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BREAKFAST ON THE FARM GIVES PUBLIC FREE TASTE OF FARM LIFE

Nea-Tocht Farm in Ferrisburgh Draws Big Crowds for Farm Tours, Food, Fun

Ferrisburgh, VT, June 25, 2016 – The Vander Wey family of Nea-Tocht Farm believe in showing their community what farmers do to produce safe, wholesome and nutritious food in Vermont and beyond. On June 25, the Vander Wey's opened their third generation farm to over 900 visitors for Vermont's 2nd Breakfast on the Farm.

The free, public event included a pancake breakfast, self-guided tours of the dairy farm and a peek into the life and business of dairy farming in Vermont – home to over 850 dairy farms that make 63% of the milk for New England, according to USDA data.

The 500-cow, 800-acre farm is owned and operated by Raymond and Linda Vander Wey, along with their five children and their grandchildren. They hope to continue the family farming tradition by exposing their grandkids to life on the farm. The farm has earned acclaim for their high quality milk. In 2000 they won The *New England Green Pastures Dairy Farm of the Year* award.

“People enjoyed a delicious breakfast, met the cows and saw new technologies, like our wind turbine and robotic milking system,” said Raymond Vander Wey. “We helped our community understand where their milk and dairy products come from and a little bit about our story. The backbone of this farm is our family – and has been for 40 years.”

Educational stations throughout the farm enabled visitors to see technology such as robots which allow the cows to choose when to be milked. Attendees also saw farm equipment, learned about how farmers protect water quality, saw the free stall barns where the cows have constant access to food and sleep on water-filled mattresses, and more. Kids took part in an educational scavenger hunt that included learning how to milk a cow.

Vermont Breakfast on the Farm is coordinated by the Vermont Agency of Agriculture and aims to provide the public with a first-hand look at how food is made for Vermont communities and the world. Approximately 100 volunteers from the community joined the Vander Wey family and helped answer visitors' questions about farming practices.

Chuck Ross, Vermont's Secretary of Agriculture said, "Breakfast on the Farm is one way we can help ensure future generations of Vermonters maintain a connection to the land and an appreciation for the importance of agriculture in our state."

A second *Breakfast on the Farm* will be hosted by the Rowell family on August 27 at Green Mountain Dairy Farm in Sheldon, Vermont.

Vermont *Breakfast on the Farm* is made possible by the agricultural business community including Bourdeau Brothers, Hall Communications, New England Dairy Promotion Board, Poulin Grain and Vermont Feed Dealers & Manufacturers Association.

For more information, visit www.VermontBreakfastonTheFarm.com, email vermontbreakfastonthefarm@gmail.com, or call Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets at (802) 828-2430.

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About The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food, and Markets (VAAF):

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