

1 Introduced by Committee on Agriculture

2 Date:

3 Subject: Agriculture; appropriations; agricultural development; [Farmers](#)
4 [Markets](#) ~~school nutrition; water quality; soil health~~

5 Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes multiple
6 provisions related to agricultural development in the State. The bill would
7 [explore](#) [establishing](#) a Dairy Farm Next Generation [Incentive](#) Program. The
8 bill would provide grants to provide business and strategic planning service to
9 representatives of farmers' markets. ~~The bill would appropriate funds to the~~
10 ~~Produce Safety Improvement Grant Program to provide financial assistance for~~
11 ~~the design, implementation, and documentation of on-farm marketing,~~
12 ~~processing, storage, or cooperative distribution projects. The bill would create~~
13 ~~incentives for schools to purchase locally produced foods. In addition, the bill~~
14 ~~would appropriate funds for soil and manure management, for soil health~~
15 ~~monitoring, and for grants from the Farm Agronomic Practices Program, the~~
16 ~~Capital Equipment Assistance Program, and the Vermont Phosphorus~~
17 ~~Innovation Challenge.~~

18 An act relating to agricultural development

1 It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

2 * * * Dairy Farm Next Generation Program * * *

3 Sec. 1. 6 V.S.A. § 22 is added to read:

4 § 22. VERMONT DAIRY FARM NEXT GENERATION INCENTIVE
5 PROGRAM

6 (a) As used in this section, “next generation” means an individual, whether
7 related or not by familial ties, who is seeking to start a new dairy farm or
8 assume ownership of an existing dairy farm.

9 (b)(1) The Secretary of Agriculture, Food and Markets shall explore what
10 would be required to develop and implement a statewide Vermont Dairy
11 Farm Next Generation Incentive Program whose aim is provide a small amount
12 of state financial support to next generation dairy farmers.

13 (2) The Secretary of Agriculture, Food and Markets shall assemble a
14 group of dairy industry stakeholders and business assistance providers to
15 consider how to develop, manage and fund
16 a program
17 that matches persons seeking to start a dairy farm or transition
18 into ownership of a dairy farm with persons willing to sell or otherwise transfer
19 ownership of all or a portion of a dairy farm.

20 (3) Funding awarded through to the Program may be used to build and
21 administer coordinated and cohesive program implementation and to provide

Commented [EK1]: We suggest you look at bill language used to establish the new worker relocation program as there may be language that can be used to supplement this section. It is not intended to be just like this ... but rather a means of getting recruiting young people into dairy farming – eg. funds could be used to provide a stipend for 1 year or to pay some amount of student debt. See the program just created by Act 80 (page 15) (Sec. 12. NEW WORKER RELOCATION INCENTIVE PROGRAM) from 2019 <https://legislature.vermont.gov/Documents/2020/Docs/ACTS/ACT080/ACT080%20As%20Enacted.pdf>

1 participants with a stipend during program participation, based on need. Funds
2 may be made available only to program participants that:

3 (A) do not replace or supplant existing positions;

4 (B) expose individuals to real and meaningful workplace experiences
5 on a dairy farm;

6 (C) provide a process that measures progress toward mastery of the
7 knowledge and skills necessary to successfully operate a dairy farm;

8 (D) are designed to motivate and educate participants through work-
9 based learning opportunities on Vermont dairy farms; or

10 (E) offer participants a continuum of learning, experience, and
11 relationships with employers that will make it financially possible and
12 attractive for individuals to continue to work and live on a dairy farm in
13 Vermont.

14 (c) The Secretary of Agriculture, Food and Markets shall:

15 (1) identify new and existing funding sources that may be allocated to
16 the Program;

17 (2) collect data and establish program goals and performance measures
18 that demonstrate program results for next generation program participation
19 funded through the Program;

1 (3) engage appropriate agencies and departments of the State in the
2 Program to expand next generation opportunities within State government and
3 with entities awarded State contracts; and

4 (4) work with other public and private entities to develop and enhance
5 next generation program engagement, opportunities, and activities throughout
6 the State.

7 * * * Farmers' Markets * * *

8 Sec. 2. APPROPRIATIONS; FARMERS' MARKETS

9 In fiscal year 2021, \$50,000.00 is appropriated to the Agency of
10 Agriculture, Food and Markets from the General Fund to provide a grant to an
11 organization to provide business and strategic planning services and stipends to
12 a representative of up to 10 farmers' markets in the State to enable
13 participation in business assistance services offered by agricultural advocacy
14 groups, such as NOFA-VT and the Vermont Farmers Market Association.

15 ~~*** Produce Safety Improvement Grants ***~~

16 ~~Sec. 3. APPROPRIATIONS; PRODUCE SAFETY IMPROVEMENT~~
17 ~~—— GRANT PROGRAM~~

18 ~~In addition to any other funds appropriated to the Agency of Agriculture,~~
19 ~~Food and Markets (Agency) for the Produce Safety Improvement Grant~~
20 ~~Program, \$200,000.00 is appropriated to the Agency to provide financial~~
21 ~~assistance under the Produce Safety Improvement Grant Program for the~~

1 ~~design, implementation, and documentation of on-farm marketing, processing,~~
2 ~~storage, or cooperative distribution projects to assist Vermont produce growers~~
3 ~~implement on-farm food safety practices, transition to compliance with the~~
4 ~~Food Safety Modernization Act Produce Safety Rule, and meet market~~
5 ~~demands for on-farm food safety.~~

6 ~~*** School Nutrition Programs; Locally Produced Foods ***~~

7 Sec. 4. 16 V.S.A. § 1262a is amended to read:

8 ~~§ 1262a. AWARD OF GRANTS~~

9 ~~***~~

10 ~~(d) The Agency shall, from funds appropriated to it to implement this~~
11 ~~section, award grants to school districts in accordance with section 1264a of~~
12 ~~this title (Locally Produced Foods).~~

13 Sec. 5. 16 V.S.A. § 1264 is amended to read:

14 ~~§ 1264. FOOD PROGRAM~~

15 ~~***~~

16 ~~(d) It is a goal of the State that by the year 2022 school boards operating a~~
17 ~~school lunch, breakfast, or summer meals program shall purchase at least 20~~
18 ~~percent of all food for those programs from local producers.~~

19 ~~(e)(1) On or before December 31, 2020, and annually thereafter, a school~~
20 ~~board operating a school lunch, breakfast, or summer meals program shall~~

1 ~~submit to the Agency of Education an estimate of the percentage of locally~~
2 ~~produced foods that were purchased by the school board for those programs.~~

3 ~~(2) On or before January 31, 2021, and annually thereafter, the Agency~~
4 ~~of Education shall submit to the Senate Committees on Agriculture and on~~
5 ~~Education and the House Committees on Agriculture and Forestry and on~~
6 ~~Education in an aggregated form the information received from school boards~~
7 ~~regarding the percentage of locally produced foods that are purchased as part~~
8 ~~of a school lunch, breakfast, or summer meals program. The provisions of 2~~
9 ~~V.S.A. § 20(d) regarding expiration of required reports shall not apply to the~~
10 ~~report required by this subdivision.~~

11 ~~Sec. 6. – 16 V.S.A. § 1264a is added to read:~~

12 ~~§ 1264a. LOCALLY PRODUCED FOODS~~

13 ~~(a) It is a goal of the State that by the year 2022 at least 20 percent of all~~
14 ~~foods purchased for school lunch, breakfast, or summer meals programs shall~~
15 ~~be locally produced foods. School boards have the discretion to define what~~
16 ~~foods are included within the definition of “locally produced foods” for the~~
17 ~~purposes of this subsection and subsection (b) of this section.~~

18 ~~(b)(1) On or before December 31, 2020 and annually thereafter, a school~~
19 ~~board operating a school lunch, breakfast, or summer meals program shall~~
20 ~~submit to the Agency of Education an estimate of the percentage of locally~~
21 ~~produced foods that were purchased by the school board for those programs~~

1 ~~during the preceding school year and, for summer meal programs, during the~~
2 ~~preceding summer.~~

3 ~~(2) On or before January 31, 2021 and annually thereafter, the Agency~~
4 ~~of Education shall submit to the Senate Committees on Agriculture and on~~
5 ~~Education and the House Committees on Agriculture and Forestry and on~~
6 ~~Education in an aggregated form the information received from school boards~~
7 ~~regarding the percentage of locally produced foods that are purchased as part~~
8 ~~of a school lunch, breakfast, and summer meals program. The provisions of~~
9 ~~2 V.S.A. § 20(d) regarding expiration of required reports shall not apply to the~~
10 ~~report required by this subdivision.~~

11 ~~(c)(1) Beginning in the 2020-21 school year and annually thereafter,~~
12 ~~school districts whose boards report purchasing at least 15 percent of locally~~
13 ~~produced foods in aggregate under school lunch, breakfast, and summer meals~~
14 ~~programs under subsection (b) of this section shall be eligible to apply to the~~
15 ~~Agency of Education for a local foods incentive payment from funds~~
16 ~~appropriated to the Agency of Education for this purpose.~~

17 ~~(2) A school district that is eligible to apply for a local foods incentive~~
18 ~~payment under subdivision (1) of this subsection may apply to the Agency for~~
19 ~~this payment by submitting information that demonstrates that at least~~
20 ~~15 percent of all foods purchased by the school board in the aggregate for~~
21 ~~school lunch, breakfast, and summer meals programs during the preceding~~

1 ~~school year or, for summer meal programs, during the preceding summer were~~
2 ~~fruits, vegetables, meat, poultry, dairy, and eggs that are grown or raised in~~
3 ~~Vermont or foods processed in Vermont with greater than 50 percent Vermont~~
4 ~~grown or raised ingredients.~~

5 ~~(3) If a school district is eligible for a local foods incentive payment~~
6 ~~under subdivision (2) of this subsection, then the Agency shall make the~~
7 ~~incentive payment, subject to appropriation, which shall be determined as~~
8 ~~follows:~~

9 ~~(A) 15 cents per plate served through a school lunch program for~~
10 ~~school districts purchasing at least 15 percent or more of locally produced~~
11 ~~foods;~~

12 ~~(B) 20 cents per plate served through a school lunch program for~~
13 ~~school districts purchasing at least 20 percent or more of locally produced~~
14 ~~foods; or~~

15 ~~(C) 25 cents per plate served through a school lunch program for~~
16 ~~school districts purchasing at least 25 percent or more of locally produced~~
17 ~~foods.~~

18 ~~Sec. 7. ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT~~

19 ~~(a) The Agency of Education shall collaborate with the Agency of~~
20 ~~Agriculture, Food and Markets to promote the local foods program under~~

1 ~~16 V.S.A. § 1264a to school districts, farmers, food processors, and~~
2 ~~distributors.~~

3 ~~(b) The following position is created in the Agency of Education: one full-~~
4 ~~time, classified position specializing in the administration of school food~~
5 ~~programs to assist school districts with expanding access to locally produced~~
6 ~~foods. The position established in this subsection shall be transferred and~~
7 ~~converted from an existing vacant position in the Executive Branch of State~~
8 ~~government. There is appropriated to the Agency of Education from the~~
9 ~~General Fund for fiscal year 2021 the amount of \$100,000.00 for salary,~~
10 ~~benefits, and operating expenses.~~

11 ~~*** Soil and Manure Management ***~~

12 ~~Sec. 8. APPROPRIATIONS; SOIL AND MANURE MANAGEMENT~~

13 ~~In addition to any other funds appropriated to the Agency of Agriculture,~~
14 ~~Food and Markets (Agency) from the General Fund for water quality~~
15 ~~improvement in fiscal year 2021, \$300,000.00 is appropriated to the Agency to~~
16 ~~issue grants to the Vermont Natural Resources Conservation Council and~~
17 ~~farmers watershed organizations in the State for outreach and education of~~
18 ~~farmers regarding improved or innovative methods for the management of~~
19 ~~soils and manure applied to soils.~~

20 ~~*** Farm Agronomic Practices ***~~

21 ~~Sec. 9. APPROPRIATIONS; FARM AGRONOMIC PRACTICES~~

1 PROGRAM

2 In fiscal year 2021, \$1,000,000.00 is appropriated to the Agency of
3 Agriculture, Food and Markets from the General Fund for grants under the
4 Farm Agronomic Practices Program.

5 * * * Capital Equipment Assistance Program * * *

6 Sec. 10. APPROPRIATIONS; CAPITAL EQUIPMENT ASSISTANCE

7 PROGRAM

8 In fiscal year 2021, \$1,000,000.00 is appropriated to the Agency of
9 Agriculture, Food and Markets from the General Fund for grants under the
10 Capital Equipment Assistance Program.

11 * * * Vermont Phosphorus Innovation Challenge * * *

12 Sec. 11. APPROPRIATIONS; VERMONT PHOSPHORUS
13 INNOVATION

14 CHALLENGE

15 In fiscal year 2021, \$1,000,000.00 is appropriated to the Agency of
16 Agriculture, Food and Markets from the General Fund for grants under the
17 Vermont Phosphorus Innovation Challenge.

18 * * * Soil Health Monitoring * * *

19 Sec. 12. APPROPRIATIONS; SOIL HEALTH MONITORING

20 In fiscal year 2021, \$1,000,000.00 is appropriated to the Agency of
21 Agriculture, Food and Markets from the General Fund to implement programs

1 ~~[for the measuring and monitoring of soil health in the State, including the](#)~~
2 ~~[development of a statewide database of soils, benchmarking specific soil types,](#)~~
3 ~~[and correlating changes with implementation of specific best management](#)~~
4 ~~[practices.](#)~~

5 * * * Effective Date * * *

6 Sec. 13. EFFECTIVE DATE

7 This act shall take effect on July 1, 2020.