

New Hampshire Agriculture

New Hampshire agriculture is quite diverse, encompassing many crop, livestock and specialty products. The value of New Hampshire's agricultural industry is nearly \$929 million. This includes \$554 million in direct sales of agricultural and \$381 million in direct spending by agriculture related tourists.

Farming activity provides the fields, pastures and meadows that buffer New Hampshire's residential and commercial development and affords the views of the hills, valleys and mountains. Without land kept open by farming, there would be no greenbelts around our towns and cities and without farming, there would be no barns, silos, or sugar houses that give our state its special character.

Some 4,150 individual operations qualify as commercial farms in New Hampshire, managing 471,911 acres including crop, pasture, maple and Christmas tree production, conservation and other agricultural uses.

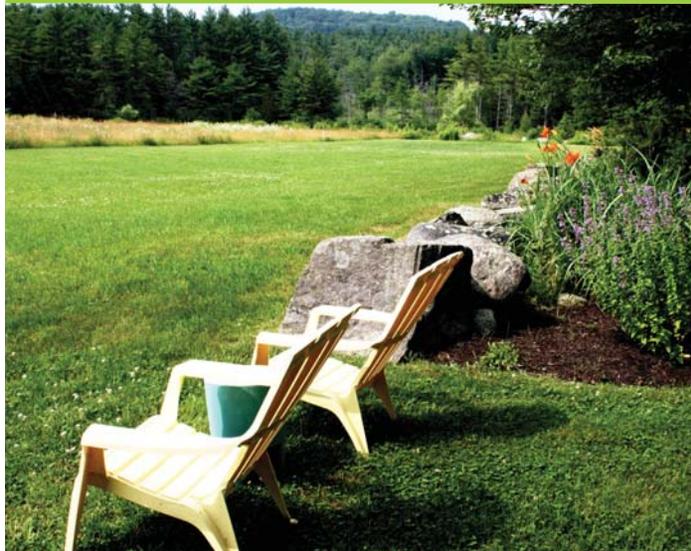
The state's farms produce a wide variety of conventional bulk commodity crops, with milk and apples being the most significant. New Hampshire farms produce many specialty and horticultural crops for markets both within and beyond the state.

Food manufacturing in New Hampshire, including dairy products, bakery products, confectionery, beverages and seafood products, is valued at \$550 million per year. Internationally, New Hampshire exports over \$36 million annually in food and agricultural products.



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Agricultural Land Easements

In New Hampshire

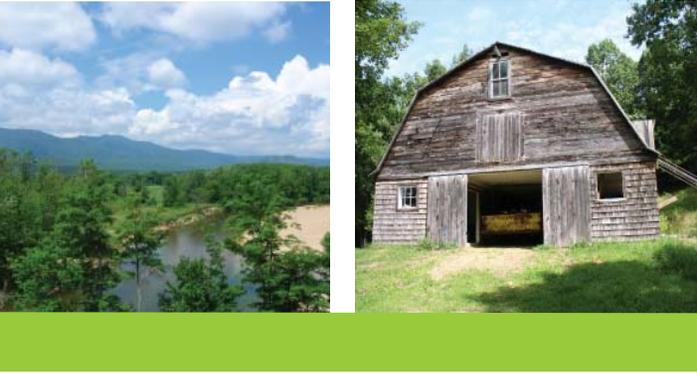


New Hampshire
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Agricultural Land Easements

Funding for Conservation Easements



What are agricultural land easements?

USDA Agricultural Land Easements (ALE) help New Hampshire farmers keep their productive land in agriculture in perpetuity. NRCS provides financial assistance to eligible partners for purchasing Agricultural Land Easements that protect the agricultural use and conservation values of eligible land. In the case of working farms, the program helps farmers and ranchers keep their land in agriculture. The program also protects grazing uses and related conservation values by conserving grassland, including rangeland, pastureland and shrubland. Eligible partners include American Indian tribes, state and local governments and non-governmental organizations that have farmland, rangeland or grassland protection programs.

Under the Agricultural Land component, NRCS may contribute up to 50 percent of the fair market value of the agricultural land easement. Where NRCS determines that grasslands of special environmental significance will be protected, NRCS may contribute up to 75 percent of the fair market value of the agricultural land easement.



How does ALE work in NH?

USDA Agricultural Land Easements establish partnerships with land trusts, state and local unit of government, and other non-profit organizations, to facilitate and provide funding for the purchase of conservation easements on land in New Hampshire.

Landowners participate voluntarily and protected land remains in private ownership. The property owner still owns the land and retains the right to sell it, lease it, or will it to his or her heirs.

Participating landowners agree not to convert their land to commercial enterprises other than agriculture and forestry and to develop and implement a conservation plan for any highly erodible land.



What land is eligible?

To qualify for ALE, the land offered must:

- Be a minimum of 50% productive agricultural soils; or
- Have historical or cultural resources; or
- the enrollment of which would protect grazing uses & related conservation values by restoring & conserving land; or
- the enrollment of which will further a state or local policy consistent with the purposes of the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP);
- Have the easement purchased through partnerships with state and local units of government, land trusts, or

other non-profit organizations;

- Be privately owned and cannot be town, state, or nationally owned.
- Be owned by an individual or entity that does not exceed the Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) limitation.
- Have less than 2/3 forestland or have 1/3 open land.

How much farm land has been protected in NH?

Since the ALE came into existence in 1996, NRCS in New Hampshire has provided over \$30 million to support the purchase of, and provide permanent protection of just over 7,800 acres of agricultural land on over 117 farms across the State.

The \$30 million in Federal funds leveraged nearly \$55 million in local funds and \$8.5 million in landowner contributions for a total easement value of \$93.5 million.

More information

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