

[Brattleboro Reformer](#)

Vermont's congressional delegation announced a new grant to provide training and assistance to farmers and ranchers in the state.

The announcement from Sens. Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., and Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., and Rep. Peter Welch, D-Vt., includes \$659,784 to the Vermont New Farmer Network (VNFN). The grant offers training and assistance to beginning farmers and ranchers to help them run successful and sustainable farms.

"Farming is an integral part of Vermont's identity and economy," the delegation said. "In recent years we have seen a growth of farmers' markets and community supported agriculture programs, which has inspired a new generation of Vermont farmers."

The Vermont New Farmers Network, a working group of agricultural organizations committed to serving the needs of new and aspiring farmers, will aid in the development of new enterprises to continue the state's long farming tradition.

According to the congressional trio, the grant was made possible through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP). The program allows the USDA to grant money to organizations that implement education, training, technical assistance and outreach programs to help beginning farmers and ranchers, specifically those who have been farming or ranching for 10 years or fewer.

Additional grants will be available through the USDA's Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program. Applications will be accepted through November 22, 2011. Interested parties should visit <http://www.csrees.usda.gov/fo/beginningfarmerandrancher.cfm> .