

The Connecticut General Assembly



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Future Agriculture Professionals Advocate for Vo-Ag Programs During Ag. Day

HARTFORD — State Representative Michelle Cook, D-Torrington, and Speaker of the House Joe Aresimowicz, D-Berlin/Southington, and State Representative Maria Horn, D-Torrington met with students and alumni from some of the state’s Agriculture Science and Technology Education programs to discuss their impact on the state economy during a press conference Wednesday afternoon.

“The agriculture industry is a huge base of our state’s economy and for it to continue growing, we need students who are invested in generating new technologies and revolutionizing the field,” said **Rep. Cook**. “It is critical that we continue to invest in programs that develop Connecticut’s workforce and fuel our state’s economic growth.”

“Agriculture Science is a model for how a career curriculum should work, and Rep. Cook is a great advocate for the program and its students,” said **Speaker Aresimowicz**, noting Southington High School has a vibrant Vo-Ag program. “Vo-Ag in Connecticut is a proven pipeline for skilled employment in a wide variety of industries that are important to our state’s economy and deserves to be supported.”

Connecticut FFA Association President Michael Wetherell of Killingly and Vice President Megan Davenport, a first year animal science major at the University of Connecticut from Litchfield, and Justine Leeper, owner of Floral Designs by Justine and a graduate of Nonnewaug High School’s Ellis Clark Regional Agriscience and Technology Program in Woodbury, also shared remarks about their experiences in Connecticut agriscience programs.

The press conference coincided with the state Department of Agriculture's Agriculture Day at the Capitol, which highlights industry businesses and organizations, as well as their contributions to the state economy.

Connecticut has a rich agricultural community, and is [home to 5,977 farms](#) that contribute approximately \$4 billion in direct sales to the state economy, and has created about 22,000 jobs, many of which are filled by young people who have graduated from one of the 19 Agriculture Science and Technology Education (ASTE) programs in the state.

Students in ASTE programs learn the basics of natural resources and environmental systems, agriculture mechanics, animal and plant science, aquaculture and marine technologies so they can continue to drive the industry and develop innovative technologies.

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