

## Producers Make Pots & Profit From Cattle Manure

A pair of enterprising producers utilizing a methane digester on their East Canaan, CT dairy have found a way to add a new profit wrinkle into their manure management – CowPots™.

Freund Farms mixes composting bovine waste with other materials and molds it into biodegradable planting containers. The product can survive for weeks in a greenhouse, and then dissolves when planted into the ground, an environmentally friendly alternative to plastic containers.

Brothers Ben and Matt Freund, who run a 250-cow dairy and have operated a methane digester since 1997, hatched the idea nine years ago. CowPots were their brainchild to deal with the solids after they're separated from the liquids. Utilizing Small Business Innovation Research Awards through USDA, they developed the idea, hired some help and conducted more research to refine the manufacturing of the products. The solids are composted, which leaves them weed-free and used to mold CowPots.

Their website – [cowpots.com](http://cowpots.com) – tells how Matt experimented with the manure fibers, drying the pots in his wife's toaster oven.

“This didn't do much for his marriage, but it allowed him the ability to share his vision with other people. After many trials and tribulations, the brothers found a process in which they can mass-produce pots of limitless sizes and shapes at an economical cost.

“These pots can withstand months in the greenhouse, but within four weeks of being planted in the ground they dissolve and continue to feed the plant,” the web site says.