

Massachusetts Farmland Action Plan for Potential Partners

Conversation with Potential Partners

10/29 thru 11/4/2024. Online

Katharine Otto, Farmland Action Plan Coordinator



Getting started

Agenda

- ❖ Introductions (5 mins)
- ❖ Context (20 mins)
- ❖ How could potential partners get involved? (90 mins)
- ❖ Next steps (5 mins)

Today's Goals

- ❖ Explore how MDAR and potential partners can collaborate and coordinate

Discussion norms

- ❖ Balance your participation – speak and listen
- ❖ Be open minded
- ❖ Ask questions for clarification
- ❖ Be constructive
- ❖ Be aware of potential bias
- ❖ Consider what are other people seeing and working with
- ❖ Avoid silent dissent

Anything to add? Or modify?

Introductions

Key staff

- Katharine Otto – MDAR Farmland Action Plan Coordinator

Everyone

- Name
- Position
- Organization
- How familiar are you with the Plan?
- Have you been involved in any previous implementation discussions?

Context

Why are farms and farmland important?



Farming in Massachusetts today

According to the 2022 Census of Agriculture, Massachusetts has:

**7,083 farms on
464,451 acres**



of farmland (about 9% of MA land) with
land and buildings worth

\$6.4 billion

13,896 producers* and
14,032 hired farm workers

with a payroll of

\$204 million



**\$607
million**

of agricultural
products
sold



* A “producer” is a person who is involved in making decisions for the farm operation

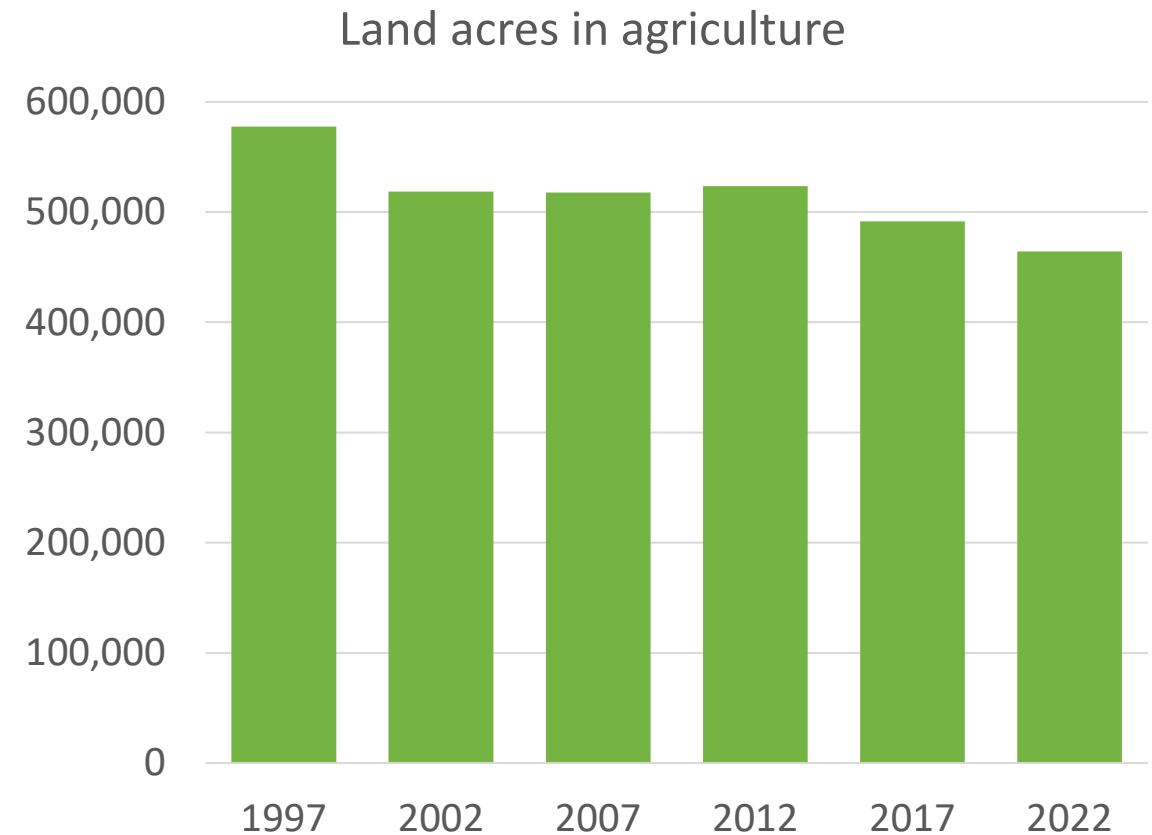
Why is the Farmland Action Plan important?

We are losing agricultural land fast!

Between 1997 and 2022

Massachusetts lost 113,000 acres

- 3.7 times the size of the land area of Boston
- 1.8 times the size of Martha's Vineyard
- 12.4 acres per day



Farms Under Threat

American Farmland Trust's "Farms Under Threat 2040" Report, between 2016 and 2040 Massachusetts, without additional investment and policy changes, is projected to lose



Crisis for agriculture in Massachusetts

Land and climate

- Land prices have risen significantly
- Losing land to competing land uses
- Climate change is exacerbating extreme weather impacts

Economics

- Food system economics favor larger scale farms in other areas
- High input costs so average cost of production is greater than the value of goods produced
 - *Average farm earned 95 cents for every dollar spent on production in 2022*

People and systems

- Farmer population is aging and many do not have plan for after they step away
 - *40% of MA producers are 65 or older in 2022 and most have not identified who will carry on the farm's work*
- Lack of comprehensive statewide land-use planning with clear goals for farmland protection
- Historic and current inequities in accessing farmland

The Plan

What is the Plan?

- State funded
- State coordinated
- Long range strategic initiative
- Statewide, not just for state government
- www.mass.gov/farmland-action-plan



MASSACHUSETTS FARMLAND ACTION PLAN 2023–2050

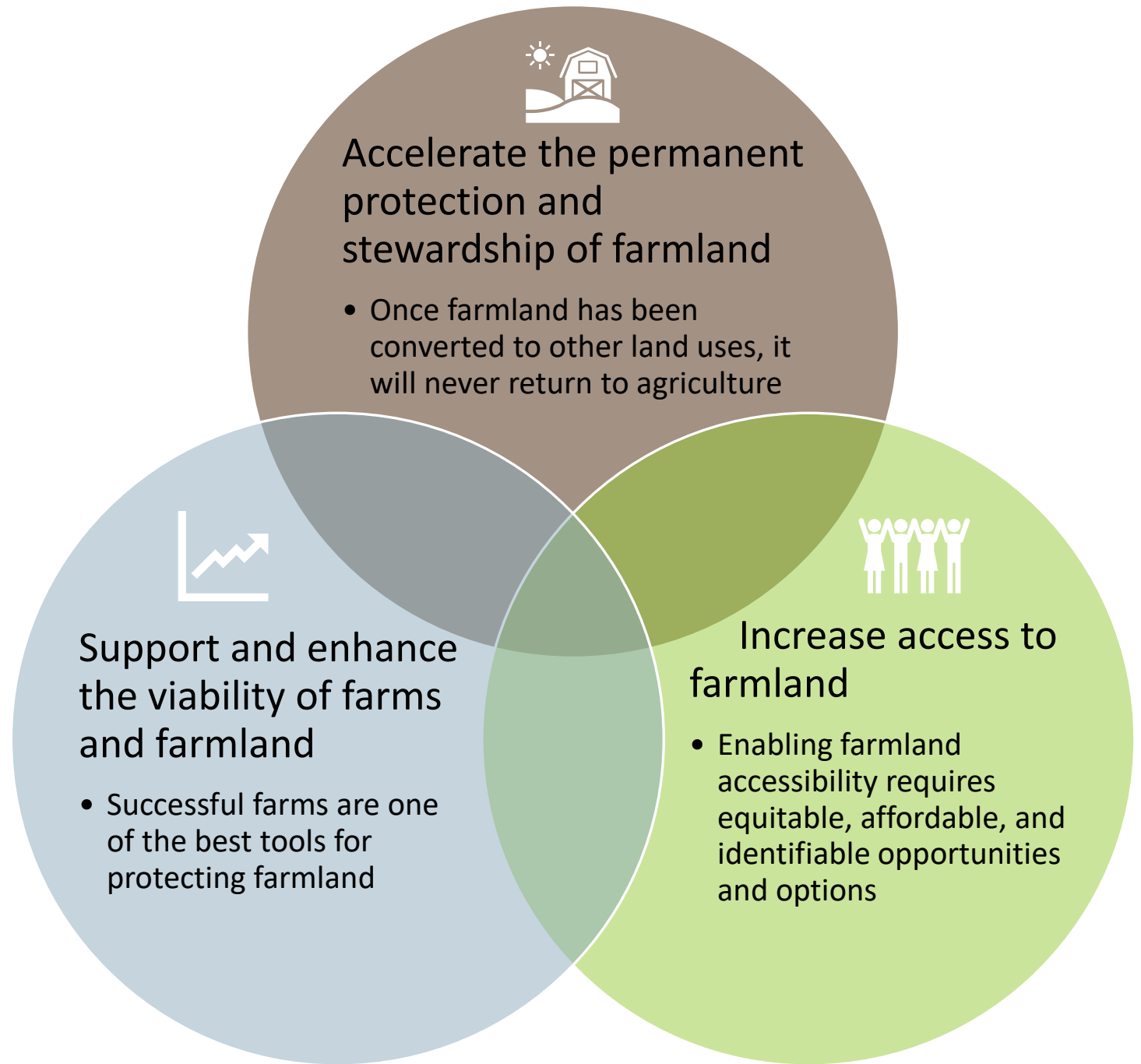
Other related statewide plans

- Local Food Access Plan (2015)
- Decarbonization Road Map (2018)
- Rural Policy Plan (2019)
- Clean Energy & Climate Plan (2022)
- ResilientMass (2023) (State Hazard Mitigation and Climate Adaptation Plan)
- Resilient Lands Initiative (2023)
- Healthy Soils Action Plan (2023)
- Special Commission on Agriculture in the Commonwealth in the 21st Century (forthcoming)
- And others!

What are the goals of the Plan?

Three overlapping goals:

- Protection
- Access
- Viability



Overview of the matrix

Goals – what the plan hopes to achieve.

Strategy – clarify what aspects of each Goal will be addressed

Action – direct how each strategy will be advanced

Task – details on how each action will be achieved

4-digit unique ID number



Strategies for each goal



Protection

- A. Permanently protect farmland through purchases of agricultural restrictions
- B. Further develop and implement additional tools to avoid farmland loss and retain farmland
- C. Prioritize protection of whole farms
- D. Formalize and integrate decision-making processes regarding farmland protection



Access

- A. Make more land available for agriculture
- B. Support farm transfer and succession in ways that enhance access to farmland
- C. Prioritize increased access for BIPOC and historically underserved farmers in all farmland access programs and policies
- D. Support and expand service-provider networks to meet the needs of all farmers and potential farmers.



Viability

- A. Ensure that laws, regulations, programs, and investments support farm viability
- B. Grow resilience and sustainability practices on farms
- C. Increase use of services, programs, and other resources by farmers



All goals

- A. Implement the Massachusetts Farmland Action Plan
- B. Build public support for agriculture and for farmland protection, access and viability

Starting to implement the Farmland Action Plan



Protect and steward land

- Modify how farms are evaluated for protection
- Encourage municipalities to adopt Farmlands of Local Importance (FLI)



Access to farmland

- New state land licenses adjusted to prioritize use by historically underserved farmers (beginning, BIPOC, veterans, limited resource)



Viability of farms and farmland

- New Farm-Pass program to assist farmers to plan on how to pass their farm to the next generation, that results in a farm transfer plan.



General

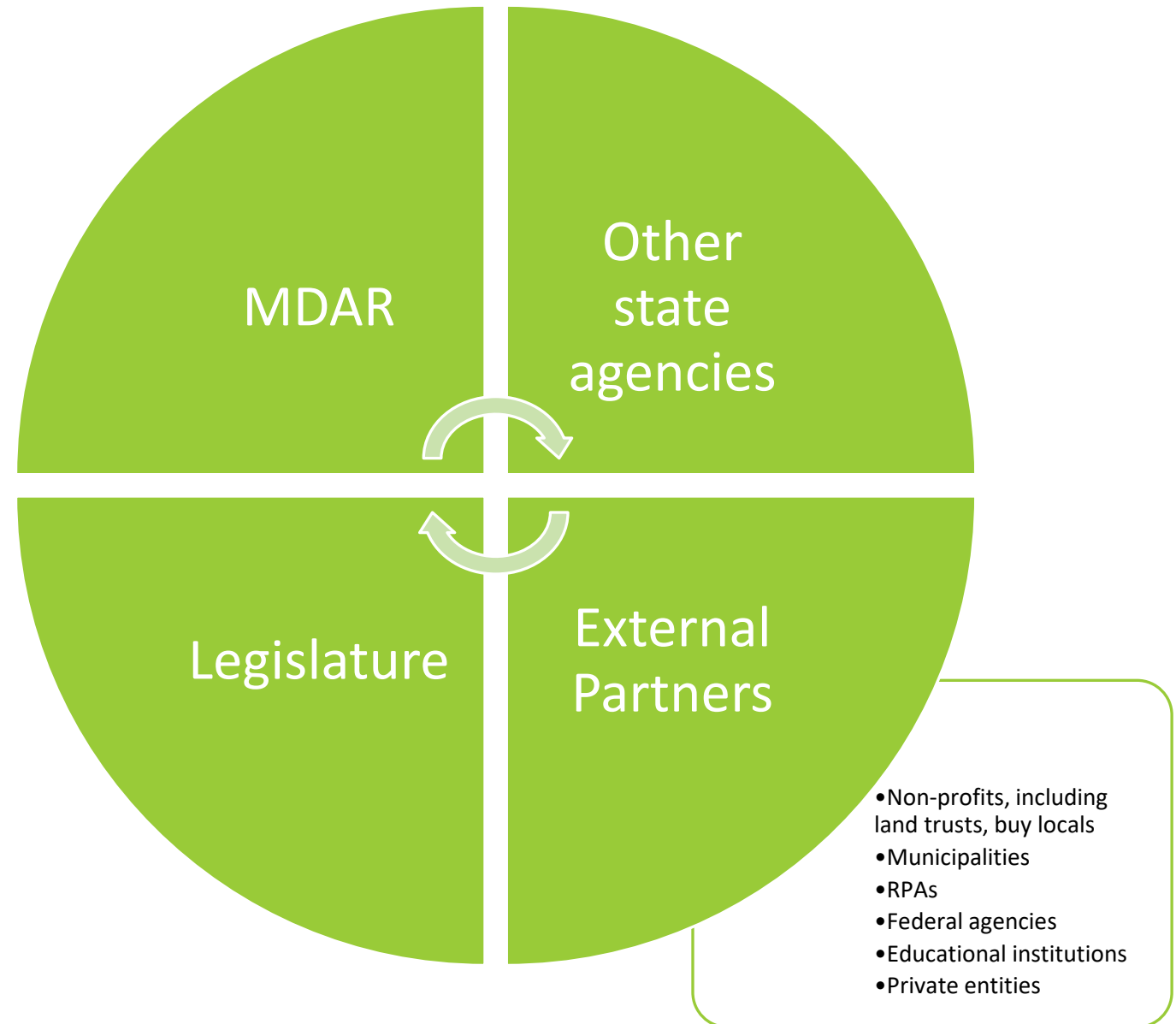
- Hire Farmland Action Plan Coordinator
- Refine Implementation Matrix

How could potential
partners get involved?

Who will implement the Plan?

This is a plan for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

MDAR is promoting, monitoring and facilitating implementation of the Plan, building momentum from existing programs and initiatives.



How can I get involved?

Depending on the task you could be:

- **Lead implementer** – Partner who is the champion/ energy behind implementing a task
- **Other potential implementer** – Other partners who could be key for implementing a task, bringing specific expertise or insights that may shape implementation
- **Other interested entities and individuals** who may have useful information to share to inform the task, may be part of the solution, or are interested in the task outcome.

Lead implementer

Other
potential
implementer

Other
potential
implementer

Other
potential
implementer

Other
interested
individuals

Other
interested
individuals

Other
interested
individuals

Other
interested
individuals

Other
interested
individuals

Other
interested
individuals

How might a task be implemented?

Depending on the lead implementer and the parameters of the specific task:

- Listening sessions to understand the problem or potential solutions
- Committee meetings
- Working groups
- Research report
- Other methods

Types of people involved

- Partner
 - Lead implementer
 - Other potential implementer
- Other interested individuals

Additional details on actions and tasks

Each meeting talked about different topics.

Please visit slides at end of this presentation!

There are slides that summarize some of the actions and tasks for topics. Some topics were covered by bringing up the Implementation Matrix live during the conversation and are not, therefore, included in this slide desk.

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Supporting all the goals

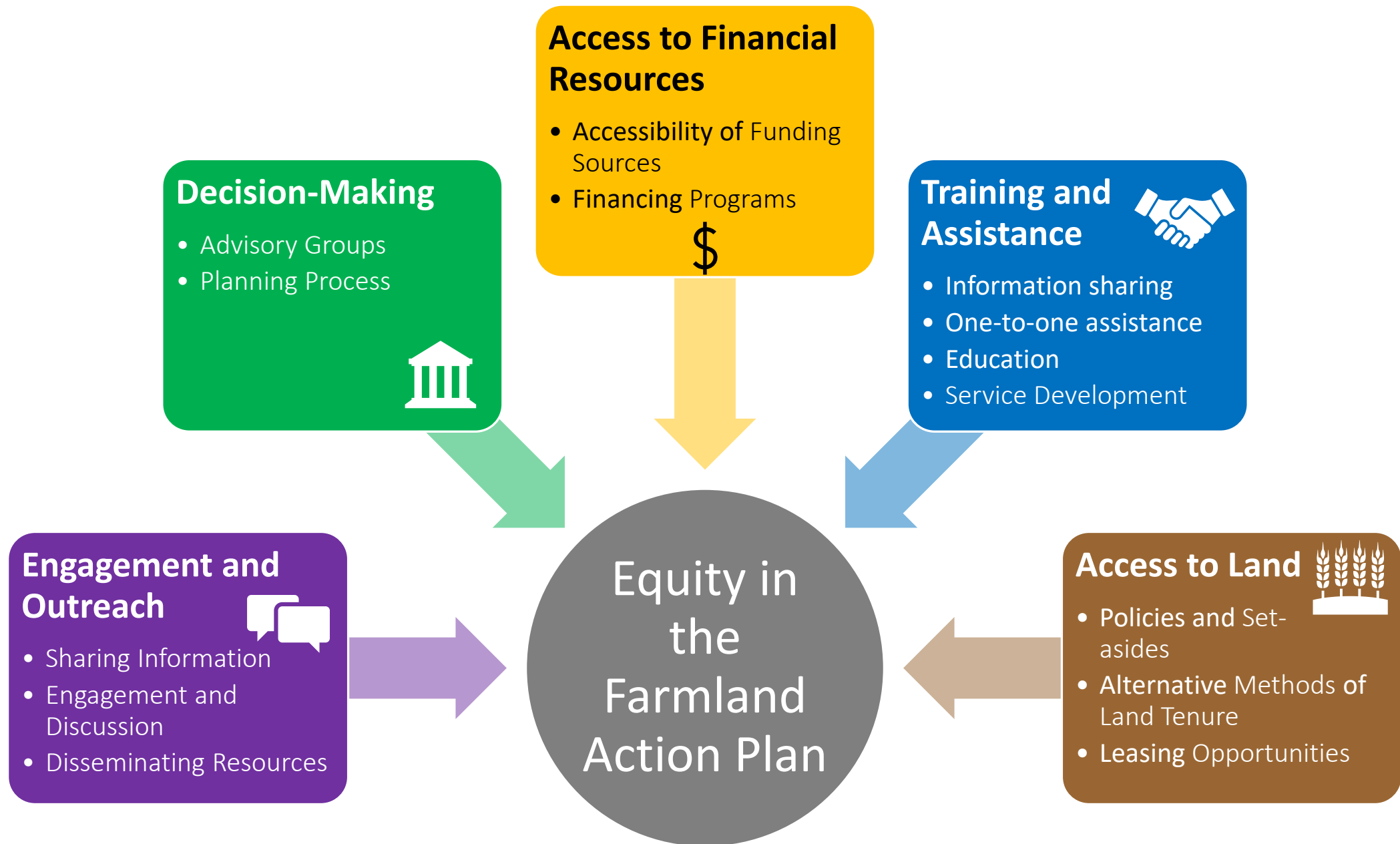
Hire Farmland Action Plan Coordinator

Implement the Farmland Action Plan

- Encourage partners and partnerships that can implement the plan.
- Support BIPOC and other historically underserved farmers and organizations involvement.
- Monitor and report on the impact of farmland programs to demonstrate the success, inform changes, and identify needs.
- Map and track farmland (APRs, CRs, Chapter 61A, and more).
- Research and report on agricultural incentive models used in other states and countries.

Build public support for agriculture and for farmland protection, access and viability

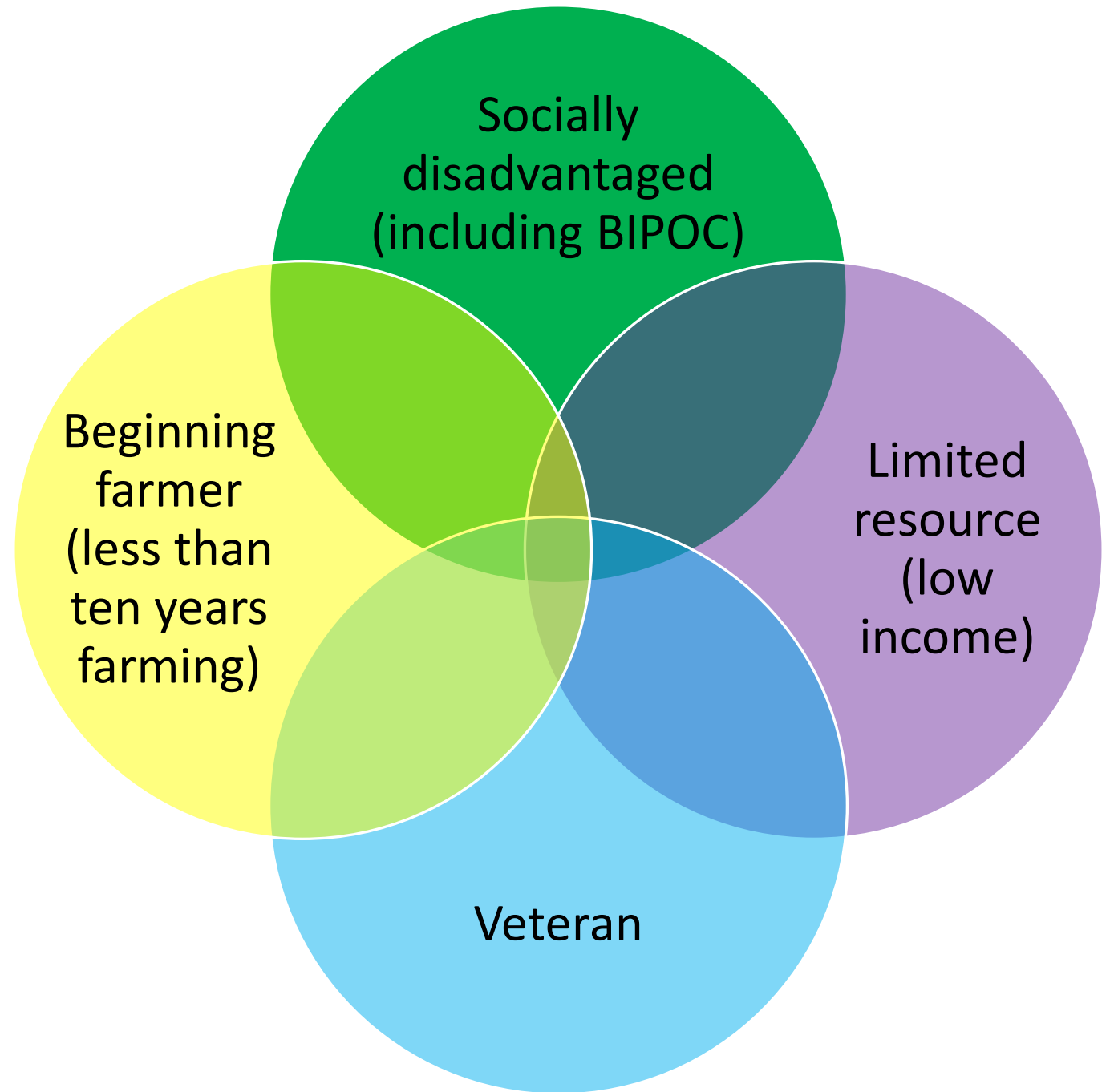
- Education and outreach for residents and elected officials
- Comprehensive plan



Who is a Historically Underserved Farmer?

USDA Definition

www.nrcs.usda.gov/getting-assistance/underserved-farmers-ranchers





Goal - Accelerate the permanent protection and stewardship of farmland

A. Permanently protect farmland through purchases of agricultural restrictions

- Creative financing mechanisms and strategies
- Federal funding
- Additional financial resources
- Prevent conversion
- Build capacity and coordinate
- Long term protection
- Short term covenants
- Stewardship
- Education and engagement

B. Further develop and implement additional tools to avoid farmland loss and retain farmland

- No net loss
- Chapter 61A
- CPA
- Underserved access
- State lands
- Solar development
- Zoning & Smart Growth

C. Prioritize protection of whole farms

- Housing
- Infrastructure
- Other land
- Other tenure models
- Funding
- Ecosystem services

D. Formalize and integrate decision-making processes regarding farmland protection

- Agricultural suitability



Goal – Increase access to farmland

A. Make more land available for agriculture

- Agricultural suitability
- State land licensing
- Urban agriculture
- Private leases
- Tribal lands
- Farmland Restoration
- Conservation Restrictions
- Farm Incubators

B. Support farm transfer and succession in ways that enhance access to farmland

- Education and technical assistance
- Protected lands
- Registries

C. Prioritize increased access for BIPOC and historically underserved farmers in all farmland access programs and policies

- Programs and policies
- Prioritization and accessibility

D. Support and expand service-provider networks to meet the needs of all farmers and potential farmers.

- Diversification
- DEI training
- Business technical assistance
- Capacity building
- Resource toolbox
- Land search



Goal - Support and enhance the viability of farms and farmland

A. Ensure that laws, regulations, programs, and investments support farm viability

- APR Program flexibility
- Right to Farm Bylaws and Ag Comms
- Grants and financing
- Local taxation, policy and regulations
- Decision making
- Support industries
- Urban agriculture
- Farm infrastructure
- Service providers
- Financial facilitation

B. Grow resilience and sustainability practices on farms

- Climate change technical assistance
- Soils on public lands
- Non-market contributions
- UMass Extension

C. Increase use of services, programs, and other resources by farmers

- Strategic outreach
- Technical assistance
- MDAR programs
- Education

Next steps

Next steps

- ❖ Re-read slides from today and other resources on www.mass.gov/farmland-action-plan
- ❖ Things to think about
 - ❖ How does the Farmland Action Plan aligns with your organization's work?
 - ❖ How can we partner and collaborate more between organizations?
- ❖ Plan implementation updates/ newsletter
 - ❖ Follow up discussions focusing on specific tasks or groups of tasks
 - ❖ Progress Report and Implementation Matrix to be shared by the end of the year
- ❖ Reach out to Katharine with questions

Farmland Action Plan Webpage
www.mass.gov/farmland-action-plan

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For more more information or questions

Farmland Action Plan Webpage www.mass.gov/farmland-action-plan

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Berkshire County

Berkshire county meeting topics

- Solar development policies and energy siting
- Private APRs and more flexible ACEP-ALE/ APR
- Buy Protect Sell
- Technical assistance provider for farmers
- Options to make land available to meet needs of farm seekers
- Land access and succession planning.
- Land tenure and access
- Farm viability
- Zoning reform, smart growth policies, farmland preservation and planning.
- Increase acreage of farmland protected under short-term covenants
- Explore establishment of state-funded grant program to provide resources to purchase, hold and steward agricultural restrictions and conservation restrictions that allow agriculture.
- Enroll more agricultural land in Chapter 61A
- Explore options to expand and strengthen equity and diversity criteria for applications for agricultural use of public land
- Municipal involvement with Right to Farm bylaws and agricultural commissions

Some interests we won't cover today:

- Equity
- Community gardens



Purchase and awareness of ag restrictions (particularly private APRs)

Purchase agricultural restrictions to permanently protect farmland, help increase affordability, and keep it in production (Action I.A.1)

- Significantly expand protection of the Commonwealth's remaining farmland. (Task 1003)

Build capacity of state agencies, land trusts, municipalities, and other entities to protect land. (Action I.A.6)

- Educate land trusts and municipalities about the availability of the NRCS ACEP-ALE program for private APRs. (Task 1049)
- Educate land trusts and municipalities about ability to utilize installment or annuitized payments for acquisitions of private APRs. (Task 1058)
- Explore establishment of a state-funded grant program to provide resources to land trusts, municipalities, and other entities to purchase, hold, and steward agricultural restrictions (APRs) and conservation restrictions (CRs) that allow agriculture. (Action I.A.10 now Task 1096 under Action I.A.6)

Leverage the maximum amount of federal funding available (Action I.A.3)

- Increase use of state, local and regional plans and policies as alternative path for ACEP-ALE eligibility (Tasks 1418, 1016, 1017)
- Educate land trusts and municipalities about the availability of the NRCS ACEP-ALE program for private APRs and to strategize how to best use ACEP funds. (Task 1012)

Increase the number of applications to APR, ALE, and non-ALE protection programs. (Action I.A.7)

- Enhance and promote a track within the APR Program that is not tied to NRCS funding or requirements. (Task 1070)

Access related action and task

Ensure that CRs and private APRs support the growth of agriculture where consistent with the overall purpose of the restriction. (Action II.A.7)

- Continue to include sample language in the permitted uses section of the model CR and private APR to allow agriculture. (1199)



Zoning reform and smart growth

Action I.B.7 - Advance zoning reform and smart growth policies that encourage density and development that do not result in the loss of farmland.

- Enable and incentivize communities to take actions to retain farmland and promote infill and compact development without adversely impacting farmers' equity and asset value in their land. (Task 1123)
- Encourage communities to adopt zoning regulations for Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) as a farmland protection tool. (Task 1124)
- Educate municipalities about the use of conservation subdivision/natural resources protection zoning and accessory apartment bylaws as tools to promote compact development and provide technical support to communities seeking to adopt and use these zoning tools. (Task 1125)



Solar development

Explore solar development policies that do not inadvertently displace agriculture. (Action I.B.6)

- Create permitting and financial policies and practices that incentivize installing solar on built infrastructure and brownfields or, where that is not viable, on marginal land. Policies and practices should disincentivize installation and prevent displacement onto prime, state, or locally important farmland. (Task 1118)
- Develop clear policies as to how agricultural production potential (e.g., prime soils), energy production potential, and carbon sequestration potential should be weighted when these uses compete with one another, especially when state policy creates incentives for behavior change. (Task 1119)
- Develop a consistent approval process for expected increase in applications for dual use solar arrays. (Task 1120)
- Educate farmers about working with solar developers and the unique nature of farming within a solar array. (Task 1121)



Short-term covenants

Increase acreage of farmland protected under short-term covenants (Action I.A.8)

- Increase general awareness of short-term covenants as a land protection option through MDAR's Farm Viability Enhancement Program (FVEP) through focused outreach. (Task 1082)
- Increase funding for through FVEP program to increase the number of farms under short term covenants. (Task 1083)
- Ensure staff capacity for program coordination and stewardship of farmland protected through the FVEP. (Task 1084)
- Provide proactive outreach about land use protection options to farm families. (Task 1085)
- Increase stewardship and engagement with landowners of protected lands that include short-term covenants. (Task 1087)



Buy-protect-sell

Buy Protect Sell

- Identify funding options that are flexible in terms of eligibility requirements and specific deed terms that can more closely meet local and state priorities and landowner needs or preferences, including for stewardship and buy/protect/sell transactions. (Task 1029)
- Establish an MDAR buy/protect/sell program. (Task 1043)
- Explore the establishment of an entity that can buy, sell, and lease land and restrictions, with the goal of permanently protecting farmland and prioritizing access for historically underserved farmer populations. (Action I.B.4)



Chapter 61A

including definition of farm

Enroll more agricultural land in Chapter 61A. (Action I.B.2)

- Protect and support farmland parcels smaller than five acres via updates to Chapter 61A, through constitutional change, tax abatement, or other means. (Task 1101)
- Consider elimination of the requirement that land be in active commercial agricultural use for 2 years to be eligible. (Task 1102)
- Create a central registry and publicly available map for all properties enrolled in 61A, including a metric tracking the percentage of all agricultural land enrolled. (Task 1103)
- Explore mechanisms that would require towns with municipal agricultural commissions have those bodies review and provide a recommendation on ROFRs under Chapter 61A. Provide commissions with education to enable them to do so effectively. (Task 1104)
- Identify options that would make no- and low-interest bridge financing available to be used by municipalities or land trusts to move quickly to exercise ROFRs. (Task 1105)
- Authorize and seek funding that would enable MDAR to exercise Chapter 61A ROFRs if the municipality or nonprofit waives that option. (Task 1106)
- Work with the Farmland Valuation Advisory Commission (FVAC) to guide and limit municipalities setting their own farmland values under 61A to ensure that values are based on use value, not sales value. (Task 1107)
- Assist the FVAC in evaluating and updating farmland values via support from UMass Department of Resource Economics, which may require increase resources or expertise. (Task 1108)



Publicly held land

Assess all existing, publicly held land for its suitability for agriculture and make more of it available for agriculture. (Action II.A.1)

- Work with state agencies and departments, counties, and municipalities to identify and publicly list all publicly owned land that is either in current agricultural production or suitable for agricultural production. Consider each parcel for inclusion in the farmland licensing program (Task 1157)

Explore options to expand and strengthen equity and diversity criteria for applications for agricultural use of public land, and prioritize access for historically underserved, new, aspiring, and low-income farmers. (Action II.C.2)

- Conduct outreach to historically underserved communities to discuss land access opportunities and measures put in place to remedy past injustice and inequity. (Task 1230)
- Work with non-profits and community groups focused on equity and diversity to strengthen and amplify outreach. (Task 1231)
- Provide technical assistance (TA) to applicants in completing program applications through non-profits and other TA organizations. (Task 1234)
- Conduct ample and strategic outreach for all Requests for Responses (RFRs), coordinating with organizations serving and based in historically underserved communities. (Task 1235)
- Engage with local organizations to determine the farmland needs of a community and when conducting outreach and publicizing availability of farmland. (Task 1237)



More on land tenure and access

Strategy II.A – Make more land available for agriculture

Are there any actions here where you'd like to see the tasks?

- Assess all existing, publicly held land for its suitability for agriculture and make more of it available for agriculture. (Action II.A.1)
- Strengthen the state land licensing program. (Action II.A.2)
- Create preferential zoning and ordinances to support urban agriculture. (Action II.A.3)
- Increase the amount of privately leased farmland, coupled with agreements designed to meet the needs of farmers. (Action II.A.4)
- Explore opportunities to assist state and federally recognized Tribal governments and entities of the Commonwealth in obtaining land. (Action II.A.5)
- Establish a farmland restoration program to provide assistance to farmers for bringing fallow or marginal farmland into food production, which may include cost-sharing provisions. (Action II.A.6)
- Ensure that CRs and private APRs support the growth of agriculture where consistent with the overall purpose of the restriction. (Action II.A.7)
- Support farm incubators, potentially via funding. (Action II.A.8)



Farm and farmland transfer

Support and expand farmland transfer and farmland succession education and one-to-one technical assistance (TA) (Action II.B.1)

- Disseminate information to farmers and non-farmer landowners. (Task 1203 and 1205)
- Incentivize participation for owners of land with APR and CRs. (Task 1204)
- Include farm transfer planning in farm business planning, training, and outreach at all stages of farm business life cycle. (Task 1206)
- Increase awareness of farmland linking and listing tools such as New England Farmland Finder. (Task 1208)
- Make funding available to support farmers in developing transfer plans, with follow-up support (Task 1209)

Ensure that transfers of protected land enhance farmland access for farmers. (Action II.B.2)

- Evaluate the effectiveness of Options to Purchase at Agricultural Value (OPAVs) and ROFR in keeping land affordable for farmers and in active production. Develop an ongoing monitoring process to allow for continual evaluation and course-corrections as needed. (Task 1212)
- Acquire stand-alone OPAVs on existing APRs that do not have them from willing owners. (Task 1213)
- Continue to ensure that all APRs require that owners notify MDAR in advance about any intention to sell the land, and create incentives for existing APR owners to do so voluntarily. (Task 1214)
- Encourage protection that result in the transfer of farmland to a next-generation farmer. (Task 1215)

Contract with consultants, and others with the capacity to provide business technical assistance services, including succession transfer planning, to farmer clients. (Action II.D.3)

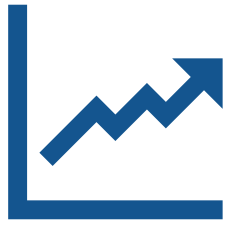


Service-provider networks

Strategy - Support and expand service-provider networks to meet the needs of all farmers and potential farmers.

Are there any actions here where you'd like to see the tasks?

- Support diversification of the agricultural service-provider workforce through job training and expanded consideration for historically underserved individuals when hiring. (Action II.D.1)
- Develop and implement training programs focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion to agricultural lenders and other service providers and agencies. (Action II.D.2)
- Contract with consultants, and others with the capacity to provide business technical assistance services, including transfer planning, to farmer clients. (Action II.D.3)
- Develop capacity of service providers like financial institutions, real-estate professionals, and attorneys to better support farms. (Action II.D.4)
- Refine a comprehensive toolbox of resources for farm business, succession, transfer planning, and implementation that is maintained and kept up to date, and provide these resources to farmers, which may require additional staff resources. (Action II.D.5)
- Support and expand service-provider networks and resources to meet the needs of all farmers and potential farmers who are searching for land. (Action 1239)



Outreach

Develop and implement a strategic outreach plan to promote public and private resources available to farmers. (Action III.C.1)

- Work with the MLTC, municipalities, RPAs, Buy Locals, and state agencies to develop outreach material with uniform messaging that can be utilized by all entities. (Task 1344)
- Develop online and print materials for outreach to landowners. Ensure that publications like Land Conservation Options: A Guide for Massachusetts Landowners and Your Land, Your Legacy are kept up to date and easily available digitally and in hardcopy. (Task 1345)



Municipal support for farm viability

Explore opportunities to modify local taxation, policy and regulations to support farming. (Action III.A.4)

- Explore provision of incentives to communities that enact farm-friendly zoning and tax policies. (Task 1281)
- Ensure and promote local zoning that allows for multi-family housing near farms for farmworkers. (Task 1282)
- Encourage communities to enact zoning bylaws that permit ancillary commercial enterprises in areas zoned for agriculture. (Task 1283)
- Discourage local zoning regulations, nuisance bylaws, and other regulations from unnecessarily hampering the expansion of urban agriculture. (Task 1284)

Include farmers and representatives of the full range of the industry in planning and policy-setting processes that impact land-use, environmental, and other public policy. (Action III.A.5)

- Develop and implement policies and practices to ensure that other state, local, and regional planning efforts related to transportation, housing, energy, wildlife habitat, etc.—understand the Farmland Action Plan, minimize conflicts with it, and maximize ways to complement it. (Task 1288)

Explore implementation of mechanisms that would increase the number of municipalities instituting Right to Farm bylaws and agricultural commissions. (Action III.A.2)

- Provide a clearinghouse of all the Right to Farm bylaws municipalities have passed, along with the model the state created. (Task 1256)
- Explore opportunities to support adoption of Right to Farm bylaw and local farmland planning. (Task 1258)
- Support stakeholders in Right to Farm communities to act as ambassadors to educate and encourage other municipalities to pass Right to Farm bylaws. (Task 1258)
- Re-establish state investment and programming by which MDAR helped municipalities craft and pass Right to Farm bylaws and provided guidance to agricultural commissions. (Task 1259)



Other viability tasks

Make it easier for farmers to seek and obtain grants and financing. (Action III.A.3)

- Provide more technical assistance to assist farmers with compiling grant applications and increase interest in grants from a broader range of farmers. (Task 1262)

Broad interest in viability – but what in particular?

- *Go to the matrix to look at some actions and tasks specifically*

Franklin/ Hampshire/ Hampden Counties

Franklin/ Hampshire/ Hampden Topics

- Grow resilience and sustainability practices on farms
- Increase use of services, programs and other resources by farmers
 - one-to-one business and technical assistance
 - formal education
- Build public support
- Farm financing
- Creative funding mechanisms and strategies for farmland protection



Build public support for agriculture and for farmland protection, access and viability

Develop programming to educate all Massachusetts residents and elected officials about the importance of local agriculture. (Action All.B.1)

- Through media and other public outreach, educate the public about the value of local agriculture and how they can support it through consumer spending and advocacy. Highlight local agriculture's connections to food security, public health, the economy, the environment, equity, culture, and other sectors. (Task 1370)
- Integrate lessons concerning Indigenous understanding of practices that support biodiversity and framing of sustainable that is not centered on market but on productivity and abundance for food as a human right. (Task 1428)
- Recommend agriculture, nutrition, and the local food system standards in K-12 classrooms. (Task 1371)
- Evaluate and strengthen state programs that support purchases of local foods, including processes like procurement, as well as funding. (Task 1372)
- Educate elected officials about the role of state policy, programs, and investment in supporting local farms and farmland. (Task 1373)



Creative funding for protection

Seek development of creative financing mechanisms or strategies that would significantly increase funding to support protection. (Action I.A.2)

- Increase funding for land protection programs, technical assistance grants, and farmland support programs. (Task 1005)
- Ensure that agency budgets are planned across multiple years and in advance to enable longer-range planning. Explore options for additional dedicated public funding. (Task 1007)
- Explore increase of the Conservation Land Tax Credit and ensure it is used to protect farmland. (Task 1008)



Land tenure and access

Strategy II.A – Make more land available for agriculture

Are there any actions here where you'd like to see the tasks?

- Assess all existing, publicly held land for its suitability for agriculture and make more of it available for agriculture. (Action II.A.1)
- Strengthen the state land licensing program. (Action II.A.2)
- Create preferential zoning and ordinances to support urban agriculture. (Action II.A.3)
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- Establish a farmland restoration program to provide assistance to farmers for bringing fallow or marginal farmland into food production, which may include cost-sharing provisions. (Action II.A.6)
- Ensure that CRs and private APRs support the growth of agriculture where consistent with the overall purpose of the restriction. (Action II.A.7)
- Support farm incubators, potentially via funding. (Action II.A.8)



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Strategy - Support and expand service-provider networks to meet the needs of all farmers and potential farmers.

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- Support and expand service-provider networks and resources to meet the needs of all farmers and potential farmers who are searching for land. (Action 1239)



Grow resilience practices and sustainability on farms

Increase TA technical assistance to farmers around crop- and livestock-specific climate change adaptation strategies. (Action III.B.1)

- Include climate change adaptation strategies as eligible practices under USDA's Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). (Task 1423)
- Create a program to support farmers with technical assistance around crop- and livestock-specific climate change adaptation strategies. (Task 1425)
- Continue to support the Climate Smart Program (Task 1426)

Improve soils on publicly held land being used for agriculture. (Action 1325)

- Implement the Massachusetts Healthy Soils Program. (Task 1326)
- Prompt healthy soil practices on Chapter 61A, APR and FVEP properties. (Task 1327)

Identify opportunities to support farmers for their non-market service contributions, including ecological enhancements and services provided by management practices, potentially via new funding. (Action II.B.3)

Build UMass Extension's capacity to meet the needs of farmers. (Action III.B.4)



Technical and business assistance

Expand opportunities for one-to-one assistance for farmers, prioritizing beginning and historically underserved farmers and aspiring farmers. (Action III.C.2)

- Establish a diverse network of “navigators,” individuals based at trusted local organizations who are well-versed in the range of public and private resources, regulations, and processes, who can work one-on-one with aspiring farmers through the entire process of launching a farming enterprise. (Task 1353)
- Explore expanding range of farmer mentorship and peer-to-peer programs. (Task 1354)
- Support farmers and landowners who have completed viability, estate, and succession planning to act as ambassadors to their peers to educate and encourage them to do the same. (Task 1355)
- Support culturally appropriate outreach by other experienced farmers of color. (Task 1356)
- Diversify the service-provider workforce, including public agencies, through job training and expanded consideration for historically underserved individuals when hiring. (Task 1357)

Support MDAR’s Farm Viability Enhancement Program (FVEP), APR Improvement Program (AIP), Matching Enterprise Grants for Agricultural (MEGA) Program, and Agricultural Business Training Program, which provide one-on-one business technical assistance. (Action III.C.3)

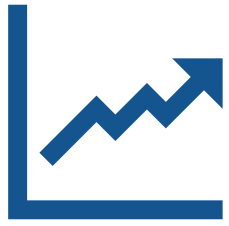
- Support FVEP to enable farmers to access business planning assistance and capital for business improvements in exchange for farmland protection covenants. (Task 1359)
- Increase awareness of MDAR’s Farm Viability programs and Agricultural Business Planning courses among the farming community. (Task 1360)
- Track and evaluate farm businesses after program participation to determine the program’s effectiveness in supporting long-term viability. (Task 1361)



Education

Support formal education for farmers and aspiring farmers. (Action III.C.4)

- Promote farming and agriculture as viable career paths. (Task 1363)
- Ensure that Commonwealth workforce development programs include farming and careers in the agricultural industry. (Task 1364)
- Support public school, agricultural vocational-technical high school and community college workforce development programs related to agriculture, including business training and succession planning. (Task 1365)
- Work to secure state funding to support networks, curricula, and trainings. (Task 1366)
- Raise awareness of MDAR language services and their applicability to farmer services. (Task 1367)



Farm financing

Prompt further development of industries supportive of agriculture to ensure they serve farmer, farm and farmland issues fully. (Action III.A.6)

- Support workforce development, networking, and coordination of a next generation of farm succession and farm business advisors. (Task 1298)
- Educate commercial lenders about current values of permanently protected land to encourage lending for farm infrastructure on protected farmland. (Task 1300)

Develop capacity of service providers like financial institutions, real-estate professionals, and attorneys to better support farms. (Action III.A.9)

- Educate financial institutions about the need for creative approaches to agricultural lending and services, including the need to offer farmer-friendly hours to assist farmers with paperwork and follow-up. (Task 1317)
- Support formation of partnerships with progressive banks geared toward farm-specific programs. (Task 1318)
- Explore existing examples of how financial facilitation support is provided to farms in Massachusetts and other states.

Access Section

- Explore and establish novel, alternative methods of land tenure to meet the needs of beginning, BIPOC, and other historically underserved communities with limited equity or credit. (Tasks 1192 and 1193)

Worcester County

Worcester meeting topics

- Planning and zoning policies
- Engaging farmers
- Succession/ transfer planning

What we will not discuss today

- land trust work – See separate webinar at <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massachusetts-farmland-action-plan#the-plan-and-additional-resources->



Zoning reform and smart growth

Action I.B.7 - Advance zoning reform and smart growth policies that encourage density and development that do not result in the loss of farmland.

- Enable and incentivize communities to take actions to retain farmland and promote infill and compact development without adversely impacting farmers' equity and asset value in their land. (Task 1123)
- Encourage communities to adopt zoning regulations for Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) as a farmland protection tool. (Task 1124)
- Educate municipalities about the use of conservation subdivision/natural resources protection zoning and accessory apartment bylaws as tools to promote compact development and provide technical support to communities seeking to adopt and use these zoning tools. (Task 1125)



Other municipally focused protection tasks

- Identify funding options that are flexible in terms of eligibility requirements and specific deed terms that can more closely meet local and state priorities and landowner needs or preferences, including for stewardship and buy/protect/sell transactions. (Task 1059 in Action I.A.4)
- Create watchlists of important farmland properties that are not yet protected and prioritize them in terms of threat of loss and importance, and support municipalities and land trusts in doing the same. (Task 1059 in Action I.A.7)
- For properties at risk of turnover or conversion, educate owners about APR opportunities. (Task 1066 in Action I.A.11)



Publicly held lands

Assess all existing, publicly held land for its suitability for agriculture and make more of it available for agriculture. (Action II.A.1)

- Work with state agencies and departments, counties, and municipalities to identify and publicly list all publicly owned land that is either in current agricultural production or suitable for agricultural production. Consider each parcel for inclusion in the farmland licensing program (Task 1157)

Explore options to expand and strengthen equity and diversity criteria for applications for agricultural use of public land, and prioritize access for historically underserved, new, aspiring, and low-income farmers. (Action II.C.2)

- Conduct outreach to historically underserved communities to discuss land access opportunities and measures put in place to remedy past injustice and inequity. (Task 1230)
- Work with non-profits and community groups focused on equity and diversity to strengthen and amplify outreach. (Task 1231)
- Provide technical assistance (TA) to applicants in completing program applications through non-profits and other TA organizations. (Task 1234)
- Conduct ample and strategic outreach for all Requests for Responses (RFRs), coordinating with organizations serving and based in historically underserved communities. (Task 1235)
- Engage with local organizations to determine the farmland needs of a community and when conducting outreach and publicizing availability of farmland. (Task 1237)
- Establish criteria that prioritize applications that come from BIPOC, beginning, and historically underserved farmers for municipal farmland licensing programs. (Task 1436)



Farm and farmland transfer

Support and expand farmland transfer and farmland succession education and one-to-one technical assistance (TA) (Action II.B.1)

- Disseminate information to farmers and non-farmer landowners. (Task 1203 and 1205)
- Incentivize participation for owners of land with APR and CRs. (Task 1204)
- Include farm transfer planning in farm business planning, training, and outreach at all stages of farm business life cycle. (Task 1206)
- Increase awareness of farmland linking and listing tools such as New England Farmland Finder. (Task 1208)
- Make funding available to support farmers in developing transfer plans, with follow-up support (Task 1209)

Ensure that transfers of protected land enhance farmland access for farmers. (Action II.B.2)

- Evaluate the effectiveness of Options to Purchase at Agricultural Value (OPAVs) and ROFR in keeping land affordable for farmers and in active production. Develop an ongoing monitoring process to allow for continual evaluation and course-corrections as needed. (Task 1212)
- Acquire stand-alone OPAVs on existing APRs that do not have them from willing owners. (Task 1213)
- Continue to ensure that all APRs require that owners notify MDAR in advance about any intention to sell the land, and create incentives for existing APR owners to do so voluntarily. (Task 1214)
- Encourage protection that result in the transfer of farmland to a next-generation farmer. (Task 1215)

Contract with consultants, and others with the capacity to provide business technical assistance services, including succession transfer planning, to farmer clients. (Action II.D.3)

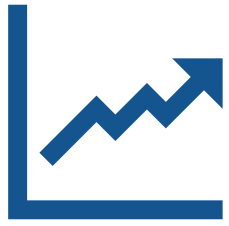


Service-provider networks

Strategy - Support and expand service-provider networks to meet the needs of all farmers and potential farmers.

Are there any actions here where you'd like to see the tasks?

- Support diversification of the agricultural service-provider workforce through job training and expanded consideration for historically underserved individuals when hiring. (Action II.D.1)
- Develop and implement training programs focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion to agricultural lenders and other service providers and agencies. (Action II.D.2)
- Contract with consultants, and others with the capacity to provide business technical assistance services, including transfer planning, to farmer clients. (Action II.D.3)
- Develop capacity of service providers like financial institutions, real-estate professionals, and attorneys to better support farms. (Action II.D.4)
- Refine a comprehensive toolbox of resources for farm business, succession, transfer planning, and implementation that is maintained and kept up to date, and provide these resources to farmers, which may require additional staff resources. (Action II.D.5)
- Support and expand service-provider networks and resources to meet the needs of all farmers and potential farmers who are searching for land. (Action 1239)



Municipal support for farm viability

Explore opportunities to modify local taxation, policy and regulations to support farming. (Action III.A.4)

- Explore provision of incentives to communities that enact farm-friendly zoning and tax policies. (Task 1281)
- Ensure and promote local zoning that allows for multi-family housing near farms for farmworkers. (Task 1282)
- Encourage communities to enact zoning bylaws that permit ancillary commercial enterprises in areas zoned for agriculture. (Task 1283)
- Discourage local zoning regulations, nuisance bylaws, and other regulations from unnecessarily hampering the expansion of urban agriculture. (Task 1284)

Include farmers and representatives of the full range of the industry in planning and policy-setting processes that impact land-use, environmental, and other public policy. (Action III.A.5)

- Develop and implement policies and practices to ensure that other state, local, and regional planning efforts related to transportation, housing, energy, wildlife habitat, etc.—understand the Farmland Action Plan, minimize conflicts with it, and maximize ways to complement it. (Task 1288)

Explore implementation of mechanisms that would increase the number of municipalities instituting Right to Farm bylaws and agricultural commissions. (Action III.A.2)

- Provide a clearinghouse of all the Right to Farm bylaws municipalities have passed, along with the model the state created. (Task 1256)
- Explore opportunities to support adoption of Right to Farm bylaw and local farmland planning. (Task 1258)
- Support stakeholders in Right to Farm communities to act as ambassadors to educate and encourage other municipalities to pass Right to Farm bylaws. (Task 1258)
- Re-establish state investment and programming by which MDAR helped municipalities craft and pass Right to Farm bylaws and provided guidance to agricultural commissions. (Task 1259)



Outreach

Develop and implement a strategic outreach plan to promote public and private resources available to farmers. (Action III.C.1)

- Work with the MLTC, municipalities, RPAs, Buy Locals, and state agencies to develop outreach material with uniform messaging that can be utilized by all entities. (Task 1344)
- Develop online and print materials for outreach to landowners. Ensure that publications like Land Conservation Options: A Guide for Massachusetts Landowners and Your Land, Your Legacy are kept up to date and easily available digitally and in hardcopy. (Task 1345)



Other viability tasks

Make it easier for farmers to seek and obtain grants and financing. (Action III.A.3)

- Provide more technical assistance to assist farmers with compiling grant applications and increase interest in grants from a broader range of farmers. (Task 1262)

More related to outreach and engagement with farmers

- *Go to the matrix to look at some actions and tasks specifically*

Cape Cod and Islands

Cape Cod and Islands meeting topics

- Public outreach and education



Build public support for agriculture and for farmland protection, access and viability

Develop programming to educate all Massachusetts residents and elected officials about the importance of local agriculture. (Action All.B.1)

- Through media and other public outreach, educate the public about the value of local agriculture and how they can support it through consumer spending and advocacy. Highlight local agriculture's connections to food security, public health, the economy, the environment, equity, culture, and other sectors. (Task 1370)
- Integrate lessons concerning Indigenous understanding of practices that support biodiversity and framing of sustainable that is not centered on market but on productivity and abundance for food as a human right. (Task 1428)
- Recommend agriculture, nutrition, and the local food system standards in K-12 classrooms. (Task 1371)
- Evaluate and strengthen state programs that support purchases of local foods, including processes like procurement, as well as funding. (Task 1372)
- Educate elected officials about the role of state policy, programs, and investment in supporting local farms and farmland. (Task 1373)

Develop a comprehensive plan to support and sustain the state's agricultural sector, including urban agriculture, integrating both public and private resources. (Action All.B.2)

- Build upon the 2015 Massachusetts Local Food Action Plan and other efforts that look more broadly at agriculture to set goals and recommendations for ensuring long-term viability for the state's agricultural sector (Task 1375)



Protection related actions and tasks

Increase awareness and understanding of permanent protection options including APR, ALE, and non-ALE protection programs (Action I.A.11)

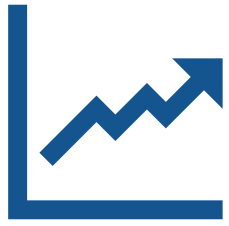
- Develop and implement a program to train municipalities on the economic, food security, and other benefits of farmland to help them understand the details of Chapter 61A ROFR, and to encourage them to exercise their rights or assign them to nonprofits. (Task 1063)



Food production and land access

Assess all existing, publicly held land for its suitability for agriculture and make more of it available for agriculture. (Action II.A.1)

- Educate city and town decision-makers about the benefits of hyper local food production and its connection with climate change and food access. Include information about tools to encourage it, including community gardens and land licensing. (Task 1395)
- Provide TA technical assistance to municipalities to identify all municipally owned land, including parks, schools, and open land, that is suitable for food production. (Task 1159)
- Work with EEA and other state agencies to include food production assessment into criteria for their grants (eg Landscape Partnership, Planning Assistance grants, etc) (Task 1160)
- Explore case studies to share best practices for food production assessment/ planning (Task 1161)
- Create a pilot to test and refine how to roll out food production assessment/ planning in urban environments. (Task 1163)
- Create a pilot to test and refine how to roll out food production assessment/ planning in rural environments (Task 1164)



Education and workforce development

Support formal education for farmers and aspiring farmers. (Action III.C.4)

- Promote farming and agriculture as viable career paths. (Task 1363)
- Ensure that Commonwealth workforce development programs include farming and careers in the agricultural industry. (Task 1364)
- Support public school, agricultural vocational-technical high school and community college workforce development programs related to agriculture, including business training and succession planning. (Task 1365)
- Work to secure state funding to support networks, curricula, and trainings. (Task 1366)
- Raise awareness of MDAR language services and their applicability to farmer services. (Task 1367)

Prompt further development of industries supportive of agriculture to ensure they serve farmer, farm and farmland issues fully. (Action III.A.6)

- Support workforce development, networking, and coordination of a next generation of farm succession and farm business advisors. (Task 1298)
- Develop program to engage with aspiring/beginning farmers, through NGOs non-profits, USDA, Extension, MDAR, UMass Student Farm, K-12 programs, and other stakeholders. (Task 1302)
- Support and encourage organizations and programs that support the health and welfare of farmers and farm workers, including mental health and physical health. (Task 1407)



Farmer outreach and support

Prompt further development of industries supportive of agriculture to ensure they serve farmer, farm and farmland issues fully. (Action III.A.6)

- Support workforce development, networking, and coordination of a next generation of farm succession and farm business advisors. (Task 1298)
- Develop program to engage with aspiring/beginning farmers, through NGOs non-profits, USDA, Extension, MDAR, UMass Student Farm, K-12 programs, and other stakeholders. (Task 1302)
- Support and encourage organizations and programs that support the health and welfare of farmers and farm workers, including mental health and physical health. (Task 1407)

Make it easier for farmers to seek and obtain grants and financing. (Action II.A.3)

- Provide more technical assistance to assist farmers with compiling grant applications and increase interest in grants from a broader range of farmers (Task 1262)

III.B.1 - Increase TA technical assistance to farmers around crop- and livestock-specific climate change adaptation strategies.



Outreach

Develop and implement a strategic outreach plan to promote public and private resources available to farmers. (Action III.C.1)

- Work with the MLTC, municipalities, RPAs, Buy Locals, and state agencies to develop outreach material with uniform messaging that can be utilized by all entities. (Task 1344)
- Develop online and print materials for outreach to landowners. Ensure that publications like Land Conservation Options: A Guide for Massachusetts Landowners and Your Land, Your Legacy are kept up to date and easily available digitally and in hardcopy. (Task 1345)

Include farmers and representatives of the full range of the industry in planning and policy-setting processes that impact land-use, environmental, and other public policy. (Action III.A.5)

- Develop education and messaging related to farmland protection as it relates to greenhouse gas emissions, net zero and food system resiliency. (Task 1427)



Other viability tasks that may be of interest

Make it easier for farmers to seek and obtain grants and financing. (Action II.A.3)

- Provide more technical assistance to assist farmers with compiling grant applications and increase interest in grants from a broader range of farmers (Task 1262)

Go to the matrix to look at other actions and tasks specifically

III.B.1 - Increase TA technical assistance to farmers around crop- and livestock-specific climate change adaptation strategies.

Support Urban Agriculture (Action III.A.7)

- Provide more public education on urban food production techniques in community gardens and home gardens, such as growing vegetables, composting, keeping bees, chickens, and other animals. (Task 1304)

Norfolk/ Bristol/
Plymouth/ Suffolk
Counties

Norfolk/ Bristol/ Plymouth/ Suffolk meeting topics

- Funding for protection – federal funds and creative financing mechanisms
- Whole farm protection
- Landowner outreach and education
- Town level engagement and support
- Expand the use of existing tools like CPC and 61A
- Outreach to Ag Coms, Planning Boards, and Select Boards
- Expand use of newer tools, including Smart Growth/Zoning changes
- farmland inventory or watchlist of farmland priorities
- Succession planning
- Viability planning
- Resilience and sustainability practices on farms

Not covered significantly today

- Land trust focused information at <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massachusetts-farmland-action-plan#the-plan-and-additional-resources>
- Urban agriculture meetings forthcoming and information at <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massachusetts-farmland-action-plan#the-plan-and-additional-resources>
- Network building
- Strategy



Build public support for agriculture and for farmland protection, access and viability

Develop programming to educate all Massachusetts residents and elected officials about the importance of local agriculture. (Action All.B.1)

- Through media and other public outreach, educate the public about the value of local agriculture and how they can support it through consumer spending and advocacy. Highlight local agriculture's connections to food security, public health, the economy, the environment, equity, culture, and other sectors. (Task 1370)
- Integrate lessons concerning Indigenous understanding of practices that support biodiversity and framing of sustainable that is not centered on market but on productivity and abundance for food as a human right. (Task 1428)
- Recommend agriculture, nutrition, and the local food system standards in K-12 classrooms. (Task 1371)
- Evaluate and strengthen state programs that support purchases of local foods, including processes like procurement, as well as funding. (Task 1372)
- Educate elected officials about the role of state policy, programs, and investment in supporting local farms and farmland. (Task 1373)



Purchase ag restrictions

Purchase agricultural restrictions to permanently protect farmland, help increase affordability, and keep it in production (Action I.A.1)

- Significantly expand protection of the Commonwealth's remaining farmland. (Task 1003)

Leverage the maximum amount of federal funding available (Action I.A.3)

- Show demand for federal resources to increase available federal funds (Task 1010)
- Increase use of state, local and regional plans and policies as alternative path for ACEP-ALE eligibility (Tasks 1418, 1016, 1017)
- Communicate more regularly and earlier in project processes with NRCS staff to maximize available federal funds. (Task 1024)

Identify and secure additional resources to purchase farmland in fee and via restrictions and to steward protected properties. (Action I.A.4)

- Leverage private-sector support through public-private partnerships, private philanthropy, corporations, direct-giving programs, community groups, and others. (Task 1028)

Increase the number of applications to APR, ALE, and non-ALE protection programs. (Action I.A.7)

- Explore making available installment or annuitized purchases of APRs. (Task 1430)



Awareness of protection options

Increase awareness and understanding of permanent protection options including APR, ALE, and non-ALE protection programs.

(Action I.A.11)

- Promote farmland protection and programs to municipalities, financial institutions, development entities, farmers, real-estate professionals, appraisers, and others. Prioritize communities that have been historically underserved communities. (Task 1061)
- Education and resources on Chapter 61A, APR, etc (Task 1062)
- For properties at risk of turnover or conversion, educate owners about APR opportunities. (Task 1066)

Build capacity of state agencies, land trusts, municipalities, and other entities to protect land. (Action I.A.6)

- Educate land trusts and municipalities about the availability of the NRCS ACEP-ALE program for private APRs. (Task 1049)

Increase the number of applications to APR, ALE, and non-ALE protection programs. (Action I.A.7)

- Enhance and promote a track within the APR Program that is not tied to NRCS funding or requirements. (Task 1070)



Creative funding for protection

Seek development of creative financing mechanisms or strategies that would significantly increase funding to support protection. (Action I.A.2)

- Increase funding for land protection programs, technical assistance grants, and farmland support programs. (Task 1005)
- Ensure that agency budgets are planned across multiple years and in advance to enable longer-range planning. Explore options for additional dedicated public funding. (Task 1007)
- Explore increase of the Conservation Land Tax Credit and ensure it is used to protect farmland. (Task 1008)



Whole farms

Explore revision to the APR Program's approach to include whole farm conservation as relates to farm family and farm worker housing. (Action I.C.1)

- Explore policy updates that would allow public funds to be used to support farm-related housing, with requirements for that home to remain connected to that or another farm. (Task 1129)
- Explore revision to the APR Program's approach to include affordable farm family and farm worker housing within the APR restriction via a building envelope and/or including the right or potential to request residential housing. (Task 1130)
- Explore revision to the APR dwelling policy to make approvals for dwellings more attainable while limiting resale values to affordable prices. (Task 1131)
- Identify mechanisms to link housing to farms via deed restrictions that extend their effective period to the maximum possible (Task 1132)

Explore revision to the APR Program's approach to include whole farm conservation as relates to infrastructure. (Action I.C.2)

Explore revision to the APR Program's approach to include whole farm conservation as relates to the full range of farm entities and operations, including woodland and other land types and uses. (Action I.C.3)

- Develop whole farm policies and practices that recognize the importance of associated land (in forest, wetlands, water bodies, etc.) and uses (cord wood, irrigation, housing, buffering from surrounding residential or commercial uses, etc.) to a farm's crop and pastureland and include those in protection and support of farms and farmland. (Task 1134)

Ensure that protection programs are compatible with all tenure models, supporting leased land, co-operative ownership, and other novel tenure options. (Action I.C.4)

Explore how additional federal and state programs might be further utilized to aid in funding whole farm protection. (Action I.C.5)

Include the value of ecosystem services when valuing land for protection. (Action I.C.6)



Zoning reform and smart growth

Action I.B.7 - Advance zoning reform and smart growth policies that encourage density and development that do not result in the loss of farmland.

- Enable and incentivize communities to take actions to retain farmland and promote infill and compact development without adversely impacting farmers' equity and asset value in their land. (Task 1123)
- Encourage communities to adopt zoning regulations for Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) as a farmland protection tool. (Task 1124)
- Educate municipalities about the use of conservation subdivision/natural resources protection zoning and accessory apartment bylaws as tools to promote compact development and provide technical support to communities seeking to adopt and use these zoning tools. (Task 1125)



CPA

Identify opportunities to increase CPA funding and its application to protect farmland and affordable on- and off-farm housing. (Action I.B.3)

- Encourage all municipalities to adopt the CPA, create conservation commission funds, and fund them for agricultural land protection projects as consistent with the CPA statute. (Task 1110)
- Explore with relevant officials and stakeholders potential revisions to the CPA that would provide additional funding to the Trust and that will allow it to keep up with increasing land costs over time. (Task 1111)
- Encourage land trusts and the Community Preservation Coalition to provide support to municipalities on CPA adoption and its use to protect farmland. (Task 1112)
- Develop a process for communities to quickly use CPA funds for purchase of agricultural land and/or CRs and APRs, such as borrowing and bonding against future CPA income to create a fund that can be accessed without further need for authorization, including in the situation of Chapter 61A ROFR. (Task 1113)
- Provide technical assistance to town community preservation committees, agricultural commissions, and land trusts about how CPA funds can be used to support farmland protection as well as affordable housing associated with farmland. (Task 1114)



Inventories, watchlists and prioritization

Increase the number of applications to APR, ALE, and non-ALE protection programs. (Action I.A.7)

- Create watchlists of important farmland properties that are not yet protected and prioritize them in terms of threat of loss and importance, and support municipalities and land trusts in doing the same. (Task 1059)

Create a state-level prioritization of farmland for protection similar to Biomap, TNC's resilient lands, Mass Audubon's MAPPR (Mapping and Prioritizing Parcels for Resilience), etc. (Action I.D.1)

- Establish a working group to develop priorities for land to be protected, such as considerations for geographic equity; soils; crop diversity; forest cover; parcel size; emerging agricultural practices such as silvopasture, nut tree operations, permaculture, etc.; proximity to environmental justice communities, markets, other protected land; etc. The working group should include farmers, MDAR, NRCS, planners, and others.
- Communicate the working group's priorities to land trusts and conservation organizations to encourage their work to align with state priorities.

Enroll more agricultural land in Chapter 61A. (Action I.B.2)

- Create a central registry and publicly available map for all properties enrolled in 61A, including a metric tracking the percentage of all agricultural land enrolled. (Task 1103)

Map and track farmland, APRs, private APRs, CRs with farmland, land in Chapter 61A, farmland protected with Conservation Land Tax Credit funds, and farmland protected with Community Preservation Act funds. (Action All.A.4)

- Track and make public annual accounting of how much new land has been protected (Task 1388)
- Track and make public how much new land has been converted into agricultural production. (Task 1434)



Solar development

Explore solar development policies that do not inadvertently displace agriculture. (Action I.B.6)

- Create permitting and financial policies and practices that incentivize installing solar on built infrastructure and brownfields or, where that is not viable, on marginal land. Policies and practices should disincentivize installation and prevent displacement onto prime, state, or locally important farmland. (Task 1118)
- Develop clear policies as to how agricultural production potential (e.g., prime soils), energy production potential, and carbon sequestration potential should be weighted when these uses compete with one another, especially when state policy creates incentives for behavior change. (Task 1119)
- Develop a consistent approval process for expected increase in applications for dual use solar arrays. (Task 1120)
- Educate farmers about working with solar developers and the unique nature of farming within a solar array. (Task 1121)



Farm and farmland transfer

Support and expand farmland transfer and farmland succession education and one-to-one technical assistance (TA) (Action II.B.1)

- Disseminate information to farmers and non-farmer landowners. (Task 1203 and 1205)
- Incentivize participation for owners of land with APR and CRs. (Task 1204)
- Include farm transfer planning in farm business planning, training, and outreach at all stages of farm business life cycle. (Task 1206)
- Increase awareness of farmland linking and listing tools such as New England Farmland Finder. (Task 1208)
- Make funding available to support farmers in developing transfer plans, with follow-up support (Task 1209)

Ensure that transfers of protected land enhance farmland access for farmers. (Action II.B.2)

- Evaluate the effectiveness of Options to Purchase at Agricultural Value (OPAVs) and ROFR in keeping land affordable for farmers and in active production. Develop an ongoing monitoring process to allow for continual evaluation and course-corrections as needed. (Task 1212)
- Acquire stand-alone OPAVs on existing APRs that do not have them from willing owners. (Task 1213)
- Continue to ensure that all APRs require that owners notify MDAR in advance about any intention to sell the land, and create incentives for existing APR owners to do so voluntarily. (Task 1214)
- Encourage protection that result in the transfer of farmland to a next-generation farmer. (Task 1215)

Contract with consultants, and others with the capacity to provide business technical assistance services, including succession transfer planning, to farmer clients. (Action II.D.3)



Service-provider networks

Strategy - Support and expand service-provider networks to meet the needs of all farmers and potential farmers.

Are there any actions here where you'd like to see the tasks?

- Support diversification of the agricultural service-provider workforce through job training and expanded consideration for historically underserved individuals when hiring. (Action II.D.1)
- Develop and implement training programs focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion to agricultural lenders and other service providers and agencies. (Action II.D.2)
- Contract with consultants, and others with the capacity to provide business technical assistance services, including transfer planning, to farmer clients. (Action II.D.3)
- Develop capacity of service providers like financial institutions, real-estate professionals, and attorneys to better support farms. (Action II.D.4)
- Refine a comprehensive toolbox of resources for farm business, succession, transfer planning, and implementation that is maintained and kept up to date, and provide these resources to farmers, which may require additional staff resources. (Action II.D.5)
- Support and expand service-provider networks and resources to meet the needs of all farmers and potential farmers who are searching for land. (Action 1239)



Grow resilience practices and sustainability on farms

Increase TA technical assistance to farmers around crop- and livestock-specific climate change adaptation strategies. (Action III.B.1)

- Include climate change adaptation strategies as eligible practices under USDA's Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). (Task 1423)
- Create a program to support farmers with technical assistance around crop- and livestock-specific climate change adaptation strategies. (Task 1425)
- Continue to support the Climate Smart Program (Task 1426)

Improve soils on publicly held land being used for agriculture. (Action 1325)

- Implement the Massachusetts Healthy Soils Program. (Task 1326)
- Prompt healthy soil practices on Chapter 61A, APR and FVEP properties. (Task 1327)

Identify opportunities to support farmers for their non-market service contributions, including ecological enhancements and services provided by management practices, potentially via new funding. (Action II.B.3)

Build UMass Extension's capacity to meet the needs of farmers. (Action III.B.4)



Municipal support for farm viability

Explore opportunities to modify local taxation, policy and regulations to support farming. (Action III.A.4)

- Explore provision of incentives to communities that enact farm-friendly zoning and tax policies. (Task 1281)
- Ensure and promote local zoning that allows for multi-family housing near farms for farmworkers. (Task 1282)
- Encourage communities to enact zoning bylaws that permit ancillary commercial enterprises in areas zoned for agriculture. (Task 1283)
- Discourage local zoning regulations, nuisance bylaws, and other regulations from unnecessarily hampering the expansion of urban agriculture. (Task 1284)

Include farmers and representatives of the full range of the industry in planning and policy-setting processes that impact land-use, environmental, and other public policy. (Action III.A.5)

- Develop and implement policies and practices to ensure that other state, local, and regional planning efforts related to transportation, housing, energy, wildlife habitat, etc.—understand the Farmland Action Plan, minimize conflicts with it, and maximize ways to complement it. (Task 1288)

Explore implementation of mechanisms that would increase the number of municipalities instituting Right to Farm bylaws and agricultural commissions. (Action III.A.2)

- Provide a clearinghouse of all the Right to Farm bylaws municipalities have passed, along with the model the state created. (Task 1256)
- Explore opportunities to support adoption of Right to Farm bylaw and local farmland planning. (Task 1258)
- Support stakeholders in Right to Farm communities to act as ambassadors to educate and encourage other municipalities to pass Right to Farm bylaws. (Task 1258)
- Re-establish state investment and programming by which MDAR helped municipalities craft and pass Right to Farm bylaws and provided guidance to agricultural commissions. (Task 1259)



Outreach

Develop and implement a strategic outreach plan to promote public and private resources available to farmers. (Action III.C.1)

- Work with the MLTC, municipalities, RPAs, Buy Locals, and state agencies to develop outreach material with uniform messaging that can be utilized by all entities. (Task 1344)
- Develop online and print materials for outreach to landowners. Ensure that publications like Land Conservation Options: A Guide for Massachusetts Landowners and Your Land, Your Legacy are kept up to date and easily available digitally and in hardcopy. (Task 1345)



Other viability tasks

Make it easier for farmers to seek and obtain grants and financing. (Action III.A.3)

- Provide more technical assistance to assist farmers with compiling grant applications and increase interest in grants from a broader range of farmers. (Task 1262)

More related to outreach and engagement with farmers

- *Go to the matrix to look at some actions and tasks specifically*

Middlesex/ Essex Counties

Middlesex/ Essex County meeting topics

- BIPOC and immigrant/ refugee farmers
- Land Access and Availability
- Service-provider networks and resources
- Farm incubators
- Farmer Transition and Succession Planning
- Technical Assistance and Financial Support
- Education for general public
- Climate change and resilience
- Education and Training, including career paths
- Mentorship and Peer-to-Peer Engagement

Not covered significantly today

- Urban agriculture meetings forthcoming and information at <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massachusetts-farmland-action-plan#the-plan-and-additional-resources->
- Institutional partners. Food hubs and local purchasing
- Education for adults and children
- Stronger farming coalition in the county



Build public support for agriculture and for farmland protection, access and viability

Develop programming to educate all Massachusetts residents and elected officials about the importance of local agriculture. (Action All.B.1)

- Through media and other public outreach, educate the public about the value of local agriculture and how they can support it through consumer spending and advocacy. Highlight local agriculture's connections to food security, public health, the economy, the environment, equity, culture, and other sectors. (Task 1370)
- Integrate lessons concerning Indigenous understanding of practices that support biodiversity and framing of sustainable that is not centered on market but on productivity and abundance for food as a human right. (Task 1428)
- Recommend agriculture, nutrition, and the local food system standards in K-12 classrooms. (Task 1371)
- Evaluate and strengthen state programs that support purchases of local foods, including processes like procurement, as well as funding. (Task 1372)
- Educate elected officials about the role of state policy, programs, and investment in supporting local farms and farmland. (Task 1373)



Farm and farmland transfer

Support and expand farmland transfer and farmland succession education and one-to-one technical assistance (TA) (Action II.B.1)

- Disseminate information to farmers and non-farmer landowners. (Task 1203 and 1205)
- Incentivize participation for owners of land with APR and CRs. (Task 1204)
- Include farm transfer planning in farm business planning, training, and outreach at all stages of farm business life cycle. (Task 1206)
- Increase awareness of farmland linking and listing tools such as New England Farmland Finder. (Task 1208)
- Make funding available to support farmers in developing transfer plans, with follow-up support (Task 1209)

Ensure that transfers of protected land enhance farmland access for farmers. (Action II.B.2)

- Evaluate the effectiveness of Options to Purchase at Agricultural Value (OPAVs) and ROFR in keeping land affordable for farmers and in active production. Develop an ongoing monitoring process to allow for continual evaluation and course-corrections as needed. (Task 1212)
- Acquire stand-alone OPAVs on existing APRs that do not have them from willing owners. (Task 1213)
- Continue to ensure that all APRs require that owners notify MDAR in advance about any intention to sell the land, and create incentives for existing APR owners to do so voluntarily. (Task 1214)
- Encourage protection that result in the transfer of farmland to a next-generation farmer. (Task 1215)

Contract with consultants, and others with the capacity to provide business technical assistance services, including succession transfer planning, to farmer clients. (Action II.D.3)



Service-provider networks

Strategy - Support and expand service-provider networks to meet the needs of all farmers and potential farmers.

Are there any actions here where you'd like to see the tasks?

- Support diversification of the agricultural service-provider workforce through job training and expanded consideration for historically underserved individuals when hiring. (Action II.D.1)
- Develop and implement training programs focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion to agricultural lenders and other service providers and agencies. (Action II.D.2)
- Contract with consultants, and others with the capacity to provide business technical assistance services, including transfer planning, to farmer clients. (Action II.D.3)
- Develop capacity of service providers like financial institutions, real-estate professionals, and attorneys to better support farms. (Action II.D.4)
- Refine a comprehensive toolbox of resources for farm business, succession, transfer planning, and implementation that is maintained and kept up to date, and provide these resources to farmers, which may require additional staff resources. (Action II.D.5)
- Support and expand service-provider networks and resources to meet the needs of all farmers and potential farmers who are searching for land. (Action 1239)



Incubators

Strengthen the state land licensing program. (Action II.A.2)

No other tasks. Maybe add more?

- Support farm incubators and aspiring and beginning farmers through the state land-licensing program. (Task 1178)
- Connect existing tenants with resources to help them transition to their next situation after their license. (Task 1183)

Support farm incubators, potentially via funding. (Action II.A.8)

- Provide education about farm incubator models and approaches including how to start, operate and sustain them. (Task 1435)



Grow resilience practices and sustainability on farms

Increase TA technical assistance to farmers around crop- and livestock-specific climate change adaptation strategies. (Action III.B.1)

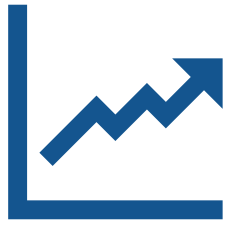
- Include climate change adaptation strategies as eligible practices under USDA's Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). (Task 1423)
- Create a program to support farmers with technical assistance around crop- and livestock-specific climate change adaptation strategies. (Task 1425)
- Continue to support the Climate Smart Program (Task 1426)

Improve soils on publicly held land being used for agriculture. (Action 1325)

- Implement the Massachusetts Healthy Soils Program. (Task 1326)
- Prompt healthy soil practices on Chapter 61A, APR and FVEP properties. (Task 1327)

Identify opportunities to support farmers for their non-market service contributions, including ecological enhancements and services provided by management practices, potentially via new funding. (Action II.B.3)

Build UMass Extension's capacity to meet the needs of farmers. (Action III.B.4)



Technical and business assistance

Expand opportunities for one-to-one assistance for farmers, prioritizing beginning and historically underserved farmers and aspiring farmers. (Action III.C.2)

- Establish a diverse network of “navigators,” individuals based at trusted local organizations who are well-versed in the range of public and private resources, regulations, and processes, who can work one-on-one with aspiring farmers through the entire process of launching a farming enterprise. (Task 1353)
- Explore expanding range of farmer mentorship and peer-to-peer programs. (Task 1354)
- Support farmers and landowners who have completed viability, estate, and succession planning to act as ambassadors to their peers to educate and encourage them to do the same. (Task 1355)
- Support culturally appropriate outreach by other experienced farmers of color. (Task 1356)
- Diversify the service-provider workforce, including public agencies, through job training and expanded consideration for historically underserved individuals when hiring. (Task 1357)

Support MDAR’s Farm Viability Enhancement Program (FVEP), APR Improvement Program (AIP), Matching Enterprise Grants for Agricultural (MEGA) Program, and Agricultural Business Training Program, which provide one-on-one business technical assistance. (Action III.C.3)

- Support FVEP to enable farmers to access business planning assistance and capital for business improvements in exchange for farmland protection covenants. (Task 1359)
- Increase awareness of MDAR’s Farm Viability programs and Agricultural Business Planning courses among the farming community. (Task 1360)
- Track and evaluate farm businesses after program participation to determine the program’s effectiveness in supporting long-term viability. (Task 1361)



Education

Support formal education for farmers and aspiring farmers. (Action III.C.4)

- Promote farming and agriculture as viable career paths. (Task 1363)
- Ensure that Commonwealth workforce development programs include farming and careers in the agricultural industry. (Task 1364)
- Support public school, agricultural vocational-technical high school and community college workforce development programs related to agriculture, including business training and succession planning. (Task 1365)
- Work to secure state funding to support networks, curricula, and trainings. (Task 1366)
- Raise awareness of MDAR language services and their applicability to farmer services. (Task 1367)



Other viability tasks

Make it easier for farmers to seek and obtain grants and financing. (Action III.A.3)

- Provide more technical assistance to assist farmers with compiling grant applications and increase interest in grants from a broader range of farmers. (Task 1262)

More related to outreach and engagement with farmers

- *Go to the matrix to look at some actions and tasks specifically*



Using peer-to-peer and navigators

Increase awareness and understanding of permanent protection options including APR, ALE, and non-ALE protection programs. (Action I.A.11)

- Support peer-to-peer farmer engagement. (Task 1079)
- Incentivize farmers and landowners who have conserved their land to act as ambassadors to their peers to educate and encourage them to do the same. (Task 1080)

Expand opportunities for one-to-one assistance for farmers, prioritizing beginning and historically underserved farmers and aspiring farmers. (Action III.C.2)

- Establish a diverse network of “navigators,” individuals based at trusted local organizations who are well-versed in the range of public and private resources, regulations, and processes, who can work one-on-one with aspiring farmers through the entire process of launching a farming enterprise. (Task 1353)
- Explore expanding range demand for and development of robust farmer mentorship and peer-to-peer programs, including a referral database. (Task 1354)
- Support farmers and landowners who have completed viability, estate, and succession planning to act as ambassadors to their peers to educate and encourage them to do the same. (Task 1355)