

No. R-62. House concurrent resolution congratulating Foster Brothers Farm of Addison County on being named the 2019 Innovative Dairy Farmer of the Year.

(H.C.R.50)

Offered by: Representatives Smith of New Haven, Norris of Shoreham, Scheu of Middlebury, and Sheldon of Middlebury

Offered by: Senators Bray and Hardy

Whereas, annually, the International Dairy Foods Association (IDFA) and *Dairy Herd Management* magazine name an Innovative Dairy Farmer of the Year, and

Whereas, in the award's 21st year, the judges looked for "progressive U.S. dairy farmers who have employed new technology and welcomed industry partnerships to promote greater productivity, embrace sustainable practices, educate consumers and explore new paths to growth," and

Whereas, Robert Foster and his family's Foster Brothers Farm, located in Addison County, were selected as the 2019 Innovative Dairy Farmer of the Year, the first Vermont or New England dairy farm to be so honored, and

Whereas, George and Luella Chaffee founded Foster Brothers Farm in the 1930s, and following a devastating fire in 1957, their grandsons Howard, Ben, and George and their spouses constructed a new barn, and

Whereas, in 1964, the next generation, Robert, Jim, George Jr., and Theodore built a new freestall barn with a double-eight parlor, and

Whereas, this dairy farm was updated in 1972 and operated until the winter of 2018 on a 23 hour-per-day basis, and

Whereas, in March 2018, a magnificent new barn, a 475-cow "Cow Palace" with "eight robotic milkers, freestall water beds, rubber mats and cow brushes that is all climate-controlled with a distinctive ventilation system," was inaugurated, and

Whereas, IDFA CEO and President Michael Dykes was extremely impressed with the farm's innovative technology applications, and

Whereas, as the first Vermont operator of a methane digester, Foster Brothers Farm is committed to sustainable farming practices, and since 1992, the family has also operated Vermont Natural Ag Products, Inc., a producer and marketer of soil products derived from composted manure and other agricultural residuals, and

Whereas, the still family-operated Foster Brothers Farm is proud of its record of success as a practitioner of sustainable agriculture, now therefore be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly congratulates Foster Brothers Farm of Addison County on being named the 2019 Innovative Dairy Farmer of the Year, and be it further

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to Robert Foster at Foster Brothers Farm.