

New England Beef to Institution Development Grants

The New England Beef to Institution (NEBI) Steering Committee announces the availability of matching grant funds for the purpose of enhancing regional¹ beef and dairy beef producer access or expansion to institutional market outlets in New England. These funds should serve to assist New England producers in the marketing, aggregation, storage, processing, and/or distribution of regionally produced beef by providing them with the coordination and facilities to access an institutional market.

A. Available Funds and Timeline

An initiative of the Farm to Institution New England (FINE) Collaborative, the NEBI Steering Committee received \$10,000 from the John Merck Fund to provide matching grants to encourage the development of the institutional market for New England beef and dairy beef. We are now accepting applications from New England meat producers, slaughter facilities or meat processors, distributors, support organizations and producer or processor groups, for institutional market development.

The maximum grant amount is \$10,000.

Key Dates:

March 14	Proposals Due
April 20	Grantees Notified
June 15	Interim Report Due
July 31*	Projects Complete, Final Report Due

*Longer projects may be considered

B. Eligibility and Program Goals

The goal of the NEBI Initiative is to increase the amount of local ground beef entering New England institutions and increase farm viability by offering access to diverse institutional markets. A team of marketing consultants has analyzed institutional demand for New England beef, and assessed feasible models to meet this demand. The study concluded that there are opportunities for growth in the local beef to institutional market in all six New England States, and that there are two models that could be replicated on a regional basis to service this demand: 1) a producer-driven model that is designed for the buyer with decision-making control and a proactive desire to source local beef; and 2) a processor-driven model designed to service buyers constrained by price and institutional requirements. The models create opportunities for beef and dairy producers, as well as processors across New England. The link to the full report can be found online here:

http://www.vermontagriculture.com/education/documents/New_England_Beef_to_Institution_Market_Study_2011.pdf

¹ Regional = Produced in one of the New England states of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island or Vermont

Eligibility: New England-based beef or dairy beef producers, processors or distributors in pursuit of institutional market development, or organizations or associations that will directly support New England producers' access to institutional market expansion all qualify for funding consideration.

Applicants that represent a partnership of organizations, including farmers and institutions, are highly encouraged. One lead organization that will coordinate grant activity and act as fiscal agent must be identified.

Eligible uses of funds for increasing institutional market access include:

Market Access and Development – e.g. coordination of or attendance at matchmaking events or trade shows, subsidizing samples or transportations costs during the start-up phase, consumer education, web platform development

Planning – e.g. feasibility studies, processor enterprise analysis

Infrastructure Development – e.g. capital improvements, equipment purchases

Match requirements: All applicants must demonstrate matching funds representing 50% of total project costs. For instance, for a \$10,000 project, applicants must demonstrate \$5,000 in match on a \$5,000 grant request.

Eligible match sources can include: your own capital, outside investment capital, grants from private or public sources. The matching funds must be directed to the same project for which you are requesting grant funds. Up to 100% of match support can come in the form of in-kind time and services related to the institutional market development activities.

C. Application and Review Process

The full application format is provided below. Applications will be reviewed by the NEBI Steering Committee (see page 3 for a list of members). We expect to notify applicants of funding decisions within 4-6 weeks of the application deadline. Successful applicants will be required to sign grant agreements with the Vermont Agency of Agriculture before funds can be disbursed.

Applications will be scored in part based on their demonstration of the following criteria:

- Experience;
- Clear strategies for increasing access to institutional markets;
- Description of new institutional markets to be reached through these grant funds;
- Impact on multiple New England states.

Application Instructions:

- ✓ Fill out the cover sheet
- ✓ Answer the application questions, being sure to address each of the criteria questions.

- ✓ Fill out the one-page budget form and attach a budget narrative, showing and describing the sources and use of funding for your project. Be sure to show the required 100% matching funds. Include cash, in-kind, and anticipated match support for the project.

- ✓ Mail or email the completed application material to:

Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food, and Markets
Attention: Chelsea Bardot Lewis
116 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05602
Email: chelsea.lewis@state.vt.us

Your application must be received at the office of the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, emailed or postmarked by 5 PM on Wednesday March 14, 2012. Submission via email is preferred.

Please contact Chelsea Lewis, NEBI Administrator at 802-828-3360 or chelsea.lewis@state.vt.us with any questions or concerns. You may also contact the NEBI Steering Committee representative from your state:

Connecticut – Jane Slupecki, Connecticut Department of Agriculture, 860-713-2588, jane.slupecki@ct.gov

Maine – John Harker, Maine Department of Agriculture, 207-287-7620, John.Harker@maine.gov

Massachusetts – Emily French, Mass. Farm to School Project, 413-253-3844, Emily@massfarmtoschool.org

New Hampshire – Charlene Anderson, Kamigo Marketing, 603-942-7160, charlene@kamigomarketing.com

Rhode Island – Tess Brown-Lavoie, Rhode Island Dairy Farms Cooperative, 617-599-8491, tess.brown.lavoie@gmail.com

Vermont – Abbey Willard, 802-272-2885, abbey.willard@state.vt.us, or Koi Boynton, 802-828-2084, koi.boynton@state.vt.us, Vermont Agency of Agriculture

Application Cover Sheet

Name(s) of applicant(s) _____

Name of organization _____

Mailing address (street) _____

Town _____, State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____ Email address _____

Financial assistance request from grant program (up to \$10,000) \$ _____

Total Budget (including match) \$ _____

Grant Application

Please answer the following questions in 3 pages or fewer (not including budget). Answers must be typed.

1. Overview of Business or Organization.

Producers and Processors: please provide a basic description of your business, including a brief history, products sold and current market outlets.

Organizations: please provide a basic description of your organization, including a brief history, services provided and relevant market development experience.

2. Proposed Project Description.

Please describe the proposed market development (project) for which you are seeking grant assistance.

Producers and Processors: How will the institutional market(s) relationships be developed? What are the proposed market outlets you anticipate reaching out to?

Organizations: How will the institutional market(s) relationships be developed? Who are the proposed project partners? How do you intend to communicate directly with producers?

For equipment or capital requests, please describe how this investment will increase access to institutional markets.

3. Market Development Projections.

Please describe the measurable outcomes you will achieve under this grant project time frame. Consider including the following information:

- Projected financial returns for your business/organization, or to the New England agricultural community;
- Number of new institutional market relationships established and the anticipated gross sales per market outlet; and
- Estimated quantity and value of New England beef and/or dairy beef that will be sourced by these institutional markets.

4. Project Timeline.

Please provide a timeline for the project. Preliminary progress reports are due on June 15th, 2012. Projects must be completed by July 31, 2012 (longer projects may be considered).

5. Budget.

Please complete the enclosed budget sheet, and provide a budget narrative to demonstrate how the funds will be used, where matching funds or in-kind services are expected to come from, and what marching funds are currently secured.

Budget Sheet

Please show budgeted amounts for the investment you hope to make in expanding your institutional market capacity. Fill in as many lines as are appropriate.

The first part of the budget should show how you would use funding from the grant program. The second part of the budget should identify each additional source of match funding, such as personal savings, bank loan, grants, contracted labor, etc. In-kind labor and services also qualify for the “Match” section.

Part One: Grant-Funded Items (Requested)

Category	Funds Requested	Describe Use of Funds
Personnel/Labor		
Equipment		
Materials		
Other		
Total Grant Request		

Part Two: Non-Grant-Funded Items (Match)

Category	Match Value	Describe Use of Match
Personnel/Labor		
Equipment		
Materials		
Other		
Total Match		

Total Project Costs: \$ _____ (total request plus total match)

Application Scoring Criteria

Experience. Applicant has evidence of at least three (3) years of successful experience as a producer or processor or as an organization working with the agricultural community in market access and/or development. Please supply contact information for at least two professional references. *Up to 15 points.*

Market Development Outcomes. Proposed outcomes clearly articulate market development. *Up to 25 points.*

Methodology and Timeline. Work plan is thorough and realistic. July 31, deadlines *Up to 25 points.*

Budget. Costs are reasonable and budget demonstrates leveraging of additional resources (e.g. cash or in-kind match). *Up to 20 points.*

Regional Collaboration. Project demonstrates a benefit to multiple New England states. *Up to 15 points.*