

For Immediate Release: April 3, 2020
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Connecticut Department of Agriculture Facilitates Continuation of Farmers' Market and Shellfish Sales during COVID-19

(HARTFORD, CT) - The Connecticut Department of Agriculture (DoAg) has released guidance documents to facilitate the continuation of farmers' markets and shellfish sales during the COVID-19 crisis. Per Governor Lamont's Executive Order 7H, and 7S and DECD's guidance on essential services and Safe Stores, food and agriculture, including aquaculture, as well as, farmers' markets and farm stands are deemed essential. The guidance documents contain practices and protocols to be implemented as necessary in an effort to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 while providing access to supply of local, fresh food.

"Connecticut's agricultural producers have been entrepreneurial and innovative for generations. During the COVID-19 crisis they have an ample supply of fresh, local foods available," said Bryan P. Hurlburt, Agriculture Commissioner. "Issuing these guidance documents allows them to meet the needs of consumers as market access shifts."

Farmers' Market Guidance
The Farmers' Market Guidance has been established in order to assist market managers and farmers in providing a safe environment to sell farm products for sustained food accessibility while limiting potential exposure of COVID-19 to market managers, volunteers, vendors, food, and consumers. The recommendations provided in the guidance represent best practices under the current COVID-19 conditions. The guidance will be updated throughout the market season and as the WIC and Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program season approaches. The full farmers' market guidance can be found here: <https://portal.ct.gov/doag-covid>

Shellfish Guidance
Long Island Sound shellfish harvesters are adapting to changing market access as COVID-19 has limited movement to restaurants as they are restricted to takeout orders only at this time. Direct-to-consumer access is not new, however, given the shifting market, it is imperative to pursue this model in order to sustain the industry. Licensed Shellstock Shippers I operations may sell directly to the public from either their land-based facility or at a designated pickup location, provided they are selling from an approved vehicle that has been inspected and licensed by DoAg for temperature-controlled storage of shellfish. They may also deliver shellfish direct to the consumer from a DoAg licensed vehicle. This direct-to-consumer model, developed in cooperation with UConn SeaGrant, allows shellfish harvesters the ability to sustain their industry and protect consumers from exposure to COVID-19 during this public health crisis. In response to the current COVID-19 crisis, DoAg is providing this updated guidance document to clarify the existing licensing requirements for direct sales and to add additional COVID-19 specific guidance to protect the public as well as the producers. The full shellfish guidance can be found here: <https://portal.ct.gov/doag-covid>

CT Grown Map
Farmers' markets and licensed Shellstock Shippers I operations are encouraged to submit their information to be listed on www.CTGrownMap.com, an interactive online map of agriculture and aquaculture entities open for business. This is a joint effort with CT Northeast Organic Farming Association to promote the availability of all Connecticut farmers who can provide food and other farm products at this time. Market managers or producers should complete the [online form](#) to be included on the map.

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The Connecticut Department of Agriculture (CT DoAg) mission is to foster a healthy economic, environmental and social climate for agriculture by developing, promoting, and regulating agricultural businesses; protecting agricultural and aquacultural resources; enforcing laws pertaining to domestic animals; and promoting an understanding among the state's citizens of the diversity of Connecticut

agriculture, its cultural heritage, and its contribution to the state's economy. For more information, visit www.CTGrown.gov.
