



# Words of Windham

April 2008

A Newsletter For People Who Care About Agriculture

## ***Towns of Windham County— Highlights of an Agricultural Town and a local Farmer in Sterling- Oneco, Connecticut***

The Town of Sterling was Incorporated on May 4, 1794 after a separation from Voluntown was approved by the CT Assembly. The town was named after Dr. John Sterling who had promised the town a library in return for the honor of having the town named after him. Unfortunately he did not provide a library as promised. The library was eventually built through private donations. Sterling Hill which is located in the western part of town, is the original settlement and there is also a village that is today known as Oneco. This village was named after Owaneco, son of the Mohegan Indian Sachem Uncas, who in colonial days had claimed ownership of large tracts of eastern Connecticut land. The town hall resides in the village of Oneco, referred to by some residents as the “Capitol of Sterling.” The town is located on the border of Rhode Island, it is an area of 27.24 miles and a population of approximately 3,300 people. The principal industries are dairy farming and manufacturing. Sterling is also the home of Falls Creek Farm where you can watch horseshows and visit the largest asparagus farm in New England. \*

\*(information provided from the Town of Sterling website)

One of the local farmers who resides in Oneco is Wayne Hansen. He and his wife Marilyn run **Wayne's Organic Garden**, which is located at 1080 Plainfield Pike (Rt. 14A) in Oneco. Wayne has been a “Certified Organic Farmer” since 1989. He is the longest “Certified Organic” farmer in eastern Connecticut. At their farm they sell organic vegetable plants from the second week of May through the first week of June. By the second week of June his business is primarily at the local farmers markets. You can meet Wayne at the Danielson Farmers Market on Saturdays, The Putnam Farmers Market on Thursday evenings from 4:00-6:00 p.m. and the Old Saybrook Farmers market on Wednesday mornings. He sells all types of organic produce and has some unusual varieties as well, such as cippolini onions, fava beans, radicchio, fingerling potato's, sungold cherry tomatoes, garlic and shallots. Wayne is also active in sharing his knowledge of organic farming as a teacher in the Master Gardeners Program. You may visit his website at [waynesorganicgarden.com](http://waynesorganicgarden.com).

With the growing season just around the corner, be sure to take a drive to the beautiful and historic Town of Sterling and visit Wayne's Organic Garden, Betsy's Stand on Rt. 49, Ekonk Hill Turkey Farm and Café on Ekonk Hill Rd., Falls Creek Farm on Bailey Rd., or perhaps you'll meet Russell Gray who is 1st Selectman of Sterling and with his family owns and operates Gray's Dairy Farm on Ekonk Hill Rd.

*Remember to support our local producers*



## Beware of Crop Insurance Rebating Schemes

The USDA and Crop insurance agents have become aware of a serious issue regarding the spring sales closing date for many Federal crop insurance policies. The Risk Management Agency (RMA) has received reports from the producers and agents that some aggressive marketers have been approaching producers with rebate offers. These schemes promise lower insurance premiums, re-funds, dividends, or items of value tied to crop insurance purposes. Beware, most of these activities are illegal.

RMA reminds all Federal crop insurance program participants that it is now coordinating with state regulators to take appropriate regulatory action against all those who are found to promote or participate in such schemes. Producers who are found to participate in illegal rebating activities will not only lose their crop insurance coverage but will also lose eligibility in all USDA programs. Producers and agents can report suspicions of illegal rebating to the OIG Hotline: 1-800-424-9121.



### Acreage Reporting

Acreage reporting time is just around the corner. Please remember that filing an accurate acreage report for all crops and land uses, including failed acreage and prevented planting acreage, can prevent the loss of benefits for a variety of programs. Acreage reports are required for many Farm Service Agency programs. For crops other than NAP (Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program) crops, acreage reports are to be certified by the July 15, 2008 deadline. Acreage reports on crops for which NAP assistance may be paid are due in the county office by the earlier of July 15, 2008, or 15 calendar days before the onset of harvest or grazing of the specific crop acreage being reported.

### Dairy Disaster Assistance Payment Program (DDAP-III)

Benefits are eligible to dairy producers who suffered dairy production losses as a result of natural disasters occurring during the period of January 1, 2005 through December 31, 2007. Producers must meet eligibility requirements.

- \*Proof of production & marketed milk period of 1/2/05-12/30/07.
- \*Suffered dairy production losses attributed to natural disaster in eligible period.
- \*Producer must not have received disaster payments for same losses under previous disaster program.
- \* Must provide proof of average number of cows, annual milk production marketed during years of 2003- 2004 & applicable disaster year.

The County FSA office is accepting applications (Form FSA-747) through May 5, 2008, (860) 774-8397, ext. 1 for more information.

**Low interest loans are available from FSA.** Whether you need a loan to fund your spring planting needs, upgrade your farm equipment or expand your farming operation, we may be able to assist you. The Commodity Credit Corporation announced the interest rate for loans disbursed during March 2008 is 3.125 percent, down from 4.125 percent in February 2008. Further information is available from Ron Clark at (860) 887-9941, ext. 105.

The interest rate for Farm Storage Facility Loans is 3.125 percent, down from 3.50 percent in February 2008. For further information contact the Brooklyn FSA Office at (860) 774-8397, ext. 1.

***All NAP (Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program)  
Participants***

**Reminder:** To remain eligible for NAP, a producer must annually report the crop, including: type, variety, location, producer shares, date planted and the intended use (fresh, processed, etc.). Once the crop is harvested the production must also be reported. In the event of a crop failure caused by natural disaster, the producer needs to notify the local FSA office by completing a "Notice of Loss" (form CCC-576). The notice of loss must be executed within 15 days of the date the damage became apparent.

***The Connecticut Department of Agriculture announces  
New Farmers' Markets looking for Vendors***

There are several new Farmer's Markets opening throughout the State and they are looking for farmers and vendors to participate. If you are interested in participating in local Farmer's markets, marketing your produce, milk products, maple products, plants, etc., please contact Rick Macsuga at (860) 713-2544 or Richard.Macsuga@ct.gov, or Mark Zotti, (860) 713-2538 or Mark.Zotti@ct.gov. for more information.

***Earth Day—April 22, 2008***  
***A day dedicated to the environmental health of our planet.***

*Earth Day was first observed on April 22, 1970. Senator Gaylord Nelson of Wisconsin is considered the founder of Earth Day. It was his idea for a nationwide demonstration in support of the Earth's environment. Today there are more than 500 million people in 141 countries participating. Some people observe Earth Day on March 21st and many times activities go on for weeks or months. This is a good time for us all to participate in some kind of environmental activities, such as recycling, protecting endangered species and water supplies, conserving energy, or volunteering in our local communities in their Earth Day programs.*

*Many of our local farmers follow "green" agricultural practices throughout the year such as **low tillage, drip irrigation systems, manure management systems, use of buffer areas to reduce soil erosion, nutrient management, protect wetlands and prevent stream sedimentation.** Many are preserving grasslands and conserving lands for wildlife habitat.*

*Through the USDA's Section 9006: Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Program there are loans, loan guarantees and grants available to farmers, ranchers and rural small businesses to purchase renewable energy systems and make energy efficiency improvements such as: wind power systems, solar power systems, geothermal, hybrid and biomass such as (biodiesel production, ethanol production, solid fuel and thermal conversion). USDA also leads efforts to accelerate renewable fuels, and lessen greenhouse gas emissions. Agriculture Secretary Ed Schafer states that "in rural America, USDA remains at the center of the national commitment to expand the use of renewable energy and reduce our dependence on imported oil." If you have any questions or would like additional information, please contact our Southern NE Rural Development Office at (860) 859-5218 or you may view information on the USDA website at <http://www.usda.gov/rus>.*

**USDA to Measure Maple Syrup Production**

When the sugaring season winds down in April, approximately 2,200 questionnaires will be mailed to NE Producers. The information collected will be kept strictly confidential and used by USDA's NE Agricultural Statistics in the publishing of the official USDA maple production statistics for five NE states (excluding RI). The statistics generated are the basis for many decisions made by producers and maple industry representatives throughout the region. National results will be available in the Crop Production Report from Washington D.C., on June 10, 2008 and available on the internet at [www.nass.usda.gov](http://www.nass.usda.gov). All sugar producers be sure to complete and return your questionnaire.

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## **Renewable Energy** **How can you make it happen?**

**April 4, 2008**  
**9:00 a.m. -noon**  
**Brooklyn Agricultural Center**  
**139 Wolf Den Rd.**

### Renewable Energy Funding Options

- Johan Strandson, USDA Rural Development
- Dave Ljungquist, CT Clean Energy Fund
- Nancy Ferlow, USDA-NRCS

### Panel Discussion

- Richard Springer, Aegis
- Jodi Gold, Solar Works
- Solar Wrights



### Participant sharing of projects

**Sponsored by: Windham County Food & Agriculture Council (WCF & AC)**

**For Information Contact: 774-8397, ext. 1**

## **April Events**

**April 1st: Farm Emergencies: Are You Prepared?:** Sponsored by CT Farm Bureau's Women's Leadership Committee, from 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., at The Gallery in Glastonbury. To register or more info. contact Gini Nagy, (860) 298-4400 or ginin@cfba.org.

**April 9th: Marketing Tour-Expanding into New Markets:** Start an newsletter, develop your website. How to get into retail and wholesale markets? Visits to: Beltown Hill Orchard, (newsletter & website), Connecticut Creative Store (getting into retail markets), and the Firebox Restaurant, (Farm to Chef Program). Contact Norm Bender @ 860-885-2827 or Norman.bender@uconn.edu.

**April 10th: Eastern CT Forest Landowners Assoc., Annual Mtg. & Potluck Supper.** 6:00 dinner, 7:00 Bus. Mtg., 7:30 Speaker Dr. Kirby C. Stafford III, speaking on Lyme disease & other tick related diseases. At Windham Cty. Agric. Ctr. Public welcome. Contact & information: [www.ecfla.org](http://www.ecfla.org)

**May 2nd and 3rd: 54th Annual Windham County 4-H Auction and Tag Sale:** 326 Taft Pond Rd., Pomfret, New Goods-Used Goods—Gift Certificates. Hours: Starts at noon Friday & Saturday. To donate please call 974-3379 and leave a message to arrange the pick up of donated items or to schedule a delivery. Items will be accepted at camp beginning April 12th. Donations are tax deductible.

**CT RC&D:** CT Dept. of Environmental Protection has commissioned a feasibility study— Nutrient Management in Eastern CT managing dairy and poultry manure. For more info. go to [www.ctnm.org](http://www.ctnm.org).

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**P.O. Box 399, Brooklyn, CT 06234**  
**PH: 860-774-8397 x 1**

### **OFFICE STAFF:**

**Dawn S. Pindell**, County Executive Director x 109  
**Diane C. Holowaty**, Program Technician x 111  
**Maureen B. Fontneau**, Program Technician x110  
Office Hours: 7:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

**Ron Clark**, Farm Loan Manager  
860-887-3604 x 105

### **COUNTY COMMITTEE:**

**Harold Bishop**, Chairman  
**Betsy Molodich**,  
Vice-Chairman  
**Charles Tyler**, Regular  
Member