

**Remarks of Senator Patrick Leahy
UVM Farm Bill Grant Announcements
July 17, 2015**

When I first arrived in the U.S. Senate in 1975, I was assigned to the Agriculture Committee. My early mentor, Senator Ted Kennedy, warned me that the Agriculture Committee was easy to join, but tough to leave, and that some members considered it a banishment. But I quickly came to see – and to appreciate – that the Agriculture Committee is where I needed to be to best serve Vermont. We are first and last an agricultural state. I also came to appreciate that as simple and straightforward as it sounds, the Farm Bill is very complex and is one of the biggest domestic spending bills that Congress considers in any 5 year period.

Some 40 years later, I can tell you that in one respect at least, Senator Kennedy was right: my Committee assignments have changed through the years, but I have **never left** the Agriculture Committee. Now, through eight Farm Bills, most recently in 2014, the Agriculture Committee has provided one of my most consistent opportunities to support Vermont and Vermonters.

We are all familiar with Farm Bill programs for dairy farmers, organic agriculture, land conservation, water quality and forestry work. But much less recognized is how important Farm Bill authorized programs are for Vermont's Land Grant Institution, the University of Vermont. Today we are recognizing some of the great work being done at UVM in partnership with United States Department of Agriculture in the first year-and-a-half since I watched President Obama sign the 2014 Farm Bill into law.

- Some of the most important and innovative agricultural water-quality projects in the Lake Champlain basin are being created and delivered by UVM Extension agents Jeff Carter in Addison County and Dr. Heather Darby in Franklin County, with Farm Bill grants.
- UVM Extension is leading youth risky behavior prevention work in rural communities with a five-year grant of more than \$500,000 from the USDA.
- Researchers at the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences are doing cutting-edge research into sustainable pest control, hoof-and-mouth disease prevention, and rural economic development with Farm Bill grants.
- The Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources has built partnerships with the U.S. Forest Service through Farm Bill-authorized programs that has yielded 19 grants and more than 1 million dollars since 2014.

I would love to tell you exactly how many dollars have come to UVM to-date through the 2014 Farm Bill, but we have a problem there. . . . a good problem. The relationship between the University of Vermont and the U.S. Department of Agriculture is so complex, and so rewarding that (like a good long marriage) it defies a quick snapshot. At a minimum, 15 million dollars have been awarded to UVM by the USDA in the first 16 months of this Farm Bill. There are at least 35 projects underway that range from single competitive research grants, to five-year

program support. There are UVM solo projects and also projects with multiple outside players.

The other partner in this successful marriage is the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which recognizes the value and quality of the University of Vermont, and supports these grants at every juncture. Ted Brady from USDA Rural Development, Bob Paquin from the Farm Service Agency, and Rob Allen from the Natural Resources Conservation Service are here today representing the USDA. And I thank you Ted, Bob and Rob, we couldn't do this without you and the other dedicated public servants at USDA.

This federal support enables the University of Vermont to deliver real benefits to our farmers, our rural communities and to our watersheds through applied research and the best Extension work in the country. I have asked Deans of UVM Extension, of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, and of the Rubenstein School to each say a few words about the work that USDA supports in their units.

First Doug Lantagne, Dean of Extension – Doug?

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