

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 to require the
6 Secretary of Agriculture, Food and Markets to study establishment of a Dairy
7 Farm Next Generation Incentive Program. The bill also would provide grants
8 to provide business and strategic planning services to representatives of
9 farmers' markets.

10 An act relating to agricultural development

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

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

13 § 22. VERMONT DAIRY FARM NEXT GENERATION INCENTIVE

14 PROGRAM

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

18 (b)(1) The Secretary of Agriculture, Food and Markets shall study whether
19 and how the State should develop and implement a statewide Vermont Dairy

1 Farm Next Generation Incentive Program to issue small grants to provide State
2 financial support to the next generation of dairy farmers.

3 (2) The Secretary of Agriculture, Food and Markets shall assemble a
4 group of dairy industry stakeholders and business assistance providers to
5 consider how to develop, manage, and fund a program that matches persons
6 seeking to start a dairy farm or transition into ownership of a dairy farm with
7 persons willing to sell or otherwise transfer ownership of all or a portion of a
8 dairy farm.

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

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

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

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

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

20 (E) offer participants a continuum of learning, experience, and
21 relationships with employers that will make it financially possible and

1 attractive for individuals to continue to work and live on a dairy farm in
2 Vermont.

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

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

6 (2) collect data and establish program goals and performance measures
7 that demonstrate program results for next generation program participation
8 funded through the Program;

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

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

15 Sec. 2. APPROPRIATIONS; FARMERS' MARKETS

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

1 Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE

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