

July 2026 Newsletter

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News and Updates

Northwest Crops and Soils Annual Field Day: The Demonstration Derby

Thursday, July 23, 10:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
Borderview Farm, 487 Line Road, Alburgh VT 05440
Cost: Free for farmers. $30/per person for non-farmers. Price includes a BBQ lunch catered by Cold Hollow Catering as well as ice cream, courtesy of Ben & Jerry's.
Certified Crop Advisor Credits, VAAFM Water Quality Credits, and Custom Applicator Credits will be available!

Please join us for the 19th Annual Crops and Soils Field Day in **ONE WEEK**! Enjoy a guided tour of Borderview Research Farm in Alburgh, learn about on-farm trials, and connect with the local community. This year, experience more live demonstrations of cutting-edge technology and in-the-field skills than ever before!

In the afternoon, attend one of the following engaging breakout sessions.



Fresh Vegetables: The Taste of Texture

- Roy Desrochers, UVM Extension Sensory Expert
- Hillary Emick, UVM Extension E.E. Cummings Crop Testing Laboratory Manager
- John Bruce, UVM Extension Research Specialist



Precision Agriculture Technology: Innovative Approaches to On-Farm Management

- Jeff Sanders, UVM Extension Agronomy Specialist
- Daniel Bliss, UVM Extension Precision Ag Specialist



Let's Get Physical: Soil Testing Demos with UVM's SHREC Team and NRCS

- Joshua Faulkner, SHREC Director
- Deb Neher, SHREC Associate Director
- Marie English, SHREC Lab Manager
- Ben Tukto, Water Quality Research Specialist
- Felix Jimenez, NRCS State Grazing Specialist



Know What You Grow: Plant Identification, Forage Quality & Species Selection

- Kurt Cotanch, Independent Dairy Nutrition Consultant
- Sarah Flack, Independent Livestock Grazing Consultant
- Sara Ziegler, UVM Extension Research Specialist
- Amber Blodgett, UVM Extension Dairy Research Specialist



Seed to Sovereignty: How Hemp and Flax Foster Resilience at the Regional Scale

- Laura Sullivan, UVM Extension Hemp Research Specialist

Learn more **Register now**

Enter Your Best Crops at the Addison County Fair & Field Days!

The UVM Extension Champlain Valley Crop, Soil, and Pasture Team **invites farmers to enter the Crop Contest at the Addison County Fair & Field Days**.

Entries are due by noon on August 3 and should be brought to the Jeff Carter Crop Exhibit (north end of the 4-H Exhibit Building). Crops will be judged on quality, maturity, moisture, uniformity, and freedom from defects and contamination. Click below to learn more.

Crop Contest Entry Information

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.

Heather, Ann, and the three additional 2026 inductees will be celebrated with family and friends at a luncheon on September 2, 2026, during the Champlain Valley Fair. Click below to learn more.

Read the Full Article

Future-Ready Dairy Farm Tour Series Recap

In June and July, our Future-Ready Dairy Farm Tour Series highlighted four farms implementing innovative practices to build more resilient, efficient, and profitable dairy operations. Click below for the event recaps.



Resource Recovery in Action: Recycling Water for Pasture Irrigation
Severy Farm, LLC, Cornwall, VT
Thursday, June 25

Event Recap on Facebook



Precision Agriculture in Action: Robotic Weeding on Dairy Farms & Herd Health Monitoring Systems
Henry Bros. Wolf Ridge Dairy and Ladd Farm, Alburgh, VT
Tuesday, June 30

Event Recap on Facebook

National Cover Crop Variety Testing Program Recruiting Farmers for 2026-2027 Season

The National Cover Crop Variety Testing Program from the Center of Regenerative Agriculture at the University of Missouri aims to identify how new and existing cover crop varieties perform in a wide variety of locations across the country to help farmers, crop advisors, and members of the seed industry with decision making.

The program is now recruiting farmers to participate in the 2026-2027 growing season and is offering seven fall-planted, annual cover crop types to test. For each cover crop type you choose to test, you will receive three varieties. Using a scale of 1 to 5, you will be asked to rate a) fall establishment before first frost; b) winter hardiness shortly after spring greenup; and c) biomass, weed control, and maturity right before termination.

Want to learn more and participate? Click below.

Learn more **Enroll**

SHREC Lab Now Accepting CEMA 216 Soil Samples

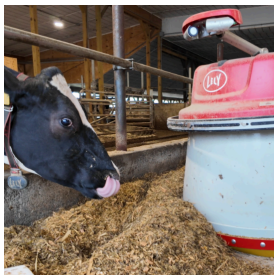
The UVM Soil Health Research and Extension Center (SHREC) lab is now accepting soil samples that meet NRCS Conservation Evaluation and Monitoring Activity (CEMA) 216 requirements. Farmers enrolling in the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and the new Regenerative Pilot Program (RPP) are 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, July 29, 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Topic: Automation in the Barn: Lely's Approach to Smarter Barn Management
Speakers: Chris Hill, Lely New England

Automation is reshaping how dairy farmers manage daily operations — from milking to feeding to monitoring herd health. Presenter Chris Hill will explore how farms across New England are using Lely's robotic systems and the real-world impacts on labor efficiency, animal welfare, and farm productivity. Topics will include robotic milking systems, automated barn management tools, and considerations for farms exploring automation for the first time.

Watch Previous Webinars **Register Now**

VT Public Banking Congress Presented by the White River Natural Resources Conservation District

This August, White River NRCD is hosting the VT Public Banking Congress, a two-day gathering to explore how public banking can support resilient farms, thriving communities, and a stronger Vermont economy.

Farm Resiliency Bus Tour & Farmer Dinner
Tuesday, August 4, 12:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.
Lake Morey Resort, 82 Clubhouse Road, Fairlee, Vermont, 05045

Public Banking Congress
Wednesday, August 5, 9:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.
Vermont Law & Graduate School, 164 Chelsea St, South Royalton, VT 05068, and Fable Farm, 22 Orchard Hill Rd, Barnard, VT 05031

Learn More & Register

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**

Research Spotlight



Double Duty: Cover Cropping for Forage Production

By Elizabeth M. Seyler and the NWCS Team

Vermont already has one of the highest cover crop adoption rates in the country. Planting annuals as dual-purpose crops—as cover crops and forage crops—may increase their direct economic value to farms. Dr. Heather Darby and the NWCS team wrote on the topic for the book *Cover Crops for Sustainable Soil Management* (Burleigh Dodds Science Publishing, 2026). Chapter 6, titled “The Role of Cover Crops in Forge Production,” describes dual-purpose cover cropping (aka double cropping) and associated management practices such as species selection, nutrient management, harvesting, storage, and feeding. The chapter also explores examples of double cropping on Vermont farms.

Read the Full Article

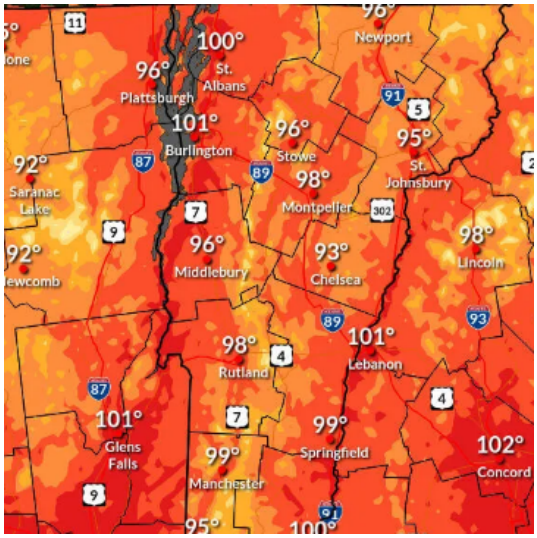
Outcroppings Blog



Recap: First Public Demonstration of Autonomous Weeding Robots in Vermont

On June 30, UVM Extension NWCS hosted the first public demonstration of its fleet of BOTONY autonomous weeding robots from Greenfield Robotics. More than 45 farmers, researchers, government agency employees, and community members gathered in Alburgh to watch the robots mow weeds between rows of soybean plants.

Read the Full Article



How to Keep You, Your Family, and Your Employees Safe During Extreme Heat

This article contains reminders to keep you, your family and friends, and your employees safe in extreme heat. This guidance was compiled by Extension Professor Vern Grubinger.

Read the Full Article

Photos





Folks gathered at Henry Bros. Wolfridge Dairy Farm on June 30 to see autonomous weeding robots in action in Vermont for the first time. Stonyfield Organic devised names for and attached name plates to each one.





Guests tasted cheese and donned their booties for biosecurity at the Future-Ready Dairy Farm Tour at Stonypond Farm in Fairfield on Thursday, July 9.

Subscribe

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