

Dairy Sustainability: A Learning Journey to US and Canadian Farms and Supply Chains

June 17, 2019 - June 19, 2019

Purpose

The dairy system in the US is in severe financial crisis, with prices below the cost of production for the fourth year running. Farm numbers continue to rapidly decline, and Wisconsin alone has lost half its dairy farms since 2005. Yet just across the border in Canada, the market is relatively stable, and farmers have been able to make a living income since the 1960s.



Through farm visits and supply chain conversations, we will immerse ourselves in the dairy industry on both sides of the border. In some respects, this dairy immersion is really about any commodity. What are the roles of supply chains, technical assistance, farmer-to-farmer learning, and public policy in creating the enabling conditions for sustainability? This learning journey offers a unique chance to delve into when and why we might need to look beyond the supply chain and explore market structure solutions to farm viability. We'll extend the analysis to other commodities with "high barriers to exit" that struggle with swings of low prices and overproduction, including coffee and cocoa. If financial sustainability is a prerequisite to environmental sustainability, under what circumstances can a competitive market with volatile prices generate financial sustainability for farmers? What tools and mechanisms can reduce volatility and improve livelihoods? We'll explore these questions and more.



Logistics

The event will begin with dinner on Monday, June 17th at a hotel near Montreal. On the 18th we will visit with farmers on both sides of the US/Canada border, as well as with processors, cooperatives and industry leaders. The morning of June 19th, we will synthesize our visits. Montreal is the closest airport to the venues for those flying in. We will also arrange carpools from Burlington, Vermont. SFL has reserved a block of rooms at [Auberge des Gallant](#) in Rigaud, QC where our meetings will be held. SFL will make reservations via a rooming list, however individuals will pay the hotel directly upon arrival. If you plan to stay other nights then 6/17-6/19, please contact us to ensure that you receive the room block rate and are not charged for additional nights or no shows.

Cost: \$350.00

Includes all meals from Monday dinner through and including Wednesday lunch and ground transportation to and from the learning journey. All other costs (hotel accommodations, flights, and transportation to and from the hotel) will be the responsibility of individuals. We have reserved a block of rooms at [Auberge des Gallant](#) in Rigaud, QC where our meetings will be held. The room rate is \$129 CAD + tax per night/room.

To hold your spot please register online at:
<https://foodlab.wufoo.com/forms/kiz2jvu1poz3fk/>

Limited Invitation: In addition to a small number of dairy industry leaders from the region and members of the Impact Lab, we will extend this invitation to a select number of other Food Lab members and partners. If you have questions, or would like to be invited, please contact Kaitlin Sampson: ksampson@sustainablefood.org.