

Northeast SARE Professional Development Program Implementation Plan for
University of Connecticut, University of Massachusetts and University of Rhode Island
Grass-fed All Year Long
Strategies for Expanding Year-round Production of Local, Grass-fed Meat

Project Duration: 2011-2014

From 2008 to 2011 the Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island SARE PDP plan focused on increasing production of local meat in the region. The tri-state project worked to improve livestock producers' and agricultural service providers' knowledge and skills in the areas of forages and grazing, studied the relationship between local meat production and animal processing, and created a strategic plan to increase the production and availability of local meats.

After study and investigation of the farmers' expressed problem of a slaughter and processing infrastructure shortage, the project concluded that at least part of the problem is seasonal capacity rather than overall capacity. One recommendation of the strategic plan was to address some processing capacity shortages by promoting year round breeding of beef cattle that would result in year round slaughter and processing.

Year-round production of grass-fed beef will alleviate the fall slaughtering glut, provide producers and processors with a more consistent income flow, enable consumers to access fresh meat year-round, and potentially increase the total amount of meat grown in the region. The goal of this SARE PDP plan is to create a sustainable meat production system in New England.

The tri-state PDP program will educate service providers and fanners about the benefits of year-round, grass-fed meat production. Educational programs will be offered in each of the three states. Topics will include animal selection/breeding, seasonal nutrition for animals, environmental impacts of year-round production, facility design/maintenance, and alternative forage options.

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