

University of Connecticut Cooperative Extension System Faith Based Expression Guidelines

The first amendment of the United States Constitution requires governmental neutrality with regard to religion. Federal government requirements, related to secular issues, specify that religion must neither be advanced nor inhibited by government-funded programs. Additionally, State of Connecticut law mandates that all institutions supported by State funds must be free of sectarian control or influence.

The University of Connecticut Cooperative Extension System receives both State and Federal funds, and is required to uphold constitutional principles. Volunteers with Extension programs, such as 4-H, Master Gardeners, and EFNEP, function under the direct supervision of Extension faculty/staff members and sponsorship of the University, and are therefore similarly obligated to uphold constitutional principles. Privately incorporated organizations such as Extension Councils, 4-H Camps, 4-H Foundations, and the 4-H Education Center at Auer Farm are derived from and operate in support of Extension, and likewise cannot engage in activities prohibited by Federal and State laws.

In practice, the principle of separation of church and state means that Extension faculty/staff members and volunteers shall not:

- Conduct Extension programs, projects, or events that either advance or inhibit religion;
- Conduct or incorporate into Extension programs, projects, or events any religious services or practices, including prayer or other forms of worship;
- Adopt, promote, or otherwise advance creeds in Extension programs, projects, or events that include sectarian references or language e.g. "ideals of (Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, etc.) life."

Extension events may be held in sectarian facilities provided that attendance is open to persons of all beliefs and that none of the above principles are compromised.

The Connecticut Cooperative Extension System adheres to the University of Connecticut policy that supports all State and Federal laws to promote equal opportunity and prohibit discrimination. The Connecticut Cooperative Extension System is open to all youths and adults without regard to race; ethnicity; religion; sex; age; marital status; national origin; ancestry; sexual orientation; or physical, mental or learning disability.

The University of Connecticut Cooperative Extension System adheres to all policies of the University of Connecticut.

University of Connecticut policy information can be reviewed at www.policy.uconn.edu

This policy has been reviewed and approved by: The United States Department of Agriculture, The University of Connecticut's Department of Human Resources, Office of Diversity and Equity, and Office of Audit, Compliance and Ethics.

Adapted: April 2006