

Connecticut's Definition of Agriculture and Farming



Background:

Connecticut's geography and proximity to population centers promotes a broad spectrum of agricultural commodities and enterprises - from the fertile soils of the Connecticut River Valley, to its forest lands, to its proximity to Long Island Sound. The state's definition of agriculture and farming, CGS Sec. 1-1q, encompasses the diversity of Connecticut agriculture from crops to livestock to forest products to shellfish.

Key Points:

- The statute defines the words "**agriculture**", "**farming**", "**farm**", and "**aquaculture**".
- The statute includes the processing, sale and marketing of agricultural commodities.
- The statute recognizes horses as livestock.
- Forestry is included in the definition of farming and agriculture.
- The statute allows for the activities associated with the maintenance and management of a farm.
- The statute does not restrict the power of local zoning authority.
- The statute was amended in 2021 to exclude the cultivation of cannabis in the definition of farming and agriculture.

Statute:

CGS Section 1-1q: Except as otherwise specifically defined, the words "**agriculture**" and "**farming**" shall include cultivation of the soil, dairying, forestry, raising or harvesting any agricultural or horticultural commodity, including the raising, shearing, feeding, caring for, training and management of livestock, including horses, bees, poultry, fur-bearing animals and wildlife, and the raising or harvesting of oysters, clams, mussels, other Mollusca shellfish or fish; the operation, management, conservation, improvement or maintenance of a farm and its buildings, tools and equipment, or salvaging timber or cleared land of brush or other debris left by a storm, as an incident to such farming operations; the production or harvesting of maple syrup or maple sugar, or any agricultural commodity, including lumber, as an incident to ordinary farming operations or the harvesting of mushrooms, the hatching of poultry, or the construction, operation or maintenance of ditches, canals, reservoirs or waterways used exclusively for farming purposes; handling, planting, drying, packing, packaging, processing, freezing, grading, storing or delivering to storage or to market, or to a carrier for transportation to market, or for direct sale any agricultural or horticultural commodity as an incident to ordinary farming operations, or, in the case of fruits and vegetables, as an incident to the preparation of such fruits or vegetables for market or for direct sale. The term "**farm**" includes farm buildings, and accessory buildings thereto, nurseries, orchards, ranges, greenhouses, hoop houses and other temporary structures or other structures used primarily for the raising and, as an incident to ordinary farming operations, the sale of agricultural or horticultural commodities. The terms "agriculture" and "farming" do not include the cultivation of cannabis, as defined in section 21a-420.

2 Connecticut's State Definition of Agriculture and Farming (*continued*)

The term "**aquaculture**" means the farming of the waters of the state and tidal wetlands and the production of protein food, including fish, oysters, clams, mussels and other molluscan shellfish, on leased, franchised and public underwater farm lands. Nothing herein shall restrict the power of a local zoning authority under chapter 124.

FAQs:

Q: Who determines whether an activity or land use constitutes agriculture or farming as defined by the state definition of agriculture?

A: The Commissioner of Agriculture may provide an advisory opinion, upon request of any municipality, state agency, tax assessor or any landowner as to what constitutes agriculture or farming pursuant to CGS 1-1q.

Statute:

CGS Section 22-4c: Powers of commissioner. Recording and transcription of hearings. Payment of related costs or expenses. (a) The Commissioner of Agriculture may:

(4) provide an advisory opinion, upon request of any municipality, state agency, tax assessor or any landowner as to what constitutes agriculture or farming pursuant to subsection (q) of section 1-1, or regarding classification of land as farm land or open space land pursuant to sections 12-107b to 12-107f, inclusive;

Notes: