

**THE CONNECTICUT COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SYSTEM**  
**University of Connecticut, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources**  
**Response to the Financial Crisis Created by the Current Recession**

The Connecticut Cooperative Extension System (CCES) <http://www.extension.uconn.edu/> creates learning partnerships that enhance the lives of adults and youths for a sustainable future. It is a dynamic organization that strengthens individuals, families, and communities statewide and beyond. Extension programs continually emphasize and promote economic enhancement and sustainability; however, in response to the current financial crisis, additional efforts and emphases have been implemented.

**Impact of the Dairy Industry on the Connecticut Economy** was completed. The study showed that this industry generated \$832 M - \$1.1 B in statewide sales, 2,465–4,242 jobs and household earnings of \$145-\$208 M. The contribution of the industry to state and local taxes was estimated at \$23M and additional non-pecuniary benefits from open space farmland were estimated at \$55M in additional public welfare.

**Farm Risk Management** workshops and materials assist CT farmers to manage risk through difficult as well as stable times. Workshops on **Multigenerational Opportunities, Communications for Dairy Farm Families** and **Moving New England Dairy Farms into the Future** allowed open discussions about addressing the dairy industry crisis through diversification opportunities and involving all family generations in decision-making. The **One-On-One Risk Management Advising Sessions** provide opportunities for farm families to discuss topics with an agribusiness professional, including farm business planning, marketing, estate planning, dealing with local officials, transition to organic agriculture and crop insurance.

Personal finance programs such as **Beyond Paycheck to Paycheck** and **Managing Family Money in Challenging Times** address issues faced by families in changing financial circumstances such as job loss, reductions in pay and benefits, finances and family relationships, the need for developing emergency savings as well as credit and debt management. Financial literacy programs such as **Welcome to the Real World, Connecticut Edition!** and **The Financial Facts of Life** reach teens and young adults with information about living within their incomes and budgeting, working toward their goals for their futures, managing financial decisions. Additional programs in **Identity Theft Protection** are also offered.

**EFNEP** teaches families on how to stretch food budgets, prepare meals, smart shopping, and food safety to maximize nutrition gained/per dollar spent. Families in need of food stamps; WIC benefits; housing, heating and utilities; food pantries; and credit assistance programs are advised on these processes to get help.

**UConn Soil Nutrient Analysis Lab** received 60 percent more soil samples from residential clients who wanted to grow edibles, including vegetables and fruits, this past growing season than in the previous year. This was attributed mainly to the poor economy and the desire of residents to reduce grocery bills by growing their own produce. The **UConn Home & Garden Education Center** also received a greater proportion of phone calls asking about home food production and preserving. **UConn Extension Master Gardeners** offered a series of workshops on community gardening, and they also worked with low-income families to create urban gardens through a 4-H framework in which teens are offered a positive alternative to dropping out of school, crime, drugs, and other barriers to success.

**Integrated Pest Management (IPM)** programs have reduced the use of pesticides in Connecticut by more than 90 tons of active ingredient since the mid-80's resulting in nearly \$3 million in cost savings to growers and businesses. Such IPM programs were intensified this year to address unusual weather related needs and the economy that further threatened farm sustainability and farmer health. Farmers have also been encouraged to take advantage of more retail sales and higher profits by opening Community Supported Agriculture ventures.

**Extension Forestry** implemented a new service learning program to provide small stipends to student interns to help develop forest management plans for landowners in the Farm and Ranchland Protection Program. This provides income-earning opportunities for students, while providing the required forest management plan for these landowners at little or no cost. In addition, we are reaching out to forest landowners in general with specific information about cost-share assistance programs available to help them defray the cost of certain management activities to improve their forests.

**Pesticide Safety Education** programs provide training for individuals who wish to become certified by the state to apply pesticides commercially. This is a jobs training opportunity for those who wish to open a pesticide application business or move up in a business they are currently hired in at a lower level.