



Franklin County Perspective - St. Albans Cooperative Creamery, Inc.

by Leon Berthiaume, CEO

Franklin County has been home to the St. Albans Cooperative Creamery, Inc. for nearly 100 years. During that time, the Cooperative and its member farmers have remained committed to providing quality milk and dairy products to customers - many located well beyond the borders of Franklin County.

Over the past several years, we have seen many positive changes in St. Albans City, where production facilities, retail store and offices are located. Some of the improvements include the expansion of our neighbor, Mylan Technologies; the construction of a new state office building on Federal Street and a new, much-needed hotel on Lake Street.

The Cooperative has been growing as well, although it isn't as noticeable as a new parking garage or streetscape. We have incorporated a transportation component to our business through the acquisition of McDermott's to better serve our members. We have purchased new equipment to satisfy customer needs and have an unprecedented number of exciting projects in our pipeline. Our store is thriving and we launched a delivery option for our members that has been very well-received. We provide dairy mixes to many Vermont businesses; if you have enjoyed a creemee at Hoss', Maple City Candy or Ice Cream Bob's, then you've had another quality Cooperative product.

In short, our future, like the rest of Franklin County's, remains bright.

Our success relies on over 350 small businesses – our member farms – that provide us with the highest standard of products daily. Our farms can be found in the county from Richford to Georgia, as well as elsewhere in Vermont, New York and New Hampshire. These small businesses need to be as innovative as those in any sector, and they have the added challenge of a federally prescribed milk price calculation. They don't have the ability to set their price for their product, so must be continually inventive in order to remain efficient and successful. However, they still are able to provide quality milk to some well-known customers in the County, including Ben & Jerry's, Swan Valley and Franklin Foods.

Some of our members have employed new, on-farm technology to generate energy with excess being sold back to the grid. Others have opted to become non-GMO certified, such as the Paul-Lin Dairy which sells milk to Vermont Creamery for their new - and very good – St. Albans cheese. Nearly 30% of our members have elected to operate as organic dairy farms. Regardless of these individual preferences, our Cooperative supports them all as long as they meet our quality standards.

We also have 181 employees that make this operation run smoothly and efficiently, including our drivers that are responsible for the assembly and delivery of our members' milk to our facility, as well as delivery to our customers.

As an employer, it is incredibly rewarding to see their level of commitment to the Cooperative and in the community. We have employees that coach youth sports and participate in local and regional boards and many of our dairy farmer members do as well.

We are proud to be a member of the Franklin County business community and part of its strong economic engine.