

“As a farm lender based in Wyoming County, I’ve relied upon information provided to clients from Cornell’s Dairy Farm Business Summary program for over 30 years. During this time I’ve observed that one of the common factors among many of the most progressive, dynamic and successful managers has included participation in DFBS. Furthermore, the presence of inspired, qualified and dedicated program leaders in the field has coincided with the periods when the program has enjoyed its greatest enrollment and success. In my opinion DFBS has played an important role in Wyoming County’s reputation as an industry leader in New York and nationally and that benefits of the program are critical in maintaining and building the dairy industry’s presence throughout New York and the Northeast region in the future.”

-- Dave DeLaVergne, Senior Vice President, The Bank of Castile, Perry, NY.

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“To succeed in a volatile dairy economy, producers must have a good understanding of their cost of production. The DFBS is a valuable tool for analyzing the dairy's profitability, and the DFBS Benchmark comparisons highlight areas for improvement.”

-- Jan Bitter, First Pioneer Farm Credit, Homer, NY.

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“The Dairy Farm Business Summary is a vital tool we use to improve the management of our dairy farm. Although proper completion of the summary takes much effort, the end results are more than worth it. Furthermore, we are always able to get ready and able assistance with any questions.

Each year, we use the Summary to evaluate our farming practices and to get a clear idea of the true costs of our management decisions. The summary is also the backbone of our annual farm employee meeting. Each person on our farm makes decisions every day about how our business operates. We all need financial tools to understand the full impact of our choices. The DFBS offers the data we need to push our business toward better competitiveness and more secure financial standing.”

-- Meghan Hauser and Willard DeGoyler, Table Rock Farm, farm operators of 970-cow dairy farm in Wyoming County, DFBS participant for 32 years.

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“We have used the DFBS for 15+ years now. It has been invaluable to our dairy and is used constantly to make budget and management decisions for our dairy. This past year, our dairy went through a large expansion. We had been using our benchmark numbers for 2 years to run different budgets on this particular project. This is just one example of how we have used the DFBS. We make changes every single year by identifying our strengths or weaknesses and acting on them.

As consolidation of dairies continues, I believe a program like this is greatly needed so our farms continue to be profitable with tight margins and difficult years.”

-- Pat Hanehan, William Hanehan & Sons, farm operator of 600-cow dairy farm, DFBS participant for 15+ years.

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“The DFBS program has become a must for our business because it focuses on what is really happening from year to year. Also, by using the business summary, we have gained control of our business with better cost control, rates of production, both milk and crops, which all translate into profitability. With the help of Extension, we are able to compare our costs, income and profitability to benchmarks. That has helped us set goals for long and short term.

One great example is milk income and marketing reports which has helped our farm considerably. By comparing prices, I have been able to get our milk cooperative to start paying premium incentives for quality and quantity. The DFBS has assisted us in making better use of our resources, labor, finances, and live a healthier life style. The statements and analysis on the DFBS are very valuable to us and NY agriculture because they are reality and help us to make real decisions.”

-- David and Donna Gaige, farm operators of 55-cow dairy farm in Albany County, DFBS participants for 11 years.

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“I have been a user of the Cornell Dairy Farm Business Summary (DFBS) for many years. The information that it provides is very valuable to me in managing my farm. I first started using the DFBS in the 1980’s. I like the way it breaks out pertinent information into cost/cwt or cost/acre etc. This helps me to track my income and expenses better and I know where I stand compared to previous years. It tells me at a glance where I have improved and where I have slid. I then know what areas I need to work on for the coming year. It is also very helpful in helping me to make out a budget for the year. It is also a report that my accountant and lender receive copies of. It provides them with a profit and loss statement as well as a balance sheet and debt structure. The DFBS also provides a section on crop costs and yields and another section on herd inventories and milk production which is also very helpful. It would have a negative impact on many dairy farms if the DFBS were discontinued.”

-- David Green, Farm Operator.

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“The DFBS has enabled our farm to make solid business decisions on expansions and monitoring income and expenses comparing ourselves to other farms in our area, state and country. Without the DFBS, we believe we will lose critical information that keeps

us competitive and eventually lead to an unstable food supply in our region and statewide.”

-- Mark Stanton, farm operator of 360-cow dairy farm in Albany County, DFBS participant for 20 years.

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”Cornell University Cooperative Extension's Dairy Farm Business Summary and Analysis Program has a very prominent role in our program's efforts to enhance farm business owners' capacities to effectively use finance and economics in the management of their businesses. The DFBS Program is an extremely valuable farm financial management tool.”

-- John Hanchar, Farm Business Management Specialist  
Northwest NY Dairy, Livestock, and Field Crops Program, PRO-DAIRY

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The operator stated that the decision making process benefited from having DFBS information from his farm as a historical base of financial condition and performance for developing analyses, projections -- “... better than flying blind and hoping for the best.”

-- Northwest NY Region dairy farmer that used DFBS information for his farm business to evaluate, and reach a decision regarding the possible switch to certified organic milk production.

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“The DFBS is a great educational tool we use with customers which encompasses all aspects of their business. Use of the DFBS reiterates the need for good recordkeeping, allows our customers to compare their business with others, identifies strengths and weaknesses and assists with better decision making. Human resources are needed to assist with inputting information into the system and doing a follow up session to explain the results - increased participation in the DFBS would benefit the farmers of New York and the results of the summary.”

-- Christy A. Marshall, Farm Loan Chief, USDA - Farm Service Agency, Syracuse, NY.

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”The Agricultural Business Faculty Team at SUNY Cobleskill uses Dairy Farm Business Summary Data in numerous courses and specifically in AGBU 241, Farm Management. We find the data very useful in demonstrating industry trends and the economics behind businesses of varying sizes. “

-- Dayton Maxwell, Faculty, SUNY Cobleskill.

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"I have been an agricultural lender for approximately 25 years. During that time, I have found the Dairy Farm Business Summary an invaluable tool to help me and my customers make comparative financial and operational business measurements that help strengthen and improve their businesses. It was an important resource 25 years ago and remains an equally important resource for the agricultural community today."

-- Edward C. Ward, Community Bank, NA, Watertown, NY.

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"My Banker waits for me to complete the DFBS and send it to him before he does my annual review. He appreciates the report and the information it gives him. With the help of Extension, we are able to compare our costs, income and profitability to benchmarks that have helped us set goals for short and long term. One great example is Milk Income and Marketing Reports which have helped our farm considerably. By comparing prices, I have been able to get our milk cooperative to start paying premium incentives for quantity and quality."

-- Bernard Gohlert, Dairy Producer, Hilltop Farms, Lowville, NY.

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"Often when a farmer plans a major facilities renovation or expansion, I'm called to provide input on facilities layout and cow comfort. In many cases, the greatest impact is in helping the farmer explore alternatives by a thorough financial analysis of the business. No dairy management decision should get made without financial consideration."  
"Dairy Management Educators familiar with using the DFBS program are well equipped to make a tremendous impact on farm profitability."

-- Frans Vokey, Dairy Educator, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Lewis County.

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"How can you fully help the farmers when you don't understand the REAL numbers? Sometimes the questions at hand are not the real priorities. The DFBS determines the true issues, not just what the farmer sees as the issues."

Dave Balbian, Dairy Educator, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Fulton and Montgomery Counties.

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“Our family farm has benefited greatly from information gained from our participation in the DFBS. It has helped to guide our decision making through a major expansion, in the adoption of new technologies and management strategies, and annually in budgeting to weather the financial extremes that seem to be the norm now. The Northeast dairy industry is truly fortunate to have such a tool at its disposal.”

-- Edie McMahon, McMahon's EZ Acres, Homer, NY.

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“Managing a dairy farm requires all of the same skills as managing any business. Those skills include business analysis and decision making to improve the economic performance of the business. The DFBS is a tool used to identify strengths and areas for improvement in the business. Management then takes that information and uses it to chart a future course for the business that allows it to meet family and business goals and objectives. Research has shown that farm businesses that perform a business analysis are more profitable than those that do not. Why not improve the profits of your business by doing a DFBS?”

-- Wayne A. Knoblauch, DFBS Director