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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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Maple season is underway with sugarhouses busy tapping and gathering sap to make one of nature's sweetest treats - pure Connecticut maple syrup. Find an open sugarhouse at www.ctmaple.org.



Happy Hens Farm increased egg production and delivery by more than 2.5 times with additional coops, egg washer, grazing fence and insulated storage.



Pleasant View Farms quadrupled their grain drying capacity tonnage with the purchase of a high efficiency grain drying system.



Kogut's Hemlock Hill Tree Farm diversified their offerings to include decorative custom wreaths in a new pre-fab building.

Farm Transition Grant Restructured to Better Support Connecticut Agricultural Producers

The Connecticut Department of Agriculture is pleased to announce the Farm Transition Grant (FTG) has been restructured to better serve Connecticut farmers and farmer cooperatives. The creation of five grant categories will address gaps in funding to support farmers in times of growth, change, and emergency need. Applications will be accepted starting April 8 and due no later than 4:00 p.m. on April 15, 2021.

“The changes to our Farm Transition Grant are a direct result of listening to the producers we currently serve and creating attractive funding opportunities for new farmers in Connecticut,” said Agriculture Commissioner Bryan P. Hurlburt. “The revised categories will level the playing field through a proactive approach, which fosters an environment of innovation and support, throughout the lifecycle of a farmer and their business enterprise.”

The Farm Transition Grant is a matching grant program for Connecticut farmers and agricultural cooperatives to support the diversification of existing farm operations, transitioning to value-added agricultural production and sales. Funding is provided through C.G.S. Section 22-26j.

“The Farm Transition Grant was previously a one-size-fits-all approach. After hosting a farmer focus group and giving extensive consideration to industry needs, five new grant categories have been developed,” said Jaime Smith, Bureau Director for Agricultural Development and Resource Conservation. “The agency strives to support farmers from those just beginning, to those well established. We now have grant opportunities which echo that.”

The new grant categories are summarized below.

- **New Farmer Micro Grants:** To support new individuals/partnerships who have one full year to three years of production history and are seeking long-term careers that financially support them through farming and agriculture.
- **Infrastructure Investment Grant:** To support farmers in production for a minimum of three years with infrastructure to expand the farm's production and operation.
- **Research and Development Grant:** For farms to conduct research to assess the viability and development of a new product line, service, or market.
- **Innovation and Diversification Grant:** For the implementation of a new product or service for market or business expansion after a research and development phase has been explored.
- **Crisis and Emergency Response Grant:** To provide aid in response to disasters where federal support, insurance, and loans are unavailable or have been exhausted. *(This grant will not be initially available and will be announced as needed at a later date.)*

Grant guidelines and forms can be found at www.CTGrown.gov/grants for additional detail on match requirements and eligible expenses.

A virtual workshop to assist interested applicants in learning about the new grant categories and application process will occur at 1:00 p.m. on March 17, 2021. The session will be recorded and posted to the agency website if you are unable to attend the live event.

Questions regarding the Farm Transition Grant can be directed to Amanda King at Amanda.King@ct.gov or found online at www.CTGrown.gov/grants.



APPLY TO VEND AT THE CT REGIONAL MARKET FARMERS' MARKET

The Capital Region Development Authority (CRDA) in partnership with the Connecticut Department of Agriculture (DoAg) will be accepting applications for the Farmers' Market at the CT Regional Market starting March 1.

The 2021 farmers' market season runs from April 1, 2021 to December 31, 2021. Stall use agreements are available for periods of three months up to a full season. Applications and information can be found on CRDA's website at <https://www.crdact.net>. For more information or questions, please contact Holly Dupont at hdupont@rmbradley.com.

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](#).

ALERT: Rollback to Phase 2.1 effective November 6, 2020
Find all updated guidance documents [here](#).

NEW: [COVID-19 Vaccination & the Food and Agriculture Sector](#)

NEW: [Maple Sugarhouse Guidance](#)

[Equine Guidance](#)

[Equine Competition Guidance](#)

[Farmers' Markets](#)

[Farm Stores/Stands and CSAs](#)

[Food Safety](#)

[Pick-Your-Own/Cut-Your-Own](#)

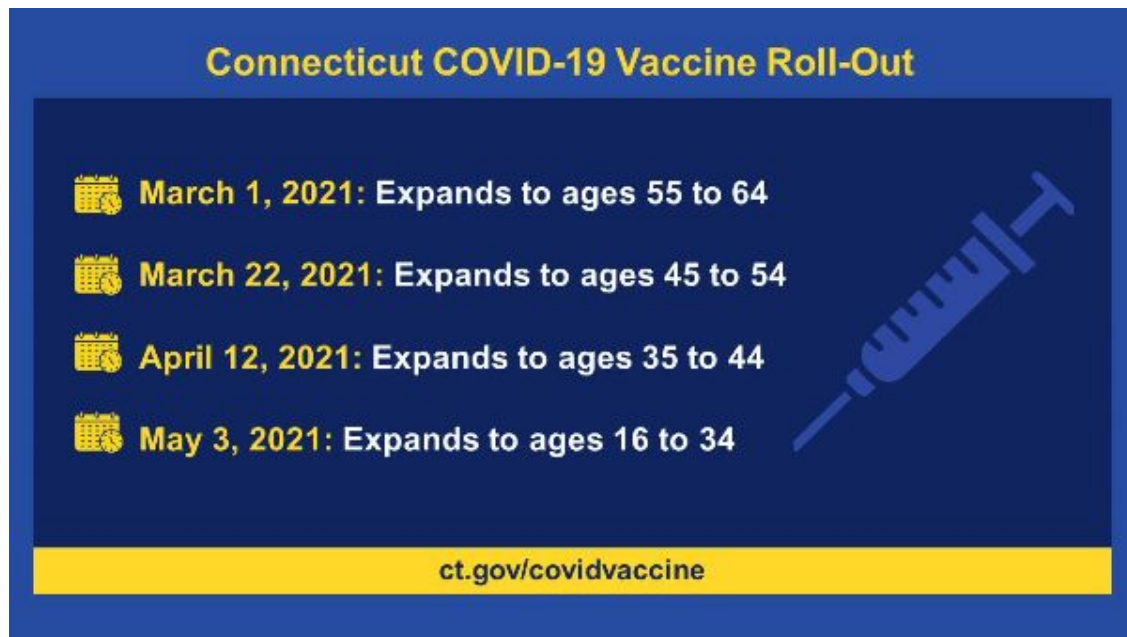
CONNECTICUT AGRICULTURE IN THE NEWS

[Community members hoofin' around Lyman Farms while participating in a goat stroll, 2/21, Hartford Courant](#)





[Eight neglected horses seized from Montville farm rehabilitated at Niantic prison now up for adoption, 2/23, WTNH](#)

[After recovery, neglected horses from Montville going up for adoption, 2/24, FOX 61](#)

[Sugar houses start tapping trees to make maple syrup, 2/24, WFSB](#)



Connecticut COVID-19 Vaccine Roll-Out

-  **March 1, 2021:** Expands to ages 55 to 64
-  **March 22, 2021:** Expands to ages 45 to 54
-  **April 12, 2021:** Expands to ages 35 to 44
-  **May 3, 2021:** Expands to ages 16 to 34

ct.gov/covidvaccine

COVID-19 VACCINE ROLL-OUT

In an effort to ensure that Connecticut continues taking the most equitable and efficient approach to quickly administering the COVID-19 vaccine to as many people as possible, Governor Ned Lamont today announced that the state will continue with an age-based approach to expanding eligibility to the vaccine, explaining that other previously considered scenarios proved overly complex and confusing, would potentially exacerbate inequities in vaccine distribution, and slow down the process of providing it to Connecticut residents.

Age is one of the strongest factors contributing to COVID-19 deaths, with 96

percent of COVID-19 deaths in Connecticut occurring in people over the age of 55.

To provide clarity and predictability, the governor today announced a schedule for age-based eligibility for the next several months. By laying out a clear timeline for eligibility for the vaccine, the strategy allows everyone in the state, including essential workers and those with chronic conditions, to know when they will be able to schedule an appointment. The planned schedule is as follows:

- **March 1, 2021:** Expands to age group 55 to 64
- **March 22, 2021:** Expands to age group 45 to 54
- **April 12, 2021:** Expands to age group 35 to 44
- **May 3, 2021:** Expands to age group 16 to 34

Connecticut has been using a phased approach to its COVID-19 vaccine program because of the very limited supply of the vaccine that it has been receiving from the federal government. The program initially began in December with healthcare providers and medical first responders, and then expanded in January to include all individuals over the age of 75 and certain congregate settings, followed by those over the age of 65 in mid-February. All previously eligible individuals and settings will continue to be eligible after March 1.

All eligible individuals in Connecticut are required to make an appointment in advance of receiving the vaccine. Residents aged 55 to 64 should not attempt to make an appointment now – they will not be able to schedule one until the program expands to their age group on March 1.

To locate vaccination clinics, individuals should visit ct.gov/covidvaccine and enter their zip code. From there, users will be shown the nearest available clinics and provided with specific directions on how to make an appointment at each one, including over the internet and over the telephone.

Those who do not have access to the internet can call Connecticut's Vaccine Appointment Assist Line at 877-918-2224. The line is open seven days a week from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.



MULTI-BUSINESS DAIRY AGRITOURISM GRANT - DEADLINE EXTENDED

The first competitive grant round through the Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center (NE-DBIC) is going live! The Multi-Business Dairy Agritourism Grant will fund projects to dairy farmers, processors and producer associations throughout New England, Delaware, New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania.

Projects that support multiple farmers and processors will be eligible for grant funds of \$10,000 - \$25,000 for the development and marketing of geographically contiguous agritourism activities designed to raise awareness and consumption of regionally produced dairy products.

Applications are due by April 1, 2021 at 4:00 p.m. EST. [Click here](#) for more information.

PPP LOANS AVAILABLE TO SMALL BUSINESSES THROUGH MARCH 10, 2021

In order to reach the smallest businesses, The U.S. Small Business Administration will offer Paycheck Protection Program loans to businesses with fewer than 20 employees and sole proprietors only from Wednesday, February 24 through Wednesday, March 10, 2021. President Biden has also announced additional program changes to make access to PPP loans more equitable.

Find a Lender:

1. [Get matched with a lender](#)
2. [Search for lenders in your area](#)

Identify a loan:

1. First Draw PPP Loans: If you have not received a PPP loan before, First Draw PPP Loans are available to you.
2. Second Draw PPP Loans: If you have previously received a PPP loan, certain businesses are eligible for a Second Draw PPP Loan.

**FMNP FARMER CERTIFICATION MEETINGS**

All fruit, vegetable, and honey producers selling at Certified Connecticut Grown Farmers' Markets must be certified with the Connecticut Department of Agriculture's Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP). To be certified, producers must attend a certification meeting.

The certification allows farms to accept the FMNP checks for fresh fruits, vegetables, and honey from WIC clients and income-eligible seniors over the age of 60. Join us to get your certification, learn more about available grant funding for your farm, and accepting SNAP to expand your sales.

Additional meeting dates have been added. Below is the current list of meeting dates which will all be held virtually via Microsoft Teams.

- Wednesday, March 9, 2021 from 8 a.m. - 10 a.m.
- Wednesday, March 24, 2021 from 3 p.m. - 5 p.m.

Registration is now open at <http://bit.ly/3qK3cjV>.

Questions can be directed to Erin Windham at Erin.Windham@ct.gov or 860-519-6083 or Haley Rowland at Haley.Rowland@ct.gov or 860-895-3095.

SPECIALTY CROP BLOCK GRANT APPLICATIONS NOW OPEN

Connecticut's Specialty Crop Block Grant Program is now accepting applications for the 2021 program year. The goal of the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program is to solely enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops in domestic and foreign markets. An eligible plant must be intensively cultivated and used by people for food, medicinal purposes, and/or aesthetic gratification to be considered a specialty crop. The complete definition of specialty crops can be found on the USDA's [website](#).

Eligible applicants include commodity groups, agricultural organizations, colleges and universities, municipalities, state agencies, and agricultural nonprofits. The USDA wants to see as many entities as possible benefit from these dollars during the three years in which the project can take place. As a result, individual farms or businesses are encouraged to apply and partner with other eligible applicants rather than apply themselves.

This is a reimbursement grant for research with awards up to \$75,000. Completed applications must be sent to AGR.Grants@ct.gov by 4 p.m. on March 19, 2021. For more information on the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program and an example application, please visit the website, www.ctgrown.gov/grants and click on Specialty Crop Block Grant Program, or contact Haley Rowland at 860-895-3095 or haley.rowland@ct.gov.



NEW CT FARMER ALLIANCE HOLDS HOOTENANNY AND ANNUAL MEETING

Looking to connect with other Connecticut farmers and hear about what the New Connecticut Farmer Alliance has been up to? Register now for NCTFA's annual Hootenanny.

This year's Hoot will feature trivia, prizes, the annual report, Cabbage moth radio hour, and more. Register at: <https://bit.ly/Hoot2021>.

WEBINAR SERIES: IMPROVING PASTURE MANAGEMENT FOR SUSTAINABLE LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION

Tri-State SARE (Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education) Project is offering a webinar series on improving pasture management for sustainable livestock production. The next webinar is on Wednesday, March 10 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. This project is a professional development opportunity for agricultural service providers and farmers provided by the Northeast SARE state programs in Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island.

Webinars are open to service providers and farmers. By attending all webinars, participants will have a sound understanding of how to develop a personalized

grazing plan.

For more information, visit <http://meatsystems.uconn.edu/> or contact Rachel Bispuda, Project Director, at rachel.bispuda@uconn.edu. To register, click [here](#).

USDA TEMPORARILY SUSPENDS DEBT COLLECTIONS, FORECLOSURES, AND OTHER ACTIVITIES ON FARM LOANS

Due to the national public health emergency caused by coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), the U.S. Department of Agriculture today announced the temporary suspension of past-due debt collections and foreclosures for distressed borrowers under the Farm Storage Facility Loan and the Direct Farm Loan programs administered by the Farm Service Agency (FSA). USDA will temporarily suspend non-judicial foreclosures, debt offsets or wage garnishments, and referring foreclosures to the Department of Justice; and USDA will work with the U.S. Attorney's Office to stop judicial foreclosures and evictions on accounts that were previously referred to the Department of Justice. Additionally, USDA has extended deadlines for producers to respond to loan servicing actions, including loan deferral consideration for financially distressed and delinquent borrowers. In addition, for the Guaranteed Loan program, flexibilities have been made available to lenders to assist in servicing their customers.

For the full press release and more information, click [here](#).

Looking to save jobs? CT DOL Shared Work Program offers a solution. The Shared Work program is an **economic relief program** available to Connecticut employers who are experiencing business downturns. It is a great alternative to laying off employees. For more information, please visit us at SharedWorkCt.com and chat with our Virtual Assistant, Sherry.



Ag Market Pricing

[Middlesex Livestock Auction - CT](#)
Prices last provided on February 22, 2021

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

[Northeast Regional Eggs](#)

[New Holland, PA Hay Report](#)

[New England Shell Eggs](#)

[USDA Mexico Canada Weekly Update \(New!\)](#)

[Pennsylvania Weekly Cattle Auction](#)

SummaryWholesale Fruits & Vegetables - BostonPennsylvania Livestock Auction - Eighty Four, PAWholesale Ornamental Flowers - Boston

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.

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

24-R. Seven foot International 3-point hitch cultivator. \$300. 860-779-2107.

32-R. Modine Power-Vented propane heater, 240K BTU. Greenhouse/high tunnel heater. Brand new, still in box. \$1,600 Call 860-576-2277.

39-R. Honeybees: 5-frame NUCS, DEEPS only, available 1st week May. [Jones Apiaries LLC](#), 860-677-9391

40-R. Bobcat 853 skidsteer. 1994 with 7,500 hours. Comes with 5' power angle snowplow \$9,500. Backhoe attachment available \$3,500. 860-648-1355

41-R. Straw - small square bales, 45-50 lbs. 860-675-9252, please leave message.

43-R. 24' Aluminum Body with rail gate, 16' Aluminum beverage body, tractor tires and rims 15.5R38. 203-623-2694

Wanted

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

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

Upcoming Events

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

SOLID GROUND

AG MECHANICS TRAINING SERIES - 2021

JAN 30TH **POWER TOOL SAFETY & BASIC CARPENTRY**
 DEWOLFE AGRICULTURE & EQUIPMENT, VERNON CT - 9AM-3PM
 Gain hands-on practical knowledge on a variety of power tools and how to use them safely. Troubleshoot common problems that will easily adapt to your farm projects. [CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)

FEB 6TH **BASIC ELECTRICAL FOR 12-VOLT SYSTEMS**
 NEWBURY AGRICULTURE & EQUIPMENT, VERNON CT - 9AM-3PM
 Gain hands-on practical knowledge about electrical systems for your farm. Workshop covers basic electrical and hands-on practice on educational tools, trailers, generators and troubleshooting electrical issues with equipment. [CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)

FEB 20TH **SMALL ENGINE MAINTENANCE & REPAIRS; 4-STROKE**
 DEWOLFE AGRICULTURE & EQUIPMENT, VERNON CT - 9AM-3PM
 Gain hands-on experience working on 4-stroke engines for tractors, lawnmowers, blowers and more. Make repairs and troubleshoot your 4-stroke engine to work on your own farm equipment. [CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)

MAR 13TH **BASIC ELECTRICAL; AC 120 RESIDENTIAL WIRING**
 NEWBURY AGRICULTURE & EQUIPMENT, VERNON CT - 9AM-3PM
 Gain skills and hands-on knowledge about electrical wiring for your home. Hands-on and troubleshooting presented to current residential voltage. [CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)

CLICK FOR WORKSHOP 5205 - Lunch is included. SPACES ARE LIMITED SO REGISTER TODAY!
 If the date is public land, you may request a special fee waiver and/or fund by clicking [HERE](#) to view the request form.

REGISTER ONLINE HERE: [https://www.ct.gov/ctag/ctagreportfeb262021?e=UNIQID](#)
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WEBINAR SERIES

LOCAL AND REGIONAL FOOD SYSTEMS RESPONSE TO COVID-19

BUILDING BETTER BEYOND

MARKETING INNOVATIONS WHEN COMMUNITIES EAT AT HOME
 October 19 | 1 PM EST

FORMAL AND INFORMAL COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT TO SUPPORT LOCAL AND REGIONAL FOOD SYSTEMS
 February 15 | 1 PM EST

RETAINING & ENGAGING NEW LOCAL CUSTOMERS: TENSIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES
 November 16th | 1 PM EST

ONLINE PLATFORMS, PIVOTS AND PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE
 March 15 | 1 PM EST

EMERGENCY FOOD, CHARITY, AND THE LOCAL FOOD SYSTEM
 December 21 | 1 PM EST

INTEGRATING NATIONAL CONSUMER SURVEY RESULTS INTO FUTURE PLANNING
 April 19 | 1 PM EST

INNOVATIONS IN STATE POLICIES AND IMPLICATIONS FOR LOCAL AND REGIONAL FOOD SECTORS
 January 25 | 1 PM EST

NEXT STEPS TO SUPPORT THE LOCAL FOOD SYSTEM IN TIMES OF UNCERTAIN CONSUMER BEHAVIOR
 May 17 | 1 PM EST

<https://fscovid.localfoodeconomics.com/>

AG SERVICE PROVIDER WORKSHOPS

WINTER 2021

register at: bit.ly/NCTFAworkshops

Presented by the New CT Farmer Alliance

- AFFORDING FARMLAND**
w/ Land for Good
January 18, 4-5:30pm
- NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR FARM TO SCHOOL**
w/ Put Local on Your Tray
February 1, 4-5:30pm
- FARM LOANS 101**
w/ Farm Credit East and the USDA's Farm Service Agency
February 15, 4-6pm
- POLICY 101: BEING A FARMER ADVOCATE**
w/ Working Lands Alliance, CT Farm Bureau, and the CT Food & Ag Resiliency Coalition
February 21, 4-6pm
- CHOOSING A BUSINESS STRUCTURE: ENTITY FORMATION FOR FARMERS**
w/ Legal Food Hub
March 1, 4-5pm
- UConn EXTENSION: SERVICES & SUPPORT FOR FARMERS**
w/ The UConn Soil Lab, Fruit Crops Specialist, and Solid Ground
March 8, 5-6:30pm

Questions? Reach out to newctfarmers@gmail.com

New England Dairy Nutrition Conference (Virtual)

Thursday March 11, 2021
10:00 am - 3:00 pm

FREE WEBINAR

RSVP for Zoom Link to: sue@nysta.mobi

NEFAA is partnering with UConn, U of Maine, UER, UMass, UNH, UVM and Cornell for a Virtual Dairy Webinar on Thursday, March 11. This event will provide top notch speakers on timely topics impacting dairy farm management.

Co-Hosted By

AGENDA

10:00 am Call to Order, Welcome, meeting procedures

10:15 am Labor Management
What New England dairy farms need to know in 2021
Alicia DeLong, Ph.D. - University of Rhode Island

11:00 am Cover Crops: Successful Management and Use
Richard Smith, Ph.D. - University of New Hampshire

12:00 noon Sponsor Recognition & Break

12:45 pm Factors to Consider for Profitable Grouping of Cows
Dil Weber, Ph.D. - The Ohio State University

1:30 pm Feeding and Managing for Milk Components
Tom Drouot, Ph.D. - Cornell University

2:00 pm Colostrum: The Foundation of the Future
Neil Mackinnon, Ph.D. - University of New Brunswick

3:00 pm Adjourn

Speakers:

Thank you SPONSORS

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AGROECOLOGY SERIES

TO TILL OR NOT TO-TILL

TUESDAY FEBRUARY 23RD, 2021
6-8PM ON ZOOM [REGISTER HERE](#)
PRESENTER: ANDREW MEFFERD
EDITOR, GROWING FOR MARKET MAGAZINE
ONE DROP FARM CORNVILLE, ME
DIP INTO THE 'WHYS' AS WELL AS THE 'HOWS' OF NO-TILL. EXPLAINS TECHNIQUES FOR OPERATIONS OF ALL SIZES, AND SKILLS TO GET STARTED OR EXPAND YOUR PRACTICE.

ON-FARM COMPOSTING

THURSDAY MARCH 11TH, 2021
[REGISTER HERE](#) 6-8PM ON ZOOM
PRESENTER: JAMES MCSWEENEY
AUTHOR, COMMUNITY-SCALE COMPOSTING SYSTEMS
ARLINGTON, MA
ON-FARM COMPOSTING FOR BOTH SMALL TO MID-SIZE FARMS. EXPLAINS SYSTEMS AND SKILLS TO PUT RIGHT INTO PRACTICE AT YOUR OWN FARM.

ECOLOGICAL GROWING

SAVE THE DATE
SATURDAY MARCH 27TH, 2021
PRESENTER: WAYNE YOUNG
HIGH HILL ORCHARD - MERIDEN, CT
EXPLAINS HOW ECOLOGICAL GROWING CAN BE IMPLEMENTED TO SUPPORT REDUCED OR NO PESTICIDES USE. LEARN HOW BUILDING SOIL HEALTH LEVERAGES OTHER NATURAL SYSTEMS IN ORDER TO MANAGE PESTS AND ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES.

These trainings are supported by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, under award number 2020-70019-30730.

USDA UCONN UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND NATURAL RESOURCES



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