



## Impact & Significance of Connecticut Agriculture

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### CFBA's Mission & History

The mission of the Connecticut Farm Bureau is to elevate the stature of agriculture in our state. Through education, market promotion and legislative advocacy, we strive to increase farm income and to improve the quality of life not only for Connecticut farmers, but also for their consumers.

CFBA is the state's largest and oldest agricultural organization with over 3,000 members from across the state. We are a statewide non-profit organization governed by a volunteer Board of Directors. Each of Connecticut's eight counties have a farm bureau that is a separate legal entity with their own Board of Directors and plan of work. The county farm bureaus work collaboratively with CFBA on promotion and advocacy efforts.

### Key Facts About Connecticut Agriculture

Agriculture continues to be a significant driver in our economy. With farms in every corner of the state, and an increased consumer awareness of where their food comes from, agriculture has received much attention.

- 6,000 farms working 436,000 acres of land<sup>1</sup>
  - 22% increase in number of farms from 2007 to 2012
  - 60% increase in the number of farms since 1982<sup>1</sup>
- Contributes up to \$4 billion to the state's economy<sup>2</sup>
- Creates approximately 21,000 jobs and generates \$900 million in wages<sup>2</sup>
- 25% of farms are operated by women<sup>1</sup>
- Farmland Preservation Program has protected 41,500+ acres on 315 farms<sup>3</sup>. State goal is to protect 130,000 acres.
- 967,800+ acres on 36,500+ parcels are assessed by PA 490
- Forestland covers 50% of the state and generates \$132 million in sales<sup>2</sup>
- Community Investment Act has invested \$122 million over 13 years supporting:
  - Agricultural Sustainability Program (Dairy Support); Farmland Preservation; Farm Reinvestment Grants; Farm Transition Grants; Farm Viability Grants; CT Grown Program; Farm Link; Food Policy Council; Seafood Advisory Council; Wine Development Council.

<sup>1</sup>USDA Census of Agriculture (2012)

<sup>2</sup>UConn Economic Impacts of CT's Agricultural Industry (2015)

<sup>3</sup>CT Department of Agriculture (2015)

## 2019 Public Policy Priorities

- Support adequate funding for and continuation of a stand-alone, cabinet-level Department of Agriculture and full funding for farmland preservation.
- Support continuation and full funding of the Community Investment Act and the critical programs that it funds in support of agriculture.
- Oppose changes to PA490 that would result in decreased access to quality farmland for farmers and accelerate development conversion.
- Adequate funding for the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station, the Agriscience and Technology Program, and the College of Agriculture, Health, and Natural Resources at the University of Connecticut.
- Legalization of industrial hemp as an agricultural product that allows for the processing of, and sales of, hemp by-products, including oils and other uses.
- Energy Policy:
  - Encourage the development of on-farm anaerobic digester projects that result in multiple environmental benefits.
  - Support requiring developers of solar projects on prime and important farmland be responsible to return the land to a productive agricultural condition at the end of the useful life of their projects.
  - Encourage agricultural energy policy to reduce production cost and enhance farm revenue through the implementation of on-farm energy production utilizing agricultural virtual net metering.
- Support the development and expansion of farm-based wineries, breweries, cideries and distilleries.
- Transfer the requirements of regulation and inspection of maple and honey products to the Department of Agriculture

**Continued support for policies that support CT agriculture:** Continuation of the Farmer sales tax exemption and Off-road fuel tax exemptions. Maintain state-only jurisdiction for CT pesticide and fertilizer regulations and invasive plants.

<i>Opportunities</i>	<i>Challenges</i>
<i>Industrial Hemp</i> <i>Direct Marketing</i> <i>Agritourism</i> <i>Aquaculture</i> <i>Farm Wineries, Breweries, Cideries &amp; Distilleries</i> <i>Controlled Environment Production</i>	<i>Labor Availability</i> <i>Labor Costs</i> <i>Dairy Prices</i> <i>Food Safety Modernization Act</i> <i>Access to land</i> <i>Energy Costs</i>