



**Agriculture  
and Markets**

# **“The Future of Dairy” Think Tank**

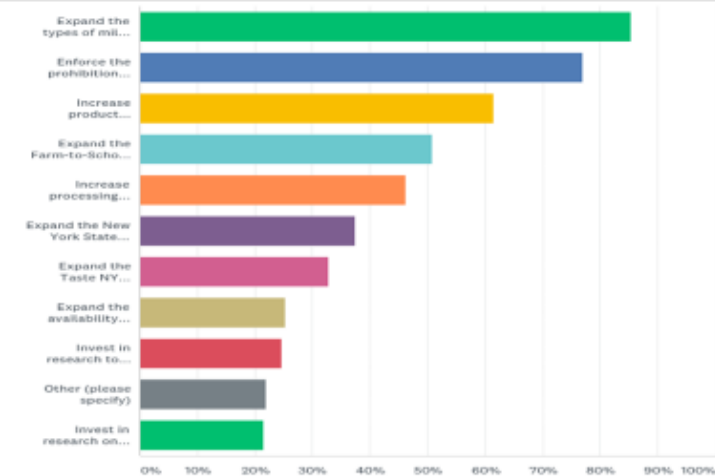
NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets

# Farmer Survey 2018/19

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Expand the types of milk served in schools to include more flavors and milk fat.	85.38%	257
Enforce the prohibition against using "milk" on food items that did not originate from an animal.	77.08%	232
Increase product development research to create new/innovative dairy foods.	61.46%	185
Expand the Farm-to-School program.	50.83%	153
Increase processing capacity in New York State either by expansion or new investment.	46.18%	139
Expand the New York State Grown and Certified program to better promote and advertise New York State dairy products.	37.54%	113
Expand the Taste NY program to better promote and advertise New York State dairy products.	32.89%	99
Expand the availability of financial analysis and business planning assistance for dairy farms.	25.25%	76
Invest in research to identify ways to reduce the cost of production or to increase productivity on a dairy farm.	24.58%	74
Other (please specify)	21.93%	66
Invest in research on improved milk quality.	21.59%	65

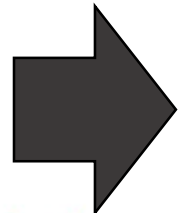
Q7: Which of the following actions do you believe may have a measurable beneficial impact on New York State's dairy industry? Select all that may apply.

Answered: 301 Skipped: 0



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**Note:** The Top 7 align with our goal of advising the Commissioner on 'Efforts to Grow Sales of NY Foods'



# MMAC Survey

Purpose: Identify/prioritize areas/topics the Council should focus providing advice to the Commissioner on.

Those topics were identified as follows:

Increase Efforts to Grow Sales of NY Foods

Review State Farming regulations

Review State Food Regulations

Review Other State Regulations

# “The Future of Dairy” Think Tank

Meeting date: 2/13/2020

## Attendees:

Andy Novakovic Cornell  
Craig Alexander O-AT-KA  
Ed Schoen  
Kevin Ellis Cayuga Milk Ingredient  
Jodi Smith Upstate Niagara  
John Noble NobleHurst Farms  
Chris Laughton Farm Credit East  
Brad Keating DFA  
Julie Suarez Cornell

Sheila Marshman SUNY Morrisville  
Tonya VanSlyke NEDPA  
Doug Young Spruce Haven Farm  
Chris Wolfe (phone) Cornell  
Jennifer Huson DFA  
Commissioner Ball NYS AGM  
Jennifer Trodden NYS AGM  
Dan McCarthy NYS AGM  
Elizabeth Hayes NYS AGM

# -- Dairy “Think Tank” --

## Purpose and Opening Comments

- The purpose of the think tank is to gather great minds and leaders in the industry, to talk about the dairy industry, dairy challenges, and the future of dairy!
- At our first meeting the Commissioner stated that this is a “blue-sky” conversation to come up with ideas and work together to answer the following questions:
  - Where do we want to be?
  - Is there a problem facing us right now?
  - Who is our customer?
  - Who will be our customer and how do we meet their needs?
  - Where do you want to be in 10 years?



# Comments Provided



MR. NOBLE STATED: “WE SHOULD FOCUS ON RURAL FARMS AND SUPPORTING THEM IN THE FACE OF CLIMATE CHANGE. THERE ARE A BUNCH OF TRENDS THAT ARE COMING AT US QUICKLY THAT ARE ABOUT TO CHANGE THE LANDSCAPE OF AGRICULTURE..”



MR. YOUNG: STATED “I AM EXCITED FOR THE FUTURE OF DAIRY. THE SCIENCE BEHIND DAIRY IS HELPING US UNDERSTAND COWS, MILK, AND THE NUTRITION OF IT ALL. WE NEED TO BE ABLE TO EXPLAIN THE COMPLEX SCIENCE IN UNDERSTANDABLE TERMS FOR CONSUMERS, EXPLAIN IT IN A WAY THAT IS SIMPLE. WE NEED TO TAKE THE COMPLEX SCIENCE OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND EXPLAIN IT IN A WAY THAT IS MEMORABLE.”



MS. VAN SLYKE STATED: “THERE IS MARKETING ON BOTH ENDS HERE. THERE IS MARKETING TO OUR FARMERS. MARKETING TO OUR CONSUMERS. MARKETING TO OUR REGULATORS. WE AREN’T KEEPING UP WITH CHANGES. IN MANY PLACES, WE NEED TO KEEP UP WITH MESSAGING INTERNALLY AND EXTERNALLY..”



MR. KEATING STATED: “THE INDUSTRY IS BEING PULLED IN SEVERAL DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS IN DIFFERENT WAYS. ECONOMISTS TALK ABOUT EFFICIENCY AND SCALE. CONSUMERS ARE GOING IN A DIFFERENT DIRECTION THINKING ABOUT SMALL FAMILY FARMS. SOCIAL MEDIA PAINTS A DIFFERENT PICTURE. REQUIREMENTS TO BE IN INDUSTRY—NET ZERO, CLIMATE CHANGE. HOW DO YOU DO THIS? HOW DO YOU EXPLAIN IT TO FARMERS?. .”

# Topics Discussed



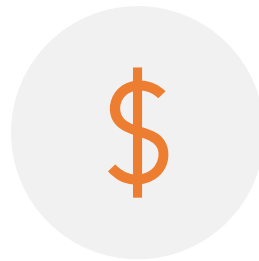
ENVIRONMENT:  
SUSTAINABILITY, WATER  
QUALITY, REGENERATIVE  
AGRICULTURE



TRANSPARENCY: BLOCKCHAIN  
TECHNOLOGY



TARGET AUDIENCES:  
CONSUMERS; BRANDING; KIDS



EXPANSION: IMPORTS,  
NUTRITION, ATTRIBUTE MILK



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT:  
RETENTION



GOVERNMENT:  
WORKING TOGETHER:  
AGM, DEC, NYSERDA,  
ESD.

# Key Takeaways

## Messaging

- a. Messaging on nutrition needs to be conveyed in a simple, easily digestible, and humorous manner
- b. The science of climate change needs to be simplified
- c. “Climate score” or “Sustainability scores” are one way to convey a message
- d. Create and develop a branded story

## Marketing

- a. The Dairy Industry needs to improve the way they market
- b. What the market wants needs to be considered
- c. Further market research is needed
- d. NYS has a niche in the market with “attribute milk”. It can be marketed to high-paying markets in NYC, Philly, and Boston
- e. How do we attract (new) consumers?

## Sustainability

- a. Climate change is going to alter the landscape of the Dairy Industry
- b. Help the NYS Dairy Industry become the most sustainable in the country – net zero
- c. Work with the DEC on permitting
- d. Create a “contest” to promote sustainability efforts
- e. NYS farms can become carbon sinks

## Energy and Resources

- a. Farms can produce energy
- b. Biofuels, methane digesters, water recapture can contribute to the energy grid and regenerative efforts
- c. Focus on being stewards of the land

## Transparency

- a. Consumers want transparency
- b. Block chain technology can be used to create transparency
- c. Farm to fork and everything in between
- d. This already exists how do we connect with the consumer



**Agriculture  
and Markets**



Coordinated  
Vision

Create a coordinated, future vision of New York Dairy, with shared goals and definitions

Government  
Partnership

Determine the timing of the change, with the necessary education and coordination required from AGM, ESD, DEC, NYSERDA and related agencies and support

Industry  
Support

Work to help, support, and educate our constituencies with the required changes (sustainability, nutrient management/soil health, emissions, regenerative agriculture, operational efficiencies, etc.), with broad industry support, including loans and financial assistance, recognizing the need for the change

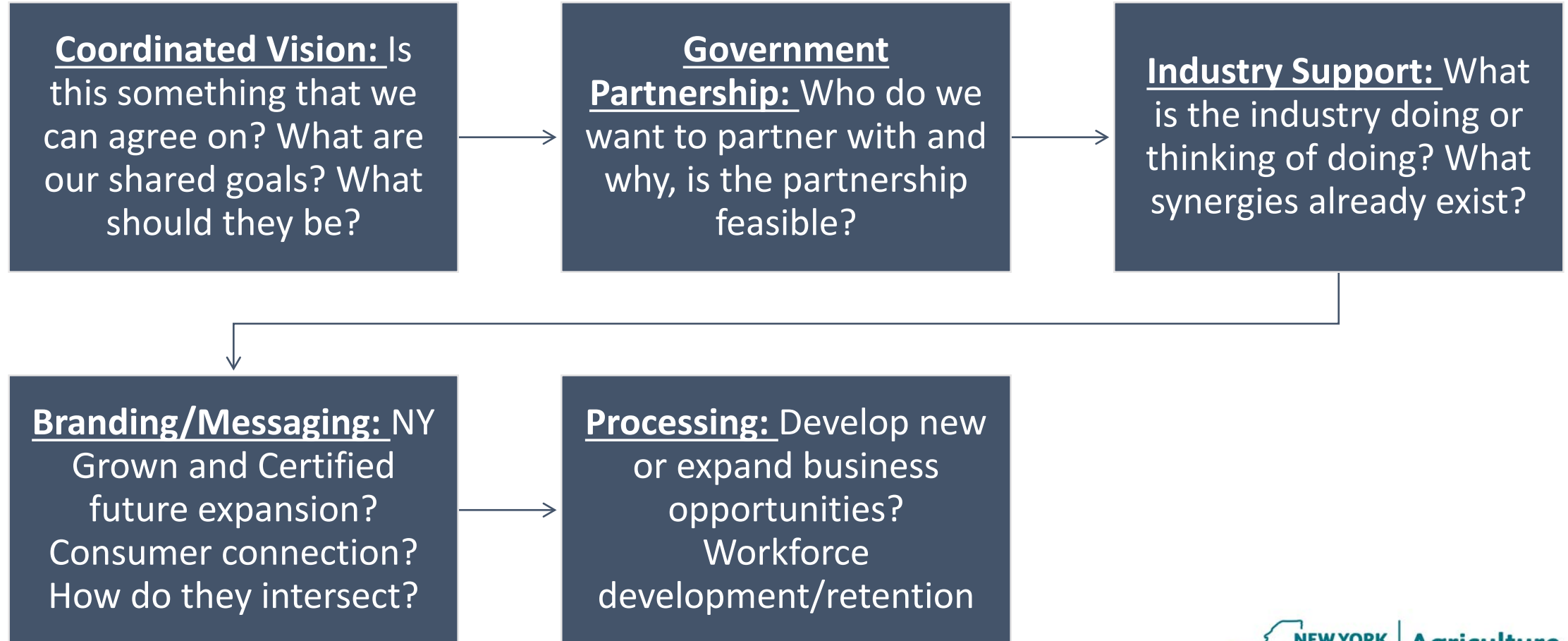
Branding

Explore a potential branding opportunity to help create value and impact for New York i.e. NYS Grown and Certified, should it be expanded? <https://certified.ny.gov/> Add a transparency component. Needs to be a public/private partnership.

Processing

Work to help attract and relocate new investment and processing in the region, that may create import product displacement opportunities and regional growth, considering consumer demands and desires. ESD partnership with the NYS Dairy Industry exists, who else should be involved?

# RoadMap & Next Steps for the Dairy Think Tank?



Questions?

