

**THE GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL FOR
AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT**



Grow Connecticut Farms

*a strategic plan for agriculture
developed by farmers for farmers*

CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

ABOUT THE COUNCIL

- Reshaped through Public Act 11-189
- Governor Malloy and legislative leaders appointed members—mostly farmers--in late 2011
- Appointed members serve without compensation and commit their time, energy, and expertise to help shape and strengthen the future of Connecticut agriculture

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ABOUT THE COUNCIL

CHAIRMAN

Commissioner Steven K. Reviczky
Connecticut Department of Agriculture

VICE CHAIRMEN

Executive Director Henry Talmage
Connecticut Farm Bureau Association

Dean Gregory J. Weidemann, Ph.D.
UConn College of Agriculture and Natural Resources

MEMBERS

- **Allyn L. Brown, III**, Maple Lane Farms
- **James F. Guida**, Guida's Dairy
- **George Hindinger**, Hindinger Farm
- **Jason Hoagland**, CT Ag Education Foundation
- **Herb Holden Jr.**, Broad Brook Beef
- **Jamie Jones**, Jones Family Farms
- **Michael T. Keilty**, Maple Spring Farms
- **Shelly Oechsler**, Botticello Farms
- **Peter Orr**, Fort Hill Farms
- **Kevin Sullivan Jr.**, Chestnut Hill Nursery

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ABOUT THE COUNCIL

Public Act 11-189 gave the council two specific charges:

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ABOUT THE COUNCIL

1. Make recommendations to the Department of Agriculture on ways to **increase** the percentage of **consumer dollars spent on Connecticut Grown** fresh produce and farm products . . . **by 2020, to not less than five per cent** of all money spent by such residents on food.

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ABOUT THE COUNCIL

2. Make recommendations concerning the **development, diversification and promotion** of agricultural products, programs, and enterprises in this state and shall provide for an **interchange of ideas** from the various commodity groups and organizations represented.

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ABOUT THE COUNCIL

- Convened in January 2012
- Resolved to develop the first-ever holistic strategic plan for Connecticut agriculture, **Grow Connecticut Farms**

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THE STRATEGIC PLAN

- Researched models successful in other states
- Developed strategy for Connecticut's unique and diverse industry, incorporating food and non-food sectors
- Established results-based framework

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THE STRATEGIC PLAN

COMPONENTS

- Stakeholder Input
- Research
- Recommendation Development
- Strategic Plan Refinement

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STAKEHOLDER INPUT

- In-depth information interviews (55)
- Online survey (232 completed)
- Regional listening sessions (4)
- Topic-focused meetings (6 topics/2 days)
- Town hall style meeting (today)

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INITIAL FINDINGS

TOP OPPORTUNITIES

1. Market demand (180)
2. Consumer knowledge of Connecticut Grown products (157)
3. Geography (153)
4. Market supply (48)
5. Access to credit/financing (46) *tied with* Land availability (46)

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INITIAL FINDINGS

TOP OBSTACLES

1. Input costs (164)
2. Regulations (148)
3. Land availability (98) *tied with* Infrastructure gaps (98)
5. Market competition (89)

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STAKEHOLDER INPUT

TOPIC-FOCUSED MEETINGS

1. Farm-to-institution markets and infrastructure
2. Marketing and consumer education/training
3. Input costs, labor, and regulatory environment
4. Farmland resources
5. Producer education/training
6. Food security and urban agriculture

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RESEARCH

- UCONN Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics determined baseline and methodology to measure increases in consumer spending on Connecticut Grown farm products
- Additional research ongoing as needed to measure progress and outcomes

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2012 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Study infrastructure gaps and opportunities for the aggregation, light processing, and distribution of Connecticut Grown products.
2. Develop and invest in a comprehensive marketing strategy for Connecticut agriculture.
3. Create an agriculture-friendly energy policy that includes agricultural net metering for power production and transmission, and qualification of agricultural anaerobic digestion projects for zero-emissions renewable energy credits (ZRECs).

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2012 RECOMMENDATIONS

4. Strengthen the state Department of Agriculture and improve coordination among all agencies regulating agricultural businesses.
5. Perform a comprehensive review of agricultural labor issues and develop initiatives that provide an adequate workforce for Connecticut farm businesses.
6. Increase weight limits on truck loads to be consistent with surrounding states.

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2012 RECOMMENDATIONS

7. Establish a bridge between the state departments of Agriculture and Education through a dedicated agricultural education coordinator, and develop ways to integrate agriculture into Connecticut's K-12 curriculum.

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2013 WORKING GROUPS

1. Farm-to-Institution Subgroup A
(public K-12 schools and state institutions)
2. Farm-to-Institution Subgroup B
(private K-12 schools, higher ed., healthcare, and corporate)
3. Farm-to-Institution Subgroup C (restaurants)
4. Consumer Education and Training

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2013 WORKING GROUPS

5. Research
6. Food Security
7. Marketing
8. Agricultural Business Environment

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2013 WORKING GROUPS

9. Planning and Coordination
10. Agricultural Resources and Investments
11. Agriculture and Food Infrastructure
12. Producer Education and Training

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2013 RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Farm-to-Institution A and B:** Modify Connecticut General Statutes [Section 4a-51\(b\)](#) to include the following: "At least 5 percent of purchases must be Connecticut Grown farm products" and implement a certification process for wholesalers.
- **Farm-to-Institution C:** In Connecticut General Statutes [Section 22-38b\(d\)](#), change the name of the program "Connecticut Farm Fresh Restaurant" to "Connecticut Farm-to-Chef Restaurant" to better align with the Department of Agriculture's existing Farm-to-Chef Program, and work with the agency's Farm-to-Chef advisory group to develop criteria for implementation of a one-, two-, or three-fork restaurant certification within that program.
- **Consumer Education and Training :** Create within the Connecticut State Department of Education a full-time agricultural education coordinator responsible for creating and maintaining a web-based tool kit of curriculum for K-12 educators to use in core subject examples and assignments.

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2013 RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Research:** Create an agricultural innovation initiative that is a partnership among Connecticut's private industry, state government, and educational institutions, including both public and private colleges and universities throughout the state.
- **Food Security:** Enhance enforcement of Connecticut General Statutes [Section 22-38\(b\)](#), and develop a pilot program to certify Connecticut Grown markets based upon Connecticut General Statutes [Section 22-38b\(c\)](#), changing the program name from "Connecticut Farm Fresh Market" to "Connecticut Grown Market," to better align with the existing Connecticut Grown Program, and revising the 15 percent stocking requirement to one appropriate for Connecticut Grown production.
- **Marketing:** Conduct research that will enhance the multiyear, state-wide Connecticut Grown marketing and advertising campaign in Connecticut General Statutes [Section 22-38a](#).

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2013 RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Agricultural Business Environment:** Support on-farm biomass energy projects that do not consume prime and important farmland and explore the carve-out of an AgREC within the LREC system.
- **Agricultural Business Environment and Planning and Coordination:** Improve coordination among all state agencies with involvement in agricultural issues through designation of an agricultural liaison in each.
- **Agricultural Resources and Investments:** Inventory state-owned land and put an additional 4,000 acres into leases with farmers for agricultural production by the end of 2015.

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2013 RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Agriculture and Food Infrastructure:** Explore potential at the state-owned Hartford Regional Market for light processing facilities that would enable Connecticut farmers to reduce waste, expand offerings, and augment income through production and sale of value-added products.
- **Producer Education and Training:** Develop agricultural internship programs through partnerships between Connecticut's farms and educational institutions—including both public and private colleges and universities—and enhance Cooperative Extension focus on programs that educate farmers about continually changing challenges related to climate, insects, and diseases.
- **Farm to Institution A and B, Food Security, and Agricultural Business Environment:** Assist agricultural producers with Food Safety Modernization Act education and compliance through existing programs; consider development of a new program dedicated to this purpose.

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2014 WORKING GROUPS

FOOD SAFETY MODERNIZATION

- Study proposed Food Safety Modernization Act rules
- Gather input from producers on concerns about those rules
- ID gaps/extraordinary costs for producers to comply with rules

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2014 WORKING GROUPS

INFRASTRUCTURE AND WHOLESALE MARKETS

- Gather producer input on wants/needs for processing, aggregation, storage, and associated business models
- ID/study models for cooperatives, nonprofits, public/private aggregation, storage, distribution, marketing, etc.

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2014 WORKING GROUPS

PRODUCER EDUCATION AND INNOVATION

- Gather producer input on education, research, and development needs
- ID gaps in producer education, research, and development
- ID potential partnerships for providing that education, research, and development

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2014 WORKING GROUPS

MARKETING

- ID Connecticut Grown sectors and marketing messages
- ID potential partnerships for message dissemination

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TODAY'S EVENT

A 90-minute session dedicated each group's assignment:

1. Introduction
2. Public Input
3. Panel Discussion

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NEXT STEPS

- Each group will continue to meet in February and March, reporting back to the Governor's Council for Agricultural Development (GCAD)
- GCAD will consider input from all groups, how it overlaps and fits together, and develop its 2014 recommendations to the Connecticut Department of Agriculture
- GCAD will issue an update to **Grow Connecticut Farms** strategic plan in late 2014

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UPDATES AND INFORMATION

- www.CTGrown.gov/GovernorsCouncil
- www.GrowConnecticutFarms.com
- Connecticut Weekly Agricultural Report

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FOOD SAFETY MODERNIZATION

SESSION COMPONENTS

- Introduction
- Public Input
- Panel Discussion

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FOOD SAFETY MODERNIZATION

INTRODUCTION

- Commissioner Reviczky
- Diane Hirsch, University of Connecticut Extension
- Willie Dellacamera, Cecarelli Farm

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FOOD SAFETY MODERNIZATION

GROUP'S ASSIGNMENTS:

- Study proposed Food Safety Modernization Act rules
- Gather input from producers on concerns about those rules
- ID gaps/extraordinary costs for producers to comply with rules

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FOOD SAFETY MODERNIZATION

PUBLIC INPUT: QUESTIONS

- Where do you get most of your FSMA and/or other food-safety related information?
- Proposed FSMA rules may affect all agricultural producers. What is the best means of providing information and training to reach all agricultural stakeholders?
- Do you prefer information through list-serves, in-person training, webinars, etc.?

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FOOD SAFETY MODERNIZATION

PUBLIC INPUT: QUESTIONS

- While Connecticut agricultural food producers are regulated by three different state agencies, there is only one Cooperative Extension food safety educator.
- Would cost-share assistance offered to producers to hire experts to consult on implementation of new food-safety equipment, practices, procedures, or methods to comply with regulations be advantageous?
- Why or why not?

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FOOD SAFETY MODERNIZATION

PUBLIC INPUT: QUESTIONS

- New food safety regulations may require agricultural producers to performing various monitoring and testing in their operations.
- Would new programs or services that provided reduced-cost verification of compliance in these areas be beneficial?

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FOOD SAFETY MODERNIZATION

PUBLIC INPUT: QUESTIONS

- What are non-GAP audited farmers currently doing to minimize the risks of food borne illness from the fruits and/or vegetables they grow?

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FOOD SAFETY MODERNIZATION

PANEL DISCUSSION: QUESTIONS

- This working group consists of agriculture producers, stakeholders, and regulating state and federal agencies.
- What educational resources are or will be available for FSMA/GAP and food safety assistance?

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FOOD SAFETY MODERNIZATION

PANEL DISCUSSION: QUESTIONS

- One of the larger concerns among agriculture producers is the potential cost to comply with FSMA, and other food safety regulations.
- Is state or federal assistance available to help producers with the cost for consultants, services, and building/equipment upgrades to comply with these regulations?

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FOOD SAFETY MODERNIZATION

PANEL DISCUSSION: QUESTIONS

- Having three state and two federal agencies regulating the marketing, production, and manufacturing of food and food products results in information spread out in many different places.
- If a single clearinghouse for this information could be established, which entity is best suited to provide or coordinate the information and training agricultural producers need to meet food safety regulations?

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FOOD SAFETY MODERNIZATION

PANEL DISCUSSION: QUESTIONS

- How do the state's three food-regulation agencies currently coordinate?
- What coordination opportunities exist for the future?
- Should Connecticut's three-agency food-safety regulation system be examined to determine if it is the best way to provide this oversight?

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FOOD SAFETY MODERNIZATION

FOLLOW UP

- Thank you for participating today
- You will receive an email in a few days that will enable you to submit any other comments/input on this session

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INFRASTRUCTURE / WHOLESALE MKTS

SESSION COMPONENTS

- Introduction
- Public Input
- Panel Discussion

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INFRASTRUCTURE / WHOLESALE MKTS

INTRODUCTION

- Commissioner Reviczky
- Joe Geremia, Geremia Greenhouse
- Stacia Monahan, Stone Gardens Farm
- Kathy Smith, The Farmer's Cow

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INFRASTRUCTURE / WHOLESALE MKTS

GROUP'S ASSIGNMENTS:

- Gather producer input on wants/needs for processing, aggregation, storage, and associated business models
- ID/study models for cooperatives, nonprofits, public/private aggregation, storage, distribution, marketing, etc.

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INFRASTRUCTURE / WHOLESALE MKTS

PUBLIC INPUT: QUESTIONS

- What infrastructure gaps are restricting the growth of your farming operation?

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INFRASTRUCTURE / WHOLESALE MKTS

PUBLIC INPUT: QUESTIONS

- Are you interested in working with other Connecticut producers to aggregate and distribute your farm products to larger wholesale customers such as supermarkets, hospitals, state agencies, corporate cafeterias, and educational facilities?
- If so, how would you manage such an aggregation and distribution system to maximize your bottom line?

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INFRASTRUCTURE / WHOLESALE MKTS

PUBLIC INPUT: QUESTIONS

- Would the availability of inspected processing facilities for rent provide growth opportunities for your farm?
- If so, what types of processing equipment and services provide the greatest opportunities (e.g., chopping, saucing/canning, drying/dehydrating, freezing, recipe development and testing, foodservice labor, etc.)?

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INFRASTRUCTURE / WHOLESALE MKTS

PUBLIC INPUT: QUESTIONS

- How do you want to access such facilities (hourly rental fee, membership, third-party copacker, etc.)?

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INFRASTRUCTURE / WHOLESALE MKTS

PUBLIC INPUT: QUESTIONS

- Would the availability of off-site storage space provide your farm growth opportunities?
- If so, what type(s) of storage (dry, refrigerated, frozen)?

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INFRASTRUCTURE / WHOLESALE MKTS

PANEL DISCUSSION: QUESTIONS

- What specific successful business models currently exist in Connecticut for aggregation and distribution?
- How and by whom are they operated?

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INFRASTRUCTURE / WHOLESALE MKTS

PANEL DISCUSSION: QUESTIONS

- What are the obstacles and opportunities involved with each of the following business models for farm product aggregation and distribution?

Producer cooperatives
Non-profit third parties
For-profit third parties
Other models (specify)

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INFRASTRUCTURE / WHOLESALE MKTS

PANEL DISCUSSION: QUESTIONS

- What specific challenges and opportunities do the following types of processing equipment and services offer Connecticut farmers?

Peeling/chopping/slicing
Saucing/canning
Drying/dehydrating
Freezing
Recipe development and testing
Foodservice labor

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INFRASTRUCTURE / WHOLESALE MKTS

FOLLOW UP

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PRODUCER EDUCATION / INNOVATION

SESSION COMPONENTS

- Introduction
- Public Input
- Panel Discussion

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PRODUCER EDUCATION / INNOVATION

INTRODUCTION

- Commissioner Reviczky
- Joe Geremia, Geremia Greenhouse
- Dr. Richard Fu, Agrivolution
- Gregg Wershoven, Mountaintop Mushrooms

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PRODUCER EDUCATION / INNOVATION

GROUP'S ASSIGNMENTS:

- Gather producer input on education, research, and development needs
- ID gaps in producer education, research, and development
- ID potential partnerships for providing that education, research, and development

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PRODUCER EDUCATION / INNOVATION

PUBLIC INPUT: QUESTIONS

- What specific education and information do you need for yourself as a farm owner, and what do you need to provide your employees?
- Of that needed information, what are you unable to find or easily access?

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PRODUCER EDUCATION / INNOVATION

PUBLIC INPUT: QUESTIONS

- Would an online information portal be of value to your farming operation?
- Would you use it?

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PRODUCER EDUCATION / INNOVATION

PUBLIC INPUT: QUESTIONS

- Do you see a need for or value in on-farm work-study programs within the state?
- If so, what would such a program entail?
- Would you be willing to host such a program at your farm?

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PRODUCER EDUCATION / INNOVATION

PANEL DISCUSSION: QUESTIONS

- If demand and farm hosts for agricultural work-study programs were identified, what educational partners could most efficiently and effectively provide the administrative structure (e.g., state or private universities, community colleges, high schools, producer associations, etc.)?

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PRODUCER EDUCATION / INNOVATION

PANEL DISCUSSION: QUESTIONS

- After gathering input from hundreds of farmers and other stakeholders, the Governor's Council identified the top opportunities for the Connecticut agriculture as market demand, consumer knowledge of Connecticut Grown products, geography, market supply, access to credit/financing, and land availability.
- How can information about these opportunities be most effectively shared with new farmers?
- With existing farmers?

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PRODUCER EDUCATION / INNOVATION

PANEL DISCUSSION: QUESTIONS

- After gathering input from hundreds of farmers and other stakeholders, the Governor's Council identified the top opportunities for the Connecticut agriculture as market demand, consumer knowledge of Connecticut Grown products, geography, market supply, access to credit/financing, and land availability.
- How can information about these opportunities be most effectively shared with new farmers?
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PRODUCER EDUCATION / INNOVATION

PANEL DISCUSSION: QUESTIONS

- If an online information portal were identified by Connecticut farmers as a tool they needed and would use, how could it be established, updated, and maintained in a timely and cost-efficient manner within existing resources?

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PRODUCER EDUCATION / INNOVATION

FOLLOW UP

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MARKETING

SESSION COMPONENTS

- Introduction
- Public Input
- Panel Discussion

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MARKETING

INTRODUCTION

- Commissioner Reviczky
- Randy Fiveash, Connecticut Office of Tourism
- Kevin Donahue, Imperial Nurseries
- Gary Yerman, New London Seafood

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MARKETING

GROUP'S ASSIGNMENTS:

- ID Connecticut Grown sectors and marketing messages
- ID potential partnerships for message dissemination

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MARKETING

PUBLIC INPUT: QUESTIONS

- What products does your farm grow, raise, and/or produce?

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MARKETING

PUBLIC INPUT: QUESTIONS

- Who and where are your customers?
- How and where do they purchase your products?

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MARKETING

PUBLIC INPUT: QUESTIONS

- What motivates your customers to purchase your farm products?
- How have you identified these motivations (e.g., anecdotal comments, informal surveys, formal market research, etc.)?

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MARKETING

PUBLIC INPUT: QUESTIONS

- What additional product types or sectors not yet mentioned does Connecticut agriculture include?

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MARKETING

PANEL DISCUSSION: QUESTIONS

- What are the various sectors or product types included in Connecticut agriculture?

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MARKETING

PANEL DISCUSSION: QUESTIONS

- Who and where are the markets/customers for each of these farm product types?

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MARKETING

PANEL DISCUSSION: QUESTIONS

- What competitive advantage does each Connecticut Grown product type have in its individual market(s)?

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MARKETING

PANEL DISCUSSION: QUESTIONS

- What different marketing messages does each Connecticut Grown farm product type have?

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MARKETING

PANEL DISCUSSION: QUESTIONS

- What common marketing messages do these different Connecticut Grown product types share?

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MARKETING

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