

Advance Climate-Smart Agriculture & Improve Climate Disaster Relief Efforts

Climate change is a “wicked” problem that threatens lives, livelihoods, food security, natural resources, and our economy across New England and the Nation. As a result of the increasing incidents of climate change-related extreme weather events, our regional communities will see more catastrophic on-farm losses from floods, drought, and frost events. Alongside more frequent natural disasters, the day-to-day impacts of changing growing conditions threaten a producer’s entire operation. While all farmers are potentially vulnerable to losses caused by climate disaster, beginning farmers and Black, Indigenous, and Farmers of Color are most at risk because of historical, structural, and financial barriers.

Our farmers and the farmland they manage play a key role in the region’s fight against climate change. Climate-resilient agricultural practices can help farmers respond to stressful weather events while increasing profitability and farm viability. The region’s rich soils and farmland biodiversity keep carbon out of the atmosphere, protect our landscapes from erosion, create barriers against floods and drought, and nourish a more stable and just local food system. Dairy and livestock producers, who hold

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the greatest percentage of farmland in the region, actively seek new strategies to manage soil health and innovate with new technology, including investing in anaerobic digesters. Climate-resilient practices have the potential to improve yields, grow profits, and promote economic resiliency. Further funding is needed to support farmers who experience major losses because of extreme weather events.

The following priorities outline some of the steps the region can take to ensure that farmers and the agricultural lands they manage are a part of the region’s climate change resiliency planning efforts.



AMANDA FREUND

Cover Crops on Freunds Farm in East Canaan, Connecticut

Priorities

- ▶ Fully fund state soil health and climate-resilient agricultural programs. Include measures for farmers to improve stormwater infrastructure and water management within these programs and invest in on-farm climate solutions such as high tunnels, equipment, and edge-of-field practices that help address stormwater (like grassed waterways and buffers).
- ▶ Increase funding for governments and nonprofits to provide technical assistance to farmers and support farmer-to-farmer educational opportunities.
- ▶ Support tribal communities in greater land sovereignty and recognize traditional land management practices as powerful tools to enhance climate resiliency.
- ▶ Create, fund, and implement payment for ecosystem services programs that compensate farmers for additionality and fill gaps in current incentive programs.
- ▶ Develop and fund climate disaster relief programs for impacted farmers. This includes creating and continually funding an ongoing relief fund rather than solely an emergency fund.
- ▶ Include regenerative agriculture in all the region's Climate Action Plans.



AFT's New England Soil Health Project Manager, Caro Roszell, conducting soil sampling.

New England Programming

- ▶ [New England Climate and Agriculture Program](#)