

*Building Resiliency on Northwest  
Connecticut Farmland*  
Climate-Smart Agriculture Grant Program



Northwest Connecticut  
Land Conservancy

PROTECTING LAND AND WATER FOR PEOPLE, FOR WILDLIFE, FOREVER.

An aerial photograph of a valley with rolling hills, a river, and a large field of trees. The scene is captured during the golden hour, with a soft, warm light. The hills are covered in dense green forest, and the river winds through the valley. In the foreground, there is a large, open field with a mix of green and brown patches, possibly a farm or a natural area. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and scenic.

## AGENDA

Introduction

Climate-Smart Agriculture

*Building Resiliency Program*

Assessment Process

Q&A

# Presenters



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# Northwest Connecticut Land Conservancy

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Northwest Connecticut Land Conservancy (NCLC) is a regional land trust serving Litchfield County and northern Fairfield county. Our 13,300 acres of conserved lands serve 200,000 residents and include:

- 3,000 acres of habitat for rare species,
- 45 miles of rivers, lakes, and streams,
- 22 public nature preserves (and growing),
- 48 working farms.



## **Berkshire Agricultural Ventures**

Berkshire Agricultural Ventures is a 501c3 nonprofit organization with the mission is to support the development and viability of local farms and food businesses in order to build a thriving and equitable local food economy. BAV fulfills this mission by providing micro-finance, technical assistance, and educational programming.



# Climate Change Impacts on Farmland

## Loss of Land, Production, and Ecosystems

Including, but not limited to:

- Erosion
- Flooding
- Drought
- Disease Pressure
- Weed Pressure
- Pest Pressure
- Diminishing Biodiversity

The untimely frost in May impacted 1,077 acres of crops and \$8.45 million in losses for producers.

Then in July, CT producers were hit with flooding that resulted in estimated losses of more than 1,500 acres and nearly \$21 million in sales revenue.

# What is Climate-Smart Agriculture?

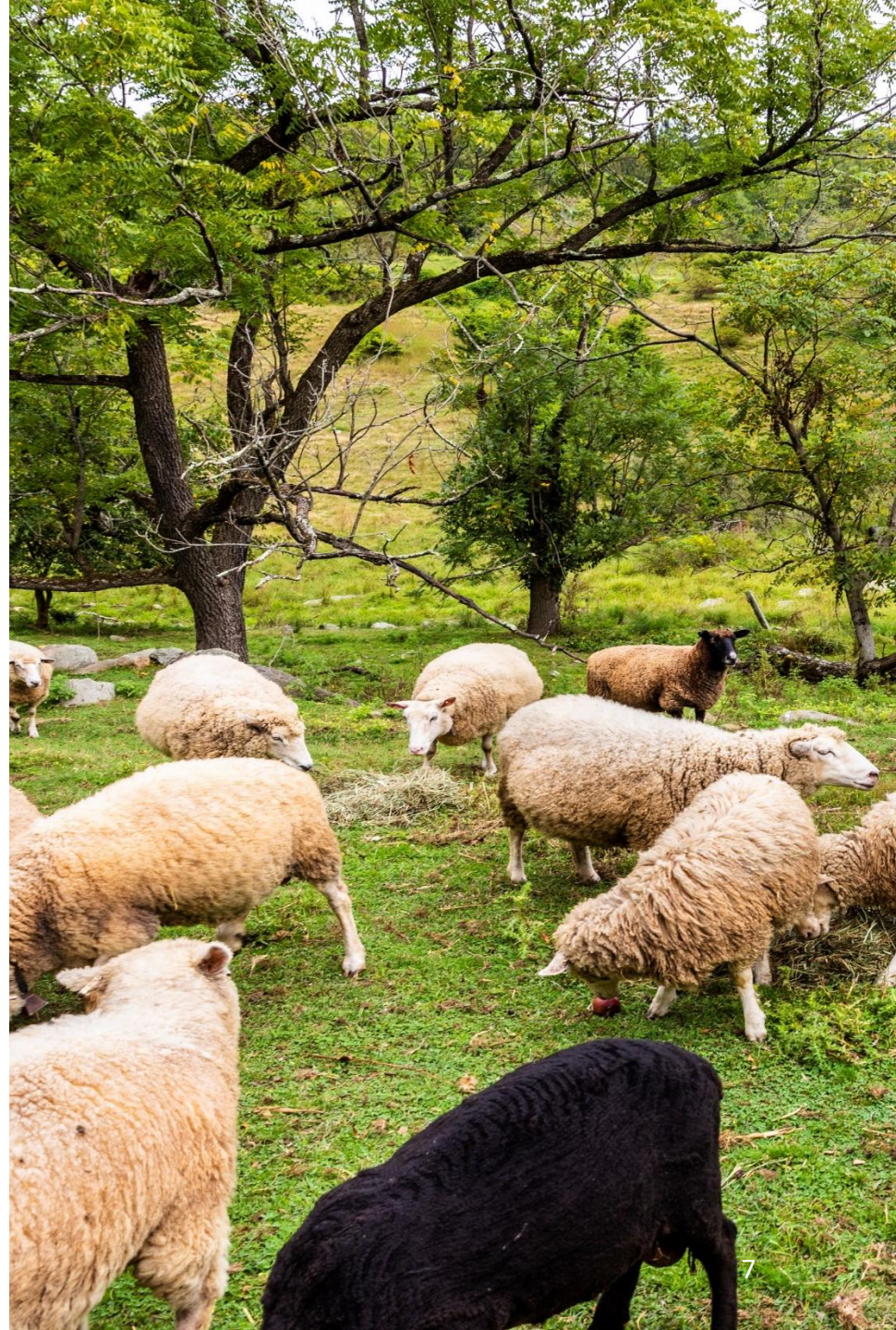
Climate-smart agriculture is an approach to managing working land to help adapt agricultural methods to the effects of climate change and, where possible, counteract it by reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

**The emphasis is on both sustainable agriculture and improving agricultural productivity.**

Activities largely fall into two types:

**Mitigation** – activities that can result in reduction or removal of greenhouse gas emissions or increase carbon sequestration

**Adaptation** – activities to reduce risks and vulnerabilities to a changing climate, build resilience, and help to maintain productivity





## Climate-Smart Agriculture and Forestry (CSAF) Grant Program

- Connecticut Department of Agriculture (DOAG) received 78 applications for \$55M
- Awarded \$7M to 12 applicants
- 5 Subgrant programs based on the mission of the facilitating organization
- Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) [Climate-Smart Agriculture and Forestry Mitigation Activities](#)



# NCLC's Program

- \$750,000 award from the Connecticut Department of Agriculture (DOAG)
- **\$517,500** distributed to farms through assessments and implementation grants
- Supports NCLC's Agricultural Program Manager and other costs of administering the program



An aerial photograph of a rural farmstead. In the center, there is a large white house with a dark roof, a barn, and a tall white silo. The farm is surrounded by green fields and dense forests with trees in various shades of green and brown. The lighting suggests a late afternoon or early morning setting, with long shadows cast across the landscape.

# Building Resiliency Program

- Climate-Smart Agricultural Assessment
- Implementation Grant

# Climate-Smart Agricultural Assessment

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- Funding for 16 additional assessments
- Accepting applications on a **rolling basis**
- Partnering with Berkshire Agricultural Ventures
- Site visit + management plan





## Eligibility

- Own or operate working farmland
- NCLC's service area
  - All of Litchfield County
  - Fairfield County: Sherman, Brookfield, Newtown
- Definition of Agriculture, Conn. Gen. Stat. § 1-1(q)
- Prioritizing applications from limited-resource and underserved producers

# How to Apply

[ctland.org](http://ctland.org)

- Online form
- PDF



# Evaluation Process

- Is the applicant eligible?
- Does the applicant identify a specific area of concern?
- How well does the applicant demonstrate the magnitude of risk?
- Is the applicant interested in applying for an implementation grant?



# Additional Information

Activity	Timeline
Awardee executes agreement with NCLC	Within 1 month of award selection
Awardee and NCLC schedule assessment	Within 2 weeks of agreement
BAV completes climate-smart assessment and management plan	~1 week total
Awardee completes final survey	Within 2 weeks of completed management plan



## Assessment Process

- What happens during a site visit?
- What will be included in the management plan?
- What happens after the management plan is complete?



# Why Assessments?

- These assessments aim to serve as a guided conversation to help each applicant identify the primary extreme weather risks to their operation
- Assessments are applicant-driven, and *not* prescriptive
- Act as a snap-shot (benchmark) of your operation



# Site Visit

- We walk and talk!
- Review and deepen the application
- Expect it to take 1.5-4hrs, depending on size and complexity
- Primarily meet w/Ben or another BAV staff member, and occasionally joined by NCLC partners (we'll check-in first!)
- Take time to visit “trouble spots” or areas in person, discuss what has already been done



# Management Plan

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Ideally contains all the info you need to begin implementation:

- Budget and quotes
- Resources and links for technical info
- Maps or diagrams
- Timelines or significant dates related to implementation
- Measuring and monitoring plan
- Maintenance plan



A scenic landscape at sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a bright sunburst effect with rays of light. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and light blue. Below the horizon, there are rolling hills covered in dense green vegetation. In the foreground, there is a field of tall, green grasses with yellowish-brown seed heads, some of which are slightly blurred, suggesting a gentle breeze. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and natural.

# QUESTION AND ANSWER