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# Vermont Goat Dairy Research Findings

**2023**

# Vermont Goat Dairy Research Key Finding: Financing & Cost

- Financing and loans can be challenging to secure for new farmers due to limited knowledge on goat dairy industry
- Continued opportunities for financial groups to interact with farming community allow for improved education and visibility
- Vermont Creamery, a significant producer, can commit to purchasing all milk and provide documentation for loans, etc.
- Stable pricing of goat milk market is a benefit over cow milk market, and this should be promoted as an improvement to farms considering starting.

**Recommendations:**

- Full research of financial requirements for a farm to transition from cow to goat dairy, and costs/benefits for transition
- Promote UVM's business analysis tool to support farmers and financial institutions to understand the potential opportunity and costs.
- Continued education/communication with agricultural lending & funding community to support evaluation of new producers and improve access to credit for viable new farms.

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# Vermont Goat Dairy Research Key Finding: Expanding Fluid Milk

- There is limited desire from current cow dairy farmers to explore or transition to goat dairy farming.
- There is likely more opportunity in supporting existing farms to scale up in order to increase fluid milk in Vermont.
- Ensure pricing structures support growth among suppliers and build bi-directional communication between processors and producers.
- Farmstead creameries are geared toward small-scale production and processing, not likely to scale up for bulk milk shipment.

**Recommendations:**

- Disseminate technical and financial requirements for transition to cow dairy farms.
- Improve understanding of costs and benefits for transitioning.
- Continue to connect with cow dairy farmers on opportunity and profitability opportunities with goats through panels, presentations, and other outreach.

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# Vermont Goat Dairy Research Key Finding: Technical Assistance

- Herd health & nutrition are a primary concern for producers of all sizes.
- 82% of farms surveyed do not have sufficient access to a reproductive/genetics specialist.
- 44% of farms surveyed do not have adequate access to an animal nutrition specialist.
- Educational resources and training focused on specialized expertise of dairy goats would benefit the health, milk quality, and volume output for local farms.

**Recommendations:**

- UVM Extension and VAAFM could work together to fund and develop a training program
- A regional service to provide free or reduced-cost disease testing and management services would help with disease reduction
- Incentives for small-ruminant specific training or care for local vets
- Partner with other nutrition experts

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