



Vermont Dairy Producers Alliance **2025 Legislative Priorities**

Fiscal Responsibility

As Vermont continues to struggle with affordability, the 2024 Legislative session, overall, was a setback for the agriculture and dairy sectors. Our members do not have the luxury of just increasing product prices. The cost of living is unaffordable and with milk pricing set at the federal level producers have little or no way to increase profitability. Any increase in costs without corresponding revenue will continue to cause farms to exit. Fiscal responsibility includes development of regulations that increase the costs to our farms without the proven scientific knowledge that they are necessary and further compound the disadvantage Vermont farmers have in competing with other farmers in states such as NY, Wisconsin, and Michigan.

Climate and environmental regulations

Dairy producers are leaders in caring for the environment and they continue to lead in addressing changing climate conditions. We believe environmentally focused policies affecting agriculture should be guided by farmers, grounded in science, driven by the market and sufficiently flexible to allow for innovation at the farm level.

We will:

- Work to instill a sense of trust and encouragement with both the Legislative & Executive Branches to encourage farmers rather than watch more and more farms exit the industry.
- Seek legislative opportunities to pass legislation to strengthen the current “Right to Farm” law.
- We will oppose the “Clean Heat Standard” that will be voted on in 2025. Increasing the costs of fuel is not practical. Vermont needs to remain competitive within our region, Vermont is not an island.
- Engage decision makers in the discussion over which agencies regulate agriculture and environment and then require that they work together to improve the communication, reduce confusion and time takes for approvals, reports, and proposals to change regulations.

Agriculture workforce reform & Immigration

Dairy farmers need access to a practical agricultural workforce to address critical workforce shortages. We will support increased vocational educational opportunities within the state school system and encourage coalitions within our industry to provide opportunities for apprenticeships.

We must be mindful that any state or federal legislation must strengthen our borders, create a fair and efficient employment system, not simply tell workers they are not welcome. We need to be aligned with future workforce and find a reasonable and rational way of dealing with the current undocumented population in Vermont and the US.

About the Vermont Dairy Producers Alliance: *The Alliance is comprised of dairy farmers and industry partners in the farming industry, representing dairy farms of all sizes throughout Vermont.*

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We will oppose Legislation that creates more regulations like; “right to strike and the right form a union.”

Increase Food Access

We will advocate for additional processing capacity within the state and expand the processing capacity for new, niche, products.

We support expanding the VT “On-Farm Accessory” law to enable the processing of more Vermont products to make available at farm stands, with processors to redirect fresh, locally grown food into a products that can helping farms offset the costs to produce, harvest, package, and transport healthy food.

Energy

We support electrification when reliable, battery-powered tractors & machinery exist on farms. But we are far from there. Not only do farmers need reliable, affordable equipment, farmers must be able to quickly charge machinery in the fields during crucial times, like planting and harvest seasons. If a mandate is passed, VDPVA believes exemptions must be made for vehicles and machines where batteries do not supply enough power for the task at hand.

We will support legislation that incentives electric and renewable energy rather than simply just increase costs to Vermonters.