

AGRiVIEW



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Build Resilience to Extreme Weather with Conservation Practices

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

Many Vermont communities have already experienced just how devastating extreme weather events can be: Vermont has now been hit with historic flooding two years in a row. While climate experts certainly don't expect Vermont will experience flood events like these every year, they do expect that we will experience them at a greater frequency than we did in the past. Cropland and vegetable fields are particularly vulnerable to these extreme weather events.

As we face this changing – and challenging – reality, farmers are having to make decisions on how to manage their land so that it has the best shot to remain productive



even through the wetter or drier conditions which are becoming increasingly frequent. Developing this ability to better withstand the increasingly extreme weather events associated with climate change is called “building climate resilience”. Fortunately, many management-related “climate resilient” practices are likely already familiar to you – you might know them as “conservation practices”, or “soil health practices”.

Generally speaking, the following principles can increase a crop field or farm's resilience to extreme weather:

- Keep roots in the ground (preferably living ones). Roots provide physical stability and support to resist erosion in wet conditions and retain nutrients as the weather fluctuates.
- Keep the ground covered. Bare or tilled ground is prone to rapid drying in drought conditions and erosion in wet conditions.

- Increase diversity. Increased diversity of plants and microorganisms has a lot of wide-ranging benefits for soil health. But at its most basic, know that in extreme conditions some of your plant species will be set back or die so if you have more diversity in your plants/crops, there is a higher likelihood that some of the species will survive and be harvestable.

Some management practices to consider:

Seed down crop fields – Fields in perennial vegetation (e.g., hay) are less vulnerable to flooding and erosion damage than fields in annual crops. Consider permanently seeding down fields (or parts of fields) where you consistently experience excessive saturation and/or high

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THE VIEW FROM 116 STATE STREET

It's hard to believe it happened again this summer. Floods and flash flooding once again have hit families and farming again. As we head into fall, the clean-up and recovery will continue from the summer flooding.

It was a tragic summer for many. We are mourning the loss of Vermonters who died after getting caught up in the flash flooding. It also caused millions of dollars of damage with thousands of acres impacted by the severe weather. We witnessed bridges, roads and crops wiped out. Some dairy farmers were forced to milk their cows by generator for days and in some cases, milk had to be dumped because there was no way a truck could reach the farm. Beautiful crops were gone in a matter of minutes because of historic rainfall.

We are grateful for all the first responders, emergency management officials, contractors, volunteers and neighbors who stepped up in this crisis. The workload was overwhelming and continues.

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets has compiled resources, guidance, and contact information that can support agricultural recovery from flooding.

You can find the Post Flooding – Technical Assistance Toolkit and other compiled resources online. Within the toolkit, you will find a variety of resources such as next steps for farmers, technical assistance opportunities, mental

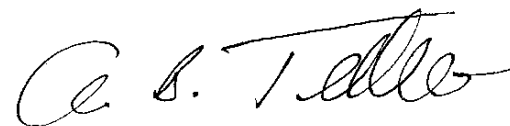
health resources, enterprise specific guidance, financial assistance programs, and more. In addition to the full-length toolkit, one pager with key information is available for targeted and brief reference.

This will not be a quick recovery for many, especially for those who have endured two straight summers of severe weather. We are thankful for our federal partners, UVM

Extension and all state employees from Vermont Emergency Management to the Agency of Transportation for helping in this latest recovery.

For flood related questions or concerns, please email AGR.FloodResponse@vermont.gov or call 802-828-2430.

Hoping for a calm, safe and productive fall for all Vermonters.



Anson Tebbetts

Secretary, Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

This Month's Recipe

Sweet Corn and Zucchini Pie

Ingredients

4 tablespoons butter
 half of a yellow onion, diced
 2 ears sweet corn (can use about 1½ cups of frozen corn, defrosted, and drained)
 2 large zucchini, sliced very thinly (about 4 cups)
 8 ounces sliced mushrooms
 1 tablespoon dried basil
 1 teaspoon dried oregano
 1/2 teaspoon salt
 12 ounces shredded Vermont cheese (try different combinations)
 4 eggs, beaten

Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 375°. Heat the butter in a large, deep skillet over medium high heat. Add the onions, zucchini, and mushrooms. While the veggies sauté, cut the corn kernels off the cob. Add them to the pan and continue to sauté until the veggies are soft, 5-10 minutes. Remove from heat.



2. Once the mixture has cooled for a few minutes, stir in the basil, oregano, salt, cheese, and the beaten eggs. Line or grease a 9" or larger pie pan. Transfer the mixture to the pan. Arrange the top so the zucchini slices lay flat and look nice. Top with a little extra cheese

for looks, cover with greased foil, and bake for 20 minutes. Remove foil and bake for an additional 5 minutes to brown the top. Let stand for 10-15 minutes before cutting into slices.

C O N N E C T

W I T H U S



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Working Lands Enterprise Board Seeks Dairy Farmer to Serve

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

The Working Lands Enterprise Board (WLEB) seeks a dairy farmer to serve on its board. The mission of the Vermont Working Lands Enterprise Initiative (WLEI) is to strengthen and grow the economies, cultures, and communities of Vermont's working landscape. WLEB achieves this by making investments in the Vermont farm and forest economy. They also help with policy development surrounding the agricultural and

forest use of Vermont lands. WLEB is responsible for stewarding the Working Lands Enterprise Fund (WLEF), which receives \$1,000,000 annually to grant to farm and forest businesses and service providers.

WLEB is a twenty-member board made up of private sector members throughout the supply chains of agriculture and forestry, and staff from the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Vermont Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation, Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development, Vermont Housing Conservation Board,

Vermont Economic Development Authority, and Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund.

The dairy farmer seat is available to anyone who currently milks cows, goats, or sheep and feels they can represent the Vermont dairy industry on the board. WLEB meets on the third Tuesday of the month on Microsoft Teams. In June and August, there are day-long, in-person meetings. WLEB members can participate in board subcommittees, grantee site visits, and/or an annual legislative hearing based on their interest and availability. WLEB

members receive a \$50 payment per meeting and are eligible for mileage and meals reimbursement for in-person events. The dairy farmer seat must be officially appointed by the governor to serve a one-year initial term. After that, they can serve up to three three-year terms.

For more information about WLEB, please visit workinglands.vermont.gov. Any dairy farmers interested in learning more about serving on WLEB and the nomination process should contact Clare Salerno at Clare.Salerno@vermont.gov or 802-917-2637.

Start Planning Now for Working Lands Enterprise Initiative Grant Applications

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

Do you operate a farm or forest business or a food business that uses local farm products? Or are you a producer association or service provider that works with these businesses? Are you looking for funds for equipment, infrastructure, marketing, research, or workforce development? If so, consider applying for a Working Lands Enterprise Initiative grant! Applications will open throughout the fall and winter, with awards announced throughout the winter and spring. These awards should be for projects that you will start working on in spring 2025.

Unlike in past years, there will be no match requirement for these grants. Because funds are limited and these grants are very competitive, you should apply for the minimum amount needed for a project. Find details for each grant online at

workinglands.vermont.gov.

The following funding opportunities will be available for Fiscal Year 2025:

Service Provider & Producer Association Grant

Application Window
September 20 – November 7, 2024

Award Size
\$10,000-\$25,000 for local programs
\$25,000-\$75,000 for statewide programs

Eligible Projects/Expenses

- Market development
- Financial planning and accounting
- Business succession planning
- Manufacturing efficiencies or process flow
- Business research and development
- Workforce development
- Leadership and staff development
- Board training, refreshing by-laws, committee work, or strategic planning

Eligible Applicants

- Organizations that provide services to farm and forest businesses;
- Non-profit associations of farm, forest, or local food businesses

Business Enhancement Grant

Application Window
October 18 – December 12, 2024

Award Size
\$10,000-\$50,000

Eligible Projects/Expenses

- Market development
- Infrastructure and equipment
- Workforce training and development
- Research and development

Eligible Applicants

- Farms, primary/secondary forestry businesses, or food businesses using ingredients grown in Vermont

Trade Show Assistance Grant

Application Window
Winter 2025 TBD

Award Size
\$2,000 - \$5,000

Eligible Projects/Expenses

- Planning, exhibiting, and selling Vermont products at out-of-state trade shows or virtual shows targeting out-of-state buyers

Eligible Applicants

- Farm, forest, or local food businesses with more than three wholesale accounts



DAIRY BUSINESS INNOVATION CENTER

NE-DBIC Grant Helps Menard Center Farm Prepare For the Future

By Katie Spring, Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center

In 2023, Menard Center Farm received a \$21,850 Dairy Farm Innovation and Alternative Management Grant from the Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center (NE-DBIC).

Co-owned by Mike Menard and his son, Landis, Menard Center Farm (MCF) is an organic dairy milking 47 cows in Fairfield, VT. Over the next few years, Landis will take full ownership as Mike retires. With a generational transfer in sight, the father and son have been looking for ways to make their operation more efficient.

First, Mike and Landis enrolled in a Nutrient Management Planning course through UVM Extension, where they focused on better manure management as a key area to increase efficiency. Later, as members of Organic Valley, they enrolled in the NE-DBIC funded Organic Valley Dairy Cohort. Through the cohort, they worked with Brian Jerose of Agrilab Technologies, who noticed the cows were wasting coarse hay feed while the farmers spent a lot of time lugging bedding for their pack. Thanks to the technical assistance they received through UVM Extension and the Dairy Cohort, MCF



Menard Center Farm Tomahawk Bale Chopper

determined that one key piece of equipment would do multiple jobs, and address manure and feed issues on the farm.

That's where the Dairy Farm Innovation and Alternative Management Grant comes in.

With support from their Dairy Cohort TA, MCF applied for and was awarded \$21,850 in funding to purchase a bale shredder. Before purchasing the new equipment, MCF frequently dealt with clogs in the tie-stall barn when gutter-cleaned manure mixed with coarse hay. Their cows wasted hay that was too long, and the bedding in

the heifer and calf bedded pack didn't absorb enough moisture because it was too large. The bale shredder could solve all three of these problems.

Within a month of use, the cows were eating more and wasting less hay. Just as importantly, Mike and Landis noticed a new ease in moving feed hay, which meant less strain on their backs. Over the course of their 10-month grant period, the success of the bale chopper became clearer. Chopped bales in the bedded pack pens led to improved animal cleanliness and reduced farm labor time. The bale

chopper was particularly effective in processing coarse late-cut forage bales. After processing, cow refusal rates went from 50% to 10%, saving at least 30 bales.

While Mike and Landis found that earlier cut hay with less lignin doesn't chop as easily, it's also less likely to be refused by the cows. With that in mind, they're using the bale chopper primarily for coarser hay and bedded pack. Watch a

video of the bale shredder in action on the NE-DBIC blog: nedairyinnovation.com/menard-center-farm

Overall, the grant project has been a success. Thanks to the bale shredder, Mike and Landis are saving up to 20 hours a month on labor, enabling them to spend more time on livestock care and other farm tasks. The decrease of feed refusal and subsequent bale savings opens up opportunities for MCF to increase revenue through sales of certified organic bales. All of this adds up to support Mike's gradual retirement and farm transition to Landis.

After seeing a large impact and need for funding equipment and modernization efforts on dairy farms, NE-DBIC has expanded the original Dairy Farm Innovation & Alternative Management grant. The updated program is now called the Dairy Farm Improvement & Modernization Grant, and applications will open for a new round of funding in November. Learn more about the upcoming grant round, and view our full Grants Calendar at nedairyinnovation.com/grants



Current and Upcoming Dairy Grants

By Ali Boochever, Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center

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

Open Funding Opportunities

New Dairy Processor Start-up Grant

Grant funds will support new dairy processing projects throughout the Northeast. The goal of this program is to help develop competitive dairy processing businesses with long-term viability, supporting operations of all sizes in successfully launching and sustaining their products in the marketplace. This program is for:

1. Dairy farmers ready to begin processing,
2. Value-added entrepreneurs with proven experience in dairy processing or value-added business startups, or
3. Dairy processors established after January 1, 2023, who are in the start-up phase of business development.

Applicants are required to allocate at least 15% of their funding towards obtaining technical assistance or training relevant to starting up value-added production. Funds can also cover the purchase of specialized dairy processing equipment and supplies, enhancement of food safety measures, professional marketing and branding efforts, market access strategies, and product development.

Evidence of prior or current technical assistance from a service provider or business planner supporting the development of the project will make applications more competitive.

The application deadline is September 5, 2024 at 2 PM ET. Awards will range from \$15,000 to \$75,000, with a 25% match commitment. Approximately \$500,000 in total funds are available this round.

Innovation in Dairy Processing and Packaging Grant

This grant will provide funds for dairy processors, dairy producer associations, packaging manufacturers, supply chain businesses, educational research institutions, and technical assistance providers to support innovation for Northeast dairy processors across a variety of scales.

Projects funded through this program will help dairy processors gain knowledge or implement systems that support informed, long-term business investments with beneficial environmental

and/or economic impacts. Funded projects will be centered on developing alternatives to current industry standards through projects that are applicable, scalable, and replicable to small- or mid-sized Northeast dairy processors.

Competitive projects should address issues that are relevant to more than one Northeast processor, rather than solely benefiting the applicant's business.

Projects funded through this grant must address at least one of the following areas:

- **Packaging initiatives** that prioritize sustainability, scalability, and marketability of packaging solutions for small and mid-sized processors. Packaging projects may address topics such as packaging lifecycle analysis, packaging materials, costs of conversion, supply chain logistics, research and development, packaging design, processor packaging changeovers, and infrastructure upgrades.
- **Novel processing solutions** such as innovation in sourcing, product development, alternative production solutions, distribution and supply chain logistics, operations, workforce development or employee welfare, and marketing or consumer experience.
- **Projects that increase collaboration** across the dairy sector or increase partnerships between sectors to ensure the greatest number of dairy businesses

benefit.

All projects are required to include an educational/knowledge sharing component for the regional dairy industry.

The application deadline is October 31, 2024 at 2pm ET. Awards range from \$75,000 to \$350,000, with a 25% match commitment. Approximately \$1,500,000 in 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 up to five 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. Trade shows must occur before June 30, 2025.

Applications are currently being accepted on a rolling basis until November 28, 2024 at 2 PM ET or until funds run out. Awards will range from \$5,000 to \$20,000 with a 25% match commitment. Approximately \$150,000 total funds are available this round.

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The Big Picture of Sustainable Packaging

By Katie Spring, Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center

In 2022, Big Picture Farm received a \$147,800 Dairy Packaging Innovation Grant through the Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center (NE-DBIC). Their project goal was to eliminate virgin plastic from every aspect of their distribution. Thanks to the NE-DBIC funding, they've not only transitioned to more sustainable options for everything from their cheese and caramel wrappers to packaging tape and shipping labels, they have also created an open-source guide for others to use as well. This guide is ideal for small to medium-sized producers looking for environmentally friendly packaging options that are recyclable, compostable, and FSC-certified. Access the guide on Big Picture Farm's website: bigpicturefarm.com/pages/sustainability

Flood Response & Recovery Resources Can Help

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

Tropical Storm Beryl inundated parts of Vermont this year with flooding on July 10th and 11th, and more occurring at the end of July in the Northeast Kingdom

with large thunderstorms. Farmland, roads, bridges, buildings and properties were once again affected, exactly one year after the flooding of 2023. With each weather forecast we hold our breath hoping not to face another downpour, thunderstorm, or tropical storm. Please know that

the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets is working to help our farmers and our agriculture community, and to assess the ongoing damage and impact situation and provide the best response and assistance to you that we can. That work is ongoing since the flooding occurred.

The information below has been published in *Agriview* as a guide for anyone who has or will suffer damage from severe weather or flooding. Keep these pages as a reference guide of helpful tips and resources, and you can visit our website for more at <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/flood>. Any new

resources and/or assistance programs will be posted there.

If you need to talk to someone or have specific questions, we are happy to help. Reach out to us by email at agr.floodresponse@vermont.gov or by phone at 802-828-2430.

Next Steps for Farmers

Document and Report Damage

Farms and impacted businesses are encouraged to prepare for future program requirements by capturing date stamped photos, estimated crop loss, and infrastructure damage. Report damage including any damage to your home, on the Vermont 211 website or call 2-1-1. Reporting damage to 211 will help determine whether a certain county is eligible for federal FEMA resources.

Contact your County USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA)

To determine which federal agricultural disaster programs you may qualify for and submit relevant documentation. Reporting agricultural damages and losses to FSA supports a USDA Secretarial Disaster Designation for affected areas of Vermont that can result in additional federal programs for agricultural produce. Some crop and livestock programs are available



immediately. Support for self-assessment of program availability can also be found here: <https://www.farmers.gov/protection-recovery/disaster-tool>.

Complete the 2024 Flood Loss and Damage Survey

The Agency, in coordination with the Vermont Agricultural Recovery Task Force, is asking flood-impacted agricultural producers to participate in the 2024 Flood Loss and Damage Survey. The purpose of this survey is to capture the scale and

location of the flood-related damage agricultural producers suffered throughout the state starting on July 10, 2024. The survey will remain open to capture information on loss and damages until the deadline of August 31, 2024.

Contact Your Insurance Company and Lenders

Contact your insurance with potential crop loss, anticipated yield reductions, or infrastructure damages. They may send an adjuster to document any claims. Private insurance may be

the primary mechanism to recover financial losses due to flooding. Contact your lenders to request a waiver on loan payments during this emergency period.

Connect With a Trusted Service Provider

To discuss your business or production concerns. If you are looking for a farm viability advisor, contact the Vermont Farm & Forest Viability Program, and if you are seeking technical assistance contact your local Conservation Districts or UVM Extension.

Enterprise Specific Guidance

Flooded Produce Fields

Under U.S. law, crops where the edible portion of the plant has contacted flood waters are considered adulterated and cannot be sold for human consumption. For questions, concerns, or detailed flooded crop or replanting guidance, contact the Vermont Produce Program at AGR.Produce@vermont.gov or 802-828-2433. UVM is offering free soil testing through the UVM Agricultural and Environmental Testing Lab for flooded commercial vegetable and berry farms only. Download and complete the submission form and mark it as Flooded Field to avoid being billed.

Flooded Hay Crops for Livestock

Heather Darby's UVM Extension Team has developed comprehensive guidance in a Fact Sheet for Managing Damaged Crops and Forage. Producers who have hay losses can contact their FSA county office to

inquire about potential NAP and ELAP eligibility. See the USDA FSA Programs section in this document. Farm Feed-Finder Marketplace | Agency of Agriculture – This directory is an easy way for those looking for feed to connect with those with feed for sale.

Flooded Corn Crops for Livestock

Heather Darby's UVM Extension Team has developed comprehensive guidance in a Fact Sheet for Managing Flood Damaged Corn. Producers who have hay losses can contact their FSA county office to inquire about potential NAP and ELAP eligibility. See the USDA FSA Programs section in this document. Farm Feed-Finder Marketplace | Agency of Agriculture – This directory is an easy way for those looking

Flooded Pasture Fields

Heather Darby's UVM Extension Team has developed comprehensive guidance in a Fact Sheet for Managing Damaged Crops and Forage. Reach out to UVM Extension Grazing and Livestock Program Assistance by filling out the Grazing and Livestock Contact Form | Agriculture | The University of Vermont (uvm.edu). Producers who have pasture losses can contact their FSA county office to inquire about potential NAP and ELAP eligibility. See the USDA FSA Programs section in this document.

Livestock Loss Due to Flooding

Contact Local USDA FSA Service Center. The USDA FSA Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) provides benefits to livestock owners and some contract growers for livestock deaths in excess of

normal mortality or injury to livestock resulting in a reduced market price that are the direct result of an eligible adverse weather event.

Business and Land Based Issues Guidance

Flood Debris in Fields and Waterways

Farmers can remove debris in the stream or river that is causing danger to life or property, if the removal is limited to flood deposited sediment, rocks, and woody debris, and/or human trash. Removal should be the minimum necessary to reestablish pre-flood channel dimensions not deeper or wider. Landowner must notify the town. No review is needed if sediment needs to be removed from the field. Farmers should be aware that if they stockpile the sediment in the federally mapped flood hazard areas or the ANR-mapped river corridor, this may require a permit. Please see full document for more information.

Business Viability

The Vermont Farm and Forest Viability Program is a group of experienced business advisors who work with farm, food and forest businesses. We can support businesses that are recovering from flooding by offering assistance around short term business planning including financial analysis and identifying resources to assist with short term business management and financial decisions, as well as long term planning around business resiliency and planning. Please contact calley@vhcb.org or 802-828-3370 for more information and to be connected with a

business advisor.

Unemployment Insurance

The Vermont Department of Labor encourages workers affected by flooding to apply for Unemployment Benefits. Individuals who have lost their jobs, are unable to reach their place of employment, or cannot work due to the flood conditions are encouraged to apply for unemployment benefits. Vermonters can initiate the application process by calling the Unemployment Claimant Assistance Center at 1-877-214-3330. If a claim is filed and found ineligible, it may become eligible if federal Disaster Unemployment Assistance benefits are authorized. The first step in the process is to file an initial claim through the regular unemployment insurance program.

Flooding and Organic Certification

Flooded land, pastures, crops, and livestock feed on certified organic farms may require farm owners to follow additional measures to ensure and maintain their organic certification as they recover from flooding. Frequently Asked Questions about Flooding and Organic Certification. If you have additional questions regarding maintenance of organic certification, contact Vermont Organic Farmers LLC at 802-434-3821 or info@vermontorganic.org

Road Issues

For any road or culvert that need to be fixed immediately, there is not likely to be any state or federal financial support available. Additionally, roads, culverts and bridges are not covered under a

farm's insurance policy. The Agency of Agriculture's Best Management Practice (BMP) Program & Engineering Services may be able to provide engineering assistance if the farm is unsure about how to repair their road or culvert. Please note that, while technical assistance is available, road or culvert repair is of low priority for BMP Program funding. Prepare for any possible future reimbursement programs via documentation. Please see full document for more information.

Additional Resources

Vermont Flood Imagery (arcgis.com): Existing photo and video imagery available.

Drone Services

VACD Drone Program: For specific property sites and purposes. Access VACD's request form here. Filling out this form provides a better sense of the flight area and helps the operator pre-plan an automated flight plan. Contact Will Ebby GIS/UAV Technician at William.Ebby@vt.nacdnet.net.

Agency of Natural Resources Assistance

Guidance related to private wells, septic systems, dams, fuel tanks and more - Flood Recovery Resources | Agency of Natural Resources (vermont.gov)

Water Testing

Free water testing is available for private well and spring owners whose water systems have been affected by flooding. Call 802-338-4724 to order a free drinking water test to screen for contamination commonly caused

by flooding. Learn more from the Vermont Department of Health.

Program Navigation and Service Coordination

Vermont's Natural Resources Conservation Districts provide soil sampling, nutrient management assistance, program navigation, service coordination and various other technical assistance services to support farmer access to state, federal and private conservation and water quality programs. Farmers should contact their local Conservation District to determine what assistance they can provide.

Financial Assistance Programs

For a complete list of federal and philanthropic funding opportunities, as well as where to find future updates on state grant programs, please refer to the full toolkit document here.

Please note that there has not yet been any announcement of State of Vermont specific Flood Recovery financial assistance or funding. Gathering data on the extent of impacts is a crucial step toward making funding available beyond existing disaster assistance programs.

Mental Health Resources and Support

Farm First provides free access to a counselor. If someone needs to access a counselor, please reach out to the Farm First team:

- During daytime working hours (8am-4:30pm M-F) call: 802-318-5538
- Outside of daytime work hours call: 877-493-6216 (if daytime # is busy)
- Fill out Farm First support inquiry form.

Fantastic Farmer Grant Program Seeks 2024 Applicants

\$5K grant available through the A. Pizzagalli Family Farm Fund

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

- Are you a farmer feeding your neighbors?
- Are you working to protect the environment?
- Do you prioritize water quality, soil management, and sustainability on your farm?
- Do you work to connect with and educate your community about farming and food?

Perhaps you are the 2024 Fantastic Farmer!

The farmer chosen will also receive a \$5000 grant from the A. Pizzagalli Family Farm Fund! The winner will be announced this Fall.

Apply or nominate now at: <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/administration/fantastic-farmer-award>. Contact Scott Waterman for more information at scott.waterman@vermont.gov

The application period will close on Friday, September 20 at 5pm, so make sure to apply today.

Resilience

continued from page 1

levels of erosion or washouts.

Incorporate perennial rotations into crop systems – Having living perennial roots in the ground for a few years can significantly increase soil health and increase soil aggregation – research shows that these soil health benefits persist even after a few seasons of annual cropping. UVM researchers have found that in forage management systems, a rotation of four years hay and six years corn (using reduced till and cover cropping) is a great way to promote environmental benefits, without sacrificing yield or forage quality.

Plant cover crops – In

vigorous cover crops, the root systems help keep soil in place and the leaves protect the ground surface. Cover crops also take up fall-applied nutrients and make them available to the cash crop in the spring. They can also help manage soil moisture. Ensure that you plant cover crops early enough for them to establish well in the fall to maximize these benefits. Multi-species cover crops are even better at increasing resilience because they have increased plant diversity.

Use no till or reduced tillage – Tilling breaks up soil structure and increases the risk of erosion from wind and rain. It can also limit a soil's ability to infiltrate and hold water.

Minimizing tillage, especially when combined with cover cropping or crop rotations, can significantly decrease risk of erosion on fields where you grow annual crops and help manage soil moisture.

Plant and manage for diverse species in hayfields and pastures – Some forage species like it hotter and drier, other species do well in cooler, wetter conditions. Having a diversity of species in your hayfields and pastures can help you hedge your bets, so that you can get a reasonable harvest in a variety of weather conditions. Ensure you are managing for a diversity of grasses, legumes and forbs and consider reseeding or renovating perennial hay/pasture systems if needed.

Raise the mower bar – Cutting perennials higher has many practical non-climate benefits, from increasing the digestibility of the feed, to reducing equipment wear, to improving regrowth. Always leave at least 4 inches of residual vegetation when harvesting. With regards to climate resilience, mowing higher also leaves the soil more covered, which will help reduce excessive drying or cracking in dry conditions, speed the transpiration of excess water in wet conditions, and leave the plants healthier so that they are better able to withstand unideal conditions.

Reducing your risk of negative impacts from extreme weather will

help your bottom line in the medium and long term, so these practices may pay for themselves. That said, these practices also help protect your neighboring communities, so they serve the public good. Because of that, you can find funding for many of these conservation practices through payment programs from the federal United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA NRCS) or the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets (VAAFMM). Contact your local conservation district at <https://www.vacd.org/contact-nrcds/> to find the programs that will work best for your farm.



Vermont Wins at American Cheese Society Awards

By Katie Spring, Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center

In July, cheesemakers from across America gathered in Buffalo, NY for the annual American Cheese Society (ACS) Conference. Celebrating and uplifting American made cheese, the ACS Conference offered cheese tastings, workshops, and area tours. It also hosted the annual ACS Competition Awards

Ceremony. The competition, “a technical and aesthetic evaluation of American-made cheeses,” recognizes the finest American cheeses and cultured dairy products. Hundreds of cheesemakers across the United States and Canada submit thousands of entries each year. ACS awards recognize technical and aesthetic excellence and are highly valued in the industry. They’re known to open doors to new mar-

kets and help cheesemakers expand their reach and sales. This year, 16 Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center grantees won awards. Vermont cheesemakers took home a total of 34 individual ribbons.

Vermont winners include:

- Blue Ledge Farm*

- Cabot Creamery*
- Cellars at Jasper Hill*
- Grafton Village Cheese*
- Green Mountain Blue Cheese
- Jasper Hill Farm*
- Maplebrook Farm*
- Sage Farm Goat Dairy
- Spring Brook Farm Cheese
- Vermont Creamery*

*NE-DBIC grantees.

Congratulations to all for the recognition and honor of winning at ACS! See a full list of NE-DBIC grantees who won ACS awards at nedairyinnovation.com/nedbic-grantees-acs-awards/



Alpha Tolman was awarded as one of the top 10 cheeses overall. Photo credit: Jasper Hill Farm

VEDA: Providing creative financing solutions for this generation of farmers... and the next



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

VERMONT VEGETABLE AND BERRY NEWS



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

Reports From The Field

(Guildhall) Been a disappointing month over here. On July 11 the Connecticut River came up again (repeat of 2023) and wiped out 14 acres, the usual 25% we plant on low land. But then it came up 3 or 4 feet higher than last summer and took a 5-acre field that shouldn't flood. The water sat for 72 hours. So, 19 acres flooded, representing 36% of the crop. Pretty bleak. Potato plants melted into the ground immediately.

The good news: there's still 33 acres of potatoes, which were looking great before the flood, and are now being pampered with weekly foliar feedings of boron, magnesium, kelp, and every other thing I can think of. All based on weekly petiole sampling.

Looking to the future, we're making some big changes. These summer floods are no longer 10 or more years apart. Switching from a 4-year rotation to a 3-year will allow us to avoid planting on the floodplain. Potatoes are too

expensive to plant there (particularly with increased fertilizer prices), there's rarely seed available in July for replanting, and breaking down/cleaning of planting equip takes at least a week. I think we can keep up good practices up on a 3-year rotation, including a fallow third year in a cover crop.

Lastly, if you need potatoes for your CSA, farmstand or store this fall, call me. Keeping our potatoes out of the produce terminal and moving more to better paying markets is going to make all the difference this year. Be safe out there y'all. Matthew Linehan, Sparrow Arc Farm, sparrowarcfarm@gmail.com or 207-323-4439

(Burlington) What we've learned from two years of July flooding: eggplant appears to be more flood tolerant than most vegetables, surviving inundation and bouncing back to produce new flowers and fruit two years' running. Most peppers, potatoes, and cucurbits are losers along with annual herbs and beans. Tomatoes, brassicas, and sunflowers are intermediate. Onions are frustratingly flood tolerant: but we lose them to food safety concerns when they flood. By the time we can get the plastic out of the crop they've ripened up to good looking bulbs, this year with very low thrips counts and no sign of downy mildew. Alas. In the flower garden, verbena is a winner, zinnias are pretty good too. Snapdragons and calendula suffered.

Our tunnels have been a key to our success for many years, but the past two summers have driven that

point home, allowing us to continue harvesting popular cucumbers and tomatoes into the fall. Combined with a little patch of unflooded ground we've been able to stay in salad crops and fresh herbs. Taken together with the stored crops rescued from flooding we have produced good CSA shares and expect to be able to do so for the season as the replanted field crops start to mature in September.

We are looking hard at our crop mix and thinking about which crops have too long a season with lots of stranded costs (e.g. onions, celeriac), and considering crops we aren't growing now that might be a good hedge in the event we are flooded like sweet corn (tall), summer romaine (quick), summer baby spinach (even quicker). We are hearing mostly support from our CSA members, though we will see if two flood summers will shrink our retention and signup more than it did for this spring.

Just like it is rarely good to make headlines, it stinks to have useful experience preparing for floods, though we immediately thought about how we could do better next time. Farm on!

(Marlboro) Raspberries are mostly done. Taylor is still producing a few and then we wait for the late Prelude crop. Blueberry yield is smaller than last year. First Spinosad spray was 7/24 (one day later than last year). Hoping to get a few more weeks. We wonder if the dry season means a bit less SWD pressure? Also, not seeing a lot of Japanese Beetles (but knock on wood, probably jinxed it). The

ExcludeNet portion of the blueberry field still looks great. Late variety is coming along nicely with no SWD. Great growing year for veggies, and good response at the farm stand.

(Grand Isle) Very good blueberry crop this year. Will be done in another 10-14 days. Japanese beetle population was down considerably. Unsure if covering the grass areas with plastic decreased the population, we think it made the difference, but no way to know for sure. Years past when picking berries there would be a cloud of beetles emerging from the plants. This year we must look for beetles. We are collecting on average about 100 beetles a day.

Updates From UVM Extension Ag Engineering

Andy Chamberlin,
UVM Extension

A new post-harvest case study features a DIY conversion of a shipping container for a wash pack space. Explore this project with a 360 tour, video interview and photos of special features in our latest blog post at <https://go.uvm.edu/asctuneyharvest>. Lauren Mucha and Oliver Owen own and operate Ascutney Harvest in Ascutney, Vermont. Their half-acre market garden consists mostly of mixed vegetables and herbs which require washing and packing before heading off to two different farmers markets and a few wholesale vendors. They are fairly new to this land and needed a quick and affordable improvement to their wash/pack area.

Now's The Time For Perennial Fruit Leaf Analysis

Leaf analysis (aka tissue or foliar analysis) is better than soil testing for determining an optimal fertilization program for berries and tree fruit because it reveals exactly what the plant has succeeded in taking up. (Soil tests are still necessary for monitoring soil pH.) Leaves should be analyzed when fully mature but before they begin to senesce. Early to mid-August is a good time to sample most crops. Lab options include Dairy One (comes with Cornell recommendations), Penn State, and many land grant university soil test labs.

Take The Tick Survey, Visit The Tick Info Center

Ticks and tickborne diseases are increasing in Vermont. Scientists at the UVM Entomology Research Laboratory are gathering information about ticks on farms (of all types) and farmers deal with them. Insights gained will help develop resources and strategies to minimize risk of tick bites.

Please complete this 5-10 minute survey: https://qualtrics.uvm.edu/jfe/form/SV_00nshllEvEdmldc.

Visit the UVM Tick Information Center <https://site.uvm.edu/vt-tic/> for more information. Questions? Cheryl Sullivan at cfrank@uvm.edu



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

Angus Bulls for sale.

Greensboro, VT 802-533-9804 (10)

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

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

Equipment

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 Lynn, 802-728-9749. (8)

J.D. post hole digger, 3pt., ex condition = \$950. N.H. Model 900 chopper, 2 heads, excellent = \$25,000. Pinwheel Rake, 3pt., 4 wheels = \$750. J.D. hopper blower, pto, good condition - \$950. J.D. Forage Wagons, tandem, 16 ft. = \$12,500 each. Several plows 3, 4, 5 bottom, good condition. Pittsford, VT 802-483-2870 (9)

John Deere 446 Round Baler. 2 - 32 foot Hay elevator on wheels. 600 gallon bulk tank sap. Call 802-222-7645 (9)

1985 John Deere 950, \$WD, power steering, 1249 hrs, \$8400. John Deere brush hog \$750. 802-453-2724 (9)

2 Hay Wagons just running gear. 717 New Holland one row corn chopper. 3 Pt hitch weight for tractor. Phone 802-442-4877 (9)

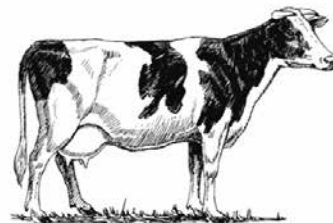
1999 Galignani 3200L round baler for sale. Excellent condition: double twine, fixed chamber, rolls in front, chain in back, runs on little power. Good for baleage or dry hay. \$6000 includes spare auger, assorted parts, operators and parts manuals, 4 bundles of 9000' plastic twine that works best in this machine. Always under cover. Danville, 802-748-8461. (9)

Milking Equip, Bulk Tank, Vac Pump, Balance Tank, Pipe Line, Receiver, Milk Pump, 2 ATO, 4 Cow Walk Thru, Head Locks, Free Stall, Hoops, Rd Bale Unroller, Ford Sq Baler, 3 Pt Fert Spreader, JD 450, Dozer, 3 Pt Wood Splitter, Bulk Tank Washer, 91' 2WD Dodge Trk, 75 gal, Hot H2O Heater LPG. 802-348-6303. (9)

4 Gehl Forage Boxes with good running gears. \$1500.00 each or 5500 for all four. Gehl 99 Blower \$1500.00 - Very Good Shape. 2 Older Hay Elevators \$250.00 each. Please call 802-272-0548 (9)

Gehl round bailer, model RB1475. In very good, well maintained condition. New belts still in the box will come with it. Please call 802-425-2385. (9)

John Deere 10 1/2 transport harrows. 7-8 ton Brock grain bin. 19 ton Brock grain bin. 16ft Snuco hay elevator. 15 ton Brock grain bin. 802-624-0143 (10)

**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>.

Pasteurizer/Chart Recorder/ Thermometers: 30 gallon Micro Process Design pasteurizer, lids, paddle and motor. Thermometers; indicating, recording, and air space. Anderson chart recorder, spare paper and pens. In good condition and used lightly seasonally. Selling as a set for \$11,000 Located in Westminster, Vt. Contact rachel@alpineglofarm.com for details and pictures. (10)

Row PTO potato digger 500., 6' tandom disk harrow 250 Hercules 3/4 hp. engine best offer, economy engine 3/4 hp, jd 500b backhoe 1500. 802-446-2125 leave message. (11)

Hay, Feed & Forage

1st, 2nd and 3rd cut grass haylage layered in bunk with preservatives. 250 tons, \$55/ton. Call Larry Scott, Ekolott Farm, Rt. 5, Newbury, VT 802-291-2363 (9)

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

continued on page 12

HAVE FEED?
NEED FEED?
BUY / SELL

FARM FEED-FINDER MARKETPLACE

HELPING CONNECT FARMS AND FEED

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

Classifieds*continued from page 11*

68 East Putney Ferry Road
Putney, VT 05346. Call Cory
at 802-289-3420. (9)

Large Square Bales, 1st cut hay.
Saxtons River, VT. 802-463-
3875 (9)

WINDSOR COUNTY

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

For Sale

We have Black and White
Border Collie puppies for
sale. One male and one
female. Parents are on

our farm. Born 1/9/2024.
Beautiful lovable smart
puppies ready for a new
home. Call 802-342-0612
Wallingford, Vt. \$500. (9)

Help Wanted

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)

Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund Releases Complete Free Training Series for Entrepreneurs and Small Business Owners

By Kelly Notterman, Vermont
Sustainable Jobs Fund

The Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund (VSJF) just released the complete set of six modules of its Business Sense series, next level tools for entrepreneurs and small business owners. Written by VSJF's team of business coaches, this free series shares their decades of experience in areas such as financials, operations, sales, marketing, human resources, and leadership and governance.

VSJF provides tailored business management coaching, entrepreneurial

support, and training to position Vermont-based entrepreneurs and small business owners in designated market sectors – agriculture, forestry, waste management, renewable energy, and environmental technology – for growth and long-term success.

Along with the complete release of Business Sense in English, Module 1: Financial Literacy was also translated into six additional languages for non-native English speaker. With funding through the SBA Community Navigator Pilot Program (CNPP), VSJF worked with the Champlain Valley Office of Economic

Opportunity (CVOEO) and their team of translators to make the Business Sense financial literacy series accessible in French, Spanish, Swahili, Nepali, Arabic, and Somali.

Business Sense is designed to provide entrepreneurs and small business owners in various sectors with recommendations and practical advice to help their businesses not only survive but thrive. Technical service providers have also found Business Sense helpful when working with clients, often working off them as training tools and providing them as leave-behind resources.

“These resources can help

build skills and competency across all aspects of business operations so our clients become more well-rounded leaders and managers,” said VSJF Executive Director Ellen Kahler. “We are excited to share these resources widely in the Vermont business community!”

Visit <https://www.vsjf.org/services/business-coaching/business-sense/> to access the completely free resources.

Business Sense Modules Now Available Include:

Module 1: Financial Literacy
Module 2: Business Operations
Module 3: Business Leadership and

Governance
Module 4: Human Resources
Module 5: Marketing
Module 6: Sales

The series was made possible in part by the generous support of the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets, the Vermont Farm and Forest Viability Program (a program of the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board), and the SBA Community Navigator Pilot Program, facilitating VSJF's ability to publish the resource as another way to help companies stay and grow in Vermont.

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza in Dairy Cows

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

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

Vermont veterinarians continue to monitor the situation as it develops

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

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

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



Organic Certification Cost Share Program

By Rebecca Brockett, VT
Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets offers funding assistance through the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service to organic producers and handlers

of agricultural products who have received organic certification through a USDA-accredited certifying agent.

Certified organic producers and handlers who have paid certification fees to become newly certified or re-certified for specific scopes under the National Organic Program (NOP) are eligible

for cost-share reimbursement.

Certified organic operations may receive reimbursement of up to 75% of their direct certification costs paid between October 1 and September 30 annually, not to exceed \$750 per certification scope. There are up to four eligible certification scopes (crops, livestock, wild

crops, and handling), which must be individually inspected for organic certification to be eligible for reimbursement.

Allowable Costs include application fees, inspection fees, USDA organic certification costs, user fees/sale assessments, and postage.

To learn more and apply, please visit: agriculture.vermont.gov/grants/organic-costshare

agriculture.vermont.gov/grants/organic-costshare

The application deadline is October 31, 2024. Reimbursement is available on a first come, first served basis.

Please contact Terry Smith at terry.smith@vermont.gov or 802-828-5667 with any questions.



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

September

Capital Equipment Assistance Program (CEAP)

Purchase of innovative farm equipment that aids in the reduction of runoff.

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

Fall

Organic Certification Cost Share Program

Partial reimbursement of direct costs for organic certification

Terry Smith
Terry.Smith@vermont.gov
802-828-5667

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

Online Tools Can Help With Selecting Cover Crops

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

There are many different reasons why cover crops may benefit your farm or garden. Cover crops can improve soil health, help with nutrient cycling, improve crop yields, reduce weed pressure, and build overall soil resilience.

Different cover crop species and varieties have different benefits and different growing and management requirements. When choosing a cover crop to use, it is important to think about your goals (what are you trying to achieve by planting the cover crop?) as well as your logistical sidebars (when will you be



able to plant the cover crop? How much money are you willing to invest?).

The Northeast Cover Crop Council (NECC) has online decision support tools that can assist farmers, and those that work with farmers, to think through

these decisions around implementing cover crops. For example, the Species Selector Tool can help you choose cover crop species.

The Cover Crop Nitrogen Calculator helps predict nitrogen release after cover crop termination. The NECC website also provides a portal into tools developed by other organizations, such as the Winter Cover Crop Planting Scheduler and the Cover Crop Tool for Vegetable Growers, both developed by Cornell University.

Heather Darby is a well-known University of Vermont Extension researcher and outreach specialist who has been a leader in the Northeast Cover Crop Council since the organization's creation in

2016. According to Heather, "these tools have been built with data produced in the northeast and vetted by researchers and farmers". Many of the tools consider not just your goals but also your farm's specific location, soil type, drainage and flooding frequency in order to give you tailored recommendations.

To access and take advantage of these free-to-use decision support tools and other cover cropping resources visit the Northeast Cover Crops Councils' website at <https://northeastcovercrops.com/>

The Pesticide Applicator newsletter is going digital in 2024!

This change will allow:

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

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

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

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



Pesticide Applicator Certification Exams

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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



Farm First: Free Resources and Support for Farmers

Farm First is a free and confidential service for Vermont farmers and their family members, providing help with personal or work-related issues that cause stress. We will connect you to resources that can help your farm to thrive, and to counselors and other folks in your farming community who can help you find tools to deal with the uncertainty and frustrations that are a part of farming.



resources that provide funding opportunities, technical assistance, educational services, business and succession planning, and

figuring out how to keep the farm going after an injury or illness.

- **The Peer Farmer Network:** Farm First has a diverse and growing team of farmers across Vermont who provide confidential support to our state’s agricultural community. Peer Farmers know what it’s like to work on the land—the good, the bad, and the ugly—and there are many tools and resources that they are eager to share with you. They can find a time to talk to you at the time of day or evening that works best for your busy farm schedule. Once you connect with a Peer Farmer, you’ll always have someone trustworthy to listen to you and offer support when you need it.
- **Free Short-Term Counseling:** Farm First works with a team of licensed and accredited counselors who have specific experience

working with farmers. You can receive up to 12 free sessions to tackle problems that are creating stress in your work or personal life. We can also work to match you with affordable options for longer term counseling as needed.

How to Get in Touch with Farm First

There are several ways to connect with Farm First support:

- Call our main number at 802-318-5538 (during business hours)
- email EvaG@farmfirst.org to reach the resource coordinator, or
- Visit www.farmfirst.org; click “Get Our Help” and follow the instructions.

Often someone will answer right away, but if you leave a message, we will do our best to get back to you within one business day.

If you need to speak with someone urgently, you can call our 24/7 number at 1-877-493-6216. (If it is a true emergency, always call 911).

More information

In Vermont, many workplaces provide a benefit to their employees known

as an employee assistance program, which can help employees to solve stressful problems whether they be personal, legal, or a need for financial assistance. Farm First is designed to provide a similar free service to Vermont farmers and their

families.

Farm First is a public, not-for-profit program jointly sponsored by the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets, and the Vermont Agency of Human Services’ InvestEAP Centers for Wellbeing.

Vermont Milk Commission Seeks Nominations for Three New Members

The Vermont Milk Commission, authorized under 6 V.S.A. § 2922, is seeking nominations for three new members for the following seats:

- Two members representing milk consumers and having no pecuniary interest in the sale of milk or milk products
- One dairy farmer who does not serve on the Board of Directors of any organization that handles or processes dairy products, nor is an officer of any organized farm organization in the State

Commissioners serve for terms between 1-3 years and are eligible for expense reimbursement. The Milk Commission meets, on average, 2-3 times per year.

To nominate yourself or someone else, send an email to Laura Ginsburg at laura.ginsburg@vermont.gov with the person’s name, phone and email, a short description of why you are nominating them, and how they qualify. You can also complete a short online form here: <https://forms.office.com/g/ZgMaRvdCnF>

Nominations will be open from October 1 - 31, 2024.



2024 Vermont Fairs and Field Days

- Orleans County Fair September 4-8, Barton, VT
- The Tunbridge World’s Fair September 12-15, Tunbridge, VT

Coloring Contest for Vermont Students in Grades K-4

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

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets is pleased to announce a new coloring contest for Vermont students in grades K-4 during the 2024-2025 school year.

The Agency hopes this contest will spark conversations in the classroom about the many types of agriculture here in Vermont. While dairy is a very large component, we also have tree fruits, berries, vegetables, grains, maple syrup, flowers, emus and more.

The contest invites students to use art to show what it is they love about



agriculture or agricultural products. Maybe it is a stack of pancakes and a jug of maple syrup. Maybe it's an apple tree. Or a big old creemee. Whatever it is, we hope the students will tell us about why they love what they drew.

If you know of children whose English is a second language, we encourage

them to submit entries in their home language. Honoring new Americans and their agricultural traditions is something Secretary Anson Tebbetts and Agency staff embrace. The Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets wants all types of agriculture to flourish here in Vermont.

All entries to the contest become the property of the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets. It is our plan to use this artwork to help in messaging the importance of agriculture to our state through social media and other messaging opportunities.

You are welcome to contact Terry Smith with any questions you may have by calling 802-828-5667 or by emailing us at agr.coloring-contest@vermont.gov

We hope this contest will be incorporated into

fall curriculums and we look forward to receiving entries from around the state.

Submission Guidelines

- Students currently enrolled in grades K-4 in Vermont are eligible to enter. One winner will be selected from each grade.
- Only one entry per student allowed.
- Entries must include the artwork.
- Written words describing what they love about agriculture is optional.
- A completed entry form must accompany the submission.
- Art must be original and no larger than 11 x 17 inches.
- Art works can be created in pen, pencil, crayon, pastels, paint, cloth, collage, photography, or computer art.
- Entries must be titled with the chosen agricultural

theme and signed by the student in the lower right-hand corner.

- Teachers and club or organizational leaders may submit entries in groups as long as each individual submission has the completed entry form.
- Entries can be submitted electronically (scan or link to folder). Individuals can only win once.

Entries must be received by November 1, 2024.

They can be sent by email to agr.coloringcontest@vermont.gov or by mail to Terry Smith c/o Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets, 116 State Street, Montpelier, VT 05620-2901

For more information, please contact Terry Smith by email terry.smith@vermont.gov or by phone 802-828-5667.

Dairy Grants

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Upcoming Funding Opportunities

Dairy Co-packing Grant

This grant will provide funds for existing Northeast dairy processors to initiate new co-packing arrangements or expand existing co-packing capabilities. Processors who have not previously co-packed will be eligible for funds to add co-packing capabilities to their current business. Processors who currently co-pack will be eligible for funds to add new

co-packing partnerships, scale up existing co-packing relationships, or add additional co-packed product lines.

Applicants will be required to utilize technical assistance or training as part of 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 for this grant. 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.

The RFA is expected to be released in late 2024.

Awards will range from

\$15,000 to \$150,000 with a 25% match contribution.

Find out more about these current and upcoming

funding opportunities on our website at:

nedairyinnovation.com/grants

