

AGRiVIEW



Published monthly by the Vermont Agency of Agriculture • www.Agriculture.Vermont.gov

Best Management Practices Program Applications Due April 1

By Ellen Friedrich, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

The Best Management Practices (BMP) Program provides technical and financial assistance to farmers for the implementation of engineered, structural improvements on farmsteads which are designed to protect and improve water quality. The BMP program provides up to 90% cost share on eligible practices. The following are some examples of BMP eligible practices:

- Manure storage structures
- Composting stack pads
- Barnyard runoff collection systems
- Gutter & ditches to divert clean water
- Laneway development and stream crossings for livestock



The left image depicts the Severy Farm before BMP project implementation. The right image depicts the Severy Farm with the new manure pit, barnyard, stack pad, and access road installed with the help of BMP funds.

• Milk house waste collection and treatment systems

Since 2020, the BMP program has provided nearly 40 million dollars in cost share supporting water quality improvements on about 130 different farms across the state. The

Severy Farm, owned and operated by Nate and Karianne Severy, is one of the many farms which has received technical and financial assistance through the BMP program.

The Severy Farm is a small 100% grassfed and organic dairy

in Cornwall, VT. With the help of BMP funding, the Severys did a major revamp of their waste collection and management systems. They replaced an old and damaged

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Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

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THE VIEW FROM 116 STATE STREET

“Facilitate, support and encourage the growth and viability of agriculture while protecting the working landscape, human health, animal health, plant health, consumers and the environment.” That’s our mission at the Vermont Agency of Agriculture. We have been sharing this statement with lawmakers and the public this year. We must never forget our mission or who we serve.

We have spent the last few months on the road talking and listening to those who are making their living in agriculture. Our listening sessions in all corners of Vermont have been well attended and informative. We are grateful to all our partners who have helped us organize these meetings with the farm community. We have heard from maple producers,

dairy farmers, fruit and vegetable growers, beekeepers, consumers, and countless others who are making their living off the land. We will keep listening and learning.

Over the next few months, we will be following up on some of the issues we heard from the public. They may be issues solving a “simple” problem or maybe it’s taking a stab at some long-term issues. For example, we heard that our granting programs are at times too complicated and cumbersome. Could we make it simpler to allow more to participate in programs with a simpler application? We are looking at this issue.

We also heard about maple. Some of the producers want more information on how the price of maple is set. Like the dairy world, understanding the price a producer gets for its product is complicated. We will do our best to get some answers. Are there any maple

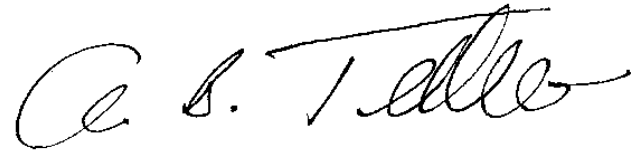
economists out there?

We were asked to investigate ag plastics. Some are frustrated that there is not a clear system to recycle plastic that’s used to wrap hay or plastic that’s used by fruit and vegetable farmers. We will explore this issue this summer. If you have some ideas share them with us.

These are just a few issues we discussed in our statewide listening tour. There were many more including recovering from the severe weather that dominated Vermont in 2023. As we head into a new growing season we will continue to work with farmers on recovery. Several private groups and the

Agency are doing their best to raise dollars for farmers. We are grateful for all those involved in Dig Deep Vermont. This group is raising money and distributing grants to farmers hurt by the flooding and severe weather. You can learn more by visiting www.digdeepvt. This campaign will run into the summer hoping to help farmers get to a better place. Please reach out to us to learn more.

There is a lot to do as we head into a new growing season. Wishing you a quiet and productive spring and keep feeding us suggestions so we can make Vermont a better place to live, work and play.



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

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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

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E-mail: agr.agriview@vermont.gov

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This Month’s Recipe

Maple Candied Bacon

Ingredients

- 1 lb thick-cut applewood smoked bacon, best quality
- 2½ tablespoons packed brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons maple syrup
- 1½ teaspoons chipotle chile powder (optional)

Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F and set a rack in middle position. Line a baking sheet with aluminum foil and set an oven-proof rack over top.
2. Arrange the bacon in a single layer on the rack. Bake for 20 minutes.
3. Meanwhile, in a small bowl, stir together the brown sugar, syrup, and chipotle powder. Set aside.
4. Remove the pan from the oven and flip the bacon slices. Using a small spoon, spread the sugar-syrup mixture evenly over the bacon. Place the pan back in the oven and continue cooking for 20-35 minutes more. The longer you cook, the crispier the bacon and less sticky the coating.
5. Transfer to parchment paper covered pan. Let sit 10-15 minutes before eating.



Checking Your Grazing Pastures

By Kristin Haas, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

The welcomed signs of spring – melting snow, longer days, return of the red-winged blackbirds, and those infamous muddy roads – should be triggers to all livestock owners to survey your grazing pastures.

This is something you may already do routinely, but if you haven't in a while, we recommend picking a week this month and going on a pasture walk-about, keeping your eyes peeled for items that can threaten the health and safety of your livestock and poultry. Items that can cause lead poisoning in livestock and poultry are some of the deadliest hazards you can remove from grazing areas. Things discarded in rubbish piles or accidentally made accessible to livestock can constitute a significant animal health, food safety, and financial risk. The most common sources of on-farm lead include:

- Spent lead-acid car/boat/tractor batteries
- Paint tins and painted surfaces – machinery, auto bodies, sheds/barns

- Grease or oil filters
- Putty and caulking
- Linoleum
- Spent sump oil

Cattle and poultry are most prone to lead toxicity because of their inquisitive nature and indiscriminate eating habits, and cattle because of their attraction to the sweet taste of lead and lead salts. Cattle will readily lick and chew discarded lead-acid batteries, and if battery casings have lost integrity over time or batteries have been burned, lead is readily accessible to those probing tongues. Pre-weaned calves are even more vulnerable. While adult cattle absorb 1-2% of ingested lead, milk calves' immature digestive systems are like sponges and can absorb up to 50% of ingested lead.

Poisoned animals develop neurologic and gastrointestinal illness and may even die from lead toxicosis. Elevated lead levels can persist in animals' bodies for years and can be found in unsafe levels in affected animals' milk and meat. Treatment for lead poisoning is expensive and often not successful. Some treatments available for use in companion animal species are not



Beef and dairy breeds are susceptible to lead poisoning. It is more about the exposure vs. the breed. Photo source: iStockphoto.

approved for use in food producing animals. In the absence of treatment, animals and the food products they produce could be quarantined for months or years due to lead residues – a significant financial hit for impacted farm

So, you may be asking yourself what you can do to remedy this issue. As the saying goes, “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.” We urge you to pick a week right after the snow melts and the ground is bare, to take a walk-about around your livestock and poultry living areas to do the following:

- Look for rubbish piles or other debris areas that could contain the risky materials described above. This is especially important if you are surveying pastures that are new to you (rented, recently purchased, etc.) but it is also worth taking a fresh look at pastures you have used for years.

Remember that over time, rubbish piles can become overgrown with brush and forgotten, so look closely.

- If possible, remove the risk. To safely dispose of batteries and other solid waste, visit Contact Your Waste District or Town | Department of Environmental Conservation to connect with your Solid Waste District or town. If you are not able to determine a method of disposal through municipal channels, contact the Department of Environmental Conservation's Solid Waste Management program at 802-828-1138 for advisement.
 - Batteries should ALWAYS be removed, but if removal of other hazards is not an option, fence off the risk. Consider fencing off outbuildings with lead paint, equipment storage areas containing risky materials, and “resting”/unused vehicles or farm machinery.
- If you experience livestock illness or death and are concerned about lead toxicosis, consult your veterinarian for evaluation and diagnostic testing that can help clarify whether lead poisoning is the culprit. Watch a short video to review the clinical signs associated with lead poisoning.

For more information, contact the Animal Health office by email Agr.animalhealth@vermont.gov or by phone (802) 828-2421.



An example of farm- or home-based rubbish that can be a hazard to livestock. Photo source: iStockphoto



This is a great example of the type of farm equipment that should be made inaccessible to livestock. Photo source: iStockphoto

DAIRY BUSINESS INNOVATION CENTER

Reflecting on Success: The Impact of NE-DBIC's Marketing and Branding Grant

By Ali Boochever, Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center

While Vermont may produce the most milk in New England, there are also many great dairy farmers and processors beyond our borders. At the Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center (NE-DBIC), we fund grant projects in 11 Northeast states. With an aim to increase resiliency in the dairy sector, taking a regional approach allows NE-DBIC to connect and support dairy across state lines. While we typically highlight Vermont grantees in Agriview, we also want to zoom out and share how our Vermont-based team is impacting the wider region.

Take Bell & Goose Cheese Co, for example. In 2022, NE-DBIC awarded Bell & Goose a Dairy Marketing and Branding Services Grant. A year later, they have much to show. Located on Heron Pond Farm in South Hampton, NH, with milk from Breezy Hill Creamery in Greenland, NH, Anna Cantelmo of Bell & Goose has been making an array of cheeses since 2016. Thanks to their Dairy Marketing and Branding Services Grant project, Bell & Goose has acquired all the assets necessary to take their business to the next level. With help from their marketing consultant, The Social HQ, Bell & Goose now has a new



Anna Cantelmo of Bell & Goose Cheese Company with Erick Lafferty of Breezy Hill Creamery.

website with e-commerce capabilities and active social media accounts. They also have a content packet for posting engaging content on their social media accounts, along with unified packaging for all cheeses, with each having a cohesive logo and

label. This includes necessary nutritional information and bar codes, allowing them to sell to larger stores and outlets. Additionally, they have printed marketing materials and professional photography to help tell the unique story of Bell & Goose Cheese Co.

The work produced from this grant will allow for more wholesale and direct-to-consumer sales abilities and overall increased brand awareness. "The materials and our revamped website have significantly improved our sales and relationships with wholesale distributors," Cantelmo says. "We're excited about the possibility of shipping our products, which could be a whole new revenue stream." What's more, "the completion of this project has opened doors to new connections in the dairy industry. From chefs to buyers, these relationships are invaluable for future growth."

Thanks to the grant and the new perspective gained about the value in seeking out opportunities, Bell & Goose applied for, and won a bronze medal, at the

American Cheese Society for 2023 for their marinated feta cheese, further boosting their wholesale sales.

Last but not least, as Cantelmo was able to focus more on her marketing strategy, she saw the need to re-start the New Hampshire Cheese Guild both for herself as an NH cheese maker and with the philosophy that "a rising tide lifts all ships." She is now the President of the Guild and is helping to connect dairy farmers with cheesemakers to make it easier for them to find each other going forward. Watch for a NH Cheese Guild website launching soon!

The next round of the Dairy Marketing & Branding Services Grant opens this month. Learn how to apply at nedairyinnovation.com/dairy-marketing-branding-services/

Current and Upcoming Dairy Grants

By Ali Boochever, Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center

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

receive technical assistance, consider applying for an NE-DBIC grant.

Open Funding Opportunities

Goat & Sheep Dairy Supply Chain Development Grant

This grant program will provide funds to strengthen and support the growth of the Northeast goat and sheep dairy sector through projects that address one of

the following:

- 1) business viability,
- 2) market development, or
- 3) innovative approaches to production.

This program will fund two types of projects:

1. **Individual Business**
Projects are for farmers or processors making necessary improvements to increase business viability, market development, or innovations in production.
2. **Sector Enhancement**

Projects must directly engage multiple dairy businesses in activities which improve or expand small ruminant production practices or dairy markets. Projects should strengthen relationships across the goat/sheep dairy supply chain such as farmer-to-farmer, farmer-processor, or processor-customer relationships.

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Upcoming Funding Opportunities

Dairy Marketing & Branding Services Grant

This grant will provide funds for established value-added dairy processors and producer associations to access professional marketing and branding services to elevate their value-added dairy businesses. Up to 25% of the grant funds can be used to implement the strategy and/or content developed by the contractor.

The RFA for this program will be released April 9, 2024. Awards will range from \$10,000 to \$50,000 with approximately \$300,000 total funds available this round.

Dairy Processor Start-Up Grant

Processor Start-up Grants will be available to dairy farmers looking to diversify by adding processing to their

operation. Non-farm applicants are eligible to start up dairy processing businesses if they have established a business entity prior to applying and can demonstrate strong experience in dairy processing and value-added business start-up. Those who have started up dairy processing businesses after January 1, 2023 are eligible to apply. Grants will range from \$15,000 to \$75,000.

Funds may be used to purchase specialized dairy processing equipment and/or supplies, increase food safety, marketing and branding, market access, and/or product development.

Applicants will be required to utilize technical assistance or training as a subset of their funds in their projects. Applicants are strongly encouraged to engage in technical assistance such as business planning, market research, or other relevant pre-work ahead of applying.

Grants are available to applicants in all Northeast states: Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

Full program details will

be posted in early summer.

Co-packing Start-up Grant

Co-packer Start-up Grants will be available to existing dairy processors only. Processors who have not previously co-packed will be eligible for funds to add co-packing capabilities to their current business. Processors that currently co-pack will be eligible for funds for activities that will add new co-packing partnerships, scale up existing co-packing relationships, or add additional co-packed product lines. Grants will range from \$15,000 to \$150,000.

Funds may be used to purchase specialized dairy processing equipment and/or supplies, increase food safety, marketing and branding,

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New Research on Opportunities for Vermont Goat Dairy

By Katie Spring, Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center

New research on the potential for goat dairy development is now available. Funded by the Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center and conducted by Vermont Creamery in partnership with UVM, the goal for this work was to quantitatively and

qualitatively understand the current goat dairy sector in Vermont, near-term opportunities for developing the sector, and what producers need to be successful operators.

The research looks at existing goat dairies in Vermont, from farmstead cheese producers to fluid milk producers, along with cow dairies to understand the potential for conversion or diversification. The project

also explored the existing educational opportunities as well as what technical assistance and resources would help to support expansion of the goat dairy industry in Vermont. Get the key findings, recommendations to expand the goat dairy sector, and watch Vermont Creamery's webinar on the NE-DBIC website: nedairy-innovation.com/vermont-goat-dairy-research



Dairy Grants

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The deadline for grant applications has been extended to June 6, 2024, at 2 PM ET. Awards will range from \$15,000 to \$50,000 for Individual Business Grants and \$25,000 to \$75,000 for Sector Enhancement Grants with a 25% match commitment. Approximately \$760,000 total funds available this round.

Dairy Trade Show Assistance Grant

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

to-business trade shows. This grant will support established value-added dairy processor businesses and producer associations in increasing exposure and promotion of their regionally produced dairy products. Grant funds will cover the cost of attending tradeshows including registration, travel, costs of product samples, production and distribution of sell-sheets and other marketing materials, professional branding and design services, trade show booth set-up, and more.

Applications are being accepted on a rolling basis until June 25, 2024. Awards will range from \$5,000 to \$20,000. Approximately \$125,000 total funds available this round.

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

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

In 2023, the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets recently began offering agriculture employers the opportunity to advertise their open employment positions on the Agency's website. Each job is posted by the employer through an online



entry portal. This page is specifically designed to connect agricultural sector employers with potential

employees in a user friendly, free format.

The page allows employers to include helpful details about their positions like duration (seasonal vs. year-round) and included benefits such as housing. All submitted job postings are reviewed for completeness and published bi-weekly. The Agency will post each job for 2 weeks unless otherwise informed by the employer that the job should remain posted. We encourage anyone seeking employment, or if you know of anyone seeking an agriculture job, to visit this site for newly posted jobs available now. We also hope any employer will consider this site an opportunity for posting your agriculture job to include in your outreach efforts.

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

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

DISCLAIMER: The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets (AAFM) compiles farm employment opportunities on its website from external sources as a courtesy to farms and prospective employees. AAFM does not have a role in farm employment and offers this resource as a potential means for farms and prospective employees to connect. AAFM does not create the posted information, does not evaluate its accuracy, and does not vet or endorse prospective employers or employees. All related information is strictly provided by external sources and AAFM does not control, maintain, or verify

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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

Funding Opportunities continued from page 5

market access, and/or product development.

Applicants will be required to utilize technical assistance or training as a subset of their funds in their projects. Applicants are strongly encouraged to engage in technical assistance such as business planning, market research, or other relevant pre-work ahead of applying.

Grants are available to

applicants in all Northeast states: Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

Full program details will be posted in winter 2024. For more information about these grants, contact the NE-DBIC team at agr.dairy-innovation@vermont.gov

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

How to Apply for \$600 Pandemic Stipend in Vermont

By Farm First

The Farm and Food Worker Relief (FFWR) Program from the U.S Department of Agriculture provides eligible workers with \$600 stipends for expenses caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. Farmworkers (dairy, meat, and produce) who worked between January 27, 2022 and May 11, 2023, within the United States or U.S territories are eligible.



FarmFirst
Resources and support for farmers

Immigration status is not an eligibility criteria but workers need to provide proof of identify and employment.

Workers who are eligible for relief payments are those in frontline farming activities, grocery stores, or meatpacking* who incurred expenses due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This work should have been performed in the United States or certain U.S. territories (Guam, American Samoa, or Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands) between January 27, 2020, and May 11, 2023. Applicants must self-certify

they have not received this relief from another grantee.

Eligible workers can apply through PASA Sustainable Agriculture, which has partnered with other organizations in Vermont to connect with farmworkers and support them through the application process. You can access the PASA application at www.farmworkers.org.

Support is available 24/7 via email, in English at support@pasafarming.org,

or in Spanish at apoyo@pasafarming.org.

Toll free phone support is available in English and Spanish at (833) 469-3397 on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11:30 am–2:30 pm ET.

Farmworkers in Vermont are encouraged to apply as soon as possible. Processing times vary, but can take several weeks. It's very likely that these application windows will permanently close by early summer.

Spring Manure Stewardship Reminder

By the Water Quality Division, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

While the winter manure spreading ban formally ends on April 1 of each year, please remember that there are additional requirements laid out in the Required Agricultural Practices (RAPs) that are intended to

prevent runoff.

It should be common knowledge by now that the RAPs prohibit application of manure to saturated, snow-covered, or frozen ground, on top of bedrock, or before major rain events at any time of year. These requirements should make common sense — you are restricted from spreading manure where that manure is unlikely to

infiltrate into the ground and would pose a significant potential of surface runoff to waters of the State.

Trends in Vermont's weather show increasing precipitation through the spring season, rising temperatures, and more extreme precipitation events. These conditions provide the potential for increased flooding and require farmers and custom manure applicators to remain vigilant through the spring season.

Individual field conditions will vary significantly across the State. So, when you start planning to spread manure this spring, take a moment to check the ground conditions and ensure that you are in compliance with the rules and are protecting Vermont's waterways.

If you still have capacity

in your manure pit, wait for the optimal weather and field conditions for spreading.

Remember, after spreading any nutrient (liquid or solid manure, compost, or fertilizer) be sure to keep

accurate records of the manure or nutrients applied.

If you have questions relating to manure spreading restrictions, please call the Agency of Agriculture at 802-828-2431 to learn more.



MFO Annual Report and Operating Fee Reminder

Medium Farm Operations (MFOs) must submit an annual report and operating fee of \$1,500 to the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets by April 30 of each year. A reminder email with 2024 annual report requirements will be sent out in March. Please contact Brittany Cole at (802) 522-7413 with questions or to request a mailed copy.

Invoices will be mailed to MFOs in March. Checks of \$1,500.00 should be made payable to Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets and can be submitted to:

VAAFAM, Attn Jeff Cook
116 State Street, Montpelier, VT 05620

April 8, 2024: Total Eclipse of the Sun

If you weren't aware, it's coming. And people are coming to Vermont watch. On April 8, 2024, at 2:14 p.m., a partial solar eclipse will begin. At 3:26 p.m., a total eclipse will darken Vermont's daytime sky, lasting about three minutes. The phenomenon will continue as a partial eclipse until 4:37 p.m. Along with this amazing, rare event in our solar system will

come many visitors to Vermont. The Vermont Department of Tourism is predicting many thousands will visit Vermont to witness the eclipse as the shadow will traverse across the state in our northern counties.

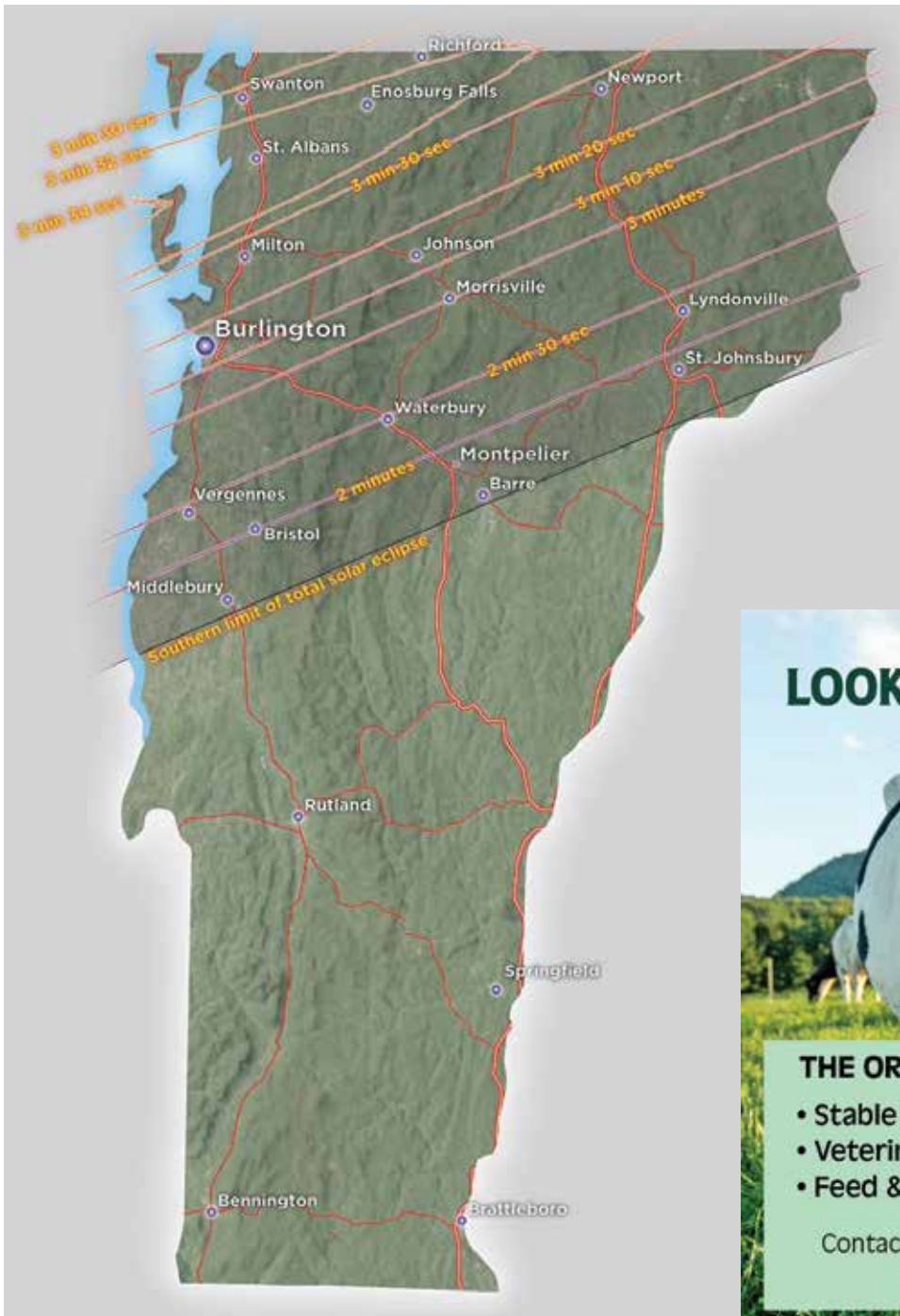
The full eclipse, called



totality, can be experienced from Burlington to Montpelier, St. Johnsbury, Hardwick, Newport, St. Albans, Stowe, Waterbury, and Winooski. Locations throughout the Northeast Kingdom are also in the path of totality. Ski areas in the northern region

will be celebrating the eclipse with music, dancing, and more. Find more information at Jay Peak, Burke, Smuggler's Notch, Stowe, Bolton Valley, and Sugarbush. While April is a transitional time for hiking trails in Vermont, our state parks have limited openings for the total solar eclipse. Rail trails and paved recreation trails are a great option for viewing including the Island

Line Trail, Stowe Recreation Path, Lamoille Valley Rail Trail, or the Beebe Spur Rail Trail. To find out more about how Vermont is preparing and how you can prepare to witness this spectacle, visit <https://www.vermont.gov/eclipse>. Search #VTEclipse on social media to see the latest messaging about the coming event.




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Apply Now for Funding for Spring Agronomic Practices

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

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets' Farm Agronomic Practices (FAP) Program invests state funds in soil-based agronomic practices to improve soil quality, increase crop

production, and reduce erosion and surface runoff from agricultural fields. Grant applications are currently open for spring conservation practices planned to be installed prior to June 30, 2024, such as manure injection (\$25/acre), conservation tillage (\$15/ac), no-till pasture and hayland renovation (\$30/ac) and

rotation of cropland into hay (\$35/ac or \$45/ac if a nurse crop is used).

Funding is limited and available on a first-come-first-served basis, so apply now! Applications are due at least 30 days prior to implementation, and the sooner the better.

You are eligible for these payments IF:

- You are a farm;
- You would implement no till, no till pasture and hayland renovation, crop rotation, or manure injection in the next few months if funded;
- You are not receiving payments for those practices from any other payment program; AND
- You haven't already hit your \$10,000 annual cap with practices paid for through FAP in the fall.

For more information on the FAP program, the payment rates for each practice type, and to apply online, go to <http://agriculture.vermont.gov>.



No till reseeding of pastures and hayland can improve forage quality and diversity while minimizing soil disturbance and improving organic matter.

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veda.org | info@veda.org | 802.828.5627



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VERMONT VEGETABLE AND BERRY NEWS



Compiled by Vern Grubinger,
University of Vermont
Extension
802-257-7967 ext. 303, or
vernon.grubinger@uvm.edu
www.vvbga.org

Reports From The Field

(Orwell) We are getting tunnels ready for spring and summer production; taking a little breather from winter greens has given us the headspace to feel more organized heading into spring. We've been working to build fertility in dormant tunnels through additions of farm-made compost and cover crops and are excited to get planting into improved soil.

Small systems improvements include installing a more sophisticated greenhouse controller in our prop house (thanks to Chris Callahan for helping to trouble shoot this) and partially rebuilding an older tunnel. Recent winds have convinced us that we really need to invest in a generator--at our small scale, we've always scrapped by with manual backup systems, but when the wind whips all night, it would be nice to sleep without so much anxiety.

Other stresses include dreaded aphids already appearing (the temptation to keep a few beds of kale

and spinach for personal consumption overwhelms logic) but we hope to control them before they jump to tomatoes. March's longer days mean the season is rolling and we are in for another wild ride, hopefully it is a more positive one for our grower community than last year.

(Dummerston) The mild winter has been great for high tunnel greens, but most are looking a bit tired now. Asian greens are starting to bolt. Downy mildew is starting in the spinach. I plan to increase plant spacing a bit next year to try to reduce bottom rot on the bok choy and others. But in a cold year it might not matter. That seems to be the tradeoff: in a warmer year there's more growth and less cold injury but more disease. I'm looking forward to the end of mud season so I can get to work outdoors.

(Guildhall) After strong holiday sales and an unusually busy January, February's sales were lackluster. A few solid shop projects have been seen to (spray coupes and potato trucks), and the slog that is bookkeeping this time of year. Potatoes are keeping well enough, but some varieties are starting to look their age.

(E. Wallingford) Most of the snow has melted this week. Time to start pruning blueberries and finish mulching blueberries. Has not gone below zero this winter yet. Buds on blueberries and new peach trees look good so far. Picked up irrigation system for frost control and flail mower to grind up brush.

No more hand picking and burning of brush from pruning.

(Putney) We have our new tomato grafting speed record of 260 in one hour.

High Tunnel Soil Testing

For established high tunnels growing in the ground we recommend using the University of Maine Soil Test Lab's Long Term Combined High Tunnel Package for \$30 per sample. This includes the Basic High Tunnel Test PLUS Saturated Media Extract for all major and micronutrients. Results show both season-long nutrient availability and short-term nutrient intensity.

Tech Tips From UVM Extension Ag Engineering

by Chris Callahan and Andy Chamberlin

A variety of seasonal guides can be found on our blog <https://blog.uvm.edu/cwcallah/>. Take a look at what others are doing with germination and start chambers and go down the technical rabbit hole with Chris in our germ chamber guide. As you start-up prop houses and tunnels take some time to do a quick safety check on your heaters to prevent problems (like this flame roll out) down

the road. Speaking of which, we've heard a lot of interest in monitoring options from low to high tech. You may want to check out our summary of available remote monitoring options. Are your walk-ins getting bare or empty? May be a great time to do a deep clean and spring cooler check to make sure you are ready to keep the season's bounty clean and cool.

Looking for something to listen to while you work? Andy's been busy mic'ing up growers and walking and talking to produce audio farm visits for The Farmer's Share podcast. Recent episodes include Pooh Sprague from Edgewater Farm and Geo Honigford (formerly) from Hurricane Flats Farm. Listen at <https://thefarmersshare.com/>

Pollinator Support Report

Laura Johnson, UVM
Extension Pollinator Support Specialist

If you are using commercial bumble bees for crop pollination this year, consider requesting queen excluders with your order. Review a new guide for more details, Protecting Wild Bee Crop Pollination Services: Commercial Bumble bee Best Management Practices. It can be found

on the pollinator support site <https://www.uvm.edu/extension/pollinator-support-resources>

Depending on the weather this month, you may start to see certain native bumble bee species starting to emerge from their overwintering sites looking for flowers to eat from and a new nest site to grow their summer colony. Remember as spring cleanup approaches to "leave the leaves" until we have steady nighttime temperatures in the 50s, as many wild pollinators are still in their nests found under leaves and in plant stems.

Health Savings Accounts

A farmer suggested we let others know about HSAs. These allow you to pay for unreimbursed medical expenses such as deductibles, co-payments, and services not covered by insurance—if you have a high-deductible health plan. A fact sheet from Rutgers University notes the tax advantages are typically that contributions are deductible, withdrawals are not taxed if used for medical expenses, earnings on the savings account are tax-exempt, and unspent balances may accumulate, see <https://njaes.rutgers.edu/health-finance/health-savings-accounts.php#what>

Farm Labor Dashboard

This project helps farm owners, managers and crew leaders build knowledge and skills they need to successfully recruit and manage the right employees for their operations. Visit their site at <https://www.uvm.edu/aglabor/dashboard/>



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.

Cattle

Jersey & Jersey/Holstein cross dairy cows, in Highgate Ctr Vermont; Certified Organic & Grass-only, very tame. Farmer retiring, needs surgery. Vaccinated, Negative for Johnes. Two A2 cows and ten A1 cows still need new homes! (as do 12 bred heifers, all A1, due to freshen in late spring). (802) 868-2356 (landline); (802) 370-1051 (cell); jjoust87@vt.edu (7)

4 AI Holstein heifers due in March. Georgia Vt. 802-527-2010 leave message. (7)

Equipment

One 48ft New Holland hay elevator, excellent shape. One John Deere 10ft Harrow transport. One 7.5 ton grain bin. 802-624-0143 (4)

Like new 80 Ft New Holland elevator, 7 ton brook grain bin, 10 ft John Deere KBA harrows, 15 ton bin, 3 klex auger – 350.00 call 802-624-0143 (6)

1 ½ horsepower Deloval vacuum pump good for sugaring or milking. 80ft New Holland hay elevator like new. 802-624-0143. (7)

Red Cedar fence posts 7ft & 8ft. 803-265-4566 (7)

Commercial Blooming onion cutter & frying tanks 802-365-4000 (7)



Massey-Harris "Pony" tractor with cultivators, plows, runs great. \$5,000. J.D. Gator - as is. Special \$950. Steel Totes 4x4 with plastic liner. \$99 each. 1-802-483-287 (7)

General

Trucking to C.V.L.M. every Tuesday, strong market, several buyers for Beef, Sheep, Goats. Call Eddie 1-802-483-2870 (7)

Hay, Feed & Forage

Hay small square bales 1st cut never wet. \$5 a bale. Leave message. 802-442-2646 (7)

Small square bales of 2022 1st cut, nice and dry \$5.00 per bale. Also have 2023 2nd cut for \$6.00 per bale. Call 802-223-5747 (7)

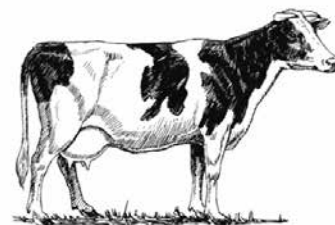
1st and 2nd cut round baled Hay, some wrapped, some not, Will Load, 4' X 4' Round Bales, prices vary depending on quantity, cutting, wrapped vs. unwrapped, quantity discount/cash prices available. Westford, Call 802-355-2930 (4)

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

1st cut 4x5 round bales – covered, no trucking. 802-265-4566 (4)

Riverview Market Farms has certified organic second cut hay available in round bales. \$70 per bale picked up at our farm at 68 East Putney Ferry Road Putney, VT 05346. Call Cory at 802-289-3420. (6)

Small square bales of 2022 1st cut nice and dry \$5.00 per bale. Also have 2023 2nd cut for \$6.00 per bale. Call 802-223-5747, leave message. (6)



THE VERMONT AG BULLETIN

Grants, Learning, News & More

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

FRANKLIN COUNTY

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

Wanted

Used 13" diameter scalloped disc harrow. 802-793-3688 (4)

30" -32" Steel farm implement wheels 802-365-4000 (4)

Beginner blacksmith Seeking blacksmith tools - tongs, hammers, and anvil. 802-482-2583 (6)

Help Wanted

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 telephone: 603-548-3890. (6)

Census of Agriculture Captures Changes in Vermont Agriculture

Dr. Vern Grubinger,
University of Vermont
Extension

The first Census of Agriculture was conducted in 1840, when Vermont produced 3.7 million pounds of wool from 1.7 million sheep, and just \$1.4 million of milk. Since then, data collected at regular intervals has documented ongoing, often dramatic, changes in farming.

The most recent census, taken in 2022, was just released. The 475-page Vermont report describes the products, land, and people that comprise our farm community, which now produces just 72,813 pounds of wool from 17,888 sheep, and \$599 million of milk.

Vermont has 6,537 farms, down 4% from 2017. We have 1,173,890 acres of farmland, but we lost 19,547 acres since 2017, presumably to development. These declines are attributable in part to the loss of 313 dairy farms over the same five years, a drop of 37 percent. The number of milk cows declined less, by 18%, to 105,514. The fluid milk produced by our remaining 528 cow dairies accounts for 58% of all agricultural sales in Vermont. Further, there are 265,275 forage acres, 110,962 pasture acres, and 74,800 corn silage acres, most of which feed cows. These data show how important dairy is to our agricultural economy and landscape.

Looking back 20 years,



to the 2002 Census, we had 6,571 farms, about the same as today, but 1,508 were dairies. So nearly a thousand farms have shifted from dairy to other products, making agriculture more diverse.

We now have 744 farms selling vegetables and 471 farms selling berries. There are 507 farms in the greenhouse and nursery business, 441 orchards, and 266 farms selling Christmas trees.

We have 1,345 farms with laying hens, 222 farms selling broilers, and 123 grow turkeys. There are 1,526 farms with beef cows, 1,012 farms with horses, 419 farms with goats, and 300 farms with pigs.

Vermont leads the nation in maple production. Our 1,433 sugarmakers produced 3.1 million gallons of syrup worth \$112 million from 8.5 million taps. That's a big increase from 2 million gallons worth \$58 million from 5.9 million taps in 2017.

Most farms in Vermont, and across the country, are

small. The Census requires only \$1,000 in annual agricultural sales to qualify as a farm. Over half of Vermont's farms sell less than \$10,000 of products a year, and only 19% of farms report sales over \$100,000. The average sales per farm is \$159,373, but only 43% of farms report next gains. Our agriculture may be diverse, but it is also consolidated. Just 3% of our farms

account for two-thirds of all agricultural sales.

Importantly, farms provide more value than just the food they produce, or the money they make. Vermont has 1,461 farms with solar panels, generating renewable energy. We have 797 farms with 143,774 acres under conservation easement, protecting farmland for the future. Our 323 farms engaged

in agritourism attract visitors from near and far. And we gain a modicum of food self-reliance from 1,639 farms that sell \$42 million of products direct to consumers, and 1,066 farms that sell \$101 million of products to retail stores and institutions. Together they account for 14% of all farm sales.

Vermont's agriculture is growing. Sales of farm products now exceed one billion dollars, up by 32% since 2017. We have 12,470 farmers (41% are women), about the same as five years ago, but their average age increased from 55.9 to 57.7 years old. During that time, we lost 1.6% of our farmland.

If you would like to read the report or are looking for more information go to <https://www.nass.usda.gov/AgCensus/>

Fertilizer: Protecting the Consumer

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets is able to sample and test fertilizer products, both bagged and bulk, sold in Vermont. The Agency performs sampling and testing to ensure the user of the fertilizer is receiving the primary and secondary nutrients or micronutrients listed on the product's label. All fertilizer products sold in the state of Vermont must have proper labeling. The goal is to protect agricultural producers and consumers, and to make sure they are getting what they are purchasing.

In some instances, the Secretary may assess a deficiency penalty to the guarantor (the person responsible for the guarantee on the product label) when a fertilizer does not conform to its guarantee for nitrogen, available phosphoric acid or phosphorus, and soluble potash or potassium content as it appears on the label. All fertilizers sold in Vermont must be labeled, this includes bulk and custom mixed fertilizer products. The penalty is two times the commercial value of the deficiencies, which is then paid to the consumer.

The Agency compiles an annual fertilizer report outlining previous years fertilizer sampling and analysis activity. If you would like to request a fertilizer sample and analysis, email agr.feedseedfert@vermont.gov.

Vermont's Newest Invasive Plants

By Plant Health and Pest Management, Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

Mile-A-Minute Weed

In 2023, the state of Vermont officially confirmed the presence of mile-a-minute weed (*Persicaria perfoliata*) in Chittenden County, Vermont. The infestation was considered small and was limited to two specific areas. It is not known if the weed is present elsewhere in the state.

Mile-a-minute weed is a non-native barbed fast-growing annual vine never

Photos by Judy Rosovsky



Mile-a-minute weed foliage

seen before in the state. It grows up to six inches per day creating dense mats that have the potential to block sunlight to other naturalized or cultivated plants, which may cause stress, weaken, and kill the smothered vegetation. This vine has triangular leaves



Mile-a-minute weed fruits

and iridescent blue fruits, reproducing through seeds that can be viable up to six years, which are easily spread via animals, waterways and flooding, and even in the landscape and nursery trade through infested plant stock or poor sanitation practices.

Mile-a-minute weed poses a threat to native vegetation, young forest stands, natural areas, and agricultural industries such as nurseries, landscaping, and Christmas tree farms. It was introduced to the United States through

contaminated nursery stock in the 1930s.

Management of mile-a-minute may include both mechanical and chemical control. If hand pulling the vines, it is best to do before the barbs harden and seed production begins, which happens in June through October. Once pulled, vines can be left to dry in place. After seed production begins, then the vines can be pulled and all plant parts dried in place then burned or bagged and landfilled (least preferred method of disposal).

If using a chemical control method, in some situations, it may be difficult to only treat the weed and not impact desirable plants. If using an herbicide, choose one that is appropriate for the stage of plant development and always follow the label. In any management of an invasive plant wear

appropriate personal protective equipment.

Pale Swallow-wort

In 2023, Vermont officials confirmed the discovery of the pale swallow-wort (*Vincetoxicum rossicum*) in Burlington, Vermont. Pale swallow-wort is considered a class A noxious weed, which “means any noxious weed is not native to the state, not currently known to occur in the state on the date of listing and poses a serious threat to the state.”

Generally, noxious weeds are non-native plants that are considered by the state to pose a threat to Vermont’s environment, agriculture, property, economy, or public health (according to Vermont’s Noxious Weed Quarantine <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/sites/agriculture/>

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Agency Contact Numbers

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

Program Phone Numbers

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

BMP Applications

continued from page 1

concrete barnyard, created a gravel stack pad to store solid manure, and built a reception pit with a pump system to collect milhouse waste and liquid manure from an adjacent holding area. Liquid waste and runoff generated from each of these components is now fully collected in a clay-lined earthen manure pit, and a new access road was added to enable proper management of the pit.

These updates not only supported the Severy family in more securely capturing

their waste and meeting their water quality goals, but they have also proven to be a major labor-saver for the farm.

Applications to receive technical and/or financial assistance through the Agency’s Best Management Practices (BMP) Program are due by April 1, 2024.

Applications received by April 1st will receive an initial field visit from state engineers this spring. On average, state-designed projects receiving BMP financial assistance are not ready to begin construction until one year after the initial engineering field visit

is completed. So, if you are interested in a potential BMP project for 2025, this is the perfect time to submit a BMP application!

Applications submitted after April 1st will likely not receive an engineering visit until spring of 2025.

Visit <http://agriculture.vermont.gov/bmp> for more information on the BMP Program and to find an application.

If you have any questions, please contact the BMP program coordinators Ellen Friedrich (802-261-5629) or Emma Redel (802-261-5628).

Invasive Plants

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[files/documents/PHARM/Plant_Pest/NoxiousWeedsQuarantine.pdf](#)). There are two species of swallow-wort on the Noxious Weed List: Pale swallow-wort, and a related species, black swallow-wort (*Vincetoxicum nigrum*), classified as a class B noxious weed which means “any noxious weed that is not native to the state, is of limited distribution statewide, and poses a serious threat to the state, or any other designated noxious weed being managed to reduce its occurrence and impact in the state...”

The plant itself has a vining habit, twisting around other nearby plants to heights of 4-6 feet. Its glossy, dark green leaves are lance shaped and have an opposite arrangement. Flowers are described as “pink to maroon” or magenta. They

Photo by Judy Rosovskys



Pale swallow-wort

make seed pods similar to milkweed, but light green, smooth, and pointed (~3-4 inches by 2-3 inches wide). Just like milkweed, these pods split when mature to release many tufted seeds that easily catch the wind and disperse great distances. It can be a challenge to tell pale from black swallow-wort. Pale tends to have lighter flowers, but the

species have some overlap in the color range. The surest tell is that pale swallow-wort flowers have tiny hairs, while black do not. Of course, it doesn't hurt to take out any black swallow-wort you see while you're at it!

Please report any invasive plant sightings to AGR.planthealth@vermont.gov.

Don't let the plant's pleasing colors and climbing habit fool you though—there's a reason both species are on the Vermont Noxious Weed Quarantine list. Several reasons, actually. They are particularly nasty when it comes to crowding out native plants. Swallow-worts are shade tolerant, which allows them to crowd out native plants even in well-

established habitats. They can release chemicals from their roots which stop other plants from growing, reducing their competition and making it even harder for other species to grow. Furthermore, they pose a danger to butterflies. Monarchs, which are known for laying eggs on milkweed (also in the *Apocynaceae* family) will lay eggs on swallow-wort. The caterpillars which hatch on *Vincetoxicum* do not survive. All of these factors combined make swallow-wort a major danger for Vermont ecosystems.

Controlling pale swallow-wort is no easy task. The only way to physically remove the plant is to completely remove all of its roots. This involves careful digging because swallow-wort sprouts back from root fragments—making

this method impractical for large infestations. Small populations can be treated with the appropriate herbicide following label instructions or contact a pesticide company for assistance. Cutting can prevent seed formation, but only if timed right. Mowing when seed pods begin forming can rob the plant of its chance to put out seeds for the season. Any earlier, and the plant can re-sprout. Any later, and mowing can spread the plants by throwing mature seeds right into the wind, where they can fly for miles.³ Unfortunately, when seed pods are open it makes removal riskier. Late in the summer, it is best to hand cut any seed pods from the plant. Removal of just seed pods won't completely stop

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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

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

Invasive Plants

continued from page 14

the spread of the plant, but it can reduce the distance it travels by eliminating wind-borne dispersal. The cut plant materials can be placed in heavy duty plastic bags and tossed with regular garbage- composting may allow plants to spread

through root fragments or seeds, and burning can aid seed dispersion! It's highly recommended that a person wears gloves and long sleeves when handling the plant to avoid exposure to the plant's sap.

When state officials first received reports of pale swallow-wort in Burlington, they hoped that

the population would be confined to a small area, but after a survey it was found in multiple locations in

Burlington and elsewhere. But it's not too late to respond. Communities banded together to persistently work on reducing the spread of similar invasives and have made a difference. The

town of Ogunquit, Maine, has held "pod-picking days" for several years now to reduce the spread of the related black swallow-wort.⁴ While pulling is not generally considered a viable option for controlling a large population (even in a relatively small area, like Ogunquit's marginal strip), the event ends in removal

of hundreds of pounds of swallow-wort seed pods. Years of consistent control by Ogunquit's community has likely prevented millions of new seeds from sprouting; their example has shown the power that the community has to control such invasive populations through coordinated and persistent effort.

Reminder: 2024 Scale Testing

The Weights & Measures Section of the Agency will be hosting multiple scale inspection events around the state during April for anyone who uses a scale(s) at farmers' markets or farm stands to sell produce or other commodities. The testing and licensing of these scales is required by law, if you need an application form to license the scale it can be found on our website, agriculture.vermont.gov. Please plan to attend one of the inspection events listed below. Bring your legal for trade scale, and any accessories that you use with it for weighing items for sale.

The following is a list of dates and locations for the testing. Most sites will be at Agency of Transportation (AOT) garages. You can come anytime during our open hours, and no advance appointment is necessary. The test should take 5 to 10 minutes per scale. Look for the yellow "Scale Check Here" signs.



Full Day Locations: 9:00 am – 2:00 pm

April 4: AOT Clarendon
1628 Route 7B, Clarendon

April 8: AOT Dummerston
870 US Route 5,
Dummerston

April 9: AOT Windsor
1640 US Route 5 North,
Windsor

April 11: AOT Chimney
Corners, Colchester
400 US RTE 7, Colchester

April 24: AOT Middlebury
341 Creek Road,
Middlebury

April 25: AOT Derby
4611 Route 5, Derby

April 26: AOT St. Johnsbury
1068 US Route 5,
St. Johnsbury

May 2: Vermont Ag & Env
Lab/Weights & Measures
Lab, 163 Admin Drive,
Randolph Center (VTC
Campus)

Half Day Locations: 9:00 am – 12:00 pm

April 4: AOT Bennington
359 Bowen Road,
Bennington

April 5: AOT Central
Garage,
1716 US Route 302,
Berlin

April 12: AOT Morrisville
643 Brooklyn Street,
Morrisville

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

Ellen Friedrich
Ellen.Friedrich@vermont.gov
802-261-5629

Pasture And Surface Water Fencing (PSWF) Program

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

Mary Montour
Mary.Montour@vermont.gov
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

April

Dairy Marketing & Branding Services Grant

Grants for established value-added dairy processors and producer associations to access professional marketing and branding services

Ali Boochever
Ali.Boochever@vermont.gov
802-261-5740

April

Existing Dairy Processor Expansion Grant: Tier 3

Tiered grants for specialized equipment needed to increase processing capacity of regionally produced milk

Ben Eldredge
Ben.Eldredge@vermont.gov
802-522-9478

May

Farm Agronomic Practices (FAP) Program

Per-acre payments for conservation practices on Vermont farms and support for one-time water quality educational events or trainings

Sonia Howlett
Sonia.Howlett@vermont.gov
802-522-4655

Online Locator for Agricultural Conservation Equipment and Services

By Ellen Friedrich, VT
Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

Access to appropriate conservation equipment and services is essential to the successful implementation of many conservation practices on farms. It's awfully tricky to plant a field of no-till corn without a no-till drill, or to seed cover crops without the appropriate equipment!

To help land managers connect with conservation equipment/services available to them within and around the state of Vermont, the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets has created an online



conservation equipment and services locator that can be found at <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/equipment-rental>. The locator includes a spreadsheet and interactive map that showcase conservation equipment/services such as no-till drills, soil probes, and custom

manure application or cover cropping services that are available for borrow, rent, or hire. If you or someone you know needs help locating conservation equipment/services available for rent or hire, please check out this resource!

We are eager to grow

this list of conservation equipment/services so that it can better capture the extent of equipment and services available in Vermont. If you offer any equipment or services that you would like to feature on this resource, please fill out and return the "Submit

New Equipment/Services" form located on the locator's webpage. Listings are limited to equipment/services which can help land managers protect and promote soil health, water quality, or other natural resources. Eligible conservation equipment/services from both public organizations and private individuals/businesses can be included. There is no charge to feature equipment/services on this resource!

Contact Ellen Friedrich at 802-261-5629 for more information about the agricultural conservation equipment and services locator.

Easter Flowers

By Deborah J. Benoit,
University of Vermont Master Gardener

Did you receive some potted flowers to celebrate the spring holidays?

Daffodils (*Narcissus*) are one of the first flowers to emerge as winter ends and are true harbingers of spring. They appear in cut flower bouquets and as potted plants at florists around this time of year. Their bright yellow, trumpet-shaped blooms represent rebirth and are a popular gift to celebrate the season.

Daffodils are hardy in USDA Hardiness Zones 3-8.

While bulbs are traditionally planted in the fall, potted daffodils can be transferred to the garden after flowers have faded. Simply deadhead the flowers and allow the greenery to continue to grow until it dies off naturally.

Remove from the pot and plant in the garden once temperatures have warmed and the ground is workable.

Like daffodils, tulips (*Tulipa*) are a classic spring-blooming flower. They're available in a rainbow of

colors and can be found at florists as cut flowers or potted plants. The egg-shaped flowers can represent rebirth and love.

Tulips are hardy in USDA Hardiness Zones 3-7. Potted tulips can be transplanted in the garden in the same manner as daffodils. Like daffodils, they're toxic to dogs and cats if eaten.

You may already be familiar with other holiday cacti—Thanksgiving cactus (*Schlumbergera truncata*) and Christmas Cactus (*Schlumbergera bridgesii*)—but have you heard of the Easter cactus (*Rhipsalidopsis gaertneri*)? Its flowers come in shades of red, orange and

pink. It's easy to care for and generally considered pet friendly.

Like other holiday cacti, Easter cactus is actually a succulent. Treat it to bright, indirect sunlight and water when the soil feels dry. It's hardy only to USDA Hardiness Zones 10-12, so while it can spend warmer months outside (avoid hot, direct sunlight), be sure to bring it back indoors before there's danger of frost.

Whether you receive flowers as a bouquet, a potted plant or a mixed-bulb planting, they're a wonderful way to celebrate and a sure sign of spring.

