

AGRIVIEW



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Cut-Your-Own Christmas Trees Plentiful This Holiday Season

By Nigel Manley, Program Manager of the New Hampshire-Vermont Christmas Tree Association

It has been said that money does not grow on trees, but that phrase may not capture the whole picture, especially if you are one of the 400 or so Vermont and New Hampshire farmers that bring to market Christmas trees, wreaths, garland and other decorator items each year. Many trees are sold to the wholesale market for ultimate resale throughout the region. Others are sold directly to the consumer, who enjoy the process of visiting the farm



and taking part in the “cut your own” experience. Within the New Hampshire-

producing states of North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Oregon and Washington, the soil and climate

Governor Phil Scott and Tom Paine at Paine’s Christmas Tree Farm, Morristown, in December, 2023.

Vermont Christmas Tree Association, the “cut your own” market is the most rapidly growing segment of an industry which annually produces more than 30 million trees nationwide. While Vermont production is not large in comparison to the major

here are ideal for producing a quality tree. Balsam fir, Canaan Fir, Fraser fir, Korean Balsam Hybrid are the two states primary species, but other exotic species are grown here as well. The large population within driving distance of a Vermont and New Hampshire farms often allows for direct sale to the consumer through pick-your-own and cut-your-own operations. Many farms truly turn the selection of a tree into an experience with gift shops, hot chocolate or cider, wagon rides, slides, fire pits or even visits from Santa. Some allow for pre-season visits to the farms, where customers can select and tag a tree for ultimate cutting later in the year.

All farmers are in a partnership of sorts, with Christmas tree farmers being no different, with Mother

continued on page 3

AGRIVIEW

Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

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Inside This Issue

- The View from 116 State Street Page 2
- Winter Spreading Ban Page 3
- Dairy Workforce Impact Fund Page 4
- Upcoming Dairy Grants Page 5
- Organic Dairy Outreach Program Page 5
- Business Enhancement Grants Page 6
- Local Milk in Vermont Correctional Facilities Page 7
- County Foresters Page 8
- Trade Show Assistance Grants Page 9
- Vermont Vegetable and Berry News Page 10

- Classifieds Page 11
- Moose Hunt Results Page 12
- Fish & Wildlife Calendar Page 13
- Barns & Snow Removal Page 14
- Flood Assistance Page 14
- Seeding and Filter Strip Funds Available Page 15
- 2024 Fantastic Farmer Page 16



THE VIEW FROM 116 STATE STREET

This season, we gather with friends and family. Perhaps you're getting together for a home cooked meal, a potluck, or a special holiday celebration at the office or workplace. Maybe it's to visit your favorite restaurant. We are fortunate in Vermont to have extraordinary food and beverages in every corner of our state. This time of year, we enjoy feasts with fresh local veggies, meat, dairy, and specialty food and beverages made right here in Vermont.

Your local farmer works many long hours to produce a harvest that all of us may enjoy. You might find this season's bounty at the farm at the farmstand, farmers' market, CSA, retail store or co-op, or maybe delivered to your home. Many of our producers can ship your favorite "Taste of Vermont" right to

your kitchen, and Vermonters may efficiently order online to support Vermont farmers.

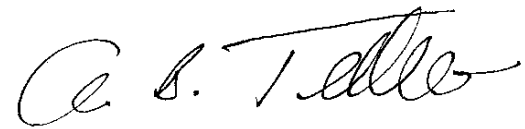
As we close out 2024, it's also time to think of our Christmas tree growers. They provide us with the experience of getting that "perfect" tree for our family. Memories of a lifetime can be found, and made, at choose-and-cut farms across our 14 counties. If you have a friend or family member that misses Vermont this time of year some growers will even box up trees, wreaths, or garlands and ship to a home or office. Décor from fresh Vermont trees is as beautiful to smell, as it is to see.

The holidays are also a time for

giving and remembering those who are less fortunate. The year 2024 was a difficult time for many. Once again, floods and severe weather destroyed homes, businesses and crops this summer. The flooding is gone from the headlines, but the emotional and economic impact is still with countless Vermonters. You can still support them by checking on them, volunteering to help with chores or bringing them a home cooked meal or treat during the

holidays. These acts of kindness often make the world of difference during the hardest of times.

Thank you for all you do to support your neighbors. We are grateful to have the privilege to enjoy the finest foods in the world. And thank you, farmers, producers and all those who make a living off the land. Your work, and the community we find together here in our brave little state of Vermont, is unmatched.



Anson Tebbetts

Secretary, Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

This Month's Recipe

Old Fashioned Popcorn Balls

These are buttery and molded together with a sweet simple syrup. Makes 5-6 balls.

Ingredients

- 7 cups popped popcorn, unsalted
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1/3 cup water
- 1/3 cup light corn syrup (or molasses for molasses popcorn balls)
- 1 teaspoon salt (If you use salted popcorn, omit the salt)
- 1/2 stick butter, unsalted
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

Directions

1. Sift through the popped corn and remove any unpopped kernels. Transfer popcorn to a large bowl and set aside.
2. Add the sugar, water, corn syrup, salt, and butter to a medium saucepan and mix



- over medium heat until the butter has melted, and all ingredients are combined.
3. Cook to 250 degrees on a candy thermometer or when mixture forms a hard ball when dropped in cold water.

4. Add the vanilla and mix to blend it in.
5. Drizzle the hot syrup in a thin stream over the popcorn while mixing at the same time. Mix until all the popcorn is covered with the syrup.
6. Using buttered hands shape popcorn into balls and place on parchment paper. Allow popcorn balls to sit on the parchment paper for 15 minutes and wrap individually or place each one in a sandwich bag.

Popcorn balls will stay fresh for up to five days if kept in sealed sandwich bags.

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Don't Forget: Winter Spreading Ban Starts December 15th

Sonia Howlett, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

The annual winter manure spreading ban begins on Sunday, December 15 and lasts until Tuesday, April 1 – a full 107 days. This ban on spreading manure or other agricultural waste through the winter months is designed to protect water quality. The Required Agricultural Practices (RAPs) also prohibit manure spreading on saturated, frozen, or snow-covered ground at any time.

The best thing you can do to be prepared for the spreading ban is to spread your manure when conditions are right, prior to December 15th. Ideal conditions for spreading are dry conditions before the snow falls when soils are non-saturated.

If you anticipate having a manure storage issue after the December 15th spreading ban goes into effect, please contact Laura DiPietro for assistance with manure management options at 802-595-1990. The earlier you reach out, the more time there is to engage in a solution.



Christmas Trees

continued from page 1

Nature. 2023 was a difficult year, with extreme dryness in early summer. Newly planted trees struggled, less so for more mature trees. 2024 has been a different story, with plenty of rainfall through much of the region. As a result, there should be a good supply of trees if you want to visit a farm and cut your own, and the quality should be excellent.

There are reports of a shortage of trees in 2024 throughout the country. Production of Christmas trees can be cyclical, much like corn, soybeans, and other agricultural



crops, as farmers adjust their plantings to marketing and pricing outlooks. Unlike annual crops, though, the cycle is 8-10 years rather than an annual one as is the

case with many other crops. The availability of trees in 2024 has much to do with farmers' outlook several years ago. There is no denying that the supply of wholesale trees will be tight this year. Most Vermont and New Hampshire farmers who sell to the wholesale market are sold out for the year, and at favorable prices.

While supply and demand cycles will always be part of agricultural decision making, the future of the Christmas tree industry is a good

one. Farmers who are looking at diversification, with good land and with the capability of absorbing annual production costs and waiting several years before trees reach merchantable size may want to give this some thought. "We have seen an increase in new growers over the past three years" said Nigel Manley, Program Manager NH-VT CTA.

The New Hampshire-Vermont Christmas Tree Association was founded in 1956 and represents both large and small, wholesale and cut your own growers throughout the two-state region. For further information they may be reached by visiting their website www.nh-vtchristmastree.org.

New Filing Requirement for LLC, S-Corp and C-Corp Businesses

If your business, including farm and food businesses, is an LLC, S-Corp, or C-Corp, you are now required to submit a Business Ownership Information (BOI) Report to the U.S. Treasury by December 31, 2024. This filing ensures transparency in business ownership, and missing the deadline could result in fines of \$500+ per day starting January 1, 2025.

Make sure you have details ready for all individuals who own or control 25% or more of the business. Start your filing now to avoid penalties!



DAIRY BUSINESS INNOVATION CENTER

Dairy Workforce Impact Fund to Boost Jobs, Skills in Northeast

By Katie Spring, Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center

The Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center (NE-DBIC) is excited to announce the launch of the Dairy Workforce Impact Fund, a new initiative designed to address critical workforce challenges in the region's dairy industry. With \$1.215 million in funding, the initiative aims to strengthen the workforce pipeline, improve career advancement opportunities, increase worker retention, and reduce barriers to participation in the dairy sector across 11 Northeast states.

NE-DBIC will pilot the Fund for two years. Designed to spark, grow, share, and invest in workforce solutions, the Fund will provide grants and resources to support both farm and processing businesses across the Northeast. This initiative addresses critical challenges, including a shortage of entry-level workers and limited career pathways in the dairy sector.

The Dairy Workforce Impact Fund focuses on four Key Priorities:

- **Strengthening the Pipeline:** Expanding the number of new workers entering the dairy industry
- **Building Skills and Career Opportunities:** Elevating training programs that increase career



- **Increasing Worker Retention:** Fostering workplace cultures that improve employee satisfaction
- **Reducing Barriers:**

Removing obstacles for employees and new industry entrants, especially through training and development
This investment will be dispersed in one round of

directed funds and two rounds of competitive grants. Directed funds will go to programs focused on strengthening Registered Apprenticeship programming, increasing

access to supervisor skill-building opportunities, and growing the pipeline of new workers across the Northeast region. These programs are:

- Center for Dairy Excellence's Dairy Herd Manager Apprenticeship
- Cornell's Agricultural Supervisory Leadership (ASL) Program
- Pilot Anne Saxelby Legacy Fund (ASLF) Immersive Alumni Apprenticeship Program

The first competitive round of funding is expected to open in early 2025. Grants will be open to applicants in 11 Northeast states, including Vermont. For more information on the Dairy Workforce Impact Fund, visit <https://nedairyinnovation.com/resources/dairy-workforce-program/>

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza in Dairy Cows

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

Since early March 2024, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Drug Administration, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and State veterinary and public health officials has been investigating an illness among primarily older dairy cows.

Vermont veterinarians continue to monitor the situation as



it develops and are learning from other states and officials around the country. As of June 7, 2024, no cases have been detected in Vermont and no links to affected states have been identified.

For more information, the latest updates and resources, please visit the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets website here:

<https://agriculture.vermont.gov/HPAinDairyCowsAnEmergingAnimalHealthIssue>

Current and Upcoming Dairy Grants

By Ali Boochever, Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center

At NE-DBIC, our goal is to help dairy farms and processors innovate to become more sustainable and resilient. Whether you're looking for funding to purchase specialized equipment, to implement an innovative practice, or to receive technical assistance, consider applying for an NE-DBIC grant. Access full details and Requests for Applications online at nedairyinnovation.com/grants

Open Funding Opportunities

On-Farm Milk Storage and Handling Grant

This program will provide grants for dairy farmers to access funds that support the purchase of equipment and other related costs that will improve milk storage, handling, and energy efficiencies. The focus of this grant is on the purchase of specialized equipment. Applicants may select from a pre-approved list of eligible equipment. Projects funded by this grant will streamline milk pick up, create efficiencies around milk storage, and improve handling for both farmers and their processors.

The application period is open until December 5, 2024 at 2 PM ET. Awards range from \$15,000 to \$50,000 with a 25% match commitment. Approximately \$1,500,00 in total funds are available this round.

Dairy Farm Improvement and Modernization Grant

This program provides grants to dairy farmers or farmer groups, working with technical assistance providers, producer associations, or milk buyers, to make improvements to farm systems or operations to support long-term farm viability. Projects may cover topics such as upgrading outdated production practices or specialized equipment (e.g., milking systems, animal comfort, water and nutrition management, manure handling); implementing farm-scale technology and green innovations; transitioning to group calf housing; developing collaborative/cooperative milk production models; increasing engagement of new and young farmers; exploring alternative ownership/management models; piloting new technologies with support from technical assistance; or creating a culture of continuous improvement.

Funds may be used for specialized equipment, training, consultant or technical assistance costs, but may not be used for construction or farm systems that do not impact dairy operations. Applications will be more competitive with evidence of direct involvement of a service provider, business planner, farm succession planner, or technical assistance provider to demonstrate a strategic, long-term approach to their grant project investment.

The Request for Applications (RFA) will be released Dec. 10. Awards will range from \$15,000 – \$100,000 with a 25% in-kind and/or cash match contribution. Approximately \$950,000 in total funds are available this round.

Upcoming Funding Opportunities

Dairy Co-Packing Grant

This grant will provide funds for existing Northeast dairy processors to initiate

new co-packing arrangements or to expand existing co-packing capabilities. 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.

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 seek technical assistance or training as a subset of their funds for their projects.

The RFA will be released in January. Awards will range from \$15,000 – \$150,000 with a 25% in-kind and/or cash match contribution. Approximately \$1,100,000 in total funds are available this round.

NE-DBIC to Facilitate New USDA Organic Dairy Outreach Program

By Katie Spring, Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center

In October, USDA Under Secretary Jenny Lester Moffitt visited Vermont to announce the launch of the Organic Dairy Product Promotion (ODPP) program. This new \$15 million program will expand school and youth program access to organic dairy products.

Funded by the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC), the program will increase consumption of organic dairy products among children and young adults while creating new opportunities for small and mid-sized organic dairy producers. Four national Dairy Business Innovation Centers, including the Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center (NE-DBIC) in Vermont, will each be grant-

ed \$3.75 million to facilitate the new program.

“Expanding access to a variety of organic dairy products in schools and community programs promotes healthy consumption habits and strengthens local dairy markets,” said Under Secretary Moffitt. “Announcing the Organic Dairy Product Promotion program during National

Farm to School Month is yet another way to celebrate USDA's commitment to connecting producers to new, local markets and providing youth with healthy, fresh dairy products from nearby farms.”

Read more about the program on the NE-DBIC website: nedairyinnovation.com/usda-organic-dairy-outreach



Vermont Secretary of Agriculture, Food and Markets Anson Tebbetts and USDA Under Secretary Jenny Lester Moffitt toast with organic milk in Vermont last month.

Working Lands Enterprise Initiative Opens Business Enhancement Grant Applications

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

The Working Lands Enterprise Initiative (WLEI) is opening applications for the Business Enhancement Grant. This grant is open to Vermont working lands businesses/organizations, which include farms producing food and fiber, as well as forest products businesses. Some food businesses/organizations, as well as agriculture or wood processing and/or distribution businesses can be eligible if they meet certain requirements for local sourcing of raw ingredients or product.

Applicants can apply for grants \$10,000 to \$50,000 grants. This year, there is no match requirement for this grant.



The application portal is open through December 12th, 2024. A recorded applicant webinar is available to assist in the application process here. There will also be weekly virtual drop-in Q&A sessions throughout the application period.

Applicants will be notified of award decisions in late February 2024, and projects can begin in April 2025.

Eligible project types are:

- Infrastructure development
- Market development
- Research and development

- Workforce training and development

More details about the Business Enhancement Grant, including full eligibility criteria, recorded webinar, and weekly Q&A information, can be found at: <https://workinglands.vermont.gov/>

[grant-contract-opportunities/business-enhancement-grant](https://workinglands.vermont.gov/grant-contract-opportunities/business-enhancement-grant).

Any food, processing, or distribution applicant must make their Vermont product sourcing clear in the application.

The Working Lands Enterprise Initiative (WLEI) and governing board (WLEB) were created in 2012. WLEB's vision is that our shared working landscape is the foundation of Vermont's evolving culture, vibrant economies, healthy ecosystems, and sense of place. WLEB's mission is to make strategic investments and develop policy recommendations that support a sustainable farm, food, and forest economy in Vermont.

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

Slow Cooker Pulled Beef Recipe

More than you need for one meal? Freeze the leftovers for a future meal! Freeze in a freezer safe container or freezer bags (frozen flat for easier storage) for up to four months. Thaw overnight in the fridge, then reheat in the microwave or on the stove top.

Ingredients

4 - 5 lbs. boneless chuck roast
2 Tablespoons oil
2 Tablespoons red wine vinegar
1 1/2 Tablespoons salt
Pepper to taste
3 teaspoons dried parsley
2 teaspoons dried basil
2 teaspoons garlic powder
1 large onion, sliced (yellow works best)
5 cloves garlic (sliced)

Instructions

1. Remove the meat from packaging and use a fork to stab a few holes on all sides.
2. Whisk together the olive oil and red wine vinegar then rub it all over the meat.
3. Sprinkle evenly with salt, pepper, parsley, basil, and garlic powder on all sides.
4. Place half of the onion on the bottom of the slow cooker followed by the roast. Spread the garlic cloves on the roast and top with the remaining onion slices.
5. Cover and cook on low for 8-10 hours or on high for 4-5 hours, until the beef shreds easily with a fork. If you check it after 8 hours and it's not easy to pull apart, continue cooking for another 1-2 hours.



6. Remove the roast from the crock pot and transfer to a cutting board. Pull the beef apart using two meat forks. Beef can be served immediately with juices over noodles or mashed potatoes.

Vermont Department of Corrections and Agency of Agriculture Partner to Bring Fresh, Local Milk to Vermont Correctional Facilities

By VT Department of Corrections

The Vermont Department of Corrections and Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets (VAAFAM) are partnering to bring local and regional milk to all six Vermont correctional facilities.

Milk is currently served in all correctional facilities, but in recent years most sites have carried only powdered milk. Fresh, local milk will provide individuals incarcerated in Vermont with the full

nutritional benefits and taste of Vermont dairy, while also supporting Vermont's agricultural economy.

"A person's health and wellness is impacted by everything from medical care to the beverage you drink with breakfast each day," said Nicholas Deml, Commissioner of the Department of Corrections. "Providing fresh, local milk, creates a more dignified dining experience and healthy offering for the individuals in our care and custody while also supporting Vermont's dairy industry."

The Agency will provide the Department with \$15,000 for refrigeration equipment as several facilities require additional refrigeration capacity to start serving fluid milk. Funding for the refrigeration equipment comes from Vermont Dairy Farmers through a dairy promotion checkoff program.

"Milk is a nutritious beverage that is loaded with protein, minerals and vitamins. It is great to see real milk will be served in Vermont correctional facilities. Thank you to the dairy farmers of Vermont

for supporting this project and the Department of Corrections for investing in our dairy farmers," said Anson Tebbetts, Secretary of VAAFAM.

Two of Vermont's six correctional facilities already made the transition to local and regional milk. Chittenden Regional Correctional Facility was the first facility to provide fluid milk in 2019, prompted by strong support from the Legislature's Women's Caucus. Representative Carol Ode, a member of the Caucus, was a key facilitator of the effort.

"When the Women's Legislative Caucus visited the Women's Correctional Facility a few years ago, we identified fresh milk as a priority and, although a small change, one that could make a big difference," said Representative Ode. "Secretary Tebbetts immediately went to work, and the result is better health for all those incarcerated and a further expanded market for local Vermont dairy. This story is an example of what Vermonters can do when we listen to each other and when we work together."



Built in 1899, Sibley Barn in East Montpelier hosted a diverse group with tremendous energy talking about the future of farming in Vermont. This meeting was led by the Vermont Farm Bureau who were joined by a group of farmers and stakeholders. From left to right: Kate Rowley, Jackie Folsom, Mike Covey, Jenny Nelson, Paul Doyon, Katie Cate, Lauren Brady, Mindy Hinsdale, Eliza Schraver, Clara Ayer, Amber Perry, Jeannette Cole, Stephanie Walsh, Dave Martin, Anson Tebbetts, Graham Unangst-Rufenacht, Maddie Kempner



Vermont Enhances Forestry Services with County Forester Update

By Keith Thompson, VT Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation.

The Vermont Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation (FPR) is updating its County Forester service areas to better support landowners statewide. Effective

November 12, 2024, County Forester responsibilities will be redistributed on a regional basis, no longer restricted by county boundaries. This change aims to provide more equitable access to forestry services.

County Foresters have long been key to providing forest management, stew-

ardship guidance, technical assistance, and outreach to Vermont landowners, fostering lasting relationships. They offer expertise on topics ranging from forest management to wildlife habitat and outdoor recreation. County Foresters also administer the forestland category of Use Value Appraisal (Current

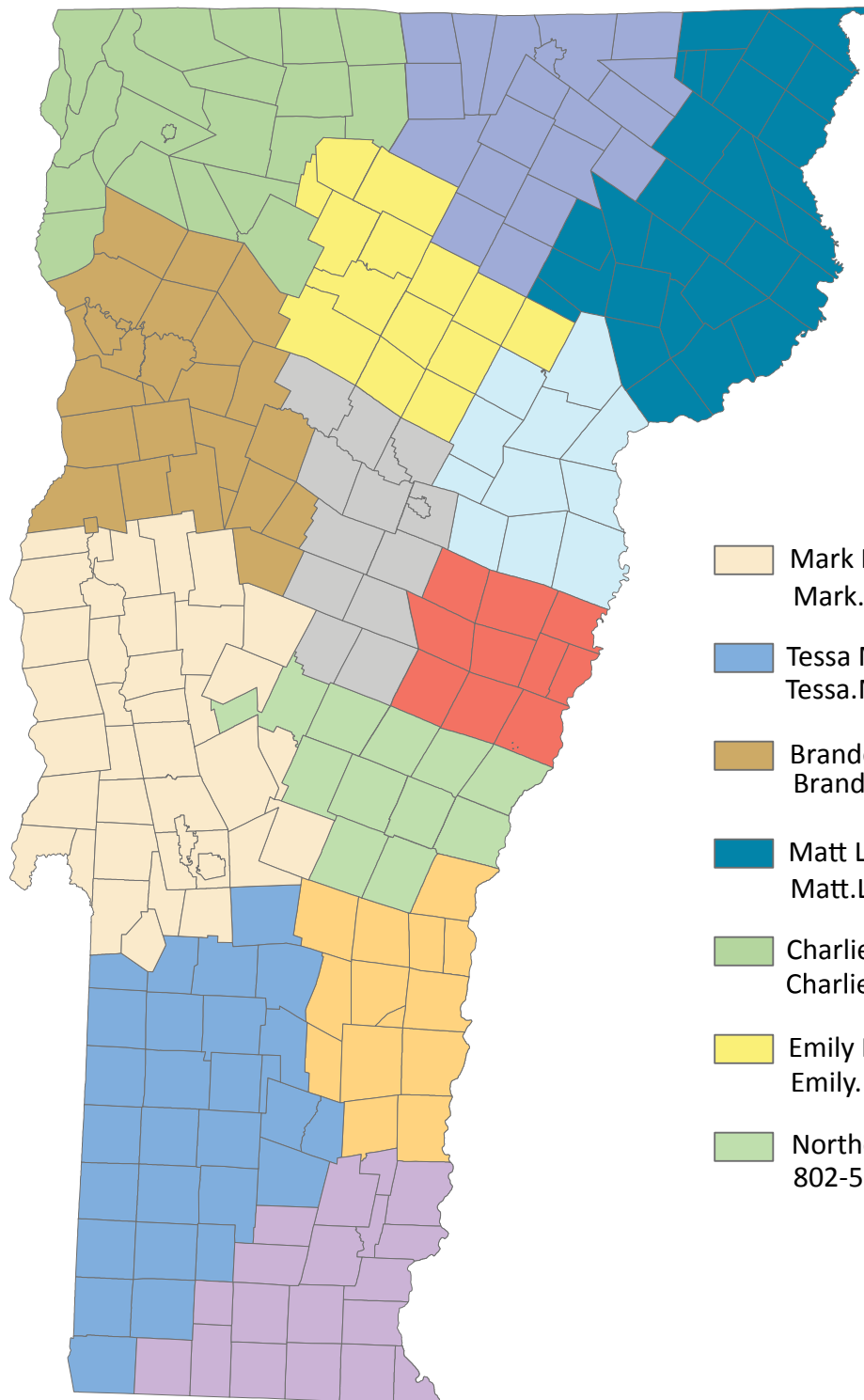
Use) program, which enables eligible private landowners engaged in long-term forestry to have their land appraised based on its forestry value, rather than its fair market (development) value.

While foresters will retain their "County Forester" title, their service areas will be defined by geographically connected groups of towns. FPR has created a new forester coverage map and reference guide to help landowners identify which forester covers their area.

"County Foresters play a

vital role in forest management and stewardship," says Oliver Pierson, Division of Forests Director. "They provide valuable guidance and technical assistance to landowners, support communities through expertise and outreach, and promote informed forest stewardship."

FPR is confident these updates will enhance their ability to provide consistent, high-quality support to all landowners, ensuring a more equitable distribution of forestry services across Vermont.



Vermont County Foresters

County Foresters provide forest management and forest stewardship information, technical assistance, and outreach to landowners in Vermont.

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Application for Trade Show Assistance Grants Opens December 6th

By Jennifer Porter, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets welcomes applications from Vermont agricultural and forestry businesses for Trade Show Assistance Grants. These grants provide businesses with funds to exhibit and sell their Vermont products at trade shows targeting out-of-state buyers. These matching grants can partially offset the expenses associated with exhibiting at trade shows. Trade shows are wonderful opportunities to promote Vermont's incredible food, forestry, and agricultural products with people from around the region and the world. They provide excellent opportunities to network with wholesale buyers and expand into new domestic



and international markets.

Funding may be used to reimburse up to 50% of the following expenses: travel; marketing assets and booth design; registration fees; booth fees; furnishings; utilities; shipping/freight; and other marketing costs (samples, printing, etc.). Trade show(s) must target buyers outside of Vermont and be in the business to business/wholesale format.

Direct-to-consumer shows are not eligible for TSAG funding. Applicants may include up to five trade shows in their yearly marketing plan, requesting a total of between \$2,000 and \$5,000 in eligible reimbursements for shows that take place between April 1, 2025 and March 31, 2026. Businesses may not apply for funding to support attendance at trade

shows they have already attended five or more times.

Eligible applicants are Vermont-based agricultural and forestry businesses that meet the following criteria: (1) Business is

registered with the Vermont Secretary of State and has been in business for over one year, with an address indicating that they perform substantial functions in Vermont; (2) Business has three or more wholesale

accounts; (3) Business's products meet the Vermont Local Definition as defined in Act 129.

Applications will be reviewed through a competitive process. Eligibility does not guarantee funding will be awarded.

To learn more about this opportunity and review the full Request for Applications (RFA), please visit agriculture.vermont.gov/grants/tradeshows. The application will be open from December 6, 2024 through January 20, 2025.

For questions regarding this grant opportunity, please contact Jennifer Porter at Jennifer.Porter@vermont.gov or (802) 261-7395.

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VERMONT VEGETABLE AND BERRY NEWS



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Reports From The Field

(Westminster) A nice fall has led to an excellent harvest season, although we still have five or six acres of carrots and beets to harvest and more radishes and turnips than we can possibly sell. The limiting factor is bins: we've almost filled the 220 bins we bought this fall to supplement what we had.

We're still cutting lettuce and will be for two or three weeks, weather permitting. We'll have kale until Thanksgiving, if not beyond. Winter squash is selling briskly, except for baby blue hubbard and orange kabocha, which Whole Foods decided to stop selling.

Anyone who needs those varieties of squash, let us (Harlow Farm) know.

With the robust harvest, we're a little worried about enough people to work on our wash-pack line this winter once the Jamaican H2A workers are gone; local labor is still almost nonexistent.

(Hinesburg) Finished garlic planting Oct 31. We've been gradually pushing the planting back by a few days each year. Field

greens still looking great. Hoophouse greens are ready too. Demand for greens is light. Probably everyone has a good supply? Winter cutworms are vigorous. Hoop house carrot tops seem like their favorite right now. Seduce and B.t. helped, where I applied it in spinach.

With the warm weather, we are leaving the farmstand open, until sales die off, or it gets too cold in the unheated building. Fall CSA starts this week. Signups were steady.

Working on a garden drainage project, a French drain with perforated pipe and stone. There's never been a time that seemed like a good time for tearing up the garden. Firm dry ground at the end of October is the time! Other than the July monsoon season, it was a smooth year.

Invitation To Participate In NRCS Committees

Every state has a Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) technical committee, and subcommittees. These serve in an advisory capacity to NRCS, providing input on policies and funding priorities. Committees include members from a wide variety of natural resource and agricultural interests. In Vermont there are currently subcommittees for the following priorities: Soils, Water Quality, Climate, Forest and Wildlife, Urban and Small Agriculture, Wetland Reserve Easements, and Working Lands (EQIP/CSP). Click here for a summary of the subcommittees, their meeting dates, and person to contact. Many of the meetings are hybrid so you can attend without traveling.

Organic Mentorships Available

Current mentors say they wish this program existed when they were going for certification! Signups are open now to be paired with an experienced organic mentor for a yearlong peer-to-peer organic mentorship. Through the Transition to Organic Partnership Program, certified producers serve as mentors for organic-curious and transitioning producers. Receive one-on-one support, set your own goals, visit each other's operations, ask your burning questions, and be set up for success in your organic certification journey! It's open to any type of producer—veg, berry, other crops (hay, grain), flowers, maple, livestock, dairy, pro-

cessors, handlers, etc. See more info here, read stories from 2024, and fill out the short form soon to start the mentorship in December or early 2025. From a mentee: "The mentorship program was absolutely vital to our success with our certification. My mentor was consistent, proactive, kind, supportive, and positive and he seriously helped to calm my anxiety about the inspection!"

New England Vegetable and Fruit Conference and Trade Show Manchester NH, December 17-19

The biennial conference will be held at the Doubletree by Hilton Manchester Downtown. The event features 30 education-

al sessions over three days, on topics related to vegetable, berry, and tree fruit crops. Visit <https://newenglandvfc.org/> for registration and accommodation details. Early bird registration discount ends Nov 30.

Vermont Vegetable and Berry Growers Association Annual Meeting

Hold the date! January 28, 2025. DoubleTree Hotel, S. Burlington. Encourage companies and organizations you do business with to join the VVBGA as commercial members at <https://vvbga.org/commercial-membership> so they get an ad in the meeting booklet, and can sign up for a table in our trade show. Registration for the meeting will open soon.

\$410,000 in Funding for Vermont Fairs & Field Days

By Selina Rooney, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

The Fairs and Field Days Capital Grants and Operational Stipends Program is open for applications.

Vermont's fairs and field days draw over 300,000 visitors each year, and many 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 the practices, products, skills, and livelihoods that contribute to maintaining Vermont's working landscape.

\$300,000 is available for 20-year capital improvement projects that fairs across the state can use for lighting, building, electrical, and structural upgrades. An additional \$110,000 is available in the form of stipends, which support operating costs.

The application period is between November 1st – December 15th.

If you are a fairs or field days organization, you can find more details in the Request for Applications or the program website. If you have questions, contact Selina Rooney at selina.rooney@vermont.gov or 802-522-7811.



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.riview@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

American Milking Devons for sale, Registered 4 yr old cow, with calf. \$2700. Bull calf for sale, \$1500. Yearling heifer calves for sale, \$1500. We are located in Leicester, VT. We use rotational grazing methods, using single strand electric fencing. Heifers have been worked with and do well on a lead. All are used to going in and out of the barn as we milk our cows daily. Please call or text for more info and pictures: Liza at 802-558-6944 (12)

Jersey/Guernsey cross heifer due to freshen in April. From A2 sire and dam. Friendly and well handled. Waterville VT. Call/text: 802-730-0604 or lucyrogersvt@gmail.com. (12)

3 angus bulls for sale currently about 6 months old. Call for more information 802-558-8196. (1)

Add hybrid vigor to your beef operation. Pure bred Naturally Polled Beef Shorthorn Bulls for sale. 18 months old and ready to go to work. Red, docile, likes to be combed. Used to single strand electric fence, 100% Grass Fed. Shorthorns are fast growing and hardy to Vermont climate. Whatever you are using for your beef market, Shorthorn genetics will make it better. \$2700. Beautiful 2024 Red and

White Roan Shorthorn Bull Calves, ready to leave after weaning. Ready to breed next summer. \$2500. Greenfield Highland Beef, Plainfield. Call or text for pictures and more info. 802-279-9014 (2)

Equipment

Kubota tractor model L 345-DT, 34 HP, loader, 4W/D, chains, snowplow, forks, plows, shop manual, clean \$11,995. York rake 4ft, 3pt hitch, solid \$695. IH Finish mower 5ft, 3 blades, new \$2995. Dir scoop 3pt, J. Deere \$495. NH 1 row chopper #77 3pt solid \$995. Sprayer 300 gals with pump \$995. 802-483-2870 (1)

Cast iron stone boat heads (Sargent Osgocht) and 2 simplex No. 22 railroad jacks \$150, 802-365-7620 (1)

Blooming onion cutter with SS pans. Great for fairs, farmers markets, parties. 802-365-4000 (1)

542 Agri Metal feed cart. 50 kilowatt generator like new. 2 Furrpow plows good shape. 600 Sunset bulk tank vacuum for sap. 1.5 vacuum pump. 802-624-0143 (2)

Equipment and supplies for small-scale home dairy production in very good, scrupulously clean condition. Price negotiable. Pownal, VT 802-823-5654 7am-7pm (2)

Several totes food grade, plus



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>.

others very clean \$100-\$120. Model #560 Flat bed mulch layer, drip attack, rool carries, \$1995. Holland 1 row transplanter. 3pt, 2 seats, several pockets \$2500. Toro model 6900 D mower reelmaster 4/w drive, for parts \$1500. Slide delivery rake all steel, horse pole \$550. 802-483-2870 (3)

6" Grain Auger 19'6". 2" Grain Auger 13/4. 2 - 4" Grain

Augers. 4 Flex Augers. Call 802-624-0143 (3)

Hay, Feed & Forage

4x5 round bales 1st & 2nd cut. Mixed grass & legume. 802-265-4566 (2)

Small square hay bales 1st cut. Leave message 802-442-2646. (3)

CHITTENDEN COUNTY June 1st, June 6th cut and later cut Hay. 4' x 5' Round Bales,

Will Load, \$35/bale, cash/good check, Westford, Vt. Call Ray at 802-355-2930 (2)

WINDSOR COUNTY

1st and 2nd Cut wrapped 4x4 round bales for sale, \$55/bale, Call Tom at 802-698-3390 (2)

Wanted

Head lock with squeeze chute, any condition. 802-483-2870 (3)



HAVE FEED?
NEED FEED?
BUY / SELL

FARM FEED-FINDER MARKETPLACE

HELPING CONNECT FARMS AND FEED

<https://agriculture.vermont.gov/farm-feed-finder-marketplace>

2024 Vermont Moose Hunt Results

By Vermont Department of Fish & Wildlife

The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department issued 180 moose hunting permits this year, resulting in 62 moose harvested between the October 1-7 archery season and the October 19-24 regular season. Moose hunting was only allowed in Wildlife Management Unit E, in northeastern Vermont.

“Moose are relatively abundant in WMU-E,” says Nick Fortin, the department’s moose biologist. “This high density of moose contributes to high winter tick numbers that can negatively impact moose health and survival. A goal of this



Inset: winter ticks on moose.

year’s hunt was to improve the overall health of WMU-E’s moose population by reducing its density.”

Of the 180 permits avail-

able, 174 were issued by lottery, to which nearly 5,800 hunters applied. The department reserves the first five lottery permits for

Vermont military veterans. Three non-lottery permits are reserved for persons with life-threatening illnesses, and three more are auctioned as

a fundraiser for conservation.

Moose management goals were informed by years of monitoring data and extensive research on moose and winter ticks from the north-eastern U.S. and Canada.

Vermont research has shown that chronic high winter tick loads have caused the health of moose in northeastern Vermont to be very poor. Survival of adult moose remains relatively good, but birth rates are very low, and many calves do not survive their first winter.

“This year’s hunt in WMU-E was another step towards achieving a healthy, sustainable moose population,” said Fortin.

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

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

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

Brattleboro
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

Vermont Fish and Wildlife's 2024 Calendar Is Available

By Vermont Fish and Wildlife

Vermont Fish and Wildlife's colorful 2024 calendar is now available. The calendar is filled with stunning photos of Vermont native species ranging from a rugged white-tailed deer buck to the

vibrant dogbane leaf beetle.

The calendar features art by both well-known and emerging nature photographers, including Roger Irwin, Jim Blakeslee, Emmanuel Soza-Foias, Roger Farmer, Chris Ingram, Brian Pfeiffer, and Rav Benett.

"Vermont's wildlife, habi-

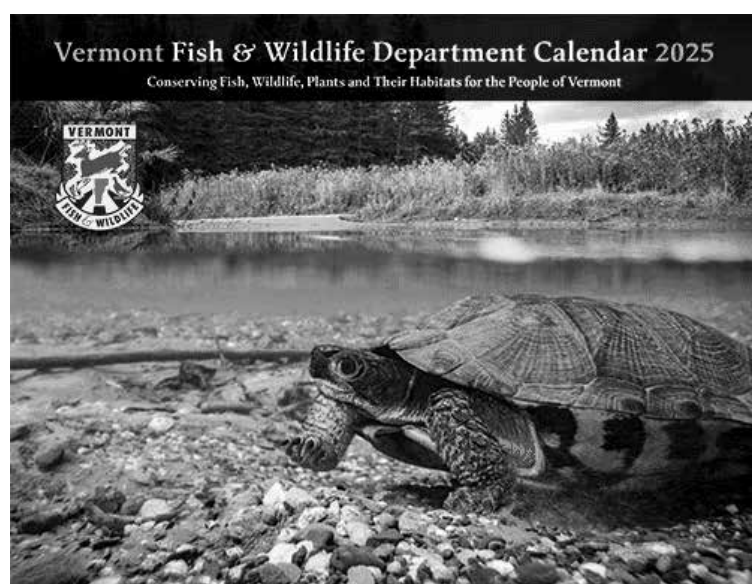
tats and people are interconnected, and this calendar celebrates that," said Fish and Wildlife Commissioner Christopher Herrick. "It showcases many wildlife species and commemorates the contributions and leadership of hunters and anglers

as well as community scientists, private landowners and volunteers in conserving these species and their habitats for all Vermonters."

The calendar includes hunting, fishing and trapping season dates for each month along with beautiful

photography, making it the perfect gift for any outdoor recreationist.

The calendar is available for \$15 with free-shipping from the VFW website, www.vtfishandwildlife.com, or by downloading a printable mail-in form.



The Pesticide Applicator newsletter is going digital in 2024!

This change will allow:

- Fast delivery direct to your email
- Easy to click links and answer quizzes
- Save 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.



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

December

Dairy Farm Improvement & Modernization Grant

Grants for dairy farmers to fund a wide range of projects that prioritize long term farm viability and climate/economic resilience

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

Trade Show Assistance Grants

Grants to help food and forestry exhibit and sell their Vermont products at trade shows targeting out-of-state buyers

Jennifer Porter
Jennifer.Porter@vermont.gov
802-261-7395

Dairy Co-packing Grant

Grants to support the development of new co-packing capabilities and relationships for existing dairy processors.

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

Barns and Snow Removal

By Cornell University
Extension

As winter begins with the threat of snow and ice storms, this is an annual reminder that your barns will need your attention. It is important to:

- Keep gutters and downspouts clear
- Remove snow and ice frequently and properly
- Stay up to code
- Be aware of common wintertime roof collapses

Often rooftops collapses are caused by snow refreezing on eaves, leading to ice dams or backup under shingles. There are several factors that can lead to roof collapse.

- Poor planning or improper construction
- An aged building or outdated building codes

- Allowing snow load to exceed the capacity of the roof
- Snow drift conditions caused by wind
- Rain on top of snow, which then freezes
- Clogged gutters

Is Your Roof on the Verge of Collapse?

While it's important to ensure your roof is capable of handling winter snow loads and that it's up to code, it's also crucial to know the signs of an impending roof collapse. Monitor and stay aware of daily snow fall amounts and the accumulation of snow on your roof. The following are some common signs of an impending roof collapse:

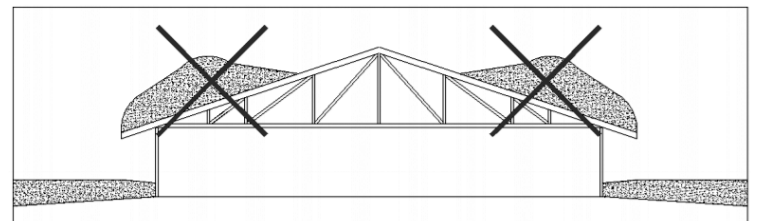
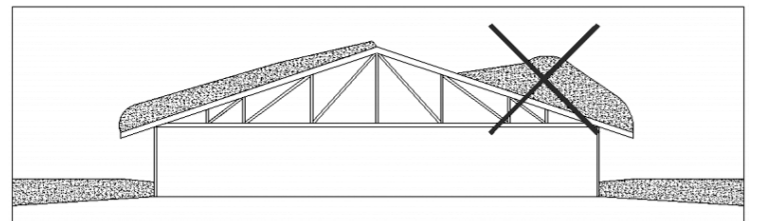
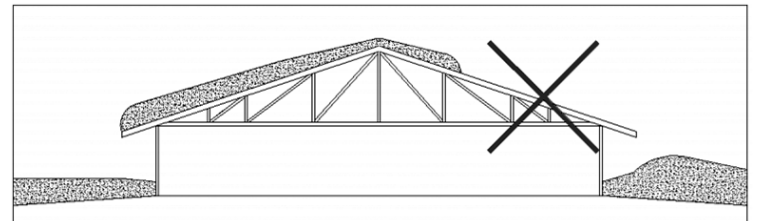
- A sagging ceiling
- Wet and/or stained roof tiles

- Severe/repeated leaks
- Sagging sprinkler heads
- Doors and windows become hard to close, or pop open on their own
- Creaking or popping noises coming from the roof

If you see one or more of these signs, evacuate the building and call a qualified roofing professional or building inspector to assess the situation. These situations may indicate that your roof is at risk of collapsing and potentially causing personal injury and property damage.

Additionally, here are a list of don'ts for your consideration.

- DON'T remove snow unequally from the roof. Unbalanced loads can create even more problems.
- DON'T pile snow atop the roof. Do not simply



- DON'T attempt to clear the snow yourself! Make sure there are others nearby, helping and watching, in the event of a problem

For more information, please visit <https://blogs.cornell.edu/agnewscenter/2024/01/04/happy-new-year/>

Assistance for Flood Damage to Farmland and Forests

By USDA

Attention farm and forest owners in Washington, Chittenden, Essex and Caledonia counties! USDA emergency programs can help restore farmland or non-industrial forest that suffered damage during this past July's flooding and severe storms.

The USDA Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) and Emergency Forest Restoration Assistance (EFRP) have both opened for Washington, Chittenden, Essex and Caledonia counties.

For Caledonia and Essex counties, contact the St. Johnsbury Farm Service Agency Office at 802-748-2641 and request assistance before December 20th.

For Washington and Chittenden counties, contact the Williston Farm Service Agency County Office at 802-288-8155 and request assistance before December 23rd.



photo by MaeKate Campbell

Seeding and Filter Strip Funds Now Available!

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

There's a newly improved water quality grant program available for all farms in Vermont — the Seeding and Filter Strip (SFS) program! Over the past year, our Agency team significantly revised the program previously known as the Grassed Waterway and Filter Strip (GWFS) program to better align it with water quality priorities & community needs, and to make enrollment more straightforward. We are thrilled to announce that the newly revamped and renamed Seeding and Filter Strip (SFS) program is now open for enrollment on a rolling basis!

Seeding and Filter Strip (SFS) Program Practice Payment Rates		
Practice	Five-Year Agreement	Ten-Year Agreement
Filter Strip (25-34 ft)	Not eligible	\$200/acre
Wide Filter Strip (35 ft +)	\$700/acre	\$1,000/acre
Pasture/Hayland Plantings: Area with High Water Quality Concerns	\$700/acre	\$1,000/acre
Pasture/Hayland Plantings: Area with Low Water Quality Concerns	Not eligible	\$200/acre
Grassed Waterway Seeding	Not eligible	\$1,000/acre

The Seeding and Filter Strip (SFS) program provides technical and financial assistance for the installation of practices with perennial vegetation (think hayland vegetation). These seeded areas help

reduce soil erosion and agricultural runoff and prevent it from reaching water. One-time, per acre payments are offered to support the long-term establishment of filter strips, pasture and hay plantings,

and/or grassed waterways on farmland within 300 ft of surface water or ditches. All practices can be harvested for hay.

The program primarily focuses on land with a recent history of annual crops, but, in some cases, hayland/pasture impacted by flooding may also be eligible for assistance. The program prioritizes seeding down areas which have significant water quality concerns as identified by Agency staff. Depending on the practice and farmer commitment, maintenance agreements will last for either five or ten years.

One of the SFS program's

top priorities is supporting the implementation of wide, harvestable filter strips (also known as buffers) along the border of annual cropland and surface waters. In contrast to some other programs, the SFS program allows and encourages the harvesting of vegetation from filter strips. Harvesting filter strips not only provides yield benefit to the farmer, but also promotes water quality by removing nutrients in the vegetation, which prevents an excess buildup of nutrients in the soil along waterways. Another priority of the SFS program is helping to convert annual cropland with significant erosion, water quality, and/or flood risk into perennial vegetation.

If you are interested in expanding or enhancing your buffers or seeding down annual cropland on your farm, the Seeding and Filter Strip (SFS) program may be a good fit for you!

To learn more about the program, please visit the program webpage at <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/sfs>. You may also contact Ellen Friedrich by email at ellen.friedrich@vermont.gov or by phone 802-261-5629.



A freshly seeded pasture planting which was supported by the SFS program this fall. The field was previously in a corn-soybean rotation and had significant gully erosion. Now, perennial roots and leaves will be in place year-round to minimize erosion.



2024 'Fantastic Farmer' Award Recognizes Glover Sheep and Meat Farm

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

Located in the heart of the Northeast Kingdom, and embracing the values of that region, lies MKVT Farm. The Glover farming operation, run by Mark and Karen Rodgers, was recently selected as the 2024 Vermont 'Fantastic Farmer'. The farm selected for this recognition receives a \$5000 grant from the A. Pizzagalli Family Farm Fund.

A Vermont 'Fantastic Farmer' recipient is recognized for the way in which they impact our lives, often going unnoticed. Hidden away in remote parts of Vermont and the depths of the local grocery or farm stand; maybe in our lunch, on top of our pancakes or in a slice of cheese on our sandwich, a Vermont farmer has touched our life today. A Vermont 'Fantastic Farmer' must also embrace stewardship of the land, management of resources, education and promotion of Vermont agriculture and farming to the public and fellow farmers.

Mark and Karen Rodgers are continuing the tradition of family farming on their Glover property. MKVT Farm is a Farm to Table business with a focus on pasture raised sheep, pigs, chickens (broilers and layers), and turkeys. MKVT Farm has recently garnered national attention with the introduction of Dutch



Mark and Karen Rodgers

Spotted Sheep into the US. The first Dutch Spotted sheep in the Western Hemisphere was born at MKVT Farm from embryos imported from the United Kingdom.

"It is very fulfilling to be recognized as a Vermont 'Fantastic Farmer' for doing what comes naturally to me," said Mark Rodgers of MKVT Farm. "My job as a farmer is to convert photosynthesis into food for the population, to educate the public about the value of knowing their farmer and where their food and fiber comes from, as well as educating farmers and the public about our responsibility to treat and nurture our animals and our environment with respect. Ultimately my goal is to leave the world a better place when we have completed our journey as temporary stewards of our small part of the world. The generosity of the A. Pizzagalli Family Farm Fund to support this program

provides a unique incentive for farmers to apply for this award."

The 'Fantastic Farmer' title is one of three annual award programs supported by the A. Pizzagalli Family Farm Fund. Including the Vermont Barn Painting Project and the High-Quality Milk Awards, the mission of the Fund is to support farmer efforts to grow their business, cultivate, and deliver their products to the consumer, in a way that respects the heritage, culture, and stewardship that our farmers and farming community strive for every day.

In March, The Vermont Dairy Industry Association (VDIA), announced the 2023 Vermont High-Quality Milk Awards. The awards recognize the dairy farmers who produced Vermont's best quality milk in 2023. These farmers were recognized at the annual Vermont Dairy Producers Conference, held for the

first time in-person since the beginning of the pandemic.

These awards were presented to:

1st: \$2,500 – Howmars

Farm, The Gates Family, Franklin

2nd: \$1,500 – Essex Farm

LLC, The Essex Family Vergennes

3rd: \$1,000 – Mark & Susan

Rushton, The Rushton Family, Grafton

Also this summer, nine barns around the state received a fresh coat of paint through the Vermont Barn Painting Project. These barns were painted by their owners, who then received up to an \$8,000 micro-grant from the A. Pizzagalli Family Farm Fund. This program reimburses barn owners for improving and preserving their barns and farm property for future generations and improve their roadside appeal across Vermont, for their local communities, visitors, and tourists.

"The goal of the A. Pizzagalli Family Fund is to support and reward Vermont's hard working agricultural entrepreneurs, maintain the integrity of barns across the state, and preserve Vermont's vistas for visitors and Vermonters alike," said Lisa Pizzagalli. "The Pizzagalli family thanks our farmers for their hard work and looks forward to these programs benefitting more agricultural families in the coming years."

"Congratulations to our farmers for all you do for

Vermont. You feed us, take care of our land and animals, and give back to our communities. We are also grateful to have the support of the A. Pizzagalli Family Farm Fund. These investments are making a difference to our farmers and Vermont," said Vermont Agriculture Secretary Anson Tebbetts.

The Vermont Barn Painting Project, with support from the A. Pizzagalli Family Farm Fund and partners, will continue the program next year and beyond. Any Vermont barn owner who may have interest in the program should visit the Vermont Barn Painting Project to learn more.

- VIDEO: 2024 Fantastic Farmer | MKVT Farm
- Mark Rodgers, Q&A about MKVT Farm practices
- To nominate or apply for the 2024 Vermont Fantastic Farmer Award, please visit: <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/administration/fantastic-farmer-award>
- To find out more about the High-Quality Milk Awards, visit: Vermont Dairy Industry Association 2023 Vermont High-Quality Milk Awards.
- To learn more about the Vermont Barn Painting Project, visit: <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/administration/vermont-barn-painting>