

**Keep Local Farms Program Fact Sheet**

**Overview of the Program:**

The goals of the Keep Local Farms program are:

* Provide stable income to as many dairy farmers as possible in multiple states in the Northeast.
* Ensure that stable income is not lost or decreased prior to payment to the farmer
* Keep administration costs low.
* Generate funds for the Keep Local Farms Program. There are three ways to do this:
	1. Support here on the web.
	2. Support the businesses and organizations that display the logo.
	3. Buy products with the Keep Local Farms logo when they become available.

Instead of farmers operating at a disadvantage, the “Certified Fair Trade” practices will ensure that farmers are treated fairly by helping to provide them with a consistent and reliable income. This is the Keep Local Farms model.

**What We’re Doing:**

* Funds are collected and pooled from businesses that support the Keep Local Farms program.
* Collected funds are tabulated monthly.
* An independent firm hired by the New England Family Dairy Farms Cooperative (NEFDFC) handles accounting and payments to farmers.
* Information on the total distributed and the average amount per dairy farmer is posted on the Web.
* Initial payments to dairy farmer members of NEFDFC will be made at least every 6 months to coincide with high expense months:
	+ Once at Spring planting – April/May
	+ Once at Fall harvest – September/October
* As the program grows, it may be possible to make quarterly or even monthly payments to dairy farmers.
* Administration costs are kept to a minimum.
* Auditing of the program, its retailers, processors and promoters takes place on an annual basis and results are posted on the web.

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* Information about the number of farmer members of the NEFDFC and the states in which they reside is posted on the web.

**What We are Working on:**

Farmers and the supports for Keep Local Farms are creating more green ways to help keep farms alive. Ideas that are being put into play are:

* **Animal housing-** Barns are being designed to take advantage of natural ventilation from animals’ natural body heat. These barns have the sides open while covered with curtains and a vent at the ridge line of the roof acting like a chimney to keep cows cool. This improves the health of the animals and uses little to no electricity—a very green innovation.
* **Energy Efficiency-**Instead of using large refrigeration units, farmers have decided to use a plate cooler. This plate cooler uses two pipes-one pipe contains the milk and the other pipe contains cold water. The two pipes touch one another and heat is transferred from the milk to the water. Less energy is used to cool the milk in the bulk tank and the warm water is then provided to the dairy cows.
* **By-Product Feed-**Using two by-products such as orange juice or beer. By compressing the orange peels and beer grains to make these drinks into pellets creates feed for your cows.
* **Renewable Energy-**By using your cows manure, it can create energy to light the farms and houses because of the methane gas and bacteria in it. Also, the dried leftover solids can be used for bedding for the cows to keep them dry and clean, for gardens to raise food, or to make compost. Another benefit – the manure after digestion has little to no smell.

**Ideas We Can Get Behind:**

The Governor’s support for this program will be big help to the local farmers in the Vermont Area and help keep the local color of the state. This is a concern for the governor because one of his priorities while in office is to the local businesses stay afloat, this including farmers. The partners of Keep Local Farms program want to assure citizens and other government officials that the money provided will go to farms in the Northeast.

**Contacts:**

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