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For Immediate Release

“Keep Local Farms” Celebrates its 2nd Anniversary
Initiative to Support Local Dairy Farmers Thanks New Englanders for Support

Boston, MA—October 13, 2011- A unique dairy farmer-led program called “Keep Local Farms” (KLF) observed its 2nd anniversary of operations with the distribution of more than \$140,000 to its 1400+ dairy farm members across New England. The funds were raised from New Englanders who wanted to show their support for local dairy farmers, fresh locally-sourced dairy products, and the green, open spaces those farms provide for the enjoyment of everyone.

Vermont dairy farmer **Jane Clifford of Starksboro**, who is the Chairperson of the New England Family Dairy Farms Cooperative, called the check distribution historic, and thanked people for their support. “We could not be more thrilled, humbled and gratified that New Englanders voted with their wallets thousands of times to support the Keep Local Farms program, and its mission to support the family farms of our region.”

People contributed to the program through KeepLocalFarms.org and by participating in program partner promotions, where a portion of proceeds benefited the Keep Local Farms program. For a full list of partners, visit KeepLocalFarms.org/program-overview/program-partners/.

New Hampshire Commissioner of Agriculture Lorraine Merrill, whose family operates a historic dairy farm in Stratham, echoed Clifford’s sentiments. Said Merrill, “We recognize that the first Keep Local Farms check being sent to dairy farmers is a modest one, but also highly symbolic. It symbolizes the deep and abiding link New Englanders have to their agricultural roots, the respect they have for dairy farmers and the high quality, nutritious products they produce, and their appreciation for the beauty of the New England landscape.”

Massachusetts dairy farmer Lucinda Williams of Hatfield agrees and adds, “It’s not easy being farmers in New England, and what the Keep Local Farms program is attempting to do is not simple, either. We are trying to fundamentally change and strengthen the relationship between local dairy farmers and our neighbors throughout New England. This program is still young, but it’s taken some significant steps in its first two years.”

Clifford also saluted the corporate partners who supported the program in its infancy. “Supermarkets big and small, colleges and universities, hospitals, dairy brands and more all took a chance on a fledgling program that started with a simple concept: New Englanders value having local dairy farms and would be willing to voluntarily support those family farms by paying a little extra to support them. We cannot thank those partners enough for what they have done.”

In addition to raising money for local dairy farms throughout the six states, the program has education at the heart of its mission. The Keep Local Farms website KeepLocalFarms.org features videos of dairy

farmers talking about what they do, and why they love dairy farming. There are educational videos, such as one that illustrates how milk gets from the cow to the kitchen table. More such efforts are promised in the years ahead.

For more information about Keep Local Farms and to make a contribution, please visit www.KeepLocalFarms.org.

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About Keep Local Farms

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, visit www.KeepLocalFarms.org.