Buying a fresh-cut Connecticut Grown Christmas tree is a fun, family tradition that supports Connecticut farmers while often enjoying winter agritourism activities like wagon or sleigh rides, hot cocoa, and visits with Santa.

Kathy Kogut, co-owner of Kogut’s Hemlock Hill Farm in Meriden said getting a Christmas tree is certainly a family tradition.

“Families find a spot they like and go back year after year,” said Kathy. “Some have Santa, hot chocolate, photo-ops, even tail gaiting. They make a day out of it.”

Kathy, who is also Executive Director of the Connecticut Christmas Tree Growers Association (CCTGA), said sales of Christmas trees were brisk the first weekend after Thanksgiving for many Connecticut Christmas tree growers.

“This weekend was slamming” said Kathy. “Between all the hype about the limited supply of trees, the impending snowstorm, plus the season is six days shorter than normal this year. That’s what made it so busy this weekend.”

Kathy says the economic recession of 2008 is to blame for the limited supply of trees today.

“A lot of farmers didn’t plant (in 2008) because land was so expensive,” said Kathy. Because it takes 8-10 years for Christmas trees to mature, the lack of planting 10 years ago has led to the current limited supply.”

Kathy said a lot of Connecticut Christmas tree farms supplement sales of their own Connecticut Grown trees with trees from other parts of the country. She said the Fraser fir is the most popular tree, but it is native to North Carolina and is not widely grown in Connecticut. The white spruce is native to Connecticut and it is widely grown and available in the state.

Kathy also attributes the nationwide limit supply of Christmas trees to droughts out west, and flooding in the southern states. New England’s supply of Christmas trees has been impacted by an October ice storm in Maine and flooding in Massachusetts that impacted several large growers in 2019.

An increase in the cost of transportation has caused the price of out-of-state Christmas trees to go up, while the cost of Connecticut Grown trees has remained stable.

“The average tree is between $40 and $50 in most of Connecticut,” said Kathy. “Out-of-state trees cost more because of the cost of freight.”

Not only are Connecticut Grown Christmas trees more affordable than out-of-state trees, they are also fresher. Christmas trees from out-of-state may have been cut a week before being shipped to Connecticut. Connecticut Grown Christmas trees are often sold as cut-your-own, which gives customers the option of cutting the tree themselves or picking it out for the farmer to cut that day.

“A Christmas tree can say in a house for four to six weeks if kept properly,” said Kathy.

Kathy said there are about 500 Christmas tree growers in Connecticut, out of which 215 are CCTGA members. She esti-
(continued from Page 1)

mates about 70% of Connecticut Christmas tree growers are "mom and pop shops" that grow and sell about 200-300 trees per year. She said about 20% of CCTGA members are large growers, like Dzen Tree Farm in South Windsor and Jones Family Farms in Shelton, which sell thousands of trees year.

One mid-size Connecticut Christmas tree grower is Maple Hollow Tree Farm in New Hartford. Maple Hollow currently sells about 1,000 trees per year. In 2018, Maple Hollow Farm was awarded a $22,000 Farm Transition Grant from the Department of Agriculture (DoAg) for a project to construct an expanded wreath shop that will providing an inviting retail space for the existing Christmas tree farm and wreath business.

"Construction of Maple Hollow Tree Farm’s wreath shop has provided our growing business the opportunity to display our own holiday wreaths and arrangements in a controlled environment," said James Steadman, Jr. of Maple Hollow Tree Farm. "In the long term, the project helps supports the production of different ornamental shrubs and evergreens and allows our local Christmas tree business to provide local products that are otherwise overwhelmingly supplied by national and international distributors."

The grant has enabled the farm to expand production to 2,000 trees by 2023. The new wreath shop was completed in October 2019 and is now open for business.

For a listing of Cut-Your-Own Christmas tree farms visit DoAg’s website at https://portal.ct.gov/DOAG/ADaRC/Publications/Pick-Your-Own-Christmas-Tree-By-County.

The CCTGA also maintains a listing of CCTGA members that offer Cut-Your-Own and retail farm Christmas tree sales at https://www.ctchristmastree.org.

ADVERTISEMENTS

FOR SALE

1-R. Blumenthal & Donahue is now Connecticut’s first independent NATIONWIDE Agri-Business Insurance Agency. Christmas tree growers, beekeepers, sheep breeders, organic farmers and all others, call us for all your insurance needs. 800-554-8049 or www.bludon.com

2-R. Farm, homeowner and commercial insurance—we do it all. Call Blumenthal & Donahue 800-554-8049 or www.bludon.com

3-R. Gallagher electric fencing for farms, horses, deer control, gardens, & beehives. Sonpal’s Power Fence 860-491-2290

4-R. Packaging for egg sales. New egg cartons, flats, egg cases, 30 doz and 15 doz. Polinsky Farm 860-376-2227

5-R. Nationwide Agribusiness Insurance Program, endorsed by the CT Farm Bureau, save up to 23% on your farm insurance and get better protection. References available from satisfied farmers. Call Marci Zyskowski today at 203-444-6553


77-R. Heifers, crossbred beef, Hereford/Angus, April calves. $450 each. 2 available. Call 860-537-1974

79-R. Pollination services for small scale farms. Call Hilltop Apiaries for information at 860-408-9039

WANTED

6-R. Livestock wanted: Dairy cattle, heifers of any age, beef cows, bulls, steers, feeder cattle, veal, groups of sheep and goats. RyanM01@comcast.net or 860-655-0958. If no answer, leave message. All calls returned

MISCELLANEOUS

65-R. Connecticut Greenhouse Co. Installation, maintenance and fabrication of greenhouses, cold frames and NRCS high tunnels. 12’ to 30’ wide by any length. Designed and manufactured in CT, a farmer owned and operated business. Maintenance parts, supplies and custom plastic. www.ctgreenhouse.com or call Toby 203-654-1595

80-R. Burlington, CT. Free 20+ pine logs 18”x4’ Perfect for outdoor furnace, dry a year. Call 860-673-1025 or 203-509-4361

AG JOB CONNECTION


CT FARM ENERGY WORKSHOPS

Are you a farm or rural small business who would like to reduce your energy consumption and costs? The CT RC&D and the CT Farm Energy Program will be hosting the following farm energy workshops covering energy efficiency and renewable energy options along with state and federal incentives:
- January 16, 2020, at 3:00 p.m., USDA Service Center - 238 W. Town St. Norwich, CT. Snow date: Jan. 17th at 3:00 p.m.
- January 23, 2020 at 2:00 p.m., UConn Extension Center - 843 University Dr. Torrington, CT. Snow date: Jan. 30th at 2:00 p.m.

For more information and for information on how to RSVP for the workshops go to https://ctfarmenergy.org.
### New England Markets

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<th>Item</th>
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**Dairy Cattle**

- New Holland, PA. Price per animal.

**Fresh/Milk Cows**

- **Approved**: 100.00 1475.00
- **Medium**: 650.00 1050.00

**Bred Cows**

- **Approved**: 900.00 1075.00

**Springer Cows**

- **Approved**: 1025.00 1425.00

**Bred Heifers**

- **Approved**: 575.00 975.00
- **Medium**: 450.00 750.00

**Springer Heifers**

- **Approved**: 800.00 1350.00
- **Medium**: 500.00 725.00

**Open Heifers**

- **Approved**: 325.00 600.00
- **Medium**: 175.00 275.00

**New Holland, PA Hay Report**

- Orchard/ Timothy Grass Good: 360.00 360.00
- Orchard Grass Good: 355.00 355.00
- Timothy Grass Good: 320.00 320.00

**New England Livestock Auction**

- **Bob Calves**: 45-60 lbs. n/a n/a
- **61-75 lbs.**: n/a n/a
- **76-90 lbs.**: n/a n/a
- **91-105 lbs.**: 8.00 10.00
- **106 lbs. & up**: 15.00 20.00
- **Farm Calves**: 1@ 50.00
- **Starter Calves**: n/a n/a
- **Veal Calves**: n/a n/a
- **Feeder Heifers**: n/a n/a
- **Beef Heifers**: 64.00 68.00
- **Feeder Steers**: n/a n/a
- **Butcher Hogs**: 2@ 70.00
- **Feeder Pigs each**: n/a n/a
- **Sheep each**: 65.00 90.00
- **Lambs each**: 100.00 140.00
- **Goats each**: 135.00 300.00
- **Kid Goats each**: 65.00 130.00
- **Canners**: up to 60.00
- **Cutters**: 61.00 64.00
- **Utility Grade Cows**: 65.00 68.00
- **Ea Rabbits**: 6.00 9.00
- **Chickens each**: 3.00 11.00
- **Ducks each**: n/a n/a

**New Holland, PA Hog Auction**

- **Barrows and Gilt**: US 1-2 223-299 lbs 50.00 63.00
- **US 1-2 300-325 lbs**: 54.00 64.00
- **US 2-3 240-297 lbs**: 42.00 51.00
- **US 2-3 300-319 lbs**: 40.00 44.00

**Boston Market Organic**

- **Apple, Fuji, WA, XFCY, 80’s**: 35.00 35.00
- **Apple, Gala, TRAY PK, 100’s**: 38.00 38.00
- **Cabbage, GRN, 45 LB CRT**: 18.00 20.00
- **Collards, GA, CRTN, 12S**: 16.00 18.00
- **Kale, GA, CRTN, BNCH, 12S**: 13.00 16.00
- **Mesclun Mix, CA, 3LB CRTN**: 6.50 7.00
- **Mushrooms, White, 12-80Z**: 17.00 17.00
- **Onion, RED GLOBE, 50 LB**: 30.00 30.00
- **Pear, BARTLETT, 4/5 BU**: 36.00 38.00
- **Pear, BOSC, 4/5 BU**: 36.00 38.00
- **Potato, RND RED, 50LB, 70S**: 34.00 34.00
- **Potato, RUSSET, 50LB, 70S**: 38.00 38.00
- **Sweet Potatoes, #1, 40 LB**: 37.00 43.00
NEW ENGLAND VEGETABLE & FRUIT CONFERENCE
Registration is now open for the 2019 New England Vegetable & Fruit Conference. This conference will take place in Manchester, NH on December 10-12, 2019. The New England Vegetable & Fruit Conference and Trade Show includes more than 25 educational sessions over 3 days, covering major vegetable, berry and tree fruit crops as well as various special topics. A Farmer to Farmer meeting after each morning and afternoon session will bring speakers and farmers together for informal, in-depth discussion on certain issues. Go to https://newenglandvfc.org/registration to register online. For assistance with registration call 207-933-2100. For more information about the conference go to https://newenglandvfc.org.

ARTISAN DAIRY FOOD SAFETY PLAN WORKSHOP
UConn is hosting a coaching workshop intended for artisan cheese and dairy food producers who are preparing to develop, or are already developing, a Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) compliant, preventive control (PC)-based, food safety plan for their facility.

The two-day workshop will be held January 16-17, 2020 at the Hartford Times Building, 10 Prospect Street, Hartford, CT. The generous support of the USDA allows this course to be provided at a reduced cost to artisan dairy producers for $49. Registrations and payments must be received by January 9, 2020. This course is limited to the first 20 registrants.

For more information and registration go to https://dairyextension.foodscience.cornell.edu/programs/artisan-dairy-food-safety-coaching/.

HEMP PRODUCER LISTENING SESSIONS
Topics will include: Information from the 2019 Growing Season, New USDA Hemp Regulations, CT Agriculture Experiment Station research, and Q&A with DoAg staff.

- Tuesday, December 3, 2019, 5:30 - 7:30 PM
  UConn Avery Point Campus Auditorium, Groton, CT
- Wednesday, December 4, 2019, 5:30 - 7:30 PM
  CT Agricultural Experiment Station Auditorium, New Haven, CT
- Thursday, December 5, 2019, 5:30 - 7:30 PM
  Litchfield County Extension Center Meeting Room, Torrington, CT
- Thursday, December 12, 2019, 5:30 - 7:30 PM
  UConn Storrs, WB Young Building Room 101, Storrs, CT

Growers, Processors, and Manufacturers are encouraged to attend. Great networking opportunity! Please RSVP to: AGR.Hemp@ct.gov; 860-713-2502. www.CTgrown.gov/hemp.

PRODUCTION AGRICULTURE - BACK TO BASICS
Farmers of all experience are encouraged to join the Connecticut Department of Agriculture, University of Connecticut, and the American Farmland Trust on Thursday, January 9, 2020 from 9 AM to 1 PM at the Tolland Agricultural Center in Vernon, Connecticut to hear the latest in IPM, soil management, and water programs. Aaron Ristow of the American Farmland Trust will discuss his findings on the economic and environmental impacts of soil health practices. This is a free program and pesticide credits will be offered. For more information or to register, please contact Erin Windham at 860-713-2543 or Erin.Windham@ct.gov.