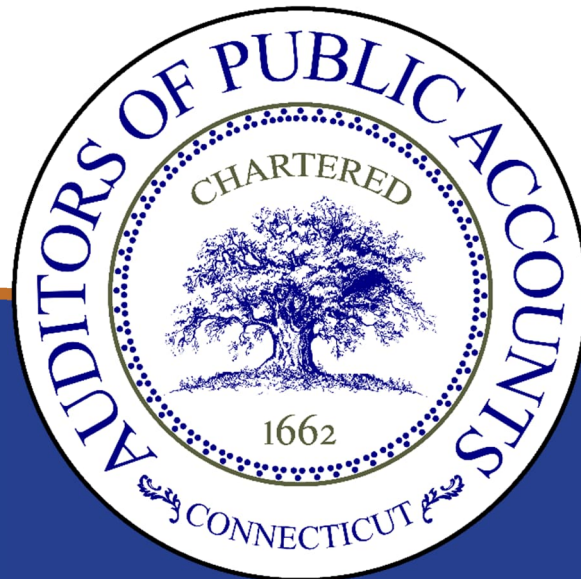


AUDITORS' REPORT

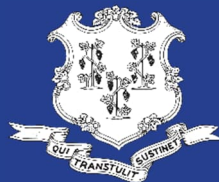
PERFORMANCE AUDIT COMPLIANCE REPORT

Governor's Council for
Agricultural Development
(Follow-Up Report)
February 4, 2026



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
Auditors of Public Accounts

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INTRODUCTION

Background

Our office published the [Governor's Council for Agricultural Development](#) performance audit on June 6, 2023. The purpose of this audit was to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the Governor's Council for Agricultural Development in meeting its statutory obligations to make recommendations for the Department of Agriculture (DoAg) and commodity groups. We also focused on determining the extent that DoAg implemented the council's recommendations, including the goal to reach five percent of Connecticut consumer food spending on Connecticut-Grown fresh produce and farm products by 2020.

The Governor's Council for Agricultural Development (GCAD) advises the Connecticut Department of Agriculture (DoAg) on the development, diversification and promotion of agricultural products, programs, and enterprises in the state and provides for the interchange of ideas from various commodity groups and organizations it represents.

In 2011, Public Act 11-189 made key changes to how GCAD operates, including reducing its membership and expanding its responsibilities. GCAD convened under its new configuration in January of 2012 and embarked on the development of its strategic plan, Grow Connecticut Farms. Through the course of three years, it developed 24 different recommendations.

In 2022, subsequent to our audit period, the General Assembly passed legislation that included significant revisions to the council's mission and membership. One of the changes included the renaming of the Governor's Council for Agricultural Development to the Governor's Council for Agricultural Development and Innovation.

Follow Up

On March 19, 2025, we requested an update from the Governor's Council for Agricultural Development and Innovation in conjunction with the Department of Agriculture on how it addressed the report's three recommendations.

The report's recommendations focused on the council developing a system to monitor its progress towards achieving its goals, reporting to the legislature and public on its goals and accomplishments, and developing an agricultural plan for Connecticut that considers all sectors of the state's diverse agricultural industry.

Note that Finding Area 2 in the original report is not included in our follow-up as it did not include a related recommendation.

Highlighted Agency Accomplishments

The Governor's Council on Agricultural Development and Innovation has 16 members. Four members are designated by state statute and 12 members are appointed by the Governor and legislative leaders. At the time of our review, the Governor and legislative leaders had not notified DoAg of their appointments. Thus, the council lacked a quorum and could not meet to conduct business and address the report's recommendations.

The Governor's Council for Agricultural Development and Innovation in conjunction with the Department of Agriculture did not partially or fully implement any of our audit recommendations. This information is solely based upon the department's responses to our update request and may be verified during our next departmental audit.

AGENCY UPDATES

Finding 1

The Governor's Council for Agricultural Development and Innovation had no mechanism to track and report on its progress toward achieving its goals.

Recommendation 1

The Governor's Council on Agricultural Development and Innovation should work with the Department of Agriculture to develop a system to monitor the council's progress toward achieving its goals. The department should collect information and utilize measures that quantifiably ascertain the council's progress toward achieving its goals.

Recommendation 2

The Governor's Council on Agricultural Development and Innovation should work with the Department of Agriculture to regularly report to the legislature and the public on its goals and accomplishments.

Status

NOT IMPLEMENTED

The Governor's Council on Agricultural Development and Innovation in conjunction with DoAg did not implement Recommendations 1 and 2 because the council did not have a quorum to meet and conduct business.

Agency Update

"Pursuant to CGS 22-26e, the Governor's Council on Agricultural Development and Innovation was created to consist of the following members:

...(1) The Commissioner of Agriculture, who shall serve as the chairperson of the council, (2) the dean of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources at The University of Connecticut, or the dean's designee, who shall serve as co-vice-chairperson, (3) the executive director of the Connecticut Farm Bureau, or the executive director's designee, (4) six members appointed by the Governor, who shall each be actively engaged in agricultural production or aquaculture production, provided not less than one of whom shall be socially disadvantaged, as defined by the United States

Department of Agriculture, and not less than one of whom shall be engaged in aquaculture production, (5) one member appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives, who shall be engaged in urban agriculture production, (6) one member appointed by the president pro tempore of the Senate, who shall be engaged in agricultural marketing, (7) one member appointed by the majority leader of the House of Representatives, who shall be a new and beginning farmer, as defined by the United States Department of Agriculture, (8) one member appointed by the majority leader of the Senate, who shall be from a trade association, (9) one member appointed by the minority leader of the House of Representatives, who shall be from the green industry, (10) one member appointed by the minority leader of the Senate, who shall be actively engaged in agricultural education, and (11) the director of the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station, or the director's designee, who shall serve as the co-vice-chairperson. Each member appointed pursuant to subdivisions (4) to (10), inclusive, of this subsection shall serve for a term of three years from the date of such member's appointment.

The total number of members to be seated on the Council is 16, of which 4 are designated members and 12 of which are appointees from the Governor's office and the Legislative Leadership. As of the date of this response, the Department has not received notification of any appointments to the Council for the 12 open seats. In the absence of these appointments, the Council only has 4 members, and does not have a quorum to meet and conduct any business. Therefore, The Council has not taken any action to carry out the recommendations from the 2023 audit at the present time."

Finding 3

The Governor's Council for Agricultural Development and Innovation did not update its strategic recommendations to promote and further develop Connecticut agriculture.

Recommendation 3

The Governor's Council on Agricultural Development and Innovation should work with the Department of Agriculture and its councils and boards to develop a holistic, strategic, written agricultural plan for Connecticut that considers all sectors of the state's diverse agricultural industry.

Status

NOT IMPLEMENTED

The Governor's Council on Agricultural Development and Innovation in conjunction with DoAg did not implement Recommendation #3 because the council did not have a quorum to meet and conduct business.

Agency Update

"Pursuant to CGS 22-26e, the Governor's Council on Agricultural Development and Innovation was created to consist of the following members:

...(1) The Commissioner of Agriculture, who shall serve as the chairperson of the council, (2) the dean of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources at The University of Connecticut, or the dean's designee, who shall serve as co-vice-chairperson, (3) the executive director of the Connecticut Farm Bureau, or the executive director's designee, (4) six members appointed by the Governor, who shall each be actively engaged in agricultural production or aquaculture production, provided not less than one of whom shall be socially disadvantaged, as defined by the United States Department of Agriculture, and not less than one of whom shall be engaged in aquaculture production, (5) one member appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives, who shall be engaged in urban agriculture production, (6) one member appointed by the president pro tempore of the Senate, who shall be engaged in agricultural marketing, (7) one member appointed by the majority leader of the House of Representatives, who shall be a new and beginning farmer, as defined by the United States Department of Agriculture, (8) one member appointed by the majority leader of the Senate, who shall be from a trade association, (9) one member appointed by the minority leader of the House of Representatives, who shall be from the green industry, (10) one member appointed by the minority leader of the Senate, who shall be actively engaged in agricultural education, and (11) the director of the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station, or the director's designee, who shall serve as the co-vice-chairperson. Each member appointed pursuant to subdivisions (4) to (10), inclusive, of this subsection shall serve for a term of three years from the date of such member's appointment.

The total number of members to be seated on the Council is 16, of which 4 are designated members and 12 of which are appointees from the Governor's office and the Legislative Leadership. As of the date of this response, the Department has not received notification of any appointments to the Council for the 12 open seats. In the absence of these appointments, the Council only has 4 members, and does not have a quorum to meet and conduct any business. Therefore, The Council has not taken any action to carry out the recommendations from the 2023 audit at the present time."