

Linda Leehman

From: James Maroney <maroney.james@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 21, 2021 6:01 PM
To: Linda Leehman
Cc: Roger Allbee; Jock Gill; Thomas Hall; Tom Kearney; Christopher Pearson; Tim Ashe; Doug Hoffer
Subject: Fwd: an update on Horizon Organic 🐄

Dear Task Force for Revitalizing Vermont Dairy:

The following email is a road map Vermont could follow if it wants to revitalize its dairy industry.

Vermont has a duty to meet both its water quality standards and its GWSA targets but it cannot meet either of these obligations while supporting conventional dairy. The Task Force has failed to put forward a formula that will save conventional Vermont dairy because unless and until the industry becomes profitable and non polluting nothing can.

I enclose again my plan which will (1) reduce agriculture's pollution footprint by 50%, (2) make the dairy industry both ecologically and economically sustainable and (3) reduce taxpayer support for the dairy industry to zero all in three years.

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/7nrylzy4sze1d37/Remedy%2C%20The%20Proposal%20for%20debate%20response%20to%20F2P%20RFP.docx?dl=0>

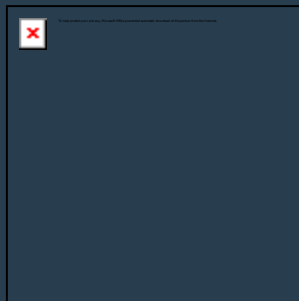
The model is working admirably in Wisconsin. <https://www.organicvalley.coop/>

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Begin forwarded message:

From: NOFA-VT <info@nofavt.org>
Date: December 21, 2021 at 4:59:57 PM EST
To: James Maroney <maroney.james@gmail.com>
Subject: an update on Horizon Organic 🐄
Reply-To: NOFA-VT <info@nofavt.org>

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Danone NA's concessions to Northeast dairy farmers is a small step towards honoring their B-Corp commitments—

but it's not far enough.

In August 2021, Danone North America (NA), owner of Horizon Organic, canceled contracts with 89 New England organic dairy farms, putting these family farms at risk while further consolidating our food system.

Danone NA is one of the largest B Corporations in the country. They have committed to putting people over profits—a commitment their corporate decision to leave behind Northeast organic dairy farms directly violates.

On November 18, NOFA-VT, NOFA-NY, MOFGA, Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance, and Organic Farmers Association met with Danone NA executives to present [15,324 petition requests urging the company to pursue](#)

one of two options that would help rectify their negative impact on the Northeast and their violation of their B Corporation commitment:

Option 1: Danone NA stays in the Northeast and invests in a processing plant that would make their supply chains more sustainable and reduce truck miles.

Option 2: Danone NA leaves the Northeast but financially invests in the region, providing necessary support for the transitions that the 89 dairy families are facing, including \$15M in severance to all 89 dairy farmers – a reasonable \$150,000 per farm – who will either be forced into an early retirement or will be required to make costly changes to their farms to be picked up by another company. Additionally, Danone NA provides a \$25M investment towards a new organic dairy processing plant in New England.

On December 13, after this meeting, Danone NA announced that they will partially meet one of the requests of Northeast organic producer group by extending farm contracts to 18 months (from the 12 months they originally offered). They also committed to providing a nominal transition payment for the 89 organic dairy farm families the company will cut off as it stops sourcing milk from the Northeast—a mere fraction of what we asked for at a total cost of less than \$1M to Horizon.

Horizon Organic has been in the Northeast region for over two decades and has a long-term relationship with all the organic farm organizations and our farmer-members. If Horizon is determined to leave, we are glad that they are working towards meeting some of our requests to leave the region in a stronger position.

Danone NA's concessions to Northeast dairy farmers is a small step towards honoring their B-Corp commitments—but it's not far enough.

“The contract extension will give farmers a little bit more time to investigate new paths forward for their families, but what they really need is a sound market with a good pay-price to give them a living wage,” said our partner Ed Maltby, Executive Director of the [Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance](#).

“We hope to hear more specifics about how Danone plans to co-invest in solutions for Northeast dairy infrastructure. The region needs a new organic dairy processing facility to be able to secure a future for Northeast dairy and provide local milk for the Northeast,” says Kate Mendenhall, [Organic Farmers Association](#). “We estimate that a new facility will cost at least \$50 million to support the milk processing for the region as well as supplementary dairy processing needed to balance the local supply. Danone has the fiscal capability to help make that a reality for these farmers.”

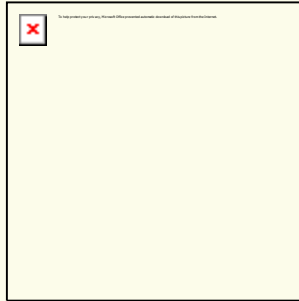
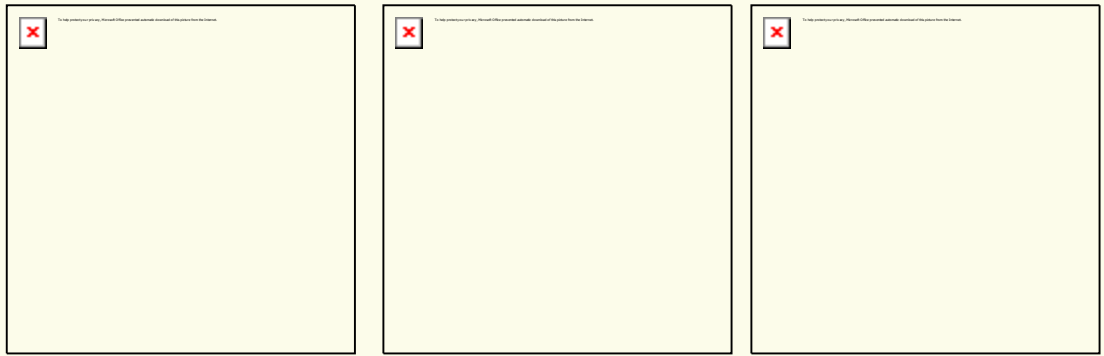
We will continue to work with our partners to manage the crisis on the ground and help the affected farm families. We also plan to continue to work to hold Danone accountable to its B Corporation social responsibility commitments.

We encourage you to buy directly from local organic dairy farmers and processors ([raw milk](#), & [farm direct dairy](#)) and to [buy brands you know source milk from the northeast](#). With increasing corporate consolidation in the organic sector, we must find ways to rebuild our local food system infrastructure, so farmers regain control of their fair share of the market and can continue to provide nourishing local food to meet consumers' growing demand. We seek durable solutions that center farmers, farm workers, and ecological health, rather than profit above all else.



Thank you for supporting Vermont's organic dairy farms!

Check out our Milk Money guides to learn what farms and brands you can support to keep your milk money in Vermont:



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