

# SOLID GROUND NEWSLETTER



## Meet our Consultants

Meet Mackenzie White!

Mackenzie White is the new Diversified Livestock Extension Field Based Specialist with UConn Extension. Mackenzie earned her Associates of Applied Animal Science from UConn Ratcliffe Hicks School of Agriculture, a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture and Natural Resources from UConn College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources, and a Masters of Agriculture in Agricultural Science with an integrated resources management specialization from Colorado State University.

Mackenzie is no stranger to working for UConn Extension or being out in the barn working with livestock. Growing up on a small farm in southern Maine is where her passion/interest for livestock and production agriculture started.

Mackenzie's new role with UConn Extension involves planning, implementing, and evaluating impactful extension programs primarily related to commercial livestock production. Livestock species include but are not limited to beef, sheep, swine and

[Meet the Consultants](#)

[Grant Funding for Your Farm](#)

[November Farm Tasks](#)

[Upcoming Events](#)

[TOPP Corner](#)

[Grants Open](#)

[Getting to the Root Video Series](#)

[Partner Highlights](#)



## GRANT FUNDING FOR YOUR FARM

We know many people think farmers relax in the winter months, but really, we're just working on different projects- like Grants. With 5 grants open right now (see page 3!) and more on the way, we want to make sure you feel prepared. Jiff Martin and R Chang (our Co-Directors and grant writers extraordinary) are doing a 2 session class (one in person, one virtual) that will help you write better applications for grants. In addition, you get free one-on-one consultations with them on a grant of your choosing to make sure you're submitting the best application possible. We're excited to launch this and hope [you'll sign up to join us](#). Find out more info at the link!

goats. Prior to working at UConn Extension, she was an Agriculture Marketing & Inspection Representative with the CT Department of Agriculture and before that she supported multiple successful UConn Extension programs as an Educational Program Assistant. Outside of work, she owns and operates a small farm in Eastern Connecticut with her family. MacKenzie is most excited to work with farmers through our Free Consultations and you can [sign up to work with her directly here](#).

To find out more about our FREE consultations and what they have to offer you as a farmer, visit [solidground.extension.uconn.edu/consultations/](https://solidground.extension.uconn.edu/consultations/)

## SOLID GROUND

### Upcoming Events

- [Accessing Grant Funding For Your Farm](#)
  - Session 1: Nov 19, Hartford County Extension Office: 9AM to 11:30AM
  - Session 2: Dec 3, online: 9AM to 11:30PM
- [How to Use Enterprise Budgeting](#): Dec 5, Farm Credit East, Enfield 9AM to 1PM (*prerequisite training to be uploaded to website soon!*)
- [Business of Farming Online Course](#): Launching two cohorts [Jan 2](#) and [Feb 12](#). Virtual and in person
- [Ag Mechanics](#) Sign-ups coming soon!
  - Dec 5th & 12th (2-part training): Power Tool Safety and Carpentry Basics Training at Workspace CT, 4PM-7PM
  - Dec 10: Small Gas Engine Basics at Middletown High School, 4pm-7pm

## November Farm Tasks: Winter High Tunnel Management

For farmers lucky enough to have high tunnels, these structures often become year-round workhorses. But with constant use comes the challenge of maintaining soil health and ensuring long-term sustainability. Fortunately, there's plenty of guidance available! [North Carolina Agricultural and Technical Univ Extension have put together a thorough guide](#). Specifically in Chapter 7 they help you consider "Managing Cold-Hardy Vegetables" by discussing

- Species/Cultivars
- Considerations for Cold Weather Growing
- Fertility Management and Irrigation
- Temperature Management
- Pest Management
- Harvest

While their advice comes from a slightly warmer climate, there's still a wealth of knowledge to gain—especially if it's your first time growing in the winter!

Many farmers also use high tunnels to shelter livestock during the colder months. It's a smart way to provide warmth, enrich the soil with natural fertilizer, and make use of leftover plant debris for feed. BUT, we also need to consider Food Safety protocols, such as

- How long to wait before planting after livestock has been in the high tunnel
- Proper cleaning and preparation after housing animals
- Best crops to plant post-livestock

At the University of Minnesota Extension they included some thoughts about overwintering chickens in high tunnels ([see 2nd to last paragraph in this article](#)), but if you're not sure about anything, always feel free to reach out to our [Livestock](#) and [Food Safety](#) Extension staff who can help with your specific situation.

Best of luck with your high tunnels!





## Upcoming:

### Partner Events

[2024 CT Ag Expo](#): Nov 20, Aqua Turf Club, Southington - 8:30 AM to 2PM

[2024 Connecticut Pomological Society's Annual Meeting](#): Dec 3, Middletown Elks Lodge - 8AM to 3:30PM

[Meat & Poultry HACCP Course](#): Dec 4-6, Middlesex County Extension Center - 8:30 to 5 W & TR, 8:30 to 12:30 F

NCTFA Town Hall with the CT Dept of Ag: Dec 5, over Zoom - 6:30PM to 8PM

[Jewish Farmers Conference](#): Dec 12-15, Isabella Freedman Jewish Retreat Center in Falls Village, CT

[New England Fruit and Vegetable Conference](#): Dec 17-19, Manchester NH

UConn Extension Vegetable and Small Fruit Growers Conference: Jan 7th, UConn Campus, Storrs

### Grant Opportunities

[BIPOC Farmer Stipend from Cityseed](#)  
DUE NOV 22

[The Brighter Future Fund's New England Regenerative Livestock Farming Grants](#) DUE NOV 29

[Climate-Smart Agriculture Implementation Grant](#) DUE NOV 30

[Climate Smart Ag and Forestry grant program](#) DUE DEC 13

[Historically Underserved Farmer/Farming Communities Grant Program from SARE-](#) DUE JAN 7

[CT Dept of Ag Farm Transition Grant](#)  
DUE JAN 10

### FSA County Committee Elections

The 2024 Farm Service Agency County Committee Elections will begin on Nov. 4, 2024, when ballots are mailed to eligible voters. The deadline to return ballots to local FSA offices, or to be postmarked, is Dec. 2, 2024.



Welcome to the new TOPP (Transition to Organic Partnership Program) corner! Partnering with CT NOFA (a core partner in the implementation of this program that is being led out of Pennsylvania), we are helping support farmers that are interested in transitioning their farms to certified organic.

So what is this program and what does it look like? CT NOFA will be connecting paid organic certification mentors to mentees for one year. The mentorship program is ongoing and applications will be accepted through 2027. CT NOFA staff will assist with helping mentee farmers to navigate the organic certification process.

Other partner non-profit or public organizations work with CT NOFA to provide community building opportunities, technical assistance, train-the-mentor support, and workshop/field day activities covering topics including organic production practices, certification, conservation planning, business development, regulations, and marketing.

Keep up to date on what's being offered and how this program is helping Farms in CT!

[LEARN MORE HERE](#)



### Video Highlight

Thinking about expanding your operation and including something new? Our "Getting to the Root" video series might be a good place to start. Hear from farmers in the state that have mastered some unique markets and strategies to grow their farm business. Topics include Livestock, to Cut Flowers, Microgreens, Ethnic/Speciality crops, and establishing Farm to School accounts. These farmers have grown their businesses and want to share with you how!

[View the Videos here](#)

*This project is supported by USDA-National Institute of Food and Agriculture, Award 2023-49400-40870 supported by USDA-National Institute of Food and Agriculture, Award 2023-49400-40870*

*UConn complies with all applicable federal and state laws regarding non-discrimination, equal opportunity, affirmative action, and providing reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities. Contact: Office of Institutional Equity; 860-486-2943; equity@uconn.edu; https://www.equity.uconn.edu.*



## New CT Farmers Alliance

There is plenty going on this time of year so we needed to highlight 2 partner orgs! New CT Farmers Alliance Climate Smart Ag and Forestry Grant is **still open** and closes Dec 13! These grants can be used for a variety of practices/projects that [you can see here](#) and will be granted in 2 tiers- in amounts up to \$8,000 and \$30,000. [Learn more and apply](#) by DEC -EMBER 13TH to be considered!

In addition, we are partnering up with NCTFA again this year to put on the **Annual Farmer to Farmer Conference**. Sign ups will be coming soon, but you don't have to wait to save the date! The conference will be **January 25 at the Meriden Public Library from 10AM to 4:30PM** with learning that focuses on the knowledge other farmers have to share with each other. Looking forward to seeing you there!

## WINTER CONFERENCE

CT NOFA is proud to present our 43rd Winter Conference, featuring a series of virtual workshops on February 25-27 in the lead up to our full day, in-person gathering and celebration on March 1, 2025 at Eastern Connecticut State University, in partnership with their Institute of Sustainability.

We'll be offering a variety of workshops, covering topics such as farming, seed saving, organic land care, community food security, social justice issues, and more, including a soon-to-be announced keynote speaker. Our in-person celebration will also feature the presentation of the Bill Duesing Organic Living on the Earth award and our members' annual meeting.

You can participate by attending, being a sponsor, vendor, or even a presenter! The educational slate of workshops is made possible thanks to the interest and enthusiasm of our knowledgeable community members. All are welcome to submit a proposal until **December 20**. Selected presenters are provided with free admission to the conference, as well as a \$150 honorarium.

[Find Out More](#) 

For questions surrounding this newsletter, please reach out to [rebecca.toms@uconn.edu](mailto:rebecca.toms@uconn.edu)

## SAVE THE DATE

UConn Extension  
Vegetable and Small  
Fruit Growers  
Conference: *January 7th*

2nd Annual Farm  
Manager Summit:  
*January 29th (snow date  
Jan. 30th) @ Chrysalis  
Center, Hartford*