 6th cut and later cut Hay. 4' x 5' Round Bales, Will Load, \$35/bale, cash/good check, Westford, Vt. Call Ray at 802-355-2930 (2)

WINDSOR COUNTY
1st and 2nd Cut wrapped 4x4 round bales for sale, \$55/bale, Call Tom at 802-698-3390 (2)

HAVE FEED?
NEED FEED?
BUY / SELL

FARM FEED-FINDER MARKETPLACE

HELPING CONNECT FARMS AND FEED

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

VERMONT
AGENCY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD & MARKETS

Pesticide Applicator License Renewals

By Bethany Creaser, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets



Pesticide licensing renewal is right around the corner. Now is the time to check to see if your certification expires at the end of the year. To check when your certification expires and/or to see how many credits you need to recertify, visit <https://usaplants.vermont.gov/usaplants/PesticideApplicator/ApplicatorExternalSearch.aspx>

You will need to enter your license number (the digits after the hyphen, for example, if you license num-

ber is 123-4567 or P-4567, enter 4576) and last name and click on search. If you need more credits, you can complete home quizzes from the Pesticide Applicator newsletter or find courses using the Agency's online

course search at <https://usaplants.vermont.gov/usaplants/PesticideApplicator/MeetingSearch.aspx>

Now is also the time to submit your credit slips and completed quizzes. They can be emailed to agr.pest@vermont.gov, or if you prefer, they can be mailed to Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Attn: Bethany Creaser, 116 State St, Montpelier, VT 05620-2901

Your pesticide license renewal paperwork will be emailed in mid-November. If you do not renew by early December, then the renewal paperwork will be physically sent to the mailing address that is on file.

You can renew via online or by mail. Renewing online is the only way you can pay with a credit card. If you choose to renew by mail, please ensure that your renewal packet is complete. Incomplete packets will be returned to you. Please note,

Vermont applicator certifications that have been issued via reciprocity must be renewed by mail and cannot be renewed online.

For step-by-step instructions on how to renew via mail, how to setup an online account, and how to renew online are posted on the Agency's website at <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/public-health-agricultural-resource-management-division/pesticide-programs/applicator-types>

The Agency encourages all certified pesticide applicators to review the renewal instructions.

For more information, please contact agr.pest@vermont.gov

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

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

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

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

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

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

Choosing the Right Category – A Guide to Vermont Pesticide Applicators

By Bethany Creaser, VT
Agency of Agriculture, Food &
Markets

Each state's pesticide rules are different. These differences can include the applicator categories offered by a state. The Pesticide Certification and Training Program at the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets has developed guidance tool to help pesticide companies and prospective pesticide applicators understand the Vermont applicator categories and which may align with a company's work or an applicator's intended pesticide usage in Vermont.

Typically, farmers are considered private applicators when

- farmers or their employees using pesticides on property/land owned or leased by the farm to produce an agricultural commodity.
- the farm wishes to use Class A (restricted use) pesticides or be able to train their own workers and handlers for the federal Worker Protection Standard (WPS).

If a farmer wishes to use a restricted-use pesticide on their property and it is not for agricultural use, then they would be treated as a non-commercial applicator and need to become certified as such or hire a certified commercial applicator with a certification in the correct category. Additionally, if a farmer is a commercial certified applicator in Category 1

and wishes to use restricted use pesticides on their own farm, they must obtain a private applicators certification.

Private applicators who wish to apply pesticides aerially, or for soil or non-soil fumigation must also become

certified in the respective sub-category.

Categories for
continued on page 14

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.

Emma Redel

Emma.Redel@vermont.gov

802-261-5628

Ellen Friedrich

Ellen.Friedrich@vermont.gov

802-261-5629

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.

Ellen Friedrich

Ellen.Friedrich@vermont.gov

802-261-5629

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

November

Agricultural Fairs & Field Days Capital Grants and Operational Stipends

Grants for 20-year capital improvements and operational stipends for fairs and field days.

Trevor Lowell

Trevor.Lowell@vermont.gov

802-585-9186

Specialty Crop Block Grant Program

Grants for collaborative projects to benefit multiple fruit, vegetable, honey, maple, hops, Christmas tree, or nursery crop producers or organizations

Madison Berry

AGR.SpecialtyCrops@vermont.gov

802-622-4626

Fall

Organic Certification Cost Share Program

Partial reimbursement of direct costs for organic certification

Terry Smith

Terry.Smith@vermont.gov

802-828-5667

Working Lands Business Enhancement Grants

Grants to farm, forest, or local food businesses for infrastructure, workforce training, or market development

Clare Salerno

Clare.Salerno@vermont.gov

802-917-2637

The Pesticide Applicator newsletter is going digital in 2024!

This change will allow:

- Fast delivery direct to your email
- Easy to click links and answer quizzes
- Save 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.



Trade Show Assistance Grant Open Now

By Selina Rooney, VT 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 (TSAG). 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 wonder-

ful opportunities to promote Vermont's incredible food, forestry, and agricultural products to 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. The Working Lands Enterprise Initiative has allocated \$50,000 to support Vermont businesses through these Trade Show Assistance Grants with the following requirements:

- 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,

2025 and March 31, 2026.

- 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 substantial 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.

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/tradeshows. The application will be open December 6, 2024 through January 20, 2025.

Questions related to the Trade Show Assistance Grant program should be directed to Selina Rooney at 802-522-7811 or Selina.Rooney@Vermont.gov

Big E Recap – Another Record-Breaking Year!

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

Vermont helped break records this year at the Big E, and vendors at the Vermont Building enjoyed great weather and record attendance at the region's biggest fair! The 17-day event invited visitors from New England and beyond to come experience a taste of our region's businesses, food, agriculture, and products. Held in West Springfield, Massachusetts, the Vermont Building at the Big E once again hosted an assortment of great businesses from the Green Mountain State,

providing a dynamic, historic venue and a taste of Vermont to those who visited.

Record-breaking highlights of the fair include:

- All-time Big-E single day attendance record with 178,608 visitors on



Vermont Day (September 24).

- All-time Big E attendance record: 1,633,935

The twenty-seven Vermont vendors welcomed those who visited the Vermont Building for all 17 days of the Big E. Harvest New England Day on September 30th increased that number to thirty-one.

"The Vermont Building at the Big E transports the visitor into the Green Mountains with a wide range of Vermont food, products, and activities, straight from the heart of our Green Mountain State," Vermont Agriculture Secretary Anson Tebbetts said. "It takes hard work from our wonderful

Vermont vendors and Agency staff over the 17 days of the Big E to bring Vermont to Massachusetts, but what a great experience it is. Thank you to all for such a great year!"

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

Pesticide Applicators

continued from page 13

Commercial, Non-commercial and Government applicators are for those who use or supervise the use of a pesticide. For information about the difference between commercial and non-commercial applicator, please visit: <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/public-health-agricultural-resource-management/division/pesticide-programs/applicator-types>

takes pride in managing the Vermont building with support from the Agency of Commerce and Community Development, Building and General Services, the Vermont State Police and the Vermont Department of Labor.

[gov/public-health-agricultural-resource-management/division/pesticide-programs/applicator-types](https://agriculture.vermont.gov/public-health-agricultural-resource-management/division/pesticide-programs/applicator-types)

The goal of this guidance tool is to help you make the choice that fits best for the type of work you do. If you remain uncertain of which category you should obtain, please reach out to agr.pest@vermont.gov.

Historic Preservation Barn Grants

By Vermont Agency of
Commerce & Community
Development

Established in 1992, the Barn Preservation Grant program helps individuals, municipalities, and non-profit organizations to rehabilitate the historic agricultural buildings that are a symbol of Vermont's rural landscape. This is the oldest state-funded agricultural-based grant program in the country.

Since its inception, the program has provided over \$3 million towards the preservation of over 360 historic barns and agricultural outbuildings around the state. Preservation of these buildings not only protects Vermont's agricultural and architectural legacies, but it also generates jobs, supports independent businesses, increase civic participation, and bolsters a community's sense of place while enhancing the experience of visitors.

Applications for the 2024 grants are due on Monday, December 2, 2024. Download the application materials at: https://outside.vermont.gov/agency/ACCD/ACCD_Web_Docs/HP/HP-Grants/Barn_Grants/2025BarnGrantApplicationManual.pdf

The Division for Historic Preservation, in cooperation with the Legislature and the Vermont Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, is able to award competitive

50/50 matching grants of up to \$20,000 for the repair and adaptive use of historic agricultural buildings. In order to qualify, the buildings must be at least 50 years old and listed in or eligible for the State Register of Historic Places.

This is a reimbursement grant program, which means that if you are awarded a grant, you are responsible for paying for the full amount of the project and the State will reimburse you once the project and required paperwork

are completed. The Barn Grant Program is funded by the taxpayers of the State of Vermont, at the direction of the General Assembly, through the annual Capital Appropriations and State Bonding Act.

See the Frequently Asked Questions (PDF) for more information on the Barn Preservation Grants program.

For more information contact Caitlin Corkins at caitlin.corkins@vermont.gov or 802-828-3407.

4-H'ers Return Home From National 4-H Dairy Event

By Wendy Sorrell, UVM
Extension

For the seven 4-H teens selected to attend the 2024 National 4-H Dairy Conference in Madison, Wisconsin, it was a whirlwind four days of dairy-focused activities and opportunities to connect with like-minded peers from 20 states and three Canadian provinces.

The Vermont delegates who took part in the September 29 to October 2 event were Hailee Allen, New Haven; Hailey and Mackenzie Chase, Bristol; Torrey Hanna, Addison; Ruby Hubbell, Shoreham; Amy Vaughan, South Ryegate; and Elizabeth Waterman, Thetford Center. They were accompanied by adult volunteers Cindy and Brian Kayhart, New Haven, and Jackie Chase, Bristol.

The conference was held in conjunction with the World Dairy Exposition and

gave participants, ages 15 to 18, an opportunity to learn about the dairy industry and explore career pathways through tours of agricultural businesses and dairy operations, motivational speakers, a career fair and interactive seminars taught by dairy specialists, biotechnology leaders and professors. Conference delegates also spent time at the dairy expo to watch the dairy show competitions and visit the trade show.

Fun activities including team challenges, a dairy skill-a-thon and a farm tour, tailgate party and evening barn dance at Crave Brothers Farm and Crave Brothers Farmstead Cheese in Waterloo, Wisconsin. Field trips to other southern Wisconsin locations included stops at ABS Global, ST Genetics and Jones Dairy, a centuries-old producer of sausages and other breakfast meats. In Fort Atkinson, they toured the National Dairy Shrine Museum and Hoard's

Dairyman Magazine and its registered Guernsey farm.

Selection for this national opportunity was based on a number of criteria, including overall 4-H achievements, 4-H dairy project record books and participation in county and state dairy shows, judging contests, quiz bowls and other 4-H dairy events.

Applicants also had to meet the age requirement and be enrolled in the 4-H dairy project for three or more years.

The State 4-H Foundation; Farm Credit Northeast AgEnhancement; the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets; county 4-H founda-

tions and several Vermont businesses and individual donors provided funding for the trip.

For more information about Vermont 4-H dairy events, contact Wendy Sorrell, University of Vermont Extension 4-H livestock educator, at wendy.sorrell@uvm.edu.



Seven Vermont 4-H'ers and their chaperones recently participated in the 2024 National 4-H Dairy Conference, which was held from September 29 to October 2 in Madison, Wisconsin. They were: Front row (left to right): Hailee Allen, New Haven; Torrey Hanna, Addison; Jackie Chase (chaperone) and Hailey Chase, both from Bristol; and Cindy Kayhart, New Haven (chaperone). Back row: Brian Kayhart, New Haven (chaperone); Amy Vaughan, South Ryegate; Ruby Hubbell, Shoreham; Mackenzie Chase, Bristol; and Elizabeth Waterman, Thetford Center. (photo courtesy of the National 4-H Dairy Conference)

Scotch Burn Farm Chosen as Vermont Dairy Farm of the Year

By New England Green Pastures Committee

Scotch Burn Farm, an eighth-generation dairy operation in Ryegate, Vermont, has been named the 2024 Vermont Dairy Farm of the Year.

Ethan and Erin Nelson were recognized for their high-producing herd, milk quality, excellent crops and topnotch management. The judges also were impressed by their many recent farm improvements including installation of a 4-million-gallon concrete manure pit, remodeling the milk storage capacity and changes to the calf and heifer barn to improve efficiency and comfort.

The Nelsons currently milk 270 cows on a twice-daily milking schedule in a double-12 herringbone parlor. Their rolling herd



Scotch Burn Farm celebrates their 2024 Green Pastures win with a photo at The Big E. Pictured (L to R): Whitney Hull, Erin Nelson, Ethan Nelson, Bryn Nelson, Susanna Nelson, Ewan Nelson

average is between 24,000 and 25,000 pounds.

Butterfat is 4.5 to 4.6 percent with protein averaging 3.25 to 3.27 percent, enviable numbers for a primarily Holstein herd. They ship their milk to Agri-Mark/Cabot Creamery,

consistently earning quality awards for their milk.

To help maximize milk production, the higher-producing group is fed highly digestible BMR (brown midrib) corn silage and grass, usually at a 2 to 1 ratio, and higher

concentrates once they slow down. The low group, who produce less milk and generally are in late lactation, get conventional corn and grass.

The farmers raise all their own replacements with heifers bred to have their first calf at 24 months. They use SCR ear tags to monitor rumination, feed intake and activity, which tells them if a cow is in heat or ill. Use of the tags, they say, has doubled their pregnancy rate.

They strive for a 1.5 conception rate with a 70-day voluntary waiting period between calving and next breeding although if a high producer comes into heat earlier, they will service her then. The farm has an added advantage when it comes to monitoring herd health and pregnancies as Erin and her sister, Anna Morrison, are licensed large animal veterinarians.

The Nelsons purchase grain but grow all their forages, doing all their own crop work but hiring out for custom manure spreading. They hay and chop 300 acres of grass, aiming for several cuts a season, and 40 to 50 acres of alfalfa.

They grow 240 acres of corn with their best fields averaging 22 to 23 tons of silage per acre, 15 to 17 tons for the less productive fields. In the fall, they plant winter rye as a cover crop. Any fields with a slight slope are put in rotation of two years in corn, then eight years in grass and alfalfa.

The success of the farm can also be attributed to good employees. The Nelsons employ three full-time and 10 part-time workers, including several high school students. Their children, Susanna, 17, Bryn, 14, and Ewan, 11, also help out on the farm along with several family members.

The award is presented annually to an outstanding Vermont dairy farm by University of Vermont Extension and the Vermont Dairy Industry Association, in cooperation with the New England Green Pastures Program.

LOOKING for VERMONT FARMERS

ORGANIC VALLEY

THE ORGANIC MARKET IS GROWING AGAIN

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- Organic Transition Premium
- Feed & Forage Sourcing

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