

MAKING MY LAND AVAILABLE FOR FARMING

WHERE DO I START?



INTRODUCTION

Are you interested in having your land farmed? If so, this guide will help you take first steps toward making your land available for farming. You may be able to meet your personal goals for your property and offer a farming opportunity at the same time.

This “Where Do I Start?” guide will help you move forward.

It begins with what you know: what you want and your current situation. Many landowners find out that they already have a solid start. Writing down your thoughts and questions is a good way to take stock of what you know and to prepare to communicate with others.

Next you can think about the bigger picture. The guide offers a list of considerations and places to add your own.



You may then feel ready to act. You will have the momentum to follow up with action steps, resources and advisors.

Make use of this “Where Do I Start?” guide in the ways that work best for you. You don’t have follow any particular order. You may write full sentences, use shorthand, draw or make mental notes. Or add your own ideas, questions and concerns. You will feel good knowing that you’ve taken your first steps toward making your land available for farming.

NOTES:

GOALS

My/our vision for this property is...

Special features we value most are (for example, the view, orchard, stone walls)...

Some ideas I have for farming uses of the property are...

The relationship I would like to have to the property in the coming years is (for example, live there, visit weekends, be involved in a farming operation, grow a home garden, harvest cordwood):

Other?

CURRENT SITUATION

You can create an opportunity for one of the many people who want to farm in New England, while at the same time creating a lasting legacy of sound stewardship. A leasing or other opportunity will assure that the next generation can continue to farm. Leasing and other land use arrangements offer win-win solutions for farmers and landowners.

Description of my land (history, natural and built features):

The current agricultural and other uses of the property are...

This is my relationship to the property (e.g., I live there, I visit occasionally, work on, enjoy recreation there):

These owners, family members, users, and other decision-makers are involved with the property:

Discussion, plans and decisions to date about future uses of the property:

CONSIDERATIONS

What do you need to think about as you prepare to transfer the farm? Here are some important considerations. You may think of others.

- The capacity of the land for farming
 - Areas available for agriculture
 - Kinds of agriculture best suited to the available land
 - Constraints to what can be done on the land
- The impact of farming activities on me, my family, other users of the property, the neighborhood and community
- How much involvement and responsibility I want in farming activities
- The legal, financial and practical implications of my involvement
- My financial goals and requirements for use of the property
- Preservation of the land and features (e.g., protect from development or misuse)
- Legal (including liability) and tax issues
- My timeline
- My or my heirs relationship to the land in the future
- The pros and cons of the different tenure scenarios (for example, short-term rental, longer-term lease, lease with purchase option, multiple tenants, farm stand)
- Finding someone to farm the property and determining if it is a good match
- Land management and stewardship preferences
- Public access

NEXT STEPS

Congratulations. You've taken two important steps. You've identified what you know and begun thinking about several important considerations. Next, you may take action steps like those below.

Action Steps

- * Contact advisors about recommended agricultural uses.
- * Clarify financial requirements
- * Talk to family and others
- * Learn about tenure options
- * Research easements
- * Draft your "ideal" scenario

Make use of resources and reach out to advisors.

This is a partial list. You will find more on SEMAP's website and the links below.

Southeast Massachusetts Agricultural Partnership (SEMAP) is your first point of contact to help you make your land available for farming. Phone: (508) 295-2212 x50
<http://www.umassd.edu/semap/>

- **Farm Transfer Network of New England.** Online directory of advisors such as attorneys, financial planners, and land use consultants, plus many resources. www.farmtransfernewengland.net
- **Farmland Protection and Transfer in New England.** A comprehensive guide to farm transfer issues and strategies. <http://smallfarm.org/bookstore/index.htm#nesfi>
- **Holding Ground: A Guide to Northeast Farmland Tenure and Stewardship.** Non-ownership tenure with sample lease provisions, worksheets, and case studies <http://smallfarm.org/bookstore/index.htm#nesfi>
- **Land For Good.** Consulting, information, educational programming for non-farming landowners. www.landforgood.org
- **Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources.** General information and links. <http://www.mass.gov/agr/>
- **Massachusetts Land Trust Alliance.** Find out about land protection and easements. www.massland.org.
- **New England LAND LINK.** List your farm property. <http://smallfarm.org/nell/index.htm>
- **USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service.** Natural resources inventories, site and soil maps. <http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/HomePage.htm>



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