

# AGRIVIEW



Published monthly by the Vermont Agency of Agriculture • [www.Agriculture.Vermont.gov](http://www.Agriculture.Vermont.gov)

## Recovery Resources for Vermont’s Agricultural Communities, Farms and Families

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

**A**s we all watched Vermont communities become inundated with flood waters after an unprecedented rainfall in July, our thoughts were with all Vermonters and their families recovering from this devastating event. The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets (VAAFM) has assembled important guidance and resources for the state’s agricultural members and communities to facilitate recovery.

“Our little state is hurting, but we are going to figure this out,” said Anson Tebbetts, Vermont Secretary of Agriculture. “Vermonters have a history of getting things done during difficult times. I am confident we can



again, but it will take hard work, creativity, and good will from all of us pulling in the same direction.”

When Governor Phil Scott declared a State of Emergency in Vermont on July 9, 2023 due to heavy rainfall, many farmers across

the state were watching rising flood waters begin to cover farm fields, crops, bee hives and threaten animals. While the top priority is and will be the life and safety of our citizens, the recovery of our farms and food supplies is critical to the

full recovery of the state. At the request of Governor Scott, President Biden declared that an emergency exists in the State of Vermont and ordered Federal assistance to supplement State and local response efforts. The President’s action authorizes the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to deploy assistance and resources to Vermont. Read the full Vermont Emergency Declaration. At this time the Agency is working to understand how these declarations will respond to agriculture issues.

To assist our farms and farmers with these processes, Secretary Tebbetts has directed all VAAFM Divisions and Programs to focus on recovery efforts and information. Below are highlights from the VAAFM Flood Recovery Resource

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### AGRIVIEW

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

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## THE VIEW FROM 116 STATE STREET

We all know the story; We have seen the images. We have witnessed the heartbreaking pictures of water tearing through our cities, towns, and villages, uprooting our roads and bridges, flooding our farms, and destroying our crops. This tragic event follows closely on the heels of a hard freeze many of our farmers experienced in May.

As of this writing, it is too early to fully describe or even estimate damages, but it is clear losses will be catastrophic and our farmers, small businesses and agricultural producers will need help. We expect that the excessive flooding and silt will destroy a large share of our produce and livestock feed. In our hilly State, some of our most fertile farmland lies in river valleys. Countless fields of corn, hay, vegetables, fruit, and

pasture were swamped and buried.

Vermont's growing season is short, and a historic flood in the heart of our limited window to grow food and crops is particularly devastating. Many crops cannot be replanted, and losses will not be effectively recovered or mitigated prior to our early fall harvest.

Farming is challenging and rewarding but heavy losses of agricultural products or feed will put many at risk. There is a ripple effect. The disruption to our farms may disrupt our regional food system and our food security. The widespread flooding, we suffered throughout Vermont in July is among the worst of the last century, and it arrived in the heart of our growing season.

Farmers are cleaning up, calculating their losses, and preparing for the fall and winter. The work will not stop.

We want our farmers, producers, and nurseries to document their losses. There will be a time when we will need that information to present to our federal partners including FEMA and the United States Department of Agriculture.

We encourage farmers to visit our webpage ([agriculture.vermont.gov/](http://agriculture.vermont.gov/)



flood) or any of our social media channels. We have put together a packet of resources that may help farmers navigate the many issues they face.

What can the public do? This is the time to support your farmers. Maybe it's checking on your neighbor to see if they need a hand with a chore or an errand. Maybe it's attending a farmer's market or buying meat, cheese or produce from a farmstand. Or maybe you

could donate to a fund that's focused on farmers. There are many.

Farmers are rugged, hard-working, creative, darn tough, curious and kind. They love their land, but they are hurting like the thousands of Vermonters who have lost their homes or businesses.

Farmers feed us and will continue to feed us. Let's do our part to support them as we navigate this historic event with them.

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AGRIVIEW

(UPS 009-700)

AgriView is Vermont's Agricultural Publication of Record.

It is published monthly by the Vermont Agency of Agriculture Food & Markets, 116 State Street, Montpelier, VT 05620-2901

Telephone: 802-828-1619

[www.Agriculture.Vermont.gov](http://www.Agriculture.Vermont.gov)

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## This Month's Recipe

## Grilled Honey Goat Cheese Pizza

## Ingredients

- 1 lb. pizza dough or 1 tube thin crust dough
- 4 oz. soft goat cheese, crumbled
- 1/4 c. chopped pecans
- 2/3 c. shaved Parmesan
- 2 Tbsp. fresh sage, finely chopped
- 2 Tbsp. honey

## Directions

Prepare a gas or charcoal grill to high heat. Brush the grill with oil so the crust doesn't stick.

Shape the dough into a thin crust on a floured surface. Let the dough sit for 5 minutes and then press out some more, so it

remains thin. If using a tube of pizza dough, simply unroll the dough.

Transfer the dough onto the grill. Grill for 2 minutes on high heat with the lid closed. Using a pair of tongs, lift the lid, and flip the dough over and reduce the heat to low.

Working quickly, add the crumbled goat cheese and pecans and top with Parmesan. Close the lid and cook for 4-6 more minutes, or until the crust is cooked through and the cheese is melted.

Top with the fresh sage and drizzle with honey. Serve immediately.





*The Big Picture:*

# Zero-Waste Packaging Improves Sustainability on a Farmstead Goat Dairy

By Katie Spring, Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center

**B**efore you get to Big Picture Farm you'll drive along winding dirt roads, forests growing right up to the edges. Go another mile and you'll see it: the fields that open amidst the trees, the farmhouse, and the big red barn that houses both milking parlor and caramel processing facility. Run by Louisa Conrad and Lucas Farrell, Big Picture is a nationally recognized goat dairy making farmstead caramels and artisan cheese.

Recipients of the 2022 NE-DBIC Dairy Packaging Innovation Grant, Big Picture Farm is in the process of transforming their entire packaging line to zero-



waste.

Before they became farmers, they were artists, and infusing their creativity into

their marketing and branding has led the farm to be known almost as well for their storytelling, photography, and goat art as it is for their award-winning goat milk caramels. Much of that storytelling happens on their caramel packaging: names and line-drawn faces of individual goats giving eaters a direct connection to the source of the confections, while postcards tucked into shipments expand on the awards that all start with "the most delicious milk from our family of happy goats."

With an eye to the big picture of sustainability for the land, goats, business, and their family, Louisa and Lucas have consistently invested in sustainable practices, from managed grazing to installing

solar panels on the barn roof. Now, with funding from NE-DBIC, they're researching and sourcing green packaging for everything from the tape and twine to the freezer packs and insulation used to ship caramels across the country.

The goal: to eliminate virgin plastic from every aspect of their distribution.

"Sustainability in packaging means that our product line is packaged with and distributed in environmentally friendly formats that are recyclable, compostable, FSC-certified, and/or climate-forward to help reduce our impact on the environment," Louisa said. "For us, that means every aspect of our production and distribution --from the ingredients we use, to individual caramel and cheese wrappers, to folding cartons and cellophane bags, to

*continued on page 4*

## Vermont Organic Dairy Relief Program

*Applications now open*

By Laura Ginsburg, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

**I**n 2023, the Vermont legislature passed H.494, providing \$6.9 million in relief funding to the organic dairy sector. This grant funding is designed to mitigate the extreme market challenges in 2022, including high feed and input costs. Eligible dairy farmers who timely apply will receive a single payment of \$5 per hundredweight of organic milk produced in 2022. The Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets is responsible for the application process and distribution of funds.

To qualify for this funding, you must meet all the following requirements:

- At the time of application:
  - currently shipping milk to a buyer (either organic or conventional) and/or producing and processing your own organic milk
  - or identified as a producer who is "on-hold" with the Dairy Section at the Agency and has maintained your cooperative membership and will be shipping milk at the time of application and any related grant payment

- In 2022, you must have shipped organic milk or processed your own organic milk under the requirements of 6 V.S.A. chapter 151 (pasteurized products)
- Be in good standing with the Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

To apply, you will need your most recent farm inspection report (for your producer number and BTU number), documentation confirming your 2022 organic production, and a W-9.

Applications are due by October 20, 2023, are only available online,

and can be completed on a phone, tablet, or computer. Production documentation and the W-9 can be emailed or sent in hard copy to: Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets, Organic Dairy Relief Program, 116 State St., Montpelier, VT 05620-2901

To find out more and submit your application online, visit: <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/vermont-organic-dairy-relief-program>

Have questions? You are welcome to contact Terry Smith via email: [terry.smith@vermont.gov](mailto:terry.smith@vermont.gov) or by phone: 802-828-5667.

## DAIRY BUSINESS INNOVATION CENTER

# Current Grants for Dairy Processors Across the Northeast

By Ali Boochever, Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center

The Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center (NE-DBIC) announces two current or upcoming grants for cow, goat, and sheep dairy processors. Find the Request for Applications (RFA) for the grants below, plus our full funding calendar, on our NEW website: [nedairyinnovation.com/grants](http://nedairyinnovation.com/grants)

### Existing Dairy Processor Expansion Grant

With a goal to diversify and strengthen the supply chain for dairy farmers and

consumers, this grant offers existing dairy processors across the Northeast funding to acquire specialized equipment needed to increase the processing capacity of regionally produced milk and other activities to support expansion and meet demand.

The RFA for the single-stage Tier 3 application for smaller processors whose volume of milk utilized on an average production day is under 1,000 pounds, is available until the application closes on August 24, 2023 at 2:00 PM ET. Awards for Tier 3 will range from \$25,000 to \$250,000, with a 25% match requirement.



### Dairy Packaging Innovation Grant

Northeast dairy businesses looking for sustainable product packaging solutions can now apply for the Dairy Packaging Innovation Grant. This program provides funding to support modernized, climate-forward dairy packaging initiatives that prioritize sustainability, scalability,

and marketability. Eligible applicants include dairy processors that transform fluid milk, dairy components, or dairy mix sourced from the Northeast, dairy producer associations, packaging manufacturers, supply chain businesses, and educational/research institutions that partner with at least one Northeast dairy processor.

The RFA for the first

round of this two-step application process is available now and pre-applications for the first round of this two-phase application process are due by August 24, 2023 at 2:00 PM ET. Following the review of pre-applications, a subset of applicants will be invited to submit a full application beginning in mid-September to mid-November.

Awards will range from \$75,000 to \$350,000 with a 25% (cash or in-kind) match commitment required.

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

### Packaging Grant

*continued from page 3*

corrugated shipping boxes, cold-packs and insulation, as well as even packaging tape, mailers, and shipping labels used for e-commerce shipping.”

While their grant isn't due to wrap up until summer 2024, they've already switched all boxes to 100% FSC-certified paper board made with wind energy. They've also identified many suppliers of eco-friendly packaging materials, from compostable bioplastic bags made from wood fibers to compostable shipping labels

to 100% biodegradable freezer packs.

As part of their grant, Louisa and Lucas are developing a toolkit for other small to mid-sized dairy processors looking for sustainable packaging.

Processors will be able to access the annotated directory of suppliers with details about product types, packaging environmental impacts, pricing, purchasing logistics, and contact information, making it easier for them to navigate the options for their own products. This toolkit will be available upon the completion of their

project in 2024 and will be disseminated through the Vermont Specialty Food Association, Vermont Cheese Council, University of Vermont Extension, and other network partners.

The Dairy Packaging Innovation Grant is open now and includes a two-step application process. Following the review of pre-applications, a subset of applicants will be invited to submit a full application. Pre-applications are due August 24.

Learn more at our new website: [nedairyinnovation.com](http://nedairyinnovation.com)





# USDA Announces Dairy Business Innovation Initiatives Funding

By Katie Spring, Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center

The USDA announced a fifth round of funding for the Dairy Business Innovation Initiatives (DBII), and we're excited to report that the Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center (NE-DBIC) is invited to apply non-competitively to receive \$7 million to support regional dairy.

Upcoming grants through this round are expected to focus on continued support for resiliency and climate-forward dairy supply chain improvements, within

three primary areas: farm investments, processing investments, and workforce development.

As USDA Under Secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs Jenny Lester Moffitt said, "This program is a great example of USDA's efforts to build capacity from the bottom up and the middle out by supporting small and mid-sized dairy operations."

The DBII was established in the 2018 Farm Bill.

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets was awarded to host a DBII, and NE-DBIC received our first round of funding in 2019. To date,



the center has received \$38.77 million for projects extending through 2026. In Vermont, over \$5.4 million have been distributed to Vermont farmers, processors,

and service providers, representing 86 grant projects and contracts.

This \$7 million represents the final round of funding from the 2018 Farm Bill.

The upcoming 2023 Farm Bill will determine how and if the DBII continue forward in our work to increase dairy resiliency across the region.

## 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? To take an exam you must register by contacting the Certification & Training coordinator at least a week (7 days) in advance at 802-461-6118.

All exams are given by the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets.

- 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

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

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

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

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

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

## The Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center Launches New Website

<https://nedairyinnovation.com/>

Since its inception, the The Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center (NE-DBIC) web presence has been housed on the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets website. This change to a stand-alone web page will allow the program to brand, market and promote their activities and programs to farmers across the eleven states it serves without any confusion that could arise with its affiliation with the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets.

The program has also developed a media list for its eleven-state region and stand-alone social media for their public facing outreach. This is an important milestone for the program as they continue to grow and share their important work for dairy farmers and dairy processors across the northeastern United States. Congratulations to the NE-DBIC team!

## VERMONT AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEM PLAN 2021 – 2030: Access to Capital

**Editor's note:** This brief is part of the Vermont Agriculture & Food System Plan 2021-2030 submitted to the legislature in January 2021. To read the full plan, please go to <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/document/vermont-agriculture-and-food-system-strategic-plan-2021-2030>



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### What's At Stake?

Properly capitalized farms and food businesses are critical for a healthy food system. Food system businesses need different kinds of capital depending on their stage of growth, scale of operation, and the markets into which they sell. In part due to the aging of our population, Vermont is experiencing an unprecedented generational

transfer of farmland and food businesses. We need to develop new business models, and support access to affordable farmland for new and beginning farmers and young entrepreneurs to take over food businesses, all of which require significant capital and business acumen for success. Critical to this process is connecting the next generation of values-driven investors with opportunities to support farms, food producers, and food system businesses, through a variety of capital provider organizations and through programs that educate new investors.

### Current Conditions

Strengthening the state and regional food system is one of the most important paths for broad and sustainable wealth creation

in rural communities, yet Vermont farm and food businesses are forced to rely on a more limited financing landscape than businesses in other sectors.

There is a deep interrelationship between matching the right kind of capital with the right capital structure and provider, as well as individuals and/or networks that can provide that capital.

Capital can take many forms, as shown in the capital continuum diagram. Financial capital can be structured as debt, equity, grants, and more. The maturity of different types of businesses within the food system can impact access to capital, as well as dictate the form of capital that is most suitable. For instance, for food manufacturing businesses that are growing

or pivoting their business and expanding facilities and/or distribution, there is often a lag time between when investments are made in a new facility or equipment and when revenues are generated from that investment. This leads to cash flow challenges as the business grows and requires additional working capital that is patient and flexible.

From 2008 - 2018, a suite of new and diverse forms of capital have become available to Vermont farm and food businesses. Alongside the growth in Yankee Farm Credit and Vermont Agricultural Credit Corp (VACC) portfolio of loans over the last decade, new lending programs, such as the Vermont Community Loan Fund's (VCLF) Food, Farms & Forest Fund, have been developed. The

### Capital Continuum





advent of crowdfunding, complemented by the changes to the Vermont Small Business Offering Exemption, have allowed food system businesses the ability to seek capital directly from individual investors. One example is Milk Money Vermont, a platform for businesses to raise capital from Vermont investors in amounts and at a scale that are accessible to the full range of individual investors.

The Vermont Working Lands Enterprise Fund is another example of an important new source of capital, providing grant funding to strengthen and grow the businesses connected to Vermont's working landscape. Since its inception in 2012, the Fund has distributed over \$5.3 million to 184 agriculture and forestry projects.

## Financing Farmland and Farms

### Current Conditions

Demographics and market shifts are accelerating the pace of generational farm transitions. There are multiple costs when farms transition, including the farm land transfer, the transaction, and the start-up costs of the new farm. New and beginning farmers are attempting to access farmland on which to develop their businesses, but as the historic mechanisms of family inheritance and transferable dairy markets have become the rare exception, innovative lease-to-own models are emerging that enable incoming farmers to build equity and working capital while they grow markets and customers.

### Bottlenecks & Gaps

- Some of the traditional agricultural capital providers are not yet knowledgeable about new and diversified farming business models (e.g., grass-fed beef), and many have taken losses that might make them more risk averse in the future. Additionally, the methods of risk assessment commonly used by such capital providers cannot readily be applied to new models.
- Affordable land access is one of the biggest costs in starting and growing a farm business. The fact that Vermont's new farmers often don't have the equity and down payment needed to purchase land calls into question cultural assumptions that land ownership is the first step for a new farmer.
- When new farmers do purchase land early in the life of their business, they often struggle to have sufficient capital for operating expenses and capital expenditures to make improvements.

### Opportunities

- Yankee Farm Credit is expanding their Young, Beginning, Small and Minority (YBSM) farmers program, which includes Farm Start, reduced underwriting criteria for YBSM, business consultation, and business education.
- Yankee Farm Credit partners with the Farm Service Agency (FSA) on the USDA Beginning Farmer program, requiring only a 5% downpayment on real estate purchases.
- Both VACC and FSA offer low-cost real estate and operating loans to beginning farmers and

on-farm value-added operations.

- The Vermont Land Trust's Farmland Access Program, and newly launched Farmland Futures Fund (FFF), is an innovative, successful, and evolving tool for the transfer of farmland to the next generation.

## Financing Food Businesses

### Current Conditions

There are myriad lending programs supporting Vermont value-added food businesses. Companies with hard assets (e.g., equipment, real estate) are commonly able to finance early growth in small amounts through these sources of debt. As food system businesses scale and grow, they can be at risk of over-leveraging their business if they don't grow as quickly as planned, or they can lack sufficient working capital and personnel to properly manage the growth.

Meanwhile, new and emerging businesses with high-growth-potential products (e.g., breweries, kombucha, CBD products) are seeing an influx of capital during their early stages of growth, but as they grow and need larger and more risk-focused capital, they are having a hard time raising it from in-state sources.

### Bottlenecks & Gaps

- We need more educated, values-aligned, equity investors in Vermont that can bring sufficient amounts of capital to help businesses grow.
- Attention to succession planning and the requisite capital to facilitate a transition to new ownership is often brought up too

late in the life cycle of the business.

- Few food system businesses have advisory boards or mentors to help them navigate the challenges of growing their business.
- There is a gap in flexible funding options for slower-growing, lower-margin food system businesses.
- There remains a lack of understanding of the sources of capital among food entrepreneurs.

### Opportunities

- Businesses and projects in Vermont's Opportunity Zones (OZ) may see better access to alternative sources of capital if the OZ attracts investor dollars.
- Writing case studies and sharing stories of failures in food system entrepreneurship can provide important lessons learned to entrepreneurs who are just starting out and would benefit from knowing they are not alone.
- Advisory boards can mitigate risk for entrepreneurs and investors, while insuring against executive burnout and enhancing growth strategies and access to markets.
- The Vermont Women's Investor Network and the Northern New England Women's Investors Network educate and engage female investors in support of female entrepreneurs.

## Systemic Issues Impeding Food System Businesses' Ability to Access Capital

### Current Conditions

Capital providers tend to be siloed. If investors, lenders, grantmakers, bankers, and

other types of capital providers built stronger ties across the capital continuum and outside of their traditional networks, they would have a wider choice of providers to bring to the table when an entrepreneur doesn't fit their particular criteria or needs more than one type of capital to grow. The traditional investing model is lopsided and skewed towards investor gains (or protection from losses), as opposed to being a true partnership with entrepreneurs whereby all stakeholders' interests are considered.

### Bottlenecks & Gaps

- There are low-cost loans available to farm and food businesses but much of this debt remains dependent on collateral to get approved, which can be challenging for early-stage businesses.
- There are not enough diverse investors (e.g., women, people of color, Generation X, and millennials).
- Business assistance providers have varying levels of expertise and knowledge along the capital continuum, which could lead them to suggest a mismatch between businesses and capital providers.
- We have some mechanisms for helping low-income and underserved populations access capital, but typically in the form of small grants that are expensive to administer. Furthermore, these populations often lack access to social capital and advisory services.

### Opportunities

- A significant transfer of wealth from baby boomers to millennials is under-

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# Vermont Turkey Brood Survey Underway

By Vermont Department of Fish & Wildlife

The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department is seeking the public's help with monitoring wild turkeys.

Since 2007, the department has run an annual online survey in August for reporting turkey broods. Beginning in 2021, the survey was expanded to include the month of July. The use of "citizen scientists" in this way facilitates the department's ability to collect important turkey population and productivity data from all corners of the state.

If you see a flock of turkeys in Vermont during July and August, the department asks you to go to the turkey brood survey on its website ([www.vtfishandwildlife.com](http://www.vtfishandwildlife.com)) and report your observations, including where and when you observed the turkeys with the number of adult

and young turkeys you observed. The value of the data collected improves when more people participate.

"Information gathered from this survey helps us monitor long-term trends

in the productivity of Vermont's wild turkey population," said Vermont Fish and Wildlife's turkey biologist Chris Bernier. "It also helps us assess the impacts of spring weather on the survival of poults and

adult turkeys which is an important consideration in the management of turkeys."

"We monitor and manage wild turkey numbers annually in order to maintain a healthy, abundant and sustainable population of these

iconic and ecologically significant birds throughout the state," added Bernier. "Please help us scientifically manage the turkey population by reporting your Vermont turkey sightings during July and August."



## 2023 DMC Program Receives Additional Funding

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

The Vermont Legislature has provided an additional \$415,000 in funding to the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets to ensure dairy farms enrolled in the 2023 USDA Dairy Margin Coverage Program (DMC)

can receive compensation toward their Tier I premiums in calendar year 2023.

Originally, the Legislature approved \$2,600,000 to reimburse Vermont dairy farmers enrolled in the DMC for 2022 and 2023. The reimbursement program began in 2022; however, the original funds were exhausted in May 2023. There remain approximately

120 farms enrolled in the 2022 and 2023 DMC programs which have not received payment toward their premiums. Some farms have submitted the necessary paperwork and have been waiting for this additional funding while other farms have not applied for reimbursement. Farms which have completed their paperwork should receive their payments in July. The

Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets hopes to wrap this program up by the end of calendar year 2023.

The deadline for farms to sign up for the USDA's 2023 Dairy Margin Coverage Program was December 9th, 2022.

Reimbursement for the Tier I premium will occur after payment in full has been made to USDA. While funding exists, the Agency

of Agriculture, Food and Markets shall reimburse eligible applicants in the order in which the Agency receives administratively complete applications after the payment in full to USDA.

For more information, please contact Jeff Cook by email [jeff.cook@vermont.gov](mailto:jeff.cook@vermont.gov) or by phone at 802-828-3474.





## FARM AND FOOD WORKERS RELIEF PROGRAM

ADMINISTERED BY:

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The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Farm and Food Workers Relief Program (FFWR) provides a one-time \$600 payment for expenses incurred by frontline farmers and meatpacking workers due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



### One-time relief payments

Eligible frontline farmworkers and meatpacking workers can apply for a one-time \$600 pandemic relief payment through check, direct deposit, or gift card. [See if you're eligible.](#)



### No cost to apply or for assistance

There is **no cost** to apply. You do not need to pay a notary, agency, or lawyer to apply for the USDA Farm and Food Workers Relief (FFWR) program.



### Your identity is protected


Applicant information is confidential. It will not be shared with the USDA nor any other state or federal agency.


APPLY NOW AT [FARMWORKERS.COM](https://farmworkers.com)  
OR BY PHONE AT [\(833\) 469-3397](tel:8334693397)

SCAN TO APPLY



CONTACT US FOR SUPPORT

 (833) 469-3397

 [support@pasafarming.org](mailto:support@pasafarming.org)

USDA IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PROVIDER, EMPLOYER AND LENDER.

For more information visit: [usda.gov/non-discrimination-statement](https://usda.gov/non-discrimination-statement)

# Vermont Fairs and Field Days 2023

*Please check before attending a fair/field days to be sure it's still operating*

**A**s we roll along in August it's time to visit a Fair or a Field Day. It's an important time to catch up with our neighbors, eat some great food, take a spin on the Ferris Wheel, and mingle with friendly award-winning animals.

Vermont fairs and field days draw over 300,000 visitors each year, and many of the fairgrounds are utilized for other events, drawing many more visitors into Vermont communities throughout the year. Fairs and events offer opportunities for the agricultural community to highlight their practices, products, skills, and livelihoods that are part of the success of maintaining Vermont's countryside.

The Agency is proud to invest in our fairs and field days with financial support. With strong support from the legislature and the Governor we offer grants for capital projects and stipends. These investments make it more affordable for our fairs and field days to operate.

You may have seen a new cow



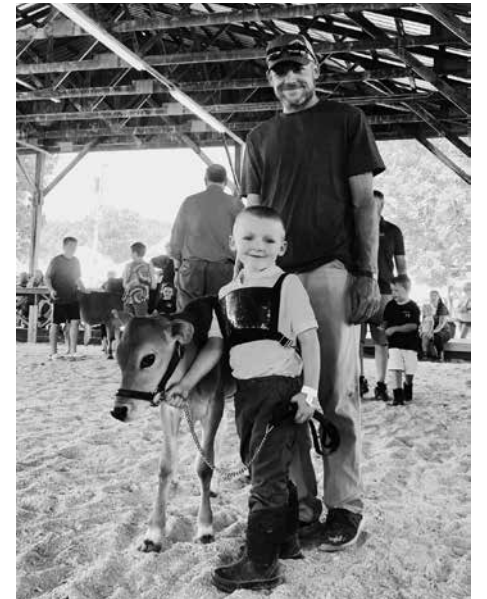
barn go up at your local fair. These grants support these critical investments so young people can continue to bring their 4-H calf or cow to the fair. You also may have enjoyed new grandstand seating so you could enjoy the tractor pull, cattle show or demolition derby. Capital improvements make the fair more viable for the future.

The Vermont Agency of

Agriculture, Food & Markets has administered the Agricultural Fairs & Field Days Capital Projects Competitive Grants Program and the Stipend Fund for over a decade.

For more information about these funding opportunities, review the state statute for the Capital Projects Competitive Grants Program and the Stipend Fund Distribution.

We hope you can get to a fair or



a field day this season or maybe you will bring a product or a vegetable to one. Fairs and field days love to see your flowers from your garden, your homemade pie, or that major league bat sized zucchini you grew. Winning a blue ribbon at a fair is a proud moment. Thanks for supporting your local fair or field day. Don't let summer slip away without a visit. You won't go away disappointed.

## “Farm to Family Coupon” Program Starts Summer Season

*Food assistance for local produce available statewide*

*By Vermont Department of Children and Families*

**M**ore Vermonters now have access to fresh, local produce across the state through the “Farm to Family Coupon” program. Approximately \$164,000 in coupons are now available to help eligible Vermonters buy locally grown fresh fruits and

vegetables at participating farmers markets and farm stands. Coupons are issued on a first-come, first-served basis, and may be used at any of the 60 markets and farm stands enrolled in the program this summer.

Vermont households with incomes at or below 185% of the federal poverty level and households participating in the Vermont Department

of Health's WIC Program (Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children) are eligible for the program. People can apply through their local WIC office or local community action agency. Dial 2-1-1 for local agency contact information. Current income limits are \$2,248 a month for a single person, \$3,041 for a couple, \$3,833 for a

family of three, \$4,625 for a family of four and \$5,418 for a family of five.

“Farm to Family supports Vermonters eating more fruits and vegetables and local farming at the same time,” said Chris Winters, Commissioner of the Department for Children and Families. “We expect over 200 farmers to participate in the program this

season. Every coupon spent puts money directly into the pocket of a Vermont farmer while helping Vermonters in need and putting great local foods on kitchen tables across Vermont.”

To learn more, go to <https://dcf.vermont.gov/benefits/f2f>. Farm to Family is a program of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).



CLASSIFIEDS

To place a classified ad in *Agriview* sign up to be a paid subscriber — visit our website: <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/administration/vaafm-news/agriview/advertising-agriview>

Email: [Ag.agriview@vermont.gov](mailto: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.

**Cattle**

Cow and calf pairs from closed Certified Organic herd. Mixed breeds, reasonable prices. 802-254-6982 (8)

Dexters for sale. 6 cows (open) 1 red, 2 dunn, 3 black, 3 steers. All dehorned. Animals are in great condition. Please contact: 802-356-5988 (Windsor County) (8)

Angus bull for sale, he is proven and 4 years old. Call for more info. (802)-558-8196 (8)

Jersey cows available: closed herd in Highgate; Organic, grass-only, some A2A2, vaccinated, awaiting results of disease testing. 802-370-1051 (8)

Angus Bulls for sale good genetics and ready for service. Greensboro, VT (802) 533-9804 (9)

4 year old Angus proven bull. 802-558-8196 (8)

Jersey cows for sale; Organic, grass-only, some A2A2, Highgate Ctr, vaccinated, Negative for Johnes. 802-868-2356, or 802-370-1051 (10)

**Equipment**

Steel 20 ft kicker wagon 802-624-0143/802-895-4683 (9)

Gehl - 3935 -\$9500.00, Gehl - 3410 -\$7000.00, Kuhn/knight 3170 mixer- \$19,000.00 Call 802-537-2435 or 802-345-5543 (9)

Kuhn GMD400 Disc Mower, Kuhn tedder, Darf 5 wheel rake on rubber, JD 24T baler (would like to sell together). Also JD 2040 tractor with loader (40 hp; 2wd), NH 329 manure spreader. Springfield 802-886-1473 (9)

1 Bunker Silo Defacer (fits on skid steers) \$1250.00, 400 amp transfer switch for generator \$400 or BO, Electric pipe threader \$300,

Robert Manning 802-233-9173 (9)

Beautifully restored doctor's buggy and Irish Brougham coach. Call 802-451-6813 for photos & details. (9)

2012 Kuhn 3130 trailer type reel mixer wagon. Digistar scale, floatation tire, very good condition, always under cover - \$19,500. [upweyfarm@gmail.com](mailto:upweyfarm@gmail.com) 802-457-1639 (9)

New bunk full of organic grass silage. Trucking is available. We are an Organic farm and would consider leasing part of our barn and pastures. We are located in Newport Center, Vermont. You can call Tom at 1-802-744-2444 or Shaye at 1-802-744-6553 or cell phone 1-802-274-4939. (9)

PTO three point hitch post hole digger. Excellent working condition \$400. Two Travis horse drawn work sleds. Good condition. Need poles for work team. \$150 each or both for \$250. 802-291-4525 (10)

Superior Model GS394- 7' blade 3-point hitch double action sickle mower excellent condition. Includes Extra knife section/guards bar with tool box, spare parts + parts book & Sickle Servicer Model S4--\$2,150. 802-439-6348 (10)

**Hay, Feed & Forage**

Certified organic wrapped round bales for sale. All hay is tedded and feeds out like it's dry. 4.5' by 4' bales. Early and late 1st cut @ \$45/ bale. 2nd and 3rd cut @ \$55/bale. N. Danville 802-748-8461. (8)

Small square first cut bales. \$4.00 a bale. Call 802-767-4247 (9)

Wheat and oat rotocut straw from western Canada, quality feeding. Large bales 3X4X8 or 3X4X7. Stored inside. From 175USD/ton, transport available (not included). We are located 30 minutes away from Swanton VT in Canada (Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu). Call or text us 514-588-3829 for more info. (9)



Feed-organic haylage, 3rd cut - 60 a ton, 2nd cut - 60 a ton, 1st cut - 45 a ton Call - 802-537-2435 or 802-345-5543 (9)

**FRANKLIN COUNTY**

Good quality hay 1c & 2c from western US & Canada. Alfalfa orchard and orchard sweet grass. 18 to 20% plus protein. Large bales and organic by trailer loads. Large or small square bales of straw whole or processed at farm we load or direct delivery by trailer load. 802-849-6266 or 802-373-5217 (12)

**WASHINGTON COUNTY**

Small square bales - 1st and 2nd cut; excellent quality. \$5.00/ bale at the Paquet Farm, Barre 802-476-5082 (8)

**Sheep & Goats**

Ice House Farm dairy goat kids available. Disease free herd. Saanen & Alpine lines averaging over 4,000 pounds of milk per season. Call 802-247-1443 (8)

Alpine kids \$200. CAE/CL/ Johnes negative. ADGA top genetics. <http://www.sagefarmgoatdairy.com> Katie 802-461-9025 [kpindell@gmail.com](mailto:kpindell@gmail.com) (8)

Villa Villekulla Farm yearlings for sale. Purebred Alpine and Alpine-Nubian crosses. No milking records available but all boast Lazy Lady genetics. From tested disease-free herd. Two-year old does in milk also available. Must go in pairs at minimum. Experienced goat handlers and small scale farms only. Contact [lauren@villavillekullafarm.com](mailto:lauren@villavillekullafarm.com) for pricing and more info. (10)

**Wanted**

Maltese pup or young dog. 802-885-6450 (8)

Help Wanted year round on our organic livestock (Angus beef, pork, lamb) farm in N. Danville, Vt. Part time position consists of morning chores (7:30-10:30am) Monday-Friday and every other weekend. Full time position possible for someone willing to do chores and who has experience with outdoor work (fencing, hay-ing, logging) as well. We also would allow someone to use the farm to produce for themselves and market through our on-farm store (chicken, eggs, produce, etc). Pay depends on experience with entry level at \$15/hr. We would assist someone from out of town in finding rental housing. Contact Vince Foy at [badgerbrookmeats@gmail.com](mailto:badgerbrookmeats@gmail.com) or 802-748-8461. (8)

Fahr KH40 hay tedder for parts. Contact Dan, Hinesburg VT 802 482-2047 (9)

Caretaker for beautiful "hobby" farm in the Upper Valley of Vermont, Woodstock area. On site detached housing provided. Part or full time duties. Perfect for retired person or couple. Basic horse experience preferred but not necessary. References required, Make inquiries by email: [morganmiltimore@gmail.com](mailto:morganmiltimore@gmail.com) or call 802 436 1111. (9)

**For Sale**

419 acre organic farm: 2 robotic milkers, 3 bunker silos, 275/100 freestall, 4 bedroom farm house Call 802-537-2435 or 802-345-5543 (9)

**For Immediate Release**

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets have received an application for a Milk Handlers license from the following entity: Good Hands Farm, LLC, of Brownsville, VT to buy/sell, transport, process, package and bargain milk and 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 August 15, 2023.

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.



**Recovery Resources**

*continued from page 1*

website at <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/flood>.

- If you need immediate support, please dial 2-1-1, or visit Vermont 2-1-1 to connect to a Community Resource Specialist.
- Vermont is working with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) on a disaster declaration. Farms should document property damage and crop or livestock loss. At the time of this writing, it is unknown what aid programs may become available but documentation of loss will be needed.

Farmers should assess damages field by field and crop by crop. If you have questions you can reach out to your local Farm Service Agency (FSA) County Office.

- Farms without crop insurance can still report losses at their local FSA Office.
- If you are interested in volunteering to assist with recovery efforts, you can register for the State of Vermont Volunteer organization.
- For specific questions about how produce crops or fields may be affected by flooding, please contact the Vermont Produce Program Team at AGR.

Produce@vermont.gov or 802-622-4412. Under U.S. law, crops where the edible portion of the plant has contacted flood waters are considered adulterated and cannot be sold for human consumption. For more information, please review the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) Resources for Human and Animal Food Producers Affected by Flooding.

By the time you are reading this, road closures and washouts may no longer be impacting our roads. Below is guidance for all farms, co-ops, and haulers if farms and processing plants are out of reach or unable to have necessary staff to process milk.

- If you are required to dump your own milk or are accepting a load of milk from another farm operation, a manure pit is the best location to dump



milk, assuming there is adequate pit capacity and freeboard requirements are maintained. Please ensure to maintain accurate records.

- If you are a co-op or a waste hauler looking to dispose of milk or other non-sewage waste at a farm operation into a manure pit or a digester, please contact Jessa Mason with the Non-Sewage Waste Program at 802-595-4726 or Jessica.Mason@vermont.gov

If there is an emergency where a farm does not have a manure pit and is required to find another alternative

for milk dumping and is seeking assistance to identify an appropriate location, please contact Nate Sands at 802-224-6850 or Nathaniel.Sands@vermont.gov.

We recognize that recovery from this emergency will take significant time, energy, and resources. The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets is here to help. Other state agricultural organizations can also help, including Farm First. They can assist farmers and their families with access to resources including technical, legal, or financial assistance as well as to a counselor or trained peer.

**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 now 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)

**Vermont Fairs and Field Days 2023**

Vermont Fairs will continue to follow state and federal COVID-19 guidelines. Please know that the situations are still changing frequently so we suggest you visit the individual Fair's web site for the most current information.

- Franklin County Field Days . . . . . August 3-6, 2023
- Addison County Fair & Field Day . . . . . August 8-12, 2023
- Deerfield Valley Farmers Day . . . . . August 10-13, 2023
- Vermont State Fair . . . . . August 15-19, 2023
- Caledonia County Fair . . . . . August 23-27, 2023
- Bondville Fair . . . . . August 25-27, 2023
- Champlain Valley Exposition . . . . . August 25 - September 3, 2023
- Guilford Fair . . . . . September 3-4, 2023
- Orleans County Fair . . . . . September 6-10, 2023
- The Tunbridge World's Fair . . . . . September 14-17, 2023



# Stress Management

By Farm First

**Y**ou may have heard that not all stress is bad – and that’s true. Acute stress triggers cortisol, which can be energizing, focusing, and motivating – all things we need to escape danger. Our bodies and minds are built for handling that type of stress for short bursts of time, and then recovering. How fast we recover from a bout of stress is a measure of resiliency.

What our bodies and minds are less equipped for is ongoing or chronic stress, where there is crisis after crisis, or even small, nagging stressors that keep the cortisol flowing day in and day out. Kind of like farming.

Everyone tolerates and manages their stressors differently. Some people go from challenge to challenge,

volleying whatever comes their way like a pro tennis player. For other people, it may feel more like they are being tackled by a pro football player every day and end up feeling pretty beat up by the end of the season. And for others, it may seem like they’re keeping up well, but the stress is taking its

toll in other ways, like in relationships or unhealthy coping mechanisms.

Would you like a stress management check-in?

A stress management check-in is a 45-minute conversation with a Farm First Wellness Coach to learn about your lifestyle and how you’re managing stress, and a

follow-up session 3 months later. If desired, they can offer you free resources.

For participating in the check-in and follow-up sessions, farmers will receive a total of \$100.

Check-in conversations can take place at your farm or via Zoom. Sign-up by calling the Farm First

Wellness Coach, Ginger at 802-277-6560 or send an email to [GingerC@investeap.org](mailto:GingerC@investeap.org)

Check-ins are only available for the first 50 participants, so reach out to Ginger today!

Contact Farm First if you have any other questions or concerns at 802-318-5538.

## 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.

Jenn LaValley  
[Jenn.LaValley@vermont.gov](mailto:Jenn.LaValley@vermont.gov)  
802-828-2431

#### 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.

Sonia Howlett  
[Sonia.Howlett@vermont.gov](mailto:Sonia.Howlett@vermont.gov)  
802-522-4655

#### Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

Implementation costs of vegetated buffers and rental payments for maintained buffers on Vermont 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

### Early Summer 2023

#### Dairy Packaging Innovation Grant

Grants to support modernized packaging initiatives that prioritize sustainability, scalability, and marketability

Kathryn Donovan  
[Kathryn.Donovan@vermont.gov](mailto:Kathryn.Donovan@vermont.gov)  
802-585-4571

### August

#### Working Lands Enterprise Fund Service Provider Grants & Contracts

Grants and contracts for service providers that support agriculture and forestry businesses

Clare Salerno  
[Working.Lands@vermont.gov](mailto:Working.Lands@vermont.gov)  
802-917-2637

### Fall 2023

#### On-Farm Milk Storage & Handling Grant

Grants to provide dairy farmers with funds that support the purchase and supplies to improve milk storage, handling and energy efficiencies

Ben Eldredge  
[Ben.Eldredge@vermont.gov](mailto:Ben.Eldredge@vermont.gov)  
802-522-9478

#### Dairy Food Safety and Certification Grant

Grants to support food safety projects, including specialized equipment purchase, supplies, food safety training, and certifications.

Ben Eldredge  
[Ben.Eldredge@vermont.gov](mailto:Ben.Eldredge@vermont.gov)  
802-522-9478

#### Working Lands Enterprise Initiative Business Enhancement Grants

Grants to provide farm and forest businesses with funds to support marketing, infrastructure, equipment, workforce development, and energy-focused projects

Clare Salerno  
[clare.salerno@vermont.gov](mailto:clare.salerno@vermont.gov)  
802-917-2637



# Agency of Agriculture Emergency Flood Resources

The Agency of Agriculture has compiled response & recovery information and resources in recognition of the State of Emergency. The devastation that has impacted our state's agricultural communities has been severe and destructive. We are thinking dearly of people who have lost some or all, and hope that you are safe and recovering.

You can access all the response and recovery information at our 2023 Flooding Disaster Response and Recovery Resources webpage.

You can also email [agr.floodresponse@vermont.gov](mailto:agr.floodresponse@vermont.gov) or call 802-828 5667 if you have specific questions or concerns.

## Reporting Losses:

If you have not done so already, please assess damages field by field and crop by crop. If you have ques-

tions, reach out to your local Farm Service Agency (FSA) County Office.

University of Vermont Extension has access to a drone to help you document evidence of crop loss & damage. Please contact [uas@uvm.edu](mailto:uas@uvm.edu) to access this resource.

- Producers with private crop insurance should call their crop insurance agent to report losses.
- Producers with FSA NAP coverage should reach out to their local FSA Office to report losses.
- Limited Resource, Beginning Farmer, SDA Farmer, Veteran Farmer individuals may have been automatically enrolled in FSA NAP coverage. Please reach out to your local FSA Office to confirm.
- Emergency Livestock Assistance Program (ELAP) – This program

may assist with both feed and livestock losses (including bees). Producers can reach out to their local FSA Office for more information.

- Farms without crop insurance can still report losses at their local FSA Office

## Info for Vermont Produce Growers:

If you experienced flooding or damage in your produce fields, please visit the Vermont Produce Program webpage for up-to-date Agency guidance. Under U.S. law, crops where the edible portion of the plant

has contacted flood water are considered adulterated and cannot be sold for human consumption.

You can also contact the Vermont Produce Program Team with specific questions at [AGR.produce@vermont.gov](mailto:AGR.produce@vermont.gov) or 802-622-4412.

## Guidance for Meat & Poultry Handlers:

Are you a licensed meat and poultry handler, including commercial/custom slaughter and processing, retailer, wholesale distributor, or warehouse?

The Agency has new guidance on re-opening your facility after flooding. If you

are a commercial processing facility working under a grant of inspection, please also see 9 CFR § 318.14 Adulteration of product by polluted water; procedure for handling.

## Free Resources and Support for Farmers

Farm owners and their family members can access Farm First, a free and confidential business and personal service providing technical, legal, financial, and mental health services to those in need.

Access services by visiting [farmfirst.org](http://farmfirst.org) or calling 1-877-493-6216.

## For Immediate Release

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets have received an application for a Milk Handlers license from the following entity: Mac's Happy Acres LLC, of Plainfield, New Hampshire to transport milk 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 August 15, 2023.

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.





**Access to Capital**

*continued from page 7*

way. Millennials are more likely to value strong local food systems and community (see Consumer Demand brief), and are interested in alternative investment opportunities.

- Impact investing has gained traction among a wide range of investors, including the largest financial institutions, pension funds, family offices, private wealth managers, foundations, individuals, commercial banks, and development finance institutions. Impact investing refers to investments made into companies, organizations, and funds with the intention to generate a measurable, beneficial, social or environmental impact alongside a financial return.

**Summary**

Human and social capital are as important to food

system businesses as financial capital. Having the right people and talent, networks, and connections is as critical as money to grow a business, and can assist with the transition of that business to new ownership when the time comes. Human capital is defined as the team that brings value to your organization. Social capital is the connections and shared values that exist between people and enable cooperation. When a company has developed social capital, it is much easier to access other resources such as investors, recruiting experts, or building a team. Even if a company is generating revenue and has a great team, without a network of supporters, the first bump along the way may send the company down a road they can't recover from. The recommendations below offer ways to support entrepreneurs and their need for financial, human, and social capital.

**Recommendations**

- Provide at least \$1.5 million in funding annually to the Working Lands Enterprise Fund. These grant funds are a unique and critical source of capital that leverage and accelerate innovation and sustainability in Vermont food system businesses.
- Work with public-private entities to explore the creation of an Agricultural Loan Loss Reserve Fund for businesses that need financing but lack collateral. Such a fund would serve as a guarantee in lieu of collateral, and only be drawn from upon loss of principal.
- Foster regional relationships across New England states to bring regional capital (financial, social, human) into Vermont for food system businesses (e.g., Northern New England Women's Investors Network, New Hampshire and Maine Charitable Foundations). In particular, convene

- philanthropic, public, and private organizations to collaborate on solutions for farm-transfer financing (e.g., down payment on land, guarantees for farmers who provided owner financing, and lease-to-own models designed to address farmer needs and interests).
- Provide targeted education and outreach to main street investors (non-accredited) to build awareness of opportunities to invest in intermediary institutions, such as Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) and credit unions who are lending to and/or investing in food system businesses.
- Revise the Vermont Training Program statute to enable funding for food system and working lands entrepreneurs who want to secure coaching and mentoring services (e.g.,

- leadership and CEO/peer-to-peer mentoring). As businesses grow and scale, entrepreneurs and founders need the same support an incumbent worker may need to upgrade their skills.
- The Vermont State Treasurer should expand the focus of the state's Local Investment Initiative to include investments that support a healthy food system in Vermont. Investments could be in the fixed income public markets, fixed income private debt markets, cash, and real assets. The Soil Wealth report provides guidance on investing in agriculture across asset classes.
- Explore what would be required to develop a college loan forgiveness program for aspiring farmers to make it easier for them to acquire land and start their farm.

**Fish with a Warden**

Join Vermont State Game Wardens for an evening of fishing at Vermont State Parks. This event is designed for anglers with prior fishing experience and are looking to build confidence on the water. All ages and abilities are welcome. Here is a perfect opportunity if you're looking for a group fishing experience.

- Time: 6:00pm - 8:00pm
- You need to bring your own fishing equipment.
- Fishing licenses are required.
- Use fees at State Parks are waived for this program.
- Registration is required (limited to 25 people per session).  
vtfishandwildlife.com

**August Dates:**  
Thursday, August 3, 2023  
Ricker Mills State Forest, Groton  
Thursday, August 17, 2023  
Little River Dam, Waterbury



**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 or Pesticide	802-828-2431
Feed, Seed, Fertilizer & Lime	802-828-5050
Licensing & Registration	802-828-2436
Meat Inspection	802-828-2426
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



# Beech Leaf Disease: Be on the Lookout

By Christa Lessing, UVM Extension

The American beech (*Fagus grandifolia*) is a majestic tree, capable of growing up to 70 feet in height, with a canopy spread of 40 feet. They are beloved ornamentals and important forest trees recognizable by smooth grey bark (often carved with the initials of young couples), pointed leaf buds, and in the winter, the dead leaves remaining on the branches. Of course, if you knew all that already, you've probably heard whispers of a novel beech disease that affects developing leaf buds. If you've been out of state for a summer vacation in the last few years, you may have seen it. How would you know if beech leaf disease, often abbreviated as "BLD", has infected your beech trees?

The first cases of BLD were found in 2012, on American beech in Ohio. In 2020, researchers at the USDA found that a species of nematode (a roundworm), *Litylenchus crenatae* subspecies *mccannii*, would consistently appear wherever the disease did. There is strong evidence to suggest that the nematode is responsible for the symptoms of BLD, but there is some debate on the role of several bacterial and fungal strains also associated



with the infection.

Learning the identity of the pest is the first big step to fighting against it, but at this point, the knowledge gap is still enormous. Unfortunately, we know very little about the organism, its life cycle or how it spreads. We do know that the nematodes cause damage to developing leaf buds, which makes the new leaves come out with bands of dark, thickened, or blistered tissue between veins. This makes for a highly distinctive banding pattern easiest to see when standing under the leaves and looking up at a light source, like the bright sky. BLD is fatal and has been observed to take 6-10 years to kill a tree as the nematodes cause more damage (though this may not hold true in New England), with younger trees often

dying faster. As it progresses, the damage to the leaves becomes more extreme. They can become curled, deformed, dark green or yellow, and may drop prematurely. Eventually, the trees become unable to produce new leaves and die.

It's unclear how the pest spreads, though its rapid progression through the country has led to some speculation that it is spread through vectors including birds, insects, and humans. BLD has spread rapidly though southern New England since its first detection in Connecticut in 2020. It has since been found in Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Maine, and New Hampshire. It is not currently known to be in Vermont.

Even in the absence of BLD, beech trees in the state may have experienced dam-

age from other stresses. To start, this year's late-May freeze event caused a lot of leaf die-back in species like beech. Native mites and insects like the beech leaf rolling aphid can cause the leaves to yellow, thicken, and curl in a way that may resemble late-stage BLD to the unwary observer. Among all of these different types of damage, the symptom that best indicates whether a tree has BLD is the highly distinctive dark bands between the veins of the leaves- so if you think you see the stripes in ANY leaves on a beech tree in Vermont, be sure to report it here. While not a strong BLD look-alike, it is also worth noting the prevalence of beech bark disease (BBD). Caused by an insect-fungal complex, BBD is characterized by rough-looking, blistered bark. This complex,

which has been widespread in Vermont for many years, may make trees more susceptible to BLD.

At this time, there is no effective treatment for BLD (for ornamentals or forest trees). Beech trees are known to provide valuable habitats and food for wildlife. They are a staple in Vermont forests, which can consist of 40% beech. With the limited information we have to work with, our best chance against BLD (and other pests and pathogens yet to emerge) is to prevent its spread as much as we can and to keep learning more about it. As always, don't move untreated wood (firewood or otherwise) from place to place. If you think you've spotted BLD, help us keep track by reporting it here: <https://vtinvasives.org/get-involved/report/reporting-a-tree-disease>.

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