



Soil and Plant Science Division

Technical Soil Services

Northeast Soil Survey Region

Farm and Soil Health Workshop in the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont

St. Johnsbury, Vermont, Major Land Resource Area (MLRA) Soil Survey Office (SSO)

Purpose

On July 18, 2025, the St. Johnsbury MLRA SSO staff assisted the Caledonia County Conservation District in hosting a farm and soil health workshop. Centered around Caleamont Farm in Danville, Vermont, the group consisted of local conservation district staff, NRCS staff, and local farmers. The day was spent talking about different management strategies for pastures and hayland in northern Vermont.

Background

The St. Johnsbury MLRA SSO staff provided an overview on soil basics, focusing primarily on soil physical properties (fig. 1). A large part of the discussion that followed focused on soil chemical and biological properties, and the group had an insightful conversation on nutrient loading in soil. During the discussion, experienced local farmers gave advice on some of the best management practices that have been successfully implemented in their experiences. The owner of the farm gave an in-depth tour of the farm, showcasing his herd of full-blooded Belted Galloways. This breed can be traced back to Scotland during the 16th century and has a double coat of hair perfectly suited for the cold winters of northeastern Vermont (having about 4,000 hairs per square inch!) (fig. 2). He talked passionately about his herd of 70, how he manages them and his land, and the success and failures he has had from his endeavors.



Figure 1.—At the soil station located at the base of the pasture, Soil Scientist Paul Gadecki talked about soil color and soil mapping, and Caledonia County staff talked about soil testing.



Figure 2.—Left: Caleamont Farms owner standing in front of part of his herd of Belted Galloways as they cool off in the shade. Right: A yearling Belted Galloway in a pasture.

Key Outcomes

This workshop was open to local farmers and the public and was very helpful to the newer farmers of Caledonia County who had questions about soil health and land management. NRCS staff were happy to be a part of this workshop, meet new and experienced farmers, and spread the good word about soil health and elevate people's knowledge of soils.

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