

GOALS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Agriculture

Agriculture has always been an important part of Bowdoinham's history and continues to be one of its strong economic sectors. It provides a multitude of cultural, practical, aesthetic, and ecological benefits, and is an asset for community resiliency

Goals

1. To enhance the viability of agriculture so that it will remain a resilient asset and an economic strength for future generations.
2. To promote and enhance opportunities to obtain local agricultural products.
3. To safeguard our agricultural resources.
4. To encourage economically viable, ecologically sound, and socially responsible agriculture.

Key Issues

How can the Town support and encourage the growth of its agricultural sector?

The town needs to safeguard access to natural resources, critical acreage, and good soil to keep farmland in farming.

Town programs and policies need to support agricultural uses.

The proximity to major markets like Portland, Brunswick, and Bath increases the value of farmland and locally grown food, but also increases development pressure.

A key concern is losing farmland due to older farmers retiring.

Increases in development must not compromise farmland and local food production.

Recommendations

1. Recognize farmland based on current use, and soil designation not just farmland enrolled in the Farmland Tax Program.
2. Review the Farmland Taxation Program to ensure program is beneficial to farmers.
3. Encourage owners of productive farmland to enroll in the Farmland Taxation Program.
4. Adopt and encourage participation in the Voluntary Municipal Farm Support Program.
5. Amend the Land Use Ordinance to minimize non-agricultural and incompatible development on farmland soils and reduce lot fragmentation.
6. Create mechanisms to protect active agricultural activities from new non-agricultural development.
7. Consult with the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry when developing any land use regulations pertaining to agricultural management practices to ensure regulations are agriculture friendly.
8. Encourage and support agricultural businesses and productive agriculture operations.
9. Promote and support agri-tourism.
10. Promote and recognize the benefits of agriculture for the economy and ecology.
11. Explore the interest in and benefit of creating and marketing a Bowdoinham brand for agricultural products.
12. Support the development of new markets for Bowdoinham agricultural products.

13. Encourage and support getting local food to children, elderly, and low income people, including but not limited to, distribution through the schools, the local food pantry, and education in the preparation and benefits of eating healthy local foods. .
14. Support the Bowdoinham Farmers' Market and other local venues to enhance opportunities to obtain local foods.
15. Support the growth of an organic farm cluster and prioritize conservation of contiguous farmland to enhance our regional agricultural opportunities.
16. Encourage, support, and participate in regional agricultural projects that support the growth of agriculture in Bowdoinham.
17. Encourage Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife and other landowners with prime farmland soils to lease the land for agricultural uses.
18. Encourage and support the preservation of farmland soils.
19. Ensure that all farmers and those living on farmland soils or historical farm properties are aware of all options for protection and maintaining their farms as productive farms.
20. Encourage and support the gleaning group.
21. Encourage the formation of a farmers' alliance/group, agricultural conservation commission, and/or Local Food Council and support their work.
22. Support agricultural educational opportunities.
23. Create farmer resource package for the website and distribution to farmers.
24. Create and support an Agricultural Conservation Plan.