



AgriTech Institute
for Small Farms

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Virtual Fencing Pilot Project



Presentation to VT Senate
Agriculture Committee
January 22, 2025

2023 – 2024 VT Legislative/VHCB Virtual Fence Project

VT Senate Agriculture Committee Presentation, Jan 22, 2025

- **Dan Smith, Executive Director, Agritech Institute**
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- **Jackie Pratt, General Manager, Stowe Electric Department**
<http://www.stowelectric.com>
- **Kristan Doolan, Does Leap Farm**
<https://doesleap.com>
- **Ben Nottermann, Snug Valley Farm, Hardwick**
<https://snugvalleyfarm.com>



AgriTech Institute
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Mission

Promoting agritech tool use by small farms to improve their financial and environmental performance, and enable them to combat climate change.





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Action Steps

To Promote Small Farm Use of Agritech:

Identify innovative
established and early
stage agritech tools

- Academic Research
- On-farm R&D
- Financing support
- Collaboration and Education

2023 – 2024 VT Legislative/VHCB Virtual Fence Project

3 VT Cattle Farm Grazing Trials

7 VT Small Animal Vegetation Management Trials

1 Goat Dairy Farm Trial

Funding

- *Institute*
- *Lintilhac Foundation*
- *VLITE*

- *Leg/VHCB*
- *DBIC (+ 2 ME dairy farms)*

2023 – 2024 VT Legislative/VHCB Virtual Fence Project

Cattle Farm Grazing

- *Snug Valley Farm (Beef) (2 years)*
- *Harrison Home Farm (Non-lactating dairy cows)*
- *Westman Farm (Non-lactating dairy cows)*
- *2 Maine farms*

Vegetation Management

- *Washington Electric Coop ROW (Goats)*
- *Stowe Electric Depart. ROW (Goats)*
- *Magic Mountain Ski Area (Goats)*
- *Riverbank Knotweed Control (Goats)*
- *Field Grazing – Goats*
- *Solar Array (Sheep)*
- *Sensitive wet pasture area - Shelburne Farms (Lambs)*

- *Does Leap Farm (Goat Dairy)*

Stowe Electric Department

Does Leap

Snug Valley Farm

2023 Big System Challenge

- NoFence cattle equipment shut down when interacting with 4G and 5G cellular networks.
 - Nofence stopped US sales for 2023
 - 2023 Project trials limited to Snug Valley Farm and One Maine dairy farm
 - Forced all others to be conducted only for the 2024 Season
- ❖ Snug Valley Farm was very successful

2024 Operational Successes and Challenges

Successes

- ✓ ***Improved Rotational Grazing***
- ✓ ***Viable Alternative for Vegetation Management***
- ✓ ***Improved Labor Efficiency***
- ✓ ***Promising Payback Ratios***
 - ✓ *5 Minutes Per Move*
- ❖ ***Far More Effective Exclusion Zones for Sensitive Water Quality Areas***
- ***Stored Data of Animal Movement***

Challenges/Issues

- ❖ ***Inadequate Cell Service Across the State***
 - ❖ ***Upfront Cost***
- Battery Depletion
 - Predator Control
 - Transmission line issues

Project Report Recommendations

- ***Limited Data = Need for Continuation/Expansion of Assorted Pilot Trials***
- ***Continued Development of Finance Program***
- ***Collaboration with VTCovered to Expand Cell Service Across Vermont***
- ***Collaboration for Education and Outreach***

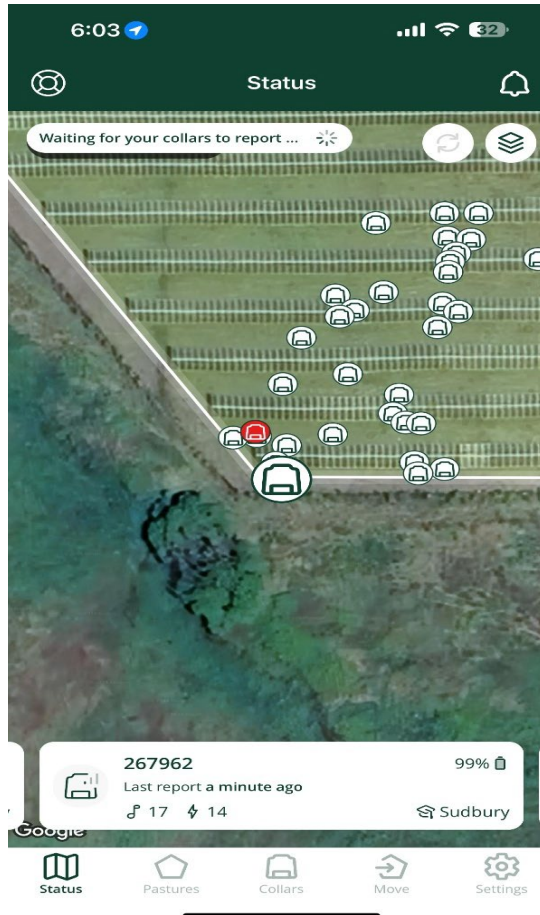


Noxious Weed (Knotweed) Trial

Ski Area Trial



Solar Array Trial



Media Coverage of the Project

<https://www.wcax.com/2024/10/17/gps-goat-collars-make-their-debut-vermont/>

<https://www.chestertelegraph.org/2024/09/17/derry-farm-tests-fenceless-technology-for-grazing-goats/>

https://www.reformer.com/local-news/goats-graze-magic-mountain-test-new-technology/article_038b28be-7439-11ef-8b9c-931fa490e357.html

<https://vtdigger.org/2024/06/07/cows-in-electric-collars-vermont-farmers-pilot-virtual-fencing-technology/>

<https://www.sevendaysvt.com/food-drink/farming-technology-reduces-pollution-increases-production-42115707>

<https://www.addisonindependent.com/2024/10/03/addison-farm-corrals-cows-with-virtual-fence-technology/>



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Website

<https://www.agritechinstituteforsmallfarms.org>

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