



Picture of John with owners Sarah and Matthew Perkins in front of sign

### **Ledgeway Farm Grows Its Rural Business With Support From USDA's Value-Added Producer Grant Program**

**Pittston, Maine** – In the heart of rural Kennebec County, Ledgeway Farm is demonstrating how value-added agriculture can strengthen local economies, create jobs, and bring unique Maine-made products to customers across the country. Owned and operated by Sarah Perkins, the farm has grown a thriving business around handcrafted goat milk soap made onsite using milk from the farm's own herd.

In fiscal year 2023, Ledgeway Farm received a USDA Value-Added Producer Grant (VAPG) to expand production, strengthen marketing, and grow its customer base. The investment is already transforming the scale and reach of the business.

## A Homegrown Product With Statewide and National Appeal



Picture of John with goat

Ledgeway Farm produces its goat milk soap entirely on the farm—from raising and milking the goats to crafting each batch by hand. With fairs, expos, and online sales making up the bulk of annual revenue, the business has become a recognizable Maine brand known for natural ingredients and a compelling farm-based story.

With support from the VAPG, the farm has launched a major marketing expansion. Funds are helping Ledgeway Farm hire a dedicated social media consultant, build a new website, upgrade online sales platforms, and enhance photography and video content. These improvements are already generating significant increases in online traffic and customer engagement.

*“We’ve always believed in the quality of what we make here,”* said Sarah Perkins, owner of Ledgeway Farm. *“This grant has allowed us to tell our story in a much bigger way. The increased outreach, new digital tools, and expert support are helping us reach customers we never could have reached on our own.”*

## Scaling Up Production for New England’s Busy Fair Season

From July through Christmas, Ledgeway Farm is on the road at fairs, trade shows, and holiday markets across New England—making this season the backbone of the business. With demand rising each year, the VAPG is enabling the farm to bring on additional production help. This support is especially important as the farm prepares for its largest market yet: the five-week SoWa Christmas Market in Boston.

Ledgeway Farm has been recognized for its exceptional exhibit presence, recently receiving the Best Booth Award at the New England Made Shows. Judges described the farm’s booth as *“authentic, warm, and unmistakably rooted in its agricultural heritage—providing an effect that is welcoming, genuine, and memorable.”*

*“We’ve always operated lean, and during the fair season we work around the clock,”* Perkins said. *“Being able to bring on help—especially during our busiest months—ensures that we can keep growing without sacrificing quality.”*

## A Strong Partnership and a Persistent Path to Funding

USDA Rural Development State Director John Butera recently visited Ledgeway Farm to see the impact of the VAPG project firsthand. He toured the soap production area, viewed boxed inventory ready for shipment, and met some of the goats that make the entire enterprise possible.

During the visit, Perkins shared the story of how she came to apply for the program, noting the persistence of the VAPG Specialist and encouragement she received along the way.

*“There were moments when I wasn’t sure we could take this step,” Perkins said. “But Ivana kept encouraging me, answering questions, and helping me understand that this opportunity really was within reach. Without that persistence, we wouldn’t be where we are today.”*

## Showcasing Maine on the National Stage

Ledgeway Farm is also representing Maine nationally. The business is participating in the 250 State Fair in Washington, D.C., providing handcrafted goat milk soaps as giveaway items in the USDA Rural Development tent. These products highlight the creativity, uniqueness, and rural character of Maine’s value-added producers.

## USDA Rural Development’s Commitment to Rural Maine

State Director John Butera praised the farm’s vision and its growing contributions to Maine’s rural economy.

*“Ledgeway Farm is exactly the kind of entrepreneurial spirit we see across rural Maine,” said Butera. “With determination, ingenuity, and a little help from USDA programs, businesses like this one are creating jobs, strengthening local economies, and keeping Maine’s agricultural traditions strong.”*

## Looking Ahead

With improved marketing, upgraded production systems, and expanded staffing, Ledgeway Farm has grown beyond its signature soap products. The business now offers dish soap, laundry detergent, shampoo bars, and lip balm, reflecting a broadening value-added

Picture of John with owners in packing room



portfolio. The VAPG positions the farm to become fully self-sustaining and continue contributing to the local economy for years to come.

*“This grant has changed the future of our farm,” Perkins said. “It’s given us the tools we need to grow, to dream bigger, and to keep doing what we love here in Pittston.”*



Picture of baby goat standing on hind legs