



## Brighter Future Fund's New England Regenerative Livestock Farming Grant 2026 Grant Guidelines

### PURPOSE

The Brighter Future Fund's New England Regenerative Livestock Farming Grant provides funds to livestock farmers in select counties in Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts and Connecticut for the adoption of regenerative agriculture practices. The funds are intended to support field-based conservation practice projects that improve soil health, water quality, and pollinator habitat on existing livestock operations.

### AWARD AMOUNT

Grants will be awarded up to \$10,000 per project.

### ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

To be eligible for this grant program, proposed projects must be taking place in one of the following counties:

#### Connecticut

- Litchfield
- Fairfield
- Hartford
- New Haven
- Tolland
- Middlesex
- Windham
- New London

#### Massachusetts

- Berkshire
- Franklin
- Hampden
- Hampshire
- Worcester

#### New Hampshire

- Cheshire
- Coos
- Grafton
- Sullivan

#### Vermont

- Bennington
- Caledonia
- Essex
- Orange
- Windham
- Windsor

- A project may involve one or more individual farmers or farm families. Only one grant can be awarded per farmer/farm family.
- This program does not intend to fund applicants who grow or raise products primarily for home, personal or family use. Eligible farms must be producing food or agricultural products for their community for sale or to barter or exchange.
  - Eligible farms must be able to provide proof of income (or similar, if farm engages in barter, exchange or community supply).
- While agriculture in New England is broad, this funding is intended to support terrestrial, soils-based agricultural production. We are unable to consider applications from aquaculture, equine, or forestry operations, but we will accept new agroforestry installation projects.
- This program can only provide funds to **existing** livestock operations. Startups will not be considered. Applicants must have been raising livestock for a minimum of one year.

- The program recognizes the following as "livestock": beef or dairy cattle, bison, hogs, poultry, bees, goats, sheep, camelids, emus, waterfowl, deer. For the purposes of this program, equine operations are not eligible for funding.
- Previous recipients of AFT grants may apply for this opportunity if those applicants have completed their grant-funded projects and submitted all required final reporting to AFT staff. Applicants who have an open, active grant are not eligible to apply.
- We are unable to award grants to American Farmland Trust staff, board members, or substantial contributors to AFT or their family members.

#### EXAMPLES OF ELIGIBLE PROJECTS:

- Cover crop seed
- Pollinator habitat establishment
- Reduced tillage equipment
- Pasture establishment/reseeding
- Irrigation infrastructure
- Livestock watering systems
- Fencing for rotational grazing
- Soil amendments and application

#### NOT ELIGIBLE FOR FUNDING:

- Purchase of livestock animals
- Processing equipment
- Fencing for predator exclusion
- Beekeeping supplies
- Barns, washrooms, storage sheds, farmstands
- Classes/trainings/conferences or workshops
- Expenses incurred prior to award
- Proposals focused on increasing efficiency
- Proposals from aquaculture, forestry, or equine operations
- Proposals for funding to support growing or raising products primarily for home, personal, or family use

#### TIMELINE

- Applications will be available for submission from September 15, 2025, to October 24, 2025 (by 5:00pm ET).
- Awards will be announced in or around December 2025.
- **All funded projects must be implemented and completed no later than June 30, 2026.\***

\*Please note: this timeline is accelerated compared to previous years of this program because this is the final year of the project and funds must be spent in accordance with our project timeline. Any applicant who is selected for a 2026 award must complete the implementation of their grant-funded project no later than June 30, 2026. AFT will not be able to disburse funds to awardees whose project status is incomplete on June 30, 2026. Applicants are strongly encouraged to carefully review the 'Payment Structure & Award Terms' section below.

#### HOW TO APPLY

To apply, farmers should submit a completed New England Regenerative Livestock Farming Grant Application to AFT. Applications must be submitted electronically through the link located on our webpage: <https://farmland.org/brighterfuture/>. The application will be available via our website on September 15, 2025.

- **An email address is required** to use the online grant portal. If an applicant does not have an email address, we encourage them to seek assistance through a local agricultural service provider, friend, or family member. We are unable to receive applications sent by email or mail.

### Application Requirements:

1. Applicant contact information and farm address
2. Brief descriptions of farming background/experience, current land tenure situation, and products
3. Description of proposed project
4. Project budget and cost estimates
  - a. Documentation of estimated proposed project costs, for example: written quotes from suppliers/vendors or contractors, or price lists on vendors' website
  - b. If total project budget exceeds the grant request, applicant must list source(s) of additional funds.
5. Letter of support from a service provider:
  - a. As part of the application, farmers will be required to submit a letter of support from a service provider. A service provider is any business, agency, organization, or consultant who provides technical assistance and/or financial assistance to farmers. The letter of support provides grant application reviewers with a clear understanding that the requested funds will be used in accordance with grant guidelines as part of a larger vision for a successful project. **Letters of support should be written by someone familiar with the scope of work included in the grant proposal.** For additional guidance and a letter of support template, [click here](#).

**Translation and Resources for Applicants of Other Languages:** American Farmland Trust may be able to provide translated application materials, depending on certain factors. Please [visit our website](#) to learn more.

### APPLICATION EVALUATION & REVIEW PROCESS

Applications that clearly demonstrate the connection between their proposed project and the improvement of soil health, water quality, and/or pollinator habitat will be prioritized.

Application review is expected to take several weeks. Program staff may contact applicants during this time to request additional information. Depending on available funds and the number of applications received, priority may be given to those who have not received a grant award from AFT in prior years.

### PAYMENT STRUCTURE & AWARD TERMS

If approved, AFT will send a notification via email to the applicant. An Award & Recipient Payment Information Form will be available in the awardee's grant portal and must be electronically signed within 7 days of receipt. The Award Form will detail the approved timeline and process for payment based on the individual project.

#### Payment Structure 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.

\*The reporting period for this grant will begin on the date of award notification and end on June 30, 2026. Awardees will be required to provide a final report of the grant funded project implementation, including copies of receipts and paid invoices and photographs and/or video showing project implementation, to AFT in order to receive the remaining 20% of their award amount. AFT will use this information to verify the permitted use of funds and evaluate the success of the grant program.

AFT intends to issue payment via ACH/direct deposit.

### **Terms for all awards:**

AFT will pay funds directly to the awardee:

- Awardees must provide an IRS Form W9 ([Form W9](#))
- Awardees must also provide bank routing and account numbers for a bank account that accepts funds via ACH
- Failure to provide correct information will result in a significant delay in award payment.

Funding is contingent on the awardee completing and submitting a grant award form with electronic signature within 7 days. Notification of award and other communication will be conducted via email and/or phone. Failure to respond by the stated deadline could result in loss of award funds.

All expenses charged and activities supported by the Grant must be completed within the above stated time period. AFT will not consider or approve any extensions for this Grant. In consideration of the disbursement of the Grant, the awardee will agree to utilize the Grant exclusively for the purposes specified in their application as approved by AFT. If the awardee's circumstances change and adjustments are needed in the Grant, the awardee shall agree to contact [brighterfuture@farmland.org](mailto:brighterfuture@farmland.org) as soon as possible. Adjustments to the Grant may be made solely at AFT's discretion and must be approved in writing.

**Use of Grant Funds:** Grant funds will be used in a manner consistent with an awardee's application. The awardee shall agree to refund to AFT any funds that AFT determines were misused, used in an illegal manner, or used in contravention of their application or if there are other violations of the terms of the award agreement. AFT may terminate the Grant if any breach occurs, or the awardee fails to fulfil any obligations under the award agreement.

**Reporting and Record Keeping:** In connection with the Grant, an awardee will be responsible for completing a brief Final Report describing results achieved with the assistance of the funds. AFT may publicize New England Regenerative Livestock Farming Grant success stories and request that awardees collaborate with us and our funding partners. Participation and collaboration in storytelling with AFT or our funding partners will not replace the requirement for completion of a Final Report.

AFT may request, and awardees should maintain and make available, receipts, expenditures, documents, and other records, pertaining to the project(s) specified in the Grant application, to monitor the performance and continued satisfaction of the terms of the award agreement. Awardees should maintain such records at an accessible location for a period of three years after the delivery of a final report.

The New England Regenerative Livestock Farming Grants were established by AFT to provide support to awardees who need financial assistance to undertake proposed activities which further AFT's charitable purposes. These grants are motivated by charitable intent. AFT however does not make any representation as to the tax consequences of any award, if any.

AFT requires award recipients to provide a tax identification number (SSN/EIN) in order to fulfill AFT's obligation to report grant activities on its annual report to the IRS. AFT does not file Form 1099s with respect to this grant.

## **QUESTIONS**

If you have questions or need additional assistance completing your application, please contact Kristen Irvin, Program Associate for Grantmaking, at [kirvin@farmland.org](mailto:kirvin@farmland.org).