

**Final Report**  
**FSMIP Project**  
**An Innovative Approach to Marketing Livestock in the Northeast**

The producer members of the Northeast Livestock Marketing Cooperative (NLMC) are from the states of New York, New Hampshire, Vermont and Connecticut. At present, there are 10 members who are all committed to making this project successful. Currently, they are engaged in herd improvement, moving toward grass fed “natural” production and doing outreach to additional producers who are committed to the vision of the cooperative and have enough livestock to make the time invested worthwhile. All members, with the exception of one, have herds of over 100. The organization has decided to limit membership to large producers (over 100 animals) until the business is operating successfully.

Outreach continues to producers in the region, utilizing print materials that have been developed. At full potential, it is envisioned that 50 producers in the region will realize at least a 100 per cent increase in the price that they receive for their animals. Profit will take longer for those producers who need to invest a significant amount of resources in improving herd management and breeding techniques. By one-to-one education, farmers will understand that their investment will pay off in increased returns enabling them to sustain their present lifestyle.

Outreach done earlier this year by NLMC members at agricultural fairs and informational meetings, provided information not only to potential farmer members, but also to potential consumers.

NLMC members continue to progress forward on the day-to-day operations of the cooperative. The cooperative has recently taken over the management and oversight of their financial accounting systems and has stepped forward to do the follow-up contact and record keeping that is necessary to keep the cooperative moving toward becoming a successful business. A database of potential and current members developed earlier, continues to be updated. Several members, who raise goat and sheep, have done mailings to potential sheep and goat producers of significant size in the region encouraging them to join the cooperative.

A seminar is planned for January of 2002 about successful year-round production of quality meats and value-added products. The challenge that the NLMC is faced with today is that historically, small ruminant producers have timed their breeding cycles to coordinate with religious holidays when consumers serve traditional meals that include lamb and goat. The market today is demanding these meats year round and naturally produced. In order to fill the demand, new breeds, new breeding techniques and new nutritional programs must be implemented. This seminar will address these issues.

An application on behalf of NLMC has been submitted by the CDI for a SARE Grant, to begin the process of developing value-added products and brand identity for marketing and to begin inter-cooperative study groups on the subjects of land management,

nutrition, quality and supply in order to achieve the goals of the cooperative. NLMC will also begin looking at ways to purchase necessary supplies together to achieve economy of scale in bulk pricing. The first annual meeting of the Northeast Livestock Marketing Cooperative will be held in April 2002.