



NH FOOD ALLIANCE

DRAFT
LAND RESOURCES POLICY



Securing & Stewarding New Hampshire's Agricultural Land: A Ranked Matrix of Policy Approaches

SUMMARY

This brief highlights a suite of policy approaches aimed at securing and stewarding the agricultural land base in New Hampshire. The NH Food Alliance Land Resources Action Team (LRAT) developed these approaches to guide their collective work. Some of the strategies and ideas do not require legislative action and could be accomplished by individual organizations or municipalities; others require cross-agency collaboration and/or legislative action. The policy matrix (Appendix A) lists each in a ranked order according to how complex and feasible each would be to implement. The matrix also includes how each approach would be implemented (mechanics), current associated rules and statutes, and further comments about each. This matrix can be used to inform policy planning and priority setting within organizations, networks, municipalities, and state agencies.

BACKGROUND

The Land Resources Action Team (LRAT) formed in 2017 to catalyze collaborative action around goals outlined in the NH Food Alliance Viability Initiative. During its first two years, the team successfully brought together representatives from both agricultural and land conservation sectors including: Land for Good, Cheshire County Conservation District, NH Association of Conservation Districts, NH Community Loan Fund, Ammonoosuc Conservation District, Southeast Land Trust, and UNH Extension. The group was successful in collaborating on education programs related to farm succession, creating a bridge-loan program for farmers seeking conservation easements, and developing the Farm Future Fund, which provides funding for farm viability planning in concert with the conservation of important agricultural soils. In 2019, the LRAT team members identified the policy goals and approaches based on needs and gaps as identified by the team. These goals are outlined in the matrix (Appendix A).

While many efforts are underway to protect farmland and farm businesses in New Hampshire, the lack of a coordinated and comprehensive policy response at the state-level limits their effectiveness. Farmers and farmland are under increasing pressure in New Hampshire due to loss of farmland to permanent development, low farm incomes, and an aging farmer population. Farmers face barriers to business viability planning, market pressures (such as the decline in conventional dairy operations), and now new and uncertain challenges related to climate change. All of these factors contribute to loss of farmland as farmers go out of business. The policy approaches outlined in this brief address both farmland stewardship and protection of existing farmland, as well as measures that support farm business viability, succession planning, and expanding access to farmland.



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AGRICULTURE AND CLIMATE CHANGE: Policy Imperatives and Opportunities to Help Producers Meet the Challenge, National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition <https://sustainableagriculture.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/NSAC-Climate-Change-Policy-Position_paper-112019_WEB.pdf>

FAQ: Why are frontline communities opposing carbon trading? OPAL PDX
<<https://www.opalpdx.org/2019/04/faq-why-are-frontline-communities-opposing-carbon-trading/>>

Carbon Offsets cause Conflict and Colonialism, Indigenous Environmental Network
<<https://www.ienearth.org/carbon-offsets-cause-conflict-and-colonialism/>>

Soil Health Policy mapping website <<https://nerdsforearth.com/state-healthy-soils-policy/>>

New England Adaptation Survey for fruit and vegetable growers:
<https://adaptationsurvey.wordpress.com/>

NE Farmer Adaptation Survey Alissa White NE Adaption Research website:
<<https://adaptationsurvey.wordpress.com/results/>>

New Hampshire Farm, Fish, & Food Economy report, Ken Meter Crossroads Resource Center
<<https://www.crcworks.org/nhfoodforum19.pdf>>

**Drafted by
The Land Resources Action Team**

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