

House Republican Press Release

June 10, 2008
Press Office: 860-240-8700

Mike Alberts Welcomes Farm Reinvestment Grants



Farms in Brooklyn and Woodstock will receive nearly \$100,000 in state grants to improve their facilities and enhance their operations.

State Rep. Mike Alberts welcomed the grants that were approved by the state Department of Agriculture and announced by Gov. M. Jodi Rell.

The grants are as follows:

Elm Farm, Woodstock
\$40,000 - new freestall/calf barn for dairy herd

Fairvue Farms, Woodstock
\$40,000 - covered composting facility

Meadowstone Farm, Brooklyn
\$16,000 - underground geothermal cheese cave

“Farming is not only an important source of jobs and local products,” said Mike Alberts. “It also helps to preserve the rural character of the region by keeping open space green and undeveloped.”

The farm reinvestment program is designed to strengthen the economic viability of Connecticut's agricultural producers through long-term, capital-fixed-asset and diversification projects. This year, 17 producers are being awarded matching grants, which will be used to expand or improve existing farms in accordance with a farm business plan.

"Agriculture is a critical industry in our state that fuels our local economy with over \$2 billion each year," said Gov. Rell. "These funds will help to ensure the longevity of our farms so that they may continue to create jobs in our state for many years to come."

The grant awards provide seed money for projects that enhance existing agricultural operations. These projects improve the farms' operations cash flow, create new jobs, and expand municipal grand lists.

The farms have up to one year to complete the project, according to the terms of their contract. The Department of Agriculture's share of each project is capped at \$40,000, and the applicant must provide matching funds that meet or exceed the grant award.

"These awards are an important component in our overall strategy to increase the production and diversity of our state's agricultural producers," said F. Philip Prelli, Commissioner of Agriculture. "Through this cost sharing program, we are investing in the future of Connecticut's agriculture for the benefit of all of our state's residents."

Approved projects include farm expansion through the building of greenhouses, dairy facilities, cheese production facilities, commercial kitchens, wine processing, and fruit and vegetable packing facilities.

Mike Alberts has been a strong supporter of farms and open space preservation in northeastern Connecticut. He serves the 50th Assembly District of Brooklyn, Eastford, Hampton, Pomfret and Woodstock.