



March 25, 2019

FVAC Recommended Values — FY 2020

To Boards of Assessors:

The Farmland Valuation Advisory Commission (FVAC) met on March 1st and adopted the range of recommended agricultural, horticultural and forest land use values for the various categories of land classified under *Chapter 61 and 61A* for fiscal year 2020.

The FVAC reviewed and approved a model that capitalized Massachusetts farmland rents, and reallocated by land use. This economic data was provided by USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), which publishes a number of rental values for Massachusetts farmland.

For FY20, the acreage rate for a majority of the chapter 61A uses has minimally increased. Regarding Chapter 61 productive woodland, the data indicates continued strong wood demand, and there are increases in stumpage values east and west of the Connecticut River. For cranberry acreage, data shows minor changes in the barrels per acre range, and overall cranberry values remain static. The cranberry yield production in Massachusetts in 2018 increased over 2017, but the industry is still struggling. The FVAC continues to have two additional categories designating an upper and lower range value for cranberry acreage rates. Assessors are advised to review the yield reported on the growers Chapter 61A application and adjust their rate accordingly. In addition, the 2016 Municipal Modernization Act provides that cranberry bogs classified as agricultural or horticultural land under M.G.L. c. 61A, will continue to be considered actively devoted to cranberry production until FY 2020 even if they do not produce a crop and the annual minimum gross sales requirement under M.G. L. c. 61A § 3, and provided the property is maintained during the designated time period. [St. 2014, c. 165, § 276](#), as amended by [St. 2016, c. 218, § 237](#).

In valuing land classified as agricultural, horticultural or forest land under Chapter 61 and 61A, the Board of Assessors must consider only those indicia of value that such land has for agricultural, horticultural, or forest uses. The ranges of value are to be used in conjunction with the Assessors' appraisal knowledge, judgment, and experience as to agricultural, horticultural and forest land values. All values adopted outside the range recommended by the FVAC must be supported by a comprehensive study of local factors influencing value, together with a detailed description of the selected valuation models and resulting use value estimates. Any sales of farmland, income data or other appraisal information being considered by assessors should be limited to data specific to the crop or product being grown or produced.

Along with the FVAC recommended values are the values of farm animals for the purpose of the *Farm Animal Excise* (Chapter 59, § 8A) as determined by the Department of Revenue. Please note the FVAC deemed no changes are to be made to the value of farm animals for FY2020.

Sincerely yours,

Joanne Graziano

Joanne Graziano
FVAC Chairman, Department of Revenue

FVAC Members:

Phillip DeMartino, Department of Housing and Community Development
Peter Church, Department of Conservation and Recreation, Forestry Division
Myron Inglis, Department of Agricultural Resources
Daniel Lass, University of Massachusetts, Department of Resource Economics
Everett Martin, Massachusetts Assessor Representative

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