In an effort to capitalize on and support the growing local food movement, Wegmans has broken new ground. The New York-based regional grocer recently announced a partnership with Cornell University that some say will revolutionize the dairy industry in the state of New York.

Wegmans and Cornell will collaborate to launch a three-year pilot program to train students on the art of cheesemaking through hands-on workshops as well as coursework. Participants include both existing dairy farmers as well as entrepreneurs.

This innovative partnership achieves several things. It creates more economic opportunities for New York, supports the local artisan cheese industry, which has traditionally faced competition from Canadian companies, and ultimately, it will create a local supplier base for Wegmans – allowing them to meet customer demands for locally grown and produced foods and reduce transportation costs at the same time. Beyond that, better training will likely help the cheesemakers increase efficiency and reduce costs, which benefits producers, retailers and consumers. It’s a truly forward-thinking example of business model innovation from the food and grocery industry.
About the Author

Sonia Parekh
sonia.parekh@kalypso.com

Sonia brings over 15 years of industry experience. She has deep retail industry knowledge having worked as a consultant and in operating roles with many large, national retailers.