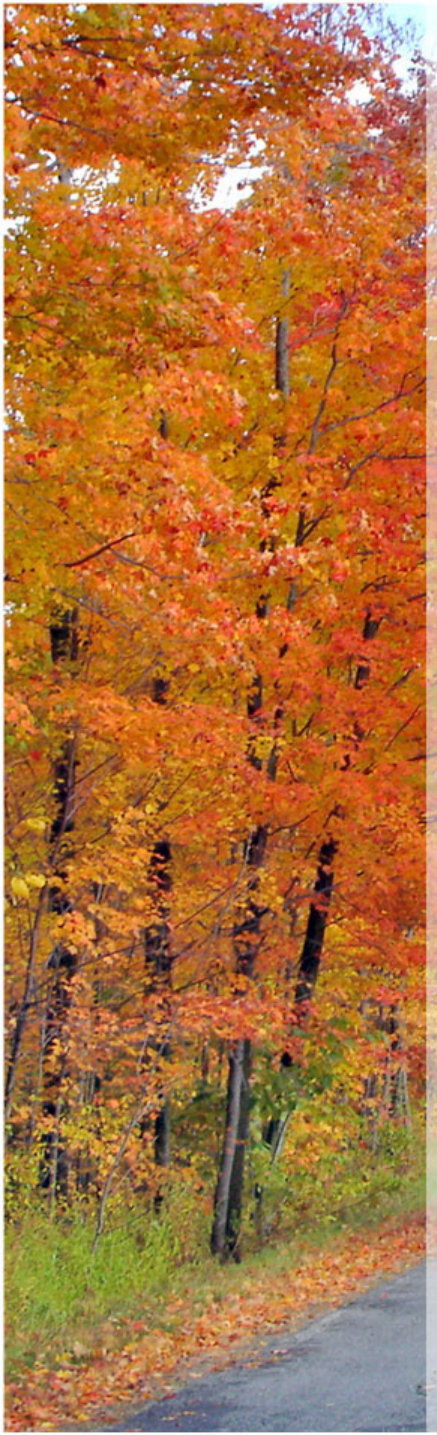




Want Rural Character?
Plan for Agriculture!



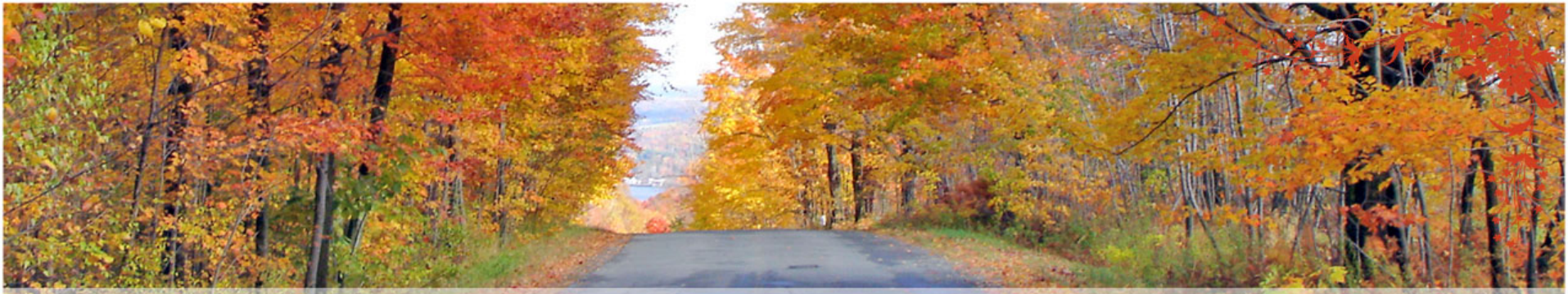
Lynda Brushett, Ph. D.
NH Coalition for Sustaining Agriculture
Brushett@metrocast.net



Agriculture—defines place... as a business and a land use

STRATEGIES

- *Understand Agriculture in Your Town*
- *Support Farm Business*
- *Protect Farmland*
- *Limit Impact of New Development*
- *Adopt Farm Friendly Policies and Land use Regulations*
- *Promote Agriculture*



Understand your unique farming community

- Meet with local farms
- Consider an Agricultural Commission
- Conduct an agricultural inventory
- Map farms and agricultural resources
- Know your farmers: understand practices and needs; find gaps



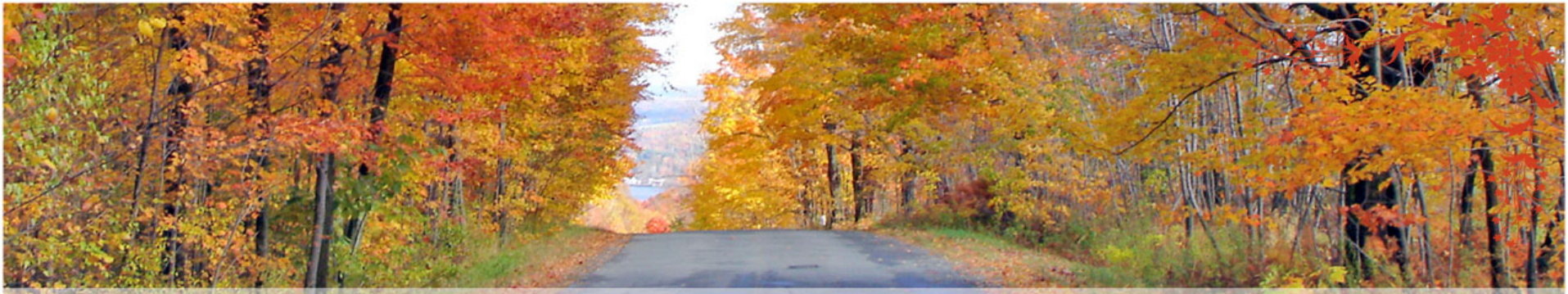
Create a Supportive Ag Business Environment

- Adopt state agricultural definition, right to farm and other statutes
- Identify, understand and support business needs
- Include agriculture in your economic development strategy/plan



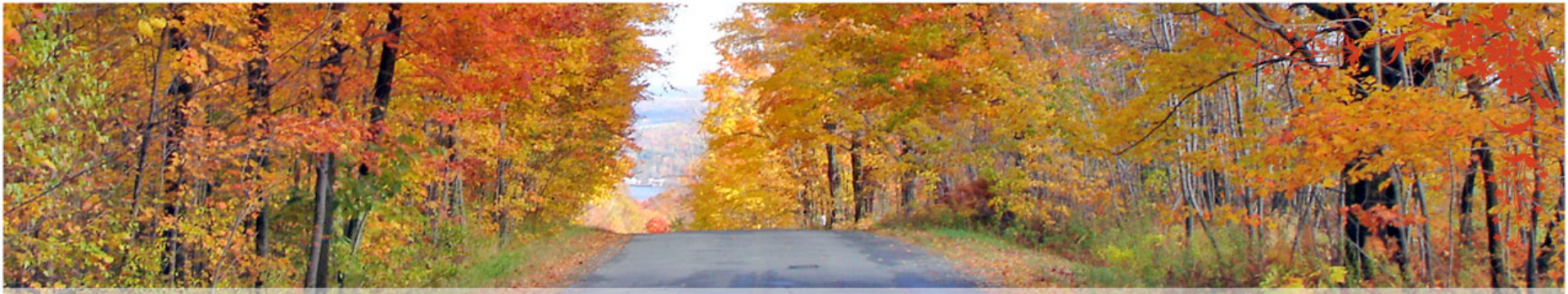
Create a Supportive Ag Business Environment...

- Allow and encourage (by right, simplified permitting, waiver) agricultural business start-up and growth:
 - on-farm retail sales
 - on-farm processing and storage facilities
 - off-site farm signs
 - on-farm worker housing
 - on-farm events
 - on-farm infrastructure businesses, eg. sawmills, B & B's
 - buy-local—in schools, at farmers markets, etc.



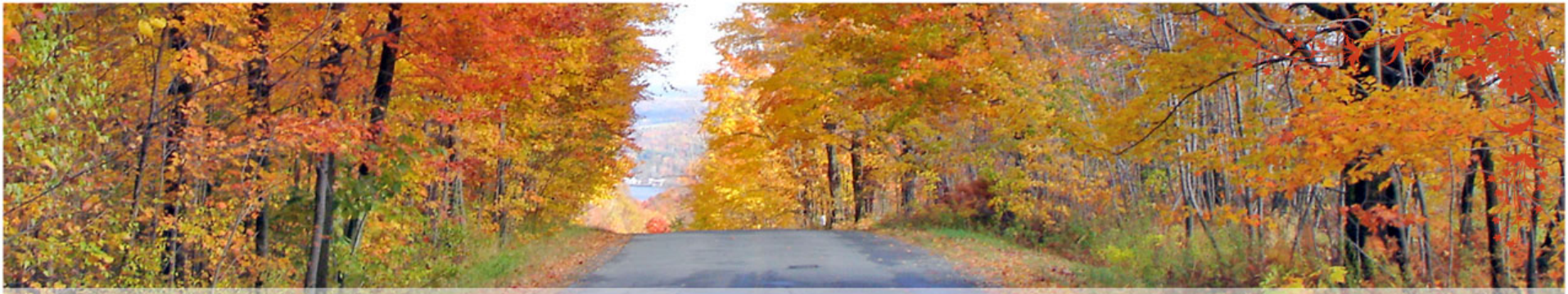
Create a Supportive Ag Business Environment...

- Enact Appropriate Tax Policies for Farmland and Farm Buildings
 - Publicize current use assessment
 - Adopt tax exemptions
- Help farms navigate permitting processes
- Be Flexible; Joint Problem-solving
- Assist with food safety regulatory compliance



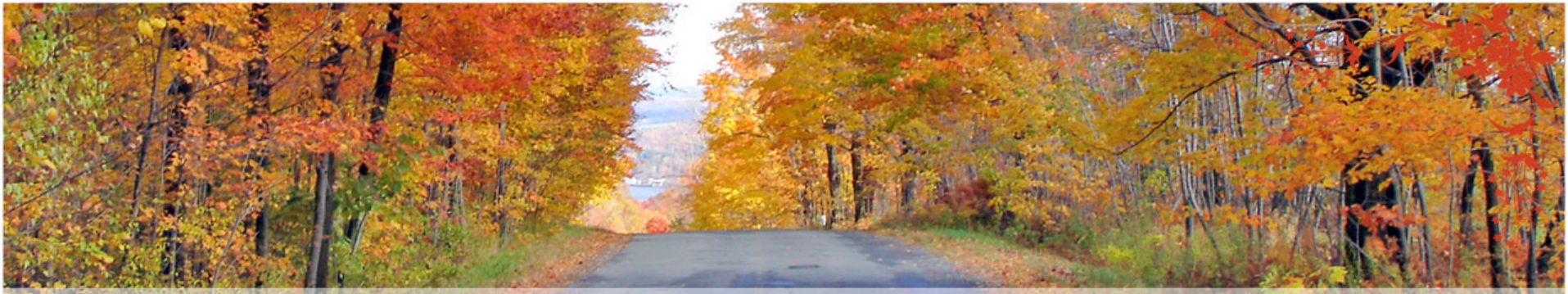
Pursue Multiple Strategies to Protect Farmland

- Identify and map private and public farmland
- Reach out to landowners about land conservation options, tax incentives and more
- Establish a land acquisition fund to purchase farmland or easements
- Make land conservation connections



Limit Impact of New Development on Agriculture

- Plan water, sewer and other infrastructure expansions in developed areas
- Adopt a right to farm ordinance
- Require buffers for new residential developments
- Use agriculture education to minimize conflict
- Encourage use of Best Management Practices
- Explore transfer of development rights regulation



- Zoning Regulations

- Review for unintended consequences

- Clarify definitions: farm (all types), agriculture, agricultural structures, etc. Adopt state definitions

- Signage

- Retail stands and value-added farm facilities

- Agriculture zones and overlays



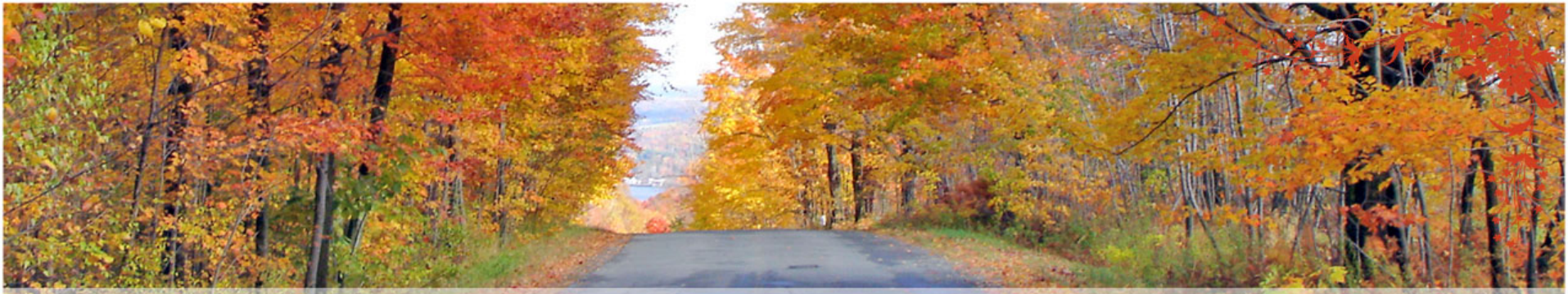
Adopt Farm Friendly Policies and Land use Regulations which support agricultural businesses and reduce opportunity for farmer and non-farmer conflicts

- Master Plan

Include agriculture and forestry

Make the rural character: agriculture connection

Set agriculture, farmland and forestry goals



Farm Friendly Policies and Land use Regulations...

- Subdivision Regulations
 - review for unintended consequences
 - allow cluster and conservation subdivision and ensure farmland is protected from development
 - require buffers
- Establish an Agricultural Commission
- Recruit farmers to local boards



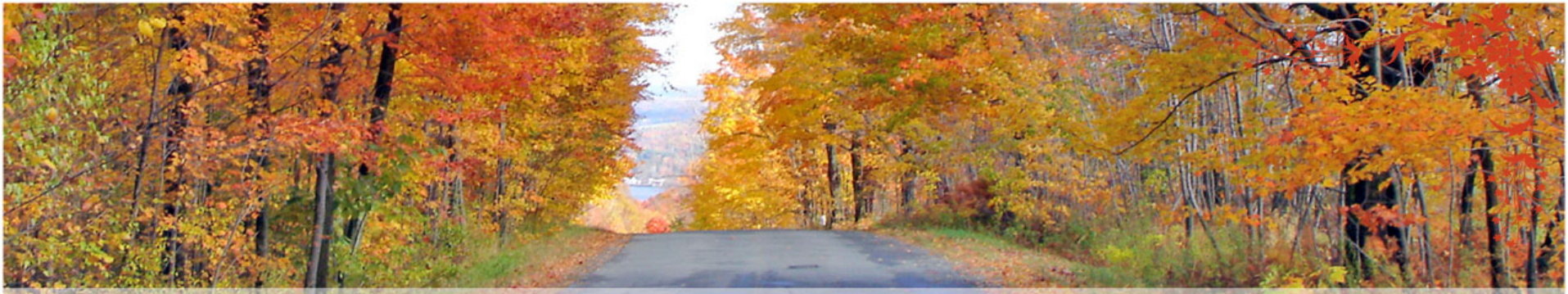
Promote Agriculture

- Set an example: Encourage agricultural use of town-owned and conserved farmland through stewardship, leases, community gardens, CSA's and more....
- Support farmers markets—offer space, parking, signage, utilities, publicity; invest in facilities; etc.
- Make Farm to School connections
- Celebrate Agriculture through farm guides, festivals, contests, farm tours, recognition, etc.
- Profile farms—highlight economic, social and environmental contributions



Agriculture contributes to Sustainable Communities

- *Economic*
 - *Jobs, local economy multipliers, tourism*
 - *Property Taxes: lower cost for services*
- *Environmental*
 - *Water Quality*
 - *Natural Resources*
- *Social*
 - *Rural character, image, identity, culture*
 - *Quality of life: recreation, food, well-being*



Thanks!

Based in part on materials found in

Planning For Agriculture: A Guide for Connecticut Municipalities

American Farmland Trust and Connecticut Conference of Municipalities

www.ctplanningforagriculture.com

Is Your Town Farm Friendly, A checklist for sustaining rural character, by Gary Matteson for the NH Coalition for Sustaining Agriculture and UNH Cooperative Extension.

Preserving Rural Character: the Agricultural Connection, NHOSP Revised Technical Bulletin 6, by Lorraine Stuart Merrill. How to support local farming in land use policies and programs.

Preserving Rural Character through Agriculture: a Resource Kit for Planners, A broad array of tools and techniques, compiled by the NH Coalition for Sustaining Agriculture. Includes recommendations for farm-friendly land use, planning, and zoning provisions.

Conserving the Family Farm: A Guide to Decision-Making for Farmers, other Agricultural Professionals, Landowners and Conservationists. By Annette Lorraine, for the NH Coalition for Sustaining Agriculture and UNH Cooperative Extension. Helps farm families identify *issues* to discuss with family members and advisors as part of land conservation planning.