

Figure 1.

Type of Firm	Sales to Dairy Farms and Those in Dairy - Related fields as a Percentage of Total Sales	Percentage of the Firm's Revenue that Stays in the Local Economy
Grocery Store	24.00	35.00
Farm Implement Dealer	70.00	8.10
Feed Supply Store	70.00	
Feed Fertilizer		35.00 20.00
Veterinarian	70.00	50.00
Insurance Agency	20.00	17.50
Artificial Insemination	95.00	70.00
Local Bank	50.00	90.00
Milk Hauler	80.00	83.00
AVERAGE	59.88	41.86

Farm Beginnings emphasizes sustainable grass-based dairying as a way for beginning farmers to get established in dairying with minimal capital and start-up costs. Grass-based and other forms of sustainable dairying can provide farmers with the profitability and quality of life necessary to attract and keep young people in dairying. The most effective way to teach sustainable agriculture practices is to teach it to beginning farmers before they have made commitments financially or emotionally to farming in a certain way.

It is suggested that sustainable agriculture may be a foundation on which successful rural communities of the future can be built. Sustainable farming practices have the potential to increase returns to skilled labor and management and to encourage the emergence of new rural businesses to serve the specialized needs of sustainable agriculture (Dobbs and Cole, 1992). Recent reports have concluded that sustainable agriculture benefits both the environment and rural communities. Researchers at the University of Missouri at Columbia, the University of Minnesota, and the Center for Rural Affairs surveyed a small number of farms in northeast Nebraska to examine the effects of sustainable farming on rural communities. The researchers concluded that if all of the farms in the survey had been sustainable: 26% more people would be living in the area; total family income would be 80% higher and; the property tax base would be