



NYFVI: Supporting New York's Dairy Industry

The New York Farm Viability Institute (NYFVI) is an independent non-profit with a 10-member farmer board that uses a NY State appropriation to fund applied agricultural research and education projects. The Institute primarily conducts a competitive grant program to select the highest priority proposals that will create and share knowledge and improve the economic viability of New York's farms. Since 2005 we have funded more than 300 projects to help farmers of all sizes and production systems create successful businesses and excellent products. As of the 2021 competitive grant competition, over 260 farmers have reviewed and evaluated more than 1,000 proposals since 2005 and shared their perspectives about the work that should—and should not—be funded. NYFVI is very much an organization of, and for, all NY farmers.

In 2006, at the encouragement of Ag & Markets, NYFVI initiated the NY Center for Dairy Excellence (CDE). The notion was: there are financial and human resources in State government, Cornell CALS and Vet School, the SUNY Schools, local, regional, national, and international agri-businesses, and non-government organizations, all doing what individuals in those organizations thought was important for either their organization or the dairy industry. The CDE brought people together to discussion and agree on industry priorities and then help focus resources on a common identified direction. In 2010 CDE funding was redirected away from NYFVI and within a short time the CDE ceased to exist.

One valuable initiative of the CDE was the development of a Dairy Profit Team (DPT) program. In 2013 NYFVI successfully requested separate funding from the legislature for a DPT program. The program initially provided cost share to bring together a team of advisors for individual farms. To better serve dairy farmers, in 2015 NYFVI expanded the program to include a Topic Specific Team (TST) program. TST's were intended to bring a small group of farmers interested in a specific topic, such as lameness, forage quality, organic transition, or grazing, together with subject specialists. Participants would learn from each other in a discussion group format and from on-farm advice from the specialist(s). The TST program has now shifted primarily to providing resources, and building capacity within vet practices across NY, to successfully implement selective dry cow therapy (SDCT) on farms. The goal is to get 40 more NY farms successful using SDCT over the next year. Unfortunately, DPT funds have been redirected away from NYFVI so when our remaining funds are depleted that program will cease.

In addition to funding 36 projects and 100 individual DPTs through special dairy funds, NYFVI has funded 141 dairy and dairy related projects through its regular core grant program, and the Corn Research and Education program. The total investment in all these dairy related projects is over \$12.7 million.

A new multi-year project now starting with the Barker Institute at the Cornell College of Vet Medicine is to use secretions from bovine mammary stem cells to treat mastitis and repair damaged mammary tissue. This is a more basic research project than NYFVI typically funds but if successful, it will be transformational for the dairy industry, and both the NYFVI Dairy Committee and Board believe the potential it is worth the risk.

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