



March 9, 2015

Dear Vermont Legislators,

Vermont Chevon, LLC strongly believes our state should fully fund the Working Lands Enterprise Fund grant for the requested \$1 million, including all three buckets of investment. This investment support is important to those of us building new agricultural industries and/or significantly expanding current agricultural infrastructure.

Vermont dairy goat farms have an international reputation for producing superb milk and cheese. Their success results in a surplus of high-quality livestock that is not being used as a food source. Sustainability for the goat cheese and milk industry will be further solidified when their surplus animals become part of the American food chain. A Working Lands Enterprise grant allowed Vermont Chevon to do research to demonstrate a growing demand for locally grown goat meat. The grant's goals recognized the potential of added value and sustainability for our state's dairy goat farms if we have access to funds, such as the Working Lands Enterprise grant, and specifically the Capital and Infrastructure grant as we build a finishing farm where those purposeless kids will be grown for meat. Our partners include Vermont Creamery and other dairy goat farms, The Royal Butcher and other processors, the restaurants, butcher shops and stores in Vermont and the Northeast who are equally committed as we are to the success of a Vermont-based dairy goat meat industry.

The Working Lands Enterprise grant helped Vermont Chevon in finding a viable and sustainable market for approximately 80% of kids born on Vermont's dairy goat farms, representing thousands of animals every year to be grown for meat. Approximately 1 million goat carcasses were imported into the US in 2012 at a value over \$50 million. Vermont Chevon is entering into the marketplace with a high quality product, locally sourced and produced by Vermont businesses. Vermont grown goat meat products are an opportunity to increase diversification of small farms in Vermont and a viable value-added enterprise opportunity for Vermont Chevon.

Vermont needs this grant opportunity if we are all truly committed to sustain and grow our thriving, nationally recognized agriculturally-based economy. Vermont Chevon is on the Northeastern stage as a Vermont-based dairy goat meat producer and purveyor. Funding the Working Lands Enterprise grant for FY2016 level requested matters greatly to all the dairy goat cheese and milk producers – ask them.

Sincerely

Shirley Richardson, Managing Partner

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