



RESOURCES FOR WARREN FARMERS

When Warren conducted a resident survey as part of creating the town's Plan of Conservation and Development for 2019-2029, a majority of respondents identified protecting farmland and supporting farm businesses as one of the priorities they would like to see the town address over the next ten years. Consequently, Goal 2 in Warren's current POCD is "Protect Farmland from Development, Support Farm Businesses, Support Sustainable Farming Practices, & Attract Young Farmers." (See full report in Farming Resources menu: "Warren POCD 2019 Goal 2")

In 2019, Warren was awarded a Farm Viability Grant from the USDA, which allowed the town, working with the Warren Land Trust, the Lake Waramaug Task Force, the Northwest Connecticut Land Conservancy, and the Northwest Hills Council of Governments, to create the Warren's Farming Future project. The purpose of this project was to conduct research, including a survey that sought input from Warren's farming community, and formulate recommendations to preserve the town's farmland and to support sustainable farming practices and farm economic viability (see full report in Farming Resources menu: "Warren's Farming Future Report 2021")

This document provides summaries of the many local, state and federal resources for farmers that can help reach these goals, with links and contacts for further information and assistance:

- **FEDERAL FARM PROTECTION AND IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMS**
- **STATE FARM PROTECTION AND IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMS**
- **THE AMERICAN FARMLAND TRUST**
- **THE FARMLAND INFORMATION CENTER**
- **THE CONNECTICUT FARMLAND TRUST**

- **THE NORTHWEST CONNECTICUT LAND CONSERVANCY**
- **LAND FOR GOOD**
- **THE NORTHEAST ORGANIC FARMERS ASSOCIATION**
- **NORTHEAST SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE RESEARCH AND EDUCATION**
- **THE NORTHWEST CONNECTICUT REGIONAL FOOD HUB**
- **FARM LINK PROGRAMS**

Here in Warren, **The Lake Waramaug Task Force** (www.lakewaramaug.org) can provide soil science and testing and wetlands delineation assistance, as well as advice on best practices for preserving soil health and water quality. Contact Executive Director Sean Hayden at seanhayden@lakewaramaug.org or 860-868-0331.

The Warren Land Trust (www.warrenlandtrust.org) can offer assistance in understanding and pursuing conservation options, and acts as a liaison with other land trust organizations such as the Northwest Connecticut Land Conservancy and well government agencies such as CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP). Contact info@warrenlandtrust.org.

FEDERAL FARM PROTECTION AND IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMS

The USDA provides these programs through its Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

- **Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)** has two components: Agricultural Land Easements (ALE) and Wetland Reserve Easements.
- **Conservation Stewardship Program**, designed to improve farm operations while conserving natural resources.
- **Environmental Quality Incentives Program**, designed to improve farm operations while promoting environmental best practices.

For more information and assistance:

www.nrcs.usda.gov

NRCS Connecticut State Office in Tolland
Thomas L. Morgart, State Conservationist: 860-871-4011

NRCS field office in Torrington: 860-626-8852
Catherine Pruss, District Conservationist: 860-618-4534
This office also has three soil conservationists on their staff

The Farmland Information Center has extensive resources and tools to help navigate the process of participating in the ACEP-ALE, www.farmlandinfo.org

STATE FARM PROTECTION AND IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMS

FARMLAND PRESERVATION

These farmland preservation programs are offered through the Connecticut Department of Agriculture's (CTDoAg) Resource Preservation Unit:

- **The Farmland Preservation Program**
The main objective of this program is to establish a food- and fiber-producing land resource base, consisting mainly of prime and important farmland soils. While the farm remains in private ownership and continues to pay local property taxes, the CTDoAg acquires development rights to the property that ensure it is used only for agricultural purposes in perpetuity.
- **The Community Farms Preservation Program**
In this program, the CTDoAg works with qualifying municipalities to preserve smaller farms of 50 acres or fewer that have excellent agricultural soils and contribute to local economic activity.

FARMLAND IMPROVEMENT

There are several programs for grants and marketing assistance available through the CTDoAg's Bureau of Agricultural Development and Assistance, including the following:

- **Farmland Restoration Program**
This program focuses on restoring and improving land with prime and important farmland soils, and can be used to meet this key criterion for both of the CTDoAg's farmland preservation programs.
- **The Farm Transition Grants**
This program has four grant categories, with maximum award and match requirements as noted: New Farmer Micro Grant (\$5,000/25%), Infrastructure Investment Grant (\$20,000/50%), Research and Development Grant (\$25,000/40%), and Innovation and Diversification Grant (\$49,999/50%)

For more information and assistance:

DoAg.Farmland@ct.gov

[www.ct.gov.doag](http://www.ct.gov/doag)

Farmland Preservation: 860-713-2511 Farmland Improvement: 860-713-2503

THE AMERICAN FARMLAND TRUST

Founded in 1980, the mission of the American Farmland Trust (AFT) is to protect farmland, keep farmers on the land, and promote sound farming practices.

They have a number of programs and initiatives nationwide, including farmland protection, farm transfer planning, access to capital and land, farm viability, and regenerative agriculture.

The AFT website also has information on resources specific to New England, including the following:

- **New England Resource Directory for Farmers**
- **The New England Farmer Micro-Grants Program** that provides direct financial support to farmers up to \$5,000 for certain purposes, including bringing more farmland into production and planning for the future of the farm

For more information and assistance:

www.farmland.org

800-431-1499

Kristen Irvin, New England Program Coordinator

1-413-419-0023

kirvin@farmland.org

THE FARMLAND INFORMATION CENTER

This center, a partnership between the American Farmland Trust and the USDA-NRCS, provides a clearinghouse for information about farmland protection and stewardship, including the following:

- **The USDA-NRCS Agricultural Conservation Easement Program/Agricultural Land Easements:** a comprehensive collection of resources and tools to help individuals and entities, including land trusts, navigate the process of participating in this program.
- **Tools to Plan for Agriculture:** including Protect Farmland, Encourage On-Farm Conservation, and Support Farm Viability.

The center's website also allows you to browse by state for specialized resources. Among the resources available for Connecticut is the 21-page publication "**Conservation Options for Connecticut Farmland,**" one of the single most helpful guides available.

For more information and assistance:

www.farmlandinfo.org

THE CONNECTICUT FARMLAND TRUST

Founded in 2002, the Connecticut Farmland Trust (CFT) is Connecticut's only private, statewide agricultural land trust. The mission of the CFT is to preserve Connecticut farmland for current and future generations of farmers. To further this mission, the CFT:

- Accepts donations of agricultural conservation easements and farmland
- Purchases agricultural conservations easements and farmland
- Partners with towns and land trusts to identify threatened farms and opportunities for protection and to help address farmland stewardship and management concerns
- Partners with communities to encourage local farmland preservation efforts

For more information and assistance:

www.ctfarmland.org

860-247-0202

The CTF's Conservation team can be reached at ext. 222

CFT Executive Director Elisabeth Moore can be reached by phone or at emoore@farmland.org

NORTHWEST CONNECTICUT LAND CONSERVANCY

Founded in 1965, the Northwest Connecticut Land Conservancy (NCLC) is the largest land trust in Connecticut. NCLC is a regional organization working with the communities of northern Fairfield and Litchfield Counties to protect natural and agricultural lands in perpetuity. They are very active in farmland preservation, and as of 2021 have preserved 40 working farms.

For further information and assistance:

www.ctland.org

info@ctland.org

The NCLC office is located in Kent:

860-927-1927

Catherine Rawson, Executive Director

catherine@ctland.org

LAND FOR GOOD

Founded in 2004, the mission of Land For Good is to ensure the future of farming in New England by putting more farmers more securely on more land. They provide support and expert guidance to help farmers, landowners, and communities navigate the complex challenges of land access, tenure, and transfer. They have three principal programs:

- **The Farm Seekers Program** fosters farming opportunities by helping farm seekers acquire farms and farmland.
- **The Farm Legacy Program** helps farmers transfer their farms to the next generation or operator.
- **The Working Lands Program** helps private, organizational, and public non-farming landowners bring more land into agriculture or improve farming land uses.

For more information and assistance:

The Land For Good office is located in Keene, New Hampshire

603-357-1600

www.landforgood.org

info@landforgood.org

Connecticut Field Agent:

Will O' Meara, Assistant Manager of Waldingfield Farm in Washington

will@landforgood.org

THE NORTHEAST ORGANIC FARMERS ASSOCIATION

The Northeast Organic Farmers Association (NOFA) fosters organic farming and other sustainable farming practices such as building healthy soil, reduced and no-till methods, and the use of cover crops. In keeping with the holistic approach of regenerative agriculture that concerns itself with the health of the whole ecosystem, NOFA also supports the restoration of native plants and habitat as an integral part of the agricultural landscape, including habitat for the pollinators that are essential to our food system.

Resources for farmers to be found on their website include information on sustainable agriculture, getting organic certification, online trainings, and agri-tourism.

For further information and assistance:

The Connecticut office of NOFA is located in New Haven:

203-408-6819

www.ctnofa.org

ctnofa@ctnofa.org

NORTHEAST SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE RESEARCH AND EDUCATION

Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) is one of four regional SARE programs funded by the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture. The program offers grants and education to farmers, educators, researchers, and others to advance innovations that ensure that agriculture in the Northeast will be sustainable, diversified, and profitable, and that promote quality of life for farmers and communities.

- **Education:** Resources include a number of free, downloadable publications on a wide range of subjects, including sustainable practices such as building soil health and the use of cover crops; transitioning to and becoming certified in organic production; and marketing.
- **Farmer Grant Program:** Grants of between \$5,000 and \$30,000 are available to farmers for projects that explore new ways to enhance Northeast agriculture and provide benefit to farming communities, e.g. sustainable best practices, farm diversification, and marketing. The funds are for project-specific costs only, and may not be used for such purposes as normal operating expenses or the expansion of farm operations, and all projects must have a technical advisor. The deadline to apply is typically in late fall with projects starting the following growing season.

For further information and assistance:

The program is administered by Northeast SARE's host institution, the University of Vermont in South Burlington: 802-651-8335

Connecticut State SARE Coordinators at the University of Connecticut:

Rachel Bispuda: 203-407-3172

Joe Bonelli: 860-875-3331

www.norheastsare.org

www.norheastsare.org/FarmerGrant

NORTHWEST CONNECTICUT REGIONAL FOOD HUB

Established in 2017, the Northwest Connecticut Regional Food Hub (NWCT Food Hub) works with over 30 local farms and 20 wholesale buyers including grocery stores, restaurants, and institutions to meet the growing demand for local, sustainable food.

Producers and customers register online with the Food Hub, which picks up produce from farmers and delivers it to wholesalers. Farmers benefit from the marketing and packaging of their produce, which identifies their farm as the source.

For further information and assistance:

www.nwctfoodhub.org

FARM LINK PROGRAMS

Farm link programs provide free posting sites for properties for sale or lease to help connect farm seekers, including beginning farmers, with transitioning farmers and non-farming landowners, with the goal of putting or keeping land in active farming. These are the two principal sites for Connecticut:

- **New England Farm Finder:** a regional farm property clearinghouse managed by the New England Farm Link Collaborative (NEFLC).

www.newenglandfarmfinder.org

- **Connecticut Farm Link:** a member of NEFLC. Farm owners and farm seekers register by completing an application that serves as their listing on the CT Farm Link website and in their database.

www.ctfarmlink.org

860-247-0202