



The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station

*Putting Science to Work for Society since 1875*

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## **Appropriations Committee**

### **Testimony**

February 27, 2023

Good afternoon, Senator Osten, Representative Walker and members of the Appropriation Committee. My name is Jason White, and I am the Director of The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station. I am pleased to be here today to give testimony on the Governor's recommended budget for fiscal years 2024 and 2025.

As a relatively small agency, we have always operated on a very lean budget and only request funding that we need to satisfy our mission and regulatory responsibilities. The budget that Governor Lamont has recommended for our agency is adequate to continue our current research programs, meet our statutory responsibilities and continue to provide superior service to Connecticut residents. The Experiment Station continues to conduct extraordinary research and provide public service in the areas of agriculture, the environment, food safety, and public health.

The Experiment Station, like most other state agencies, experienced many retirements, and I am happy to report we have been successful in replacing those positions. We had 24 staff members either retire or leave the agency. All but four positions have been replaced, those positions are being recruited, and will join the agency by May 2023.

Below is a general fund position summary:

Date	Authorized	Filled	Vacant
07/01/2022	74	57	17
02/27/2023 (today)	74	68	6

The Governor's recommended budget transfers three (3) positions for the regulatory testing of adult cannabis to the general fund. This regulatory testing program is currently fully operational with staff hired, and samples being processed in a timely fashion. The laboratory is in the process adding this testing to our current ISO accreditation. Also, the Office of Aquatic Invasive Species, which was created last year by statute, is now fully staffed, and beginning operations, including coordination with other state agencies, the University of Connecticut, and other stakeholders.

The Experiment Station has also initiated research on PFAS in the environment, supported by federal research grants. Our research staff has developed sensitive methods of analysis for a range of media, including soil and food. I do note that there seems to be an interest in the state for a new state-based surveillance program to test agricultural soil samples for PFAS. We are collaborating with other state agencies, including the Department of

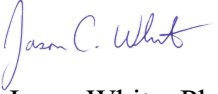
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Energy and Environmental Protection and the Department of Public Health on the PFAS issue, and we are a member of the PFAS task force. The group is working to address the threat of PFAS in the environment.

For 147 years, we have achieved ground-breaking discoveries with an unbridled commitment to public service as we have addressed the region's most challenging problems and strived to improve the quality of life for Connecticut residents. Thank you for your consideration of our operating budget.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jason C. White". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jason" and last name "White" clearly legible.

Jason White, Ph.D.  
Director