

Vermont Milk Commission

November 30, 2023

Commissioners Present: Anson Tebbetts, Senator Bobby Starr, Roy Beckford, Paul Doton, Allan Reetz, , Representative John O'Brien

Commissioners not attending: Harold Howrigan, Mark Magnan

Agency staff present: Laura Ginsburg

Guest speakers: Catherine DeRonde - Agrimark, John Roberts – FSA, Michelle Monroe – Sen. Welch

10am - 10:20am - Federal Milk Market Order reform hearing update and Q&A, Catherine DeRonde – AgriMark

- Slides submitted for distribution

10:20am - 10:40am - Vermont Organic Dairy Relief Program update, Laura Ginsburg

In 2023, the Vermont State Legislature passed H.494, providing \$6.9 million in relief funding to the organic dairy sector. This grant funding is designed to mitigate the extreme market challenges in 2022, including high feed and input costs. Eligible dairy farmers who timely apply will receive a single payment of \$5 per hundredweight of organic milk produced in 2022. The Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets (AAFM) is responsible for the application process and distribution of funds.

- 126 farms anticipated to apply
- Funds request came from volume purchased from organic processors
- Received 128 applications, two farms started shipping milk again to access funds
- 124 applicants have received payment - \$6.9 million
- 4 applicants unpaid (\$125,492 balance) due to running out of money

10:40am - 10:55am - Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center update, Laura Ginsburg

- 257 awards, totaling \$23.9 million
 - Vermont awards – 102, \$9.3 million
- Processor Expansion - \$12.2 million awarded, 91 applications, 35 awards
 - Vermont – 10 awards, \$3.9 million
- Farm Bill status, Michelle Monroe
 - DBIs continue under Farm Bill extension but not funded until annual budget bill is passed

10:55am - 11:15am - Discussion about Vermont dairy needs, gaps, and opportunities, VAAFAM staff

- John Roberts – FSA, DMC and ODMAP update
 - Included in Farm Bill extension, some questions about specifics that were included in other bills, such as supplemental production

- ODMAP – 100+ producers signed up
- Kiersten Bourgeois – DFA sponsored holiday parade in St. Albans
- Paul Doton
 - What will be focus on conventional dairy given all the focus on organic recently
 - Michelle Monroe - Sen. Welch committed to dairy and working with Sen. Gillibrand’s office, keeping track of FMMO reform and prepared to introduce language to ensure farmers are supported, feed insurance program for farmers who have unharvested feed losses not currently covered, REAP updates, bill introduced to address CREP issues, school milk and flavored milk in schools, definition of milk
 - Will there be state funds to support farm electrification
 - Secretary Tebbetts – DEC has program to support retiring diesel tractors and purchasing electric
- Senator Starr
 - Legislation dates are different this year, committee bills open until end of January
 - Be in contact if they have concerns or want to see specific legislation
- John Roberts
 - FSA working on reimbursing co-ops for dumped milk
- Will Stevens retiring from Senator Sanders staff as of 12/1

11:15am - 11:25am Q&A, Discussion

11:25am - 11:30am Next meeting planning, adjourn

- Set meeting schedule for the year – possibly November/February/June as standard meetings and add others if needed
- Adjourn 11:32