

WASHINGTON, DC – Congressman Joe Courtney today announced that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has awarded two grants totaling \$89,320 to help eastern Connecticut farmers export and market their products. The first grant, which Courtney wrote a letter of support for, is worth \$39,000, will help the Connecticut Department of Agriculture and the Connecticut District Export Council develop a coordinated export marketing strategy.

"Connecticut's family farms are a New England tradition that I am working every day to protect," said Congressman Courtney. "USDA support for farmers' markets and growth opportunities are exciting new developments that will create new customers for local farms and help them grow their small businesses."

"Working with the District Export Council and the State Department of Agriculture, we will now have the opportunity to focus attention on specialty crops and small agricultural producers," said Anne Evans, U.S. Department of Commerce, District Director. "This grant will immediately help producers expand their sales into foreign markets and create jobs"

"This grant is good news for small farmers in Connecticut and comes at a critical time," said Philip Chester, Lebanon Town Planner. "Not only should it open new markets for small farmers, but it will help them grow their businesses and fortify our local economy."

The second grant, which is for \$50,320, will also help eastern Connecticut farmers expand their markets. The funding will be used to improve the Buy CT Grown program, which helps connect Connecticut farmers to a broader network of consumers. The funding will foster sales of local agricultural products to wholesale buyers such as chefs and food service operators.

Congressman Courtney is the founding co-chairman of the Congressional Dairy Farmers Caucus, and is the first member of the Connecticut House delegation to serve on the Agriculture Committee since Henry Stevens in the 59th Congress more than 100 years ago.

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