



## Help for New England Dairy Farms

**Keep Local Farms™ program offers financial support for small dairy farms in the northeast.**

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On September 13, New England state agriculture leaders joined forces with dairy promotion organizations to launch the Keep Local Farms program.

Inspired by the "Fair Trade" concept, Keep Local Farms will help get more money directly to dairy farmers while creating stronger connections between farmers and their customers.

The program is an effort to ensure dairy farmers in the Northeast are paid a sustainable price for their milk and to provide consumers with a way to support local dairy farmers, their community and the local economy.

"The Keep Local Farms program is a creative and innovative approach to help our struggling dairy farmers in a very difficult economic environment. Vermonters are committed to helping preserve our dairy heritage and this program is one way we all can contribute. I look forward to the seeing the Keep Local Farms program succeed," said Governor Douglas.

### The Problem

Dairy farmers all across the Northeast and the nation are struggling to survive due to the low prices they are paid for their milk and the high cost to produce milk.

Most consumers are not aware that a dairy farmer currently gets about .97 cents per gallon of milk while it costs about \$1.80 to produce. This is not sustainable and threatens to undermine the dairy industry in the Northeast.

"Our dairy farmers are the backbone of agriculture in Vermont. They are stewards of the land and contribute significantly to our economy and way of life," said Roger Allbee, Vermont Secretary of Agriculture.

"There is not a dairy farmer in the state who has not been impacted by this crisis and while not a silver bullet, Keep Local Farms is a way for people to support this important industry and help dairy farmers get a more equitable price for their product."

### What's at Stake

The dairy industry in New England has a significant economic impact on the region. The milk produced on these farms is valued at \$12.2 billion, and creates over \$5 billion in economic activity.

There are approximately 1880 farms in New England and 99 percent of them are small, with fewer than 100 cows per farm. Nonetheless, they provide upwards of 22,000 jobs in the dairy industry, including farming, farm supply businesses, milk haulers, processors, marketers, farm service firms and agencies.

### Consumers Vote with Their Dollars

Consumers play an essential role in the Keep Local Farms program and the future viability of dairy farmers in the region.

In addition to purchasing nutrient-rich dairy products at the store, Keep Local Farms allows consumers to contribute directly to dairy farmers through the Keep Local Farms website ([KeepLocalFarms.org](http://KeepLocalFarms.org)) and in the future, through co-branded dairy products.

By contributing to a fund that will be shared with farmers of the Northeast, consumers can help guarantee a fair wage for dairy farmers and support the fresh, local food network they help to sustain.



“We encourage consumers to purchase and enjoy nutritious, high quality and dairy products from our New England dairy farms,” stated Darryl Williams, Dairy Farmer and board member of the New England Family Dairy Farm Cooperative, “And if consumers would like to do more to support dairy farmers the Keep Local Farms program helps them do that.”

The Keep Local Farms program will grow through partnerships with retailers, organizations, colleges/universities and businesses that share the core values of support for local farms, community, economy and you the consumer. These are partners who value farms, local foods and sustainable business practices.

For more information on the Keep Local Farms program please visit [www.keeplocalfarms.org](http://www.keeplocalfarms.org) or call 877-388-7381. Keep Local Farms is a partnership between the Vermont Dairy Promotion Council, the New England Family Dairy Farm Cooperative with Cooperative Development Institute, and the New England Dairy Promotion Board.