

Hello,

My name is Nicholas Noble, my family milks around 90 cows on our 300 acre farm in Richmond. We've been milking cows there for the last 26 years, before that we milked on a farm in southern New Hampshire that had been in the family for over 200 years. Farming is a part of our family and has been for a long time. Without the tier program that part of our family would have ended several years ago, and without updates to the program it won't continue. Last year tier program payments made up approximately 15% of the farm's income. Within the next year I will have to decide whether to take over the farm and build a new barn that is needed in order to continue milking cows. Without the safety net that is provided by the tier program I don't believe it will be possible to take on the obligation of building this barn. This will likely mean the end of milking cows on our farm. Not only would this mean the loss of one of the ever decreasing number of dairy farms left in Maine, but the ripple effect that our farm has on other businesses, from the grain companies and fertilizer companies to the farm supply stores to the tractor dealerships to the fuel companies. I would prefer if we did not have to rely on the tier program to help keep our farm financially viable, but until there is change in the industry with regards to how farmers are paid the tier program is one of the few things keeping our farm and many others going.

Thank you for your time.

Nicholas Noble
Richmond Maine