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## **Keep Local Farms™ Initiative Gets Big Boost from Co-op Food Stores**

*Keep Local Farms Raises Funds for Local Dairy Farmers to Help Ensure  
a Local, Fresh Supply of Milk Throughout New England*

**Lebanon, NH** – Co-op Food Stores announced on Saturday it will partner with the Keep Local Farms initiative to help support struggling dairy farmers in New England. Co-op Food Stores is the first retail establishment to contribute a portion of milk sales directly to the Keep Local Farms program. Fifteen cents for every gallon of milk sold at the Co-op's three locations – Hanover, NH, Lebanon, NH, and White River Junction, VT - will be given to Keep Local Farms. The initiative will help raise funds for New England dairy farmers, ensure a local, fresh supply of milk, and provide customers a way to support local dairy farmers and the local food network they help to sustain.

“Providing high-quality, local products to our customers has been part of our mission for 75 years,” said Terry Appleby, Co-op Food Stores general manager. “Maintaining a local dairy industry with Keep Local Farms fits in well with our long-standing commitment to local agriculture. Over one million customers visit our stores each year, so contributions from our milk sales can really have an impact. We hope that by raising the bar of financial commitment to Keep Local Farms we can inspire other stores to follow suit. We all benefit when local farmers benefit.”

“New Hampshire dairy farmers are struggling to survive and support their families due to this prolonged period of low milk prices that don't cover the high costs of feed, labor, energy and crop expenses,” said New Hampshire Commissioner of Agriculture Lorraine Merrill. “The Keep Local Farms program and partnership with Co-op Food Stores will provide dairy farmers with additional support allowing them the increased ability to sustain the farm for future generations.”

Launched in September 2009, Keep Local Farms is part of a broad effort to educate consumers about the value of local dairy farms and also to raise funds to support New England dairy farmers. Keep Local Farms is partnering with retailers, universities and businesses to support local dairy farmers and the products they produce while increasing the demand for local milk. The program was developed by the Vermont Dairy Promotion Council, New England Family Dairy Farms Cooperative and New England Dairy Promotion Board.

For more information about the Keep Local Farms program, please visit [www.KeepLocalFarms.org](http://www.KeepLocalFarms.org).

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