

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Connecticut Resource Conservation and Development Area, Inc.

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Tour des Farms Annual Bike Ride Uplifted Local Farmers All Summer Long

Scenic Summer Ride Raised Over \$3,500 for Food Security Initiatives in Connecticut



Left to Right: Amanda Fargo-Johnson, CT RC&D Agricultural Programs Director; Amanda Freund, Freund's Farm, Inc. Vice Chair, CT Milk Promotion Board ; Bill Davenport, Litchfield County UConn 4-H Educator, and Operation Community Impact Coordinator; Jeanne Davies, CT RC&D Executive Director



Statewide – Connecticut Resource Conservation and Development (CT RC&D) is a statewide nonprofit agriculture and environmental organization focused on sustainable Connecticut communities and rural prosperity. On July 1st, they launched their Annual Tour des Farms Program, a bicycle (2020 included motorcycle and car) ride designed to promote local farms and rural agriculture businesses, all while addressing food insecurity in our state.

As a program, Tour des Farms aims to move around Connecticut, ensuring diverse regional promotion. Last year they held an in-person ride in Connecticut's Quiet Corner, and for the ride's reemergence in 2018, participants biked farms throughout the Litchfield Hills.

However, this year was a bit different. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, CT RC&D hosted a summer long **statewide** Tour des Farms event for riders to enjoy at their own pace and schedule. The event included eight regional routes, each featuring 6-10 farms throughout the state. That's over 75 farms getting direct support from their communities!

In lieu of the typical registration fee, CT RC&D asked participants to consider donating to the 2020 Connecticut Tour des Farms Program Fund. This year the program hosted over 300 riders and raised over \$3,500 in donations which was used to buy local farm produce to donate to CT Food Pantries (see more on CT RC&D's [Social Media](#)), as well as a direct cash donation to University of Connecticut Extension's **Operation Community Impact** (OCI).

The CT Department of Agriculture and the Connecticut Milk Promotion Board have also been working with OCI to address community food insecurity issues and to reduce the amount of surplus milk that is being discarded due to the COVID-19 crisis by purchasing dairy products with donated funds and distributing to food pantries and meals sites throughout Connecticut. When the pandemic hit, OCI shifted into high gear and focused on dairy due to the dumping of milk coupled with the desperate need for dairy by food pantries. The project expanded into a state-wide initiative, distributing over 12,000 gallons of milk plus two full tractor trailer loads of ice cream, sour cream and yogurts to date.

Riders also received a few perks for participating! Riders who completed their Tour des Farms passports and submitted them to CT RC&D were entered to win a CT specialty food basket generously donated by Bishop's Orchards of Guilford, CT, one of the farm stops on a Tour des Farms route.

With food insecurity on the rise and farmer sales channels drying up, this donation effort allows everyone to help our local farmers thrive while keeping our communities fed with healthy, fresh food.

Connecticut Resource Conservation and Development Area, Inc. (CT RC&D), is a 501(c)(3) not for profit organization. EIN Number: 06-0976326

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Tour des Farms

