

UVM Extension Dairy Herd Management Demonstration Projects Application Information & Instructions



UVM Extension is excited to invite participating farms to apply for demonstration project funds of up to \$2,500 per farm to improve dairy herd management.

The online application begins with several information sections which are followed by the online application entry section for applicants to complete. Applicants will need to “review” and “advance” through the following sections first:

- Background and Purpose
- Applicant Eligibility and Funding
- Eligible Expenses
- Unallowable Expenses
- Timeline and Scoring Criteria

After those sections have been reviewed, the applicant should complete and submit the “Application Form” section.

Background and Purpose

The UVM Extension Dairy Herd Technical Assistance project began providing support to dairy farmers throughout the state in 2021, targeting specific areas of dairy management with the goal of improving operations.

In 2024, UVM Extension invites participating farms to apply for "demonstration farm" funding (up to \$2,500) to support adoption of a practice or new technique to improve overall dairy herd management. Eligible projects may include, but are not limited to, the following management improvement areas:

- Milk quality
- Herd health
- Cow comfort
- Calf and heifer management
- Grazing and pasture management

Projects must be implemented immediately in spring/early summer 2024 so that demonstration farm tours can occur or case study profiles can be completed by August 30, 2024.

Purpose

These small awards are intended to facilitate the trial of a new technology or practice to improve dairy herd management. Awards will support small projects that are outside the scope of existing grant or contract programs available in Vermont. Projects will contribute to the mission of the Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center by sharing innovations through UVM outreach efforts.

Applicant Eligibility and Funding

- Applicants must be a current or past participant in the UVM Extension Dairy Herd Technical Assistance Program. This includes engaging in consultation regarding dairy herd management with Extension Outreach Professionals Kelsie Meehan or Whitney Hull (from 2021 to present) or hosting an on-farm workshop with our program.
- Applicants must also agree to share the outcomes of their project by participating in a case study, video tour, or hosting an on-farm workshop to showcase the new management changes supported by the project.
- Projects that solely support the production/sales of raw fluid milk meant for human consumption without pasteurization are not eligible due to federal funding restrictions associated with the project.

Available Funding

\$2,500 maximum per farm with no cost-share or match required. All projects will be paid as reimbursement on eligible and pre-approved expenses.

Eligible Expenses

Funds can be used for agricultural supplies, small tools/equipment (**any equipment must be under \$5,000 total cost**), research or science instruments, general equipment rental, consultant services, lab testing services, and training. Examples of eligible expenses include but are not limited to:

- Training costs that support adoption of new practice.
- Consulting services that support adoption of new practice or management improvements (example: consulting on milking equipment, milking protocols, milk quality, etc., such as those through Dairy Herd Improvement Association (DHIA) or Quality Milk Production Services (QMPS); farm infrastructure consultant or agricultural engineer; herd health/biosecurity testing; protocol development and/or translation services)
- Equipment rentals (example: equipment for pasture improvement).
- Parlor and/or milkhouse improvements (example: testing new type of inflations, installing automatic take-offs)
- Cow, heifer, and calf comfort improvements (example: fans and/or ventilation improvements, cow brushes, fly reduction strategies, flooring or mattress improvements)
- Grazing and pasture management improvements (example: automatic gate openers, seed for pasture improvement)
- Livestock housing improvements (example: mob feeders for group housing calves, stall loops or neck rails)
- Small technology/equipment/tools under \$5,000 (example: equipment and/or implements for managing bedding and feed, information tracking or sensors)

Unallowable Costs

The following projects and costs are **not eligible** for funding:

- Projects that solely support the production/sales of raw fluid milk meant for human consumption without pasteurization.
- Contribution to equipment costs if the total equipment cost exceeds \$5,000 (fails "small" equipment definition).
- Construction or purchase of construction-associated materials which may include (but are not limited to) the purchase of building materials such as wood, nails, concrete, asphalt, roofing, gravel, sand, paint, insulation, drywall, or plumbing.
- Purchase or lease-to-own of land/building/facilities.
- Purchase of general equipment (specialized equipment is allowable).
- Purchase of vehicles.
- Purchase of animals (purchase of genetics may be allowable).
- Unallowable costs/activities as outlined in the 2021 - 2022 AMS Terms and Conditions (8.0 Allowable Costs and Activities).

Timeline and Application Scoring Criteria

Timeline/Important Dates

- **Application deadline is Monday, April 1, 2024 at 11:59 p.m. EST.**
- Award notifications will begin in early April.
- Project implementation and farmer participation in case study/farm tour must be completed by August 30, 2024.

Priorities and Ranking Criteria

Applications will be reviewed by a panel of UVM Extension dairy, business, grazing, and agronomy specialists.

Applications will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- Ability to: observe and measure the outcomes of the project; demonstrate the project's impacts on milk quality, herd health, cow comfort, young stock management, pasture management, or other aspects of dairy herd management.
- Relevance of the project and potential to be replicated by other farmers.
- Applicant's commitment to partner with UVM Extension to share the results of the project through a tour and/or case study.
- Priority scoring will be awarded to projects that are not eligible for funding by other grants.

Call or email Kelsie Meehan (802-656-4829 or Kelsie.Meehan@uvm.edu) or Whitney Hull (802-656-7563 or Whitney.Hull@uvm.edu) with questions.

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