

SOLID GROUND NEWSLETTER



Farmer Baylee

A great learning opportunity that we are excited to offer again this winter is our [Climate Smart Adaptation Strategies for Beginning Farmers Class](#). We wanted to introduce you to the coordinator who is helping make the connections for new farmers as they go through the modules to learn best practices! Baylee Drown (all pronouns), is a queer farmer, educator and community builder. Baylee believes in good food for all people and this starts with caring for soil and extends into seeking justice in our land and food system. For her farm (Long Table Farm, Lyme), this means providing sliding scale CSA, working with meal centers and acknowledging colonial land theft (our land is the home of Nehantic people) are all part of an equitable food system. They come from a family history of farming in the midwest, has spent time farming in Vermont, and are glad to now have their own farm community in Connecticut!

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ACCESSING GRANT FUNDING FOR YOUR FARM

The Department of Agriculture Farm Transition Grant recently opened for applications, and more grant opportunities are coming your way this winter. The best way to get prepared? Sign up for our **Accessing Grant Funding** class ONLY offered in December (5th and 18th) of this month. Jiff Martin will be helping you understand the grant landscape, where you can look for grants, and what grant reviewers are looking for. If you've applied before to grants and haven't been successful, this class is for you! It includes some one-on-one time to look at grants you may be currently applying for. We'll be emailing the Solid Ground listserv with the sign-ups soon, so keep your eyes open!

More Info and Sign Up Coming Soon



NOVEMBER FARM TASKS: CROP PLANNING

WE NEED YOUR FEEDBACK!

Solid Ground is excited to plan the **2026 Farm Managers Summit** (January 14th, 2026) in Hartford, CT. For its third year, we are looking for your input to make it better!

We know that managing a farm, a crew, and a work/life balance is hard. This Farm Managers Summit is here to help you foster the conversations and community to make it easier. If you want to help us make this work even more effective, we'd love to hear your input!

This survey is completely anonymous, and we greatly appreciate your feedback in helping us shape this conference to best serve our farming community. It shouldn't take more than 5 minutes. Please reach out to megan.l.hebert@uconn.edu with any questions or concerns.

[Fill Out the Survey](#)

SOLID GROUND Upcoming Events

[Climate Smart Adaptations Strategies Class](#)

Online and asynchronous
Start Dates: December 1 & February 4

[Accessing Grant Funding for Your Farm](#)

Dec 5 at 8:30AM-12PM
Tolland Extension Office

Dec 18 at 8:30AM-12PM
Farmington Extension Office
Sign ups are coming soon!

To see all 2025-2026 events [find our calender here](#)

The seed catalogs are starting to arrive and we know everyone gets excited and are usually tempted to order more than they need. Crop plans should be the gold standard for your ordering to make sure you get the right amount and variety. But if you've never made one before, or are not confident in your past efforts, below are some helpful tricks and tools to help you prepare a crop plan for this upcoming season.

[University of Minnesota Extension put together an article](#) to help you think this through, but to summarize, some of the key point are:

- Decide what to grow! (what are your high value crops, require the least labor?)
- Consider how insect pressure and disease impact the varieties you grow
- Calculate how much to plant (direct seed v. transplants)
- Calculate best time to plant and length of time to grow
- Keep in mind potential frost dates
- Give yourself the opportunity for flexibility as things change

But where do you store all this information? A chart of some sort, is usually how farmers put this together. Doesn't matter if it's handwritten, in a spreadsheet, or even a creative collage, but it should be something you can reference again and again. NC Extension has a great webpage that offers [templates for crop planning](#) (scheduling) as well as other forms. Having some structure and the ability to tailor your plans can make a huge difference.

If you still feel like you could use some assistance because your crops really stumped you this past season, you can always [schedule a free consultation](#) with our Vegetable Production Specialist at UConn Extension to help walk you through some of the challenges you might have faced and to improve your plans now to increase your yields and boost your efforts.

Good luck planning and happy farming!
- The Solid Ground Team



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Upcoming:

Partner Events

[How to Buy a Farm](#): Nov 6, 13, 20, Webinar Series- 12:30PM to 2PM

[UConn Native Plants and Pollinators Conference](#): Nov 13, Storrs Campus: 8:45 AM to 3:15PM

[A Tale of Two States: Addressing Food Security in Connecticut Through Community Empowerment](#): Nov 18, Common Ground High School, New Haven- 7:00-8:30PM

[Farmland Leasing and Succession Basics](#): Nov 18, online- 4PM to 6PM

[CTRC&D December Meeting & Holiday Social](#): Dec 1, Stone Acres Farm, Stonington- 3:30PM to 5:30PM

[CT Pomological Society Annual Meeting](#): Dec 2, Middletown Elks Lodge- 8PM to 4PM

[Growing for Our Region: Northeast Organic Farming Symposium](#): Dec. 16-17, Virtual- 9AM to 4PM

[CT Fruit and Veg Conference](#): Jan 8, UConn Storrs- 8:45AM to 3:15PM

[Farm Succession and Transfer Planning](#): Jan 8, 15, 22, & 29, online from Land For Good- 11AM to 1PM

[Regenerative Ag Weekend](#): Jan 31-Feb 1, Westerly Armory, RI- 8am to 5pm each day

Grants

[Northeast SARE Farmer Grant Program](#): DUE DEC 9

[CT DOAG Farm Transition Grant](#): DUE JAN 12



Meet the Organic Outreach Specialist helping with one-on-one assistance- **Dave Tschiegg**. He will support transitioning and certified organic farms in growing their presence in the organic market through one-on-one, in-person (or virtual) marketing assistance to help with the forthcoming CT Grown Organic campaign. Sign up for:

- Guidance on participating in the CT Grown USDA certified organic campaign and related promotional opportunities
- Technical assistance implementing CT Grown USDA certified organic brand and marketing assets
- Share insights from an organic consumer research report to support market growth and customer engagement
- Evaluate current marketing strategies and materials
- Make recommendations for enhancing brand messaging and storytelling around certified organic status and products
- Assess website and social media presence

Sign up at the link below if you are certified organic or are in the process of becoming certified organic for this assistance.

[Find Out More](#)



Video Highlight

Many of us use high tunnels or greenhouses to keep growing valuable crops as the temperature starts to dip. But how do you get these set up on your farm- especially when you are trying to do the majority of the work yourself? This video series catches up with a couple different set-ups and lets you see how each farm uses the person power they can to keep up with, or even build their own season extension structures.

[View the Videos here](#)





CT Veg and Fruit Conference

January 8, 2026

Sign up for this year's 2026 UConn Extension Vegetable and Small Fruit Growers Conference, an invaluable opportunity to expand your knowledge of vegetable and small fruit production. The conference will feature a full day of educational sessions, industry updates, networking opportunities, and a trade show.

New This Year! Join farmer focus group discussions during the lunch break and take part in breakout topic presentations in the afternoon — great opportunities to share ideas, ask questions, and connect directly with peers and experts in the field.

Event Details:

Date: Thursday, January 8, 2026

Time: 9:00 AM – 3:15 PM, registration check-in and trade show starts at 8:00 am

Location: UConn Student Union Ballroom, Storrs, CT

Pesticide Recertification Credits: amount pending confirmation

Registration:

Regular Registration: \$55 (ends December 14, 2025)

Late Registration: \$75 (starting December 15, 2025)

Student Registration: \$35

Online registration closes on December 21, 2025 at 11:59 pm. Walk-in registration may be available, but space is not guaranteed. To receive free parking, you must register by December 21. An event parking link will be sent to you prior to the conference.

To pay via mail please email tolland@uconn.edu or call 860-875-3331

[Sign up Here](#)



Cafeteria Sales Training

UConn Extension's Put Local on Your Tray program, has a new initiative for farmers interested in maximizing your market to include consistent small-scale wholesale relationship opportunities with local school districts.

The Farm to Cafeteria Sales Training will select 10 farm businesses for a 10-month learning experience with the goal of securing a forward contract or establishing a recurring sales relationship with a school (either directly or through a food hub) for each farmer participant.

Applications due by November 21st 2025. Selected participants will be announced by December 1st.

[Learn More and Sign Up](#)

For questions surrounding this newsletter, please reach out to rebecca.toms@uconn.edu