

STURRISTORE®

BUSINESS ANALYSIS SUPPORTS FARM WATER QUALITY

UVM Extension's Farm Viability Program partnered with the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets, agricultural lenders, Natural Resource Conservation Service and conservation districts to provide Water Quality Business Analysis assistance. Partners worked with farms assessing financial impacts of large infrastructure projects, identifying grant/funding sources, and implementing changes.

Vermont's 2016 Clean Water Act mandates agricultural producers comply with Required Agricultural Practices regulations. Depending on the infrastructure needed to mitigate water quality threats, on-farm environmen-

tal upgrade projects to control non-point source pollution can cost \$50,000 to \$1.1 million. Over the last five years, farmers experienced severely depressed milk prices and reduced income, leaving many doubting their capacity to pay for improvements.

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31 Vermont dairy farmers took advantage of the program between 2017 and 2018. Customized help included identifying agency personnel, and grant sources/applications; providing computer and Internet assistance;

and developing farm balance sheets, cash flow data and budget projections. Management teams were convened on some farms to help develop strategic management plans to affect environmental improvements.

Seven farms received assistance completing Water Quality and Dairy Improvement grants, with a total of \$233,650 awarded. Funds were instrumental in leveraging more than an estimated \$1.5 million in federal Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and state Best Management Practice (BMP) funds. Some projects are still under construction.

More at go.uvm.edu/farm-biz.





TEEN PATHWAYS TO SCIENCE

Vermont may not be the first state that comes to mind when you think about science careers. However, thanks to UVM Extension's VTeen 4-H Science Pathways Café program, young people are beginning to learn otherwise.

The cafés are a free, fun way for teens to explore science, engineering and technology with local experts in the field. "Science is more than just a lab coat," says UVM Extension 4-H Teen and Leadership Specialist Lauren Traister, and this model is one way 4-H is changing the image and making science more accessible to youth.

“ There are professions within the state, within science, that are really exciting and engaging. ”

-Lena Ashooh, age 15

Each two-hour café brings in a local STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) professional to guide teens in discussion and hands-on activities. From astrobiology to the science of stress, the cafés offer informal introductions to new topics and careers right here in Vermont.

6 CAFÉS
+ 3 LABS
 reached
205 TEENS
 many attended multiple events

More at go.uvm.edu/teen-leadership-programs.

NEW FARMS ARE GROWING PLACES

Since 1995, UVM Extension has offered "Growing Places," a course designed to help new farmers learn the nuts and bolts of successful farm business start-up: goal setting and decision-making; financial and business management, accessing capital and credit; marketing; basic farm business skills; and how to access to USDA program and services.

Beginning farmers (less than 10 years in operation) are a thriving sector of Vermont's agricultural economy. These new entrepreneurs provide direct access to local food through farmers markets, CSAs (community supported agriculture) and farm stands, and are increasingly servicing wholesale and institutional markets.

These farms comprise ~28 percent of the total number in Vermont, have an aggregated market value of ~\$129 million, and represent about 16 percent of Vermont's agricultural economy. However, a key challenge is helping build viable, sustainable businesses.



At the center of Growing Places is development of a whole-life (holistic) goal statement. Participants identify their core values, the activities to which they devote their time, and what they hope to achieve in life. The process encourages discussion among all the business's decision-makers so that everyone is on the same page early in the process, and ensures participants are building a business at a scale that suits their lifestyle and meets their needs.

More at go.uvm.edu/growing-places.

