

# AGRiVIEW



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## Farmers Focus on Grazing Innovation

By Katie Spring, Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center

In 2023, the Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center (NE-DBIC), awarded 24 recipients of the Dairy Farm Innovation & Alternative Management Grant. With a focus on climate and community-forward production strategies, this grant offered funds for farmers to implement projects that enhance the resilience of our Northeast regional food system.

One of those grantees was the Center for an Agricultural Economy (CAE), which leveraged grant funds to bring together a group of 7 female-led dairy farms so they may have a greater impact both individually and collectively. While the grant supported a group who are



currently farming, they hope their results reach more young women who are interested in a future in dairy farming. Led by Silene

DeCiucies of CAE in collaboration with Dr. Dayna Locitzer, DVM, the group of farms included North Country Creamery, Chaseholm

Farm, and K&O Farm in New York, along with Northwind Farm, Larson Farm, and Rebop Farm in Vermont, and Milkhouse Farm in Maine. .

Through a combination of on-farm visits and virtual meetings, the grass-based farmers focused on innovative grazing strategies, including the installation of Batt-Latches: automatic gate opening mechanisms that reduce the labor time needed to move animals. The group also received support on expanding their summer forage production through the planting of diverse annual and perennial seed mixes, as well as funding to purchase soil amendments to improve pasture fertility.

“This grant provided a great opportunity to leverage DBIC funds to make a real impact on pasture

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# AGRiVIEW

**Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets**

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# Farmer Housing, Jobs, and the Economy

From Canaan to Cavendish, and Duxbury to Dummerston, Vermonters are asking for more housing units and better-quality dwellings. Workers - employees - we hear you, asking for more well-constructed homes, apartments, and condos so you can work, live, and play closer to where you earn. We are listening and determined to act.

We hear calls for more housing from all industry sectors. From high tech, to hospitality, to hospitals - to agriculture - the need is serious. Every week, we hear from young farmers who have tremendous energy, enthusiasm, and training to work the land, producing food for

Vermont and our region. We also hear from New Americans who have moved to the Green Mountains for a better life. But agriculture is not a 9 to 5 profession. There are often odd and long hours. Aspiring farmers are discouraged because they cannot find affordable housing closer to their farms, fields, and processing facilities. They cannot find housing closer to their jobs.

The need is acute, and critical to Vermont's future. If we don't create more places to live, youth will continue to leave our state, among them, young farmers, and entrepreneurs. We need to allow more flexibility to build housing closer to the place of work. We must listen to the next generation as we develop policies in the Legislature this year.

As the legislative session gets underway, all of us need to keep an

open mind and embrace common sense suggestions that will offer more opportunities for workers and employers. That will include updating Act 250, Vermont's decades old land use law. It has been more than 50 years since Act 250 was created, and Vermont has changed. If our regulations, guidelines, and policies don't change along with our state, we risk Vermont becoming a place where only privileged people can afford to live and work.

As we take on vast and problematic housing issues, one model we could consider broadening is existing small-scale farm worker housing policies. Vermont has invested in this area, but we must do much more if we are going to provide good jobs to Vermonters, as well as enjoy fresh food and world class products.

Imagine the possibilities if we

could further elevate our food industry by boosting our workforce. Vermont produces world class dairy products like butter, yogurt, ice cream and cheese but we could do more if we had more affordable housing in our rural regions. Lack of housing has prevented companies from keeping pace or growing. Companies of all sizes are telling us they could produce more or expand their operations if there were more housing in Vermont. There are even examples of businesses having to stop producing award winning products because of the lack of labor. More housing could halt that trend. We have made some progress by investing in farm worker housing through the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board and the Working Lands Enterprise Fund but progress could be made if we

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## This Month's Recipe

### Baked Apples with Cinnamon Yogurt Topping

*Courtesy New England Dairy*

Lots of opportunities to use local Vermont products in this recipe. Enjoy!

#### Ingredients

- 4 Vermont grown apples - your choice (peeled or unpeeled)
- ¼ cup unsweetened apple juice or apple cider
- ¼ cup brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons cornstarch
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon nutmeg
- ¼ teaspoon salt

#### Yogurt Topping:

- 2 ½ cups low-fat plain yogurt
- 1 tablespoon honey
- ¼ teaspoon cinnamon

#### Directions

1. Heat oven to 350° Fahrenheit. Spray an 8x8-inch baking dish with nonstick cooking spray; set aside.

2. Core and thinly slice apples. Place apples in a medium bowl and toss with apple juice. Mix brown sugar, cornstarch, cinnamon, nutmeg and salt together in a small bowl. Sprinkle over apples and stir gently until apples are coated.
3. Pour apples into prepared baking dish. Bake 40 minutes or until apples are slightly browned at edges and sauce is bubbling.
4. For the cinnamon yogurt topping: Line a colander with several paper



towels and place over a bowl to catch drips. Pour yogurt into colander and allow to drain, refrigerated, about 30 minutes. Spoon yogurt into a small bowl and stir in honey and cinnamon. For each serving, top 1/4 of the warm apples with 1/4 of the yogurt topping.

# Apply Now for Small Farm Diversification & Transition Grant

By Clare Salerno,  
VT Agency of  
Agriculture, Food &  
Markets



The Fiscal Year 2024 State budget included \$150,000 in funds for one-time grants to small farms to support diversification and/or transition activities on the farm. The application portal is open through

March 4, 2024 at 11:59 PM.

Small farms can apply for grants ranging from \$5,000-\$15,000. There is no match requirement for this grant.

To qualify as a small farm operation (SFO) for this grant, the farm must meet a minimum of

ONE of the following criteria:

- Operate four or more acres for farming; OR
- Have filed a 1040(F) Tax Form once in the last two years; OR
- Earn an annual gross income of more than \$2,000 from the sale of agricultural products

In addition, the farm must NOT be registered as a Permitted Medium Farm Operation (MFO) or Permitted Large Farm Operation (LFO).

Farms within any agricultural sector are eligible. Processing-only operations that do not farm are not eligible.

This grant can cover the costs of equipment, supplies, infrastructure, marketing, research, and/or workforce development costs that relate to the following project categories:

- Diversifying farm products, including continuing with a diversification project that began in the last five years
- Transitioning from one form of farming to another, including continuing with a transition that began in the last five years
- New processing or scaling of current processing of farm products

- Developing an accessory on-farm business

Projects in any category should demonstrate a proposed plan for diversification or transition that includes potential markets identified for the proposed product. Applicants should also demonstrate that there is potential from the proposed diversification or transition to create additional income for the farm.

Purchases of land or animals are not eligible under this grant. Grant funds cannot cover any expenses incurred prior to grant awards being made, which will occur in April 2024.

For more information and to apply, visit [workinglands.vermont.gov/grant-contract-opportunities/small-farm-diversification-grant](http://workinglands.vermont.gov/grant-contract-opportunities/small-farm-diversification-grant) or contact [Clare.Salerno@vermont.gov](mailto:Clare.Salerno@vermont.gov) or 802-917-2637.

## Vermont Dairy Producers Conference Returns February 20

By the Vermont Dairy Producers  
Conference Committee

Now in its 25th year, the Vermont Dairy Producers Conference celebrates the dairy industry and the farmers who work tirelessly to provide milk to individuals across Vermont and beyond. This year's conference will be held on Tuesday, February 20 at the DoubleTree by Hilton in South Burlington, Vermont. It features innovative sessions led by industry experts and provides an opportunity to connect with more than 200 farmers and representatives

from across the northeast representing more than 50 dairy-related organizations.

This year's conference features five well-known speakers from across North America, sharing information about topics ranging from milk production to farm transition planning.

Dave Barbano (Cornell University) and MaryAnne Drake (North Carolina State University) will pro-



vide a presentation on dairy product innovation. Certified Coach Elaine Froese will discuss supporting farm families and farm succession planning. Mark Thomas, DVM, from Dairy Health and Management Services, will share strategic approaches for optimizing dairy herd profitability. The conference will also feature a dairy

producer panel discussion on workforce development led by Richard Stup from Cornell Cooperative Extension.

Registration for the 2024 Vermont Dairy Producers Conference is now open. The cost is \$25 for farmers, \$50 for individuals working in education or government, and \$100 for agricultural business representatives through February 12 (when ticket prices increase) and includes conference proceedings, lunch, and light refreshments. Learn more and register at [VTDairyConference.com](http://VTDairyConference.com).

## DAIRY BUSINESS INNOVATION CENTER

# Current and Upcoming Dairy Grants

By Ali Boochever, Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center

At the Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center (NE-DBIC) our goal is to help dairy farms and processors innovate to become more sustainable and resilient. Whether you're looking for funding to purchase specialized equipment, to implement an innovative practice, or to receive technical assistance, consider applying for an NE-DBIC grant.

### Open Funding Opportunities:

#### Dairy Food Safety & Certification Grant

This funding opportunity will provide grants for dairy farmers, processors, and/

or producer associations to take actionable steps to improve the safety of dairy products. Projects funded through this program will support increased production safety standards with the goal of accessing new markets. Food safety activities under this grant should build upon baseline state and federal compliance requirements to further improve product consistency, safety, and quality of dairy products.

Applications for this grant program are due February 22, 2024, at 2:00 PM ET. Awards will range from \$10,000 to \$50,000 with a 25% cash or in-kind



match requirement. Total funds available in this round are expected to be about \$600,000.

#### Goat & Sheep Dairy Supply Chain Development Grant

This grant program will provide funds to support individual small ruminant dairy businesses and/or supply chain projects that will develop or expand goat and/

or sheep dairy products or markets.

The RFA for this grant is expected to be released in mid-February, with applications due in April. Awards will range from \$25,000 to \$100,000

with a 25% match commitment. Approximately \$760,000 total funds available this round.

#### Dairy Product Trade Show Assistance Grant

This funding opportunity will provide grants for dairy processors and/or producer associations to exhibit and sell value-added dairy products at domestic and/or international business-to-business

trade shows. Grant funds will cover the cost of attending trade shows including registration, travel, costs of product samples, production and distribution of sell-sheets and other marketing materials, professional branding and design services, trade show booth set-up, and more.

The RFA for this grant will be released mid-February, 2024 and applications will be accepted and awarded on a rolling basis. Awards will range from \$5,000 to \$20,000. Approximately \$125,000 total funds available this round.

For more information about these grants, contact the NE-DBIC team at [agr.dairyinnovation@vermont.gov](mailto:agr.dairyinnovation@vermont.gov)

Find our full funding calendar on our website at [nedairyinnovation.com/grants](http://nedairyinnovation.com/grants)

## Register Now for the Northeast Dairy Innovation Summit


By Katie Spring, Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center

Dairy farmers, processors, service providers, and industry stakeholders are invited to join the Northeast Dairy Innovation Center (NE-DBIC) on April 2-3 in Albany, NY for the Northeast Dairy Innovation Summit. Register by February 29 to receive early-bird registration discounts.

The summit will include tracks on dairy farm innovation, processing innovation and expansion, and workforce development. We'll dig into topics including expanding diversity and equity in the dairy workforce; how smaller dairies can benefit from innovative technology; how to grow sales through marketing and branding; market opportunities for goat and sheep dairy; shifting to climate-smart practices; building resiliency in dairy processing; and more.

Dairy farmers and processors will receive discounted rates. Early-bird registration rates end March 1. Learn more and register online at [nedairyinnovation.com/summit](http://nedairyinnovation.com/summit)

# NORTHEAST DAIRY INNOVATION SUMMIT



April 2-3, 2024 | Albany, NY

Hosted by the Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center

# New Americans and Farmers Find Purpose and Prosperity

By Elizabeth Lynn, *Grow America Farm Corps*

An innovative initiative is underway in Vermont, spearheaded by the nonprofit organization Operation Recovery together with the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets; U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants; the dairy farm families of Agri-Mark; Cabot Creamery Cooperative; and Liberty Hill Farm. The Grow America Farm Corps initiative addresses Vermont's farm labor shortages by fostering dynamic collaboration among local farmers, new Americans, and supporting partners.

Farmers with employment opportunities can sign up to match with new Americans

seeking agricultural training and mentorship. Grow America Farm Corps partners assist in placing and transitioning participants who gain housing through on-farm living spaces, professional skills development, and community. Participants can also access job placement assistance in agricultural manufacturing.

Between January 2012 and October 2023, nearly half of Vermont's dairy farms closed their doors, according to a recent University of Vermont Extension report. State and national agricultural trends including an aging farmer population, increasing non-farmland pressure, and production capacity challenges face Vermont's current and future farming

generations.

Through this unique new collaboration, partner organizations, agencies, and community leaders aim to combine on-ground wisdom with online resources to enhance job accessibility and prioritize housing support within the state.

"I am proud of the work being done by Grow America Farm Corps and their partners including the Vermont Agency of Agriculture and Cabot to help our newest Vermonters to begin work on farms," said Patrick Leahy, a retired United States senator from Vermont noted for

his leadership in agricultural and immigration matters. "Agricultural workers are much needed, so this approach can sustain existing farms while giving new Americans an opportunity to join our rural communities through working in farming, one of Vermont's most important industries."

More than 40 new American families fleeing hardship abroad are participating in Grow America Farm Corps, launched in late 2023. Interest among the state's farmers and new Americans is growing as the initiative expands.

To host a family, regis-

ter to view available Grow America Farm Corps employment opportunities, donate, or learn more about the initiative, please visit: <https://GrowAmericaFarmCorps.org>.

Additional Vermont-specific employment resources can be found at the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets' Agriculture Jobs Bulletin Board website: <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/vermont-agricultural-employment-opportunities>.

For more information contact Elizabeth Lynn by email at [FarmCorps@OperationRecovery.org](mailto:FarmCorps@OperationRecovery.org)

## The Pesticide Applicator Report is going digital.

This change will allow:

- Fast delivery,
- Easy click links to resources,
- Electronic fillable quizzes for CEU credit submission, and
- Saving time and money.

The Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets wants to ensure you receive the Pesticide Applicator Report (PAR). Please confirm your email address with the Agency using the link, <https://forms.office.com/g/fNFGigN3FF>.

If you have any questions, please email [agr.pest@vermont.gov](mailto:agr.pest@vermont.gov) or call 802-828-1732.

Please adjust your email settings so that email coming from [agr.pest@vermont.gov](mailto:agr.pest@vermont.gov) will make it to your inbox and avoid it arriving in your Junk email box. You can also always find the latest, and past PARs with quizzes by scanning the QR code.



## Pesticide Applicator Certification Exams

By Stephanie Smith, *VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets*

Are you ready to take a Pesticide Applicator certification exam? Have you studied the appropriate materials? Do you know which exam or exams you need to become certified or licensed? Are you 18 or older? Please register online at least a week (7 days) in advance or by contacting the Certification & Training coordinator at 802-828-1732. All exams are given by the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets. Scan the QR Code to schedule.

- All exams are CLOSED BOOK
- Please bring a calculator
- Please bring a current, state-issued, picture ID (required)

There is no cost to sit for (take) exams, *however* there is a fee for obtaining certification.



**Montpelier**  
Every Wednesday  
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**Williston**  
Bi-weekly  
1st and 3rd Thursdays  
9:00 am – 12:00 pm

**St. Johnsbury**  
Monthly  
Every 2nd Thursday  
9:00 am – 12:00 pm

**Rutland**  
Monthly  
1st Tuesday  
1:00 pm – 4:00 pm

**Newport**  
Monthly  
1st Thursday  
9:00 am – 12:00 pm

**Brattleboro**  
Monthly  
1st Thursday  
9:00 am – 12:00 pm

# Statewide Listening Sessions Continue In 2024

By Sarah McIlvennie, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

In 2023 the Agency held three listening sessions – two in-person for Windsor, Chittenden and Washington counties and one (virtual) statewide session. In each session legislators, Agency employees, producers and service providers came together to have thoughtful

conversations around hard topics including farmer and farmworker housing, disaster relief needs and climate resiliency and planning. While we learned that virtual spaces have unique barriers to sharing, we had brave individuals share their needs and experiences with a robust group.

We have kicked off 2024 with two in-person events for Orleans & Essex and Caledonia & Lamoille

counties. Alongside our partner co-hosts, we are excited to continue these conversations through the rest of the winter. Throughout early 2024, our conversations will cover eleven counties through seven sessions, in addition to another virtual event.

These sessions will be focused on hearing from producers, processors, distributors, and service-providers on topics such as: severe weather impacts, grant and programming feedback and business/industry needs. An invitation has been extended to Agency employees and legislators to attend in a listening capacity. Each event will have on-site parking and light snacks provided. If you don't see or cannot make the in-person session near you, please don't hesitate to reach out to

Sarah McIlvennie at Sarah.McIlvennie@vermont.gov. We also have an anonymous form online where you can submit feedback and share your experiences.

## Find a session near you!

### 2/7 - Bennington County

- When: 4:00 – 5:45pm
- Where: Manchester Community Library
- Co-hosts: Bennington Co. NRCD & Merck Forest and Farmland Center

### 2/13 - Addison County

- When: 5:00 – 7:00pm
- Where: Champlain Valley Unitarian Universalist Society
- Co-host: Addison County Relocalization Network (ACORN)

\*ACORN will provide child-care services during this event

### 2/22 - Orange & Windsor Counties (virtual)

- When: 6:30 – 8:00pm
- Registration available on webpage
- Co-host: White River NRCD's Local Working Group Meeting

### 3/18 - Statewide (virtual)

- When: 12:30 – 2:00pm
- Registration available on webpage

### 3/20 - Rutland County

- When: 4:00 – 5:30pm
- Where: Vermont Farmers Food Center
- Co-host: Vermont Farmers Food Center

### 3/25 - Franklin & Grand Isle Counties

- When: 4:00 – 6:00pm
- Where: St. Albans Bay Town Office
- Co-hosts: Franklin Co. NRCD & Franklin/Grand Isle Farmer's Watershed Alliance

## For Agricultural Events and Resources Visit:

- The VT Agency of Agriculture Events Calendar: <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/calendar>
- UVM Extension Events Calendars: [https://www.uvm.edu/extension/extension\\_event\\_calendars](https://www.uvm.edu/extension/extension_event_calendars)
- Vermont Farm to Plate Events Calendar: <https://www.vtfarmtoplate.com/events>
- Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont Events Calendar: <http://nofavt.org/events>
- DigIn Vermont Events Calendar: <https://www.diginvt.com/events/>
- Agricultural Water Quality Regulations: <http://agriculture.vermont.gov/water-quality/regulations>
- Agency of Ag's Tile Drain Report available here: <http://agriculture.vermont.gov/tile-drainage>
- VAAFM annual report available here: [http://agriculture.vermont.gov/about\\_us/budgets\\_reports](http://agriculture.vermont.gov/about_us/budgets_reports)
- Farm First: Confidential help with personal or work-related issues. More info call: 1-877-493-6216 anytime day or night, or visit: [www.farmfirst.org](http://www.farmfirst.org)
- Vermont AgrAbility: Free service promoting success in agriculture for people with disabilities and their families. More info call 1-800-639-1522, email: [info@vcil.org](mailto:info@vcil.org) or visit: [www.vcil.org](http://www.vcil.org).

For more agricultural events visit our Funding Opportunities & Resources for Businesses webpage at: [http://agriculture.vermont.gov/producer\\_partner\\_resources/funding\\_opportunities](http://agriculture.vermont.gov/producer_partner_resources/funding_opportunities)



# New Program Helps Vermont Businesses and Farmers Install Advanced Wood Heating Systems

By Molly Willard, VT  
Department of Forests, Parks  
and Recreation

The Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation (FPR), the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets, and Vermont Energy Investment Corporation (VEIC) have launched the Vermont Wood Heat Assessment program. With funding from the US Department of Agriculture, the program provides a team of experts who help Vermont business owners and farmers assess how to use an advanced wood heating system (AWH).

AWH systems enable Vermont businesses to cut carbon emissions from fossil fuels and meet Vermont's renewable energy goals. AWH systems burn wood pellets, chips, and/or cordwood and are efficient and often include automatic fuel feeding from hoppers or bins. Pellets and chips can be delivered via a truck and hose, like heating oil or propane. AWH systems meet air quality regulations and result in no long-term increases in atmospheric carbon dioxide levels, as equal amounts of carbon are recaptured with the re-growth of well-managed forests.

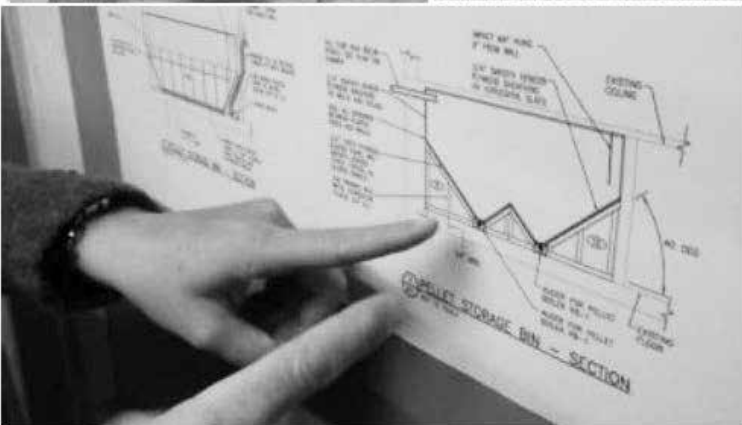
AWH systems create markets and local supply chains for low-grade wood and keep money circulating locally in Vermont's economy. When we use local wood fuel, 80 cents of every dollar spent on wood stays in Vermont's economy versus 22 cents for fossil fuels. Vermont forests add wood at more than double the harvest rate each year, and therefore, wood for heating is certainly a renewable resource. The best way to retain our forested landscape in Vermont is to maintain healthy working forests and AWH systems are one piece of the puzzle. AWH systems keep Vermonters warm, reduce our carbon footprint, support the state's GHG reduction goals, and cut Vermonter's heating bills, all by using a local and abundant resource. "We view advanced wood heating systems as an excellent way to meet Vermont's heating needs using a truly renewable energy source that also supports local businesses, our rural economy, and keeps our forests healthy and intact," says Oliver Pierson, FPR's Director of Forestry.

The Vermont Wood Heat Assessment program will provide a no-charge initial assessment, provide an in-depth feasibility study, and connect you to project assistance and funding for implementation. To request these assessment services, contact Adam Sherman at the Vermont Energy Investment Corporation:

[Asherman@veic.org](mailto:Asherman@veic.org) or (802) 540-7863.

For questions about the program, contact Molly Willard at the Vermont

Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation by email [molly.willard@vermont.gov](mailto:molly.willard@vermont.gov) or phone 802-261-1861.



Advanced wood heating systems come in many forms. Pellets and chips can be delivered by truck and hose, stored inside or in a bin outside, and fed automatically. The program provides technical experts to evaluate the options for you.

## Nutrient Management Plan Updates

Did you know you need to update your Nutrient Management Plan (NMP) every year to stay in compliance with the State of Vermont Required Agricultural Practices (RAPs)?

If your NMP is out of date or you need assistance in updating your plan, UVM Extension or your local Conservation District can help! The more advance notice we have, the better we will be able to help with your NMP update.

If you are already working with a UVM Extension or Conservation District staff person, please feel free to reach out to them directly. They are ready to schedule an update with you!

If you are unsure who should help you with your NMP update, please contact Susan Brouillette at the UVM Extension Office to get connected with technical assistance.

Contact Susan Brouillette at [Susan.brouillette@uvm.edu](mailto:Susan.brouillette@uvm.edu) or 802-524-6501, ext. 432.



# Opportunity for Vermont Businesses to Showcase their Products at the Big E

By Kristen Brassard, VT  
Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets is pleased to invite Vermont businesses to apply to vend at the Vermont Building at the 2024 Big E. The Vermont Building is one of six New England buildings on the Avenue of the States at the Big E, a 17-day fair and exposition which takes place each September in West Springfield, MA. During this event, which brings in approximately 1.6 million people each year, the Vermont Building hosts a variety of Vermont food and retail businesses which showcase the best of what our state has to offer. The 2024 Big E will take place September 13th-29th.

This annual event

provides a unique regional marketing opportunity to Vermont businesses. It is among the top-five largest fairs in the United States, with daily attendance regularly exceeding 100,000 people, and is the premier event of the year for many vendors. Fairgoers from all over the Northeast come to the Big E looking to find unique products and to get a head start on their holiday shopping. Last year alone, total sales in the Vermont Building exceeded \$2 million!

Booth spaces are offered for both retail and food/beverage products. There are booth spaces for the entirety of the 17-day fair, for 8-9 day rotating spots, and occasionally for 5-7 days. While most booths are inside, we will also be accepting applications from food truck vendors who



A large crowd passing through the Vermont Building at the Big E.

would like to sell their products on the Vermont Building grounds. Any business or organization will be considered that is registered with the Vermont Secretary of State, has been

in business for over one year, and is in good standing with the State of Vermont.

The Agency has identified the following product priorities for the Vermont Building for 2024: 1) Products that use Vermont-sourced ingredients and/or materials; 2) Vermont-made pottery; 3) Children's toys and games; 4) Glass products; 5) Producer associations interested in representing a variety of producers from their industry; 6) Products that

showcase the diversity of producers within the state; 7) Products that align with regional/national trends.

The application to vend in the Vermont Building will be open from February 2nd - March 17th. Visit <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/bigevendor> for more information.

For questions regarding this opportunity, please contact Kristen Brassard via email at [kristen.brassard@vermont.gov](mailto:kristen.brassard@vermont.gov) or call 802-522-3742.

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# New \$1.6 Million Grant Program for Vermont Meat and Produce Businesses

By Sarah McIlvennie, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets announced a new grant program targeting Vermont meat and/or produce growers and processors which opened for applications on January 19, 2024. The new Meat and Produce Agriculture Development Grants (Meat and Produce ADG) program will award funding between \$35,000 and \$300,000 with no match requirement. Applications close on February 26, 2024.

This one-time funding is intended to strengthen the viability and resiliency of Vermont operations and businesses performing production and processing activities. Approximately \$1,600,000 will be awarded to eligible operations and businesses through a single competitive grant application process. These funds were allocated by the Vermont State Legislature in

the 2024 fiscal year budget.

Awards will range from \$35,000 - \$300,000 with no match requirement. Eligible operations and businesses will be registered in and operate within the state of Vermont and will conduct or be expanding into produce production, processing of produce grown by the same business, raising meat for human consumption, and/or performing slaughter or slaughter-adjacent processing activities. Eligible projects include, but are not limited to, infrastructure improvements, equipment and material upgrades, safety and quality improvements, staff and management training, and implementing improved operations management.

**Marketing, agritourism, and research projects are not eligible. Non-profit businesses and those producing fiber, hemp, cannabis, growing hydroponically or value-added only processing are not eligible.**

All applicants should


address one of the following program priorities in their application:

- **Climate Resilience:** Funds should help operations remain productive and sustainable in the face of climate change or help mitigate environmental impacts of the operation.
- **Infrastructure, Efficiency & Capacity:** Funds should help business efficiency and market access, focusing on investments in infrastructural, operational and labor efficiencies and intentionally increasing capacity.
- **Worker and Food Safety & Product Quality:** Funds should address food and worker safety and quality of final products during production and/or processing to ensure adherence to State and federal guidelines and

*continued on page 10*



VEDA: Providing creative financing solutions for this generation of farmers... and the next



Vermont Economic Development Authority  
[veda.org](http://veda.org) | [info@veda.org](mailto:info@veda.org) | 802.828.5627

## Meat and Produce Grant

*continued from page 9*

industry standards.

**Applications are due by Monday, February 26 at 2:00PM.**

For more information visit the Meat and Produce Agriculture Development Grants (Meat and Produce ADG) website. This will include the Request for Application (RFA) and

application instructions.

Interested applicants can register here for an informational webinar on January 16, 2024, from 2:00-3:00PM. The recording will be posted online shortly after.

For questions about the Meat and Produce ADG program or the RFA, contact Sarah McIlvennie by email [sarah.mcilvennie@vermont.gov](mailto:sarah.mcilvennie@vermont.gov) or by phone at 802-261-5866.

## St. Johnsbury Maple History Tour

**A**re you interested in learning more about the people and places associated with St. Johnsbury, Vermont becoming known as the Maple Center of the World? Join us for a unique bus tour around St. Johnsbury and North Danville areas where an expert historian personally guides you through an important chapter in the history of Vermont and the Northeast Kingdom.

The tour will be led by maple industry historian and author Dr. Matthew Thomas, the leading expert on the history of the Cary Maple Sugar and Maple Grove companies.

Travelling by bus, participants will enjoy a narrated tour that will visit over a dozen locations in and around St. Johnsbury that are important in the history of the Cary and Maple Grove Companies. As a special souvenir, participants will receive a one-of-a-kind companion guide authored by Dr. Thomas, that features historic images and information on the sites visited on the tour.

This tour is offered as special event during the Kingdom Maple Festival in downtown St. Johnsbury.

Register at this [LINK](#)

Details: Advanced registration is required. Limited to the first 50 registrations! Please note that your registration is not complete until you checkout and pay the tour fee.

Cost: \$75.00

Date: Saturday, April 20, 2024

Time: 1:00 – 4:00 pm

Location: Starting and Ending at the St. Johnsbury Depot

For more information: [maplesyruphistory@gmail.com](mailto:maplesyruphistory@gmail.com)



## Jobs Bulletin Board Hopes to Connect Job Seekers with Available Agriculture Jobs in 2024

*By Scott Waterman, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets*

**I**n 2023, the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets began offering agriculture employers the opportunity to advertise their open employment positions on the Agency's website. Each job is posted by the employer through an online entry portal. This page is specifically designed to connect agricultural sector employers with potential employees in a user friendly, free format.

The page allows employers to include helpful details about their positions like duration (seasonal vs. year-round) and included benefits such as housing. All submitted job postings are reviewed for completeness and published bi-weekly. The Agency will post each job for 2 weeks unless otherwise informed by the employer that the job should remain posted.

We encourage anyone seeking employment, or if you know of anyone seeking an agriculture job, to visit this site for newly posted jobs available now. We also hope any employer will consider this site an opportunity for posting your agriculture job to include in your outreach efforts.

For those seeking potential employment in agriculture or related field, please visit the Agency's website here: <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/vermont-agricultural-employment-opportunities>

For employers who wish to post jobs, please visit the Agency's website here: <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/farm-agriculture-sector-employment-opportunities>

**DISCLAIMER:** The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets (AAFM) compiles farm employment opportunities on its website from external sources as a courtesy to farms and prospective employees. AAFM does not have a role in farm employment and offers this resource as a potential means for farms and prospective employees to connect. AAFM does not create the posted information, does not evaluate its accuracy, and does not vet or endorse prospective employers or employees. All related information is strictly provided by external sources and AAFM does not control, maintain, or verify the underlying information or claims. AAFM is not responsible for the accuracy of the content on this site and is not responsible for the accuracy of any content that any external source shares or posts in any other forum, site, or place. Any use of the information on AAFM's website is voluntary, and all users must perform their own due diligence and independently evaluate any posted opportunity and the accuracy of any related claims. Neither the State of Vermont nor AAFM is responsible for any of the employment-related materials, information, or services posted on AAFM's website, available through third-party linked sites, or available from any other site or place. This effort to connect potential farm employers and employees does not create any direct or third-party rights or obligations, and any use of the information is exclusively at your own risk.

## Grazing Innovation

*continued from page 1*

productivity on a great group of farms. I wish I could bring an opportunity like this to all of my clients because pasture productivity and consumption is such

a large driver of farm profitability," said Silene.

This cohort-based setting took a holistic approach to grazing systems, with group discussions including farmer well-being, soil health, pasture season milk production, and cost analysis

of project implementation to create a replicable, cost-effective model to support innovation adoption beyond the cohort.

The importance of developing resilient systems was highlighted during the 2023 grazing season.

An unusually dry spring, followed by summer flooding and high soil moisture, presented challenges to seeding, grazing, and haying. Despite these challenges, the majority of farms in the group were able to seed and apply amendments to their

fields.

In February, Dr. Locitzer will host a virtual roundtable with a panel of participating farmers to present findings and observations from the grant. Get the details at [nedairyinnovation.com/events](http://nedairyinnovation.com/events)

CLASSIFIEDS

To place a classified ad in *Agriview* sign up to be a paid subscriber, visit: <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/administration/vaafm-news/agriview/advertising-agriview>  
 Email: [Agri.agriview@vermont.gov](mailto:Agri.agriview@vermont.gov), phone: 802-828-1619. Deadline for submissions is the 1st of each month for next month's issue. Example: January 1st deadline for February issue.

**Equipment**

15 ton brock grain bin, 18.9 Brock grain bin, 5 ton Victoria grain bin, 4 ton brock grain bin, 7 ft back blade, John Deere KBA, Flex auger. 802-624-0143 (3)  
 One 48ft New Holland hay elevator, excellent shape. One John Deere 10ft Harrow transport. One 7.5 ton grain bin. 802-624-0143 (4)  
 Complete milking equipment for 64 cow step up, \$10,000. Storage tanks 12,500g +13,000 gal, above ground \$.30 per gal. 2 skid tanks 300g + 500 gal. Brillion seeder 10ft, \$5000. 4 JDpost hole digger 3pt, \$950. JD Dirt scoop 3 pt, \$750. 4 Hay rake pinwheels 3 pt, \$750. 802-483-2870 (4)

**General**

Commercial Blooming Onion cutter & tanks 802-265-4000 (4)  
**Hay, Feed & Forage**  
 1st and 2nd cut round baled Hay, some wrapped, some not, Will Load, 4' X 4' Round Bales, prices vary depending on quantity, cutting, wrapped vs. unwrapped, quantity discount/cash prices available. Westford, Call 802-355-2930 (4)

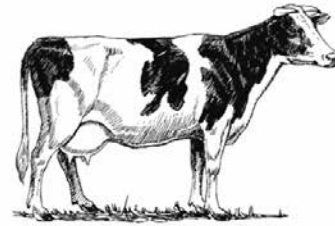
Good quality wrapped round bales, 1st and 2nd cut. Please call 802-446-2435. (4)  
 1st cut 4x5 round bales – covered, no trucking. 802-265-4566 (4)

**LFO Annual Report and Operating Fee Reminder:**

Large Farm Operations (LFOs) must submit an annual report and operating fee of \$2,500 to the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets by February 15 of each year. A fillable PDF of the annual report form, additional forms, and information can be found at <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/lfo>.

Checks of \$2,500 shall be made payable to Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets and submitted to:

Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets  
 Attn Jeff Cook  
 116 State Street  
 Montpelier, VT 05620



**THE VERMONT AG BULLETIN**

Grants, Learning, News & More

The Agriculture Development Division publishes a weekly newsletter featuring grant opportunities, workshops/webinars, and news, for its subscribers. The Agency encourages you to sign up to receive the newsletter. You can also find the form and past issues by going to <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/administration/vaafm-news>.

**FRANKLIN COUNTY**

Good quality hay 1st cut & 2nd cut from western US & Canada. Alfalfa orchard & orchard seet grass 18 to 20% plus protein. Large bales & organic by trailer loads. Large & small square bales to straw whole or processed at farm, we load or direct delivery by trailer load. 802-849-6266 or 802-373-5217 (4)

**Wanted**

Used 13" diameter scalloped disc harrow - 802-793-3688 (4)  
 30" -32" Steel farm implement wheels 802-365-4000 (4)

**Help Wanted**

CARETAKER for beautiful "hobby" farm in the Upper Valley of Vermont, Woodstock area. Onsite private, detached housing

provided. Part or full time duties. Perfect for retired person or couple. Basic horse experience preferred. References required. Make inquiries by email: [morganmiltimore@gmail.com](mailto:morganmiltimore@gmail.com) or telephone 603 548 3890. (3)

2 - 32" "spoked" steel farm/implyment wheels. Please call 802-365-4000 (3)

# Tillage and Underground Utilities

By Whitney Burgess, Poultney  
Mettowee Natural Resources  
Conservation District

If you are planning any tillage in the upcoming crop season, I am writing this for you! As utility infrastructure is continually expanding in underground networks, take a pause this winter and consider what impacts that they may have on your crop fields. I don't mean to imply that the utilities may affect your crop yields for better or for worse, but rather that the presence of underground utilities may influence how you manage those fields. You may be aware of the unfortunate, accidental encounters of farmers and their equipment with underground utilities through the news. We don't want our neighbors to find themselves in these unfortunate situations and want to pass along a few simple steps that can be taken for you to learn what lies beneath your field surfaces.

You may be familiar



with "Dig Safe" but do you know that it is not just for digging in a conventional sense? In fact, Dig Safe is used broadly to keep those working in close proximity to underground utilities safe, and the utilities themselves intact. Dig Safe is FREE and accessible in two primary ways. One way to access Dig Safe's services is to simply pick up your phone, dial 811, and speak with an operator. The other option is to navigate this process online, by going to Dig Safe's website at [www.DigSafe.com/exactix](http://www.DigSafe.com/exactix). Here you can register for an "Exactix" account to make a utility marking request, track and manage your fields or projects, and receive updates on the marking

status. Having an "Exactix" account can be a great tool for tech savvy users.

Before contacting Dig Safe, prepare by marking field corners with flagging or stakes, and note the two closest roads that your field sits between. Dig Safe will request these road names to assure they have the correct location. From there, the utility company or a contractor of their hire will come out and mark your property if underground utilities are present using a color code

indicative of the utility type (i.e. gas, water, electric, etc.). Be sure to plan ahead, and give Dig Safe at least 72 hours of notice before the date you plan to do your field work. For more information, visit [www.DigSafe.com](http://www.DigSafe.com).

Now that you know what utilities lie beneath your field surfaces, you have an improved ability to plan and manage your crop fields while avoiding expensive and dangerous utility encounters. You may consider doing this when

cropping on a new property or field, or simply when doing tillage on a field for the first time. That said, it never hurts to do a review even on a property you are familiar with. Erosion can cause utility depth to change over time and following a year of heavy rains this concern may resonate with many of you. Add this step to your field management this winter season and be more prepared for the next crop season. Stay safe out there!



## AGRICULTURAL PESTICIDE APPLICATOR MEETING

Updates on pest management and pesticide safety practices in agriculture  
This program will provide Vermont or New York\* recertification credits.

**March 19, 2024:** Virtual via Zoom

Register at <http://go.uvm.edu/vtaa24>

\*Those seeking NY credit must submit a copy of their applicator ID and check-in for roll call prior to start of meeting. See program for details.

Visit [www.uvm.edu/extension/psep](http://www.uvm.edu/extension/psep) for more information about the program or contact Sarah Kingsley-Richards at (802) 656-0475 [sarah.kingsley@uvm.edu](mailto:sarah.kingsley@uvm.edu)



THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT  
EXTENSION



VERMONT  
AGENCY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD & MARKETS

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## INITIAL PESTICIDE CERTIFICATION MEETING

Review of the Northeast CORE Manual followed by  
the Vermont Pesticide Applicator CORE Exam

**April 9, 2024:** In-Person Interactive Training & Exam

**Sites:** Rutland, Bennington, St. Johnsbury, Burlington

Register at <https://go.uvm.edu/core24>

Visit [www.uvm.edu/extension/psep](http://www.uvm.edu/extension/psep) for more information about the program or contact Sarah Kingsley-Richards at (802) 656-0475 [sarah.kingsley@uvm.edu](mailto:sarah.kingsley@uvm.edu)



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# Interested in Applying for Grants? Start Planning Today!

By Sonia Howlett, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets offers a wide variety of grants to support farms and food businesses in meeting their goals of environmental, economic and/or social sustainability. If you're new to applying for and receiving grants, that process might feel overwhelming but don't worry lots of people are here to help, and the process is pretty similar across State grant programs. To break it down, this is how the process typically goes:

## 1. Apply

All Agency grant applications are available on our website, at [agriculture.vermont.gov/grants](http://agriculture.vermont.gov/grants). Deadlines occur throughout the year.

Applications for most of our grant programs should be completed online. Some grants also allow the application to be printed out and scanned or mailed to submit. Conservation District staff, AAFM field inspectors, business planners, Technical Service Providers and UVM Extension specialists may be able to assist you in finding and completing an application. Make sure you read all the program information and submit all required documentation! If you have any questions, reach out to the program contact at the Agency, whose information will be listed in the grant materials. Their job is to help answer your questions,

and they might even be able to put you in touch with someone who can help you fill out the application.

## 2. Work with Agency staff to submit any missing documentation, then wait while your grant application is reviewed.

If you are missing any components, you may be contacted and asked to submit those pieces within a certain time period. If you have not recently received a grant from AAFM, you will also be asked to submit a W-9 form so you can be entered into the state's payment system.

Some programs are quite

competitive. Others are first-come-first-served. Regardless, all complete grant applications are reviewed by qualified personnel to confirm that your organization and project meet eligibility criteria and, if applicable, to "rank" the impact of your application compared to the other applications received. If curious, you could ask the program contact about your "odds" of receiving the funds to decide whether or not to apply.

## 3. Hear back and return signed grant, if awarded

AAFM staff will contact you to let you know about the status of your

application. If you were not awarded a grant, you will receive a letter or email and will be encouraged to apply again the next year, if you are eligible.

If you have been awarded a grant, you will be sent a copy of the grant to sign, as well as a Good Standing Certificate to affirm that you are in good standing with the Agency. You must sign and return both documents to be eligible for payment. Many programs also require a Certificate of Insurance proving your valid liability and workers compensation insurance, while also listing the State

of Vermont, its agents, and employees as additional insured under your policy. Before applying for a grant, please read Attachment C: Standard State Provisions for Contracts and Grants, which contains grantee requirements for insurance coverage and other state regulations.

## 4. Purchase/Farm/Construct, and then Submit invoice/claim form

The next step in the process is to complete the project at hand for which you have an active grant agreement. Some programs will require that you submit

*continued on page 15*

## 2023 AAFM Water Quality Grant Application Deadlines

Program	Deadline	Grant Purpose	Contact
<b>Vermont Pay for Performance Program</b>	January 20	Payments for modelled phosphorus runoff reductions from conservation practices. This innovative program requires excellent records/data management.	Brodie Haenke: (802) 636-7852
<b>Field Agronomic Practice (FAP) Program: Spring Practices</b>	March/April	Per-acre payments for conservation practices. In spring, eligible practices include reduced tillage, manure injection, no-till renovation and rotation into perennial forages. Must apply >30 days before implementation.	Nina Gage: (802) 622-4098
<b>Farmstead Best Management Practices (BMP) Program</b>	April 1	Technical and Financial Assistance for engineered conservation practices (up to 90% cost-share)	Rob Achilles: (802) 917-1397
<b>Field Agronomic Practice (FAP) program: Rotational Grazing</b>	June 15	Per-acre payments for conservation practices. June 15 latest deadline to receive payment on 2021 Rotational Grazing	Nina Gage: (802) 622-4098
<b>Field Agronomic Practice (FAP) Program: Cover Crop</b>	August 1	Per-acre payments for conservation practices. August 1 latest deadline to receive payment on 2021 Cover Crop. Other eligible fall practices include manure injection and no-till renovation: apply >30 days before implementation.	Nina Gage: (802) 622-4098
<b>Capital Equipment Assistance Program (CEAP)</b>	November 1	Purchase of innovative equipment that aids in the reduction of runoff (up to 90% cost-share)	Nina Gage: (802) 622-4098
<b>Pasture and Surface Water Fencing (PSWF) Program</b>	Year-round	Technical and Financial Assistance for pasture management and livestock exclusion from surface water (up to 90% cost-share)	Kaitlin Hayes: (802) 622-4112
<b>Grassed Waterway and Filter Strip (GWFS) Program</b>	Year-round	Technical and Financial Assistance for implementing buffers and seeding down critical areas (up to 90% cost-share)	Sonia Howlett: (802) 522-4655
<b>Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)</b>	Year-round	Implementation costs of vegetated buffers (up to 90% cost-share) and rental payments for maintained buffers in 15-30yr contracts.	Ben Gabos: (802) 461-3814

## Webinars Spill The Beans About Growing Dried Beans

By UVM Extension

A three-part webinar series, hosted by University of Vermont Extension and Cornell University, will cover a number of aspects of growing dry beans commercially.

All webinars will be offered via Zoom from noon

to 1:30 p.m. Although free to attend, prior registration is required to receive the email with the presentation link. To register, go to <https://bit.ly/41yc4x1> or visit <http://go.uvm.edu/conferences>.

Webinars will take place on the following dates:

**February 20:** Dry Bean Disease Management with Dr. Sarah Pethybridge,

School of Integrative Plant Science Plant Pathology and Plant-Microbe Biology Section, Cornell AgriTech

**February 27:** New Dry Bean Varieties: Improving the Production of Heirlooms without Losing the Culinary Characteristics with Travis Parker, Department of Plant Sciences, University of California-Davis

**March 5:** Dry Bean Farmer Panel. Growers will discuss their experiences growing dry beans from harvesting and cleaning to storage and markets. Speakers include Nazirahk Amen, Purple Mountain Organics, Tacoma Park, Maryland; Kevin Messing, Sheridan Acres, Uby, Michigan; and John

Wepking, Meadowlark Farm and Mill, Ridgeway, Wisconsin.

If requiring a disability-related accommodation to participate, please contact Susan Brouillette at [susan.brouillette@uvm.edu](mailto:susan.brouillette@uvm.edu) or (802) 656-7611 by January 30.

## Record Number of Managed Honeybee Colonies Reported in Vermont in 2023

A new report is illuminating the health of the honeybee population in Vermont, with a significant increase in bees since 2016 emphasizing the care, cultivation and collaboration of beekeepers and officials in the Green Mountain State.

The Apiary Program within the Division of Public Health and Agricultural Resource Management of the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets (VAAFAM) registers,

inspects, and provides education and training to Vermont's beekeepers. Beekeepers are required to register their apiary locations and report the number of colonies (hives) they maintain. For the 2023 registration, they reported the highest number of colonies on record, 17,145. In 2016, for comparison, Vermont's number of registered colonies was 9,715, representing a 43% increase over the seven-year period.

The increase in colony

numbers is a testament to the hard work and dedication of Vermont's beekeepers. Beekeepers, like all agricultural producers, face many challenges while producing high quality food. Challenges include weather, starvation, bear predation, Varroa mite infestation, and other factors, including periodic exposure to insecticides applied to protect crops. VAAFAM has adopted rules to protect bees from pesticide exposure, and we investigate and enforce those rules, as well as enforcing pesticide use directions on pesticide labels designed to protect bees.

One important function of the Apiary Program is to prevent the spread of diseases that can affect bee health. One such serious disease is American Foul Brood, which is an extremely contagious disease. VAAFAM inspectors prioritize inspections and responses to the incidence of this disease. Fortunately, the



number of cases declined to zero in 2023, from a high of 49 cases in 2020.

Through hard work and careful management, beekeepers are succeeding in managing their colonies and producing valuable honey and other bee products and pollination services in Vermont. VAAFAM remains

actively engaged in supporting beekeepers through education, outreach, and regulation.

The 2023 Apiary Report is available at: <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/sites/agriculture/files/documents/2023%20Apiary%20Status%20Report%20121923.pdf>

### Colonies and Apiaries Registered with VAAFAM for 2016, 2019-2023

Year	Number of Colonies	Number of Apiaries
2016	9,715	1,216
2019	14,398	1,236
2020	14,845	1,263
2021	15,110	1,251
2022	14,695	1,203
2023	17,145	1,213

Note: Data from 2017 and 2018 are being recovered.

**Grants**

*continued from page 12*

an invoice or a claim form demonstrating that you have completed the practices, while other programs may require narrative reporting, photos, or oversight along the way from state staff or contractors. The reimbursement process will be detailed in your grant award and may differ between programs.

**5. Payment**

If all the above is satisfactory, you will receive payment according to the terms of your grant agreement. Please keep in mind that the payment timeframe can vary widely from one program to the next. Some programs

require all practices to be complete while others have the flexibility to provide partial payments. If you are curious where your grant is in the process, you can contact your grant manager.

**6. Follow-up**

Some of our grants have longer term follow-up and reporting requirements that allow us to document your implementation of the funded project. If so, this should be clearly laid out in your grant agreement.

**7. Apply again!**

Most Agency grant funding rounds are held annually and you can typically apply or re-apply every year.

**Agency Contact Numbers**

*Phone numbers for Agency programs are listed below. You are always welcome to call our main line at 802-828-2430. We will do our best to route you to the person most able to answer your question quickly and accurately.*

**Program Phone Numbers**

Act 250 . . . . .	802-461-6798
Animal Health . . . . .	802-828-2421
Business Development . . . . .	802-828-1619
Dairy . . . . .	802-828-2433
Enforcement: Water Quality/Pesticides . .	802-828-2431
Feed, Seed, Fertilizer & Lime . . . . .	802-828-5050
Licensing & Registration . . . . .	802-828-2436
Meat Inspection . . . . .	802-828-2426
Northeast Dairy Business	
Innovation Center . . . . .	802-522-3186
Pesticide & Plant Health . . . . .	802-828-1732
Produce Program . . . . .	802-522-7811
Vermont Agriculture &	
Environmental Lab . . . . .	802-585-6073
Water Quality BMP . . . . .	802-828-3474
Water Quality Grants . . . . .	802-622-4098
Water Quality Reports . . . . .	802-272-0323
Weights & Measures . . . . .	802-828-2433
Working Lands . . . . .	802-917-2637

**Upcoming Grant Opportunities**

*The Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets is pleased to be able to help you more easily identify upcoming grant opportunities. Please go to <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/grants/calendar> for more information.*

**Programs Open Year-Round**

**Farmstead Best Management Practices (BMP) Program**

Technical and financial assistance for engineered conservation practices on Vermont farms.

Emma Redel  
[Emma.Redel@vermont.gov](mailto:Emma.Redel@vermont.gov)  
 802-261-5628

Ellen Friedrich  
[Ellen.Friedrich@vermont.gov](mailto:Ellen.Friedrich@vermont.gov)  
 802-261-5629

**Pasture And Surface Water Fencing (PSWF) Program**

Technical and financial assistance for pasture management and livestock exclusion from surface water on Vermont farms.

Mary Montour  
[Mary.Montour@vermont.gov](mailto:Mary.Montour@vermont.gov)  
 802-461-6087

**Grassed Waterway and Filter Strip (GWFS) Program**

Technical and financial assistance for implementing buffers and seeding down critical areas on VT farms.

Ellen Friedrich  
[Ellen.Friedrich@vermont.gov](mailto:Ellen.Friedrich@vermont.gov)  
 802-261-5629

**Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)**

Implementation costs of vegetated buffers and rental payments for maintained buffers on VT agricultural land.

Ben Gabos  
[Ben.Gabos@Vermont.gov](mailto:Ben.Gabos@Vermont.gov)  
 802-461-3814

Phil Wilson  
[Phillip.Wilson@vermont.gov](mailto:Phillip.Wilson@vermont.gov)  
 802-505-5378

**January**

**Agriculture Development Grants for Meat and Produce**

Grants for meat and produce producers and processors to fund projects to improve infrastructure, equipment, storage, processing, or training

Sarah McIlvennie  
[Sarah.Mcilvennie@vermont.gov](mailto:Sarah.Mcilvennie@vermont.gov)  
 802-261-5866

**February**

**Farm to School and Early Childhood Community Supported Agriculture Grant**

Reimbursement for 80% of the cost of community supported agriculture (CSA) shares for early childcare providers

Gina Clithero  
[Gina.Clithero@vermont.gov](mailto:Gina.Clithero@vermont.gov)  
 802-585-6225

**Farm to School and Early Childhood Vision Grant**

Grants to help schools, childcare providers and afterschool programs engage with food system issues through youth education and empowerment

Gina Clithero  
[Gina.Clithero@vermont.gov](mailto:Gina.Clithero@vermont.gov)  
 802-585-6225

**March**

**Dairy Farm Cohort Technical Assistance Program**

Service providers will be able to submit proposals to develop cohorts of dairy farmers to address relevant areas of technical assistance

Laura Ginsburg  
[Laura.Ginsburg@vermont.gov](mailto:Laura.Ginsburg@vermont.gov)  
 802-522-2252



# Ice Fishing Safety for Inconsistent Ice Conditions

By Vermont Department of Fish & Wildlife

Ice conditions across Vermont are inconsistent due to warm and variable weather, and the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department is urging anglers to put safety first if they venture out ice fishing.

“Check the ice as you go, avoid areas where currents can create weaker ice, and if you are not sure the ice is safe find a different waterbody,” cautioned fisheries biologist Shawn Good. “With good judgment ice fishing is a safe and fun way to get outside in winter. But that means making cautious, smart decisions and changing plans if conditions are not what you hoped for.”

Ice conditions are currently variable across Vermont. At higher elevations and in the Northeast Kingdom many lakes and ponds have frozen over completely and have

fishable ice. But in southern Vermont and the Champlain Valley, many lakes and ponds are not yet safe for ice fishing.

“Three to four inches of clear black ice is the minimum for safe ice fishing,” said Good. “For the kind of gray or opaque ice we get after repeated freezing, thawing, and re-freezing we recommend anglers look for at least six inches of ice where they plan to fish.”

Even on a single waterbody it is important to know that ice thickness is not always uniform. Areas around pressure cracks or near stream or river inlets can be thinner and weaker than surrounding ice.

The department says anglers should always carry a spud bar to test the ice as they go and should have a set of personal ice picks for self-rescue. Anglers should avoid fishing alone and should let someone know



where they will be fishing and when they plan on returning home.

But despite poor or non-existent early season ice conditions in some areas of Vermont, eager anglers can still find safe ice fishing opportunities.

“While we wait for colder weather to freeze

up waterbodies statewide, I recommend anglers focus on planning and getting their gear in top shape—or that they hit the road and explore the higher elevation waters or northern waters where there is already good ice,” said Good. “Fishing somewhere other than your home waters can be part of

the adventure and allure of ice fishing and is a great way to explore Vermont.”

To learn more about ice fishing safety, tips for beginners, and places to fish visit Vermont Fish and Wildlife’s “Ice Fishing Basics” and “Ice Fishing Opportunities” webpages.



**116 State Street**  
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modernize our laws.

There is growing momentum to embrace common sense changes to Act 250 this session so Vermont’s farm, forest and food economy can grow. It’s time for Vermont to realize that as much as employees fill jobs, they are people who need homes, as well as access to reliable utilities, internet, groceries, and education. They’re great workers, they love their jobs, and all too often, they must

move away because getting to and from work is just too hard, too long, too time-consuming. Vermont has the chance to bend the curve and start creating more housing closer to jobs and opportunity.

People are seeking jobs, and employers are hiring. Good jobs are waiting. However, attracting and retaining workers is difficult

when there is no place to live near your job.

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture is ready to lead. We owe it to current and future generations of Vermonters who want to call Vermont their home. Let’s work together this session to create real, meaningful change for all Vermonters, for today and tomorrow.

Anson Tebbetts,  
Secretary, Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets