

1 Sec. A. DAIRY ASSISTANCE DURING THE COVID-19 PUBLIC
2 HEALTH EMERGENCY

3 (a) As used in this section:

4 (1) “Animal feeding operation” (AFO) means a lot or facility where the
5 livestock or domestic fowl have been, are, or will be stabled or confined and
6 fed or maintained for a total of 45 days or more in any 12-month period, and
7 crops, vegetation, or forage growth are not sustained in the normal growing
8 season over any portion of the lot or facility. Two or more individual farms
9 qualifying as an AFO that are under common ownership and that adjoin each
10 other or use a common area or system for the disposal of waste shall be
11 considered to be a single AFO if the combined number of livestock or
12 domestic fowl resulting qualifies as a medium farm as defined in
13 subdivision (3) of this section.

14 (2) “Certified small farm” means a small farm required to certify
15 compliance with the Required Agricultural Practices under 6 V.S.A. § 4871.

16 (3) “Medium farm” is an AFO that houses 200 to 699 mature dairy
17 animals, 300 to 999 cattle or cow/calf pairs, 300 to 999 veal calves, 750 to
18 2,499 swine weighing over 55 pounds, 3,000 to 9,999 swine weighing less than
19 55 pounds, 150 to 499 horses, 3,000 to 9,999 sheep or lambs, 16,500 to 54,999
20 turkeys, 9,000 to 29,999 laying hens or broilers with a liquid manure handling
21 system, 25,000 to 81,999 laying hens without a liquid manure handling system,
22 37,500 to 124,999 chickens other than laying hens without a liquid manure

1 handling system, 1,500 to 4,999 ducks with a liquid manure handling system,
2 or 10,000 to 29,999 ducks without a liquid manure handling system.

3 (4) “Milk producer” or “producer” is a person, partnership,
4 unincorporated association, or corporation who owns or controls one or more
5 cows, dairy goats, dairy sheep, or water buffalo and sells or offers for sale a
6 part or all of the milk produced by the animals.

7 (5) “Small farm” means a parcel or parcels of land:

8 (A) on which 10 or more acres are used for farming;

9 (B) that house not more than the number of animals specified under
10 6 V.S.A. § 4857; and

11 (C)(i) that house at least the number of mature animals that the
12 Secretary of Agriculture, Food and Markets designates by rule under the
13 Required Agricultural Practices; or

14 (ii) that are used for the preparation, tilling, fertilization, planting,
15 protection, irrigation, and harvesting of crops for sale.

16 (b)(1) This section establishes a program to provide financial assistance to
17 milk producers due to the loss of markets, such as schools and restaurants,
18 caused by the COVID-19 public health emergency.

19 (2) The program shall provide assistance to a milk producer in the form
20 of a direct payment based on the size of the farm operated by the milk
21 producer. Assistance to milk producers operating large farms, medium farms,
22 and certified small farms shall be based on the average number of cows

1 maintained in each category of farm. The average number of cows shall be
2 1,000 cows for large farms, 450 cows for medium farms, and 125 cows for
3 certified small farms. Large farms and medium farms shall receive assistance
4 at \$50.00 per cow, and certified small farms shall receive assistance at \$100.00
5 per cow. Assistance to producers operating small farms shall not be based on
6 average cows per farm.

7 (3) Applying the criteria established under subdivision (2) of this
8 subsection, the program shall award a direct payment to producers as follows:

9 (A) Large farms shall receive \$50,000.00.

10 (B) Medium farms shall receive \$22,500.00.

11 (C) Certified small farms shall receive \$12,500.00.

12 (D) Small farms shall receive \$5,000.00.

13 (4) The assistance shall be paid as a one-time award on or before July 1,
14 2020.

15 (c) The payment of the assistance under this section shall come as a
16 separate check direct to a milk producer from the State of Vermont.

17 Sec. B. ASSISTANCE THROUGH A LOAN BUY-DOWN PROGRAM

18 The State of Vermont shall buy down the interest rate of farm loans at the
19 Vermont Agricultural Credit Corporation for the months of May, June, and
20 July of 2020.

21 Sec. C. APPROPRIATIONS

22 (a) There is appropriated from the Coronavirus Relief Fund in fiscal year

1 2020 the sum of \$8,800,000.00 to the Department of Finance and Management
2 for transfer to the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets to process
3 payments for dairy assistance established in this act.

4 (b) For the purpose of continuing to provide interest rate support for farm
5 loans, the sum of \$100,000.00 is appropriated from the Coronavirus Relief
6 Fund in fiscal year 2020 to the Vermont Agricultural Credit Corporation.

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