



Town of Woodbridge **Farmers Forum**

Co-Hosted by community-led Committee for a Woodbridge Agriculture Commission
Wednesday, April 18th 2018, 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm
Senior Center Cafe, 4 Meetinghouse Lane, Woodbridge CT

AGENDA

- 1) Greetings and introductions – First Selectman Beth Heller
- 2) Ground rules and goals of the meeting
- 3) Guest speakers – introduced by Andrea Urbano:
 - A) William Dellacamera (Cecarelli Farm, and Chairman of North Branford's Agriculture Commission)
 - B) Elisabeth Moore (the Connecticut Farmland Trust)
 - C) Terry Jones (Jones Family Farms, Shelton, CT)
 - D) Paul DeCoster (member of community-led Committee for a Woodbridge Agriculture Commission)
- 4) Group discussion:
 - A) Helping the Town identify critical needs and issues for agriculture in Woodbridge
 - B) Additional ways the Town can help support farms and farmers
 - C) Other ideas
- 5) Wrap up and adjourn



Town of Woodbridge Farmers Forum

Co-Hosted by community-led Committee for a Woodbridge Agriculture Commission
Wednesday, April 18th 2018, 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm
Senior Center Cafe, 4 Meetinghouse Lane, Woodbridge CT

MINUTES

The forum was called to order at 7:10 pm -- see Attachment A for list of attendees.

1) Greetings and introductions – Woodbridge First Selectman Beth Heller welcomed everyone to the Farmers Forum. She described the event as a collaborative discussion, put together by the Town of Woodbridge and the community-led group that is interested in seeing an Agriculture Commission created for the Town of Woodbridge. She stated that she is attending tonight to listen to the discussion and promised to take the comments and concerns expressed by participants back to the Board of Selectmen. The Board will then be in a position to consider what next steps might be possible based on this input.

Ms. Heller described how her involvement on this topic began shortly after her term as First Selectman started in July 2017. Community member Jim Urbano came to visit her at Town Hall. Her conversation with Jim got her thinking about the needs of farmers in the community and in February she asked the Woodbridge Conservation Commission to look into options the Town might explore. She acknowledged the presence of Jason Morrill, who is chairman of the Conservation Commission, along with Leland Torrence Sr., another members of the Commission, and Nancy Polk a member of the Commission on the Use of Publicly Owned Property (CUPOP).

Ms. Heller also mentioned that the Economic Development Commission is another Town Commission eager to be part of the effort to promote and sustain farmers and farming in Woodbridge. She acknowledged the BOS liaison to EDC, Deputy First Selectman Mica Cardozo, who was also present. Ms. Heller briefly described the Town's contracted services with the CT Economic Resource Center (CERC) to plan and execute supportive efforts, which might include promotion of Woodbridge farms and local produce.

Ms. Heller expressed confidence that there would be many additional ways to support farmers and agriculture in Woodbridge – from small measures that we can begin quickly, to large initiatives that may take more time and deliberation. She acknowledged that agriculture is what this community was founded on, back in the mid-1600s when Richard Sperry settled his family here to farm the “fertile land adjacent to West Rock.”

She concluded her remarks by emphasizing that she would like to learn tonight how the Town can best ensure that farming will continue for generations to come here in Woodbridge.

2) Ground rules and goals of the meeting - Ms. Heller then introduced the Town's Communications Director and Grant Writer, Sheila McCreven, who provided a brief overview of the Sustainable Connecticut program Actions that pertain to Agriculture. These materials were used to help frame some of the goals of this forum, and the Town intends to pursue points toward program certification as one potential 'next step' stemming from the forum. Ground rules for the evening were described, and Ms. McCreven asked participants to please observe a spirit of neighborliness toward one another, so that everyone has a chance to express their ideas and all voices are heard.

Ms. McCreven then introduced Andrea Urbano, a member of the community-led group involved in planning the forum. Ms Urbano described the goals of that group and provided introductory remarks for each of the Guest Speakers – see Attachment B for presentation materials and additional information shared by each.

3) Guest speakers included:

- A) William Dellacamera (Cecarelli Farm, and Chairman of North Branford's Agriculture Commission)
- B) Elisabeth Moore (the Connecticut Farmland Trust)
- C) Terry Jones (Jones Family Farms, Shelton, CT)
- D) Paul DeCoster (member of community-led Committee for a Woodbridge Agriculture Commission)

4) Group discussion - Ms. Urbano led the attendees in a brainstorming session focused on sharing ideas to help the Town identify critical needs and issues for agriculture in Woodbridge, and additional ways the Town can help support farms and farmers. Large note pad pages were used to record the thoughts of all participants as the conversation unfolded – see Attachment C for the complete list of ideas generated.

5) Wrap up and adjournment – Ms. Urbano thanked everyone for participating in the forum and reminded everyone to please use the sign-in sheets to provide an email address to assist with follow-up communication. Email will be utilized to keep everyone up-to-date on next steps. Participants were informed that the forum was coinciding with Ms. Urbano's birthday and expressed their well wishes to her in song. The forum concluded at 9:20 pm.

Farmers Forum - Ideas Captured on Large Notepad in Brainstorming Session

page one

- Agriculture Commission/differs from Conservation
 - Identify:
 - model practice
 - challenges
- Shelton agriculture concerns under the umbrella of Conservation
- For funding, some programs require an Agriculture Commission
- Purchase of Development Rights (owners retain rights)
- Guidelines? (North Branford Ordinance includes)
- Accept gifts on behalf of the Town, but protect these dollars
- Be the messenger and spirit/ reach out to state and local partners
- Cost of labor is an important factor/must be adequately understood and provided
- Succession planning/Estate planning – guidance to keep farmland together
- Right To Farm laws/ an Ag. Commission is only advisory (not regulatory)
- Help for Young Farmers (with programs in schools, hands-on learning, tours, tec.)
- Help applying for grants

page two

- Lack of focus; Farming (an Ag. Commission) vs. Open Space (a Conservation Commission)
- Land off Seymour Road could be farmed? (Has an existing easement to be hayed?)
- Could more of Fitzgerald Tract be farmed? Also look at Town-owned land roster for more
- Economic growth to support Grand List – how does farming contribute?
- Farming effects appraisal values – communicate the benefits:
 - Open Space and farmland cost little in services
 - less housing constructed means fewer people and need for services
- Agri-Tourism to make farms a destination and draw in visitors
(but this benefit also has a saturation point)
 - Create a map of farms (like the Northford example), marketing brochure/promote farms as one of our town's gems (along with our schools)
- The multiple owners who have owned and operated on the Hine-Hitchcock farmland (corner of Center and Pease Roads) an example of funding from Town for easement
- Plant wildflowers to highlight the potential of parcels
- "Buy-Protect-Sell" approach, such as currently pursued for 902 Baldwin Road parcel
 - need to include a house and barn so a farmer can live there and work
- New Connecticut Farmers Alliance and Land for Good – groups who can help find farmers
- Farm stand and sign regulations – could be improved
- Access to land and also access to capital – help farmers afford

page three

- Zoning regulations – need input from farmers
- Multi-year leases (for example 5-years) for Town owned properties?
- Farmers need housing for them and their families and barns near or on farmland
- Land Trust could have properties it owns farmed (some offer 50-year leases, for example)

- Explore examples such as 5-year lease with option to renew that takes into consideration “farming history” in renewal so those who do a good job get rewarded w/extension
- The Town’s Farmers Market:
 - cost is too high to participate for some
 - not enough customers/too many markets for them to patronize
 - would prefer fewer events that more people attend
 - combine with Bethany or Orange or Westville?
 - in conjunction with concerts is helping (but August likely not so desirable)
 - it’s hard to know if moving location to business district would help
 - the market may be saturated/ there are new business models online, etc. that draw away potential consumers
 - need more promotion/ a brochure
 - Economic Development Commission help promote (“Woodbridge Bucks” coupons)
- Look for grants to help fund agriculture promotion efforts
 - Orange and Bethany – neither have Ag. Commissions, but Town government is closely in touch with farmer needs
- Can aims be achieved with existing groups? Take a “try and see” approach, be dedicated with a sharp focus on the aims
- Grange is an example of a private group with similar aims
- Food Discussion Circles (Menu for the Future) at the Town Library, invites participation on further exploration of food-related themes
- Would small plots (privately owned) be attractive to farmers? How could they connect?
- “Fierce Cooperation” is a good approach to take

Farmers Forum – Sign-In Sheet

Attachment A

Name	Affiliation (Board or Commission)/Farm Name/Address/Town	Phone	Email
David Cardozo	Nans	203 494 91087	David.C.UTZ@GMAIL.COM
Cameron Ross-McCormack	—	203 685 5806	
Beth Heller	Woodbridge	203-389-6434	bheller@woodbridgect.org
SARAH SHEPHERD		203 530 0198	—
Ken Wood	FARM	203 389-1388	
Jerry Savino	Savino Vineyards	903-6684185	
Mica Cardozo	Woodbridge	203 843 8775	acardozo@snet.net
Alex Blythe	Woodbridge	203-907-5388	amblyth4323@gmail.com
Diana Lubin	Woodbridge	203 687 6571	
Bryan Pines	WLT	203-671-4753	pines@Snet.net

Farmers Forum – Sign-In Sheet

Name	Affiliation (Board or Commission)/Farm Name/ Address/Town	Phone	Email
RICHARDO FORSELYUS	WOODBRIDGE PARK ASSN, 1105 RACEBORO RD WOODBRIDGE		forse.rvs@snet.net
Steve & Jacquie Munno	41 Ford Rd Massaso Farm		stevemassasofarm@a.org
Kate Peterson Gorham	44 Weston Rd		kpb81744@yahoo.com
Stanislava	245 Newton		Stan3three@gmail.com
Jo Gorham	Massaso CF		Jo2Jingorham.com
Linda Colabella	Woodbridge residence		linda.starace@yale.edu
Jason Morrill	Conservation Commission		jason@sector13.org
Anne Boucher	Massaso Farm Board		amboucher@mmm.com
Will Conway			Conwaywilliam@gmail.com
LEAH TANNICE SR	17 VERNON COURT		LEAH@LITWTS.COM

Farmers Forum – Sign-In Sheet

Name	Affiliation (Board or Commission)/Farm Name/ Address/Town	Phone	Email
Leland Torrence JR	17 Vermont Creek		Leland.Torrence@vermontcreek.com
Cathy Poole	Exec Dir Massasoit Comm Farm		cathy@massasoitfarm.org
Wayne Whelan	Bethany		LehmonLucy6@gmail.com
Kristynae Hulland	Off Center Farm, Woodbury	203 609 3960	kristynahulland@gmail.com
NAWLEY Kline	14 Woodbridge Dr Woodbridge	203-915-7797	Nawleykline@gmail.com
Troy Sorenson	Merry Mountain Farm		
Ethan Schneider	Hoar Farms		
Anna Veitch		203 361 1900	Veitcha.614@gmail.com
Will Jones	Jones Family Farm		WJ12345@yahoo.com
Wayne Luciani	Wedge Family Farm	803-397-1024	www.TB3@yahoo.com

Summary of Guest Speaker Remarks – *provided by Andrea Urbano and the community-led Committee for a Woodbridge Agriculture Commission*

Agenda Item 3 (A): William Dellacamera (Cecarelli Farm, and Chairman of North Branford's Agriculture Commission)

William discussed his farm and how Connecticut's farmland protection program helped him, Cecarelli Farm, and the Town of North Branford. He spoke of the advantages of having an agriculture commission in North Branford and how it has benefited North Branford farmers. William also spoke of the need for farmers to support each other, and exemplified the concept of "farmers helping farmers". He additionally mentioned "farmers in need", ones that may be in transition and/or lack the resources to invest in the ideal upkeep of their land and/or infrastructure. He explained an agriculture commission could help establish guidelines or secure resources needed to aid these farmers, while also maintaining or enhancing the agricultural image and function in Town. He advocated for long-term agricultural leases, suggesting 50-year leases in five year increments, with options to renew. William spoke in favor of establishing an agriculture commission in the Town of Woodbridge. William brought two reference materials: a map of North Branford farms that his agriculture commission created, and North Branford's Agriculture Commission's Ordinance.

Agenda Item 3 (B): Elisabeth Moore (the Connecticut Farmland Trust)

Elisabeth introduced CT Farmland Trust's mission. Elisabeth explained the benefits of having an agriculture commission from the State's perspective. She informed attendees that there are certain grants and sources of funding that can only be issued to towns with agriculture commissions. She encouraged the Town of Woodbridge to establish an agriculture commission so that Woodbridge farmers would have a better ability to secure State funding and effectively work with supporting agencies such as the CT Farmland Trust. Elisabeth also introduced a few organizations that would support an agriculture commission's efforts. These included: Buy Protect Sell, The New CT Farmers Alliance, and Land for Good.

Agenda Item 3 (C): Terry Jones (Jones Family Farms, Shelton, CT)

Terry began his speech with a poetic excerpt from one of his publications. His talk primarily focused on the need of "fierce cooperation" and bipartisan relations between relevant stakeholders (farmers, businesses, gov't agencies, etc.) and municipal commissions. He spoke of the importance agriculture plays in local economies, and that having an agriculture commission could provide economic advantages for the Town of Woodbridge, especially considering the potential growth of micro farming in Town. He expanded that in order to ensure sustainable farming practices and economic growth, farming leases but be extended to a minimum of five years. He concluded by speaking in favor of Woodbridge establishing an independent agriculture commission.

Agenda Item 3 (D) Paul DeCoster (member of community-led Committee for a Woodbridge Agriculture Commission)

Paul provided pertinent information specific to the Town of Woodbridge's farmland resources. He discussed the Town's farmland inventory, and referenced both private and public parcels suitable for agriculture; one of which being the former Woodbridge Country Club.

Additional notes on Agenda Item 4: Group Discussion Session

1. General Comments

- a. An agriculture commission is the best option for the Town of Woodbridge's farmers.
- b. Having a Woodbridge Agriculture Commission would bring wisdom, agriculture-focused money, and a truly open space and agriculture focus to the Town.
- c. Supporting Woodbridge's farming economy by way of establishing a agriculture commission would help make Woodbridge a destination.
- d. The New CT Farmers Alliance and Land for Good. These are organizations that may be able to support efforts of an agriculture commission in Town. The New CT Farmers Alliance supports beginning farmers. Land for Good helps ensure a future of farming in New England by providing access to farmland. UConn agriculture students may also be a valuable resource.
- e. These are the most pressing barriers to farming in the Town of Woodbridge, and as such should be the focus of an agriculture commission:
 - i. Access to land
 - ii. Access to capitol
 - iii. Lease lengths (need to be increased from 1 year agreements)
 - iv. There is a need for more infrastructure and facilities to support farming efforts – there is a need for more than just open space.
- f. The market is changing for farmers. If more land is brought into agricultural production in Woodbridge, the Town/agriculture commission must consider the market for these farmers.
- g. There is a need for outreach outlets for farmers with land available.
- h. The return on investment for state investment is highest for agriculture.
- i. The agriculture commission could benefit the community by matching farmers with agricultural land.

2. Suggestions/Ideas

- a. An agriculture commission could help to unify agricultural preservation efforts by reaching out to both State and local organization
- b. The cost of labor tends to be an obstacle for farmers. In order to have a truly effective impetus for farming, attention should be focused on ensuring a source of labor.

- c. An agriculture commission could communicate and collaborate with the Town of Woodbridge Police Department. It was specifically suggested to allow parking at farm stands.
- d. An agriculture commission can help promote the Buy Protect Sell program in the Town of Woodbridge, ensuring protected farmland.
- e. Extending lease lengths to those farmers who lease Town-owned land would promote sustainable agricultural practices and the economic viability of the farm.
- f. On the topic of current agricultural lease agreements for private farmers on public lands:
 - i. The minimum lease length should be 5 years.
 - ii. Farmers need to know if they should be preparing to farm in the next year. There should be an option of extending or renewing leases in the last year of the current lease agreement.
- g. The Town must be careful not to saturate the economy. There should not be too many of any one type of farm business model (e.g., CSA, pick your own, etc.).
- h. On the topic of Woodbridge's Farmer's Market:
 - i. Participating is too expensive for a farmer
 - ii. Though enthusiastically attended, the weekly event is not well attended and is therefore not a viable market.
 - iii. CT is currently inundated with farmer's markets. The supply is too high for the demand.
 - iv. Woodbridge's Farmers Market needs more marketing to increase attendance
 - v. Consider collaborating with the Town of Bethany and the Town of Orange to host a regional market instead of three separate town markets.
 - vi. Switching the Market day to Tuesday was helpful.
 - vii. Combining the Market with Town concerts or other events helps to increase attendance.
 - viii. An agriculture commission could work with Town Planning and Zoning to allow residents and/or customers to visit farms.
- i. To expedite the process of establishing an agriculture commission, one should reference an ordinance that already exists from another municipality.
- j. Potential parcels to direct attention if establish an agriculture commission:
 - i. The parcel off of Seymour Road. This parcel used to be hayed. It is currently on the roster as open space and serves a great potential for agricultural land.
- k. The Fitzgerald farm. The fenced in area that was a chestnut tree field. This can be farmed.
- l. Prioritize efforts toward historic farmland. Target historic farmland as projects first.
- m. Prioritize ugly land (e.g., the parcel off Litchfield Turnpike where the Perottie's house used to be)

3. Questions

- a. Can one expand upon an agriculture commission's regulatory role?
Answer: an agriculture commission is only advisory.
- b. If agricultural production expands in Woodbridge, how would the farms be economically viable?
- c. What is the saturation point for agrotourism?
- d. If a landowner sells development rights, can the property still be sold.
Answer: Yes, but the buyer can not develop the land.
- e. How do we present to the public the broad economic benefit that agricultural growth would provide?
- f. How come towns with well-established agricultural economies, like the Town of Orange, don't have agricultural commissions?
Answer: the Town of Orange's long-term First Selectman, Jim Zeoli, is farmer, and intrinsically understands the importance of agriculture within the context of the Town.

Develop Agriculture-Friendly Practices

5 Points

10 Points

15 Points

20 Points

25 Points

**Objective**

Create an agriculture-friendly community through taking steps to actively support farms and farmers in your city or town.

What to Do

Complete one of the following nine (1-9) activities. You can receive additional points for completing additional actions (up to 25 points total).

1. Pass a right-to-farm ordinance. (5 points)

Submit: A copy of the right-to-farm ordinance.

2. Lease appropriate municipal land to farmers or provide outreach on [CTFarmlink](#) (linking available municipal or private land to farmers looking for land to farm) (5 points)

Submit: Number of municipal parcels available for lease to farmers; number of municipal parcels leased and description of lease agreement(s); or documentation of outreach provided on CT Farmlink.

3. Develop a Transfer or Purchase of Development Rights program. (10 points)

Submit: A description of your Transfer or Purchase of Development Rights program; Hyperlink if available.

4. Hold a farmer forum to identify critical needs or issues for agriculture in municipality. (5 points)

Submit: Your agenda, presentations, and minutes from the farmer forum.

5. Create regulations to mandate open space, subdivisions/clustering of housing. (10 points)

Submit: A copy of the regulations you created.

6. Create right-to-farm regulations allowing roadside farm stands and farm signage. Reduce regulations on farming where appropriate (for example, farm stand versus farm store). (5 points)

Submit: A copy of the right-to-farm ordinance/regulation; copies of regulations removed or amended to facilitate farming (if amended, describe how).

7. Establish an open space/farmland acquisition fund. (10 points)

Submit: Documentation establishing the fund, noting the dollar amount available in fund.

8. Create regulations or reduce barriers to encourage agriculture, agri-tourism, and use of renewable energy (including anaerobic digestion) on working farms. (10 points)

Submit: Copies of regulations created or amended. If amended, describe how.

9. Develop and promote community garden spaces for residents on municipal land. (10 points)

Submit: A photo of each community garden space on municipal land; upload outreach and promotion materials

Potential Municipal and Community Collaborators

Staff from the town council, planning and zoning, public works, parks and recreation departments and the agriculture, conservation, planning and zoning, and inland wetlands commission, as well as local farming advocates, and local land trusts could be helpful in implementing this action.

Funding

- CT Department of Agriculture, [Farmland Preservation Program](#), [Farmland Preservation Application](#), [Community Farms Preservation Program Application](#)

Resources

Toolkits, Calculators, Guidance Documents

- American Farmland Trust and Connecticut Conference of Municipalities, [“Planning for Agriculture: A Guide for Connecticut Municipalities”](#)
- Capitol Region Council of Governments, [“Regulating the Farm: Improving Agriculture’s Viability in the Capitol Region” Model Regulations](#)
- Acadia Center, [“Community Energy Vision, Action Guide for Connecticut”](#)

Organizations and Relevant Programs

- [American Farmland Trust Connecticut](#)
- [Farmland Trust Connecticut Farm](#)
- [Bureau Association Connecticut](#)
- [Agricultural Experiment Station](#)
- [Connecticut Farmlink](#) [CT Farm Energy](#)
- [Program Farm Service Agency](#)
- [UConn Center for Land Use Education and Research \(CLEAR\)](#)
- [CT NEMO \(Non-point Education for Municipal Officials\)](#)
- [Program Working Lands Alliance](#)
- USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service, [Connecticut](#)
- [Office Connecticut Environmental Review Team](#)
- [Connecticut Conservation Districts](#)
- [Connecticut Resource Conservation & Development Area, Inc.](#)

Why This Matters

Agriculture is part of the fabric of many communities in Connecticut. The state’s agriculture industry is a \$3.5 billion industry, and it is invaluable to preserving our Nutmeg character. As municipalities grow and change over time, regulations and policies may limit agricultural development, or may make it challenging for farmers to diversify their income to stay viable and/or meet the needs of the ever-changing market.

Benefits

Farms provide a variety of benefits to a community and the state, from increasing access to fresh, local produce, dairy and meat; to preserving open space and providing habitat; to celebrating our historical and cultural practices; to providing opportunities for tourism. Farms provide an industry for many businesses such as food manufacturers and processors, garden centers, veterinarians, farm equipment wholesalers and repair shops. Amending existing regulations and creating new regulations to support farms, will help the agriculture sector flourish in your community.

CT Success Stories

- South Windsor: [“Resolution Creating a Farmland Purchasing Development Rights Policy and Farmland Purchasing Development Rights Account”](#)

Credit for Past Action

Proof of current status for all actions is required prior to application submission.



CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Select Language ▼

Translation
Disclaimer

[Home](#)

[About Us](#)

[Publications](#)

[Licenses & Permits](#)

[Contact Us](#)



Steven K. Reviczky
Commissioner

**Ag Business
Development &
Assistance**

**Animals and Animal
Health**

Aquaculture

**Boards, Councils, and
Commissions**

**Hartford Regional
Market**

Job Opportunities

**Programs, Services, &
Grants**

Regulatory Services

**Where to Find CT
Grown Products**

**Weekly Agricultural
Report**



[Programs, Services, and Grant Opportunities](#)

Farmland Preservation Program

[Program Overview](#)

[Assistance to Public and Agriculture](#)

[How the Program Works](#)

[Farmland Restoration Program](#)

Community Farms Preservation Program: [Press Release](#) & [Ag Report Article](#)

Farmland Preservation Program Overview

Agriculture is one of Connecticut's most vital economic sectors, and at its heart is the state's extraordinary farmland. The Department of Agriculture preserves working lands by acquiring development rights to agricultural properties through its Farmland Preservation Program, ensuring that the land remains available only for agricultural use in perpetuity.

The main objective of the program is to establish a food-and-fiber producing land resource base, consisting mainly of prime and important farmland soils, that will ensure local availability of fresh farm products and help agriculture to remain an important part of the state's economy.

A permanent restriction on non-agricultural uses is placed on the deed to these properties, but the farms remain in private ownership and continue to pay local property taxes. The program is voluntary and gives farmers a realistic alternative to selling their land for residential development.

Applications are evaluated according to state regulation criteria, which recognize the benefits of clustering farms with a high percentage of prime farmland soils in active farm communities.

As of December 2015, the program has preserved more than 41,500 acres on 315 farms. The long-term goal is to preserve 130,000 acres.

The Program Assists the Public and Agricultural Communities Across the State By:

- Preserving the best and most productive agricultural land.
- Providing an opportunity for farmers to purchase land at affordable prices.
- Helping farm owners overcome estate planning problems which often result in farmland loss.
- Providing working capital to enable farm operations to become more financially stable.
- Addressing other personal ownership problems, such as health and age, which contribute to the likelihood of land being converted to non-agricultural uses.
- Providing a range of community amenities including its curious blend of serenity and industry.

How the Program Works in Connecticut:

A summary of how Connecticut's farmland preservation program works is as follows:

1. Landowners may apply to the program voluntarily.
2. A notice of application is filed with the town clerk of the town where the farm is located.
3. The application is evaluated according to state regulation criteria. If the farm meets minimum scoring criteria, the Commissioner may accept the application.
4. Configuration of the application and specifics of the easement are negotiated and agreed to by the land owner and Commissioner of Agriculture.
5. The farm is appraised for the unrestricted market value and the market agricultural value, the difference between the two indicating the value of the development rights.
6. The appraisals are reviewed with the land owner and the Commissioner may negotiate anywhere from a gift of, to the full value of the development rights.
7. An agreement letter is presented from the Commissioner to the land owner representing the agreed upon price. The letter is reviewed and approved by the Attorney General.
8. A detailed report is submitted to the State Properties Review Board for review and approval.
9. Funds are requested for the acquisition, including funds for an A-2 survey, title insurance, and title search, from the State Bond Commission, Chaired by the Governor.
10. Upon Bond Commission approval, the state obtains an A-2 survey and title search of the property. Upon completion, the conveyance of development rights deed is executed and a check for the development rights acquisition processed. After all the documents are approved by the Attorney General, a closing is held and the documents and maps are recorded in the local land records and with the deed with the Secretary of State.



CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Select Language ▼

Translation
Disclaimer

[Home](#)

[About Us](#)

[Publications](#)

[Licenses & Permits](#)

[Contact Us](#)



Steven K. Reviczky
Commissioner

**Ag Business
Development &
Assistance**

**Animals and Animal
Health**

Aquaculture

**Boards, Councils, and
Commissions**

**Hartford Regional
Market**

Job Opportunities

**Programs, Services, &
Grants**

Regulatory Services

**Where to Find CT
Grown Products**

**Weekly Agricultural
Report**



[Programs, Services, and Grant Opportunities](#)

Farmland Restoration Program

The Farmland Restoration Program (FLRP), made possible by Public Act 11-1, is a voluntary program with a main objective of increasing food and fiber production agriculture in Connecticut. FLRP focuses on prime and important farmland soils, in accordance with a Farmland Restoration Program Plan (FLRP Plan).

The following is an overview of the application process:

1. Submit the FLRP application.
2. You will be notified via US Postal mail of the acceptance or rejection of your application.
3. If approved, you can proceed with the development of a FLRP Plan in cooperation with your local [USDA NRCS office](#) or [North Central Conservation District](#).
4. Your FLRP Plan must then be submitted and approved by the CT Department of Agriculture.
5. You will be notified via US Postal mail of the acceptance or rejection your FLRP Plan and notice of funding availability.

Each farm can qualify for up to \$20,000. It is expected 250 farms can be served with the current available resources.

Documents available for download. All are in .pdf format:

[About the Program](#)
[Farmland Restoration Program Application](#)
[Application Checklist](#)
[Farmland Restoration Program Cost Summary Table](#)
[Agriculture, Forestry and Wetlands Protection In CT](#)
[NRCS Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Compliance Guide](#)
[Web Soil Survey: How to get a soil map and soil information](#)
[Required Applicant Forms: W9, Vendor, Nondiscrimination, etc.](#)
[Affidavit of Completion](#)
[Program Application Process Flowchart](#)

Applications must be mailed to:

CT Department of Agriculture
 Farmland Restoration Program
 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 703
 Hartford, CT 06103

Questions regarding the FLRP can be directed to Cam Weimar, cam.weimar@ct.gov or Lance Shannon, lance.shannon@ct.gov or via phone at 860-713-2511.

[Printable Version](#)



CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Select Language ▼

Translation
Disclaimer

[Home](#)

[About Us](#)

[Publications](#)

[Licenses & Permits](#)

[Contact Us](#)



Steven K. Reviczky
Commissioner

**Ag Business
Development &
Assistance**

**Animals and Animal
Health**

Aquaculture

**Boards, Councils, and
Commissions**

**Hartford Regional
Market**

Job Opportunities

**Programs, Services, &
Grants**

Regulatory Services

**Where to Find CT
Grown Products**

**Weekly Agricultural
Report**



[Programs, Service, and Grant Opportunities](#) - [Agency Grants and Loans](#)

Farm Reinvestment Grant

The application closing date for the next round of funding has yet to be determined. Please check back in the future for program updates.

The Farm Reinvestment Grants provides matching funds to Connecticut farms to expand, diversify, and improve existing working farms through projects with a lifespan of 10 years or more. The Farm Reinvestment Grant is funded through bond authorizations of the State of Connecticut.

Please be aware: this is a reimbursement grant. The entire project must be completed prior to being reimbursed/receiving grant funds.

Farm Reinvestment Grant Frequently Asked Questions

Who is eligible for the Farm Reinvestment Grant (FRG)?
Connecticut farmers.

Can a beginning farmer apply for the FTG?
Applicants need to be in production, filing a Schedule F, Form 1120S, or Schedule C for the previous three years.

When is the next application deadline date?
This has yet to be determined.

What is maximum amount an applicant could be awarded?
Up to \$40,000.

Is there an applicant match involved?
Yes, a 50% cash match, or a 1:1 match, must be provide by the applicant. This means if your total project has a cost of \$20,000 the applicant must provide at least \$10,000 and a maximum of \$10,000 could be awarded by the FTG.

If I apply by the deadline does it mean I'll be funded?
No. This is a very competitive grant program. Applications are evaluated by a team of reviewers and is primarily based on the business/project plan. More information on the evaluation criteria can be found in the application guidelines.

How is the grant money paid to someone who's been awarded?
Grant funds are paid **after** the project is successfully completed, a final financial report outlining all expenses associated with the project have been received and approved, a final project report has been received and approved, and site inspection by agency staff is conducted. For any building a certificate of occupancy must be obtained as well.

What projects can the FRG grant money be used for?
Projects which expand, diversify, and improve existing working farms and have a lifespan of 10 years or more. More specific priority areas are outlined in the application guidelines.

Can I purchase equipment with the grant?
While it can vary, general purpose equipment - tractors, trucks, boats, etc. - are not allowable purchases. However, if it can be justified that the requested piece of equipment will allow the business to expand, diversify, and improve, it **may** be considered. Equipment is an allowable match expense so long as it directly and meaningfully supports the project.

Can I pay employees salaries with the grant?
No, grant funds cannot go toward the salaries of those already employed by the business to execute the project. Consultant expenses (electricians/hired contractors, etc.) are allowable expenses. Salaries are an allowable match expense.

Can I apply for grant funds for a project I've already done?



No, you cannot have started any aspect of the project for which you're applying.

How long do I have to complete the project?

You will have one year from the time the contract is signed by the Attorney General's office.

How do I apply for this grant?

1. Review the grant application guidelines
2. Fill out the application cover page and budget forms in detail per the guidelines
3. Develop your business/project plan per the information provided in the guidelines
4. Submit the completed forms and business/project plan by email by the deadline

Can I submit my application by mailing it to the Department of Agriculture?

No, applications are only accepted by email.

Can I view the application of a successful/awarded project?

No, we cannot share or distribute applications from projects that were awarded. Applications, which are primarily based on a business/project plan, are considered proprietary information and must remain confidential.

Can someone from the Department of Agriculture help me write my business/project plan and complete the application?

No, agency staff cannot be involved in the development of a business/project plan. Information is available above to help develop a successful application. The [Connecticut Small Business Development Center](#), [UConn Cooperative Extension](#), and [Farm Credit East](#) have varying resources to help you submit an application as well.

What's the timeframe for the grant application and decision period?

It'll be approximately six weeks from the application deadline to when you're notified of the award outcome. The number of applications received affects this timeline significantly. Once notified of being awarded, it will be approx. 3-4 weeks before you receive your contract for signature. Once you send your signed contract back, it's another 4 weeks before the contract signing is complete and you can officially begin your project. This timeline can vary.

Can I start the project as soon as I know that I've been awarded?

No, you may not start the project until signatures of the grantee, Commissioner of Agriculture, and the Attorney General's office have signed the contract.

If I've already received this grant in the past can I apply again?

Yes. However, past performance will be taken into consideration.

Farmland Reinvestment Grant Guidelines and Forms (.pdf)

Appendix A: Application Cover Page (.docx)

Appendix B: Budget Form (.doc)

Appendix C: Required Format for Business/Project Plan (.doc)

Appendix D: Submission Checklist (.doc)

[Printable Version](#)

AN AFFIRMATIVE ACTION/EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

The State of Connecticut is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer and strongly encourages the applications of women, minorities and persons with disabilities.

450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 701, Hartford, CT 06103 / 860-713-2500

[Home](#) | [CT.gov Home](#) | [Send Feedback](#) | [Login](#) | [Register](#)

State of Connecticut [Disclaimer](#), [Privacy Policy](#), and [Web Site Accessibility Policy](#). Copyright © 2002-2018 State of Connecticut.





CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Select Language ▼

Translation
Disclaimer

[Home](#)

[About Us](#)

[Publications](#)

[Licenses & Permits](#)

[Contact Us](#)



Steven K. Reviczky
Commissioner

**Ag Business
Development &
Assistance**

**Animals and Animal
Health**

Aquaculture

**Boards, Councils, and
Commissions**

**Hartford Regional
Market**

Job Opportunities

**Programs, Services, &
Grants**

Regulatory Services

**Where to Find CT
Grown Products**

**Weekly Agricultural
Report**



[Programs, Service, and Grant Opportunities](#) - [Agency Grants and Loans](#)

Farm Transition Grant

The Farm Transition Grant Program (FTG) (C.G.S. Sec. 22-26j) is a competitive matching grant program. The purpose of the program is to strengthen the economic viability of Connecticut farmers and agricultural cooperatives. Producers and agriculture cooperatives applying for this grant may be awarded up to \$49,999 in matching funds.

Please be aware: This is a reimbursement grant.

2018 Farm Transition Grant Application and Information

Due February 14, 2018

[Full Application Guidance and Forms](#) (.pdf)

[Appendix A: Application Cover Page](#) (.doc)

[Appendix B: Budget Form](#) (.doc)

[Appendix C: Project Plan Format](#) (.pdf)

[Appendix D: Project Ideas and Project Checklist for FSMA Related Projects](#) (.pdf)

[Application Submission Checklist](#) (.pdf)

Workshops on how to write the FTG project plan and develop a competitive application will be held. RSVPs including your name, email, and phone number are required 24 hours prior to the meeting date. At least five people are required to host a workshop. RSVP to Mark Hood, Mark.Hood@ct.gov or 860-713-2530.

CANCELLED:

January 17, 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Middlesex County Extension Center
1066 Saybrook Rd, Haddam

PLEASE SIGN UP FOR NEXT SESSION

February 1, 9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

CT Farm Bureau Association
78 Beaver Road, Wethersfield

Registered attendees will be notified if the meeting is cancelled for any reason.

Farm Transition Grant Frequently Asked Questions

Who is eligible for the Farm Transition Grant (FTG)?

Connecticut farmers and farmer cooperatives are eligible.

Can a beginning farmer apply for the FTG?

Applicants need to be in production for the previous three years and have filed applicable tax forms for the agribusiness.

When is the next application deadline date?

Applications will be accepted in February 14, 2018.

Does it do me any good to send in my grant application as early as possible?

Applications are only accepted during specified dates which can be found in the 2017 guidance document.

What is maximum amount an applicant could be awarded?

Up to \$49,999.

Is there an applicant match involved?

Yes, a 50% cash match, or a 1:1 match, must be provide by the applicant. This means if your total project has a cost of \$20,000 the applicant must provide at least \$10,000 and a maximum of \$10,000 could be awarded by the FTG.

If I apply by the deadline does it mean I'll be funded?

No. This is a very competitive grant program. Applications are evaluated by a team of reviewers and is primarily based on the submitted project plan. Please review the guidelines and Appendix C: Required Format for Project Plan.

How is the grant money paid to someone who's been awarded?

Grant funds are paid **after** the project is successfully completed, a final financial report outlining all expenses



associated with the project have been received and approved, a final report has been received and approved, and site inspection by agency staff is conducted.

What projects can the FTG grant money be used for?

Projects which allow a farm to expand, diversify, and improve the existing operation are allowable. More specific priority areas are outlined in the application guidelines.

Can I purchase equipment with the grant?

While it can vary, general purpose equipment - tractors, trucks, boats, etc. - are not allowable purchases. However, if it can be justified that the requested piece of equipment will allow the business to expand, diversify, and improve, it **may** be considered. Equipment is an allowable match expense.

Can I pay employees salaries with the grant?

No, grant funds cannot go toward the salaries of those already employed by the business to execute the project. Consultant expenses (electricians, hired contractors, etc.) are allowable expenses. Salaries are an allowable match expense.

Can I apply for grant funds for a project I've already done?

No, you cannot have started any aspect of the project for which you're applying.

How long do I have to complete the project?

You will have one year from the time the contract is signed by the Attorney Generals office.

How do I apply for this grant?

1. Review the grant application guidelines.
2. Fill out the application cover page and budget forms in detail per the guidelines.
3. Develop your project plan per the format provided in the guidelines.
4. Submit the completed forms and project plan via email by the deadline.

Can I submit my application by mailing it to the Department of Agriculture?

No, applications are only accepted by email.

Can I view the application of a successful/awarded project?

No, we cannot share or distribute applications from projects that were awarded. Applications, which are primarily based on a business/project plan, are considered proprietary information and must remain confidential.

Can someone from the Department of Agriculture help me write my business/project plan and complete the application?

No, agency staff cannot be involved in the development of a project plan. Information is available above (see Appendix C) to help develop a successful application. The [Connecticut Small Business Development Center](#), [UConn Cooperative Extension](#), and [Farm Credit East](#) have varying resources to help you submit develop an application.

What's the timeframe for the grant application and decision period?

It'll be approximately six weeks from the application deadline to when you're notified of the award outcome. The number of applications received affects this timeline significantly. Once notified of being awarded, it will be approx. 3-4 weeks before you receive your contract for signature. Once you send your signed contract back, it's another 4 weeks before the contract signing is complete and you can officially begin your project. This timeline can vary.

Can I start the project as soon as I know that I've been awarded?

No, you may not start the project until signatures of the grantee, Commissioner of Agriculture, and the Attorney Generals office have signed the contract.

If I've already received this grant in the past can I apply again?

Yes. However, past performance will be taken into consideration.

[Printable Version](#)

AN AFFIRMATIVE ACTION/EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

The State of Connecticut is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer and strongly encourages the applications of women, minorities and persons with disabilities.

450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 701, Hartford, CT 06103 / 860-713-2500

[Home](#) | [CT.gov Home](#) | [Send Feedback](#) | [Login](#) | [Register](#)

State of Connecticut [Disclaimer](#), [Privacy Policy](#), and [Web Site Accessibility Policy](#). Copyright © 2002-2018 State of Connecticut.





CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Select Language ▼

Translation
Disclaimer

[Home](#)

[About Us](#)

[Publications](#)

[Licenses & Permits](#)

[Contact Us](#)



Steven K. Reviczky
Commissioner

**Ag Business
Development &
Assistance**

**Animals and Animal
Health**

Aquaculture

**Boards, Councils, and
Commissions**

**Hartford Regional
Market**

Job Opportunities

**Programs, Services, &
Grants**

Regulatory Services

**Where to Find CT
Grown Products**

**Weekly Agricultural
Report**



[Programs, Service, and Grant Opportunities](#)

[Agency Grants and Loans](#)

Farm Viability Grant

The Farm Viability Grant (FVG) (C.G.S. Sec. 22-26j) is a competitive matching grant program open to municipalities, regional planning organizations, association of municipalities, and agricultural non-profits. The maximum grant award is \$49,999.

Funding for the Farm Viability Grant is provided through the State of Connecticut Agricultural Viability Grant Program, established in 2005 through Public Act 228-05, An Act Concerning Farmland Preservation, Land Protection, Affordable Housing, and Historic Preservation.

The Farm Viability Grant Program and any awards are subject to limitations of state funding.

2017 Program Information

Deadline: November 13, 2017 at 4:00 p.m.

[Farm Viability Grant Guidance Document and Forms](#)

[Appendix A: Application Cover Page](#) (Word document)

[Appendix B: Budget Form](#) (Word document)

[Appendix C: Required Format for Project Plan](#)

[Appendix D: Submission Check List](#)

Farm Viability Grant Frequently Asked Questions

When will applications be accepted again?

Applications will be accepted from November 6 until 4 p.m. on November 13, 2017.

Who is eligible for the Farm Viability Grant (FVG)?

Non-profit organizations with an agricultural mission, municipalities, groups of municipalities, regional councils of governments organized under the provisions of sections 4-124i to 4-124p, inclusive, and groups of municipalities that have established a regional inter-local agreement pursuant to sections 7-339a to 7-339l, inclusive are all eligible so long as they're active for three years or more.

What is maximum amount an applicant could be awarded?

Up to \$49,999.

Is there an applicant match involved?

Yes. A 40% match for the total project costs must be provided. The match can be through cash or in-kind services.

If I apply by the deadline does it mean I'll be funded?

No. This is a very competitive grant program. Applications are evaluated by a team of reviewers and is based on the project plan.

How is the grant money paid to someone who's been awarded?

Grantees may request an advance payment of up to 50% of the total award. The balance of the award will be provided **after** the project is successfully completed, a final financial report outlining all expenses associated with the project have been received and approved, a final project report has been received and approved, and site inspection by agency staff is conducted (if applicable.) For any building a certificate of occupancy must be obtained as well.

What projects can the FVG grant money be used for?

Projects which implement local land use or agricultural regulations, farmland protection strategies, provide educational workshops for farmers, fund advertising for local or regional agriculture, establish local farmers' markets, among others. More specific priority areas are outlined in the application guidelines.

Can I purchase equipment with the grant?

While it can vary, general purpose equipment - tractors, trucks, boats, etc. - are not an allowable purchase. However, each application and project is unique and **may** be considered. Equipment is an allowable match



expense.

Can I pay employees salaries with the grant?

Generally, grant funds cannot go toward the salaries of those already employed by the applicant to execute the project. Consultant expenses are allowable expenses. Salaries are an allowable match expense.

Can I apply for grant funds for a project I've already done?

No, you cannot have started any aspect of the project for which you're applying.

How long do I have to complete the project?

You will have one year from the time the contract is fully executed.

How do I apply for this grant?

1. Review the grant application guidelines above
2. Fill out the application cover page and budget forms in detail per the guidelines
3. Develop your project plan per the information provided in the guidelines
4. Submit the completed forms and project plan and by email by the deadline

Can I submit my application by mailing it to the Department of Agriculture?

No, applications are only accepted by email.

Can I view the application of an awarded project?

No, we cannot share or distribute applications from projects that were awarded. Applications, which are primarily based on a business/project plan, are considered proprietary information and must remain confidential.

Can someone from the Department of Agriculture help me write my business/project plan and complete the application?

No, agency staff cannot be involved in the development of a business/project plan. Information is available above to help develop a successful application. The [Connecticut Small Business Development Center](#), [UConn Cooperative Extension](#), and [Farm Credit East](#) have varying resources to help you submit an application.

Can I start the project as soon as I know that I've been awarded?

No, you may not start the project until signatures of the grantee, Commissioner of Agriculture, and the Attorney General's office have signed the contract.

If I've already received this grant in the past can I apply again?

Yes. However, past performance and if you currently have an open grant contract will be taken into consideration.

[Printable Version](#)

AN AFFIRMATIVE ACTION/EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

The State of Connecticut is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer and strongly encourages the applications of women, minorities and persons with disabilities.

450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 701, Hartford, CT 06103 / 860-713-2500

[Home](#) | [CT.gov Home](#) | [Send Feedback](#) | [Login](#) | [Register](#)

State of Connecticut [Disclaimer](#), [Privacy Policy](#), and [Web Site Accessibility Policy](#). Copyright © 2002-2018 State of Connecticut.





STATE OF CONNECTICUT



Department of Agriculture

COMMUNITY FARMS PRESERVATION PROGRAM APPLICATION

NAME OF APPLICANT: _____

FARM NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____ County: _____
(Street/Town/State/ZIP)

TELEPHONE: _____ FAX: _____

E-MAIL: _____ TAX ID Number: _____

FARM LOCATION (street/town): _____

DEED REFERENCE(S): Volume _____ Page _____ ZONING OF PROPERTY: _____

TAX MAP REFERENCE(S): Map _____ Block _____ Lot _____ (Attach sheet if more space is needed for multiple deed and/or tax map references)

ARE YOU A FARMER? (check one) _____ Yes _____ No

If not, please explain: _____

DO YOU OWN THE FARM? (check one) _____ Yes _____ No

If not, please explain: _____

Have you applied to the FARMLAND PRESERVATION PROGRAM before? _____ Yes _____ No

If yes, please indicate approximate year your farm application was submitted: _____

I. PROBABILITY OF FARM CONTINUATION (please check all that apply):

1. Probability of land continuing in active agricultural production _____ High _____ Medium _____ Low
2. Active transfer negotiations or estate planning _____
3. Farm listed with Real Estate Agent _____
4. In need of funds to reinvest in farm operation _____
5. A succession plan is in place for heir(s) to inherit and continue farming _____
6. A long-term lease is in place to an area farmer(s) _____
7. Other situation (explain below) _____

Briefly explain why you are applying to the Community Farms Preservation Program: _____

8. Abutting and area land use (please check all that apply):

Is the area highly developed? ____Yes ____No;
Is there public water and sewer available to the site? ____Yes ____No;
Does the farm abut other active farmland? ____Yes ____No;
Does the farm abut other preserved farmland? ____Yes ____No; Name of Farm_____
Does it abut other permanently preserved open space? ____Yes ____No;
Name of Area_____

Briefly explain the type of uses and activities on the lands adjacent to the farm: _____

II. DESCRIPTION OF FARM OPERATION (Please describe your farm operation and then answer the specific questions listed below):

1. Number of acres owned: _____;
2. Number of acres offered to the PDR Program _____;
3. Number of cropland acres offered _____;
4. Number of pasture acres offered _____;
5. Number of acres offered in woodland, swamp, water or other use: _____;
6. Current production of land offered (list each crop, crop acreage and gross annual receipts from unit production):

CROP	Acres	Gross annual sales

(If more space is needed, please attach sheet and continue.)

7. Farm income from other than crop production. (list each source and their gross annual sales):

8. If applicable, indicate size of herd, flock, etc.: _____

9. If not farmed by owner, please indicate who leases the farm, the number of acres leased, and the annual rent paid:

10. List all structures on the farm and indicate which are, or will be, used exclusively for agriculture:

11. Does farm contain a residence? Yes _____; No _____; If yes, indicate the estimated square footage: _____ft²

13. If yes, is it included in the application as a Farmstead? Yes _____; No _____

14. Are farm products marketed on the farm? Yes _____; No _____
Are the marketed products produced on the farm? Yes _____; No _____
Percent of products marketed not produced on the farm _____%; What are they? _____
Do you have an agricultural business plan? Yes _____ No _____

15. Type of farm marketing if any (check all that apply):

No marketing of any product _____;
Community and/or educational supported agriculture (explain) _____
Delivery Route _____; Farmer's markets _____; Other off-site markets _____; Contract _____
Cooperative _____; On-site farm stand _____; Off-site farm stand _____; Mail order _____
Pick-your-own _____; Other _____

Briefly explain any marketing of agricultural products on the farm (include a copy of any marketing brochures or materials with this application): _____

16. What are the farm's gross sales? _____;
Explain how the sales are derived and percentages of each (if multiple and not fully accounted for on previous page): _____

17. Do you participate in any Agricultural Incentive Program(s)? Yes _____ No _____
If yes, explain which program(s) and year entered in each: _____

18. Does the farm have a current USDA-NRCS Soil Conservation Plan? Yes _____; No _____

19. Have the soils on site been upgraded through the removal of stones, stumping, topsoil amendments or conditioning, or any other method(s)? Yes _____; No _____ Please explain: _____

III. EVALUATION OF COST AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT (please answer questions below):

1. How much do you estimate the development rights to be worth? (indicate range):
\$ _____ to \$ _____

2. Are you willing to sell the development rights at a discount below fair market value?
Yes _____; No _____

If yes, up to a 25% bargain sale _____; up to a 50% bargain sale _____; up to 75% bargain sale _____

I am willing to make a gift a development rights to my farm _____

Briefly explain your expectations of the negotiations to sell development rights: _____

3. Does your municipality have a farmland preservation program? Yes _____; No _____

4. Is the municipality willing to cost share in an amount greater than 10%? Yes _____; No _____

5. Is there a local or regional land trust, whose mission includes support for and preservation of agriculture, that is willing to cost share in an amount 10% or greater? Yes _____; No _____

If so, name of organization: _____

Briefly explain local support (if you don't know, then indicate so): _____

IV. REQUIRED DOCUMENTS (without these documents, your application cannot be considered):

1. A detailed soils report prepared by the Natural Resources Conservation Service. (This may be obtained free of charge from your county Ag Service Center, see below.)
2. A map/sketch identifying the land owned by the applicant and covered by this application. (A copy of the tax map of your property is available from your local Tax Assessor's Office.)
3. A copy of the current deed(s) of the subject property. (Available at your local Town Clerk's Office.)
4. A copy of the tax card(s) for the subject property. (Available from your local Tax Assessor's Office.)
5. A copy of your Tax Schedule F, Form 1120S or Schedule C for the past 3 years prior to date of application.
6. A copy of your USDA-NRCS Soil Conservation Plan.
7. If land is leased, a copy of the executed lease if any
8. A copy of your agricultural business plan, if any
9. A map identifying the certified land units (fields, crops grown and acres per field). (Available at your local Farm Service Agency Office.)

If you have any questions on the application, feel free to call the Department of Agriculture, Farmland Preservation at 860-713-2511. It is necessary for all owners of the farm submitted to give their approval and consent to this application by signing below:

Signed _____

Date _____

Date _____

Date _____

Submit this signed application to the Connecticut Dept. of Agriculture Farmland Preservation Office:
450 Columbus Blvd., Suite 703, Hartford, CT 06103-1841

Soils Maps and information on your farm specific may be obtained from the United States Department of Agriculture by contacting your area Agricultural Service Center listed below:

U.S.D.A. Natural Resources Conservation Service Offices and Service Centers

Hartford and Tolland counties

Windsor Service Center
100 Northfield Drive, 4th Floor
Windsor, CT 06095

(860) 688-7725

Litchfield and Fairfield counties

Torrington Service Center
1185 New Litchfield Street
Torrington, CT 06790

(860) 626-8258

New Haven and Middlesex counties

Hamden Service Center
51 Mill Pond Road
Hamden, CT 06514-1703

(203) 287-8038

New London County

Norwich Service Center
Yantic River Plaza
238 West Town Street
Norwich, CT 06360

(860) 887-3604

Windham County

Danielson Service Center
71 Westcott Road
Danielson, CT 06239

(860) 779-0557

State Office

344 Merrow Road, Suite A
Tolland, CT 06084-4011

(860) 871-4011



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Farmland Preservation Program



FARMLAND PRESERVATION APPLICATION

NAME(S): _____

ADDRESS: _____
(Street/Town/State/ZIP)

TELEPHONE: _____ FAX: _____ E-MAIL: _____

PROPERTY LOCATION (street/town): _____

DEED REFERENCE: Volume _____ Page _____ ZONING OF PROPERTY: _____

TAX MAP REFERENCE: Map _____ Lot _____ Block _____

I. PROBABILITY OF NON-AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT (please check all that apply):

1. Probability of land continuing in active agricultural production ___High ___Medium ___Low
2. Active transfer negotiations or estate planning _____
3. Farm listed with Real Estate Agent _____
4. Other Situation (explain below) _____

Briefly explain why you are applying to the Farmland Preservation Program: _____

II. CURRENT PRODUCTIVITY FROM OFFERED LAND:

1. Total Acres Owned _____ Total Acres Offered _____ Cropland Acres Offered _____
Woodland Acres Offered _____

2. Current production of land offered (list each crop and crop acreage): _____

3. Gross annual receipts from unit production: _____

4. If not farmed by owner, please indicate who leases the Farmland, the number of acres leased and the annual rent paid: _____

III. REQUIRED DOCUMENTS (Without these documents, your application cannot be considered):

1. A detailed soils report prepared by the Natural Resources Conservation Service. (This may be obtained free of charge from your county Ag Service Center, see below.)
2. A map/sketch identifying the land owned by the applicant and covered by this application. (A copy of the tax map of your property is available from your local Tax Assessor's Office.)
3. A copy of the current deed(s) of the subject property. (Available at your local Town Clerk's Office.)
4. A copy of the tax card(s) for the subject property. (Available from your local Tax Assessor's Office)

It is necessary for all owners of land submitted to give their approval and consent to this application.

Signed _____ Date _____

_____ Date _____

_____ Date _____

If you have questions, please phone Farmland Preservation at (860) 713-2511.

**U.S.D.A. Natural Resources Conservation Service
Offices and Centers**

Hartford and Tolland Counties

Windsor Service Center
100 Northfield Drive, 4th Floor
Windsor, CT 06095

(860) 688-7725

New London County

Norwich Service Center
Yantic River Plaza
238 West Town Street
Norwich, CT 06360

(860) 887-3604

Litchfield and Fairfield Counties

Torrington Service Center
1185 New Litchfield Street
Torrington, CT 06790

(860) 626-8258

Windham County

Danielson Service Center
71 Westcott Road
Danielson, CT 06239

(860) 774-0557

New Haven and Middlesex Counties

Hamden Service Center
51 Mill Pond Road
Hamden, CT 06514

(203) 287-8038

State Conservationist Office

344 Merrow Road, Suite A
Tolland, CT 06084-4011

(860) 871-4011

PROGRAM OBJECTIVE:

The main objective of the Farmland Preservation Program is to secure a land resource base for farming and food production. Qualifying farms consist primarily of prime and important farmland soils but may include adjacent pastures, wooded land and other open areas. In accordance with state regulation, farms must score a minimum of 65 to be considered by the Commissioner of Agriculture. To score at or above the required minimum, farms must generally be in active food and/or fiber production, contain a high percentage of prime and important farmland soils, be at least 30 acres in size and be located in or near agricultural communities.

HOW THE CONNECTICUT FARMLAND PRESERVATION PROGRAM WORKS:

1. Owners of farmland apply to the Department of Agriculture voluntarily.
2. A notice of application is filed with the town clerk of the municipality where the farm is located.
3. The application is evaluated according to objective state regulatory criteria. If the farm meets the minimum score set forth in the criteria, the Commissioner of Agriculture may work with the application.
4. Configuration of the farm application and specific variables of the development rights restriction are negotiated and agreed to by the landowner and Commissioner.
5. Based on the negotiated configuration and restriction language, the farm is appraised to determine its unrestricted market value and its market agricultural value. The difference between the two indicates the full value of development rights. Review appraisals are completed by the agency.
6. The appraisals are reviewed with the landowner and the Commissioner's offer/agreement letter is presented to the landowner. The Commissioner may negotiate anywhere from a gift of the appraised value of development rights to the full appraised value of those rights.
7. The land owner signs or rejects the Commissioner's offer.
8. If the agreement letter is signed by the landowner, a detailed report is submitted to the State Properties Review Board (SPRB). The SPRB approves or denies the proposed acquisition.
9. If approved by the SPRB, funds for the purchase of development rights, including funding for an A-2 boundary survey, title search and title insurance, are requested from the State Bond Commission, chaired by the Governor, or Community Investment Act program.
10. Upon the Funding approval, the state obtains an A-2 boundary survey and title search of the property. After completion, the conveyance of development rights deed is executed and a check for the development rights acquisition is processed. Once the Attorney General approves all the necessary documents, a closing is held and conveyance documents and survey maps are recorded on the local land records.

QUALIFYING APPLICATIONS:

Applications to the Connecticut Farmland Preservation Program are submitted voluntarily by property owners and may be considered by the Commissioner of Agriculture following an evaluation based on objective scoring criteria (Conn. Agencies Regs. § 22-26gg-1 et seq.). The criteria utilized to score applications include:

- 1) Acres of cropland
- 2) Crop yields per acre
- 3) Quantity of land classified as having prime and important farmland soils
- 4) Percentage of cropland that contains prime and important farmland soils
- 5) Methods of marketing commodities produced on the farm
- 6) Amount of other active farmland located in proximity to the farm
- 7) Agricultural support services available in proximity to the farm
- 8) Protection of the farm must be consistent with the State Conservation and Development Policies Plan for the State Of Connecticut
- 9) Intensive development near the farm and an excessive cost of development rights acquisition negatively affect the score, and
- 10) For protection projects involving USDA Agricultural Land Easement funds, farms may not have more than 67% non-cropland and must have at least 50% prime or important soils.

CONNECTICUT FARMLAND PRESERVATION PROGRAM OVERVIEW:

One of Connecticut's greatest resources is farmland. Farmland is at the heart of one of Connecticut's most vital businesses, agriculture. Through the Farmland Preservation Program, the Department of Agriculture preserves farmland by acquiring development rights to active agricultural properties. **A permanent restriction on nonagricultural uses is placed on these farms.** The farms remain in private ownership and continue to pay local property taxes.

The purchase of development rights program is voluntary on the part of the applicant. Applications are evaluated according to state regulation criteria. Successful applicants will own active farms that contain a high percentage of prime farmland soils and are in established farm communities. Early program studies estimated a development rights program in Connecticut would average 40% acquisition of lands classified by USDA-NRCS as prime and important farmland soils. The program's efforts through its negotiations and scoring criterion recognize the benefits of clustering farms in active farm communities. It has allowed the Commissioner to work with the best of the best applications and has enabled the program to average 65% prime and important farmland soils on its preserved farms.

Of the 42,000 acres preserved on the 325 farms in the program, approximately 30,000 acres are classified as prime and important farmland soils.

The goals and reasons for Farmland Preservation remain unchanged. A goal of preserving 130,000 acres, with 85,000 acres of cropland continues to be in effect for the Department of Agriculture. This land base will enable Connecticut to produce at least 50% of its fluid milk needs and 70% of its in-season fresh fruits and vegetables. This in-state production will ensure some degree of local availability of fresh farm products. It will also help ensure related jobs and remain an important part of the State's economy.

The main objective of the farmland preservation program is to secure a food and fiber producing land resource base, consisting primarily of prime and important farmland soils, for the future of agriculture in Connecticut. We try to accomplish this by preserving active farms that are clustered with other farms, therefore stabilizing a viable farming region.

Farmers continue to strongly support the program and think of it as a permanent program that will be there to give them a realistic alternative to selling their farm for residential development.

THE PROGRAM ASSISTS THE PUBLIC AND AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE STATE BY:

- Preserving the best and most productive agricultural land.
- Providing an opportunity for farmers to purchase land at affordable prices.
- Helping farm owners overcome estate-planning problems which often result in farmland loss.
- Providing working capital to enable farm operations to become more financially stable and productive.
- Addressing other personal ownership problems, such as health and age, which contribute to the likelihood of the land being converted to non-agricultural uses.
- Providing a range of community amenities including its curious blend of serenity and industry.

Model Ordinance to Adopt an Agricultural Commission

**Town of (Name of municipality)
An Ordinance Establishing
The (Name of Municipality) Agriculture Commission**

ESTABLISHED: By Ordinance adopted (date of adoption of ordinance).

CHARGE/DUTIES: The Agriculture Commission shall be an advisory board with the following charges and duties:

General

- a.** To foster sustainable agriculture in (name of municipality).
- b.** To serve as a conduit between local farmers and non-profit agencies, civic organizations, municipal boards and commissions, elected officials, and non-farm residents.
- c.** To advocate for agriculture before land use commissions.
- d.** To act as a resource for agricultural information.

Education and Outreach

- a.** To increase awareness of agricultural enterprises in the community.
- b.** To provide information to town government about agricultural laws and legal issues and to review regulatory language and practices among town agencies and, if appropriate, recommend changes to help assure a consistent definition and treatment of agriculture, farming and farms.
- c.** To promote the value of agriculture viability in the areas of employment, property taxes, environment and open space preservation.
- d.** To act as a sounding board and provide review to town departments, boards, commissions, and the town planner concerning the impact of proposed town policies on agricultural activities.
- e.** To encourage young and new farmers by supporting local, regional, and state vocational agricultural education and 4-H programs.
- f.** To recognize and support new farming operations and farms.
- g.** To serve in an advisory capacity to residents, established town committees, commissions and departments, and boards related to agricultural issues.

Economic Opportunities

- a.** To identify opportunities to preserve and expand agriculture in (name of municipality).
- b.** To promote opportunities for residents and local businesses to support farming.
- c.** To provide information regarding available financial support related to agricultural viability and serve as a conduit between state and non-profit agencies, funders and local farmers.

(Over)

2 Agricultural Commissions – Model Ordinance (*continued*)

- d. To support efforts to secure the land base necessary for future agricultural uses.
- e. To foster, with the support of residents, boards, commissions, and the town planner, a climate that supports the economic viability of farming as a career in (name of municipality).

MEMBERSHIP: The Agriculture Commission will consist of 5 members, recommended to the Board of Selectmen by an ad hoc committee of groups and persons with interest and involvement in the viability, sustainability, and protection of agriculture as defined by Connecticut General Statutes 1-1(q) and 19a-341, including as available, a member of FFA. The failure of a voting member to attend four (4) consecutive meetings of the commission may constitute cause for the Agricultural Commission to recommend removal of the member and fill the position thus vacated from a list of residents recommended to the Board of Selectmen by the Agricultural Commission. The members of the Commission, at their first meeting and annually thereafter, shall elect from among themselves a chair, vice chair and a secretary. They shall establish and from time to time reestablish a regular schedule of meetings. They may adopt rules for the conduct of their business.

LENGTH OF TERM: Staggered 4-year terms, with initial appointments to be 2 members for 4 years and 3 members for 2 years. Members of the Commission shall serve without pay.

Modeled from town of Oxford Agricultural Commission Ordinance

Agricultural Commissions



Background:

Connecticut municipalities have paid staff that are responsible for the everyday operations of the town such as selectmen, tax collectors, assessors, town clerks, building inspectors, public works, public safety, and other departments depending on the size and services of the town.

The work of municipal government is supported by volunteers within the community that are either elected or appointed to various town boards, commissions and committees. These boards and commissions are responsible for a variety of functions within each town. Some commissions such as the Planning and Zoning Commission and the Inland Wetlands Commission are regulatory in nature and are responsible for administering specific regulations. Other Commissions such as the Conservation Commission and Economic Development Commission are advisory in nature and are responsible for advising town officials and other boards and commissions relative to their function.

Agricultural Commissions can help promote and support local agriculture in their communities and provide guidance to other municipal boards and commissions on agriculturally related issues.

Key Points:

- Agricultural commissions are advisory, not regulatory.
- Members of the commission are generally appointed by the Board of Selectmen or Town Council.
- Agricultural commissions are adopted by town ordinance by vote of the legislative authority in that town.
- The ordinance should include: a) Date of adoption of the commission; b) A statement of purpose; c) Powers and duties of the commission; d) Membership; e) Length of terms of membership.
- Towns may choose to adopt a committee or sub-committee of an existing commission to address agricultural issues and interests rather than a formal agricultural commission. Committees tend to be less permanent in nature. Commissions can only be disbanded through revocation of the ordinance that created the commission.
- Multiple towns may choose to collaborate to form a regional agricultural council.
- Connecticut General Statute Section 7-131v enables municipalities to establish local or regional agricultural councils and provides model language that may be assimilated into a municipal ordinance.

(Over)

2 Agricultural Commissions (*continued*)

Statute:

(Public Act 11-188) CGS Section 7-131v. Local and regional agricultural councils.

(a) Any municipality may, by vote of its legislative body or, in a municipality where the legislative body is a town meeting, by vote of the board of selectmen, establish a local

agricultural council to: (1) Provide information to local farmers and to municipal boards and commissions about the benefits of a balance between agriculture and other land uses; (2) educate municipal officials about agricultural laws and safety issues; (3) identify grant sources for farmers and municipalities; (4) enable a common understanding of agriculture among all municipal departments; (5) provide information and guidance about zoning issues relating to agriculture; (6) support local, regional and state vocational agricultural programs concerning agricultural matters; (7) provide conflict resolution and advisory services; (8) identify innovative opportunities for agriculture; and (9) create a climate that supports the economic viability of agriculture in the municipality.

(b) Any two or more municipalities may form a regional agricultural council for the purposes set forth in subsection (a) of this section by vote of the legislative body or, in a municipality where the legislative body is a town meeting, by vote of the board of selectmen, of each municipality.

FAQs:

Q: Why form an agricultural commission?

A: The interests of agriculture span the work of many regulatory and advisory municipal boards and commissions. Agricultural commissions can advise these various boards on issues they are working on that may have an impact on local agriculture. Agricultural commissions can help provide farmer input into town policies that impact local agriculture and help develop initiatives to keep farming in the community viable.

Q: What are some of the tasks of agricultural commissions?

A: Here are some examples of tasks agricultural commissions can take on:

- Help promote local agriculture by developing marketing materials such as a farm map or website to showcase all of the farms in town.
- Help coordinate farm tours.
- Help to include local agriculture in town wide events.
- Be a clearinghouse of information for local farmers on various programs and grants available on the state and local level.
- Help secure grants for the town for specific agriculturally related projects.
- Provide input to the Planning and Zoning Commission on zoning issues affecting agriculture.
- Support local farmers' markets.
- Support farmland preservation efforts.

- Support opportunities for young and new farmers.
- Work with local zoning enforcement officers, boards of selectmen or boards of health to help mediate conflict.
- Educate the non-farming community on agriculture.
- Help to adopt optional tax reduction programs for farms and local right to farm ordinances.
- Make recommendations for how to support local agriculture in their municipality's Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD). (See Section on POCDs).

Notes: