Beginning Farmers & Forest Landowners
We're Here to Help You Start Off Right

USDA’s Beginning Farmer and Rancher Initiative
The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) “Beginning Farmers and Ranchers” initiative is focused on ensuring the newest farmers have access and assistance to Farm Bill Conservation Programs. USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is committed to helping these landowners develop their operations.

The NRCS in New Hampshire strives to serve all customers, with a special commitment to assisting individuals and groups underserved in the past. Qualified beginning farmers, ranchers and forest landowners may receive higher payment rates, priority in fund categories, or have specially designated fund categories, as listed in the Environment Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) fund category table.

Why?
New and beginning farm and forest landowners emerge in the state everyday.
Farming can be a bit of trial and error for any farmer, but in New England learning some lessons the hard way can put an operation out of business before it really even gets started.

Practices like soil testing, reduced tillage, grazing and manure management are skills that are learned and passed down on multi-generational farms. These skills are rooted in conservation - taking care of your soil and other resources so that you can continue your operation year-after-year. Learning these skills can take years of trial and error or significant time to study.

As a beginning farmer time might not be on your side.

Lucky, USDA has many programs that exist to support the farmers and forest landowners that are so critical to our communities. Our agencies have experience to contribute to your success.

A secret from long-time New England farmers: these programs are available to assist you in your operation!

Who can help me?
There are many offering under USDA’s Farm Production and Conservation (FPAC) sub agencies. FPAC is the organization of USDA agencies focused on servicing our farming customers.
These agencies include: NRCS, Farm Service Agency (FSA), and Risk Management Agency (RMA).
Each FPAC agency (FSA, NRCS, RMA) has a particular focus in supporting our agricultural producers and forest landowners but work together on various programs relating to customer information and eligibility.
Through a network of State and county offices - USDA Local Service Centers - these agencies are available to assist you right in your community.
See the next page to find your service center.

USDA New Farmers:
Who is a new farmer? New farmers and ranchers can be young or old, interested in emerging agricultural technology or making things grow. Some new farmers are young people growing their responsibilities within family businesses, but many come from non-farming backgrounds and are learning about a whole new world. New farmers are everywhere.

USDA Definition, Beginning Farmer
A “Beginning Farmer or Rancher” means a participant who has not operated a farm or ranch, or who has operated a farm or ranch for not more than 10 consecutive years, and who will materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm or ranch*
* Please see our website for the full definition

Find out more about USDA’s Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Initiative, check out Farmers.gov here http://go.usa.gov/xtnMu

New Hampshire
Natural Resources Conservation Service
nr.cs.usda.gov/
NRCS: “Helping People Help the Land”

NRCS offers assistance in two basic forms, Conservation Technical Assistance and Financial Assistance:

- **Conservation Technical Assistance:**
  - Provides our nation’s farmers, ranchers and forestland owners with the knowledge and tools they need to conserve, maintain and restore the natural resources on their lands and improve the health of their operations for the future.
  - NRCS offers this assistance at no cost to the producers we serve. Our goal is to give our customers personalized advice and information, based on the latest science and research, to help them make informed decisions.
  - If a producer chooses to take the next step towards improving their operations, we can work with them to develop a conservation plan, with suggested conservation practices that can help them reach their production and conservation goals.

- **Financial Assistance:**
  - Provides voluntary programs to eligible landowners and agricultural producers through a competitive process to provide financial assistance to help manage natural resources in a sustainable manner.
  - Through these programs the agency approves contracts to provide financial assistance to help plan and implement conservation practices that address natural resource concerns or opportunities to help save energy, improve soil, water, plant, air, animal and related resources on agricultural lands and non-industrial private forest land.

**About NRCS:**
If you own or manage farm or forest land in New Hampshire, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) can be a great resource to help you achieve your operational goals.

NRCS is a non-regulatory federal agency that offers technical and financial assistance to address natural resource concerns on privately-owned lands. We work closely with local Soil and Water Conservation Districts, state agencies, nongovernmental entities, and other partners to meet local needs on a grassroots level.

Through our partnerships, we can coordinate public and private resources to implement scientifically based, locally-led voluntary conservation efforts.

**Examples of Popular Assistance**

- **Forest Land**
  - Forest Trails, Timber Stand Improvement, Stream Crossings, Stream Habitat Improvement, Wildlife Habitat Cuttings, Shrub Planting

- **Field Management**

- **Grazing Management Plans:**
  - Fencing, Water Delivery Systems, Forage Management

- **Cropland:**
  - High Tunnels, Pollinator Habitat, Pest Monitoring, Mulch, Cover Crops

- **Barnyard:**
  - Manure Management, Heavy Use Area, Water Management, Compost Facility

And many more - contact your local USDA Service Center!

**How we can help you:**

Concord Field Office
Serving Merrimack County
(603) 223-6023

Conway Field Office
Serving Belknap and Carroll Counties
(603) 447-2771

Epping Field Office
Serving Rockingham and Strafford Counties
(603) 679-1587

Milford Field Office
Serving Hillsborough County
(603) 673-2409

Lancaster Field Office
Serving Coos County
(603) 788-4651

Walpole Field Office
Serving Cheshire and Sullivan counties
(603) 756-2988

Orford Field Office
Serving Grafton County
(603) 353-4651

Dover State Office
(603) 868-7581

Easement Coordinators:
- Ian Rodgers (ALE)
- Brooke Stubbs (WRE)

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