

AGRIVIEW



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Check your Maple Trees for Signs of Asian Longhorned Beetle

By Ginger Nickerson, UVM Extension

When you are in your sugarbush this winter, be on the lookout for signs of Asian longhorned beetle (ALB). ALB is a wood-boring insect, native to southeast Asia.

This highly destructive pest will kill many hardwood trees. However, its preferred host is the beloved maple. It has not yet been confirmed in Vermont. However, there is an active infestation in Worcester County, Massachusetts. The beetle threatens all species of maples. It is spread through moving infested firewood, nursery stock, or infested wood products.

While the summer and early fall are the best times to see the adult



Pictured above and right; the Asian Longhorned Beetle and bark indentations.



beetles, winter is an excellent time to examine your trees for signs of ALB damage. Take pictures of any signs you see and report suspicious

trees to VTinvasives.org.

Signs To Look For:

Multiple round, shallow

indentations in the bark with rough edges. These are dime-sized spots the beetles chew to lay their eggs. The spots may ooze sap in the summer and fall when they are fresh.

Perfectly round, pencil to dime-sized holes. These are left when the adults emerge in the summer. The exit hole will be straight and at least one inch deep. Stick a pencil in the hole to test if it is deeper than a tap hole. There may be bits of sawdust-like material around these holes, in branch crooks, or at the base of the tree.

In addition to attacking all maple species, ALB will also harm healthy ash, poplar, birch, willow, and elm.

Let's keep Vermont's maples ALB free!

AGRIVIEW

Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

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THE VIEW FROM 116 STATE STREET

This is not news to many of you but 2023 brought months of challenging weather to Vermont. Persistent rainstorms set records that caused catastrophic flooding throughout Vermont and the Northeast. The agriculture sector was hit incredibly hard. After a hard freeze in May, the flooding and heavy rain in July decimated crops and infrastructure. Many crops were destroyed prior to harvest, and the timing of the event and continuing wet weather last summer left farmers without an opportunity to replace them during the growing season.

Since then, several partners have been looking back and planning to the future.

The Vermont Agricultural Recovery Task Force was established last August to coordinate recovery

efforts for Vermont's agriculture and food systems. The task force was co-chaired by Dr. Roy Beckford at UVM Extension and Nicole Dubuque from the Agency of Agriculture. The Task Force has released the Extreme Weather Impact & Recovery report to highlight the impacts, provide details and data, an overview of the various recovery efforts, and recommendations to continue, expand, and improve the state's response to the ongoing challenges facing Vermont farmers and producers.

Some of the important impacts identified by farmers surveyed after the flooding and included in this report are:

- 34% of respondents said their loss of feed crops was the most significant damage to their operation.
- 28.2% was the average loss of annual income reported as a direct result of the severe weather and

flooding.

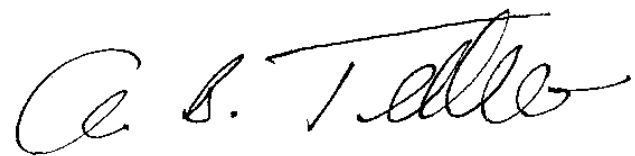
- 53% of respondents anticipated a feed shortage or problems with feed quality because of the severe weather and flooding.
- 56% of respondents said their cash flow will go negative in the next year because of the severe weather and flooding.
- 70% have no crop or livestock insurance. Those who do have crop insurance did not receive sufficient premium payouts to cover losses.

The Vermont Agriculture Recovery Task Force has developed recommendations to continue, expand and improve our response

to the 2023 severe weather. These recommendations will also inform future severe weather responses as Vermont continues to experience increased precipitation, more extreme weather events, warmer temperatures, and increased periods of drought.

Read the report online here: <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/sites/agriculture/files/documents/Ag%20Recovery%20Task%20Force%20Report.pdf>

We hope you will get a chance to read the report and continue to give us feedback as Vermonters continue to recover from the severe weather. Let's hope for a calm and quiet spring and summer.



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

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This Month's Recipe

Crustless Quiche

Ingredients

- 5 large eggs
- 1 cup cream, heavy/thickened (halve if subbing milk)
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp black pepper
- 3.5 oz ham, diced
- 1 cup shredded Vermont extra sharp cheddar
- 1 green onion, sliced

Directions

Set oven to 350. In a large bowl, whisk eggs and cream, salt and pepper. In a greased 9" pie plate, add most of the ham, cheese, and onion. Pour the egg

mixture into the pan. Sprinkle with the remainder of ham, cheese and onion. Bake for 30-35 minutes.

Like pizza, quiche can take a wide range of ingredients so you can make it your own. Here are some combinations from Agency staff for you to try.

- Mushrooms, bacon and goat cheese
- Olives, feta, red onion, dill and parsley
- Kalamata olives, roasted red peppers, mushrooms, caramelized onions, spinach, shrimp and crab meat
- Potatoes
- Kale, onions, herbs, and cheddar



- Feta, red onion, ham, spinach, roasted red peppers, garlic and mozzarella

Enjoy!



Public Comment Period for Proposed Updates to Vermont Livestock Rules

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

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets invites you to submit comments to its proposed updates to Vermont’s livestock (including horses) and poultry importation rules. The comment period for this proposed rule closes on March 15, 2024. You may submit comments in writing by emailing: AGR.FSCPRule@vermont.gov. You may also attend one or more public hearings to provide comment:

- **February 23, 2024. In-person and Virtual: 12:00 - 2:00 pm**
Vermont Agriculture and Environmental Laboratory
163 Admin Drive,
Randolph Center, VT 05061
Microsoft Teams: Dial +1 802-828-7667,,906352290#.
Phone Conference ID: 906 352 290#
- **February 27, 2024. Virtual only: 6:00 – 8:00 pm**
Microsoft Teams: Dial +1 802-828-7667,,6752120#

- **March 6, 2024. In-person and Virtual: 12:00 – 2:00 pm**
Vermont Agriculture and Environmental Laboratory
163 Admin Drive,
Randolph Center, VT 05061
Microsoft Teams: Dial +1 802-828-7667,,908404771#
Phone Conference ID: 908 404 771#
- More information about this public comment opportunity,

including a copy of the proposed rule for your review may be found by going to agriculture.vermont.gov and click on the Public Comment Opportunities button. This will open a new page, please look for the link under the Animal Health heading. A note about publicly available information: **all comments** received before the close of the comment period are available for viewing by the public, including any personally identifiable, and/or confidential information that is included in a comment.

Vermont Barn Painting Project Launches for 2024

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

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets in partnership with the A. Pizzagalli Family Farm Fund is proud to announce the opening of the Vermont Barn Painting Project to new applicants for the 2024 painting season. The Vermont Barn Painting Project has been revised as a micro-grant opportunity funded through the A. Pizzagalli Family Farm Fund, reimbursing active farm owners for barn painting projects that they undertake themselves, up to \$8000. Despite the difficult weather, the 2023 painting season was successful as a trial run of this model, with four barns painted.

The project will open the applica-



tion portal on February 1, 2024, and will begin accepting applicants for the 2024 barn painting season then. The application period will close on March 31. Funding is limited so please apply early at <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/paintbarn>

The Vermont Barn Paining Project has been part of the Vermont landscape for years, with Angelo Pizzagalli leading the effort to restore

barns to their former glory, through minor repairs and a fresh coat of paint. Mr. Pizzagalli recognized that many of our generational farm families who care for these historic barns may not be able to keep up with the care these large structures often need. In collaboration with a number of different entities since 2010, many barns have been brightened and restored. Now, the program has evolved into the current microgrant format. Along with the Barn Painting Program, the Pizzagalli Family also supports other agricultural grants important to Vermont farmers.

“Our family is pleased to be a part of the effort to keep our important working farms viable and preserved as an integral part of our beautiful landscape for Vermonters

and visitors alike to enjoy,” said Lisa Pizzagalli of the A. Pizzagalli Family Farm Fund. “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.”

“We are grateful to the Pizzagalli Family for all these programs that help our farmers. These investments are making a difference across Vermont, supporting our family farmers and improving our rural economy. We are fortunate to have these grants,” said Agriculture Secretary Anson Tebbetts.

- To fill out an application, please visit the Agency’s webpage here: <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/paintbarn>, and follow the guidance.
- See our 2024 Vermont Barn Painting Project promotional video here: <https://youtu.be/JWfRAICQohQ>
- For any questions, please contact Scott Waterman at: Scott.Waterman@vermont.gov

DAIRY BUSINESS INNOVATION CENTER

Over \$1.5 Million Invested in Dairy Farm Improvement and Modernization

By Katie Spring, Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center

The Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center (NE-DBIC) is excited to announce the selected recipients of the Dairy Farm Improvement & Modernization Grant. This grant funds a wide range of projects that prioritize long-term farm viability, climate, and economic resilience for dairy farms. In this inaugural funding round, 25 farms were selected for awards across seven states, with total program funding of \$1,583,331.



The projects selected for funding include incorporating technologies like robotic manure scrapers to improve herd health and comfort,

modernizing milking parlors for increased labor and energy efficiencies, and improving forage with sorghum as a climate-smart alternative

to corn silage. The range of projects are connected in their goals to promote healthier livestock and environmental conditions while improving the daily work of farmers and their employees.

Ten of the selected farms are in Vermont. Current and former farmer participants from NE-DBIC funded Technical Assistance cohorts received priority for a portion of funds from this grant. Those cohort members are noted with an asterisk:

- Ackermann Dairy
- Bouchard Family Dairy of Vermont
- Covered Bridge Farm of Vermont*

- Fort Waite Farm of Vermont
- Harrison's Homegrown of Vermont
- Kingdom Creamery of Vermont
- Riverview Farm of Vermont*
- The Farm at Wheeler Mountain of Vermont
- Tups Crossing Farm of Vermont
- Williams Farm of Vermont*

This grant will open again in November 2024. Learn more about the grant and the selected awardees' projects at bit.ly/farm-improvement-awards

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.

The deadline for grant applications is 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.

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

continued on page 5

Dairy Grants

continued from page 4

other marketing materials, professional branding and design services, trade show booth set-up, and more.

Applications are currently 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.

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 in April, 2024. Awards will range from \$10,000 to \$50,000 with approximately \$300,000 total funds available this round.

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

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

Dairy Processor Start-Up & Co-packing 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 process-

ing 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.

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, 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 the summer. Approximately \$1,500,000 available.



The Pesticide Applicator Report is going digital.

This change will allow:

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

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

If you have any questions, please email agr.pest@vermont.gov or call 802-828-1732.

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



Pesticide Applicator Certification Exams

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

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

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

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



Montpelier
Every Wednesday
9:00 am – 12:00 pm

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

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

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

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

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

Suicide Prevention

By Juana Lopez, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

The health and wellbeing of employees should be one of the main priorities of the workplace. In order to create a safe environment, mental health concerns, trainings and resources should be provided and ensured since the beginning. There are organizations within states that are willing to lead in trainings and create awareness on this topic.

The Center for Health and Learning offers trainings in-person and online, to Vermont and beyond. At times it can seem difficult to talk about suicide prevention or try to navigate how you can help someone in need. Organizations like the Center for Health and Learning and Farm First are there to let you know you are not alone.

I had the opportunity to speak directly with Kathleen Kilbourne, who is the executive Director of The Center for Health and Learning on the subject. The Center for Health and Learning also known as the CHL, is a mighty statewide team that works on reducing the stigma on suicide, substance use, and mental health. Kathleen stated that conversations on mental health need to become more widely accepted and talked about. CHL's vision is to make mental health awareness and prevention accessible and equitable to all. Trainings have been held in different settings such as

schools, nonprofits, and even at construction sites. Before and after the trainings, CHL conducts surveys to see the impact it has and through the data it shows that it does have an impact on one's knowledge on suicide prevention. Having knowledge on resources like the Suicide and Crisis Line 9-8-8, a 24/7, free, and confidential resources can help those in need.

The Center for Health and Learning was able to collaborate with Farm First in order to create Umatter Suicide Prevention Trainings that were specific to the agriculture and farming community, thanks to grant funding from the Vermont Department of Health. Farm First, a Vermont-based program tries to tackle these issues by providing farm owners with confidential and personal services that best suits their needs including but not limited to financial or family concerns, illness, depression, alcoholism, etc.

Farm First has hosted four Umatter Suicide Prevention Trainings at the Agency of Agriculture, Foods, and Markets that were available in-person and online. Participants were able to learn the basic knowledge and skills of suicide prevention including myths and attitudes, sensitive language, risk factors and warning signs, considerations for populations at risk, examples of what to do or say, and resources. They also learned how to use behavior practice techniques that can be used in the agriculture community when they may come into

contact with someone who presents suicide risk.

According to the Vermont Department of Health, "suicide is the ninth leading cause of death, with the rate (classified as per 100,000 Vermonters) in 2021" (Vermont Vital Statistics, 2021). Over the past 15 years, Vermont's suicide rate has consistently been higher than the U.S rate (Vermont Vital Statistics, 2008-2022).

Suicide is a major public health concern and is among the leading causes of death in the United States. It is the act of intentionally taking your life.

Some warning signs of suicide include (not exhaustive):

- Talking about feeling hopeless or having no purpose
- Talking about being a burden to others
- Talking about taking one's own life
- Increasing the use of alcohol or drugs
- Acting anxious, agitated or recklessly
- Sleeping too little or too much

What to do:

- Do not leave the person alone
- Remove any weapons or substances that they may possess
- Contact the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline by dialing 988 (free, confidential, 24/7)
- Contact local designated agency or call 911 for immediate emergencies
- Text VT to 741741

The number one protec-

tive factor is human connection. Protective factors include talking to friends, families, neighbors, farm first, and CHL that support resilience and help people through stressful events.

How can the media report on these situations more responsibly? Some recommendations include:

- Reporting suicide as a public health issue
- Include resources, such as hotlines and treatment resources (Crisis Text Line and National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 988)
 - Call or text 988
- Use sensitive language when talking about suicide
- Consider which details are truly newsworthy and in the best interest of the family and community.
- Emphasize help and hope, stories of recovery through help seeking and positive coping skills.
- Ask an expert such as suicide prevention or mental health experts if you have any questions or concerns.
- Contact Farm First for any questions, information or assistance in creating a plan that fits your needs when addressing mental health, suicide prevention or other concerns.
 - Call (802)-318-5538
 - Farm First are able to provide up to 12 free counseling sessions with a counselor that fit the needs of the farmer.
- Contact The Center for Health and Learning if you have any questions or concerns on suicide prevention and awareness or want to host or take part in any training

opportunities.

- 802-254-6590
- info@healthandlearning.org

Responsible reporting is important because it allows information that is brief and accurate to be shared without it traumatizing or triggering people.

When it comes to mental health and suicide prevention, one can play a role in suicide prevention and that is by staying connected with those around you. You are not alone, there are organizations that are able to help you. In times of crisis, Vermont is always trying to find grass root solutions to pull together. We all matter including you. *We all have mental health.*

For information on mental health experts and resources in Vermont, please visit:

- www.healthandlearning.org Center for Health and Learning
- www.vtspc.org Vermont Suicide Prevention Center
- <https://vtspc.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Vermont-Suicide-Prevention-Platform-2023.pdf>
- <https://www.healthvermont.gov/stats/vital-records-population-data/annual-vital-statistics-reports>
- <https://www.farmfirst.org/> Farm First website
- <https://facing-suicidevt.com/> Facing Suicide Vermont website



Statewide Listening Sessions Continue

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

The Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets, alongside our partners, is excited to move into the final month of listening sessions. Jointly, we have eight sessions in the books, filled with excellent discussion and a list of action items for the Agency's consideration. We would also like to explicitly thank our many partners whose

time and capacity have been paramount to each session's success. There are three more sessions coming up in March and we encourage your participation!

These sessions are focused on hearing from producers, processors, distributors, and service-providers on topics such as: severe weather impacts, grant and programming feedback and business/industry needs. An invitation has been extended to Agency employees and legislators to attend in a

listening capacity. Each event will have on-site parking and light snacks provided. If you don't see or cannot make the in-person session near you, please don't hesitate to reach out to Sarah McIlvennie at Sarah.McIlvennie@vermont.gov. We also have an anonymous form online where you can submit feedback and share your experiences.

Find a session near you!

3/18 - Statewide (virtual)

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

3/20 - Rutland County

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

- Co-host: Vermont Farmers Food Center
- Registration is required for this event

3/25 - Franklin & Grand Isle Counties

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

For Agricultural Events and Resources Visit:

- The VT Agency of Agriculture Events Calendar: <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/calendar>
- UVM Extension Events Calendars: https://www.uvm.edu/extension/extension_event_calendars
- 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

Northeast Dairy Innovation Summit: The Future of Dairy

By Katie Spring, Outreach & Content Specialist at NE-DBIC

Join dairy farmers and processors in Albany, NY on April 2-3 for a summit on the future of regional dairy. Creating a resilient dairy sector that works for farmers, processors, and consumers isn't out of reach, but it does require a multi-pronged approach and innovation across the dairy sector.

At the Northeast Dairy Innovation Summit, we'll hear from farmers and processors on the work being done now that's leading the way toward a profitable and resilient regional dairy sector, and we'll identify key funding priorities for the next decade.

Workshop tracks include farm technology and climate-smart strategies to increase profit, processing expansion and packaging

NORTHEAST DAIRY INNOVATION SUMMIT



April 2-3, 2024 | Albany, NY

Hosted by the Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center

solutions, workforce development, and growing opportunities for goat and sheep dairy. Register today to join us in leading dairy to a future of increasing profits,

climate leadership, and farmer well-being. Learn more and register at nedairyinnovation.com/summit



Water Quality Work Continues: 2023 in Review

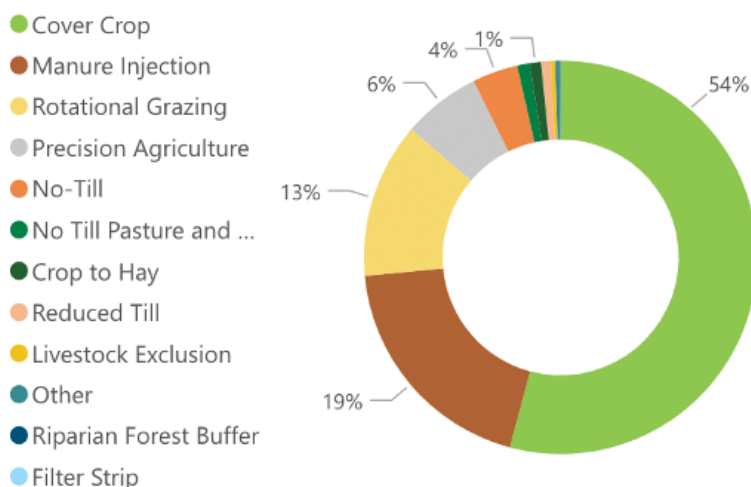
By Maria Burnett, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

Every year in January the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets delivers a report to the legislature highlighting the efforts to improve water quality in the past state fiscal year. Here are some highlights from State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2023, which covers July 1st, 2022, to June 30, 2023.

By the numbers:

- \$15.5 million was invested in water quality projects through the Agency's technical and financial assistance programs, leveraging an additional \$1.9 million in federal match and almost \$1 million in local farm match in FY 2023. This is an increase from \$10.4 million in state investments in FY 2022.
- 50,000 acres of conser-

Figure 1: Percentage of Conservation Practices Supported Through Agency Programs in SFY 2023



- More than 800 on-site technical assistance and regulatory visits were completed by Agency staff.

These visits are essential for ensuring compliance with the Regulatory Agricultural Practices and supporting farmers to implement effective conservation practices that result in improved water quality.

- Almost \$1 million was contributed by farmers as a match towards state funded farm water quality improvements in FY 2023.

- According to the state's estimated total phosphorus load reduction tracking and accounting for SFY2023:
 - 20% of Lake Champlain Basin Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Targets have been met, and
 - 14% of Lake Memphremagog TMDL Targets have been met.

Program Highlights:

Last fall, Agency staff member Ellen Friedrich worked with nine undergraduate students from the University of Vermont on a semester-long project focused on agricultural filter strips and the Grassed Waterway and Filter Strip (GWFS) program. The Agency hopes to revamp this program to make the program more accessible to farms, and to encourage more farm participation to improve buffers and to seed down critical source areas to perennial vegetation (or areas that may contribute to high rates of phosphorus runoff).

When speaking about the Capital Equipment Assistance Program (CEAP), Justin Rich, owner of Burnt Rock farm in Huntington, VT, states "this is one of the best types of grant programs. The program asks existing operations what they need... the solutions are out there."

When speaking about the Farm Agronomic Practices (FAP) Program, David Rosso from Fairview Farm in East Dover, VT, states "it is really evident that all the state

employees I have worked with want you to succeed. They care about agriculture and the type of farming you do. I really think more farms should utilize these programs." Between SFY 2016 and 2023, agronomic practice implementation has accounted for most of the estimated phosphorus reductions in Vermont.

The Agency launched a new program this year, the Vermont Farmer Ecosystem Stewardship (VFESP) which offers supplemental incentive payments to farmers who enroll in the USDA-NRCS Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). More than 80 farms across Vermont have taken advantage of this one-time incentive opportunity.

When speaking about the Vermont Pay for Performance Program (VPPF), Guy Choiniere, owner of a grass-fed dairy farm in Highgate, VT states, "the (V)PPF program has been a pleasant surprise! Even though we have an all-grass farm... this program provides incentives and rewards for using best management practices such as nutrient management planning and rotational grazing."

In SFY2023, more than 50,000 acres of agronomic practices to improve water quality were supported through Agency programs such as FAP and CEAP. Below is a chart which shows the top practice supported was Cover Crop, followed by Manure Injection and Rotational Grazing.

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LOOKING for VERMONT FARMERS

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- Veterinary & Agronomic Support
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April 2024 Total Solar Eclipse To Bring Shadow and Visitors to Vermont

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

If you weren't aware, it's coming. And people are coming to Vermont to 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 3 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.



Image courtesy Sky & Telescope

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-vacation.com/plan-your-visit/events/2024-total-solar-eclipse-in-vermont>. Search #VTEclipse on social media to see the latest messaging about the coming event.

6th Equine Industry Summit

Working Together to Create a Unified Voice for Vermont's Equine Industry Horses, Vermont Agriculture & Tourism

By Pam Knights, Vermont Horse Council

The brainchild of a Vermont Horse Council board member and past president, the Equine Industry Summit is back! After a two-year hiatus due to COVID, the 6th summit, Working Together to Create a Unified

Voice for Vermont's Equine Industry, takes place on Saturday, April 27, 2024.

The event is co-hosted by the Green Mountain Horse Association (GMHA) in South Woodstock at the Youth Center. The program features a keynote address by equestrian legend Denny Emerson of Tamarack Hill Farm, five informative

sessions, lunch, and networking opportunities.

The driving force behind the Equine Industry Summit is the afore-mentioned VHC member Heidi Krantz. The grant she secured from Farm Credit Northeast AgEnhancement is being used to brand the event, create marketing tools, and a strategic promotional

plan. This enables VHC to reach a broader segment of the equine industry and related businesses. It also helps to raise awareness of the economic and esthetic contributions equines make in Vermont.

The Equine Industry Summit helps to attract new VHC members, raise sponsorship support to run the event and raise operating capital for VHC. The Vermont Horse Council is an all-volunteer, non-profit educational 501-c3 funded

through memberships, fundraising events, donations, and grants.

According to Heidi Krantz, "The Equine Industry Summit is a pet project of mine. I think it is important to bring the diverse interests of the equine community in Vermont together to network, compare concerns and successes, and importantly to envision the future of the industry. It's a day filled with conversation, education, and opportunity".

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Robert Eddy

Vermont Recognizes National Weights and Measures Week: March 1-7, 2024

By Marc Paquette, VT
Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

State and local jurisdictions throughout the country are celebrating Weights and Measures Week which takes place the first seven days of March each year. The date for Weights and Measures Week commemorates the signing of the first United States weights and measures law by President John Adams on March 2, 1799. The evolution of a uniform system of weights and measures has had a significant impact on society and government. It provides uniformity and confidence in the marketplace for both consumers and businesses. All participants in an economy are more likely to engage openly in trade if they are assured of fairness in transactions. Weights and Measures programs contribute greatly to economic development

by promoting equity in the marketplace to all stakeholders.

Vermont's Weights and Measures Section resides in the Vermont Agency of Agriculture Food & Markets. Many consumers are surprised to learn that weights and measures programs are part of many agencies of agriculture nationwide. This is true in Vermont, where much of the state's early economy was based on agricultural products produced on tens of thousands of farms. Historically, commodities produced in Vermont like milk, meat, grains, feed, corn, and maple were sold by weight or measure, therefore the inspection program was placed in the Agency of Agriculture.

The inspections conducted by field staff provide equity in the marketplace and consumer protection by inspecting commercial devices used in trade. Each year the Vermont program inspects over 6,000 gas pumps, 425 fuel oil and 300

propane truck meters, thousands of scales, and packages. Inspectors conduct hundreds of price verification inspections, testing the accuracy of laser scanning systems in retail outlets. This work promotes consumer protection by ensuring that these devices are accurate and correct as well as monitoring pricing integrity and weighing and measuring practices where transactions occur.

This year, Vermont is highlighting our very active Price Verification inspection program, where staff will conduct inspections of randomized items offered for sale in retail stores, comparing the advertised shelf price of items with what a customer is charged at the registers.

Related to these inspections, the Vermont program is one of 68 jurisdictions from 28 states that is participating in a nationwide survey sponsored collaboratively by the National Conference on Weights & Measures (NCWM)

and the National Institute of Standards Technology (NIST). This survey was proposed in response to ongoing concerns from compliance jurisdictions around the country on the high level of failure rates being found in this area. Feedback being reported to NCWM, including from VT, has been valuable, however it has included little documentation or statistical data to gauge pricing accuracy in the marketplace.

The survey will now provide measurable documentation as data gathered will include compliance rates, total number of items inspected, overcharges, undercharges, range, average errors found, number of stores inspected, and compliance rates based on store types. The survey plan includes a list with accompanying definitions for ten commonly found types of retail stores where consumers typically purchase goods. These categories of store types include grocery, supercenters, big box/department,

warehouse/club, dollar/discount, convenience, drug/pharmacy, automotive, home centers, and clothing retailers found in the consumer market.

The inspection phase of the survey will be completed by March 1, 2024. Once the results are compiled the NCWM and NIST will be evaluating the results. They will then determine the best method of dissemination of data to survey participants and the public. The anticipated release of the data is expected during the summer of 2024.

Upon completion, the survey findings may be utilized by many stakeholders. Potential utilization includes retailers who may choose to use the information as a catalyst to implement pricing improvement plans for retail establishments and create related staff training. It may be used to empower consumer groups to use the information to educate shoppers that errors exist and how to address some

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AGRICULTURAL PESTICIDE APPLICATOR MEETING

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

March 19, 2024: Virtual via Zoom

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

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

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



THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT
EXTENSION



VERMONT
AGENCY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD & MARKETS

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INITIAL PESTICIDE CERTIFICATION MEETING

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

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

Sites: Rutland, Bennington, St. Johnsbury, Burlington

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

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



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

Email: Ag.agriview@vermont.gov, phone: 802-828-1619. Deadline for submissions is the 1st of each month for next month's issue. Example: January 1st deadline for February issue.

Equipment

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

Complete milking equipment for 64 cow step up, \$10,000. Storage tanks 12,500g +13,000 gal, above ground \$30 per gal. 2 skid tanks 300g + 500 gal. Brillion seeder 10ft, \$5000. 4 JDpost hole digger 3pt, \$950. JD Dirt scoop 3 pt, \$750. 4 Hay rake pinwheels 3 pt, \$750. 802-483-2870 (4)

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)

General

Commercial Blooming Onion cutter & tanks 802-365-4000 (4)

Hay, Feed & Forage

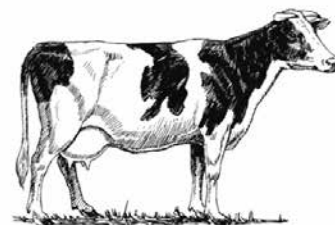
1st and 2nd cut round baled hay, some wrapped, some not, will load, 4' x 4' round bales, prices vary depending on quantity, cutting, wrapped vs. unwrapped, quantity discount/cash prices available. Westford. 802-355-2930 (4)

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 seet grass 18 to 20% plus protein. Large bales & organic by trailer loads. Large & small square bales to straw whole or processed at farm, we load or direct delivery by trailer load. 802-849-6266 or 802-373-5217 (4)

Wanted

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

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

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

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 phone 603-548-3890. (6)

Nutrient Management Plan Updates

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

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

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

If you are unsure who should help you with your NMP update, contact Susan Brouillette at the UVM Extension Office to connect with technical assistance: Susan.brouillette@uvm.edu or 802-524-6501, ext. 432

HAVE FEED?
NEED FEED?
BUY/SELL

FARM FEED-FINDER MARKETPLACE

HELPING CONNECT FARMS AND FEED

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

News from the Vermont Maple Sugar Makers Association

By Allison Hope, Vermont Maple Sugar Makers' Association

At 131 years old, the Vermont Maple Sugar Makers' Association (VMSMA) holds the bragging rights of being one of the oldest agriculture associations in the country. We are proud that maple is "The Official Flavor of Vermont". When people think of Vermont, they think of high quality, pure maple syrup and the thousands of families that make it.

Vermont has a long history of maple production, and over time, producers have innovated to create efficiencies that benefit the environment, the trees, and their operations. As a member association, our mission is to support maple producers through educational opportunities,

information about updated and emerging science, peer to peer networking, and promoting and protecting the branding of pure Vermont maple.

The Association offers strategic, long-term value for our members while still operating a lean non-profit with a professional staff. Our members represent the diversity of maple producers around the state - from backyard hobbyists who are just getting started, to family run operations with over 100,000 taps, to bulk packers who purchase from local producers around the state.

VMSMA offers educational opportunities for all producer levels and interests that focus on science, best practices, access to technical

of the great value consumers receive from weights and measures inspection programs. The next time you purchase gas, take a trip to the grocery store, or receive a delivery of fuel at your home, remember that dedicated staff from the Weights and Measures Section is working diligently to ensure accuracy, fairness, and protection to all parties.

For more information about the Agency of Agriculture's Weights and Measures Program, contact Marc Paquette, Weights and Measures Chief, Marc.Paquette@vermont.gov 802-828-2426.



expertise and peer feedback, marketing and much more. We also work on behalf of our membership to form col-

laborative relationships with partner organizations and agencies to address topics ranging from government affairs at both the local and national level and broadening our marketing reach.

Maple production in the state has grown more than 350% in the last twenty years! With more and more folks showing an interest in tapping trees, we support them with the science and

best practices they need to follow in the footsteps of those who have created a tradition of high-quality Vermont maple syrup. One new Association program that offers this expertise is our Sugarhouse Certification Program and associated Grant Program. The FDA has designated pure maple a low-risk food, which offers up exemptions for producers that other food products don't have. It's up to every maple producer to understand all the associated food safety regulations and know how to follow them. Our Sugarhouse Certification Program offers a path to get there and

we support any necessary upgrades with grants up to \$15,000, while funding lasts!

We think of ourselves like the public radio of maple — we're a resource and advocate for all of Vermont's maple producers, but the Association is even more valuable when you join. Membership is a two-way conversation that is most robust when we have a critical mass of our state's producers on board.

For a full listing of membership benefits and information on how to join us, please visit www.vermontmaple.org. Email maple@vermontmaple.org with any questions!

Water Quality

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Looking Ahead

2023 was a challenging year for Vermont farmers with record setting precipitation seen across the state. In the face of natural disasters and other impacts to Vermont's growing climate, the Agency wants to thank Vermont farmers who continue to demonstrate their commitment to the

adoption of conservation practices and improving water quality. The Agency will strive to continue serving farms and partnering with the agricultural community to meet technical and financial assistance needs while improving processing and efficiency. We look forward to continuing to share with the legislature and the public how much work Vermont farmers are putting towards improving water

quality in Vermont.

For more information on the results of efforts led by the Agency of Agriculture Division of Water Quality, visit agriculture.vermont.gov/water-quality/additional-resources-and-reports. If you have any questions or would like assistance implementing a clean water project on your farm, reach out to the Water Quality Division at 802-828-2431 or AGR.WaterQuality@Vermont.gov!

Equine Summit

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VHC's President Jeannette Cole says, "The Equine Industry Summit provides an opportunity to meet with our business community, to help build important connections between consumers, government,

educational institutions, and membership. In turn it helps to fulfill our vision of promoting a thriving equine community in Vermont. I am honored and pleased to be a part of this special event, and equally to be associated with so many professionals within Vermont. We hope equine business owners and enthu-

siasts join us for this exciting event!"

For more information and to register for the summit visit VtHorseCouncil.org/summit/.

To have a voice in the future of Vermont's equine industry, register online by April 1 for early bird and new member specials.

Weights & Measures

continued from page 10

of those errors either at the retail level or higher. Weights & Measures compliance programs can use the survey to better allocate inspection resources based on store type and to advocate for their programs. Vermont is on schedule to complete approximately 200 of these inspections during the survey period. Program members are very enthusiastic and pleased to be participating in this national initiative.

Weights and Measures Week serves as a reminder

Farm to Plate Releases Food Security in Vermont: Roadmap to 2035

For two years, over 600 Vermonters contributed their personal expertise on food security to develop a Food Security in Vermont: Roadmap to 2035. The Farm to Plate Network's Food Security Priority Strategy Team led the Roadmap development and presented the completed Roadmap on January 24, 2024 to the Vermont Senate Committee on Agriculture and the Vermont House Committee on Agriculture, Food Resiliency, and Forestry. Now it is time to begin implementation. This Roadmap shows us how to ensure everyone in Vermont has the food they need and to create resilient, climate-ready communities across the state.

Our Shared Goal: In 2035, all Vermonters will be food secure. The Vermont Food Security Roadmap to 2035 guides our way to that future. As defined by the United Nations, food security is "when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life." Vermont has the tools, knowledge, and resources to create food security and ensure that every person living here has the food they want and need to be healthy and nourished. Our time to act is now.

To achieve the goal of a food secure Vermont by 2035 the Roadmap prioritiz-

es systems and policy changes over individual-level interventions. It builds on government programs, community innovation, and the shared experiences of Vermonters in recent years, with policy recommendations and actions we can take in Vermont to create permanent, equitable food security for all.

Food Security Roadmap Background

In February 2021, the Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund, the Farm to Plate Network, and the Vermont Agency of Agriculture released the 2021–2030 Agriculture & Food System Strategic Plan to accomplish the three legislative outcomes articulated in the Farm to Plate Investment Program's statute, namely to increase sustainable economic development and create jobs in Vermont's food and farm sector; improve soils, water, and resiliency of the working landscape in the face of climate change; and improve access to healthy local foods for all Vermonters.

The Food Security Roadmap project was initiated to build shared action strategies on how to improve access to healthy local foods for all Vermonters. The 2021–2030 Agriculture & Food System Strategic Plan: called for Farm to Plate to develop a Vermont food security [roadmap], centered around a thriving food system and inspired by community-based responses to food insecurity and disruptive

events.

The process involved food insecure individuals as well as farmers in the planning, and investigated questions including, but not limited to, affordable housing, health care, transportation, siting of retail grocery stores, food distribution, and ensuring the continued production of food in Vermont. The Roadmap works to adopt state and regional level policies, procedures, and plans to ensure that the Vermont food supply is sufficient to withstand global or national food supply chain disruptions caused by climate change and other disasters.

A team of dedicated leaders in the Farm to Plate Network was assembled to design and implement a robust public engagement process with a diverse group of Vermonters on how best to achieve food security for all who call Vermont home.

"We are on the road to food security in Vermont," said Becka Warren, Farm to Plate Food Security Plan Manager at the Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund. "The State of Vermont can make policy choices that will ensure food security for everyone who lives here."

Together, we can work to ensure that hidden hunger does not exist in Vermont because everyone has the food they need. If you're interested in becoming involved in this work, you can sign up for the Food Security in Vermont: Roadmap to 2035 newsletter on the Farm to Plate web-

site. You can also join your local Hunger Council; find out more at the Hunger Free Vermont website. To learn

more about implementing this roadmap and to get involved, email becka@vsjf.org.

Agency of Agriculture Food & Markets 2024 Scale Testing

The Weights & Measures Section of the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets will be hosting multiple scale inspection events around the state during April for anyone who uses 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. This will allow the Agency to perform these inspections in a more efficient manner in a way that creates less disruption to you and the farmers' markets.

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.

A list of dates and locations for the testing follows. Most sites will be at Agency of Transportation (AOT) garages. Come anytime during our open hours; no 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

Now Is the Time to Frost Seed

By Jennifer Alexander –
Poultney Mettowee Natural
Resources Conservation
District

What is frost seeding? Frost seeding is the practice of broadcasting seed on the soil and using the freeze thaw cycle to help the seed make good soil contact. This is an inexpensive method of adding variety to your hayfield or pasture without disturbing the soil.

While it is a simple process, there is some preparation that you can do in advance to give your seedlings the best chance of survival. In the summer/fall before you frost seed,

take a soil test and make sure that your pH and soil fertility are within optimal range. Much like no-till seeding with a drill, you want to give your seedling the best opportunity at survival by having proper pH (6-6.8) and soil fertility. If you have low pH and fertility, your seedlings will struggle.

In the fall, you should create an easier pathway for the broadcast seed to reach the soil by closely grazing or mowing the pasture to reduce the amount of vegetation. If your pasture or field has a buildup of thatch, you most likely will have a poor experience frost



seeding.

Then, focus on seed selection. You will want to select seeds that can germinate and grow at cooler temperatures. Red and white clovers are perhaps the best for frost seeding. I know some farms that have had good luck

with orchard grass and perennial ryegrass. Alfalfa and birdsfoot trefoil are not good seeds to frost seed, due to seed size and slow germination. Don't forget that clover seeds are heavier and will fly further than grass seeds. Because of this, they should be seeded separately. I recommend clovers and most grasses should be frost seeded at 2-4

pounds per acre. Finally, hoof traffic after the seeding can increase the chance of good to seed soil contact, although care needs to be taken. Too much animal pressure, especially in soft ground, can cause the seed to be pushed too deep

into the soil. Care also needs to be taken so that livestock doesn't trample the young seedlings.

Additional information on successfully renovating pasture and hayland can be found at <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/water-quality/additional-resources-and-reports/practices>

Did you know that this year, for the first time, the Farm Agronomic Practices program can provide \$30/acre to support frost seeding? Apply before April 15 at agriculture.vermont.gov/fap for any acreage you plan to do between now and June. Contact Sonia Howlett at 802-522-4655 with any questions.

Underdog Documentary Screening Dates in Vermont

By Juana Lopez, VT Agency of Agriculture,
Food & Markets

The film Underdog is based on a Vermont dairy farmer named Doug Butler who is heading to Alaska with 22 dogs with a dream of competing at the Dogsled Racing World Champions. Doug Butler, who was born and raised in Vermont on a dairy farm, has always had a dream of dog sled racing since 1976 and has participated in many dog races since then. It's the story of the everyday difficulties farmers face in order to pursue their dreams and demands of being a small-scale family farmer and the ability to stay optimistic.

Farm First along with Farmer Peers will be part of a discussion panel facilitated by Vermont Public, to talk about agriculture and mental health. This panels will take place at all of the Vermont dates and locations. Farm First is a free, Vermont-based

program providing farmer and their families with support, resources, and information to reduce stress.

All showings are free, but people can reserve tickets in advance on the website.

Screening dates in March

The Gem Theater (March 5, 2024) Bethel, ME

Maine Film Center (March 6, 2024) Waterville, ME

Town Hall Theater w/Vermont Public (March 10, 2024) Middlebury, VT

Main Street Landing w/ Vermont Public (March 27, 2024) Burlington, VT

Avon Theatre (April 10, 2024) Stamford, CT

For more information or to reserve a ticket, visit: <https://www.underdogfilm.org/>
Contact: kelly.hargraves@firstrunfeatures.com
<https://www.farmfirst.org/>

Applications Now Open for FREE Agriscience Summer Academies at UVM

UVM Extension's 4-H Program invites rising 8th-12th graders to apply for one of three, free, residential summer academies held on the UVM campus June 23-29. AgroTek Innovation, now in its third year, exposes students to agriscience innovation skills by diving deep into one of three topics; Culturing Cells for Healthier Soils, Shifting the Waste to Value Paradigm (converting agricultural waste into value added products), and Using Virtual Reality for More Precise Agriculture.

In addition to learning content, participants will build important relationships with undergraduate student mentors along with faculty and staff.

More details, including the link to apply, can be found at <https://www.uvm.edu/extension/youth/agrotek-innovation-program-8th-12th-graders>

Deadline to apply is April 5. Individuals who identify as BIPOC, female identifying or LGBTQ+, humans traditionally under-represented in agriculture, are encouraged to apply. Contact Sarah Kleinman at sarah.kleinman@uvm.edu or 802-656-7637.



Protecting Wild Bee Crop Pollination Services:

Commercial Bumble Bee Management Practices

By University Extension Specialists Laura Johnson (UVM), Lisa Wasako DeVetter, PhD (WSU), and Elaine Evans (UMN)

protect the well-being of wild pollinating insects and encouraging long-term wild crop pollination services. Commercially reared bumble bees have been selectively bred, unlike wild bumble bee species. This article will cover the use of queen excluders and colony disposal after pollination.

The following management practices for commercial bumble bee colonies are important for helping

Queen excluders: Queen excluders prevent wild queen entry and resident queen escape. Observations and research¹ show that commercial bumble bee

boxes deployed for spring crop pollination services trap wild queen bumble bees that have emerged from their overwintering sites and are nest searching to establish

a new colony. Once wild queens are inside the box, many die. Queen excluders prevent this. Loss of wild bumble queen populations
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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

March

Dairy Farm Cohort Technical Assistance Program

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

Laura Ginsburg
Laura.Ginsburg@vermont.gov
802-522-2252

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

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



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Wild Bees

continued from page 15

could have negative long-term implications for wild crop pollination services.

What is a queen excluder?

There is an option to have a door included in commercial bumble bee boxes that is designed as a queen excluder, which reduces the size of the openings where bees enter and exit. This reduced size opening restricts the movement of larger bumble bee queens in and out of the box, while the smaller sized female bumble bee workers and males can continue to enter and exit for pollination services. A queen excluding door limits movement to workers and males only.

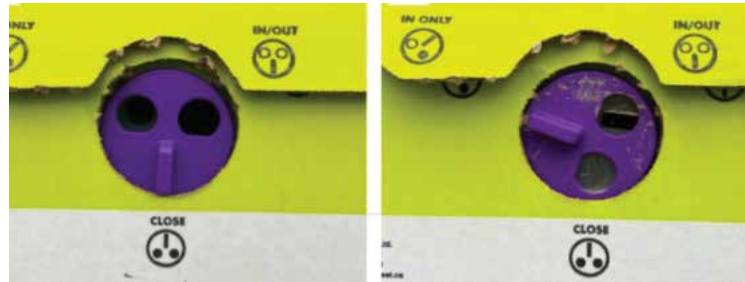
Does it change how well my crop is pollinated? Queen, female worker, and male bumble bees are all different sizes, with queens being the largest. Female workers are the primary pollinators and can freely pass through the reduced opening of queen excluder doors. Research¹ has found that colony health is not compromised when queen

excluders are installed. This suggests healthy foraging activities to flowers are carried out and pollination services are not likely impeded by using queen excluder doors.

Does it cost me anything and how do I get them?

At the time of creating this document, industry representatives indicated that there is no additional cost for queen excluders. Some suppliers will automatically include queen excluders as of 2024 and no request is needed. Other suppliers require you to request queen excluders. Always check with your sales representative for details.

Colony disposal after pollination: Commercial colonies provide effective pollination services for one to two months after arriving on site. Colony pollination services then wane as the population naturally declines and the colony dies out. Commercial bumble bees can transmit diseases and parasites to wild bees through shared flowers and contact with the colony in the box. To



Door brand Y: No queen exclusion, hive view (left); queen exclusion, hive view (right)

reduce this risk, immediately dispose of commercial bumble bee colonies after crop pollination is achieved or when peak colony performance has declined. The most humane disposal method is to place the box containing the bees in a freezer for two days. A

less humane, but effective method, is drowning the bees in the box. Follow termination by disposing of the dead bees with the box in a sealed garbage bag.


Questions? Contact Laura Johnson at laura.o.johnson@uvm.edu or 802-656-4827

1. Miller, O., Hale, C., Richardson, L., Sossa, D., Iverson, A., McArt, S., Poveda, K., & Grab, H. (2023). Commercial *Bombus impatiens* colonies function as ecological traps for wild queens. *Journal of Applied Ecology*, 60, 592–600. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1365-2664.14353>



Door brand X: No queen exclusion (left); queen exclusion (right)

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