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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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UConn 4-H Litchfield County distributed milk to families in need on Wednesday, April 22nd through a partnership with area organizations and dairy processors. (photos by Jill Davenport, Litchfield Hills Photography, LLC)

[Agriculture Relief Funds](#)

USDA Announces Coronavirus Food Assistance Program

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue announced on April 17th the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP). This new U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) program will take several actions to assist farmers, ranchers, and consumers in response to the COVID-19 national emergency. President Trump directed USDA to craft this \$19 billion immediate relief program to provide critical support to our farmers and ranchers, maintain the integrity of our food supply chain, and ensure every American continues to receive and have access to the food they need.

“During this time of national crisis, President Trump and USDA are standing with our farmers, ranchers, and all citizens to make sure they are taken care of,” Secretary Perdue said. “The American food supply chain had to adapt, and it remains safe, secure, and strong, and we all know that starts with America’s farmers and ranchers. This program will not only provide immediate relief for

CFAP will use the funding and authorities provided in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES), the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA), and other USDA existing authorities. The program includes two major elements to achieve these goals.

1. **Direct Support to Farmers and Ranchers:** The program will provide \$16 billion in direct support based on actual losses for agricultural producers where prices and market supply chains have been impacted and will assist producers with additional adjustment and marketing costs resulting from lost demand and short-term oversupply for the 2020 marketing year caused by COVID-19.
2. **USDA Purchase and Distribution:** USDA will partner with regional and local distributors, whose workforce has been significantly impacted by the closure of many restaurants, hotels, and other food service entities, to purchase \$3 billion in fresh produce, dairy, and meat. We will begin with the procurement of an estimated \$100 million per month in fresh fruits and vegetables, \$100 million per month in a variety of dairy products, and \$100 million per month in meat products. The distributors and wholesalers will then provide a pre-approved box of fresh produce, dairy, and meat products to food banks, community and faith based organizations, and other non-profits serving Americans in need.

On top of these targeted programs USDA will utilize other available funding sources to purchase and distribute food to those in need.

- USDA has up to an additional \$873.3 million available in Section 32 funding to purchase a variety of agricultural products for distribution to food banks. The use of these funds will be determined by industry requests, USDA agricultural market analysis, and food bank needs.
- The FFCRA and CARES Act provided an at least \$850 million for food bank administrative costs and USDA food purchases, of which a minimum of \$600 million will be designated for food purchases. The use of these funds will be determined by food bank need and product availability.

Further details regarding eligibility, rates, and other implementation will be released at a later date.

New SBA Aid Package Includes Loan Fix for Farmers

The Senate passed a \$484 billion coronavirus package on Tuesday, April 21 that includes a provision directing the Small Business Administration to allow agricultural businesses to participate in the Small Business Administration's Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) program.

The Senate approved the measure by unanimous consent. House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, D-Md., has advised House members that the House may vote on the measure Thursday.

The \$484 billion measure includes \$310 billion for the Small Business Administration's Paycheck Protection Program, including \$60 billion for small

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which the Democrats had said was a priority.

The bill includes an additional \$60 billion for the Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) program as well as the provision allowing agriculture businesses to participate.

Rep. Courtney, Connecticut Congressional Delegation Press for Access to SBA Paycheck Protection Program by Connecticut Self-Employed Agricultural Workers

The Connecticut Congressional Delegation [sent a letter](#) to the Small Business Administration (SBA) requesting additional clarification to ensure that self-employed agricultural workers are eligible for the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP). The Delegation received feedback from Connecticut Agricultural Commissioner Bryan Hurlburt and the Connecticut Farm Bureau that the lack of clear guidance related to self-employed agricultural workers has created inconsistencies with eligibility determinations for the PPP from different lending institutions.

“While we applaud the speed at which the Paycheck Protection Program was rolled out, we hope that you may address the concerns of our agricultural business constituents before additional funding is authorized for disbursement by Congress,” the members wrote. “To ensure consistency among regional SBA offices and to address the needs of small businesses with unique tax filing situations, we urge you to issue guidance clarifying that both Schedule C and Schedule F taxpayers are eligible for the Paycheck Protection Program. Self-employed agricultural producers remain a critical facet in local food supply chains and we must ensure they remain solvent by clarifying their eligibility for certain SBA programs.

Under interim guidance issued by the SBA, there is only clarified processes for applying for PPP for individuals who file their self-employment income using a Form 1040, Schedule C. Many self-employed farmers and agricultural workers file using the Form 1040, Schedule F—a tax filing form unique for reporting taxable income from farming or agricultural activities. While farmers are indeed eligible for the PPP, many lending institutions have not interacted with farmers in regards to SBA programs before. Guidance for lending institutions specific to Form 1040, Schedule F filers will help ease the ability of farmers to access this critical program.

Confirmation of COVID-19 in Two Pet Cats in New York

The United States Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL) announced yesterday, on April 22, 2020, the first confirmed cases of SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19) infection in two pet cats. These are the first pets in the United States to test positive for SARS-CoV-2. The cats live in two separate areas of New York state. Both had mild respiratory signs and are expected to make a full recovery. SARS-CoV-2 infections have been reported in very few animals worldwide, mostly in those that had close contact with a person with COVID-19.

post the findings [here](#).

Until we know more, CDC recommends the following:

- Do not let pets interact with people or other animals outside the household.
- Keep cats indoors when possible to prevent them from interacting with other animals or people.
- Walk dogs on a leash, maintaining at least 6 feet from other people and animals.
- Avoid dog parks or public places where a large number of people and dogs gather.

If you are sick with COVID-19 (either suspected or confirmed by a test), restrict contact with your pets and other animals, just like you would around other people.

- When possible, have another member of your household care for your pets while you are sick.
- Avoid contact with your pet, including petting, snuggling, being kissed or licked, and sharing food or bedding.
- If you must care for your pet or be around animals while you are sick, wear a cloth face covering and wash your hands before and after you interact with them.

For more information, please see the CDC link: [CDC announcement regarding Covid-19 in 2 pet cats](#)

[COVID-19 Resources for Agricultural Producers](#)



Download the [#CTGrown Social Media Toolkit](#)

Sample post: Connecticut's farming families are showing their innovation and commitment to feeding local communities by offering online ordering, shipping, delivery, and curbside pickup options to get their #CTGrown products to your home. Find a CSA or delivery service near you at www.CTGrownMap.com
#StayHomeBuyCTGrown #StayHomePlantCTGrown

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.

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](#).

NEW [Poultry Biosecurity Guidance](#)

NEW [Food Safety Guidance](#)

NEW [Backyard Flocks Guidance](#)

UPDATED [Farmers' Market Guidance](#)

[Business services](#) – including tax filing extensions, business assistance and small business disaster relief loans

[Essential Food and Agriculture Employee Work Permit](#)

[Safe Store Guidance from DECD](#)



PICK-YOUR-OWN & FARMSTAND GROWER WEBINAR

UConn Extension is hosting a live discussion for pick-your-own growers and farmstand operators to share their thoughts and ideas on how COVID-19 will impact operations and discuss solutions to ensure a safe and efficient harvest and marketing year.

Date: **Thursday, April 23, 2020**

Time: **7:00 pm**

Video webinar: <https://uconn-cmr.webex.com/uconn-cmr/j.php?MTID=mc63fdc04a5bac793c9f1c1890758b463>

Audio connection:

+1-415-655-0002 US Toll

Global call-in numbers

Access code: 615 715 846

UConn AND NRCS ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR PROJECT TO REDUCE PATHOGENS

The University of Connecticut's College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources (CAHNR), and the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Connecticut have announced that applications are being accepted for funding under the Path to Reduce Pathogens in Connecticut Agricultural Runoff RCPP-EQIP project. Technical assistance is also available to help producers develop conservation plans, calculate costs and benefits of each conservation practice, and implement new practices at their facility.

The Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) promotes coordination between NRCS and its partners to deliver conservation assistance to producers and landowners. NRCS provides assistance to producers through partnership agreements, as well as through program contracts or easement agreements. Assistance is delivered in accordance with the rules of NRCS programs such as the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).

Applicants must be EQIP-eligible and prepared to implement practices to address degradation of soil or water resources from agricultural operations. Potential conservation practices to reduce pathogens could include

The Paths to Reduce Pathogens in Connecticut Agricultural Runoff project will help reduce pathogens into Connecticut's waterways to protect the economic, recreational, and aquatic life support functions. By reducing pathogens from agricultural runoff, beach closures can be reduced, and shell fishing habitat improved. Agricultural producers submitting applications must be located in the Thames River Watershed, or one of the state's southeast coastal watersheds that drain directly into the Long Island Sound.

To be considered for FY2020 funding, applications must be submitted by May 15, 2020.

Interested? Contact one of the project partners to learn more:

University of Connecticut: Dr. Michael Dietz (860) 486-2436

Eastern CT Conservation District, Inc.: Maura Robie (860) 319-8807

Natural Resources Conservation Service: William Purcell, Danielson, (860) 412-5258 or Garrett Timmons, Norwich, (860) 319-8803

FARM VIABILITY GRANT APPLICATIONS DUE MAY 21

The Connecticut Department of Agriculture is excited to announce a second round of funding available through the Farm Viability Grant. Grant guidelines and applications for this spring cycle of funding can be found [online](#). Applications are due no later than 4:00 p.m. on May 21.

The Farm Viability Grant provides matching funds to Connecticut municipalities, groups of municipalities, regional councils of governments, and/or agricultural non-profit organizations for projects that foster agricultural viability. Examples of projects include establishing new marketing outlets for farmers, enhancing the awareness of CT Grown, increasing access to farmland and farmland preservation, and improving food security in urban and rural areas.

The maximum award is \$49,999. Applicants must provide a 40% match through cash or in-kind services.

New for this spring cycle of funding, applicants can request up to 25% of the grant award cover the cost of salary and fringe for staff who are directly related to the execution of the project.

USDA FOOD BOX DISTRIBUTION PROGRAM

As part of the Coronavirus Farm Assistance Program Secretary Perdue [announced on April 17](#) that the USDA is exercising authority under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act to purchase and distribute up to \$3 billion of agricultural products to those in need. USDA will partner with regional and local distributors, whose workforce has been significantly impacted by the closure of many restaurants, hotels, and other food service entities, to purchase fresh produce, dairy, and meat.

USDA will issue a solicitation to invite proposals from offerors to supply commodity boxes to non-profit organizations, identified by the offeror, on a mutually agreeable, recurring schedule. USDA will award contracts for the purchase of the agricultural products, the assembly of commodity boxes and delivery to identified non-profit organizations that can receive, store and

an estimated \$100 million per month in fresh fruits and vegetables, \$100 million per month in a variety of dairy products, and \$100 million per month in meat products. The distributors and wholesalers will then provide a pre-approved box of fresh produce, dairy, and meat products to food banks, community and faith-based organizations, and other non-profits serving Americans in need. For details on purchases, visit the [solicitations page](#).

FREE ONLINE FOOD SAFETY COURSES

Now through April 30, get the essential training every restaurant and foodservice worker needs to keep guests and themselves safe for FREE! This offer includes both the online training and assessment. Details [here](#).

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 - Waynesburg, 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

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

4-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

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

May. Asking \$1,400 each. Call 800-212-3400

14-R. Honeybees: 5-frame NUCS, DEEPS only available first week of May.
Jones' Apiaries LLC 860-677-9391

15-R. Need Honey Bee Pollination? Call Heritage Apiaries, Canton, CT. 860-805-7191

Wanted

9-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.

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

The State of Connecticut, Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Agriculture Development and Resource Conservation is recruiting for multiple Agriculture Marketing & Inspection Representative 1 (AMIR1) positions. The incumbent will be accountable for independently performing a full range of tasks for the development of agricultural businesses and production. Application Deadline: April 30, 2020. [Apply here.](#)

Interested in Advertising? Click [here](#) for details on rates and submission.



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