



University of Vermont

Extension

College of Agriculture and Life Sciences

## **Vermont Vegetable and Berry News – February 2, 2026**

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<https://www.uvm.edu/extension/horticulture/commercial>

This issue focuses on information resources, upcoming educational events, and surveys. Reports from the field will resume next month.

### **VVBGA 2026 ANNUAL MEETING [SLIDES ARE POSTED](#)**

### **HIGH TUNNEL GUIDANCE**

Get your tunnel heating system ready. [Blog post](#)

Getting started with growth chambers. [Blog post](#)

Guidelines and tips for scouting high tunnel crops. [Fact sheet](#)

Preparing high tunnels for extreme weather. [Blog post](#)

Soil testing in high tunnels. [Fact sheet](#)

### **FREE ON-LINE CROP PRODUCTION GUIDES**

[New England Vegetable Management Guide](#)

[New England Small Fruit Management Guide](#)

[Northeast Strawberry Production Guide](#)

[New England Tree Fruit Management Guide](#)

[Crop-by-Crop Guide for Small to Medium Size Vegetable Farms](#)

Latest Podcast Episode's: <https://www.thefarmersshare.com>

Visiting Stones Throw Farmstead: EP38

Field Walk – Produce and Popcorn with Ashley at Hurricane Flats Farm: EP37

Growing, Drying and Selling Medicinal Herbs with Jeff of Zack Woods Herb Farm: EP36

### **FUNDING UPDATES FOR VERMONT FARMS**

You can influence how 2027 Vermont Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) funds are spent through the Locally Led Conservation process! NRCS and the conservation districts are separate organizations that work together to address conservation across agricultural and natural landscapes. Conservation districts across Vermont gather input from communities on how EQIP funding should be spent on priority resource concerns within that district.

Example EQIP practices on vegetable farms are cover crops for addressing soil erosion and high tunnels for addressing plant health. Farms may be familiar with the conservation work of their district (e.g. riparian plantings, tree sales, public workshops), but not the local EQIP fund pool. Here is the [list of surveys and meetings](#) where you can give input is here: If you don't know which conservation district you are located in, [this map](#) lists them, and Vermont NRCS offices.

Please reach out for help navigating funding at any point in the process, from talking through ideas to reviewing content for applications! Julie Callahan- help with any type of funding for your farm- [Julie.Callahan@uvm.edu](mailto:Julie.Callahan@uvm.edu). Rachel Stievater- help understanding and accessing NRCS programs- [Rachel.Stievater@uvm.edu](mailto:Rachel.Stievater@uvm.edu). We also maintain a [full list of funding opportunities](#).

**VVBGA GROWER WEBINARS.** Wednesday noon-1:00. Free. [Pre-register here](#). Recordings get posted on [YouTube](#).

February 11. Go with the flow- Improving High Tunnel Ventilation  
February 18. High tunnel innovations: farmer lightening round  
February 25. What's the buzz about? Promoting pollinator health on vegetable farms  
March 4. Understanding wholesale distribution options and costs  
March 11. What's that spot? Organic tunnel management of powdery mildew and other foliar diseases  
March 18. Produce Safety audits and traceability for wholesale markets  
March 25. Crimp, rip, or strip: innovative cover cropping for soil health  
April 1. Introducing the Vermont Herb Growers Initiative  
April 8. Organic potato pest and disease management  
April 15. Tunnelling forward: learning from high tunnel tomato enterprise budgets  
April 22. Soil health bang for your buck  
April 29. Plastic mulches in vegetable production: sources, alternatives, pros and cons

### **WEBINARS FOR FRUIT GROWERS**

Wednesdays noon to 1:00. One webinar: \$10. Three webinars: \$25. All webinars: \$40

February 4. Management of Up and Coming Strawberry Diseases in the Northeast  
February 11. Kiwiberry Production in the Northeast and Aroniaberry Production  
February 18. Heat Mitigation: Sunburn and Fruit Coloring  
February 25. Updates in Lepidopteran Mating Disruption.  
March 4. USEPA Endangered Species Act Strategies and Pesticide Use  
March 11. Practical Drought Management for Fruit Growers

### **NOFA-VT WINTER CONFERENCE**

February 14-15. St. Michael's College, Burlington VT

### **NO-TILL AND COVER CROP CONFERENCE**

February 19. DoubleTree Hotel, Burlington VT. This year's event features a vegetable farm track!

## **STATEWIDE MEETINGS TO LEARN ABOUT FSA AND NRCS PROGRAMS**

The sessions listed below will help farmers learn about Farm Service Agency and Natural Resources Conservation Service programs. Come hear from a farmer and their NRCS Conservation Planner, FSA staff, and get support on-the-spot with filling out the paperwork to be eligible for funding. The sessions are free, and include light lunch, but space is limited and [pre-registration](#) is required. Questions?

[Rachel.Stievater@uvm.edu](mailto:Rachel.Stievater@uvm.edu)

Thursday March 5. Brattleboro  
Tuesday March 17. Middlebury  
Tuesday March 24. St. Johnsbury  
Thursday April 2. Williston  
Tuesday April 7. St. Albans  
Thursday April 9. Morrisville

**VERMONT PESTICIDE EDUCATION [WEBINARS](#)**, noon-1:00. Fee: \$15 per webinar.

Questions? [sarah.kingsley@uvm.edu](mailto:sarah.kingsley@uvm.edu) or (802) 656-0475

March 3. Endangered Species Act Overview  
March 10. PFAS and Pesticides  
March 17. The Cost of Pesticide Disposal  
March 24. Insects and Mites in Trees and Shrubs  
March 31. Tree Diseases Review and Outlook

## **2026 INITIAL PESTICIDE APPLICATOR CERTIFICATION [MEETINGS](#)**

April 7. 9:00-4:00 in-person at Rutland, Brattleboro, St. Johnsbury, or Burlington

This is for anyone who uses, supervises, recommends, or sells pesticides and/or trains Worker Protection Standard pesticide handlers/agricultural workers in Vermont. The fee is \$50; after April 1, \$70. No walk-ins. The Vermont Pesticide Applicator Core Exam for new applicators will be offered, after a review of the Northeast Core Manual and inserts. To pass the test you need to purchase and read the [core manual](#) (\$49) and download the free “[required inserts for study](#)” in advance of the meeting.

## **IMPROVING END OF LIFE OUTCOMES FOR PLASTIC MULCH [WEBINARS](#)**

Free, preregistration required. Questions? [n.shcherbatyuk@wsu.edu](mailto:n.shcherbatyuk@wsu.edu)

Feb. 3. Mulch Film Recycling by Gene Jones, SWIX  
Feb.17. Recycling through Mechanization by Ben Andros, Andros Engineering  
March 10. Plastics and Sustainability in the Strawberry Industry by Hillary Thomas, Naturipe  
March 24. Biodegradable Mulch by Shuresh Ghimire, University of Connecticut  
April 7. Economic Considerations by Suzette Galinato, Washington State University  
May 5. Circularity and Extended Producer Responsibility by Pierre Sarazin, PolyExpert

## **THE FARMERS SHAR PODCAST [LISTENER SURVEY](#)**

Help us evaluate how useful this podcast is as an educational resource. Haven't listened yet? Check out the list of [farmer interviews](#) you can download for free.

### **TILE DRAINAGE SURVEY FOR VT AND NY FARMERS:**

The goal is to understand the extent of tile drainage on farms, the ways and reasons it is utilized, and the benefits and challenges to crop production and related field practices. Questions? Kirsten Workman [kw566@cornell.edu](mailto:kw566@cornell.edu)

### **FARMER ERGONOMICS SURVEY FOR VT FARMERS**

A student in the UVM Occupational Therapy program is conducting research to understand how farmers learn about and use information related to ergonomics. They want to understand the common areas of work-related discomfort, and how farmers use their knowledge of ergonomics. They will be creating an educational resource for farmers. Questions? [Mackenzie.Lopes@uvm.edu](mailto:Mackenzie.Lopes@uvm.edu)