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# CONNECTICUT WEEKLY AGRICULTURAL REPORT

The latest news and updates in Connecticut agriculture

*Brought to you by the Connecticut Department of Agriculture*

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The [Connecticut Department of Agriculture](#) is pleased to announce the hiring of Jaime L. Smith as director of the Bureau of Agricultural Development and Resource Conservation (ADaRC), effective June 19, 2020.



## Third Parcel of 450-acre Kuss Farm Permanently Protected

Connecticut Farmland Trust (CFT) is pleased to announce the preservation of Kuss Farm in Bethlehem and Woodbury. This 61-acre parcel of the 450-acre farm was protected in a joint effort by partners Connecticut Department of Agriculture, USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Services (USDA-NRCS), and CFT.

Dick and Peggy Ann Kuss began purchasing farmland decades ago to fulfill Dick's lifelong dream of becoming a farmer. "My wife and I are eighty now, and we have forty years on the farm," said Dick. "From a young age, I knew that I wanted to farm."

Neither Dick nor Peggy was from a farming background. Until they were nearly forty, the Kusses operated a school bus business. The couple made a career change to start their farm but kept the school bus business going for a while so that they would have income to buy additional farmland and could farm during the summer growing season when schools were out.

Today, the couple operates a regional, high-end hay business. Kuss Farm is the third-largest hay business in Connecticut. They sell and distribute hay to horse farms across Connecticut and New York. The farm also grows sweet corn, pumpkins, and vegetables for its roadside stand on Route 132 in Woodbury.

The Kuss family has already preserved two parcels of their 450-acre farm through the CT Department of Agriculture's Farmland Preservation Program; this 61-acre piece is the third. When the Kuss family applied to the State to preserve this parcel, the State reached out to CFT to be a preservation partner. CFT and the State jointly secured matching funds from the USDA-NRCS to purchase an easement on the 61 acres.

"We are grateful for the opportunity to partner with the Kuss family to permanently protect this third parcel of agricultural lands," said Agriculture Commissioner Bryan P. Hurlburt. "Through collaboration with our partners, we are able to ensure that this diversified farmland remains available to future farmers while meeting the needs of Connecticut now through the production and distribution of fresh vegetables and livestock feed." The Connecticut Department of Agriculture's Farmland Preservation Program was established in 1978 to protect the prime and important farmland soils in the state in order to maintain and preserve agricultural land for the future.

"Placing these 61 acres of the Kuss Farm under a conservation easement

L. Morgart, Connecticut State Conservationist for the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service. "This farm contains some of the best soils in the state. Permanently protecting it and its high-yielding soils are of major importance in meeting Connecticut's – and the nation's – short- and long-range needs for food and fiber," he said.

"Dick and Peggy Kuss are committed and conservation-minded farmers who work tirelessly to maintain their farm," said Elisabeth Moore, Connecticut Farmland Trust Executive Director. "And thanks to them and their choice to protect their land now, it makes Bethlehem and Woodbury even more viable for the next generation of farmers. I have great admiration for the family's dedication to conservation, and it was a pleasure to work once again with the Connecticut Department of Agriculture's Land Preservation Program and the USDA-NRCS."

When asked about what is next for the farm, Dick said, "There are a lot of young people with an interest in farming, but they can't farm because there is no land available for them. Maybe young people can use this farm in the future." The Kuss family will continue to raise high-quality hay for the foreseeable future.

Agricultural conservation easements prohibit residential and industrial development but allow commercial agriculture and construction of agricultural structures on designated areas of the land.

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## COVID-19 Resources for Agricultural Producers



### NEW REOPEN CONNECTICUT TOURISM CAMPAIGN: SO GOOD TO SEE YOU

The Connecticut Office of Tourism is pleased to announce that they are launching a new campaign to help re-invigorate revenues for the state's many tourism-related businesses. Their new So Good to See You, Connecticut campaign will show how ready tourism partners are to welcome visitors back safely — and encourage visitors to take a fresh look at all the state has to offer.

From their existing statewide tourism budget, they've allocated more than \$1 million to a multimedia campaign that will include social media, search, content seeding, digital marketing, video marketing, and streaming TV ads. In collaboration with the

Of course, to get people to see Connecticut with fresh eyes, they need to feature fresh imagery in their campaign. So if you have any great new photos or footage that showcase your business, please share them. A [new submission form](#) makes it easy to upload them.

Questions should be directed to [Randall.Fiveash@ct.gov](mailto:Randall.Fiveash@ct.gov).

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### **COVID-19 CONSUMER RESOURCES**

[Connecticut Grown Farm Map](#): online, interactive listing of open farm stands, farm stores and farmers' markets to access Connecticut Grown produce, dairy, meat, shellfish, greenhouse and nursery stock.

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### **COVID-19 PRODUCER RESOURCES**

Find the latest guidance on best practices, resources and updates related to COVID-19 visit: <https://portal.ct.gov/doag-covid>

List your farm, farmers' market or farm stand on CTGrownMap.com by clicking [here](#).

**COVID-19 Considerations for Animal Activities at Fairs, Shows, and Other Events** available [here](#).

*Has your agribusiness or farm adopted new ways of doing business to continue serving Connecticut residents through COVID-19? We want to highlight those who have modified their operations to protect their workforce and consumers, give back to their community, and continue pushing forward in a COVID-19 world.*

*Send photos/stories to [rebecca.eddy@ct.gov](mailto:rebecca.eddy@ct.gov). We look forward to sharing your story.*

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### **CONNECTICUT AGRICULTURE IN THE NEWS**

[Shaken up by COVID-19, shellfish industry moves to reinvent itself](#), The Day, 6/20

[Second Farmers Market Launching In Downtown Stamford](#), ThePatch.com, 6/23

[Connecticut farmers markets during coronavirus era: Some adopt new rules, others shut down or try to go digital](#), Hartford Courant, 6/24

[Farm-style ice cream: 6 top stops for sMOOthe treats in Connecticut](#), CT Insider, 6/24

[Ellington Farmers Market moving back to Arbor Park](#), Journal Inquirer, 6/25

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## Farmer to Food Pantry Cooler Grant Program



The Connecticut Milk Promotion Board, in collaboration with New England Dairy, is launching the Farmer to Food Pantry Cooler Grant Program.

This pilot program provides Connecticut dairy farmers with the opportunity to apply for a one-time grant to provide a Connecticut food pantry with a cooler for keeping milk and dairy foods cold.

### Food Pantry Cooler Design

for illustrative purposes only



Learn more and submit your application at <https://tinyurl.com/farmertofoodpantry-application>

This project was funded by the Connecticut Milk Promotion Board.



### CONNECTICUT RANKS SEVENTH FOR PROTECTION OF FARM LAND

According to a 2020 American Farmland Trust report, [Farms Under Threat](#), Connecticut ranks seventh in the Agricultural Land Protection Scorecard. The

and the transfer of land to a new generation.

Since the inception of Connecticut's Farmland Preservation Program in 1978, **more than 374 farms encompassing over 44,000 acres have been permanently protected.**

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## **USDA ADDS DIGITAL OPTIONS FOR FARMERS TO APPLY FOR CORONAVIRUS FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

USDA's Farm Service Agency will now accept applications for the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP) through an online portal, expanding the options available to producers to apply for this program, which helps offset price declines and additional marketing costs because of the coronavirus pandemic. FSA is also leveraging commercial document storage and e-signature solutions to enable producers to work with local service center staff to complete their applications from home.

"We are doing everything we can to serve our customers and make sure agricultural producers impacted by the pandemic can quickly and securely apply for this relief program," said FSA Administrator Richard Fordyce. "In addition to working with FSA staff through the phone, email and scheduled in-person appointments, we can now also take applications through the farmers.gov portal, which saves producers and our staff time."

Through the portal, producers with secure USDA login credentials—known as eAuthentication—can certify eligible commodities online, digitally sign applications and submit directly to the local USDA Service Center. Producers who do not have an eAuthentication account can learn more and begin the enrollment process at farmers.gov/sign-in. Currently, the digital application is only available to sole proprietors or single-member business entities.

New customers seeking one-on-one support with the CFAP application process can call 877-508-8364 to speak directly with a USDA employee ready to offer general assistance. This is a recommended first step before a producer engages the team at the FSA county office at their local USDA Service Center.

To find the latest information on CFAP, visit [farmers.gov/cfap](https://farmers.gov/cfap) or call 877-508-8364.

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## **DROUGHT EARLY WARNING UPDATE FOR THE NORTHEAST**

June 25, 2020 - Moderate drought was introduced and abnormal dryness expanded in portions of New England and New York this week due to increasing precipitation deficits, unusually hot temperatures, much below normal streamflow, declining soil moisture, and reports of agriculture, water, and fire impacts. The U.S. Drought Monitor released on June 25 showed 29% of the Northeast DEWS area in a moderate drought and 42% as abnormally dry. The last time New York and New England experienced drought conditions was in summer/fall of 2018.

For more information, visit: <http://nedews.nrcc.cornell.edu/>

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safety of attendees, vendors, and presenters as our top priority, the New England Floriculture Board and Extension Representatives have decided to postpone the Northeast Greenhouse Conference to the fall of 2021.

We are exploring the possibility of setting up webinars this fall in order to deliver content relevant to Pesticide Applicator Certification continuing education credits. We will provide more information about that plan when it is finalized.

The New England Greenhouse Floriculture Guide is in the process of being updated and will be released in paper and digital formats!

Please visit the Northeast Greenhouse Website for more details as they are developed: [www.negreenhouse.org/](http://www.negreenhouse.org/) or contact our conference office at [info@delanemeetingevent.com](mailto:info@delanemeetingevent.com)

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### **Ag Market Pricing**

[Middlesex Livestock Auction - CT](#)

[New Holland Dairy Auction - New Holland, PA](#)

[Northeast Regional Eggs](#)

[New Holland, PA Hay Report](#)

[New England Shell Eggs](#)

[Wholesale Fruits & Vegetables - Boston](#)

[Pennsylvania Weekly Cattle Auction Summary](#)

[Wholesale Ornamental Flowers - Boston](#)

[Pennsylvania Livestock Auction - Eighty Four, PA](#)

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### **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](http://www.bludon.com)

2-R. Farm, homeowner and commercial insurance—we do it all. Call Blumenthal & Donahue 800-554-8049 or [www.bludon.com](http://www.bludon.com)

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

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

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