



Dairy Sustainability Day

Join University of Vermont Extension specialists from the Champlain Valley Crops, Pasture & Soils Program, the Northwest Crops & Soils Program, and the UVM Agricultural Business Team for a free workshop focused on practical strategies for dairy sustainability in the Northeast. Lunch, refreshments and ice cream provided.

Sessions will cover dairy herd genetic selection for sustainable production, how precision agriculture technologies are improving cropping efficiency while protecting water quality, and insights from the Ben & Jerry's Low Carbon Dairy Pilot Program. Participants will also learn how enterprise analysis tools can support sustainable forage production decisions and hear directly from farmers during a Low Carbon Dairy panel discussion.

Designed for dairy farmers, advisors, and service providers interested in sustainable dairy production in the Northeast.

Thursday, March 5, 2026 9:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. American Legion Post 27, 49 Wilson Road, Middlebury, VT 05753

Speakers include:

Dr. Bailey Basiel, UVM Associate Professor, Animal and Veterinary Sciences
Daniel Bliss, UVM Extension NWCS Precision Agriculture Specialist
Dr. Heather Darby, UVM Extension Agronomy & Soil Specialist
Rebecca Manning, Ben & Jerry's Low Carbon Dairy Program Coordinator
Jeff Sanders, UVM Extension NWCS Agronomy Specialist
Zachary Smith, UVM Extension Agricultural Business Educator

Please register online by March 1 at <https://go.uvm.edu/dairysus> or using the QR code below. If you cannot register online or have questions about your registration, please call the UVM Non-Credit Registration Office at 802-656-8407. A limited number of walk-in registrations will be accepted.

For program questions, contact Carly Bass at (802) 656-7541 or cbass1@uvm.edu.

To request a disability-related accommodation to participate in this program, please call or email Karen Gallott 802-656-7540 or karen.gallott@uvm.edu by February 12 so we may assist you.



REGISTRATION

<https://go.uvm.edu/dairysus>

DAIRY SUSTAINABILITY DAY 2026

Agenda

9:30 a.m.	Check-in & Refreshments
10:00	Welcome & Introductions — UVM Extension Dairy Team
10:15	Dairy Herd Genetic Considerations for Dairy Sustainability in the Northeast — Dr. Bailey Basiel This session will explore genetic selection strategies and decision-support tools that advance sustainable dairy production in the Northeast. It will address how breeding goals can be tailored to different production systems (e.g., intensive versus extensive), highlight the role Vermont dairies play in driving genetic improvement of dairy cattle worldwide, and offer perspective on what sustainable dairy breeding may look like in the future.
11:00	Enterprise Analysis Tools for Sustainable Forage Production Systems — Zachary Smith The UVM Extension Agricultural Business Team is working directly with farms to document the true costs of different forage production strategies. Through real-world case studies, we're analyzing the trade-offs between quality, cost, labor, and water quality. This session shares what we've learned so far and how farmers can use that information to make strategic, sustainable choices.
11:45	Precision Agriculture — Jeffery Sanders & Daniel Bliss Precision agriculture technologies and field-based practices support more sustainable dairy and cropping systems. Presenters will explore how emerging tools are reshaping on-farm decision-making by improving cropping efficiency while also protecting water quality. Topics will include variable-rate fertility strategies, innovative weed management approaches (such as robotic weeders and aerial herbicide applications), and advances in planter technology.
12:30	LUNCH & Conversation

LOW CARBON DAIRY SUPER SESSION	
1:15 p.m.	Ben & Jerry's Low Carbon Dairy Pilot Program — Rebecca Manning Ben & Jerry's launched the Low Carbon Dairy Pilot Program in 2022 as a multi-year initiative to significantly reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from its dairy supply — the biggest contributor to the company's carbon footprint. Dairy ingredients account for more than half of Ben & Jerry's total emissions, so the focus is on transforming dairy farming to be part of the climate solution rather than part of the problem.
2:00	Research Perspectives and Approaches for the Low Carbon Dairy Pilot Program — UVM Extension Northwest Crops & Soils Team On-farm data collection and trials were conducted by the UVM Extension Northwest Crops & Soils Team in collaboration with the Ben & Jerry's Low Carbon Dairy Pilot Program and seven partner farms. The project emphasized regenerative agriculture and agronomic approaches to nitrogen management, strategies for improving nutrient density in high-quality homegrown forages, and optimizing feed management and nutrition to enhance milk fat and protein production. Hear about the project's preliminary results.
2:30	Low Carbon Dairy Farmer Panel — Heather Darby Hear directly from Low Carbon Dairy Pilot Program farm partners during a farmer panel discussion reflecting on their three years of participation. Panelists will share key lessons learned, perspectives on successes and opportunities for improvement, and the practices and information that had the greatest impact on their operations.
3:15	Adjourn & Next steps

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Presenting and bringing ice cream!