



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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Agriculture Commissioner Reviczky Announces Pilot Program for Community Farms Preservation

\$2,000,000 allocated for cooperative state-municipal farmland preservation projects

(HARTFORD, CONN.) Connecticut Agriculture Commissioner Steven K. Reviczky today announced \$2,000,000 in funding for farmland preservation through the Connecticut Department of Agriculture's new Community Farms Preservation Program. This pilot program, authorized by [Connecticut General Statutes 22-26nn](#), allocates Community Investment Act funds for cooperative state-local farmland preservation projects in qualifying municipalities.

Commissioner Reviczky explained that the purpose of the Community Farms Preservation Program is to encourage locally supported farmland preservation. "One of the most exciting aspects of this program is its especially good fit for smaller farms that have excellent agricultural soils and contribute to local economic activity, but which may not be eligible for other protection programs. Now we are able to provide an opportunity for those farms to ensure their land is not converted to non-agricultural uses and for Connecticut to ensure its best agricultural soils remain available for production."

The Community Farms Preservation Program will be implemented in two phases: prequalification and application/evaluation.

During prequalification, interested municipalities must complete the following steps by May 31, 2012:

1. Recognize farmland preservation in the plan of conservation and development or interim town plan for local farmland preservation.
2. Establish an agricultural commission and/or program for farmland preservation.
3. Inventory its local farmland resources.
4. Prioritize farms for preservation using a criteria scoring or ranking system.
5. Designate a fund for farmland preservation and have a method of funding.
6. Request identification of locally important farmland soils through U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS).

Municipalities meeting the above eligibility criteria may enter into a cooperative agreement with the Connecticut Department of Agriculture no later than May 31, 2012.

Prequalified municipalities that have entered into such agreements must then complete the agency's application package and submit it to the commissioner on or before July 31, 2012.

The agency will review and evaluate applications using scoring criteria established with input from its Farmland Preservation Advisory Board. Preference will be given to food-producing farms that may be too small to qualify for the existing Farmland Preservation Program, established in 1978.

“We put a great deal of care and consideration into developing the evaluation criteria after legislation enabling this program was passed in 2008,” said Commissioner Reviczky. “This program is something we see as a valuable component of the state’s long-term plan to cultivate sustainable agriculture and food production for the residents of Connecticut. As a result, we have spent considerable time and effort on the details.”

By October 1, 2012, the department expects to complete application evaluation and determine projects that will become part of the pilot program.

The Community Farms Preservation Program is voluntary. Interested farmers and municipalities are encouraged to contact the Connecticut Department of Agriculture to discuss eligibility. For more information, please contact Program Director J. Dippel or Property Agent Katherine Winslow by phone at 860-713-2511 or in writing to:

Connecticut Department of Agriculture
Farmland Preservation Program
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