

Planning for Sustainable Food and Agriculture

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<http://agriculture.nh.gov/>

Local Food and Agriculture

- Conserve and protect farmland
- Reclaim, reconstruct, create the infrastructure to harvest, process, and distribute locally produced foods and farm products, eg., locally raised and processed meats.
- Saving dairy -- keystone of Northeast agriculture
- Save farms from death by a 1,000 regulatory strokes
- Ensure educational, entry and support opportunities for young/beginning farmers/growers
- Connect communities with local farms, agricultural resources and rural heritage

NH Farm Viability Task Force

- **2. Increase direct marketing opportunities for producers.** Direct sale of agricultural production is the most profitable channel for many NH farms. A modest increase in promotion of farm product purchases can stimulate large gains in consumer demand and boost farm profitability.

NHFVTF Recommendations

- **4. Make conservation of farmland a high priority and dedicate a minimum of \$3 million annually to buy permanent conservation easements that protect agricultural land.** Lack of funding for the existing statewide farmland conservation program puts New Hampshire farmers at a competitive disadvantage to those in other states and leaves prime agricultural resources at risk.

NHFVTF Recommendations

- **8. Authorize Agricultural Commissions that local governments may choose to adopt as an advisory committee.** Local Agricultural Commissions can be the voice of agriculture in each municipality. They would ensure that agriculture remains in their town by identifying barriers to the viability of farming, such as local regulations or ordinances.

NHFVTF Recommendations

- **9. Remove rules and regulations burdensome to agriculture and identify ways the State of New Hampshire can assist.** Many rules, regulations, and State laws inadvertently hinder the operation of farm enterprises. Modest changes that remove inappropriate obstacles and promote uniform application and reasonable interpretation of rules, regulations, and State law would help maintain the viability of farms.

How to sustain local agriculture

- Adopt broad, inclusive definition of agriculture - NH RSA 21:34a
- Adopt Right-To-Farm ordinance
- Detailed master plan section on agriculture
- Allow agricultural in more than one zoning district... maybe everywhere
- Provide for efficient use of land
- Flexibility for farm businesses

How to sustain local agriculture

- Require buffers between new residential development and farms or farmland
- Provide for agricultural use of open space land in innovative development
- Allow off-site signs to attract customers to farmstands
- Allow uses/infrastructure related to agriculture
- Address ag structures in building, safety codes

Know who to ask

- State University Cooperative Extension
- State Department of Agriculture
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Resources for Planners

- Preserving Rural Character through Agriculture:
A Resource Kit for Planners
<http://extension.unh.edu/Pubs/AgPubs/Prerural.pdf>
- Preserving Rural Character: The Agriculture Connection
http://www.nh.gov/oep/resourcelibrary/documents/technical_bulletin_6.pdf (NH OEP Technical Bulletin #6)
- Creating an Agricultural Commission in Your Hometown
<http://extension.unh.edu/Pubs/AgPubs/AgComm.pdf>