

**Vermont Dairy Producers Alliance**  
**1546 Richford Road**  
**Richford, Vermont 05476**

**TO:** Vermont Climate Action Commission

**DATE:** October 13, 2017

**RE:** Public Comment for Reduction in Carbon/Greenhouse Gas and Economic Development within the Vermont Dairy Industry

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We are pleased and encouraged by the development of the Vermont Climate Action Commission and wish to provide our written comment on behalf of our members and the Vermont Dairy Industry.

The Vermont Dairy Producers Alliance, its members and the Vermont Dairy Industry are optimistic. They that have their feet on the ground and are leading the efforts in the reduction of carbon/greenhouse gases. Our efforts began some time ago and continue with the development of the installation of more methane digester projects on farms across Vermont. The efforts to develop more digester projects throughout the dairy industry in respect to the dairy operation's size will continue to be a major tool in efforts to reduce that footprint.

Additionally, current efforts will with the continued use of land management practices which include; no till, reduced tillage, cover cropping and increased plantings to offset the greenhouse emissions. The progressive dairy industry continues to use science to further develop soil and plant management techniques that benefit the environment both on the ground and in our air.

Vermont farmers continue to the lead the way by not only incorporating the use of precision agriculture technologies but by developing specific tools for different land types. The work currently being done on Vermont farms will grow in its popularity and in its necessity with the correct modeling and availability of resources. The investments made for these types of practices create higher returns for Vermonter's as increased yields provide economic growth across our rural landscape. Recent economic studies have shown in that dollars on Vermont farms stay in Vermont.

The future of the Vermont Dairy Industry is ripe for growth and further development with the projected changes in the climate with longer growing seasons, strong water supplies, and proximity to competitive markets. The State of Vermont should work closely with the dairy industry to best prepare on how to capitalize on those advantages which will assist us with growth. The expansion of our industry allows increased job opportunity across the board from processing to "on farm" management. Planning and preparing for this opportunity could include recruitment across the country of the next generation dairy farmers. Opportunities are not as strong on the West coast with the challenges they face.

In addition, increased opportunities in the dairy industry provides an opportunity for learning trade skills which all progressive farms depend on. The collaboration of training programs with active dairy farms could benefit increased use of cutting technology. If utilized can advance the goals of reducing greenhouse gas and positioning us for further economic development.

The Vermont Dairy Industry can achieve these long-term goals of sustainability if; assistance is provided to develop on farm training sessions, investments are made in precision agriculture, further development of markets, increased availability of processing plants and future investments are made in methane digesters projects.

Across Vermont, there are eager dairy producers looking to support the goals of the Commission and create opportunities to reduce greenhouse gas. We as a State need to work on this together and encourage partnerships for a vibrant Vermont.