



by American Farmland Trust

Brighter Future Fund's New England Regenerative Livestock Farming Grant 2024-2025 Grant Guidelines

PURPOSE

American Farmland Trust (AFT) is excited to announce the Brighter Future Fund's New England Regenerative Livestock Farming Grant. This 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.

AWARD AMOUNT & ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Grants will be awarded up to \$10,000 per project. Eighty percent of the award amount will be paid in early 2025, and the remainder will be paid upon proof of project completion and receipt of final project report. Farmers will receive direct payment of funds from American Farmland Trust.

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. The program recognizes the following as "livestock": beef or dairy cattle, bison, hogs, poultry, bees, goats, sheep, camelids, emus, waterfowl. Please note: for the purposes of this program, equine operations are not eligible for funding.

Previous recipients of AFT farmer grants are eligible to apply for this opportunity. 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
- Reduced tillage equipment
- Pasture establishment/reseeding
- Irrigation infrastructure
- Livestock watering systems
- Mobile livestock shelters
- Fencing infrastructure
- 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 October 1 to November 29, 2024. Awards will be announced in or around January of 2025. All funded projects must be implemented no later than April of 2026.

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 link to apply will be available on October 1, 2024. 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 via email or mail.

Application Requirements:

1. Farmer applicant contact information and farm address
2. Brief descriptions of farming background/experience and current land tenure situation
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:
 - 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. Ideally, the letter of support will be written by someone

familiar with the scope of work included in the grant proposal. By requiring this brief letter of support, we hope to encourage New England farmers to tap into the extensive range of technical assistance and support services available in our region. For additional guidance and a letter of support template, [click here](#).

APPLICATION REVIEW

Applications will be reviewed after the submission period closes. Application review is expected to take several weeks. Program staff may contact applicants during this time to request additional information. 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. 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.

AWARD PROCESS

If approved, AFT will send a notification via email to the applicant. An Award Form will be available in the awardee's grant portal and must be signed. The Award Form will detail the approved timeline and process for payment based on the individual project.

Terms for all awards:

- AFT will pay funds directly to the awardee:
 - Awardees must provide an IRS Form W9 (**Form W9**)
 - The name listed on 'Line 1' of the awardee's Form W9 must be the same name as the holder of the bank account for ACH/direct deposit of the award funds AND must match the name listed in the awardee's application in the 'Payable to' field.
 - 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 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.
- 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 provided to the awardee in early 2025. AFT prefers to issue payment via ACH/direct deposit. Awardees may request payment via check; however, check payments will take several weeks longer to process.
- Awardees will be required to provide follow-up information to AFT about their award-funded project 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.
- The Brighter Future Fund's New England Regenerative Livestock Farming Grant has been established by AFT to provide support to awardees who need financial assistance to undertake proposed activities that 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 awards, if any.
- AFT will require the awardee to provide their SSN/EIN/TIN 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.

- AFT shall have no obligation to disburse amounts in excess of the approved grant for services not completed or goods or services not approved by AFT. Any expenses that exceed the grant maximum amount are the responsibility of the awardee.
- Expenses incurred prior to receiving written notification of approval will not be covered by the grant.
- Any unspent grant funds may be dedicated towards further services for the applicant, pending written AFT approval.

QUESTIONS

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