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# Brighter Future Fund's New England Regenerative Livestock Farming Grant 2026 Application Reference Document

This document may be used by applicants to prepare their written responses to the questions asked in the application form. *Applications will only be accepted via the online grant portal, Survey Monkey Apply, from September 15, 2025, through October 24, 2025.*

## FARM INFORMATION

**Do you own or lease your farmland? Check any that apply.**

Note: For those applicants who do not meet our definition of current farmer but have a proposal that would serve a lessee who meets our definition, you must supply a copy of the lease or other written agreement to be considered.

* Own
* Lease
* Do not own, but operate family land
* Other (explain below)

**If you are a nonfarming landowner applying on behalf of a lessee who is managing a livestock farming operation on your land, please upload a copy of a current lease and/or other agreement indicating the terms of the arrangement.**

Maximum: 2

Upload a file

Accepted formats: .pdf, .docx, .doc

**Size of farm (total acreage of the farm)**

* Under 1 acre
* 1 - 4 acres
* 5 - 9 acres
* 10 - 19 acres
* 20 - 49 acres
* 50 - 99 acres
* 100 acres or more

**Number of acres in agricultural production**

* Under 1 acre
* 1 - 4 acres
* 5 - 9 acres
* 10 - 19 acres
* 20 - 49 acres
* 50 - 99 acres
* 100 acres or more

**Which classification best describes the location of your farm?**

* Urban
* Peri-urban
* Suburban
* Rural

**What was your farm’s primary enterprise (the enterprise that provided the largest proportion of the farm’s income) in 2025?**

If you had more than one enterprise with relatively equal contribution to the farm’s income, then select up to your TOP THREE enterprises:

* Hay (or other forage crop)
* Corn, silage
* Corn, grain
* Dairy (cows, goats, other)
* Livestock, non-dairy (meat, eggs)
* Livestock, other (fiber, breeding stock, etc.)
* Grain (excluding corn)
* Vining Fruit
* Small fruit/berries (excluding cranberries)
* Cranberries
* Tree products: orchard fruit, Christmas trees, tree forage
* Maple
* Vegetable, various and/or diversified: 1-3 crops
* Vegetable, various and/or diversified: 4-10 crops
* Vegetable, various and/or diversified: more than 10 crops
* Bees/honey
* Cut flowers
* Greenhouse/nursery crops
* No production in 2025

**What was your farm's primary livestock enterprise (livestock that provided the largest proportion of the farm's income) in 2025?**

If you had more than one livestock enterprise with relatively equal contribution to the farm's income, then select up to your TOP THREE enterprises:

* Dairy (cows, goats, and/or other milking animals)
* Beef cattle
* Hogs
* Sheep/lamb
* Poultry (broilers)
* Eggs
* Meat goats
* Bees/honey
* Alpacas/other camelids
* Emus
* Waterfowl
* Other, please specify...

**How do you market your products? (Select all that apply)**

* CSA
* Farmers market
* Farmstand
* Restaurants
* Other retailers
* Website/social media
* Other (please specify)

**Tell us about yourself and your farm. Please address the following in your response:**

* Briefly describe your farming background and experience.
* Please describe your current farm operation, including the livestock enterprise(s) specifically, including how long you've been in business.
* Briefly explain your land tenure situation (lease/ownership etc.).

(max 500 words)

## PROPOSAL FOR USE OF FUNDS: PROJECT DETAILS, COSTS, AND TIMELINE

**Which of these best describes the primary objective of your proposed project?**

* Converting degraded cropland to pasture
* Improving grazing systems, or incorporating more intensive rotational grazing management
* Reducing tillage
* Improving pollinator habitat on your farm
* Incorporating/improving/expanding cover cropping
* Improving water access for livestock
* Reducing chemical inputs/improving soil fertility
* Developing a soil health management plan

**Please share a brief summary of the barriers you face in adopting soil health and regenerative farming practices on your livestock operation. (max 500 words)**

**Ineligible Expenses**

Please note, we are not able to fund the following:

* -The purchase of livestock animals (including beehives)
* -Wildlife exclusion fencing
* -Forest clearing
* -Breeding panels
* -Cold storage facilities
* -Processing equipment/supplies
* -Barns, washrooms, packhouses, sheds, or farm stands
* -Website development
* -Classes or trainings
* -Proposals from aquaculture, equine or forestry operations
* -Proposals for funding to support growing or raising products primarily for home, personal, or family use
* -Any expenses incurred prior to notification of award

**Proposed amount of funds requested ($10,000 maximum): $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Please share what specifically you are proposing to use these funds for, how it will address the barriers you described, and how your project will improve soil health, pollinator habitat, or water quality.**

Your response should:

* Provide specific details about the equipment/infrastructure or services you are seeking funding for and how they address a challenge or barrier to implement soil health or regenerative farming practices on your livestock operation.
* Clearly and strongly demonstrate how the requested items/services will directly enhance/improve soil health, pollinator habitat, and/or water quality.

 (max 500 words)

**How many acres will be involved in/improved by this project?**

Please enter a number or range (for example: 15 or 50-60)

**Cost of proposed project:**

Please provide an accurate estimate of the costs. You are required to upload supporting documentation. (max 250 words)

**Supporting Materials**

Please provide supporting materials/documentation related to your project costs. These could include a quote from a contractor or other service provider you plan to work with, and/or a detailed budget with justification for the work (this may include work you will perform yourself).

Minimum: 1

Maximum: 5

Upload a file

**If additional funds are required beyond the amount of this grant request, please include the source of those other funds.**

**Do you have a current or recent Conservation Plan with NRCS and/or your local Conservation District? (We're just curious! Having a conservation plan is not required to be considered for funding.)**

* Yes, we have a current/active conservation plan.
* We don't have a current/active conservation plan, but we had one recently (in the last 5 years).
* I'm on the waiting list to meet with a conservation planner.
* No, we have not had a conservation plan and we are not working to implement a conservation plan anytime soon.
* I'm not sure.
* I'm not sure, and I'd welcome AFT's assistance with getting connected with conservation staff and resources.

**What is your level of need with this project?**

* The project will occur with or without AFT grant assistance.
* The project could occur without AFT grant assistance but these funds would significantly help.
* The project would not be possible without AFT grant assistance.

**Payment Schedule and Timeline**

The Brighter Future Fund’s New England Regenerative Livestock Farming Grant intends to disburse funds as follows:

* The first 80% of the total awarded amount will be disbursed to the award recipient within approximately 60 to 90 days of receipt of the signed award form via the online grant portal. AFT intends to issue award notifications in December 2025.
* The final 20% of the award amount will be disbursed to the award recipient within approximately 60 to 90 days of receipt of a final report submitted via the online grant portal. AFT intends to solicit final reports from grant recipients in July 2026 and disburse the final 20% of funds in late summer 2026.

**How will you ensure that this payment schedule works for your operation?**

**All grant-funded projects must be implemented by June 30, 2026. No extensions will be given. Please share a clear timeline for the completion of your proposed project.**

If the project cannot be completed by June 30, 2026, please explain.

**Please upload your Letter of Support from a service provider or other advisor who can speak to the project you described above. For guidance, see our**[**Service Provider Letter of Support Guidance document**](https://farmland.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Letter-of-Support-Guidance-2024-2025.pdf)**.**

The service provider writing your letter of support should have skills and working experience matching your project.

Minimum: 1

Maximum: 2

Upload a file

Please enter the name and contact information of the individual providing your letter of support.

* First and Last Name
* Business Name/Affiliation
* Email Address

**If you would like to include any additional supporting materials, such as a conservation plan, business plan, or other documents related to your proposed project, you are welcome to upload them here. (Not required)**

Maximum: 2

Upload a file

**If you would like to share any additional comments, please do so here.**

Have you ever served on active duty in the US Armed Forces, Reserves or National Guard?

* Yes
* No

Do you qualify as a limited resource farmer using the [USDA's online tool for self-determination](https://lrftool.sc.egov.usda.gov/DeterminationTool.aspx?fyYear=2024)?

* Yes
* No

How many years have you been involved in operating a farm?

* Not yet farming / No farming experience
* 1 - 3 years
* 4 - 9 years
* 10 years or more

How did you hear about this grant opportunity?

I understand that all award updates and communication will be done primarily via email, and failure to reply may result in loss of award, if selected:

* Yes, I understand.

This funding opportunity is part of a larger regional project. The Western New England Regenerative Agriculture Project is a collaborative, multi-year project led by American Farmland Trust in partnership with USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service and others. Through this work, AFT has partnered with UConn, UVM & Yale on a research study to help us better understand what kinds of resources support farmers in planning and implementing regenerative agriculture. Your participation in this survey-based research is important to help us understand the broader impacts of our programs and how to evolve them for farmers in the future.

SURVEY LINK: [You can access the survey HERE.](https://tinyurl.com/regenerativeRCPPsurvey)

## Applicant Demographics

The following questions are optional (you may select 'Prefer not to answer'), but help us collect data about the reach of our grant programs. This information is not used to determine grant eligibility and will not be considered in the application evaluation and award selection process.

Select your age group:

* Under 25
* 26 - 34
* 35 - 44
* 45 - 54
* 55 - 64
* 65 or over
* Prefer not to answer

Sex/gender identity:

* Man
* Woman
* Transgender
* Non-binary
* Prefer to self-describe:
* Prefer not to answer

Race/ethnic category/categories (select any that apply):

* American Indian or Alaska Native
* Asian
* Black or African American
* Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish Origin
* Middle Eastern or North African
* Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
* White or European
* Other, please specify...
* Prefer not to answer

How do you describe your sexual orientation or sexual identity? Select any that apply.

* Lesbian
* Gay
* Bisexual
* Queer
* Heterosexual
* Prefer to self-describe:
* Prefer not to answer

STEPS TO COMPLETE & SUBMIT APPLICATION:

You have reached the end of the application. You may review your responses.

When you are ready to submit, click Mark as Complete below, and then click the green SUBMIT button located on the left-hand side under your task progress in order to fully submit your application package. Once successfully submitted, you'll receive a confirmation email that we've received your application.

Thank you for applying!