

1 Introduced by Committee on Agriculture

2 Date:

3 Subject: Agriculture; appropriations; agricultural development; school  
4 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 establish a Dairy Farm Next Generation Program. The bill would provide  
8 grants to provide business and strategic planning service to representatives of  
9 farmers' markets. The bill would appropriate funds to the Produce Safety  
10 Improvement Grant Program to provide financial assistance for the design,  
11 implementation, and documentation of on-farm marketing, processing, storage,  
12 or cooperative distribution projects. The bill would create incentives for  
13 schools to purchase locally produced foods. In addition, the bill would  
14 appropriate funds for soil and manure management, for soil health monitoring,  
15 and for grants from the Farm Agronomic Practices Program, the Capital  
16 Equipment Assistance Program, and the Vermont Phosphorus Innovation  
17 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 PROGRAM

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

8 (b)(1) The Secretary of Agriculture, Food and Markets shall develop and  
9 implement the statewide Vermont Dairy Farm Next Generation Program.

10 (2) The Secretary of Agriculture, Food and Markets shall coordinate and  
11 provide funding to public and private entities for next generation program  
12 engagement and opportunities that match persons seeking to start a dairy farm  
13 or transition into ownership of a dairy farm with persons willing to sell or  
14 otherwise transfer ownership of all or a portion of a dairy farm.

15 (3) Funding awarded through the Program may be used to build and  
16 administer coordinated and cohesive program implementation and to provide  
17 participants with a stipend during program participation, based on need. Funds  
18 may be made available only to program participants that:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

12           (2) collect data and establish program goals and performance measures  
13           that demonstrate program results for next generation program participation  
14           funded through the Program;

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

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





1 ~~regarding the percentage of locally produced foods that are purchased as part~~  
2 ~~of a school lunch, breakfast, or summer meals program. The provisions of 2~~  
3 ~~V.S.A. § 20(d) regarding expiration of required reports shall not apply to the~~  
4 ~~report required by this subdivision.~~

5 Sec. 6. 16 V.S.A. § 1264a is added to read:

6 § 1264a. LOCALLY PRODUCED FOODS

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

12 (b)(1) On or before December 31, 2020 and annually thereafter, a school  
13 board operating a school lunch, breakfast, or summer meals program shall  
14 submit to the Agency of Education an estimate of the percentage of locally  
15 produced foods that were purchased by the school board for those programs  
16 during the preceding school year and, for summer meal programs, during the  
17 preceding summer.

18 (2) On or before January 31, 2021 and annually thereafter, the Agency  
19 of Education shall submit to the Senate Committees on Agriculture and on  
20 Education and the House Committees on Agriculture and Forestry and on  
21 Education in an aggregated form the information received from school boards

1 regarding the percentage of locally produced foods that are purchased as part  
2 of a school lunch, breakfast, and summer meals program. The provisions of  
3 2 V.S.A. § 20(d) regarding expiration of required reports shall not apply to the  
4 report required by this subdivision.

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

11 (2) A school district that is eligible to apply for a local foods incentive  
12 payment under subdivision (1) of this subsection may apply to the Agency for  
13 this payment by submitting information that demonstrates that at least  
14 15 percent of all foods purchased by the school board in the aggregate for  
15 school lunch, breakfast, and summer meals programs during the preceding  
16 school year or, for summer meal programs, during the preceding summer were  
17 fruits, vegetables, meat, poultry, dairy, and eggs that are grown or raised in  
18 Vermont or foods processed in Vermont with greater than 50 percent Vermont-  
19 grown or -raised ingredients.

20 (3) If a school district is eligible for a local foods incentive payment  
21 under subdivision (2) of this subsection, then the Agency shall make the

1 incentive payment, subject to appropriation, which shall be determined as  
2 follows:

3 (A) 15 cents per plate served through a school lunch program for  
4 school districts purchasing at least 15 percent or more of locally produced  
5 foods;

6 (B) 20 cents per plate served through a school lunch program for  
7 school districts purchasing at least 20 percent or more of locally produced  
8 foods; or

9 (C) 25 cents per plate served through a school lunch program for  
10 school districts purchasing at least 25 percent or more of locally produced  
11 foods.

12 Sec. 7. ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

13 (a) The Agency of Education shall collaborate with the Agency of  
14 Agriculture, Food and Markets to promote the local foods program under  
15 16 V.S.A. § 1264a to school districts, farmers, food processors, and  
16 distributors.

17 (b) The following position is created in the Agency of Education: one full-  
18 time, classified position specializing in the administration of school food  
19 programs to assist school districts with expanding access to locally produced  
20 foods. The position established in this subsection shall be transferred and  
21 converted from an existing vacant position in the Executive Branch of State

1 government. There is appropriated to the Agency of Education from the  
2 General Fund for fiscal year 2021 the amount of \$100,000.00 for salary,  
3 benefits, and operating expenses.

4 \* \* \* Soil and Manure Management \* \* \*

5 Sec. 8. APPROPRIATIONS; SOIL AND MANURE MANAGEMENT

6 In addition to any other funds appropriated to the Agency of Agriculture,  
7 Food and Markets (Agency) from the General Fund for water quality  
8 improvement in fiscal year 2021, \$300,000.00 is appropriated to the Agency to  
9 issue grants to the Vermont Natural Resources Conservation Council and  
10 farmers watershed organizations in the State for outreach and education of  
11 farmers regarding improved or innovative methods for the management of  
12 soils and manure applied to soils.

13 \* \* \* Farm Agronomic Practices \* \* \*

14 Sec. 9. APPROPRIATIONS; FARM AGRONOMIC PRACTICES

15 PROGRAM

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

19 \* \* \* Capital Equipment Assistance Program \* \* \*

20 Sec. 10. APPROPRIATIONS; CAPITAL EQUIPMENT ASSISTANCE

21 PROGRAM

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

4                   \* \* \* Vermont Phosphorus Innovation Challenge \* \* \*

5       Sec. 11. APPROPRIATIONS; VERMONT PHOSPHORUS INNOVATION  
6                   CHALLENGE

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

10                   \* \* \* Soil Health Monitoring \* \* \*

11       Sec. 12. APPROPRIATIONS; SOIL HEALTH MONITORING

12       In fiscal year 2021, \$1,000,000.00 is appropriated to the Agency of  
13       Agriculture, Food and Markets from the General Fund to implement programs  
14       for the measuring and monitoring of soil health in the State, including the  
15       development of a statewide database of soils, benchmarking specific soil types,  
16       and correlating changes with implementation of specific best management  
17       practices.

18                   \* \* \* Effective Date \* \* \*

19       Sec. 13. EFFECTIVE DATE

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