Two Connecticut family farms, Freund’s in East Canaan and Jones Family Farms in Shelton, were recognized as the 2021 Agricultural Adventurer Award winners by the Big E Board of Trustees earlier this week. Congratulations to both on making their mark on New England agriculture!

Federal Grant Will Help Strengthen State's Shellfish Industry Amid Lingering COVID Impacts

Connecticut Sea Grant has been awarded a $196,990 federal grant to lead a project designed to further the recovery of Connecticut’s shellfish industry from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and position it to be more resilient in the future.

The grant from the National Sea Grant program to Connecticut Sea Grant was one of 13 announced Aug. 30, 2021, for Sea Grant programs nationwide for two efforts to support sustainable growth in the U.S. seafood industry. One set of projects including Connecticut’s addresses COVID-19 impacts to seafood resources, while the other focuses on improving coordination for marine aquaculture development. A total of $3.5 million was awarded.

The Connecticut project, titled, “Resilience through Restoration: Developing a Sustainable Shellfish Bed Management Strategy to Support Connecticut’s Shellfish Sector,” will be led by CT Sea Grant with partners including the Connecticut Department of Agriculture Bureau of Aquaculture; the NOAA Northeast Fisheries Science Center; commercial and recreational shellfish industry representatives; UConn; nonprofit organizations; and members of the Connecticut Restaurant Association.

It will build on a project launched in the first weeks of the pandemic lockdown in 2020 that used federal emergency relief funds to employ commercial shellfish companies on a three-phase restoration project in the state’s natural clam and oyster beds. These beds are critical to the industry as a main source of affordable seed for local farms. The program was essential to sustaining the state’s shellfish industry through the worst of the pandemic, when restaurant closures led to a 93% decline in shellfish sales. In typical years, sales of Connecticut shellfish are valued at more than $30 million.

With the new funding, shellfish companies will have opportunities to work on
term management strategies for these important resources. Connecticut has more than 3,500 acres of natural beds, located mainly in central and western Long Island Sound.

“We are very excited to continue this important work to restore shellfish habitats and populations,” said Tessa Getchis, CT Sea Grant aquaculture extension specialist who is leading the project. “It’s a real win-win that we have opportunity to realize both economic and environmental benefits.”

The restoration work will be complemented by a demonstration project to assess the feasibility of establishing a shell recycling program. Oyster shells are key building blocks for natural beds but are in short supply. The project would support development of a shell management strategy that could be used at restaurants and other food-service businesses to reclaim shell and return it to the beds.

Together the restoration and shell recycling projects will strengthen the commercial shellfish industry to be more resilient in the future.

“Thanks to the established and new partnerships, I am glad we once again were able to find funding to engage aquaculture industry members for short- and long-term economic and environmental benefits,” said Sylvain De Guise, director of CT Sea Grant.

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MONROE FARMERS MARKET RANKS THIRD IN 13TH ANNUAL AMERICA’S FARMERS MARKET CELEBRATION

American Farmland Trust and the Farmers Market Coalition announced the winners of the 13th annual America’s Farmers Market Celebration, a national event that ran between June 21 – September 19, 2021. Markets receiving the
More than 2,000 markets across the nation participated in the celebration in 2021 with over 1 million supporters engaged through voting, visiting the celebration website, and engaging with the celebration on social media.

**People’s Choice Winners**

The “People’s Choice” category awards $2,500 for first, $1,500 for second and $1,000 for third. These funds are awarded to markets for marketing, communications and other needs that help expand the market’s reach and impact.

**FIRST:** Columbia Farmers Market, Columbia, MO – Awarded $2,500

**SECOND:** Oxford Community Market, Oxford, MS — Awarded $1,500

**THIRD:** Monroe Farmers Market, Monroe, CT — Awarded $1,000

“Monroe, CT is a small town with a huge heart and this competition affirmed to our community just how much they love their Farmers’ Market! Our 13th season has proven that the market is a town treasure as our residents were fully engaged in the voting process and eagerly anticipated the final results. We are so grateful that our customers appreciate our mission of remaining a traditional farmers’ market with focus on promoting agriculture in various forms and remaining a CT Grown Market. Throughout the season we pay tribute to our eight farmers, bakers and specialty vendors by hosting fun events for all ages that promote a sense of community and showcase our towns many talents. It’s not every market that can pull off a Gender Reveal party, Grandparents Day, a flash mob, and a highly anticipated Tater Fest all in one season, but our customers expect nothing less every Friday!”

*Kelly Plunkett, Market Manager Monroe Farmers’ Market*

The Monroe Farmers Market received more than 4,400 votes to also capture first in Connecticut and the Northeast.

Connecticut Department of Agriculture congratulates them on their successes and know they will put their award to good use!

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**COVID-19 PRODUCER RESOURCES**

Agriculture businesses, non-profits, and other organizations should follow the sector rules that apply to them. Private business owners can implement or continue to require social distancing and other measures as deemed necessary.

The Department of Agriculture has archived information from various sources related to COVID-19, which can be found here: https://portal.ct.gov/DOAG/Commissioner/Commissioner/COVID-19-Resources-for-Farmers.

REGISTER FOR ON-FARM MOBILE VACCINATION SITE

Farms interested in hosting a mobile vaccination clinic for farm employees are encouraged to fill out the DPH vans intake form.

CONNECTICUT AGRICULTURE IN THE NEWS

Big E’s Connecticut building is full of state treasures, Danbury News Times, 9/17
Bysiewicz visits Bristol Farmers Market to stress its benefits, importance, Bristol Press, 9/20
Get lost in a corn maze this fall, Norwich Bulletin, 9/22

FARM CREDIT AWARDS EFFORTS TO DEVELOP AND PROMOTE NORTHEAST AGRICULTURE

The Farm Credit Northeast AgEnhancement Program, a joint effort of Farm Credit East, Yankee Farm Credit and CoBank, recently provided $71,500 in grant funding to 15 organizations to assist their efforts to support young and beginning farmer initiatives, encourage youth leadership development, promote diversity and inclusion, and advance northeast agriculture, forestry and commercial fishing.
All-American Junior Sheep Show; The North American Intercollegiate Dairy Challenge (Northeast Region); The Ecology School's ARC Program and the Holstein Foundation, Inc. Young Dairy Leaders Institute.

Other programs focused on consumer education and increasing diversity and inclusion in agriculture include: the KNOX Inc. Urban Farming Program, The Green Village Initiative Intermediate Urban Farming Master Class, Eastern Rhode Island Conservation District’s AgInnovation community garden; the Providence Farm Collective Corp and the Greater Bridgeport Opportunities Industrialization Center.

A number of programs aim to improve food security, including the Vermont Foodbank and the New York Restoration Project. The Foodshed Alliance also aims to make preserved farmland accessible to farmers through affordable leases.

Additionally, The Vermont Forest Business School will use funds for an intensive short course for those beginning forest-based businesses and the Trust to Conserve Northeast Forestlands will use grant funding to increase the number of Certified Master Logger companies in the Northeast.

The Farm Credit Northeast AgEnhancement Program was created in 1996 to support projects that promote and enhance the region's agricultural community. Since inception, the program has provided more than $2.8 million in grant funding to 998 projects. Submissions for the next round of grant funding are due by December 1. Visit FarmCreditEast.com/AgEnhancement to learn more.
FARMER WELLNESS MICROGRANT APPLICATIONS BEING ACCEPTED FOR QUEER FARMERS

The application period for the Northeast Queer Farmer Wellness Microgrant program is now open until October 27. Apply here. The Northeast Queer Farmer Wellness Microgrant program is funded through the Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network in the Northeast. This project is administered by queer agricultural service providers and queer farmers across the Northeast to support queer farmers holistically in their needs. We believe queer and trans farmers know best what they need! We define stress and mental health broadly including the impacts of structural barriers and oppression of white supremacy and heterosexism. Please use this money however may support you right now including - but not limited to - therapy, childcare, a massage, compensating you for unpaid organizing work you already do, attending community events, etc.

The following people are eligible:

- You self-identify as LGBTQ+
- You are a farmer, farmworker and or/ land steward
- You are based in Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts,
The following people will be prioritized:

- Black people, Indigenous people, and People of Color
- Farm workers and other land stewards that are not usually defined as "farmers" by dominant funding structures, which includes but is not limited to: farm workers/ laborers, part-time farmers, and beginning farmers.

Expression of interest is due October 27. Funding will be awarded in $100, $250, and $500 increments with money being distributed in November. If you would rather apply over the phone, please call Bo Dennis at 617-529-4904. Please direct any questions about this program to bdennis@mofga.org

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**USDA INVESTS $700 MILLION TO SMALL PRODUCERS, PROCESSORS, DISTRIBUTORS, FARMERS MARKETS, AND SEAFOOD PROCESSING VESSELS AND PROCESSORS IMPACTED BY COVID-19**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced it will soon publish Requests for Applications (RFAs) for new grant programs - the Pandemic Response and Safety (PRS) Grant program and the Seafood Processors Pandemic Response and Safety Block Grant program - to support agricultural stakeholders who haven't yet received substantial federal financial assistance in responding to the COVID-19 crisis. These grant programs will provide assistance to small businesses in certain commodity areas, including small scale specialty crop producers and processors, shellfish, aquaculture and other select producers, meat and other processors, distributors, farmers markets, seafood facilities and processing vessels. Today USDA released grant forecasts for these new programs to help potential applicants determine their eligibility and to prepare to apply for funding. Approximately $650 million in funding is available for the PRS grants and $50 million is available for SPRS. All of these new programs are funded by the Pandemic Assistance provided in the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021.

View the full announcement [here](#).
CONSIDERATIONS FOR STARTING A NEW MEAT PLANT

Through the Local Food Systems Response to COVID project, AMS partnered with the Niche Meat Processor Assistance Network (NMPAN) to develop a new resource outlining considerations for starting a new meat plant. A resilient food system requires a diverse group of meat processors when it comes to scale, services provided, and location. The pandemic has stretched small and mid-sized slaughterhouses and meat processors thin. Demand has outpaced supply in many places. The bottlenecks in parts of this system have encouraged many entrepreneurs and livestock producers to consider opening new meat processing facilities.

NMPAN’s website has a variety resources about what it takes to plan, design, and construct a meat processing facility, as well as how to run it efficiently and profitably. Those resources are summarized in this new brief along with advice from new meat plant operators.

So You Want to Start a Meat Plant? A short primer on what you need to know.

VIRTUAL MEAT & POULTRY HACCP COURSE - OCTOBER 2021

A virtual, three-day International HACCP Alliance approved Meat and Poultry HACCP course will provide participants with the information they need to prepare a HACCP food safety program and also plan for a plant under USDA/FSIS Grant of Inspection. Sessions will be held on October 13 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., October 14 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and October 15 from 8:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

If you work in a slaughter-only facility, email indu.upadhyaya@uconn.edu before registering.

During this course, participants will be provided resources and guidelines to successfully prepare a HACCP plan. Instructors will not prepare HACCP plans for your specific operation. This course meets requirements for the training of personnel responsible for HACCP plan development and implementation, including plan validation and verification activities.
Register here: https://secure.touchnet.com/C21646_Ustores/web/product_detail.jsp?PRODUCTID=2557

Instructors

- Indu Upadhyaya, Ph.D., Food Safety Specialist, UConn Cooperative Extension
- Diane Hirsch, MPH, Food Safety Specialist, UConn
- Lori Pivarnik, Ph.D., Food Safety Specialist, University of Rhode Island
- Jason Bolton, Ph.D., Food Safety Specialist, UMaine Cooperative Extension
- Robson Machado, Ph.D., Food Safety Specialist, UMaine Cooperative Extension

IMPORTANT NOTICE:
You MUST be present for the entirety of the course if you wish to receive the HACCP certificate. Please make sure you have a computer/laptop (no phones or tablets allowed) with built-in video or external webcam and microphone with sufficient internet connectivity for the entire duration of the course. There will be 10-minute breaks and Lunch break each day of the course. The agenda is tentative and subject to change.

- No more than 3 people from the same company should register for the course.
- Please become familiar with Google Docs, if you are not already.
- If you are joining in the same physical room as someone else, you must utilize headphones to minimize background noise and feedback.

Registration Types and Their Associated Fees:
Course registration fee (includes all course materials): $425
You must pre-register. Space is limited. Registration materials must be received by September 27, 2021, 11:59 p.m.

NRCS ANNOUNCES SIGN-UP FOR FY2022 CONSERVATION PROGRAM FUNDS

With the FY2021 growing season quickly fading into the distance, it’s not too early to look forward to the next. Thomas L. Morgart, State Conservationist for the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service in Connecticut has announced funding for two of his agency’s conservation programs for FY2022 – the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and the Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA) Program. Not sure if these programs are for you? Let’s see … are you an agricultural producer looking for ways to conserve water, or address water, air, or animal waste issues? Are you looking to reduce
may be eligible for technical and/or financial assistance.

EQIP is a voluntary program for those engaged in livestock, forestry, or agricultural production – including organics. EQIP offers financial and technical assistance to implement conservation practices on eligible agricultural land. It also provides payments for implementing practices that have a positive environmental impact, while protecting long-term production and sustainability. Eligible crop production includes, but is not limited to, field-grown ornamentals, fruits, orchards, plant materials in greenhouses, row crops, vegetables, and vineyards.

AMA provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers to voluntarily address issues such as water management, water quality, and erosion control by incorporating conservation into farming operations.

Although NRCS accepts applications year-round, to be eligible for current year funding, be sure to submit yours to your local NRCS office by October 15, 2021.

Not sure how to begin? Visit the Getting Started section of the NRCS website, where you can establish records and fill out eligibility forms. NRCS staff will need to complete an assessment of resource conditions and practice feasibility prior to making a determination of program eligibility.


USDA ANNOUNCES INTENT TO ESTABLISH AN EQUITY COMMISSION, SOLICITS NOMINATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced it will establish an Equity Commission and is requesting nominations for membership on the Equity Commission Advisory Committee and Equity Commission Subcommittee on Agriculture. The Notice represents an important step towards implementing President Biden’s commitment to create an Equity Commission and the American Rescue Plan Act provision that directs USDA to "address historical discrimination and disparities in the agriculture sector… [through] one or more equity commissions to address racial equity issues within USDA and its programs."

The Equity Commission will advise the Secretary of Agriculture by identifying USDA programs, policies, systems, structures, and practices that contribute to barriers to inclusion or access, systemic discrimination, or exacerbate or
Commission and provide recommendations on issues of concern related to agriculture. Subsequent subcommittees will focus on other policy areas, such as rural community and economic development. The Equity Commission will deliver an interim report and provide actionable recommendations no later than 12 months after inception. A final report will be generated within a two-year timeframe.

Nomination for the Equity Commission and the Subcommittee on Agriculture membership is open to the public and any interested person or organization may nominate qualified individuals for membership. The Equity Commission and the Subcommittee on Agriculture will each be comprised of 15 members. The Deputy and the Secretary will designate a Co-Chair to serve along with the Deputy Secretary as co-chairs of the Equity Commission.

Read the full announcement here.

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**PANDEMIC RESPONSE AND SAFETY GRANT PROGRAM**

The Pandemic Response and Safety (PRS) Grant Program provides funding to help small specialty crop producers, food processors, manufacturers, distributors and farmers markets recover costs incurred by responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, including for measures to protect workers. This program is authorized and funded under the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 (Pub. L. No. 116—260). The minimum funding request amount is $1,500. The maximum funding request amount is $20,000. No cost sharing or matching funds are required. Grants will cover activities associated with:

- Workplace Safety: Implementing workplace safety measures to protect against COVID-19
- Market Pivots: Implementing market pivots to protect against COVID–19
- Retrofitting Facilities: Retrofitting facilities for worker and consumer safety to protect against COVID–19
- Transportation: Providing additional transportation options to maintain social distancing and worker and consumer safety to protect against COVID-19
- Worker Housing: Providing worker housing that protects against COVID-19
- Medical: Providing health services to protect workers against COVID-19

**Important Dates:**

- Check your eligibility and request a DUNS number now.
- Application Period Opens: September 23, 2021
- Application Period Closes: 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on November 8, 2021
2021 ORGANIC CERTIFICATION COST SHARE GRANT PROGRAM

The Connecticut Department of Agriculture is applying for the National Organic Certification Cost Share Program (NOCCSP) Grant from the USDA Farm Service Agency.

Through this grant, Connecticut certified organic growers and processors can be reimbursed for 50%, up to $500, for the cost of receiving and maintaining USDA organic certification. A list of certified organic growers and processors is available through USDA's Organic INTEGRITY Database at https://organic.ams.usda.gov/integrity.

The program is administered on a first-come, first-served basis until funds are exhausted. The amount reimbursed will be 50%, up to $500, of the certification cost paid between October 1, 2020 and September 30, 2021.

To apply, please visit the CT DoAg website for required materials. Completed applications are to be submitted electronically by October 15, 2021. Any questions, please contact Jaime.Smith@ct.gov.
USDA TO INVEST $50 MILLION IN NEW COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS FOR RACIAL JUSTICE AND EQUITY

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is investing up to $50 million in cooperative agreements to support historically underserved farmers and ranchers with climate-smart agriculture and forestry. The Racial Justice and Equity Conservation Cooperative Agreements are available to entities for two-year projects that expand the delivery of conservation assistance to farmers who are beginning, limited resource, socially disadvantaged, and veteran farmers.

Applications must be received by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Standard Time on October 25, 2021. See the grants.gov announcement for details and application instructions.

WOMEN'S BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR EQUITY MATCH GRANTS

The Women’s Business Development Council (WBDC) is now accepting Equity Match Grant applications through September 28, 2021. The program offers grants of up to $10,000 to women-owned businesses in the state of Connecticut who have been in business for two or more years. Final grant decisions will be announced in mid-November. For additional information, visit www.ConnecticutGrownStore.com
WBDC’s business advisors are available to support individuals in 1-on-1 advising sessions to discuss their business, on topics including start ups, marketing, business finance, strategy and more. Check out their advisors and make an appointment today.

WBDC also has some exciting programs starting soon. Here are a sampling (sign up on their website):

- GPS: A Guide to Plan for Success (9-Part Series), starting Tuesday, Oct. 5, 2021, 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
- Marketing Made Simple: Turning Your Social Media Followers into Paying Customers, Friday, Oct. 8, 2021, 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

EXPANDED ELIGIBILITY AND EXTENDED DEADLINE FOR GOAT AND SHEEP DAIRY SUPPLY CHAIN GRANT

The NE-DBIC is currently accepting applications from sheep and goat dairy farmers, processors, and industry associations for the Goat & Sheep Dairy Supply Chain Grant. The application is now open to applicants from across the Northeast region: Delaware, New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania in addition to New England states. Grant range: $15,000–$50,000 with a 25% match commitment. This funding is for projects that accomplish at least one of the following objectives related to goat and/or sheep dairy products:

- Increase consumer awareness
- Develop market channels and distribution opportunities
- Support innovative strategies to increase consumption
- Increase business revenues
Projects must benefit the applicant and additional enterprises within their supply chain. Think: partnerships to reach new markets, business diversification, research and development, operational improvements, or your other creative ideas!

Extended deadline to apply: September 30. Learn more here.

ADD YOUR BUSINESS TO CT GROWN MAP

The Department of Agriculture, in coordination with CT NOFA, offers a variety of online listings on the CT Grown Map page. All agricultural businesses, farm stands, and farmers' markets are welcome to apply. There is no fee to participate and applications are accepted year round. To apply to be listed, visit the CT Grown Map Google Form.

Ag Market Pricing

Middlesex Livestock Auction - CT
Prices provided on September 20, 2021

New Holland Dairy Auction - New Holland, PA

NEW! CT Farmers' Market Prices

New Holland, PA Hay Report

Northeast Regional Eggs

USDA Mexico Canada Weekly Update

New England Shell Eggs

Wholesale Fruits & Vegetables - Boston

Pennsylvania Weekly Cattle Auction Summary

Wholesale Ornamental Flowers - Boston

Pennsylvania Livestock Auction - Eighty Four, PA

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

47-R. Kuhn GMC 600 II HD, 3 point hitch disc mower, 7'10" working width, ready to mow. $5,500. Durham, 860-638-9689.

50-R. The SIG Insurance Agencies offer a wide range of carriers, can save you up to 23% on your farm insurance and provide better protection. References available from satisfied farmers. Call us for all your insurance needs with locations in CT, RI, NY and NH. Contact our AG department at 866-346-3744, option 4.

54-R. Transplanters, vacuum seeders, fertilizer applicators, garlic and potato planters and harvesters. High quality Italian-made precision equipment for the vegetable, tobacco, hemp, fruit, and floral markets. Call or email us today for details. Griffin Farm Equipment, LLC. 860-508-2426, Griffinfarm@aol.com; www.griffinfarmtools.com

55-R. 250 Bales clean golden yellow rye straw, cut 6/1, large bales. 203-506-6318.


57-R. Christmas greens, wreaths, roping, many sizes and varieties. Excellent for fundraisers. We deliver. 203-457-1344.

Wanted

42-R. EZTRAIL kicker bale wagons, any condition. Cash paid. Call or text George, 860-918-5442.

58. Looking to purchase standing timber on parcels of land 10 acres or more in Hartford County and Litchfield County. Seeking mostly Hemlock and mixed hardwoods to be harvested and sawn at Hinman Lumber located in Burlington, CT> Please contact: Charles Leigus, Forester, Supreme Forest Products, 860-301-0673.

Job Opportunities

The Northwest Conservation District (NWCD) is seeking a qualified person to conduct outreach to the farming community in cooperation with USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), our partner agency. Responsibilities will include working in conjunction with NRCS staff to provide outreach to ag producers for conservation planning and support. The candidate will also be expected to work closely with watershed organization managers in northwest
This position is full-time (40 hours a week) and is partially funded through a grant from the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD). Please note the position is for a 12-month period with the anticipation, but no guarantee, that the grant will be renewed for a second or third term. Please send cover letter and resume to Cynthia Rabinowitz, Executive Director, Northwest Conservation District, 1185 New Litchfield Street, Torrington, CT 06790 or via email to cynthia@nwcd.org. Applications are due by October 1, 2021.

Interested in Advertising? Click here for details on rates and submission.

Upcoming Events
(click the image to be redirected to the event website)