



**Ottaquechee Natural Resources Conservation District**  
28 Farmvu Drive • White River Jct., VT • 05001

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Mooreland Farms, April 9, 2002  
Ottaquechee District Informal Farm Discussion Group Meeting



About 15 to 20 people gathered at Mooreland Farms in Springfield Vermont to share some discussion on farm issues and a lovely potluck lunch. Dick and Helen Moore and their son and daughter in law Ray and Linda graciously hosted the Ottawaquechee Conservation District Farm Discussion group. Dick shared some of the long history he and Helen and their family have had on the former “Town Farm”. Dick is a long time “District Supervisor” and has freely given of his time in service to the District.

Jeff Temple of Yankee Farm Credit in White River Jct., VT (802-295-3670) was invited to speak on transfer of farms from one generation to the next. He advised to start thinking and planning for it at the earliest opportunity. In the grind of day-to-day life these important planning activities can be forgotten, but the earlier you start the more options you have. Open communication between involved parties is also important. Beginning the dialogue can be scary, as many personal, intergenerational and sensitive financial issues must be dealt with. But as UVM Extension specialist Willie Gibson related it can be invigorating for the farm to purposefully move forward toward family decided goals. Dick and Helen are in the process of transferring their farm to Ray and Linda. Ray related that it was sometimes hard to communicate, but it was essential for each side to make the effort to reach out to the other. Their family has successfully negotiated the process with help from all members. Others shared their successes and failures as well as the advice that it takes time to set goals, make a plan and work to achieve it. Financial consultants, bankers and lenders, tax advisors and estate planners can all be helpful in pulling together the farm information needed for planning as well as making suggestions on how to proceed to achieve goals of the farm.



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Mike Raker of *Efficiency Vermont* kindly shared some of his experience working with nearly a thousand dairy farms over nearly 10 years in Vermont making their farms more energy efficient. Mike who clearly loves his job working as an advocate for farms said farms can save money on energy improvements in several areas among these are cooling, heating, and lighting. Cooling milk in bulk tanks is a major expense for farms and a plate cooler heat exchanger that uses cold water from wells or springs can be used to precool the milk before it goes into bulk tank. Ground water at about 50 degrees is pumped through thin plates in one direction while milk in alternate plates is pumped in the opposite direction bringing the milk temperature to within about 12 degrees of the water temperature. On large farms it is sometimes cost effective to put more advanced technology to regulate milk flow to gain even more cooling from the water. Ray said the plate cooler is the one energy efficiency technology he wouldn't want to do with out and wished he had done years earlier.

Another area for saving energy is by capturing waste heat from the bulk tank cooler to heat water for farm use. This is especially advantageous if the farm is using electricity for heating water or not using a plate cooler. But Mike felt that even though the Moore's were using the plate cooler and had switched to oil for heating that it would still be sensible. The other main area for energy savings is to using more efficient lighting which can be especially noticeable on farms that are going to having cows exposed to light for 18 hours/day. For larger farms, significant energy savings can be achieved by installing a computer controller on the vacuum pump. Some Vermont farms have saved as much as 75% of vacuum pump operating cost. Mike stressed that there are energy saving opportunities on all farms and if you have had your farm energy audited in the past there may be new opportunities because of new technologies and changes in the cost of energy and technology.

*Efficiency Vermont* <http://www.encyvermont.com/> has cost share programs and Mike is available to all dairy farms for a free on site consultation (888-921-5990 or [mmraker@aol.com](mailto:mmraker@aol.com) ).

Plate Cooler

