

August 2026 Newsletter

Inside, you'll find:

- News and Updates
  - Annual Field Day Recap
  - Read New 2025 Research Reports
  - More Future-Ready Dairy Farm Tours Coming in September
    - Skyline Holsteins, Derby Center, September 1
    - Rockbottom Farm, Strafford, September 22
    - Stopped farming in New England? **$200 for a Zoom interview with UVM**
    - SHREC Lab Now Accepting CEMA 216 Soil Samples
- Upcoming Events
  - Tri-State Dairy Exchange Monthly Webinar Series: Managing Milk Quality in Automated Milking Systems with Aurora Dairies
  - Cornell University Homer C. Thompson Vegetable Research Showcase
  - Advanced Grazing Workshop, Hudson, NY
- Research Spotlight: Optimize Your Cereal Rye Cover Crop with the Right Sowing Dates and Seeding Rates
- Outcroppings Blog
  - My Summer with Weeding Robots: Reflections from a UVM Extension Intern
  - Ann Hazelrigg, Heather Darby to be Inducted into Vermont Agricultural Hall of Fame
- Photos

News and Updates



Northwest Crops and Soils Annual Field Day: The Demonstration Derby Recap

THANK YOU to everyone who joined us for the 19th Annual Crops and Soils Field Day! More than 200 farmers, researchers, technical service providers, students, and community members traveled to Alburgh to learn, connect, and grow together for the day.

A huge thank you to all of our partners, sponsors, and presenters who helped make this year's event such a success! A very special thank you to Roger and Claire Rainville, owners of Borderview Research Farm, for hosting our program, our Annual Field Day, and for your dedication to agriculture.

Click below to see more photos from the event and learn about all the great research discussed throughout the day.

Read the Annual Field Day Recap

Read 2025 Research Reports

44 research reports were recently published on our website. Click below to check out all the latest from our team!

Corn

Forages

Grains and Dry Beans

Industrial Hemp and Flax

Oilseeds

Strawberries

Soil, Cover Crops, and Nutrient Management





More Future-Ready Dairy Farm Tours Coming in September!

We're excited to share that we are hosting two more Future-Ready Dairy Farm Tours this September! These tours will highlight innovative technologies, management strategies, and

opportunities that farmers are using to stay efficient, profitable, and build a resilient future for their farms.

Adapting to Build a Resilient Future at Skyline Holsteins

Skyline Holsteins Farm. 3749 Nelson Hill Rd, Derby Center, VT 05829
Tuesday, September 1, 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Join us at Skyline Holsteins Farm as fourth-generation farmer Sheena Brown shares how she and her family are adapting to build a resilient future. Tour highlights include:

- Transitioning from conventional to certified organic dairy production
- Grazing planning, infrastructure, and intensive pasture management
- Diversifying farm income through an on-farm farm store
- Business planning with the Vermont Farm & Forest Viability Program
- Using pasture monitoring technology to improve grazing management
- Working with partners to protect water quality and natural resources
- Building community through an active 4-H club

Learn more **Register now**

Staying Innovative in a Changing Dairy Landscape at Rockbottom Farm

Rockbottom Farm, 53 Rockbottom Rd, Strafford, VT 05072
Tuesday, September 22, 12:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Join us for a farm tour and discussion at Rockbottom Farm to learn from second- and third-generation farmers Earl and Jackson Ransom about how they are staying innovative in a changing dairy landscape. Tour highlights include:

- Practical automation tools for small dairy farms: herd health monitoring systems for cows and youngstock, automated grain feeders and sort gates, and milking facility upgrades
- Diversifying farm income through value-added on-farm milk processing
- Succession planning and preparing for the next generation
- Optimizing forage production through crop rotation and pasture renovation in an organic system
- Grazing strategies that support a twice-a-year seasonal calving system

Learn more **Register now**

Stopped farming in New England? $200 for a Zoom interview with UVM

The University of Vermont is conducting a research study about farmer wellbeing and farm viability of farmers (including farm workers) who no longer farm in New England. Participation involves a conversational interview (over Zoom or the phone) that lasts about 45 minutes. Participants will be compensated with a $200 check. We seek to gather a broad range of perspectives, so people of color, LGBTQ+ people, and other underrepresented people are especially encouraged to participate.

To be considered for an interview, please fill out the 5-minute online form at the link below. For questions, contact Ike Leslie at isaac.leslie@uvm.edu or (802) 656-7538

Fill Out the Online Application

SHREC Lab Now Accepting CEMA 216 Soil Samples

The UVM Soil Health Research and Extension Center (SHREC) lab is now accepting soil samples that meet NRCS Conservation Evaluation and Monitoring Activity (CEMA) 216 requirements. Farmers enrolling in the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and the new Regenerative Pilot Program (RPP) are required by the USDA to complete soil health testing. This standardized testing package measures five core soil health indicators, providing a comprehensive assessment of soil function to support conservation planning and program participation.

SHREC staff are informing technical service providers, practitioners, and soil scientists across the state about testing options and how to integrate soil health data into management decisions.

SHREC CEMA 216 Soil Health Testing Package

Upcoming Events

Tri-State Dairy Exchange Monthly Webinar Series: Advancing Dairy Systems through Technology

Wednesday, August 26, 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.



Topic: Automation in the Barn: Managing Milk Quality in Automated Milking Systems
Speakers: Dr. John Penry, Chief Technical Officer, Aurora Dairies

Maintaining milk quality is a critical challenge as more dairy farms adopt automated milking systems. Dr. John Penry will examine the factors that influence milk quality in automated systems and share practical strategies for monitoring and improving outcomes. Topics will include udder health management, milking system hygiene, troubleshooting common quality issues, and best practices for farms transitioning to or operating automated milking.

Watch Previous Webinars **Register Now**

Homer C. Thompson Vegetable Research Showcase

Cornell CALS
College of Agriculture and Life Sciences

Wednesday, August 26, 4:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.
Homer C. Thompson Vegetable Research Farm
133 Fall Creek Rd. Freeville, NY 13068

Join Cornell CALS for the Homer C. Thompson Vegetable Research Showcase, a twilight meeting held at Cornell's vegetable research station in Freeville, NY. The event will feature field tours and research updates on breeding, insect, and disease management in crops including tomato, potato, and more. Learn about the latest dry bean research from our collaborators on the ECOBEAN team. At the conclusion of the meeting, there will be a social hour with refreshments.

Agenda | Register Now

Advanced Grazing Workshop
Tuesday, September 15, 8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Churchtown Dairy, 357 County Route 12, Hudson NY 12534

Join Churchtown Dairy for an Advanced Grazing Workshop with Greg Judy, multi-species grazing expert of Green Pastures Farms. This event is geared toward folks with grazing experience, but beginners are welcome. You'll get practical Q&A guidance on implementing planned grazing, building healthier soils, and succeeding in farming—plus pasture walks at Churchtown Dairy. Topics include fencing and pasture setup with water development, winter stockpiling to cut winter hay needs, cattle management and grass genetics, and how to build an operation on leased land. Tickets include an organic lunch catered by The Farmers Feast.

Learn More | Register Now

Research Spotlight



Optimize Your Cereal Rye Cover Crop with the Right Sowing Dates and Seeding Rates
By Elizabeth M. Seyler

Cereal rye (aka winter rye) is the most frequently used cover crop in Vermont. It is cold hardy and provides many ecosystem services, including erosion control, weed suppression, and reduced nitrate leaching into groundwater and waterways. To achieve these ecosystem services a cover crop must be well established and have adequate shoot and root growth—it must have good biomass. Cereal rye's biomass declines as sowing dates get later in the fall. When exactly is the optimal time to plant cereal rye? Can we compensate for lower biomass due to late planting dates by increasing seeding rates? Researchers at UVM Extension Northwest Crops and Soils Program were among those in seven Northeast states who collaborated to find out. Read about their discoveries here.

Read the Full Article

Outcroppings Blog



My Summer with Weeding Robots: Reflections from a UVM Extension Intern

Addison Gates graduated from high school in June and spent her summer interning with the UVM Extension NWCS program, assisting with research on precision agriculture technology and autonomous weeding robots. Click the link below to learn more about her experience!

Read the Full Article



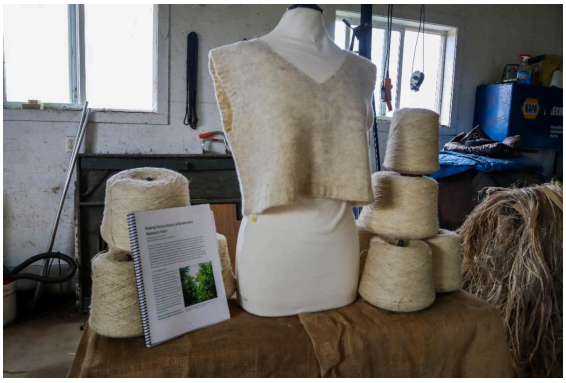
Heather Darby to be Inducted into the Vermont Agricultural Hall of Fame

Please join us in congratulating our very own Heather Darby on being selected for induction into the Vermont Agricultural Hall of Fame as the 2026 Ag Innovator. She is being honored alongside her longtime UVM Extension colleague Ann Hazelrigg, who is receiving a Lifetime Achievement Award.

Read the Full Article

Photos





NWCS Hemp Research Specialist Laura Sullivan held an art exhibition in the afternoon at the Annual Crops and Soils Field Day. All of the art was made with locally grown hemp, wool, and flax. Yay for local fiber art!





Roy Desrochers, NWCS sensory expert, taught an afternoon session about using objective sensory analysis when tasting local produce. Guests tasted a variety of tomatoes and beans, along with other local crops.

Subscribe

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