



**Statement on Herbicide Use
Issued on 8/19/2020**

The Southbury Land Trust has not one but two missions. The first is preserving and protecting open space for the enjoyment of the public and the second is preserving and protecting agricultural farm land to make sure that it remains productive. No farms. No food. This requires a balance in how we address land use issues.

This past spring, we collaborated with our tenant farmer who is responsible for cultivating and maintaining the Platt Farm property and we agreed that it was necessary to rotate the type of crops on the Platt Farm lower field. Over the past years the fields at Platt Farm have had significantly reduced hay yields due to the fact that the crop has not been rotated and weeds and broad-leaf vegetation have taken over.

A joint decision was made to change the field over to a corn crop which will be used for silage to feed animals. With that in mind the tenant farmer followed all of the rules and abided by the lease we have with them and decided to use a one-time application of herbicides to “reset” the field and then plant corn. When they did so, they posted the appropriate signage indicating this for the appropriate amount of time required. The rules for herbicide use are very strict and have been established by the State of CT Department of Agriculture and the choices for farmers to manage invasive plants and weeds are very limited. One option is that they could have tilled the field and caused major soil disruption and possible erosion that could have sent soil material into the Pomperaug River, but instead they chose to use a no-till herbicide application as an alternative. This liquid application was quite dilute and was just enough to kill the weeds and allow the corn to grow.

We have received several comments and inquiries concerning the use of herbicides. A few believe that it was a questionable decision. We are taking those comments to heart and we will work closely with the Platt tenant farmer to consider other crop alternatives and management choices going forward. We welcome input from our membership, farmers, and the public and we want to continue to gather as much fact-based information as we can to make the proper choices concerning our land use management of this and all of our parcels.

We will continue to try to achieve the proper balance and monitor the very latest science and land management techniques to do so.

SLT Board of Directors