

# TIOGA COUNTY SWCD

## Spring 2020 Newsletter



## Upcoming Opportunities

Here are a few of the upcoming agricultural funding opportunities. Please contact the District for more information if you are interested in any of them, we can assist your farm in meeting the eligibility requirements for these grants.

### **Agricultural Non-Point Source Abatement and Control Program: Winter 2020-21**

- This is a state-wide grant geared toward improving water quality on farms. This is important because we need healthy water to survive and keeping excess nutrients and sediment out of our waterways and aquifers is crucial. Examples of projects are manure storages, concrete barnyards, stream stabilization, milk house waste systems, bunk silos and collection systems for the leachate, and rotational grazing systems with water and fence.

### **Climate Resilient Farming: Winter 2020-21**

- This state-wide grant strives to reduce the operational effect to the environment on farms and to address the impacts to farms of extreme weather events related to changing climates. This grant offers manure storage covers and flares, water management on farms and soil health practices for pastures and crop fields. Farms experiencing negative impacts from extreme weather events can find solutions for their farm through their District and this grant helps implement those practices.

### **Conservation Reserve Program: Continuous Sign-up**

- This is a federal program through the USDA offices of NRCS and FSA. The program enrolls land in conservation easements for 10-15 years in various practices. Most common are riparian buffers along streams, wetlands and whole fields for grasslands. There are incentives for signing up for these programs and farms/landowners receive a yearly rental payment for the land enrolled. \*\*\*Riparian Buffers have an extra state incentive payment which is 20x the soil rental rate of the land, this is a great time to think about enrolling!

### **Tioga County Cover Crops Program: Continuous Sign-up with some deadlines**

- This is a yearly program that pays a cost-share rate to farms for implementing cover crops. Sign-ups can also be for multiple years for farms that have never tried cover cropping before, or on a yearly basis with a set max acreage for farms that already consistently plant. The cost-share rate will be higher on acreage that has never been cover cropped before than on acreage planted previously. We hope farms who try cover crops see the remarkable benefits to their soil health and thus to production & crop yields and then see the value in planting them on their own in the future.

## District Covid-19 Update

District operations have continued uninterrupted during the Covid-19 pandemic. The Tioga County Soil and Water Conservation District Board approved our most recent Office Continuity and Safety Plan which calls for our office to be closed to the public through June 20, 2020. Appointments can be requested and will be filled on an as needed basis. Staff have been granted the ability to conduct field visits as long as it is safe to do so and they are able to maintain a social distance. All staff will be required to wear PPE. As always, our staff can still be reached via phone at 607-687-3553, and via email.

- Wendy Walsh - District Manager  
[Walshw@co.tioga.ny.us](mailto:Walshw@co.tioga.ny.us)
- Miranda Palmer - Administrative Assistant  
[Palmerm@co.tioga.ny.us](mailto:Palmerm@co.tioga.ny.us)
- Alex Marks - Conservation District Technician  
[Marksa@co.tioga.ny.us](mailto:Marksa@co.tioga.ny.us)
- Mike Jura - Stream Technician  
[Juram@co.tioga.ny.us](mailto:Juram@co.tioga.ny.us)
- Brian Reaser - AEM Specialist  
[Reaserb@co.tioga.ny.us](mailto:Reaserb@co.tioga.ny.us)
- Danielle Singer - Water Quality/Nutrient Mgmt. [Singerd@co.tioga.ny.us](mailto:Singerd@co.tioga.ny.us)

## Equipment Rentals Still Available!

We're still offering equipment rentals! Please reach out to Alex Marks at the District office for scheduling!





- ESCH 5507 No Till Drill - \$50 Delivery & Setup, \$15.00 per acre
- ESCH 5512 No Till Drill - \$100 Deliver & Setup, \$20.00 per acre
- Wheatheart Post Pounder- \$50.00 Delivery & Setup, \$50 per day
- Tree Planter - \$25 per day
- Tire Cutter - \$25 per day





# Stewardship Spotlight - Fall Cover Crops

In 2019, the District rolled out a new program to assist farmers with covering implementation costs associated with the planting of cover crops. Cover crops were identified as one of the top practices that New York is relying on to meet the Phase 3 Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) goals. Through the implementation of this practice farmers can expect to see benefits such as the prevention of soil erosion, increased water infiltration, relief of soil compaction stress, improved soil structure, increased organic matter which encourages beneficial soil microbes, and protecting water quality by slowing erosion and nutrient runoff. This year the District provided funding for the planting of 1,206 acres of cover crops across 14 farms in the county.

 <p><b>Bast Family Farm</b> Spencer, New York</p>  <p>Fall 2019</p>	 <p>Spring 2020</p>	 <p>Spring 2020</p>
 <p><b>Triple F Jersey Farm</b> Candor, New York</p>  <p>Fall 2019</p>	 <p>Spring 2020</p>	 <p>Spring 2020</p>
 <p><b>Lawton Jersey Farm</b> Newark Valley, NY</p>  <p>Fall 2019</p>	 <p>Fall 2019</p>	 <p>Spring 2020</p>
 <p><b>Mead Dairy Farm</b> Owego, New York</p>  <p>Fall 2019</p>	 <p>Fall 2019</p>	 <p>Spring 2020</p>
 <p><b>Spencer Family Farm</b> Newark Valley, NY</p>  <p>Fall 2019</p>	 <p>Spring 2020</p>	 <p>Spring 2020</p>
 <p><b>TriKay Dairy Farm</b> Owego, New York</p>  <p>Fall 2019</p>	 <p>Spring 2020</p>	 <p>Spring 2020</p>

# Working Together While Staying Apart

On Sunday, March 22, life in Tioga County, and across the rest of New York "paused". As the Covid-19 pandemic wreaked havoc, spreading uncontrollably across parts of downstate New York, we would work to do what was needed to slow the spread and flatten the curve of the virus. Over the next 54 days, daily routines would be disrupted, offices turned into any location in our homes that would accommodate a laptop and some workspace, sounds of children could be heard in the background of conference calls, sleeping babies swaddled in the arms of their others were seen on zoom meetings, dogs barking at postal workers became a recognized background noise, and the term working from home became a constant in the daily vocabulary of most. However, one of the most notable, and unexpected new norms that we saw here in Tioga County was our communities unwavering ability to show compassion, offer a helping hand, and bolster our ability to work together while forced to be further apart more than ever.

The Soil and Water Conservation District was able to see and participate in the community support that emerged each day. Over those 54 days, the District stepped up to help a local school plant 600 trees on their Christmas Tree farm, hosted a regional Envirothon competition that was opened up to any counties or schools in the state interested in participating, and hosted a free dairy product drive where 3,888 gallons of milk, 1,500 cups of yogurt, and 1,200 pounds of sour cream were distributed





# Funding Availability: Dairy Transitions Farmland Protection Initiative

This grant opportunity is available through the New York State Department of Ag & Markets. This funding is being offered to implement conservation easement projects with owners of viable agricultural lands that are associated with a dairy farm operation at risk of conversion to non-farm uses. Proceeds from the purchase of development rights (PDR) transaction on viable agricultural land will offer these landowners an opportunity to either reinvest those monies to enable greater diversification of the farm operation or the transfer of ownership to a new owner of the same or different type of farm operation. Moreover, the viable agricultural land permanently protected as the result of each awarded conservation easement project will remain in continuing agricultural use.

Dairy farming is the largest component of New York's agricultural economy, accounting for approximately one-half of its on-farm production, support services and value-added products. Further, a dairy is typically the largest-sized type of farm operation in New York. Accordingly, ensuring that the viable agricultural land base of an operating dairy farm is protected from conversion to non-farm uses will be essential to help ensure the long-term viability and sustainability of the agricultural sector of the state's economy. The continuing financial crisis affecting dairy farmers due to prolonged historic low milk price supports has increased the threat for an unprecedented conversion of some of these viable agricultural lands to be lost to non-farm development.

This grant opportunity is being offered to enable eligible applicants to specifically implement Conservation Easement Projects with owners of viable agricultural lands that are associated with a dairy Farm Operation at risk of conversion to non-farm uses. Proceeds from the sale of a conservation easement (known as Purchase of Development Rights, or PDR) on viable agricultural land will offer these landowners an opportunity to either reinvest those monies to enable greater diversification of the farm operation or the transfer of ownership to a new owner of the same or different type of farm operation. Moreover, the viable agricultural land permanently protected as the result of each awarded Conservation Easement Project will remain in continuing agricultural use.

Eligible projects are limited only to Conservation Easement Projects on dairy Farm Operations on viable agricultural land that are transitioning to:

- (1) the next ownership of a continuing dairy, but whose operation has been modified to ensure greater financial sustainability;
- (2) a more diversified overall Farm Operation, while continuing, at least in part, as a dairy; or
- (3) a different type of non-dairy Farm Operation.

However, none of the following lands are eligible under this RFA:

- Lands under public ownership, or
- Lands subject to an existing conservation easement (regardless of its duration).

Viable agricultural land means land highly suitable for a Farm Operation as that term is defined in Section 301 of Article 25-AA of the Agriculture and Markets Law.

For more information on project eligibility please see the Dairy Transitions Phase 2 RFA [here](#).

If you are interested in applying for this funding, please call the office to make an appointment to discuss this opportunity.



# Trees for Tributaries Program: An Opportunity to Reforest Your Streamside Areas

Trees for Tributaries Program: An Opportunity to Reforest Your Streamside Areas

Do you have a stream running through your property? In Tioga County, there are over 1,000 miles of stream, so there is a pretty good chance you or your neighbor might! Streams are their best when the riparian area, or land area next to the stream, is forested. The New York State Department of Environment Conservation's "Trees for Tributaries" Program provides landowners with native trees and shrubs at no cost to reforest these streamside areas.

If the riparian area is not vegetated, or if the vegetation is of poor quality, stream stability is vulnerable. This vegetation, or riparian buffer, provides many services in regard to stream stability, but also to terrestrial and aquatic habitat. The riparian area aids in stream stability by slowing flood waters, as well as, reducing bed and bank erosion. Both aquatic and terrestrial habitats benefit from this area too. Shaded streams have lower temperatures and higher oxygen content providing for a more habitable area for invertebrates and fish. Riparian buffers filter out nutrients from stormwater, therefore protecting waterways from nutrient pollution, and the diverse shaded riparian area provides for a refuge and corridor for land animals. Plus, pollinators and migratory birds are attracted to these areas!

Additionally, riparian forest buffers enhance aesthetic and economic value of our properties, may create privacy green screens, or create hunting ground.

Tioga County Soil and Water Conservation District is here to help you plan and plant your buffer through this program. The main eligibility requirement is to have a stream on your property. Private and public sites qualify for the program.

If you or someone you know is interested in learning more about the program, please contact Taylor Held ([heldt@co.tioga.ny.us](mailto:heldt@co.tioga.ny.us)) or Danielle Singer ([singerd@co.tioga.ny.us](mailto:singerd@co.tioga.ny.us)) at the Tioga Soil and Water Conservation District or call (607)687-3553.



**Tioga County Soil & Water Conservation District**  
**183 Corporate Drive Owego, New York 13827**  
**607-687-3553 or [TCSWCD@co.tioga.ny.us](mailto:TCSWCD@co.tioga.ny.us)**

