

A POLICY FOR FOOD and AGRICULTURE IN MASSACHUSETTS

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

Michael S. Dukakis, Governor



1976

Executive Office of Environmental Affairs
Department of Food and Agriculture, 100 Cambridge Street, Boston, Mass. 02202



THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

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MICHAEL S. DUKAKIS
GOVERNOR

Alarmed by the persistent rise in local food prices at the retail level and the rapid decline of farming and farmland in Massachusetts, and haunted by the realization that the State has no guiding policy on these matters, the Secretary of the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs and the Commissioner of the Department of Food and Agriculture have undertaken to identify the root causes of these problems and to recommend remedial programs for state government to follow. The result of this effort is the following Policy for Food and Agriculture in Massachusetts which I wholeheartedly endorse and which I now declare the official policy of this administration.

The policy statement reflects to a large degree the excellent report of the Governor's Commission on Food, a non-partisan group of citizens representing agriculture, labor, education, government, business and consumer interests. The Commission was appointed in 1973 by then Governor Francis W. Sargent and had as its chairman Dr. Ray Goldberg of the Harvard School of Business Administration, and as its Executive Director, Dr. Theodore W. Leed of the University of Massachusetts.

I wish to acknowledge here the fine work of all those who served on that Commission and also to thank the numerous others around the State who offered comments and constructive criticism to early drafts of this document. I am particularly appreciative of the contributions of the Secretary of the Executive Office of Consumer Affairs who helped write the section entitled "Consumer Assistance" and whose continuing involvement will be indispensable to the successful implementation of this policy.

Sincerely,

Michael Dukakis

FOREWORD


The uncertainties of the world food situation are well known and no dissertation is needed to justify a food policy for Massachusetts. The following document, is designed not as a study to sit on a shelf, but as a guide to coordinated action on many fronts.

The policy proposes to preserve our agricultural land, to increase production and processing of local products, to promote local purchase of Massachusetts grown produce. It proposes to improve our importing and marketing strategies with respect to the imports on which we must depend. The goal is to make Massachusetts more nearly self-sufficient as a means of holding prices in check, reducing the transportation factor in food costs, promoting local business and jobs in agricultural and related fields, and assuring our citizens of a steady supply of nutritious foods at reasonable prices.

Pervading it all is a desire to protect the environmental and social endowments which agriculture has contributed to our heritage and to bequeath to those who follow us a wide range of options in their subsistence, lifestyle, amenities, and perhaps even their survival.



Dr. Evelyn F. Murphy
Secretary of Environmental Affairs



Commissioner Frederic Winthrop, Jr.
Department of Food and Agriculture

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PART ONE: POLICY

A. Rationale:

Many variable factors enter into the economics of feeding Massachusetts citizens, and some of these have been subject to radical change in recent months. The costs of energy and serious questions regarding its future availability have drastically altered traditional balances between cost of producing locally and importing at rising transportation costs from richer agricultural areas.

Also changing are relationships between energy intensive and labor intensive production methods. These trends have serious implications for Massachusetts which was once largely self-sufficient, but now imports 85% of its foodstuffs. For all we import we must export something to pay for it, plus an additional amount for transportation if our economy is to remain healthy. As the rest of the country and the world becomes industrialized, it gets harder to find and sell exportable commodities to pay for our imports.

The more we produce of our food and fiber in-State, the more jobs stay here, the more favorable our import-export position becomes, and the less vulnerable we become to costs, stoppages, and similar actions and circumstances beyond our control.

This implies the need for a hard look at these ever changing variables in our economic picture and at the conventional wisdom of the past.

It also calls for conserving and harnessing our land and water resources from which all wealth is ultimately derived, particularly those areas of land and sea that provide us perpetually renewable bounties if properly harvested and carefully nurtured.

Likewise needed is a new look at the needs of our people, both psychological as well as gustatorial, and at their changing attitudes toward the land and its resources and toward modes of living less destructive of these resources.

It is hoped that this policy statement can provide a point of departure for an on-going process of discussion, analysis, and action which will meet the needs of the people in this rapidly changing situation.

B. Current Situation

1. Loss of Farms, Land and Production:

The number of farms in Massachusetts has declined since World War II from 35,000 to little more than 6,000; the number of farmland acres has plummeted from over 2,000,000 to about 700,000 in the same period. There is no indication now of any reversal in these alarming trends. In fact, Massachusetts can expect to lose roughly 20,000 acres of farmland or 200 farm businesses per year if no state-wide action is taken to preserve this vital resource.

2. Farm Profitability:

There are many factors which in combination have been reducing the profitability of farming to a point where the farmer gives up and sells the farm. These include rising labor costs, shortage of labor particularly at harvest, the lure of higher pay and shorter hours in industry, taxation, lack of services such as slaughtering, processing and marketing, cost and aggravation from licensing, inspection, and nuisance laws. The unavailability of land at farm prices has prevented small farms from growing to economic size. All of these are of course piled on top of the normal uncertainties entailed in the weather and the vagaries of the market.

No entrepreneur has less control over his selling price than the farmer. Most businessmen have the ability to raise selling prices to reflect rising costs. With farm prices set in national or regional markets, however, a farmer's only recourse is to stop selling in order to affect price by creation of a shortage. While this works in the aggregate on a national or regional level over extended time periods, it nevertheless proves disastrous to individual producers in any one crop period. A dairy or poultry man whose costs are exceeding his income cannot close down the supply without suffering greater loss. Likewise, a fruit or vegetable grower who has his costs already invested in his crop must sell when the product is ready at a price already established by forces beyond his control.

Inflation has accentuated his problems not only by raising his costs, especially the segment attributable to fuel and labor inputs, faster than his income, but by adding another unstabilizing factor to his normal risks.

3. Food Imports:

Today this state imports fully 85% of its food-- 97% of the meat and poultry it consumes, 70% of the eggs, 80% of the milk, and 90% of the potatoes. As population increases in states and nations from which Massachusetts imports food, the supply available for Massachusetts to import will become increasingly scarce and costly.

Excessive reliance on imported food not only reduces our bargaining power in food pricing, but leaves us vulnerable to many outside factors such as national or world production patterns or transportation stoppages.

4. High Cost of Food:

Already Massachusetts residents pay from 6-10% more for their food than the national average. Food prices in Boston are the fourth most expensive in the 38 major American metropolitan areas. Much of the reason for the high cost of food in Massachusetts is rooted in the high cost of marketing, including transportation and out-of-state processing and packaging. The decline of rail freight service and the resulting reliance on trucking together with the lack of storage facilities in Massachusetts have also contributed to our high prices.

5. Fishing:

The fishing industry, once a great source of employment and protein-rich fish, has been suffering a decline similar to that of agriculture. Pollution of estuarine areas and over fishing on the seas by highly efficient foreign factory ship fleets have depleted stocks of several species to the danger point and are threatening others. The total Massachusetts catch has been reduced by half in the last 15 years.

6. Economic Loss:

There are currently some 35,000 Massachusetts citizens employed in the farming and fishing industries which generates nearly \$200 million of business annually. Naturally these are diminishing as more and more farmers and fishermen go out of business and enter the over crowded job market.

C. Goals of a State Policy

1. Social Climate:

The forces of the last several decades have led this state to a critical reliance on imported food paid for by exported services. As a result, consumers have little choice but to pay high food prices, and farmers lack the means of reversing the decline in the agricultural production of the Commonwealth.

Massachusetts has been viewed as an "industrial state" and the erosion of farming as inevitable.

What is needed is a climate of public opinion in which farming, fishing, and forestry are recognized as valuable home-based industries and receive due consideration as such from other interests.

2. Land and Water Base:

If the land and water base is polluted, covered up or otherwise lost, none of the other cures will work-- hence the priority on its preservation and enhancement.

3. Increased Production:

Local production must be increased by all possible means to build our economy, reduce our dependence on imports, give us more clout in the market pricing structure, and assure consumers of high quality food.

4. Importing and Marketing Strategy:

As Massachusetts is a highly urbanized state and will continue to be dependent on food imports, a food policy must contain elements of strategy as an importer and marketer as well as producer.

5. Regional Approach:

Such strategies should be formulated on a regional basis in conjunction with our neighboring New England states. Such self-sufficiency as we may be able to achieve can best be accomplished cooperatively as a region.

6. Free Enterprise:

A food policy must address certain social issues as well. Truly our greatest resource is the imagination and energy of our people themselves. A "back to the land" movement is strong, especially among the young. Our producers are anxious that solutions be found through small business/free enterprise--the common initiative of the people. The self-reliance and resourcefulness traditionally associated with life close to the land is certainly to be encouraged. We reaffirm these fundamental concepts and view the role of government as to encourage and utilize these forces for the benefit of all.

7. Beneficial Collateral Effects:

The implementation of such a policy will have important bearing on many other aspects of the quality of life in Massachusetts. A healthy agriculture will:

- A. Provide jobs and business opportunities within the Commonwealth.
- B. Utilize our renewable resources.
- C. Preserve much of our most useful and attractive open space for many compatible functions such as air purification, water absorption and retention, wildlife habitat and the prevention of crowding.
- D. Conserve a part of our New England heritage which contributes so materially to the unique qualities that make Massachusetts and New England an attractive place in which to live and work. This uniqueness also attracts a billion dollar annual recreation and tourist business.



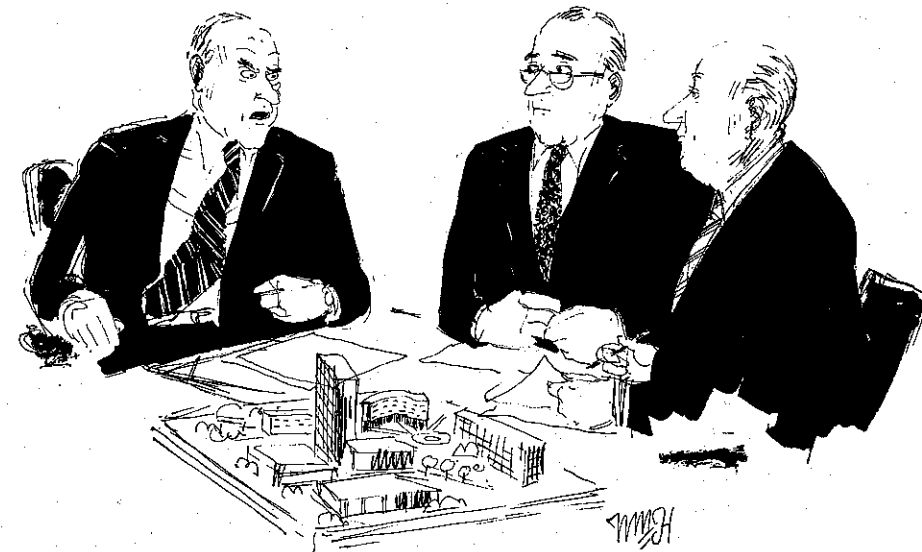
H. M. Curtis
"Which would you rather see built on this site?
(A) An intercontinental jetport; (B) an atomic powerplant; (C) a mall-type shopping center; or (D) a 3,000-unit middle-income housing development."

PART TWO: PROGRAMS

D. Priorities

In attempting to devise realistic programs toward meeting the above needs, one is faced with many "hen and egg" situations which make the assigning of priorities difficult. For example, increased production requires expanded markets and service facilities while the latter require an augmented and assured production to support them. Both require a healthy and profitable agriculture. A healthy agriculture requires that land be available at purchase or carrying costs related to its agricultural potential, and in sufficient quantity to support any desired level in production.

Protection of farmland from development pressures and resulting over-taxation should result in improvement in farm profitability. It has also been said that a more profitable agriculture would help protect agricultural land from encroachment for other more intensive uses. While this is probably at least partially true, it is undeniable that once farmland is built upon, its capacity to produce food or fibre is gone forever. Its rapid disappearance requires immediate attention for if the good land is gone, no combination of production programs will succeed.



*"Cleared with the state, cleared with the county,
cleared with the zoning boys, the building boys, the
historical society, the ecology groups,
and now the little old lady changes her mind
about selling the farm."*

Of equal importance is the protection of the sea base for the fishing industry. Not only does this include the open seas to the limits of the continental shelf, but also the coastal and estuarine areas of our shores which generate the foodstuffs on which ocean life depends. The loss of these areas by pollution, filling, draining, and other tampering threatens a vast supply of human food and likewise jeopardizes any programs designed to enhance this important segment of our local food supply. Consequently, preservation of the land and sea base stands at the top of the priority list.

The remaining programs all aimed at various aspects of the problem are presented with no particular implication of priority, as they all need to be pursued more or less simultaneously in the hope that significant gains may be realized through cumulative effect.

E. Land and Sea Base

1. Farmland Assessment Act:

In 1973 the legislature passed the landmark Farmland Assessment Act (Chapter 61A). This legislation permits local officials to assess farmland at a value which is based on its current use and yield, rather than the potential value of the land if it were sold for commercial development. Since the crushing burden of property taxes is one reason why so much farmland has been diverted to other uses, this act is potentially a major step forward.

Soaring land values have resulted in valuations far exceeding the value of the land for agriculture, and rising costs of municipal services unrelated to the farmers use of the land have resulted in property tax bills which eat up serious portions of farmers' meager profit margins. These trends have resulted in increasing insecurity among farmers who have hesitated to invest properly in their operation and in many cases have succumbed to the offers to developers for their land. Some communities, recognizing the merit of the new law, have actually gone out of their way to encourage farmers to take advantage of it. Others, recognizing only the short-term effect of lower property tax revenues, have been dragging their feet. The Commonwealth will put its full support behind this new law and behind Chapter 61, the Forestland Assessment Act. The Executive Office of Communities and Development and the Department of Corporations and Taxation should promote its use to local officials and make clear our commitment to its enforcement. This is particularly important in view of the recent court decision relative to 100% valuation.

2. Development Rights:

The Department of Food and Agriculture is currently drafting legislation for the purchase of development rights on farmland. The "right to develop" is one of the bundle of rights associated with land ownership and is severable from the others. The dollar value of such rights is the difference between the value of the land for agriculture and its value for other more intensive uses.

Such a program would enable the farmer to receive cash for this portion of his equity without removing the land from agriculture and use the proceeds for investment in his farm, to buy more land, for his retirement, or for investment in any manner he chooses. The farm may thereafter be bought or sold at its value as a farm and young people or others wishing to enter farming will be able to acquire the land at an investment which the farm operation will support. This is not possible under present circumstances.

Various methods of financing have been suggested such as a fee on real estate transactions with the possibility of a bond issue for flexibility in the time frame. It is hoped that legislation may be ready for presentation to the Governor and Legislature in the near future.

3. Identification and Mapping of Farmland:

Before any comprehensive job of land preservation can be undertaken, it is imperative that prime farmland be identified, mapped, and inventoried. To this end, the Department will be working with the College of Food and Natural Resources at University of Massachusetts, and the Soil Conservation Service of the U.S.D.A. to produce maps suitable for use by municipalities in this effort.

4. Role of Municipal and Regional Government:

Cities and towns through their Planning Boards and Conservation Commissions, and regional agencies such as counties, Regional Planning Districts, and Conservation Districts must be enlisted in the total effort to preserve agricultural land. Public and especially private agencies such as conservation groups and land trusts have traditionally acquired, by purchase or gift, land or easements thereon from willing individuals. These have usually been for forest, wetlands, or recreational land. The state through the Division of Conservation Services should encourage the extension of these practices to productive agricultural land.

5. Death Taxes:

Heavy inheritance taxes both state and federal often force heirs to sell part or all the farm to pay the tax. The administration should lobby in both Boston and Washington for elimination or reduction of those taxes by requiring valuation at "farm use" rather than "market" value with larger exemptions in keeping with today's values.

6. Ocean and Coastal Base:

The Commonwealth's official support of a 200 mile or continental shelf off-shore fishing jurisdiction should be pursued, and in the meanwhile the 12 mile law must be strictly enforced by federal agencies. Likewise every effort must be exerted to protect our shorelines, tidelands, and estuaries from encroachment or pollution by enforcement of wetlands laws or by coastal zone management techniques of various sorts.

7. State Action:

A program must be inaugurated to minimize the consequences of state actions on the depletion of agricultural land. Public agencies must recognize the full effects of their actions when they take or divide agricultural land or coastal areas by eminent domain for roads or other purposes. The Executive Office of Environmental Affairs will strive to find alternatives to such takings. The Department of Food & Agriculture will work with public agencies such as D.P.W., D.C.A., to see that necessary projects be designed not to divide farms or cause the loss of valuable farmland either through actual construction or subsequent consequential effects.

8. Utilization of Publicly Owned Agricultural Land:

It is suggested that state owned farmland be consolidated under the jurisdiction of the Commissioner of Food & Agriculture so that we may maximize our own production and set an example in the use of this resource. The state owns significant amounts of land suitable for food production. Some park and wildlife land can support agriculture on a multiple use basis, and the land thus used is kept open without public cost. Much farm land surrounds state institutions such as prisons, hospitals and colleges and could be cultivated by residents of those institutions or by others either for community gardening or for commercial farming. Many plots are currently being used for other purposes or not used at all. We intend to ask the cooperation of the Executive Office of Human Services and all other Executive Offices which have open space under their jurisdiction to assist in preparing an inventory of that land and to assist in working out plans for its most appropriate and productive use.

F. Increase Local Production

1. Soil Conservation:

Every effort should be made through the Soil Conservation Service, Cooperative Extension, and farming organizations to continue and constantly up-date good farming and soil conservation practices in order to improve the retention and productivity of our soils.

2. Research and Development:

We will call on the University of Massachusetts through their various land grant programs, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and collateral agencies to bend all possible efforts toward the investigation of new products and methods adaptable to the Massachusetts scene.

a. New Products and Methods:

We must consider the introduction of new kinds of food production suited to our land and climate. As an example, we currently import 97% of our beef, veal, pork, and lamb, much of which has been grain fed in feed lots elsewhere; yet we have good land that will grow forage. Genetic research into better strains of forage plants and strains of livestock better suited to utilize them could well put to use much of our abandoned farmland, reduce dependency on grain, and increase our local meat supply. Other products and combinations must be looked into.

Research should be devoted to exploring the potentials of sea farming in our coastal waters, as well as investigating other currently unused sea products for their possibilities. The Executive Office of Environmental Affairs will coordinate the efforts of the Department of Food and Agriculture, the Division of Water Pollution Control, and the Bureau of Solid Waste Disposal to explore possibilities for the utilization of organic wastes (such as sewage, manure, leaves, garbage) for agricultural purposes to reduce the cost of and our dependence on imported fertilizer, especially that which is petroleum derived.

3. Marketing and Service Strategies:

In conjunction with university, business, and financial interests, we must investigate assorted means of servicing agriculture and marketing its products. The assistance of the Secretary of Manpower and Economic Development will be enlisted in this work?

a. Slaughtering:

There is an expressed need for slaughtering facilities for large animals and processing plants for poultry to support local production, by both commercial and part-time farmers.

b. Processing:

If more perishable produce is to be raised, markets must be able to absorb the increase without depressing prices to the farmer. This must be done either by increasing the demand or by spreading out the marketing season beyond the harvest period. This has been accomplished in the cranberry and apple business where, by canning, freezing, juicing, refrigeration and controlled atmosphere storage, these two products are marketed year round rather than being limited to a few weeks in the fall. New methods for storage and processing of a variety of products must be thoroughly researched with the goal of building up both production and processing segments of the industry.

c. Service:

With the shrinking of the state's agriculture, it has become increasingly difficult for the farmer to obtain the services he requires. Farm service businesses are already few and far between and many items of supply or equipment are not stocked locally and must be ordered from a distance with attendant expensive delays. Further reduction in agriculture could be disastrous in this area.

d. Marketing: "Buy Massachusetts" - NATIVE

A campaign mounted by the Department of Food and Agriculture to encourage our consumers to "Buy Massachusetts" and our food wholesalers and retailers to feature home grown products is underway. Such support of local producers can be of inestimable help in supporting a growing and healthy agriculture which will in turn help the consumer to a fresher and more nutritious diet as well as in the long run protect him against higher prices due to transportation costs, freight stoppages, and other hazards related to distant factors beyond local control. Careful attention to quality must be a part of this program.

4. Labor, Health and Nuisance Laws, Permits, Inspections:

Regulations to which the farmer is subjected are often promulgated without due reference to their effect on the farm operation. Many are the result of overlapping jurisdictions or are seemingly unrelated to safety or health. Many are instigated by "city people" who move to "the country" for its rural atmosphere and then make it difficult for the farmer by objecting or passing nuisance ordinances relating to the sounds and smells which are part and parcel of the farm operation. Certain provisions of labor laws designed for the industrial situation are passed without due regard to the peculiar and seasonal nature of farm labor problems.

This whole package of regulations which together so vitally affect the farm operation must be investigated, overlapping jurisdiction eliminated, and unnecessary requirements removed in order to lighten a farmer's burden in this regard.

5. Part Time Farming:

Part time farming, largely overlooked in the past, should have considerable applicability to Massachusetts and could play a significant part in food production totals. Agricultural acreages are small in Massachusetts and except for a few areas such as the Connecticut Valley are not suitable for large operations. Part time farming and forest management can provide opportunities for land owners to augment the family income, produce food for their own consumption, and put to productive use small parcels of land in raising a few animals, in vegetable or fruit culture, or in forestry. Such activity also has much to offer in divers social and psychological ways. More extensive part time farming could contribute much to a healthy agriculture and to the volume of related services such as machinery and supply, slaughtering, marketing and processing.

6. Education and Training:

It is no secret that most Massachusetts farmers are older people and that an alarmingly small number of young people are choosing farming as a career although there are indications that the interest is there, and that the number will increase if land is available. We look forward to working with the Executive Office of Education Affairs and the Cooperative Extension Service to utilize their resources to encourage more people to enter the agricultural programs at county agricultural schools, at regional vocational schools, and at the University of Massachusetts, possibly utilizing some of the public lands referred to above. A similar program of resource production could become a part of coastal zone management programs. Courses in horticulture or gardening should be encouraged to help people help themselves and to gain an appreciation of the bounties which the land has to offer.

G. Production: Non-Food

1. Agriculture & Horticulture:

While the current press is on food, of equal importance to agriculture as a whole is nursery and greenhouse business, including flowers, plants, shrubs and ornamental trees. This segment of agriculture represents 16% of the farm output, contributes \$30 million to the economy, and helps dress up the environment. Tobacco, equines, and other non-food products represent 10% of the farm output or \$10 million.

The horse business is the fastest growing segment of the state's agriculture. Estimates indicate that there are 32,000 horses in the state, the largest number in history, including privately owned saddle horses, those in riding stables, breeding farms, and those involved in racing at both commercial and country fair tracks. All added together these provide jobs and economic activity as well as bringing in \$32 million in annual racing revenue to the state.

All these non-food segments of the state's agriculture share the need for farmland, contribute to human needs, provide jobs, and sustain markets for agriculture support services.

2. Forestry and Fiber Products:

This whole category of resource production, while not a primary part of this food policy statement, is nevertheless part of agriculture in the broader sense and an integral part of the Massachusetts farm. As such, it constitutes a large part of the state's total resource picture and deserves further study. It includes lumber on which our building industry depends, cordwood, pulp, christmas trees, maple products, wood chips, bark mulch, and kindred by-products.

Fifty-nine percent of the area of the state is classed as productive forest land and thus has important implications to any land use planning. Some of it is or could be interchangeable with agriculture if and when the need arises for more cleared land.

This industry employs 34,500 people or 6% of the total employment representing a payroll of 44½ million dollars annually. An estimated \$168 million in product value is created each year. Much of this land is not as productive as it could be under good management. Much of this land is part of farms and contributes to farm income. A vast majority of these acres are in small privately owned parcels difficult to harvest commercially because of their small areas and mixed stands.

Research is underway on management of such areas and on uses for such products of less than saw-log size and type for prestwood, particle board, fuel, and the like. This work should be accelerated and methods adapted for utilization of this resource. Part time forestry by farmers and woodlot owners has a definite place in any such picture as does management of publicly owned park and conservation land on a multiple use basis. The Division of Forests and Parks will be assisting in this endeavor.

The Forest Law (Chapter 61) permits the taxation of managed forest land at its "use value" in forestry. The Department of Corporation and Taxation and other state agencies involved, as well as local officials should encourage the use of this law and of better management practices. Every effort should likewise be made to accelerate research and development of new methods of utilizing this home based renewable resource which is not subject to permanent depletion, high transportation costs, or the volatile international political situation.

H. Importing and Distributing Strategy

As critical as it is to increase our own production and reduce our dependency on food imports, we must always depend on imports for much of our food. Such items as feed grains, tropical fruits and vegetables, and fresh produce out of season, require greater energy inputs to raise in Massachusetts than in those areas where larger acreages or warmer climates prevail. Consequently, the supply and cost of these foods will be largely dictated by outside forces. We must therefore develop strategies for their importation and distribution which will minimize the impact of those factors.

1. Storage Facilities:

We must examine the feasibility of capital investment by the private sector in a grain and food receiving and storage facility in Massachusetts. Currently, without such a facility, we are vulnerable to short-term and uncontrollable economic factors such as transportation strikes, crop failures, international conditions, floods and ice storms. We cannot store more than a few days' worth of most varieties of food. We are at the mercy of the trucking industry for many items. With storage capacity, we would be able to take advantage of volume rail rates which are not now available to us. Reductions in feed costs alone could save Massachusetts consumers some \$4 million annually on poultry, milk, and eggs.

2. Freight Rates:

Massachusetts must continue its strong efforts to revitalize its rail freight network. Rail is the most economical means of transporting most bulk shipments. The

high cost of transport is a key element in food prices. Of the \$3.3 billion that Massachusetts spends for food each year, nearly \$300 million (about 9%, compared to the national average of 6%) represents the cost of transporting food into the state.

Several factors account for these high transportation costs: discriminatory rail rates to the northeast; the long distances over which food must be shipped; and an imbalanced system that relies more on higher-cost trucking than on rail due in part to the poor condition of eastern railroads. The Executive Office of Transportation and Construction has been lobbying vigorously in Washington on behalf of a revitalized rail network; additionally, the New England governors are engaged in litigation to correct the regional discrepancy in freight rates. We support those efforts and offer our assistance toward achieving lower bulk rates on the basic items of grain, seed, fertilizer, and other products to our region.

3. Processing:

The investigation of storage facilities and freight rates should include a close look at the possibility of processing certain items in Massachusetts or New England. While it is not believed likely that processing of imported fresh produce would prove economical except as an adjunct to the processing of locally grown products, there are certain items which must be examined. Notable among these are feed grains.

The Governor's Commission on Food reported in 1973 that Massachusetts imports large amounts of flour milled in Buffalo, instead of importing cheaper raw wheat directly from the midwest and processing it here and that local milling would provide jobs for our state while saving Massachusetts consumers an estimated \$3 million annually on the cost of bread. This should be investigated.

It has been suggested that with equalized freight rates, storage and processing of wheat and other feed grains could be coupled with our port facilities to develop an export business to achieve volume. If such is the case and investment capital can be attracted, the resulting facility would bring new business to the region as well as savings to the consumer.

We will ask the cooperation of industry, labor organizations, Executive Office of Economic Development and Manpower Affairs in exploring the details of such an enterprise.

I. Community Gardening

In the summer of 1975, the Department of Food and Agriculture took its first step toward a community gardening program. This pilot effort was focussed on both making available a number of state owned lands for community gardening groups and providing general information and referral service to the general public.

This program will be expanded in the future, and citizens will be encouraged in every way possible to get involved in this country-wide gardening movement whether on the farm, in the yard, or in community garden plots for the yardless. This is a practical do-it-yourself way that people can improve their own food quality and cost situation as well as gaining an awareness of what is involved in deriving sustenance from the soil.

This department will do all it can to see that information is available to the public not only in the gardening aspects, but also in canning, freezing or other methods of preservation of the garden produce. The Cooperative Extension Service, the Agricultural Experiment Stations and the State Agricultural Schools will be encouraged to take an active part in the educational aspects of the program as will the Department of Elder Affairs. Park departments, conservation commissions and districts, as well as other public agencies are encouraged to take the lead in their areas and make their land available for this purpose.

J. Consumer Assistance

1. Food Cooperatives:

State Government should strongly encourage the establishment of food cooperatives. Responsibility of providing low-interest loans to private non-profit agencies for start-up expenses should be explored. Once a coop is in operation and is self-supporting, no further state assistance would be needed, yet households would be provided with a lasting method of purchasing food less expensively.

2. Producer-Consumer Cooperation:

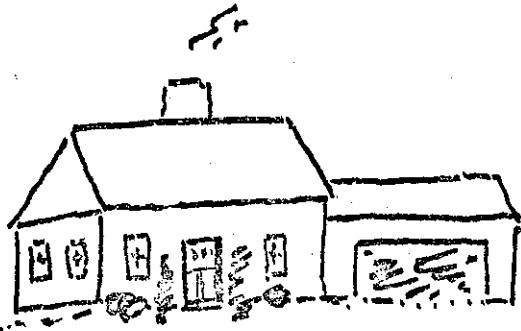
The most ancient of all marketing practices, the "Farmers' Market", has been revived in several communities in the state and is succeeding in bringing the production of small producers direct to consumers, thus providing a market for part-time farmers and gardeners and fresh wholesome food to consumers, without the added costs and delays associated with our mass marketing practices.

Direct marketing from local producers to Food Cooperatives has obvious advantages to both parties and should be encouraged wherever possible.

K. Commitment of the Administration

The revitalization of food production in Massachusetts is essential to our future, important to our consumers, and could be a very significant part of our economic plans.

The support of the entire administration will be essential as will the cooperation of the private sector, both business and labor interests, in effecting these programs and solutions. Also necessary will be the cooperation of the State Senate and House of Representatives in supporting the necessary legislation. But we are convinced that with a concerted effort, we can begin a process now which will benefit all future generations in this state and in the entire New England region.



13 January, 1995

Dear Sir,

This letter will serve to inform you that your house and property at 24 Meadow Lane will be taken by eminent domain to make room for the development of a farm.

Very sincerely yours,

State Land Use Planning Commission.