

## SETTING UP A FARMSTEAD DAIRY

**Rob Ralyea**  
**Cornell University**  
**Ithaca, NY, USA**

### Getting Started

#### Required

- Satisfactory sanitation inspection
- Satisfactory water sample bacteria test results or approved water source by health department
- Processing plant superintendent
- Proper product labels
- Sanitary processing equipment

#### May require

- Milk dealer license
- Approved milk drug residue testing facility:
  - On site approved testing lab.
  - Outside testing approved lab w/ licensed & certified technicians or pre-tested product.
- Approved pasteurization equipment & satisfactory testing inspection
- Satisfactory recirculated water bacteria test results
- Animal herd health requirements
- Interstate milk shippers rating (FDA) listing

#### Suggested

- Product Recall Action Plan
- Federal Food Establishment Registration

#### Additional resources

- Cornell Cooperative Extension- County
- Cornell Cooperative Extension Food Science (<http://www.milkfacts.info/>)
  - Robert Ralyea [rdr10@cornell.edu](mailto:rdr10@cornell.edu)
  - Steve Murphy [scm4@cornell.edu](mailto:scm4@cornell.edu)
- DPC- Dairy Practices Council Guidelines [www.dairypc.org](http://www.dairypc.org)

### Before Getting Started

- Work with Cornell Cooperative Extension: Discuss ideas, gather resources
- Work with Cornell University & SUNY Morrisville
  - How would I make my product?
  - Would I have a market for my product; with a cost margin?
  - How much milk will it take to make my product?
  - Have product tasting & constructive comments by students.

- Try to have the product made in an inspected facility
  - Understand equipment, cost, processing, packaging, labeling, and marketing the product.
  - Test marketing.
- Call the Division of Milk Control with any specific questions you may have. Office 518-457-1772.
- We do have some information resources, but we do not recommend any specific building, materials or equipment manufacturers.

### **Prepare a general plan**

- Product(s) to be made- processing description.
- Type and size of container, labels.
- Ingredients, volumes, product storage.
- Farm and/or plant: diagram of proposed rooms including product intake, raw product storage, processing area, boiler room, laboratory, dry storage, floor drains, toilet and septic facilities (cannot be connected to milkroom or processing drains), ventilation.
- Note and discuss building material types and lighting to be used.
  - Indicate equipment location with size dimensions and distance between the equipment and adjacent equipment, wall, or door.
  - Equipment can not be located over floor drains. Avoid overhead condensate.
- Contact the Department of Agriculture & Markets Division of Milk Control and Dairy Services. Set up a meeting to discuss your plans and review the site if need be. Be prepared to adjust plans as necessary. It is difficult to answer some questions without enough or proper information. Call 518-457-1772 or [Theresa.Gonzalez@agriculture.ny.gov](mailto:Theresa.Gonzalez@agriculture.ny.gov) 518-265-2398
- Stay in contact with the Dairy Product Specialist. That way they know at what step of progress you are at and can answer some questions along the way. Also, if they are in the area and have the opportunity they can stop and visit.
- I can review most drawings and plans submitted electronically.
- Milk production and processing are not simple and no two locations are exactly the same. It is not recommended that you start a building or purchase any equipment without consulting with someone who has dairy industry regulatory knowledge.
- If possible an inspector will look at used or new equipment here in New York State prior to purchase.
- Sometimes out-of-state equipment reviews can be arranged; some states have a fee for it.
- Finally, after the initial inspection a review of the processing will be made and official product samples taken for bacteria and standard of identity.

**A wholesome product made with consumer confidence is your and our goal.**