

February 2, 2023

To: Vermont Legislative Assembly

Re: Dairy Funding

Dear Local Legislators,

I am writing to you to stress the fact that ALL farms are experiencing rising costs. As we all know the economic environment has been in turmoil. Impacts of increased costs of goods, increasing interest rates, and labor availability are impacting all businesses.

As a conventional dairy farmer our local co-operative is also feeling these impacts and has implemented a member assessment including additional provisions which were deemed necessary to keep the co-op viable into 2023. These costs alone add over \$1.5/hundredweight to our already inflated cost of production with increased hauling rates on the horizon. Our farm members cannot sustain these costs in the current market conditions with conventional pricing continuing to decline into 2023. Boston blend prices are currently projected to drop below \$20/hundredweight which is below the average cost to produce conventional milk in the Northeast. While DMC is a useful risk management program for all dairies, it is not a savior for pricing as calculations are not based regionally.

We are sympathetic to our organic dairy farm community as they struggle with similar issues and support your efforts to help. Traditionally there has never been a program that excluded organic dairy from a funding opportunity. We would appreciate funding opportunities that are inclusive to ALL experiencing similar market implications.

Thank you again for your consideration for dairy funding. We implore you to explore long term solutions that will benefit all of Vermont dairy.

Best,

Mary White