

Vermont Pay For Performance Program Application Opens January 1, 2024

By Brodie Haenke, VT Agency of
Agriculture, Food & Markets

Farmers interested in participating in the Vermont Pay For Performance Program will be able to submit applications January 1-31, 2024 by visiting our webpage at agriculture.vermont.gov/VPPF. This program provides performance-based payments to Vermont farmers for reducing phosphorus losses from their agricultural fields. Reductions in phosphorus losses are estimated using a web-based environmental modeling application called FarmPREP (Farm Phosphorus Reduction Planner). First time enrollees, regardless of their P-reductions, are eligible for a data entry payment of \$15 per acre



they enroll in the program (up to \$4,000). Because this program relies on farm management data, ideal program participants are farms that are comfortable using computers, keep organized field

and nutrient records, and are interested in learning about their farm management with new environmental modeling tools. To be eligible for the program, farms must manage crop, hay or

pasture land, ensure their farm business is registered with the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA), have an up-to-date Nutrient Management Plan (NMP) that meets the RAPs for their farm size, which includes having up-to-date soil and manure tests for all sources, and have updated maps for all their fields. Farmers who are interested in learning about the effects of their management, keep organized records, and are happy to engage with and communicate with technical service providers are most likely to achieve success in the program. For more information, please contact Brodie Haenke at Brodie.haenke@vermont.gov or by phone at 802-636-7852.

AGRiVIEW

Vermont Agency of
Agriculture, Food & Markets

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Montpelier, Vermont 05620-2901

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THE VIEW FROM 116 STATE STREET

Welcome 2024. Please be kind to us. While 2023 may be behind us, it's still with us in many ways.

The flooding and severe weather continues to play a significant role in Vermont. Many of our farmers continue to face a long recovery because of the staggering losses.

Recovery will be a major focus of the 2024 legislative session which is underway. While federal funds may help rebuild much of the state's infrastructure there will be a significant dollar match needed from Vermont. It will run into millions of dollars which means there will be fewer dollars for other programs across state government. Vermont also faces significant issues around property taxes. The tax department says property owners could see steep increases in their property taxes

because education spending has accelerated at a rapid pace. Crafting and voting on school spending plans are underway and communities will face spirited debates about their school budgets in 2024.

Vermont is also facing a housing crisis. It's not a secret there is a lack of housing and when you can find housing many cannot afford it. This session we encourage farmers and those connected to agriculture to give feedback to lawmakers and the administration. Whether it's farm worker housing or those who make products, affordable housing is critical to Vermont's future. We have heard many of our manufacturing plants cannot operate as much as they like because they cannot find enough workers. Many times, it's because there is not enough housing around the businesses.

Act 250 reform and allowing

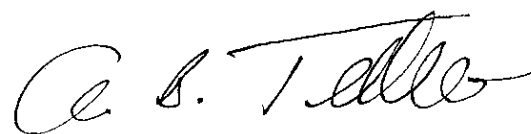
more on farm businesses to grow will be debated this session. Farmers and small businesses should be at the table in these discussions. I encourage you to follow the bills and offer your advice to Senators and Representatives. If we are going to have a working landscape, we need to offer solutions that allow our small businesses to grow.

As we enter 2024. We will be following the feed situation for livestock. Please reach out to us if you are having issues around securing feed. The severe weather in 2023 has created issues for some. Visit our feed finder on the

Agency's website. There are dozens of businesses that are offering feed for sale, and it could be useful.

Also, if you are having issues managing your manure during the winter months, please contact us. We want to be flexible and offer solutions that help you and protect the environment. While the natural disaster may be gone from the headlines many are still living it because of the severe weather in 2023.

We are hopeful of a calm and productive 2024 for our farm community. Please stay in touch and contact us if you have any questions.



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

C O N N E C T

W I T H U S



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This Month's Recipe

Maple Drizzled Apple Muffins

Makes 12 medium muffins

Ingredients

1 1/3 c. flour
1 c. oats, quick or old-fashioned
1/2 c. sugar
1 tbsp. baking powder
1 1/2 tsp. cinnamon
1/2 c. milk
1/3 c. vegetable oil
1/4 c. maple syrup
1 egg, slightly beaten
1 c. chopped apple
3 tbsp. powdered sugar
1 tbsp. maple syrup
12 Walnut or Pecan Halves
(optional)

Directions

Heat oven to 400. Line 12 medium muffin cups or grease tins. Combine first five ingredients, mix well. In a small bowl, mix milk, oil, syrup and egg. Add to the dry ingredients, mixing just until moist. Gently stir in apples. Fill muffin cups almost full. Bake 20-25 minutes. Cool slightly, mix powdered sugar and maple syrup and drizzle across tops of muffins.

Tip: To make these muffins low in fat, substitute unsweetened



applesauce for oil, 2 egg whites for the 1 egg, and skim milk for milk. The glaze is optional.



Managing Household Pesticide Waste

By the Public Health and Ag Resource Management Division, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

In 2021, Vermonters brought 70,000 lbs of pesticide waste from over 19,700 households to their solid waste management entities for disposal. Vermonters have a choice concerning the amount of household pesticide waste that enters the waste stream. Management includes understanding what is considered a pesticide, purchasing products only when necessary, and proper storage and use of products. Understanding all your options for managing pests can reduce the money spent by an individual on the front end, and the money spent on disposing of these products. There is the added benefit of safeguarding the environment when we use pesticides only when necessary.

What are pesticides?

All pesticide products, including natural and organic, must be registered with the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets. A pesticide is any substance used to kill, control, or repel a pest. Pesticide is a broad term and includes but is not limited to, specific pesticidal types like herbicides, rodenticides, insecticide, fungicides, repellents and disinfectants, such as bleach and some pool or spa chemicals. A “pest” includes insects, rodents, fungus, weeds, or virus, bacteria, or other micro-organism. Using a household product that is not intended for use to control or kill a particular pest or not as listed on a label should be



avoided due to unknown toxicity or may not be effective. This often leads to waste, as well.

What are the ways to reduce homeowner pesticide use?

- Use preventative practices to dissuade pests from establishing in and around the home. Removing food sources, installing physical barriers, and creating an inhospitable environment for pests are all practices that can make a difference.
 - In the home, use sanitation practices including clearing food from countertops and storing food in pest proof containers. This can reduce opportunities for pests to settle in.
 - In the garden use mulch or other similar material to suppress weeds, and install pest free or resistant nursery stock or other landscape materials to reduce the need for herbicides, fungicides and insecticides.
- Properly dispose of household or yard materials that can harbor pests.
- Use mechanical pest control practices to reduce the presence of pests, such as using tools to

remove nuisance plants rather than using an herbicide, or rodent traps instead of a chemical control rodenticide.

- Properly identify your pest and understand when management will be most effective. Use pesticides only as a last resort.
- Read the label before purchasing any pesticide products to ensure that it will be effective on the pest. Compare active ingredients on labels and choose the least toxic option. Labels with
 - ‘Caution’ indicates lower toxicity,
 - ‘Warning’ indicates moderate toxicity,
 - ‘Danger’ indicates higher toxicity.

What are the ways to reduce homeowner pesticide waste?

Regardless of whether you are a homeowner or a business, the easiest way to reduce pesticidal waste is to buy only what you need for the job, and resist the urge to buy more or a larger size of the same product. Once you have used a pesticide product completely and in accordance with labels, the empty containers may be recycled. However, if you have leftover product after tackling your pest issue follow this guidance.

- Store pesticides appropriately to maintain efficacy of the product
- Keep pesticides in original containers with labels
- Take an inventory of what you have before going out and purchasing more of a product
- Always use the pesticide in

accordance with label instructions

- If the product is in the original unopened container, you may be able to return to the retailer.

It is important to know what pest you are trying to control in the home or outdoors. If you can't identify the pest, you may want to contact a pest management professional. Certified applicators receiving training or independently study to identify pests, to use pesticides safely, and to provide notice to residents regarding the use of pesticides on private property and as required in the Vermont Rule for the Control of Pesticides. Feel free to contact agr.pest@vermont.gov, for a list of pest management professionals in your area.

How do I dispose of unwanted pesticides?

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets and the Agency of Natural Resources work together to ensure that Vermonters can enjoy a clean and safe environment. As part of this work the state funds disposal of pesticidal waste handled by solid waste management entities, (SWME). Please contact your local SWME for information on hazardous household waste collection events. Never throw away pesticides in the trash.

Resources

<https://pesticidestewardship.org/homeowner/>
<http://npic.orst.edu/>
 Vermont Rule for the Control of Pesticides



DAIRY BUSINESS INNOVATION CENTER

The Year Ahead: Funding for Dairy Innovation in 2023

By Ali Boochever, Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center

At 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 this year.

Open Funding Opportunities:

On-Farm Milk Storage & Handling Grant

This grant provides funds for dairy farmers to enhance milk storage, handling, and energy efficiencies. Funds can be used to purchase bulk tanks, milk pipelines, glycol chillers, milk loading systems,



reclaim systems for water, cooling equipment, plate coolers/heat exchangers, and cover equipment installation costs. Read the RFA for more information about eligible costs and activities.

The application period will be open until January 18, 2024. Awards will range from \$15,000 to \$50,000 with a 25% cash or in-kind match requirement. Total funds available in this round: \$800,000.

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.

The application period for this grant program is January 4-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.

Upcoming Funding Opportunities:

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. Look for the RFA to be released in February.

Awards will range from \$15,000 to \$50,000 with a 25% match commitment. Approximately \$760,000 total funds available this round.

For more information about these grants, contact the NE-DBIC team at agr.dairyinnovation@vermont.gov

Find our full funding calendar on our website at nedairyinnovation.com/grants

Register Now for the Northeast Dairy Innovation Summit

By Katie Spring, Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center

Registration is open for the Northeast Dairy Innovation Summit! Join the Northeast Dairy Innovation Center (NE-DBIC), along with dairy farmers, processors, service providers, and industry stakeholders on April 2 - 3

in Albany, NY.

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.

Join the conversation as we envision the next steps toward a resilient regional dairy sector! Dairy farmers

and processors will receive discounted rates. Learn more and register online at nedairyinnovation.com/summit



VHCB Water Quality Grants Available for Vermont Farms

By Vermont Farm & Forest Viability Program

The Vermont Farm & Forest Viability Program (Viability Program), a program of the Vermont Housing & Conservation Board, has grant awards available for on-farm capital improvement projects that have a positive impact on water quality. The awards are funded through the State of Vermont Water Quality Bond, and eligible farm businesses can apply for \$5,000 to \$50,000 in funding, an increase in the maximum award from prior years. Applications are due by January 19, 2024.

Viability Program staff hosted a virtual information

session to answer questions on Friday, December 8 from 12 pm to 1:30 pm and plan to host another on Monday, January 8 from 3:30 pm to 5 pm. More information, eligibility requirements, applications, and details to join the information sessions are available on the Vermont Farm & Forest Viability Program website at: <https://vhcb.org/WQG>.

Water Quality Grants support farmers to make capital improvements that reduce non-point source pollution through projects that improve manure and nutrient management. These projects aim to advance Vermont's water quality goals and also support the long-term success of farm enterprises. Construction,

renovation, and equipment projects are eligible. The grants assist with the costs of improvements required to comply with regulations.

These awards can fill the financial gaps for projects that may not qualify for other funding sources. Additionally, they serve as an important complement to existing state and federal water quality programs, such as the Natural Resources Conservation Service's Environmental Quality Incentives Program (NRCS-EQIP) and the Vermont Agency of Agriculture's Best Management Practices (BMP) and Capital Equipment

Assistance (CEAP) Programs, with a particular emphasis on prioritizing projects that have already applied for or secured state or federal funds.

Severy Farm LLC, a 100% grass-fed organic dairy in Cornwall, demonstrates the transformative upgrades made possible through the support of such funding. After completing a successful transfer of the farm from Nate's father in 2021, Nate and Kerianne Severy knew it was time to update their infrastructure to better suit their scale and land, located in the Champlain Valley and surrounded by the Cornwall Swamp Management Area.

In 2022, with the support of a VHCB Water Quality Grant and funds from the VT Agency of Agriculture Food and Market's Best Management Program, they built a pit to store their milkhouse and barnyard waste.

"The new pit has been a huge improvement to our operation. We're capturing our on-farm nutrients and it's meant a substantial impact on our farm's water quality, especially during a summer this wet"

For questions regarding this grant opportunity, please contact: Betsy McGavisk at Betsy@VHCB.org or 802-828-5562.

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 or call 802-828-1732.

Please adjust your email settings so that email coming from 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
9:00 am – 12:00 pm

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

Vermont Farm and Food Industry Stakeholder Listening Sessions

By Julia Scheier and Sarah McIlvennie, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

The Agency is excited to pilot a series of in-person and virtual listening sessions across the state over the winter. Our goal is to make the Agency more accessible to our constituents, by creating space for direct engagement with agricultural producers, processors, and distributors across Vermont. We hope to hear about experiences, needs, priorities, and concerns. We will utilize this space to receive feedback and questions from the agricultural community

to inform programs and funding opportunities.

This series will be held in multiple locations across the state and will take a variety of forms. For some, we will host or co-host a standalone meeting with a partner in the region. For others, we will collaborate with partners to join established events.

We foresee at least two events in January for Caledonia, Essex, Lamoille and Orleans counties, three events in February for Addison, Bennington and Orange counties, two events in March for Rutland, Franklin and Grand Isle counties, and a final virtual

offering in April.

Our partners in this work include (alphabetically):

- Addison County Relocalization Network
- Center for an Agricultural Economy
- Farmers Watershed Alliances – CT River Valley and Franklin & Grand Isle
- Food Connects
- Natural Resource Conservation Districts across the state
- Northshire Grows at Merck Forest and Farmland Center
- Vermont Farmers Food Center

We invite you to join for one or more meetings – please refer to our website as we finalize the schedule. We will be offering light snacks and refreshments. We recognize there are barriers to joining in-person events, but we hope as this program develops in future iterations that we can provide more robust services to better support accessibility to join.

If you are unable to attend for any reason but

would like to share your experiences, we welcome you to fill out the form on our website. We welcome feedback on structure and accessibility of this process, so we can adjust logistics for future series.

There is no need to RSVP. For questions or to offer direct input, please contact Sarah McIlvennie at Sarah.McIlvennie@vermont.gov or 802-261-5866.

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
- 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
- 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
- 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 or visit: 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

Dairy Promotion Grants Available for Vermont Farmers

By Elicia Pinsonault, New England Dairy

New England Dairy encourages farmers and dairy-focused groups planning to engage with consumers in their local communities to apply for a Dairy Promotion Grant. Grants up to \$2,400 can be used for grassroots promotion activities to grow trust in dairy and increase consumption of dairy products. Examples of activities that would be considered for funding include

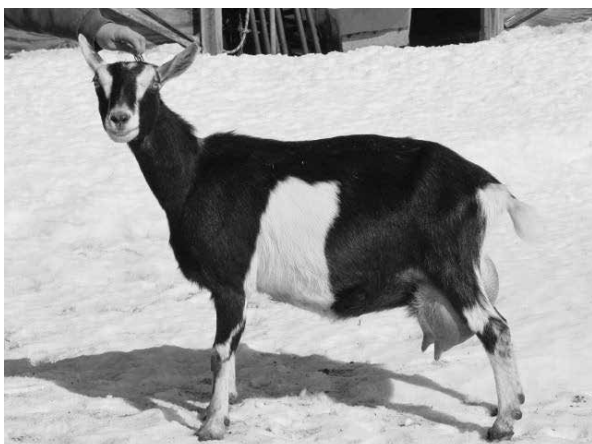
events that bring dairy into the community, on-farm events, campaigns to connect with consumers on social media, and more. Applicants must be associated with the production of cow milk as a dairy producer.

Dairy farmers and groups

should apply for grants to support dairy promotion activities occurring between February and August 2024. The deadline to apply is February 2, 2024.

Information on project eligibility and the application can be found online: bit.ly/NED-promotion-grants.

For more information, contact Farmer Relations Manager Elicia Pinsonault at epinsonault@newenglanddairy.com or (617) 380-3941.



Connecticut River Farmers to Host Annual Meeting January 12th

By Maria Burnett, ECO
AmeriCorps serving at VT
Agency of Agriculture, Food &
Markets

The Connecticut River Watershed Farmers Alliance (CRWFA) is hosting their seventh annual meeting this month. It will be from 11am to 3pm on Wednesday, January 17th at the Newmont Farm in Bradford, VT. This year's meeting includes two sessions: "Minerals, Cations, and Liming for Soil Health" and "After the Flood: What to do with flooded and damaged fields." This year's meeting attendees will also reflect on both the past and the future of farming in the Connecticut River Valley, and hear more about what to expect in 2024. Farmers and other land stewards from both sides of the Connecticut River are invited to attend.

The CRWFA is a farmer-led nonprofit organization dedicated to helping agricultural producers in the Connecticut River Watershed in VT and NH improve agricultural land stewardship practices for clean waterways, healthy soil, and productive landscapes. This year, there have been exciting new developments for the Alliance. Mike Snow has recently been brought on board as the organization's first executive director, following a round of strategic planning done over the course of 2023. A member-farmer himself, he has grown and sold



The CRWFA has a variety of grain drills available to rent at low cost, which is one of the services they offer to farmers in the Connecticut River valley.

vegetables, meat and eggs, and now grows grains and dry beans. He understands the importance of agriculture in the Northeast, and embodies the mission of CRWFA—to represent and advocate for other farmers, help them access resources, and improve water quality throughout the watershed. With the addition of Mike as executive director, the Alliance will have the capacity to continue and expand their work—which includes networking with farmers throughout the watershed, Natural Resource Conservation Districts, State agencies, Extension offices, and other partners on both sides of the Connecticut River.

The farmers alliance supports its members, and the public, with workshops, discussions, resource sharing, and education. News regarding new policies, grant programs, and recent challenges is shared and

discussed. Members have a farmer forum, a place for farmers to learn more about farming and conservation practices directly from other Members. The organization also hosts an equipment rental program, allowing farmers to share equipment for practices that can help improve soil health and water quality. They have several no-till drills available to rent (an Aitchison, a Haybuster 107c, and an Esch 5512), and work with the White River NRC and Cedar Circle Farm to offer a roller crimper, portable

scales, and other equipment. Another important aspect of the organization is education and outreach. They host educational workshops on innovative practices such as cover cropping and reduced tillage and provide resources on a variety of topics including how to communicate with legislators and the public. The CRWFA also works with partners to help farmers navigate the various grant programs available through VAAFM, NH Department of Agriculture, and other state and federal agencies.

In 2024, the organization plans to build on their past successes, expanding the equipment rental program, putting on workshops and field days, and collaborating to address issues facing farmers in the Connecticut River Valley and in Vermont and New Hampshire in general.

To learn more about the Connecticut River Watershed Farmers Alliance or the Annual Meeting, contact Mike Snow at crwfa.info@gmail.com or 802-345-9201.



Looking Back at the Impact of Dairy Funding in 2023

By Katie Spring, Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center

2023 was a big funding year for the Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center (NE-DBIC). With over 120 grants and contracts, the NE-DBIC awarded over \$18.3 million across our 11-state region. Over \$5.9 million went to Vermont dairy farmers and processors.

Two new grant programs stood out:

With a focus on climate and community-forward production strategies, the Dairy Farm Innovation & Alternative Management Grant saw \$1.07 million go to farmers to implement projects that enhance the resilience of our Northeast regional food system. These projects range from studying and promoting extended

lactation on goat dairy farms, creating a silvopasture grazing system, managing herds with geofencing, and more.

The Existing Dairy Processor Expansion Grant awarded \$12.2 million to 35 processors across eight states. Over 3,200 dairy farmers benefit from this one-time catalytic investment, which stabilizes and expands options for their milk and increases the amount of local dairy on store shelves.

Northeast dairy farmers and processors also benefitted from programs for on-farm milk storage and handling, marketing and branding professional services, dairy product innovation, dairy processing research and development, food safety and certification, and dairy cohort technical assistance.



Molly Brook Farm received funding through the Farm Innovation & Alternative Management grant for a collar monitoring system for their herd.

NE-DBIC's mission to increase innovation and resiliency for regional dairy

production continues into 2024, with more funding opportunities available across

the Northeast. Learn more about the NE-DBIC impact at nedairyinnovation.com/impact

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Bedded Pack Workshops Highlight Best Management Practices

By Kelsie Meehan and Whitney Hull, UVM Extension

In October 2023, UVM Extension and Vermont NRCS co-hosted two on-farm bedded pack workshops with special

guest speaker, Dr. Marcia Endres, professor of Animal Sciences at the University of Minnesota. The workshops were well-attended, with a total of 59 dairy and livestock farmers and service providers from Vermont, Massachusetts, and New

York participating across the two days. Dr. Endres, an expert in dairy cattle production and well-being, shared the findings of her extensive research on bedded pack barns for dairy production, discussing considerations specific to cold climates such

as Vermont. She highlighted good management as the key to success with bedded pack structures, such as tilling and using enough bedding material to regulate pack moisture, providing adequate ventilation, and keeping overstocking to a minimum. When these

best management practices are applied, bedded pack barns can enhance cow comfort, reduce lameness, encourage expression of natural behaviors, and offer potential labor savings.

Dr. Endres emphasized that maintaining clean and

continued on page 12



Top: Bedded Pack – Deer Flats. Middle and bottom: Bedded pack at Stony Pond Farm.

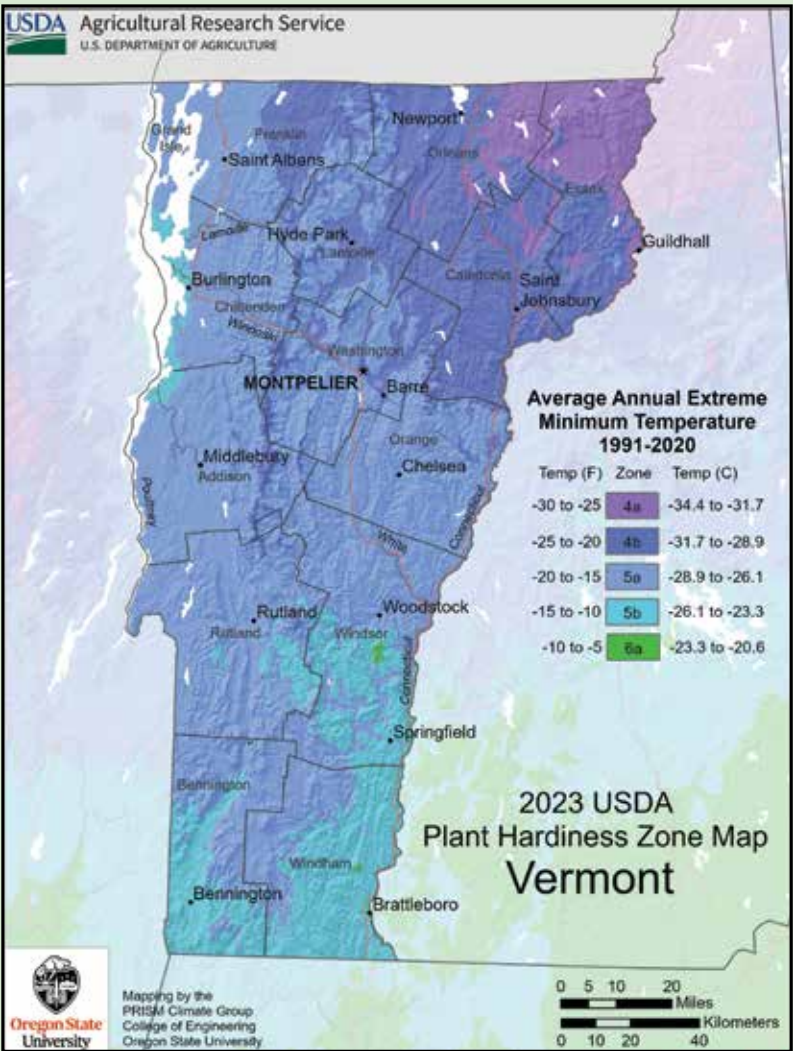
New Plant Hardiness Map Released by USDA

By U.S. Department of Agriculture

On November 15, 2023 the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)

released a new Plant Hardiness Zone Map, <https://planthardiness.ars.usda.gov/>. This map was last updated by USDA in 2012, and helps individuals “determine which perennial plants are most likely to thrive at a location.” In addition to survival of garden & crop plants, Hardiness Zone has implications for invasive plants and pests, such as spotted lanternfly. Users can enter their zip code at the top of the map and the tool will tell the user the hardiness zone for the entered zip code. Users can also zoom

in on their location and click on the map directly for the same information. Vermont zones range from 4a (-30 to -25 F) to 6a (-10 to -5 F).



VERMONT VEGETABLE AND BERRY NEWS



Compiled by Vern Grubinger,
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www.vvbga.org

Vermont Vegetable and Berry Growers Association Annual Meeting

The Vermont Vegetable and Berry Growers Association's annual meeting will be held on **Tuesday, January 30, 2024** at the DoubleTree Hotel and Conference Center in South Burlington, Vermont.

You can find the agenda and additional information on our website <https://vvbga.org/farm-dashboard/2024-annual-meeting>.

To register for the Annual Meeting go to <https://vvbga.org/user/register> and log in to your VVBGA account or create an account. Renew your membership and then pre-register for the Annual Meeting. The fee is \$50 per day, per person, for VVBGA members. The non-member fee is \$60 per day, per person. Please contact vvbga@uvm.edu to pre-register as a non-member, or if you need financial assistance.

Pre-registration closes on January 26, 2024. Add \$10 per person for walk-in registrations. All registrations include morning coffee with

snacks and a hot buffet lunch.

If you need overnight lodging, please make your own room reservations by contacting the DoubleTree Hotel. Ask for the VVBGA room rate of \$109. There are also other nearby lodging options.

VVBGA member dues for 2024 are the same as in 2023: \$70 per farm or \$80 if paid after January 31. If this poses a barrier to participation, a lower payment can be selected, no questions asked. Go to vvbga.org to pay membership dues, register for the annual meeting, sign up for CAPS produce safety program, and/or donate to the VVBGA's research and education fund.

Commercial membership in the VVBGA is \$100 per company or organization, per year. Membership includes a ¼ page ad in the Annual Meeting booklet if

submitted by December 29. Go to: <https://vvbga.org/commercial-membership> to join, register for the Annual Meeting, sign up for an ad in the Annual Meeting booklet, and/or to request an exhibitor table—but space is limited.

Questions? Vern Grubinger, UVM Extension, 802-656-7534, or vernon.grubinger@uvm.edu.

Upcoming Webinars On Crop Insurance

These webinars will be recorded.

Crop Insurance: An Introduction for New England Vegetable and Berry Growers

Jan. 16, 10am-11am. Register at: https://umass-amherst.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_n1C8JUAcQnGtoW-gBRlvU8A#/registration

This workshop is for those with little to no prior experience with insurance

and wondering what the options are and if they are right for your farm. Or for those looking for a refresher or updates. We will hear about Farm Service Agency's Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) and Risk Management Agency's Whole-Farm Revenue Protection and Micro-Farm Revenue Protection Programs.

Crop Insurance: Demystifying the How and Why Behind Each Program.

Jan. 18 10am-noon.

Register at: https://umass-amherst.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_ZibjxknoRCC76fZ8EKc40w#/registration

A deeper dive into NAP, Whole-farm revenue protection, and Micro-farm revenue protection programs to help you decide which program is right for your farm. Regional experts from FSA

and RMA will provide tips and tricks on how to be successful applying for coverage and getting a claim, including what records you need to keep and why. We will do our best to answer questions during a facilitated Q&A.

Produce Safety Information Resources Galore

Want to build a better handwashing station, safely dispense sanitizers, or properly repair cracks in a concrete floor? Maybe you need to do a better job cleaning that brush washer, barrel washer, or washing machine? Or maybe you're contemplating renovating or building a pack shed. These topics and much more are addressed by SCRUB project's set of fact sheets, SOPs, case studies, videos and more at <https://blog.uvm.edu/cwcallah/scrub-project-resources/>

Deadline for Discrimination Financial Assistance Program Extended

By U.S. Department of Agriculture

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is extending the deadline for the Discrimination Financial Assistance Program to January 13, 2024, to give eligible farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners more time to apply for assistance. The original deadline was October 31, 2023.

This deadline extension is responsive to feedback from potential applicants, nongovernmental program administrators and community-based

organizations working closely with USDA to inform and assist eligible individuals. The new deadline will allow more time to reach and help farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners through direct, no-cost technical assistance and training sessions. The extension will also ensure everyone has adequate time to apply, including producers whose harvest season falls during the original application period.

Since the opening of the financial assistance application process on July 7, the Discrimination Financial Assistance Program team

has opened 30 local offices across 26 states. Regional administrators have held over 600 events, while cooperators have also held dozens of virtual and in-person events. Advertising targeting potentially eligible individuals and rural communities has also been deployed. These efforts have successfully allowed program staff to reach many potential applicants and will be further increased with the new, extended deadline.

This program delivers on Section 22007 of the Inflation Reduction Act, which provides financial assistance for farmers, ranch-

ers and forest landowners who experienced discrimination in USDA farm lending programs prior to January 2021. Congress provided a total of \$2.2 billion for this program. The amount of money awarded to individuals through this program will depend on the number of eligible applicants and the consequences of the discrimination. Eligible individuals have the option to apply online or by submitting paper-based forms via mail or in-person delivery to local program offices.

To learn more about the Discrimination Financial Assistance Program, visit www.22007apply.gov, email info@22007apply.gov, or call us at 1-800-721-0970.

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: Ag.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)

Hay, Feed & Forage

Hay for sale sm. sq bales 1st cut
summer 2022 \$5 per bale,
nice dry & dust free, good for
horses. 2nd cut 2023 \$6 per
bale. 4x4 round bales 2023
1st that are wrapped, they are
mostly dry \$45 per bale. Take
all 60 \$40 per bale. 803-223-
5747 leave a message. (1)

Round Alfalfa Baleage all cuts.
Forage test available. Round
soybean baleage. Some Grass
dry round bales. Call for
pricing & delivery options.
Phone 518-497-6837 or
518-319-7061. (1)

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, 802-355-2930 (4)

Good quality wrapped round
bales, 1st and 2nd cut. Please
call 802-446-2435. (4)

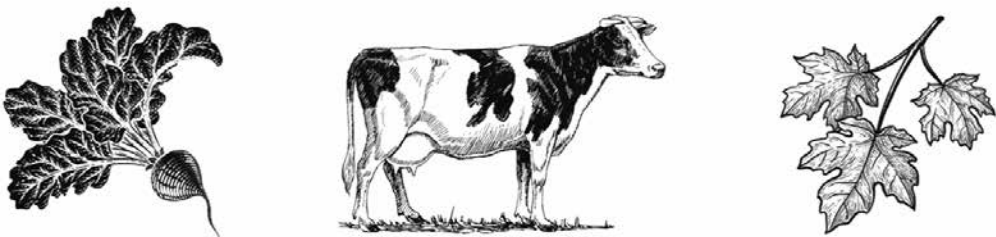
Wanted

Used 13" diameter scalloped
disc harrow - 802-793-3688

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
or call 603-548-3890. (3)

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



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>.



Join Us at NOFA-VT's 42nd Annual Winter Conference!

Saturday, February 17 &
Sunday, February 18, 2024
in-person at the University of Vermont in
Burlington with a live-streaming option
nofavt.org/conference

For Immediate Release

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets have received an application for a Milk Handlers license from the following entity: Woodlawn Creamery, LLC of West Pawlet, Vermont to process, package, buy/sell and transport cheese within the State of Vermont. If anyone has germane information as to why or why not this company should or should not be licensed those comments are to be sent to:

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture Food and Markets
Dairy Section Office
116 State Street, Montpelier, VT 05620-2901

All written comments must be received by
January 15, 2024.

At that time the Agency will make a determination as to whether a hearing will be held. If we determine that a hearing is necessary and you wish to attend please write to the above address attention Dairy Section.

HAVE FEED?
NEED FEED?
BUY / SELL

**FARM
FEED - FINDER
MARKETPLACE**

HELPING CONNECT FARMS AND FEED
<https://agriculture.vermont.gov/farm-feed-finder-marketplace>

VERMONT
AGENCY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD & MARKETS

\$250K Working Lands Impact Grants Application Open Now

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

The Working Lands Enterprise Initiative (WLEI) is now accepting applications for the ARPA Primary Producer Impact Grant and the Supply Chain Impact Grant. Vermont-based farm, food, and forest sector businesses may apply for grants for \$50,000 - \$250,000. These two different Impact Grants are available targeting specific segments of Vermont's agricultural supply chain.

ARPA Primary Producer Impact Grant: Examples of eligible primary production activities are farming, livestock rearing, sugaring, dairy, and logging. Applicants must have been operational prior to January 2020, and grant funds should be used to support business' ongoing recovery from the negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Supply Chain Impact Grant

Many successful Vermont working lands businesses affect other layers of Vermont's economy, a distinct element the Working Lands Enterprise Board considers when processing applications for the Supply Chain Impact Grant. Projects for this grant should:

- Make significant process and/or infrastructure improvements for medium to large scale production, producer-processing initiatives, or distribution of forestry and/or agriculture products, OR
- Bring forest or agriculture products into supply chain at a scale that can strengthen the industry, address the sector on a market-wide scale, and/or address a market downturn, OR
- Use innovative technologies or approaches that will lead to new opportunities for multiple businesses and/or will increase the scale of the business

to meet a growing market demand.

Gevry Firewood in Addison received a Supply Chain Impact Grant in 2022. "We do what we do because we like being able to provide our local area with high quality firewood. We also do it to enrich the local economy, from supporting area loggers to buying our fuel and parts locally, while creating jobs in our community," said Ethan Gevry of Addison, Vermont. "The grant activities have put our business in a very good position where we can easily scale to meet market demands."

Projects eligible for funding in either grant may relate to one or more of the following categories:

- Market development
- Research and development
- Infrastructure development
- Workforce training and development

These grants expect a match equal to 100% of the grant request, meaning that a business applying for a \$100,000 grant should expect to contribute \$100,000 in their own cash and/or labor. Under limited circumstances, the matching requirement may be reduced

or waived for applicants who demonstrate a clear need for this accommodation.

The application portal is now through January 19th. Applicants will be notified in mid-February 2024 if they are invited to submit a final round application, which will be due at the end of March. Final round applicants will be notified of award decisions in early May, and projects can begin in June.

For questions regarding this or other WLEI grant opportunities, please contact Clare Salerno by email at clare.salerno@vermont.gov or by phone 802-917-2637.

Bedded Pack Workshops

continued from page 9

dry bedding is essential to avoid the potential for increased risk of mastitis in a bedded pack structure. She explained that sourcing adequate bedding has been a limiting factor for the expansion of bedded pack barns in Minnesota, where, like in Vermont, bedding materials such as wood shavings have become more expensive and more challenging to source.

Bob Thompson of NRCS discussed examples of bedded pack barns in Vermont, management considerations, and the financial support programs available from NRCS.

The two host farms highlighted different management styles of bedded pack barns. Tyler

and Melanie Webb of Stony Pond Farm in Fairfield gave a tour of their active composting bedded facilities, which house their milkers and dry cows during the winter months when they are not on pasture. The Webbs manage their bedded packs by tilling twice daily and applying wood shavings weekly and as needed.

Rich and Mandy Hulett of Deer Flats Farm in Pawlet gave a tour of their deep bedded pack barns that house their weaned heifers and dry cows and serve as their calving facility. The Hulett's bed their pack three times per week with wood chips and remove all pack material to be stacked for composting every 8-10 weeks as needed.

Farmer-to-farmer connections were a highlight of the workshops, with producers discussing their

management practices and barn design considerations. Additionally, all participants received a certificate of training completion from NRCS, making them eligible to apply for financial assistance for bedded pack structures through NRCS EQIP.

These workshops were sponsored by the Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center and organized by Kelsie Meehan and Whitney Hull of UVM Extension's Dairy Herd Management Technical Assistance Program, which offers support to dairy farms statewide. To work with our team, please contact us via our online request form, or call or email us directly: Kelsie Meehan: kelsie.meehan@uvm.edu, (802) 656-4829, or Whitney Hull: whitney.hull@uvm.edu, (802) 656-7563.



Gevry Firewood

The Importance of Quality Records in NMP Planning

By Jennifer Alexander,
Poultney-Mettowee Natural
Resources Conservation
District

As field work is winding down, now is a great time to make sure cropping records are in order. In order to create a quality nutrient management plan that has value to the farm, you need to keep quality records.

What do I mean by quality records? I mean records that accurately reflect what is occurring on the land. Has your manure spreader been weighed/calibrated? Have you collected a copy of the spreading records from your custom manure applicator? How accurately are you able to capture the farm yields? Have they been tracked by field or by whole farm?

I do believe that the soil test tells the story. However, unless soil samples are being taken every year or every other year, you need to be able to accurately capture

nutrient applications and nutrient removal each year to hone your plan.

While estimating yields and weights when the nutrient management plan was first being developed was a great starting place, as the plan evolves over time, dialing in on what is really occurring will help with the bottom line and crop production. Borrow a truck scale and weigh your loads, both of crop and of manure. You might be surprised by how different they are than your estimates.

Many Districts and Extension offices offer portable truck scales, moisture probes, and soil probes for loan at no cost. Often times a staff person will come with the equipment to assist, which is very handy especially when using the scales to keep the flow of vehicles moving.

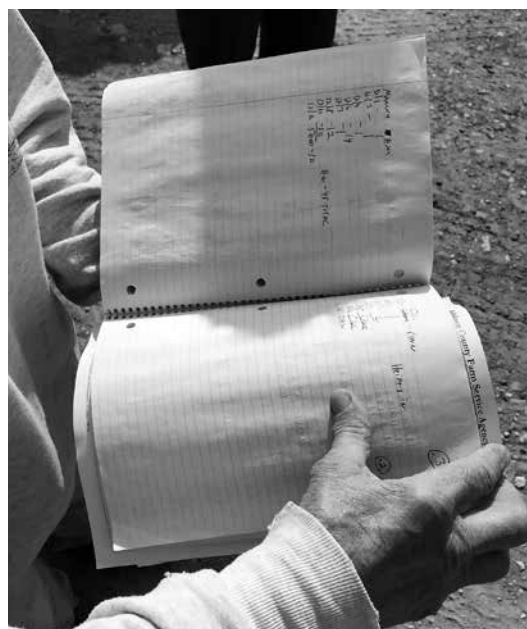
In goCrop, there exist blocks in several areas for internal notes like weights and moisture readings. These notes won't print on your

plan but can be useful to go back to. There are also 12 categories for record keeping which will print. goCrop even has an app that is available for iPhones and Android phones so records can be added as the event is occurring. No reception? No problem. Records can be added when out of service then automatically

uploaded to the plan when connected to the internet or back in service. If the farm has a trusted employee, that person can also sign up for a goCrop account and be given access to the farm's plan so they can add records.

While nutrient management plans and record keeping can seem onerous, neither are going

away anytime soon and helping you ensure that your inputs are proportionate to your outputs is good for your bottom line. If you need support with your planning or would like to borrow some calibration equipment, reach out soon to your local Conservation District or Extension office!



Keeping accurate records throughout the season is essential to successful nutrient management planning.

VEDA: Supporting Vermont since 1974.

Through our low-interest financing programs, we have been fortunate to provide more than \$2.6 billion to businesses in our (almost) 50 years. Contact us today to see how we can help your business grow.





Vermont Economic Development Authority
veda.org | 802.828.5627

North Branch Vineyards Receives Working Lands Grant to Protect Vines from Wildlife

By Elizabeth Sipple and
Clare Salerno, VT Agency of
Agriculture, Food & Markets

North Branch Vineyards (NBV) cultivates 4,000 grape vines including nine varieties on 13.7 acres in Middlesex. Business partners John and Katherine McCann established the vineyard in 2007. NBV's mission is to produce high quality, unique wines using hybrid grapes grown in their vineyard and selling directly from their tasting room. In a good year, they can produce 16,000

bottles of wine annually from these vines, but not all years are good. For example, in 2021 NBV estimated a \$360,000-dollar value-added loss in estate grape production due to deer and birds eating the grapevines.

NBV initially worked with VT Fish & Wildlife on strategies to reduce vineyard damage from deer. When this was not successful, they received a \$16,469 Working Lands Business Enhancement Grant in 2022 to install deer fence and bird netting, which has successfully eliminated the

deer pressure and reduced losses to birds.

This year, the vines were affected by the late frost in May and instead of harvesting their goal of 40,000 lbs. of grapes, they harvested only 400 lbs. The frost losses meant that this year NBV is buying grapes from another VT grape grower. But on a positive note, NBV was able to purchase and conserve their land this year. Moving forward, they plan to invest in agritourism as a resilience strategy in the face of unpredictable weather

events. And, their vines are now safe from deer and birds for years to come.

Working Lands Enterprise Initiative grant applications funding opportunities for

businesses are open through January. Other opportunities will reopen in fall 2024.

For more information, visit workinglands.vermont.gov

Live Webinar Series on Farm Succession and Transfer Begins January 17, 2024

By Mike Ghia, Vermont Farm & Forest Viability

What is the future of your farm? If you are like most farmers, you are so busy with the day-to-day business of farming you find it difficult to take the time for long-term planning, particularly for a transition from one generation to the next. It can be especially challenging during times of financial uncertainty. And it can be difficult if there is not someone immediately lined up to take over the farm. At the same time, you probably have hopes for the future of your farm and have thought some about what you would like to happen to your business and your land. With sound succession planning and its concrete action steps, it is more likely that the goals and desires of all the generations involved can be met, and there is a greater likelihood that the farm will stay in farming.

The "Farm Succession Planning Webinar Series" is for farmers to learn about key issues, tools and resources to help them make informed decisions and take action steps towards transferring their farm to the next generation of their family or a non-family successor. Farmers will learn from professionals who can help in the process and from other farmers. Topics include retirement, financial, and estate planning, taxes, legal entities, and determining goals for retirement, business transitions, and your land. All generations, including family and non-family members, who may play a role in your farm's future are encouraged to attend.

This series is organized by Land For Good, in partnership with the Vermont Housing & Conservation Board and will be held on 4 successive Wednesdays from 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. starting January 17th. For more info and to register, visit <https://landforgood.org/news-events/training/> to register or call 603-357-1600 or write to info@landforgood.org for more information.



John McCann of North Branch Vineyards



Agency of Agriculture Announces \$200K Grants for Vermont Specialty Crops

By Madison Berry, VT
Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets announces \$200,000 in grant funds to strengthen Vermont's specialty crop industries and producer associations. Specialty crops are defined as fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, horticulture crops (including honey, hops, maple syrup and mushrooms), and nursery crops (including Christmas trees and floriculture). Interested applicants should apply by January 14, 2024, at 11:59 PM. These grant funds will

enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops by leveraging efforts to market and promote specialty crops, assisting producers with research and development, expanding availability and access to specialty crops, or addressing local, regional, and national challenges for producers. Any entity may apply, but projects must benefit more than one specialty crop business, individual, or organization. In 2024, driven by feedback from stakeholders, an additional funding priority has been added for applicants to focus on: climate adaptation and resilience. To apply, download the Request for Applications

at agriculture.vermont.gov/grants/specialtycrop. The pre-application process opened December 4, 2024. Applicants must submit a pre-application by January

14, 2024 at 11:59 PM. A review committee will invite the top-ranking projects to submit full applications. The Agency conducted an information session webinar

for all prospective applicants on December 12, 2023. Please visit <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/grants/specialtycrop> to view the recording.

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
802-261-5628

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
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
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
802-461-3814

Phil Wilson
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
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
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
802-585-6225

Agency Contact Numbers

Phone numbers for Agency programs are listed below. You are always welcome to call our main line at 802-282-2430. 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

Governor Scott's Annual Tree Cutting Celebrates Vermont's Christmas Tree Industry

Scott Waterman, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

Governor Phil Scott and Agriculture Secretary Anson Tebbetts visited Paine's Tree Farm in Morrisville to celebrate the arrival of the 2023 Christmas season with the help of Vermont's tree farmers. The Christmas trees cut during the visit decorated the Governor's Office in Montpelier.

"As we enter the holiday season, Vermont and its people, including our farmers, offer so many reasons to celebrate," said Governor Phil Scott. "This is a time of year to take note of the good and unite around the true meaning behind each of the seasons' traditions: Togetherness, community and hope."

"We're excited to be a part of Christmas for many families in Vermont and beyond, and we are thrilled to have Governor Scott and Secretary Tebbetts visit our farm today," said Tom Paine of Paine's Christmas Trees. For 60 years, Paine's has been providing choose and cut Fraser Fir trees.

According to the most recent USDA Agriculture Census completed in 2017, there are 3,650 acres of Christmas tree production in Vermont across 70 farms with a crop worth more than \$2.6 million. Many more Vermonters bring to market Christmas trees, wreaths, garland, and other decorator items each year.

Lighting Up The Season



Celebrating the season: Christmas tree lighting on 12/4, Menorah lighting on 12/12. Below left, Governor Scott at Paine's Christmas Tree Farm choosing trees for office. Happy New Year to all!



Secretary Anson Tebbetts with Governor Phil Scott at the annual Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony with Franny, Tebbetts' miniature donkey.