

Connecticut (Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station New Haven, University of Connecticut Combined) Plan Of Work - FY2024

Review Report

Contributing Organizations

Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station New Haven
University of Connecticut

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Executive Summary

Overview

University of Connecticut Research and Extension and Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station Research Combined FY2024 Plan of Work . Over the past several years, new topics have emerged that are creating unique opportunities for research and extension to meet the needs of Connecticut's citizens. The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (hereafter designated CAES) and the University of Connecticut Storrs Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension System (hereafter designated UConn) partner in efforts to address these new challenges and opportunities. We changed our critical issues based on stakeholder feedback. We hosted 13 listening sessions and had input from over 500 stakeholders that generated more than 10,000 data points. Interviews were conducted with leadership from both institutions, from the northeast, funders and peer institutions. This Plan of Work describes four critical issues for Connecticut that CAES and UConn jointly address based on our stakeholder input. These include: Sustainable agriculture and food supply; Enhancing health and well-being Sustainable landscapes across urban-rural interfaces; and Adaptation and resilience to a changing climate. Research and public engagement initiatives conducted in Connecticut often overlap into one or more of these areas. These critical issues closely align with the issues previously outlined in our plan of work; however, phrasing has changed to reflect our stakeholder input. Funds are allocated separately to the two institutions, and as such, the report of accomplishments will continue to detail separate successes of CAES and UConn. Finally, we recognize that there will be emerging issues that we have not yet defined. These issues will be incorporated into the plan as they arise. There are no change from our 2023-2027 Plan of Work

Critical Issue: Adaptation and resilience to a changing climate

N/A

Critical Issue: Enhancing health and well-being

N/A

Critical Issue: Sustainable agriculture and food supply

N/A

Critical Issue: Sustainable landscapes across urban-rural interfaces

N/A

No Significant changes

Stakeholder Input

Actions to seek stakeholder input that encourage their participation

Stakeholder input offers unique perspectives and relevance to research and public engagement in Connecticut. CAES and UConn will gather formal and informal stakeholder input across the state and at national or international meetings. Presentations, interviews, workshops and conferences offer informal opportunities to meet with impacted stakeholders and gather input. Methods used to seek input include survey instruments that collect feedback from participants about existing programs, email surveys to potential stakeholder regarding new or proposed programs, and direct comments captured following sponsored events. The Dean of UConn's College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources conducted statewide listening sessions; these were coordinated with CAES to ensure both organizations have access to the stakeholder input. Information gathered at these sessions drove the strategic planning process for UConn.

UConn Extension will conduct a statewide needs assessment survey in the summer of 2023 to assess residents' perceptions of issues which could be addressed by programming. Results will be used to inform program planning and resource allocation.

Methods to identify individuals and groups

No Significant Changes

Methods for collecting stakeholder input

No Significant Changes

A statement of how the input will be considered

No Significant Changes

Critical Issues

Active

Adaptation and resilience to a changing climate

Last Updated: 2019

Initiated on: 11/26/2019

Term Length: Long-term (>5 years)

Centuries of development in Connecticut have produced a complex mosaic of land uses that include urban, peri-urban, agricultural, rural, and natural spaces. Defining a sustainable future for these complex spaces involves understanding how the built environment and the natural environment interact – particularly in the context of a variable climate. Research must engage, educate and inform citizens and decision-makers in climate adaptation. Enhancing the management and conservation of ecosystems is of importance to the protection and restoration of natural resources, understanding human impacts on the environment and dealing with the threats of invasive species and, habitat loss, as well as resource contamination and degradation. We also must explore how renewable energy sources can reduce our carbon footprint and lessen our impacts on regional and global climate to promote human, plant and animal health that is resilient to the effects of climate change.

Science Emphasis Areas: Agroclimate Science, Bioeconomy, Bioenergy, and Bioproducts, Education and Multicultural Alliances, Environmental Systems, Sustainable Agricultural Production Systems, Youth Development

Active

Enhancing health and well-being

Last Updated: 2019

Initiated on: 11/26/2019

Term Length: Long-term (>5 years)

Enhancing health and well-being locally, nationally and globally can help address a myriad of issues. The close association of humans, animals and the environment present an opportunity to build connections at the nexus of human, animal, plant, and environmental health. We will focus on preventative health measures that promote wellness through community nutrition, awareness and understanding of arthropod-borne infections, and other efforts. One key to preventative health measures involves encouraging healthy lifestyles among youth and families. We foster health equity, including food security, using a broad range of approaches that incorporate community engagement. Digital health technology and personalized lifestyle interventions informed by basic science can help optimize health. We also need to investigate how the built environment impacts human health and how we can design the built landscape to foster wellness.

Science Emphasis Areas: Education and Multicultural Alliances, Environmental Systems, Food Safety, Human Nutrition, Sustainable Agricultural Production Systems, Youth Development

Research Projects: 26

Extension Programs: 1

Active

Sustainable agriculture and food supply

Last Updated: 2019

Initiated on: 11/26/2019

Term Length: Long-term (>5 years)

Ensuring a vibrant and sustainable agricultural industry and food supply is a key challenge. Addressing food issues on a state level is a component of solving global food security and food safety concerns. We are advancing innovative, sustainable approaches to agriculture that align with local resources and markets. This helps expand production and consumption of locally grown, safe, and nutritious foods, while promoting and supporting agricultural practices that encourage a healthy lifestyle. Non-food agriculture is a key component of our agricultural economy and supports infrastructure for food production. Innovative research and technical support help meet industry challenges for all agricultural sectors and increase contributions to the Connecticut economy.

Science Emphasis Areas: Agroclimate Science, Education and Multicultural Alliances, Environmental Systems, Food Safety, Human Nutrition, Sustainable Agricultural Production Systems, Youth Development

Research Projects: 30

Extension Programs: 2

Active

Sustainable landscapes across urban-rural interfaces

Last Updated: 2019

Initiated on: 11/26/2019

Term Length: Long-term (>5 years)

In Connecticut and the northeast, cities and urban centers are tightly juxtaposed with rural or agricultural communities. The interface of rural and urban environments creates unique opportunities to investigate issues related to food, crop production, transport, waste, housing, and energy systems, including the state's water. Long Island Sound (LIS) is a unique natural asset to our state with immense economic, social-cultural and ecological value. Several water bodies flow into LIS making it sensitive to upstream agricultural, industrial and municipal land uses. In addition, urban areas offer economic development opportunities for agricultural enterprises, as well as enhance other ecosystem services. At the same time, urban encroachment into agricultural communities can generate conflict over impacts on the natural environment and loss of farmland. Research and public engagement conducted at the interface of urban and rural communities offers the unique opportunity to explore complex biophysical, social and economic issues affecting agricultural communities.

Science Emphasis Areas: Agroclimate Science, Education and Multicultural Alliances, Environmental Systems, Family & Consumer Sciences, Youth Development

Research Projects: 8

Extension Programs: 1

Report Status

Approved as of 07/26/2023

Comments

Connecticut (Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station New Haven, University of Connecticut Combined) Plan of Work- FY2024 cited no change from the FY2023-2027 Plan of Work. The four critical issues remain the same. There are no significant changes to the merit and scientific review process. Presentations, workshops, conferences, surveys, listening sessions, and a state-wide needs assessment are actions listed to seek stakeholder input. No significant changes are listed for Methods to Identify Individuals and Groups, Methods for Collecting Stakeholder Input, and Statement of How the Input will be Considered. The FY204 Plan of Work describes the active projects and programs for each critical issue; Sustainable agriculture and food supply (22-research, 3-extension); Enhancing health and well-being (18-research, 2-extension); Sustainable landscapes across urban-rural interfaces (4-research,1-extension); and Adaptation and resilience to a changing climate (11-research, 1-extension). The FY24 Plan of Work describes appropriate plans to address four critical that are important to Connecticut.