

AGRiVIEW



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Farms Access Federal Funds for Energy Improvements with Free Technical Assistance

By Laura Hardie, Red Barn Writer

Farming is a demanding job. So, even when millions of dollars in energy efficiency grants become available to farmers, many don't have the time or expertise to conduct energy assessments and write grant applications.

"We've known we needed to upgrade the refrigerators and the freezers in the farm stand for some time, and we've known about USDA Rural Development, but it is hard to access those grants," Eric Skovsted said. Skovsted and his wife, Mary, own and operate Joe's Brook Farm, a 15-acre certified organic vegetable farm in Barnet.

Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) Grants are available to assist small businesses or farms in Vermont and across the U.S. with



energy efficiency improvements or renewable energy projects. Millions of dollars have been set aside, and agriculture producers can get up to 50 percent financial assistance for projects improving energy efficiency.

Fortunately, Clean Economy

Works specializes in energy efficiency and is interested in helping farms, like Joe's Brook, get the grants they need to run their operations more efficiently.

"We thought, why don't we streamline and partner with

Todd Campbell (L) and Pete Schweigert (R) of Clean Economy Works with Eric Skovsted of Joe's Brook Farm (c)

the Working Lands Enterprise Initiative at the Vermont Agency of Agriculture to provide technical assistance to make it easy for farmers to execute the energy audits, and we write the grants for free," said Todd Campbell, owner of Clean Economy Works.

The consulting firm provides strategic planning and project management for economic development projects. They received a \$20,000 matching grant from the Working Lands Enterprise Initiative to work with eight farms in Vermont to identify projects and

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AGRiVIEW

Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

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THE VIEW FROM 116 STATE STREET

The future of dairy was front and center in Albany in early April. We held the first Northeast Dairy Innovation Summit, organized by the Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center, hosted at the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets.

We welcomed over 200 people – farmers, processors, technical assistance providers, lenders, and folks from all parts of the dairy world. It was two days of learning and inspiration. The Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center has been a positive addition to regional dairy over the past four years. Some highlights include:

- Made almost \$30 million in critical investments to dairy farms, dairy processors, research, and technical assistance.

- This represents nearly 300 individual awards
 - Built bridges across the region to better serve the dairy community
 - Identified and responded to shared areas of need to lift up the region.
 - Invested in new technologies, research and development, and alternative strategies to provide opportunities to learn and model success beyond the grant project
 - Developed national collaborations with the other Dairy Business Innovation Initiatives located in California, Wisconsin, and Tennessee, who were in attendance
- We know it's a rugged dairy economy and the federal pricing system is not returning enough dollars to farmers. We are working with our federal partners on change.

Dairy is a tradition across our region, from the rolling hills of Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine, to the pastoral landscapes of Pennsylvania, Maryland, and

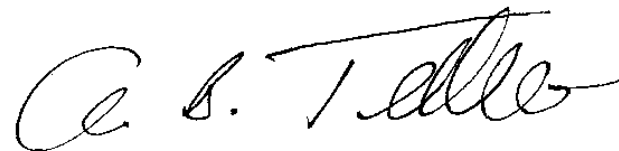
New York. We all know that times are changing, and dairy has had a rough few years – from low prices, to inflation, to floods and feed shortages, dairy is no stranger to hard times.

The Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center gives us all an opportunity to see and work towards a brighter, more positive future. The investments made today will yield dividends for years to come. The partnerships and relationships developed bring people together in new, thoughtful ways, working to answer some of the toughest questions.

We heard from farmers and processors in dairy. From small farm

innovation to packaging innovation, from grazing to workforce, we covered a lot of ground at the conference. We heard from a panel on bringing more people into the dairy world. We were also joined by commissioners from the region including New York, Maine, Connecticut, and Massachusetts. They are strong partners as we work together to improve the dairy economy in the Northeast.

Thank you to all who attended and those working behind the scenes. They asked questions, dug deep, and used the conference time to forge new connections as we move into the next decade of dairy. We were inspired to create change.



Anson Tebbetts

Secretary, Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

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This Month's Recipe

Secretary Tebbetts' Ramp Scones

Makes 12

Ingredients

3 cups all-purpose flour
1/3 cup sugar
2½ teaspoons baking powder
½ teaspoon baking soda
¾ teaspoon salt
1½ sticks (¾ cup or 6 oz.) cold unsalted butter, cut into small pieces
1 cup buttermilk
1 cup chopped ramps
1 cup shredded cheddar (the sharper the better)

Directions

Position the oven racks to divide the oven into thirds and preheat the oven to 425°F. In a medium bowl, stir the flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda, and salt together with a fork. Add the cold butter pieces and, using your fingertips (the first choice), a pastry blender, or two knives, work the butter into the



dry ingredients until the mixture resembles coarse cornmeal. It's OK if some largish pieces of butter remain – they'll add to the scones' flakiness.

Add buttermilk, ramps and cheddar and mix with the fork only until the ingredients are just moistened – you'll have a soft dough with a rough look. (If the dough looks dry, add another tablespoon of buttermilk.)

Gather the dough into a ball, pressing it gently so that it holds together, turn it out onto a lightly floured work surface, and knead it very briefly – a dozen turns should do it. Cut the dough in half. Roll each piece of the dough into a ½-inch-thick circle that is about 7 inches across. Cut into six triangles.

Bake the scones for 10 to 12 minutes, until both the tops and bottoms are golden. Transfer the scones to a rack to cool slightly. These are best served warm but are just fine at room temperature.

If you're not going to eat the scones the day they are made, wrap them airtight and freeze; they'll stay fresh for a month. To serve, defrost the scones at room temperature in their wrappers, then unwrap and reheat on a baking sheet for 5 minutes in a 350°F oven.

New USDA Resilient Food System Infrastructure Grant Will Target the “Middle of the Supply Chain”

By Julia Scheier, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has a new initiative to build resilience in the food supply chain, provide more and better markets to farms and food businesses, support the development of value-added products, and promote equitable and safe jobs. These Resilient Food System Infrastructure grants, or RFSI, will reach all 50 states and territories. Vermont is awarding over \$3.2 million in grants, broken into two rounds, to Vermont businesses and organizations that strengthen local and regional food systems.

Grants will support critical sectors of the “middle of the supply chain,” meaning everything between farm production and selling in stores. This includes aggregation, distribution, manufacturing, processing, storage, transportation, and wholesaling of Vermont food products. RFSI’s goal is to reduce bottlenecks and offer more infrastructure to get quality, Vermont made products to customers.

“These grants will strengthen our food supply chain that helps feed us,” Vermont Agriculture Secretary Anson Tebbetts said. “Strengthening these important links will help build resiliency and prosperity in Vermont’s working lands. This was a recommendation of Governor Scott’s Future of Agriculture Commission. It’s great we are acting on this recommendation.”

This grant program supports products such as specialty crops, dairy, grains for human consumption, aquaculture, and value-added products. Per USDA requirements, meat and poultry are excluded from this opportunity.

The first round of RFSI grants will be for infrastructure projects for things such as increasing processing capacity; modernizing storage, tracking, and IT systems; constructing new facilities; increasing dry and cold storage; installing climate-smart equipment; or modernizing facilities to ensure food and worker safety. Details for this grant were announced in mid April, with more information on grant specifics online. There is \$2 million available

for this track. Grants will range from \$100,000 - \$500,000 with a 50% match (25% reduced match available). Projects will run from Fall of 2024 to early 2027.

The second round of RFSI grants will be for equipment-only projects that fall within the program’s goals of enhancing the middle of the supply chain. Approximately \$1.2 million will be available for this track, with grants ranging from \$30,000 to \$100,000 with no match

requirement. Equipment-only grant details will be available in August 2024 and projects will begin in early 2025.

Applications are due via WebGrants by June 5, 2024 at 1:59pm. Full grant details can be found here: <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/grants/resilient-food-systems-infrastructure>

Contact Julia Scheier with any questions at Julia.Scheier@vermont.gov or 802-522-7042.

REAP Grants

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apply for REAP grants at no cost to the farmers. Stonyfield Organic also contributed \$5,000.

Clean Economy Works obtained a REAP grant for Joe’s Brook Farm for three energy-efficient coolers and two freezers to be installed in the farm’s two historic barns where they store and sell their fresh

produce. After the equipment is paid off in five years, the farm will save 60 percent or nearly \$2,000 annually on electricity.

“It’s doing three things. It’s helping us reduce our carbon footprint, save money on our utilities, and also give our business an option to grow as it finds new markets,” Skovsted said

of the benefits they expect from upgrading their aging refrigeration system.

Additional farms working with Clean Economy Works on energy efficiency projects and REAP grants include Miller Dairy Farm in Vernon, Bennett Family Farm Stand in St. Johnsbury, and Boyden Valley Wine & Spirits in Cambridge.

“These are the businesses we want to see succeed in our communities,” Senior Project Manager Pete Schweigert of Clean Economy Works said.

Schweigert says the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 allocated unprecedented amounts of one-time funding to the REAP program, making this the ideal time for these projects.

“The grants might not be around for long. So, part of what we’re doing is saying, let’s try to get as much of this to regional farm and forestry businesses that we value while it’s available,” Schweigert said. Campbell chimed in, “We’re making hay while the sun shines.”



Eric and Mary Skovsted of Joe's Brook Farm

DAIRY BUSINESS INNOVATION CENTER

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. Access full details and Requests for Applications online at nedairyinnovation.com/grants

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

Dairy Trade Show Assistance Grant

This grant will provide funds for dairy processors and/or producer associations to exhibit and sell value-added dairy products at domestic and/or international business-to-business trade shows. This grant will support established value-added dairy processor businesses and producer associations in increasing exposure and promotion of their regionally produced dairy products. Grant funds will cover the cost of attending tradeshows including registration, travel, costs of product samples, production and distribution



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

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

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 deadline for applications is June 13, 2024, at 2 PM ET. Awards will range from \$10,000 to \$50,000 with a 25% match commitment. Approximately \$300,000 total funds are available this round.

Upcoming Funding Opportunities

Dairy Processor Start-up Grant

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

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

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

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

Full program details will be posted in early summer.

Dairy Packaging & Processor Innovation Grant

This grant will provide funds for dairy processors, dairy producer associations, and educational research institutions to conduct research and development projects that support innovation for Northeast dairy processors across a variety of scales. Technical assistance providers may also apply for a project that will directly involve and benefit a group of dairy processors. Projects funded through this program will support dairy processors in gaining knowledge that will allow them to make informed, long-term business investments with positive environmental and/or economic impacts.

This grant round will include a two-step application process. Following the review of pre-applications, a subset of applicants will be invited to submit a full application.

- Pre-Application Anticipated Timeline: June – August 2024
- Full Application Anticipated Timeline: September – October 2024

Grants will range from \$75,000 to \$350,000 with a 25% (cash or in-kind) match commitment required. Approximately \$1,500,000 total funds are available this round.

Investing in Goat and Sheep Dairy

By Katie Spring, Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center

While cows produce the majority of milk in the Northeast, sheep and goats play an important role in the overall dairy landscape – and a new grant program from NE-DBIC aims to support their growth. This underdeveloped sector of Northeast dairy has strong potential and increasing consumer demand. According to research conducted by Atlantic Corporation on behalf of NE-DBIC, “Consumers are willing to pay the highest premiums for local or organic sheep and goat milk.” However, their research also revealed that, with the exception of goat



cheese, many consumers don't believe sheep and goat products are available at their typical shopping areas. Still, as Atlantic's research shows, “the customer segment for local [goat and sheep] dairy products may be smaller, but it could lead to greater profit margins.”

To help develop small ruminant dairy, NE-DBIC launched a goat and

sheep dairy supply chain development grant in 2021. Building on this, 2024's Goat and Sheep Dairy Development Grant program is now accepting applications until June 6. This grant aims to support projects both for individual goat and sheep dairy farmers and for the supply-chain that supports those farms. Recipients of the previous iteration of this

grant included Ayers Brook Goat Dairy of Randolph, VT, whose grant project focused on increased productivity through genetic herd improvements and sales of bucklings and semen with proven genetics throughout the region, bolstering the genetic foundation of dairy goat herds at farms throughout New England to support competitiveness and profitability of the regional goat dairy industry.

Other grantees include Vermont Shepherd of Putney, VT, who received funding to provide an education series to potential and existing sheep dairy farmers, expanding knowledge and increasing the potential for sheep dairy growth. Boston Post Dairy of Enosburg Falls used grant funds to invest in key systems and equipment

to increase production efficiencies and expand product line availability to retail accounts, getting more goat cheese on the market. And Misty Meadows Sheep Dairy of Woodbine, NY increased their value-added processing capacity for sheep milk products, allowing them to source increased milk volume from regional sheep dairy farms. This in turn helped them access regional market opportunities for sheep milk yogurt and ice cream products.

The current round of the Goat & Sheep Dairy Supply Chain Development Grant focuses on the development or expansion of goat and/or sheep dairy products or markets. Learn more and apply at nedairyinnovation.com/grants/goat-sheep-dairy-development

Seed Restrictions in Vermont?

By Whitney Burgess, PMNRCD, and Heather Darby Ph.D., University of Vermont

Pesticides, and more specifically neonicotinoids (or “neonics”), have been topics of conversation in Vermont with legislation currently being proposed regarding their use. Neonicotinoids are a class of insecticide that is chemically related to nicotine. Neonicotinoids are often simply referred to as “neonics.” These proposals have been made due to the concerns associated with

broad scale applications of neonicotinoids and their potential to affect non-target organisms, like bees and other pollinators. For crop producers in Vermont, the proposed legislation would affect the use of seed treated with neonicotinoids. Currently, much of the purchased corn seed comes coated with neonicotinoids to control insect pests that threaten these crops. They have become widely used due to their relative affordability, ease of use, wide availability, and lower toxicity to mammals and humans than traditional

insecticides.

For more information on neonicotinoids, it is recommended that you watch the webinar series, “Managing Neonicotinoids in Row Crops” hosted by Heather Darby of the University of Vermont (UVM) Extension. The topics included in the webinar series are: An introduction to the Agricultural Innovation Board (AIB), neonicotinoids and pollinators, integrated pest management (IPM), cover crops and no-till, reducing bee exposure, and transitioning away from neonic treated seeds. Each

webinar was recorded and is available at the link below, just scroll to the “Past Events” section of the webpage.

The webinar series is at <https://www.uvm.edu/extension/nwcrops/conferences-events-current-and-past>

Additional information is available from the following resources created through UVM Extension.

Neonicotinoids and Risk Management is found at https://legacy.drup2.uvm.edu/sites/default/files/Northwest-Crops-and-Soils-Program/Articles_and_Factsheets/Neonicotinoids_

[Risk_Management_Final.pdf](https://legacy.drup2.uvm.edu/sites/default/files/Northwest-Crops-and-Soils-Program/Articles_and_Factsheets/Neonicotinoid_and_Wireworm_Final.pdf)
Wireworm and Neonicotinoid Treated Seed in Row Crops is at https://legacy.drup2.uvm.edu/sites/default/files/Northwest-Crops-and-Soils-Program/Articles_and_Factsheets/Neonicotinoid_and_Wireworm_Final.pdf

Seedcorn Maggot and Neonicotinoid Treated Seed in Row Crops is at https://legacy.drup2.uvm.edu/sites/default/files/Northwest-Crops-and-Soils-Program/Articles_and_Factsheets/Neonicotinoid_and_Seedcorn_Maggot_Final.pdf

Business Planning for Agritourism Enterprises

By Kristen Brassard, VT
Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

Business planning is vital for agritourism ventures, just as it is for any enterprise. In this blog, we'll explore why having a solid plan is crucial, discuss key considerations when crafting one for your agritourism business, and introduce an easy-to-use online tool to guide you through the process.

What is business planning and why is it important?

Business planning is the process of outlining the goals, strategies, and actions needed to achieve success in a business venture. It involves setting objectives, assessing resources and potential challenges, and developing a roadmap for how your business will operate and grow over time.

The purpose of business planning is to provide clarity, direction, and a framework for decision-making to guide your business toward its objectives. However, it's not only about the finished product. Engaging in the process of business planning allows you to thoroughly evaluate your ideas, commit them to paper, and see them come together in a cohesive strategy. This process serves as a crucial form of risk management, providing you the opportunity to test the viability of your concepts and make necessary



adjustments.

If you have ever sought out any sort of funding to support your business, whether through grants or loan programs, you have probably been asked to provide a business plan. Lenders and grantors want to know that you have dedicated time to strategizing your long-term goals and can demonstrate proof of concept. Even if you already possess a business plan for your farm, it's important to revisit this process for any new ventures you want to include, such as agritourism.

What should I include in my business plan?

Business plans typically include an executive summary, a business description, a market analysis, an overview of the organization and its management, a marketing plan, and a financial plan incorporating sales projections and potential sources of external funding. Following these steps aids in developing a robust business structure and contemplating current and future opportunities that may otherwise be overlooked.

When planning for agritourism specifically, be sure to conduct thorough research into local land use and zoning laws, land acquisition strategies (if relevant), the proximity of your farm (or desired area) to population centers, and strategies for attracting visitors. Evaluate the successes of other farms and agritourism operations in your area, discerning their unique qualities and identifying potential gaps and niches you could fill. How can you offer a truly unique experience?

And don't overlook important lifestyle considerations, such as your personal priorities and the time commitment required to achieve your goals. For instance, if privacy and peace and quiet are top values for you, hosting large farm dinners weekly may not align with your vision.

Where can I get help with my business plan?

If you'd like guidance and accountability in drafting your agritourism business plan, you're in luck! A newly launched online tool is here to assist you. AgPlan, an online program managed

by the Center for Farm Financial Management at the University of Minnesota, provides business planning templates tailored to various agricultural enterprises. Thanks to a grant from Northeast Extension Risk Management Education and the collaborative effort of extension and agricultural service providers nationwide, led by the University of Vermont, there's now a free agritourism version available for your use!

The AgPlan agritourism template guides you through each step of the business planning process, offering agritourism-specific examples and concise video courses on writing each section. It simplifies the process of developing your business plan, helping you understand what to include with tips and resources and showcasing sample plans for inspiration. Upon signing up, you can create multiple business plans, store all your content for easy access, invite others to contribute and provide feedback, and export the document for presentation to lenders or partners.

Start utilizing the AgPlan template today by signing up at <https://agplan.umn.edu/>!

For additional support and accountability, consider joining a 7-week virtual training session where agritourism experts guide you through AgPlan section by section. While three sessions have already occurred, it's not too late to

participate! Each session is recorded, allowing you to follow along at your own pace or catch up and join the next session. If you're reading this in the future (hello!) and the 7-week training series has ended, you can still watch each of the recorded sessions and guide yourself through the process. If you complete each of the weekly assignments, you'll have a comprehensive draft of your agritourism business plan by the end of the training!

Agritourism Business Planning with AgPlan was taught via Zoom. Live sessions were held earlier this winter, but you can watch the recorded sessions, here: [Agritourism Business Planning - Recorded Sessions](#)

Additionally, Vermont farms can access one-on-one business planning support through the Farm Viability Program at UVM Extension and Vermont Farm & Forest Viability Program through Vermont Housing & Conservation Board.

Business planning for agritourism is just as crucial as it is for any other business endeavor. It offers clarity, direction, and serves as a vital risk management tool, especially crucial when seeking funding or embarking on new ventures like agritourism. Happy planning!

For more information, contact Kristen Brassard by email kristen.brassard@vermont.gov or by phone 802-522-3742.

The Risks of Producing Alternative Pesticides at Home

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

Any substance used to prevent, destroy, repel, or mitigate insects, weeds, fungi, rodents, or other unwanted pests is considered a pesticide, including when you mix up a substance in your kitchen to control pests. Making your own pesticides (including herbicides) may put your family, pets, and the environment at greater risk due to the unknowns associated with the substance you've concocted. You may be mistaken if you think this approach to controlling pests is a safe alternative and will reduce the risk of exposure to a toxic substance or even manage the target pest. The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets, registers all pesticides available for use in Vermont.

Using a substance not registered with the Agency will result in no knowledge of

- Whether the substance is safe to use near streams or lakes
- Whether you should wear gloves when applying the substance, or other gear to protect yourself
- How much should you use to be effective against the target pest, or whether it will have unintentional consequences for other organisms in the area where you applied the substance



- Whether it will be safe to eat your garden vegetables after applying this substance
- Whether it will kill your plants

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) plays a part in pesticide regulation under Federal Insecticide, Rodenticide, Fungicide Act (FIFRA). EPA conducts evaluations on the safety, efficacy, and the appropriate conditions for and uses of pesticides as part of its registration process. This information regarding how to safely use a product is outlined on the label. In addition to the rigorous vetting process established by FIFRA, there are also pesticides products that could be exempted from regulation under FIFRA. These products are known as minimum risk products.

Minimum Risk Products

These pesticide products may contain ingredients that could be found in a home like citric acid, cinnamon, peppermint, or garlic. A "minimum risk"

pesticide must meet explicit FIFRA conditions; only certain active and inert ingredients may be used in the product's formulation, specific label information, and which active ingredients are suitable for use on food or feed crops and food contact surfaces. Minimum risk pesticides must also be registered in Vermont, because of their potential for harm to people and the environment. Individuals looking for alternatives to conventional pesticides can search for products registered in Vermont.

Individuals growing for commercial markets/non-personal use are prohibited from applying substances used to prevent, destroy, repel, or mitigate insects, [etc.] that are not regulated by the Agency.

When managing pests, it's best to use a variety of approaches including preventative practices to dissuade pests from establishing in and around the home. This practice is an integrated approach to pest management (IPM). If you have question about what steps you can take before using a chemical control you can Ask a UVM Extension Master Gardener. When IPM indicates the need for a chemical control method, use an EPA approved or minimum risk pesticide register for use in Vermont. The product is formulated appropriately for the pest and site, and the label will contain the information

necessary to reduce exposure to the public, pets and the environment, and directions on how to apply and dispose of it safely.

Additional Resources

Reducing pesticide

waste: Management of Household Pesticides, [https://agriculture.vermont.gov/agency-agriculture-food-markets-news/management-](https://agriculture.vermont.gov/agency-agriculture-food-markets-news/management-household-pesticides)

[household-pesticides](https://www.uvm.edu/extension/mastergardener/helpline)
Ask an Extension Master Gardener: <https://www.uvm.edu/extension/mastergardener/helpline>

Commercial grower questions: <https://www.uvm.edu/extension/pdc>

Home Remedies: <http://npic.orst.edu/pest/home-remedies.html>

Low risk pesticides: <http://npic.orst.edu/ingred/lowrisk.html>

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

Farm Structures and How They're Regulated

By Noah Gilbert-Fuller, VT
Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

Spring is the time for construction across Vermont farms, with warm weather bringing thoughts of improvements and additions needed around the farm. Questions often come up when a farmer is planning to put up a structure about where farm structures can be located, what kinds of permits they may need, and what activities can be done with the structure. Farms planning to build a structure should look towards the Required Agricultural Practices (RAPs) to see what requirements, rules and exemptions may apply.

Vermont farms as defined in the RAPs are required to comply with regulations for agricultural practices, which includes the construction and maintenance of farm structures. A farm structure is defined as any structure used to carry out farming practices, including the storage of agricultural



A hoop house in progress. Contact your Town Clerk or Zoning Administrator with a town plan before constructing a farm structure.

equipment, wastes, feed and fertilizers, the keeping of animals, the storage, preparation and sale of agricultural products produced on the farm, and greenhouse structures.

Farms and farm activities that are regulated by the RAPs are exempt from regulation under local bylaws. That means no agricultural activity on a property that has been determined to meet

the definition of a farm can be restricted or prohibited by a town, since those activities are instead regulated by the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets. Farm structures also gain exemptions from bylaws that would require

permitting for construction. However, per the RAPs, farm structures must still meet any setback requirements established by their town.

Setbacks can determine how far a structure must be from the front, sides,

and back of a property facing a road, and other specific places depending on which zoning district you're in. Towns may also adopt overlay districts, such as flood hazard or natural resource districts, that apply to a targeted area across multiple districts and may come with additional setback standards. Check in with your local Zoning Administrator or Town Clerk if you have questions about which setbacks apply to your property.

Before construction on a farm structure begins, farms are required to send a copy of a site plan for their structure to their local Zoning Administrator or Town Clerk for review. Site plans must include the dimensions of the proposed structure and setback distances from property lines. In certain cases, structures

continued on page 10

Building a Farm Structure? Follow These Steps:

1. Confirm you are a farm regulated by the RAPs.
2. Review the RAPs for construction requirements.
3. Ensure your proposed structure complies with municipal setbacks.
4. Write to inform your zoning administrator of your proposed construction and include a site plan.
5. Consider additional review or permit requirements — (is your project in a flood hazard area/river corridor, disturbing more than one acre on an Act 250 parcel, wetlands present?)
6. Construct your farm structure!

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Northeast Dairy Innovation Summit Is a Success

By Katie Spring, Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center

In early April, over 220 people from around our 11-state region gathered for the Northeast Dairy Innovation Summit. Hosted by the Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center (NE-DBIC), the summit focused on the future of regional dairy: the challenges, the opportunities, and how we can work together to create resiliency from farm fields to processing plants to store shelves. Throughout the two-day summit, attendees delved into four key areas: workforce development, farm innovation, processing innovation, and opportunities for small ruminant dairy.

The summit opened with a panel facilitated by Agela Abdullah, President of the Cheese Culture Coalition – a nonprofit dedicated to making the cheese industry more inclusive and equitable. Joined by Kyra James, a cheese educator and creator of Own Your Funk, Greselda Powell, cheesemonger for Murray's Cheese, and Leslie McCrorey Wells, a restaurant owner, sheep farmer, and member of the Governor's Commission on the Future of Vermont Agriculture, the panel shared their own entryways into dairy, the barriers that often keep people out, and how we can create more accessible pathways for people to become part of the dairy workforce across the



Katie Spring, Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center introduces Agela Abdullah, Kyra James, Greselda Powell, Leslie McCrorey Wells for the opening plenary.

industry.

“Education is the biggest breaker in barriers,” said James, citing her own journey of learning about food that ultimately led her to receive a Masters in Gastronomy. Powell echoed this, highlighting that in order to grow a more diverse workforce, we need to increase exposure, education, and experience through programs like 4-H. McCrorey Wells spoke about how business owners can affect change by making thoughtful decisions on everything from sourcing from like-minded businesses to investing in the local economy and building supportive work environments. While

James shared the statistic that businesses are 60% more successful when they're diverse, Abdullah emphasized the need to build trust and develop genuine relationships in order to grow and sustain diversity across the dairy sector.

Building on workforce development, keynote speaker Corey Geiger shared opportunities for dairy farmers and processors over the next 10 years. An international economist with CoBank, Geiger brought regional, national, and international insights to how the Northeast can fill growing demand for high-quality dairy. Among

those opportunities are the continued growth of butter and cheese. “The flavor is in the fat,” he said, and with butter sales growing by 8%, consumers are noticing and returning to the flavor found there. The combination of the region's small-scale dairies known for excellent products and our proximity to major populations gives Northeast dairy a strong foundation for both exporting products and drawing in customers. “The Northeast's superpower is consumers,” said Geiger, encouraging farmers, cheesemakers, and mongers to connect as a team to continue building relationships that can tell

consumers the story of dairy.

That's where cohesive storytelling and leadership comes in. In their plenary session, agricultural communication experts Alison K. Conant, Maureen Ballatori, and Laura Hardie, brought all levels of the dairy sector together to show what the Northeast delivers: taste, value, climate-friendly farming practices, animal welfare, and authentic connection between farms and consumers. With key lessons on marketing and branding, they showed how we can all be part of sharing the story of dairy, including how dairy supports food resiliency, economics, and community.

“Farms are so important in communities because they bring communities together,” said Conant. “Rural communities need hope opportunities, and jobs, and agriculture provides that.” The idea that we can all be part of leading dairy forward is a foundational takeaway of the summit. As Hardie said, storytelling and marketing are about human connection. If we are to build a vibrant workforce based on climate resiliency and business viability, it will take people from across the entire spectrum of the dairy sector building relationships and working together. And the range of attendees and speakers at the summit proves that we're already heading in that direction. Find videos and more highlights of the summit at nedairyinnovation.com/blog



VERMONT VEGETABLE AND BERRY NEWS



Compiled by Vern Grubinger,
University of Vermont
Extension
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vernon.grubinger@uvm.edu
www.vvbga.org

Reports From The Field

(Burlington) Mild winters are helpful for winter greens growth and happiness, which translates into CSA member happiness as well. Despite a few minor hiccups with spinach and kale germination last fall (surface salinity, perhaps?) overall production has been very good across all crops, and foliar spinach diseases have been minimal to date.

We changed our winter CSA distribution targets and dropped our price after losing many winter storage crops last fall, so it has been especially helpful that the greens have done well. Otherwise, our tables are fairly empty; down to carrots, beets, and potatoes.

Summer CSA signups are nearly on track, slightly behind the COVID frenzy, but fine in the scheme of things. Exciting to see cover crops greening up, and I expect we will be back out for tillage with the tractors in the next several days, picking up where we left off on March 15, our earliest start ever. Hoping for a moderate warm up with consistent snow melt!

(Westminster) We're trying to figure out how to mitigate another rainy summer, if we have one (we're due for a dry year!) but few good ideas yet. We do plan to keep lower-lying fields that flooded twice last year in cover crops until later in the season. But every year, it seems, our well-refined planting plan ends up with revisions.

We're relying less on fresh greens and more on storage and root crops this season to even out our marketing and cash flow. And we're working on a crop mix to accommodate a reduced workforce. We can't find enough local help and our over-reliance on H-2A employees is becoming very costly.

Our Winter Market/ CSA went well, and we sold a lot of greens from our hoopouses. Now the greenhouses are full of lettuce and kale seedlings aching to get out into the cold frames.

(Hyde Park) The field is emerging from snow this week although there is another 5 inches in the forecast. The first spring we were here, we had snow through the first week of May but there has been nothing close to that the last 3 years. My snowboard gear has been taken out of my truck to make room for shuttling supplies around.

The tunnel greens are behind last year despite similar planting dates and healthier plants, which is weird because it seems like we have had more sun. So early sales of late winter planted greens will be a week or two behind, but they look vibrant and healthy. I used the paper pot transplanter a lot this year



with success. It helps get a jump on greens production if done correctly and eliminates problems with early season germination and rodents eating seed. I finally nailed the timing of planting with it, so plants don't experience a lot of shock can set them back.

I've been experimenting with "priming" spinach seed before directly sowing very densely; soaking overnight and drying the seed before planting - the jury is still out.

A couple weeks ago I frost seeded the garlic pathways with red clover but then we got a foot of snow, so we'll see how it turns out.

We've had some season propagation house issues due to inefficient and time-consuming systems as our focus has shifted to infant care (and joy!). This has prompted me to consider more automation. It's a good lesson in when to just spend the money and sleep easy.

(Westminster West) Last of the recent snow is finally gone, garlic is well up with little loss, fertilized just before the last snow so that task is done.

The greenhouse is bustling with trays of seedlings, trays of ginger and turmeric on heated

propagation benches starting to sprout and root before they go into the tunnel beds to mature. First year for turmeric! Finished up a thousand tomato grafts and we're looking for a 100% success this year!

Proof that winters are getting mild lies in the over-wintered peas and oats which usually winter kill but this year they are still green, and I think ready to start regrow. This is different. Seed potatoes arriving soon.

Northern New England High Tunnel Newsletter

Issue 2 of High and Dry is available at <https://www.uvm.edu/~htunnel/>. It contains articles on: New Video Series on

Farm Structures

continued from page 8

that do not meet the required setback distances due to circumstances related to the land that cause challenges for the farmer, farms may submit a request for a setback variance for their structure.

While planning for this year's growing season, keep in mind the resources and information available from the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and

Greenhouse and High Tunnel Construction, Time to Sample High Tunnel Soils, Diseases on Late Winter & Spring Tunnel Greens. Prepare a Biocontrol Plan for Aphids in Your High Tunnel Vegetables, and Using Pest Fighting Plants in High Tunnels: Awesome Alyssum.

Pollinator Support On-Farm Meetings

Laura Johnson, UVM Extension Pollinator Support Specialist

Join UVM Extension and the VT Tree Fruit Growers Association for "Spring Orchard Pest and Pollinator Showcases" May 9, Sweetland Farm, Norwich and May 10, UVM Horticultural Farm, S. Burlington. Both are 4:30-7:00 pm.

Join UVM Extension and the VVBGA at a farm twilight meeting highlighting blueberry pollinators, pests, and bush management. May 22, Covered Bridges Berry Farm, Underhill, VT. Time: 4:00-6:00pm.

Questions?
Laura.o.johnson@uvm.edu
or 802-656-4827

Markets regarding farm structures and how they are regulated. Information about the definitions of farms, farming, farm structures and setback variances can be found at <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/water-quality/regulations/farm-definitions-and-determinations>.

For any questions around the Required Agricultural Practices, contact Noah Gilbert-Fuller at Noah.Gilbert-Fuller@vermont.gov or at 802-505-3407.

CLASSIFIEDS

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

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

Cattle

Jersey & Jersey/Holstein cross dairy cows, in Highgate Ctr Vermont; Certified Organic & Grass-only, very tame. Farmer retiring, needs surgery. Vaccinated, Negative for Johnes. Two A2 cows and ten A1 cows still need new homes! (as do 12 bred heifers, all A1, due to freshen in late spring). (802)868-2356 (landline); (802)370-1051 (cell); jyoust87@vt.edu (7)

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

Equipment

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

1 1/2 horsepower Deloval vacuum pump good for sugaring or milking. 80ft New Holland hay elevator like new. 802-624-0143. (7)

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

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

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

32 X 8 ft. FLAT TRAILER suitable for up to 23 dry round bales. Large unobstructed space constructed with pressure-treated planks, railroad rails, trailer hitch, and 8 tires. \$5000 or best offer. Braintree Call Lynn at 802-728-9749. (8)

General

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

Hay, Feed & Forage

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

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

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)

ORANGE COUNTY

1st, 2nd and 3rd cut grass haylage layered in bunk with preservatives. 250 tons, \$55/ton. Call Larry Scott: 802-291-2363 (8)

WINDHAM COUNTY

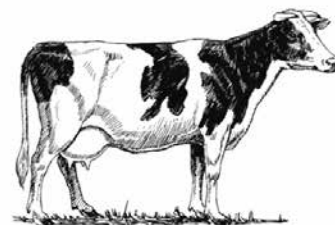
Riverview Market Farms has certified organic hay available in round bales. We have first quality hay as well as mulch hay. Pick up at our farm at 68 East Putney Ferry Road Putney, VT 05346. Call Cory at 802-289-3420 (8)

WINDSOR COUNTY

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

Wanted

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

Help Wanted

Caretaker for beautiful "hobby" farm in the Upper Valley of Vermont, Woodstock area. Onsite private, detached housing provided. Part or full time duties. Perfect for retired person or couple. Basic horse experience preferred. References required. Make inquiries by email: morganmiltimore@gmail.com or telephone 603-548-3890. (6)

Organic Livestock Farm in N. Danville seeks co-manager/co-producer to assist in current operations while leveraging farm assets to conduct their own enterprise. Farm currently raises cattle, sheep and pork but could host more of the same or

other production. Looking to diversify offerings in our farm store as well. Could help facilitate the look for housing for those from out of town. More detailed description of the opportunity can be found on the Landlink listing for Lewis Creek Jerseys. Email badgerbrookmeats@gmail.com or call Vince at 802-748-8461. (8)

A Year of Service, a Lifetime of Opportunities: ECO AmeriCorps in Vermont

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

Many of you may have seen young folks shadow Agency staff on farm visits, table at conferences, or heard the term 'AmeriCorps'. A question I get asked all the time is 'what is AmeriCorps?'

AmeriCorps is a federally funded agency that enrolls thousands of people all across the United States in service terms. They can be serving with a variety of different organizations, from nonprofits to schools to government agencies.

I am currently an ECO AmeriCorps member serving with the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food, and Markets in the water quality division. The Environmental Careers and Opportunities (ECO) AmeriCorps program focuses on environmental stewardship, education, and outreach, and completing projects throughout rural Vermont to protect public land access and improve water quality.

While I'm not a Vermont native, I fell in love with the state when I was an AmeriCorps member at Camp DREAM, a summer camp for underserved youth in Fletcher Vermont. Post grad, I wanted to be in a space where I could improve the environment, learn about climate resiliency on Vermont farms, and be an advocate for creating a just and sustainable food system.



2023-2024 ECO cohort with Tom Green and Edible Brattleboro in October, supporting their community garden that was affected by summer flooding.

I found my current position with the Agency of Ag and have been loving serving with others in the water quality division.

So far I've had the chance to shadow Sonia Howlett and Ellen Fredrich on rotational grazing and cover crop checks, head out with the team led by Ben Gabos and Phil Wilson to harvest and install willow stakes for a CREP project in Derby, help farmers with FAP applications, meet the Connecticut Watershed Farmers Alliance and attend a board meeting, and meet many of you at a wide variety of conferences and events. With my role being relatively flexible and the Agency being such a large organization, I have also

been able to connect with other divisions on various projects, including Plant Health and Agricultural Development.

I quickly learned what a wide alumni network the ECO AmeriCorps program has. Within the first few months, I met multiple people who have served in the ECO program and continue to work in the environmental conservation and water quality fields. You may have heard of Kate Longfield, who is now a part of the Champlain Valley Farmers Coalition, Kate Wettergreen, who is now with the Franklin County NRCD, and Brodie Haenke, who has been affiliated with the Franklin County NRCD and Agency, and is now at

the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation. These people and many more are former ECO AmeriCorps members, and have made a career out of helping farmers implement conservation practices. Even with being in the agricultural water quality field for six months, I've come to realize that Vermont truly is special in the way that there is strong collaboration between

state agencies, conservation districts, and local nonprofits.

So if you see me and other new folks out on farms or at outreach events, stop by and say hi! I've loved getting to know the farmers and producers that I work with and want to continue learning about agriculture in Vermont and be a part of creating a resilient food system while protecting our environment.

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Extension Helpline Provides Free Gardening Information

By UVM Extension

Do you have questions about how to prepare your garden site for planting or want to know which perennials grow best in the shade? Maybe you have a pesky insect that you can't identify or need advice on your soil test results. The University of Vermont (UVM) Extension Master Gardener Helpline is there to help for free.

Trained volunteers are available to answer questions from gardeners in Vermont on a broad range of home horticulture topics, including soil bed preparation and planting; vegetable and

fruit gardening; annuals and perennials; backyard composting; sustainable lawn care; plant diseases and integrated pest management, among others. All are experienced gardeners and graduates of the 16-week Extension Master Gardener course.

Volunteers will be on hand to answer calls on the Master Gardener Helpline from 9 a.m. to noon, Thursdays through October 31. The number to call is (802) 656-5421.

Questions also may be submitted online at <https://go.uvm.edu/gardenquestion>. Gardeners are encouraged to include up to three clear

photos of plants damaged by insects and diseases to help volunteers properly identify the problem and provide an accurate response.

Soil tests for home gardens are available through the UVM Agricultural and Environmental Testing Lab. For information, visit <https://go.uvm.edu/soiltest>. If you have follow-up questions about your soil recommendations, please

upload a copy of your soil test report through the Helpline online service.

Commercial growers of vegetables, berries, tree fruit and related crops should contact the UVM Extension Commercial Horticulture Team at <https://go.uvm.edu/hort> for information and assistance.

In addition to staffing the gardening helpline, Extension Master Gardener volunteers share their

gardening knowledge by teaching workshops and staffing garden information tables at events around Vermont. They also plant educational gardens at schools, libraries, community gardens and other public spaces to demonstrate sustainable gardening practices.

To request a volunteer for a public event, see <https://go.uvm.edu/request-volunteer>.

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

May Farm Agronomic Practices (FAP) Program

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

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

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

Sustainable Harvesting of Wild Plants

By VT Department of Fish & Wildlife

Early spring is a great time to get outside for hikes, birding and collecting wild edibles. High on the list of the latter category are fiddleheads (the unfurling leaves of ostrich ferns) and ramps (wild leeks). Both species are quite common in Vermont, but excessive harvest has resulted in local population declines, according to the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department.

While commercial harvest of either of these species is prohibited on state and conservation lands, there is no regulation on private property. "Studies have shown that heavy harvest of fiddleheads significantly reduces the number of fronds, or leaves, produced over the next few years," said Vermont Fish and

Wildlife Botanist Bob Popp. "These studies indicate that limiting harvest to less than 50 percent of the fronds limits impacts and does not reduce availability the following year."

Popp says the impact of harvesting wild leeks is even more severe because typically the entire plant is removed, but that it can be done sustainably by leaving the bulb in the ground and harvesting only the leaves. He points out that leeks mostly reproduce vegetatively by sending out underground stems, but that only the larger, older bulbs are capable of this doing this.

"We encourage outdoor activities," he added, "but we want to remind foragers to harvest sustainably and be aware of the level of previous harvesting before adding to that impact."

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.



2024 Vermont Fairs and Field Days

- Vermont Dairy Festival June 1-4, Enosburg Falls, VT
- The Bradford Fair June 21-23, Bradford, VT
- Lamoille County Field Days July 19-21, Johnson, VT
- Franklin County Field Days August 1-4, Highgate, VT
- Addison County Fair & Field Days August 6-10, Vergennes, VT
- Vermont State Fair August 13-17, Rutland, VT
- Caledonia County Fair August 21-25, Lyndonville, VT
- Bondville Fair August 23-25, Bondville, VT
- Champlain Valley Exposition August 23-September 1, Essex Junction, VT
- Guilford Fair August 31-September 2, Guilford, VT
- Orleans County Fair September 4-8, Barton, VT
- The Tunbridge World's Fair September 12-15, Tunbridge, VT

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.



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9:00 am – 12:00 pm

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

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

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

'No-Mow-May' Lets Pollinators Play!

By Brooke Decker, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

An increasingly popular conservation initiative called 'No-Mow-May' is blooming across the nation. This initiative follows the 'less-is-more' wisdom we often hear from our parents and is now a popular environmental

mantra of the day. By simply eliminating or sharply reducing the mowing of your lawn and allowing more flowers to bloom offers bees and other pollinators a wonderful playground of floral resources at a critical time in their lifecycle. Studies have shown this simple act can increase abundance and diversity of wildlife in your yard,

especially pollinators. 'No-Mow-May' will allow you the time to enjoy observing the diversity of nature in your lawn. Dandelions are often the most noticeable of the spring lawn flowers. They provide abundant nutritional resources for pollinators, especially bees. Observing flowers during a sunny day

will display numerous insect guests. Honey bees, bumble bees, or some of Vermont's other 400 native bee species are likely visitors.

As the love for your lawn flowers grows, you might consider mowing less frequently the rest of the year. When mowing becomes necessary, setting the cut height of 4-5 inches allows

for better habitat regrowth and continued pollinator benefits during the summer months. Consider turning your lawn into a "bee lawn" by seeding Dutch clover and other low growing flowering plants like creeping thyme, self-heal and native violets.

For a real-life pollinator paradise, consider 'No-Mow-May'!



The right tools for the job makes it possible.
VEDA makes it accessible.

Contact us today to learn how we can help grow your business together.



Vermont Economic Development Authority
veda.org | info@veda.org | 802.828.5627

Governor Scott Highlights Vermont Maple Industry and Buck Family Maple at Annual Tree-Tapping

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

Vermont Governor Phil Scott tapped a maple tree at Buck Family Maple in Washington last month to recognize this year's maple season. The Governor joined the Buck family and Vermont Secretary of Agriculture Anson Tebbetts for the traditional tapping of Vermont's maple season and celebrate this important industry to the state's economy and culture.

"Celebrating Vermont's maple industry and the hard-working families that produce the best maple in the world is always a highlight," said Governor Scott. "The Bucks, and so many families like theirs, make sure our state is producing the highest quality maple syrup. Their



The Buck Family is joined by Governor Scott and others for the 2024 "First Tapping". Despite muddy roads and an early start to the season, those attending were excited to see the sap run and taste the sweetest season!

hard work and dedication are why we continue to lead the nation in maple production and excellence." Buck Family Maple began

over 25 years ago. Today, James and his father John make syrup from 2000 trees on their Washington, Vermont maple farm.

"As we continue the maple sugaring history of our land, we hold a special place in our hearts and minds for the people who cared for this land long before us," said James Buck. "Without their care and thoughts for future generations, the trees they tapped all those years ago would not be part of our forest today."

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets recognizes the importance of the state's maple industry to our economy and working lands culture. The Agency continues to work to support our producers with marketing programs like

the Vermont Maple 100, labeling and product quality inspections and funding to support the Vermont Maple Sugar Makers Association Sugarhouse Certification Program.

"Vermont is the leading maple syrup producer in the nation because of families like the Buck's," Agriculture Secretary Anson Tebbetts said. "They help Vermont maintain that high quantity and quality of maple production despite recent weather challenges, and the Agency is working to support our sugar makers as they adapt to these changes. We celebrate the sweetness of Vermont's maple producers and products!"

