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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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Connecticut Grown strawberries are now available at farm stands and pick-your-own operations throughout the state. Find a producer near you at www.CTGrown.gov/strawberry.

Beloved Watertown Farm is Protected Forever

The Connecticut Department of Agriculture (CT DoAg) in coordination with Connecticut Farmland Trust (CFT) is pleased to announce the preservation of Gustafson Farm in Watertown. The farm has been a popular destination for area families since 1907. The preservation of Gustafson Farm was a complex feat of partnership and teamwork involving USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Housatonic Valley Association, CT DoAg and CFT, in the farm's preservation.

For many families, the idea of conserving their land is like a seed – it takes many years to mature. For the Gustafson family, the seed was planted over a decade ago by the past generation of Gustafsons, who knew their 301-acre orchard and beef farm was something special that they wanted to preserve. That seed has finally come to fruition with the work of their descendants: cousins Katie Barnosky, Frank Gustafson, III, and Kristie Weidemier.

land. “We think that the neighbors and the town [of Watertown] will be happy to see the farm stay. We hope to provide for the town and make our family proud of us.”

The farm, centered between Judds Pond and Black Rock State Park, is well known to locals for its iconic rolling hills on either side of Linkfield Road and its popular farm store. The land boasts not only an orchard but well-maintained hayfields and acres for beef cattle grazing. The Gustafson family hopes to restore the orchard and produce fruits and vegetables to feed the Watertown community well into the future.

Katie’s father, Alan Gustafson, started meeting with the Housatonic Valley Association (HVA) to discuss conservation options in the early 2000s. After he passed away in 2008, there was a long pause as the family decided what they wanted to do. With HVA’s guidance, the cousins eventually applied to the Connecticut Department of Agriculture’s Farmland Preservation Program. CFT and the State jointly applied for funding from USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service in 2017. After three years of active work by CFT to purchase the development rights on the entire property, the land will now remain a farm – forever.

“HVA is so proud of the Gustafson family and of our conservation partners at the Department of Agriculture and Connecticut Farmland Trust who, with patience and persistence, were able to conserve this special property,” said Tim Abbott, Regional Land Conservation Director for the Housatonic Valley Association. “Places like this have many reasons for protection – farmland soils and public drinking water and connected forest habitat among them -- but saving family land and sustaining families is one of the hardest things to achieve in land conservation and this a wonderful and gratifying outcome.”

The farm, which is large for a farm in suburban Connecticut, was preserved in three pieces to provide the family with more flexibility when it eventually becomes time to transfer or sell the property to the next generation of farmers. In total, 301 acres are now protected.

“The permanent protection of Gustafson Farm in Watertown demonstrates the importance of a collaborative effort among state and federal agencies, as well as non-profit partners,” said Connecticut Agriculture Commissioner Bryan P. Hurlburt. “This particular project encompasses 300 acres of rolling orchards, hay fields, and pasture critical to the future of agriculture in Connecticut.”

“It is critical to protect our state’s valuable working lands,” said Thomas L. Morgart, Connecticut State Conservationist for the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. “Through our Agricultural Conservation Easement Program, we are able to help landowners protect their land and keep it in agricultural use forever. More than 50 percent of the soils on this farm are designated prime farmland. Permanently protecting this farm 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.

“This is a tale of a family’s dedication to the land that has been in their care for generations. Twenty-one years ago, when I first came to Connecticut to do land conservation work, I saw this stunning land and knew that it would be essential to keep it as a working farm. The extended Gustafson family realized that, too,

was a partner in the farm's protection because the land is truly special." Gustafson Farm is the fifth farm to be protected in 2020 and the tenth easement in the current fiscal year covering over 1,100 acres. The Connecticut Department of Agriculture's Farmland Preservation Program was established in 1978 to protect the best farmland soils in the state in order to maintain and preserve agricultural land for the future.

COVID-19 Resources for Agricultural Producers

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](#).

Farm Stand, Farm Store, CSA Guidance available [here](#).

Pick-Your-Own Guidance available [here](#).

Farmers' Market Guidance available [here](#).

Food Safety Guidance available [here](#).

CDC Guidance on Agricultural Employers and Workers available [here](#).

Potential Resources for Seasonal Farmworker Housing available [here](#).

FREE Mask Distribution

The Connecticut State Grange and Connecticut Farm Bureau Association have joined forces to obtain and distribute free face coverings to agricultural producers in the state. They have purchased 80 boxes containing 50 masks per box. These will be made available to any farm operation, large or small.

Connecticut State Grange Agricultural Direct J. Allen Cameron says, "The Connecticut State Grange has a rich history of supporting Connecticut agriculture. We thank you and encourage you to be steadfast in your endeavors ensuring a continual flow of meats, milk, vegetables, fruits, seafood and plants make their way to markets throughout Connecticut."

Contact agriculture@ctstategrange.org with your mailing address and phone number to receive 50 masks.

AGRICULTURAL FAIR UPDATES

Visit CTAgFairs.org for an up-to-date list of active and cancelled fairs for 2020.



Smoothie Slurp Challenge

Smoothies are a great way to enjoy local, summer products. From berries and greens to dairy Put Local on Your Tray wants everyone to enjoy #CTGrown products. Celebrate #JuneDairyMonth with this tasty spring flavored smoothie recipe!

Try out the recipe and then take a short video clip of you and your family SLURPING your smoothies, and post on social media using the hashtag #SmoothieSlurpChallenge.

WEBINARS FOR USDA's CORONAVIRUS FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

USDA's Farm Service Agency announces that Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP) webinars for all farmers and ranchers. Ag producers can learn more about the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program and how to submit additional commodities for USDA consideration through the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) process.

Webinar Dates & Topics:

- June 16 at 3:00 p.m. EDT - Outreach CFAP Webinar for Non-Specialty Crop & Livestock Producers
- June 18 at 3:00 p.m. EDT- Outreach CFAP Webinar on FSA Programs in the Time of Coronavirus

Please visit the FSA webinar page as pre-registration links will soon be posted. <https://bit.ly/3dD1KK6>

Producers are also reminded of the CFAP Call Center available for producers who would like additional one-on-one support with the CFAP application process. Please call 877-508-8364 to speak directly with a USDA employee ready to offer assistance.

FSA June Deadline Reminders:

- June 22 - Last date to submit additional commodities for consideration into CFAP
- June 30 - ARC/PLC Signup Ends

[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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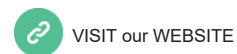
For Sale

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

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