“Not farmland without farmers”
Access to land reported as top challenge (Greenhorns; AFBF)
Demographics show aging farmer and landowner population
Traditional methods of access and transfer are not sufficient
It takes a system:
  - Seekers
  - Landowners (farmers, non-farmers, organizations, public)
  - Service providers
  - Communities and policymakers
“How farmland is acquired and held has always been a matter of national interest, for just and fair conditions of tenure are recognized as essential to our national welfare. ... It is of vital concern... that ... types of land ownership and operation be developed that will be conducive to a permanent agriculture and to strong rural communities.”

Noble Clark
University of Illinois, 1944
Farms and farmland must be:

• Available
• Appropriate
  • Equitable and secure tenure
  • Land use
  • Equity
• Affordable (land, housing)
• Accessible (and findable)
Land Access Project

• Purpose: to improve access to land for New England’s beginning farmers

• Systems approach: over 40 partners on five task forces
  • Listing and Linking
  • Farm Transfer Network
  • Non-farming Landowners
  • Coaching
  • Tenure Innovations

• Supported by the USDA Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, grant # 2010-03067
Challenge #1: To improve the way that farm seekers and farmland holders find one another

- Linking programs uneven and under-resourced
- Seekers still report they can’t find properties
- Public and private landowners seek a simpler way to promote available land
- Address gaps and coordinate at the regional level
Listing and Linking

• Task Force assessed programs in and outside the New England region
• Analyzed and teased apart the functions
• Emphasis on modern electronic tools
• Improve individual programs as well as regional coordination
• Emphasis on education and readiness
• New initiative augments and supports existing programs
Listing and Linking

**LISTING**: a managed list of available farm properties

- May include:
  - Landowner application
  - Seeker listing
  - Seeker application
  - Online/other posting
  - Notification process
  - Updating process
  - Outreach/promotion
LISTING: a service providing pre-sorted or pre-screened information about seekers to owners and/or about properties to seekers

- May include:
  - Providing selected contact/other info
  - Screening and categorizing/coding owner and seeker applicants
  - Supporting information
  - Site visits
MATCHING: a service that facilitates a specific transaction between a seeker and an owner

- May include:
  - Purchase/sale transaction support
  - Lease drafting and negotiation
  - Management agreement
  - Facilitated meetings
  - Advisor team building (legal, other)
  - Specific TA/referral
  - Site visits
  - Farmer recruitment
SUPPORT SERVICES: *Education and information that build seeker and/or owner competencies to engage in farm acquisition or transfer*

- May include:
  - Business/financial/acquisition planning
  - Land use planning, farm design
  - Estate/succession/transfer planning
  - Tenure option information
  - Lease education
  - Land protection, including easements
  - Landowner education, information
New England Farmland Finder

- Nine New England linking and support programs formed a Consortium
- Developed a web-based regional farm property clearinghouse
- Site requires minimal labor and very low budget to maintain
- Emphasizes and links to educational and support services for owners and seekers
New England Farmland Finder

- “For sale by owner” meets Craigslist
- Free and easy to use for both posters and seekers
- Auto-expire function keeps it current
- Highlights basic location, natural features and tenure options
- Landowner confidentiality
- Seeker updates
- RSS feeds to synchronize NEFF and linking program postings
Listing and Linking

New England Farmland Finder Consortium Members
New England Farmland Finder: www.newenglandfarmlandfinder.org
### Search Properties

**Before you search:**

Are you adequately prepared to acquire a farm or farmland? Do you have clear goals and objectives? Do you have information about your land acquisition options? Are you prepared to evaluate properties?

Explore these educational resources and services first to make the most of your search.

How does New England Farmland Finder compare with farm link programs? Farm link programs provide other services and may display additional properties. Some screen seekers or match seekers with properties. Some offer beginning or exiting farmer education. You are encouraged to work with a farm link program. New England Farmland Finder is managed by a consortium of farm link and land access programs. We designed this property clearinghouse to help you find properties, and to find and work with us.

Here is a list of New England's farm link programs:

- Connecticut Farm Link
- Maine Farm Link
- New England Land Link
- New Entry Sustainable Farming Project
- University of Vermont Extension Land Access Program
Listing and Linking

New England Farmland Finder: Landowner Page

NEW ENGLAND
Farmland Finder

Submit a Property

Before you post your property:

Are you prepared to bring a farmer on your property? Do you have clear goals and expectations? Do you know your options for successful arrangements?

Get ready and get help. Explore these educational resources and services to make the most of your posting. You’ll find information about describing your property, selecting a farmer, and making a good agreement.

How does New England Farmland Finder compare with farmLink programs? FarmLink programs provide other services and may display additional properties. You are encouraged to work with a farmLink program. New England Farmland Finder is managed by a consortium of farmLink programs. They designed this property clearinghouse to help make it easy for you to post properties, and to find and work with them.

Here is a list of New England's farmLink programs:
- Cornell Crop FarmLink
- Maine FarmLink
- New England Land Link
- New Entry Sustainable Farming Project
- University of Vermont Extension Land Access Program
Listing and Linking

New England Farmland Finder: Resources Page

NEW ENGLAND
Farmland Finder

Resources

Below is a list of organizations working across New England to improve farm access, tenure and stewardship. Use the boxes to search through these organizations based on the geographic areas served and the types of services provided.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State(s) Served</th>
<th>Service Type(s)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Any</td>
<td>Any</td>
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BUSINESS PLANNING RELATED TO LAND ACQUISITION

ApplesSeed Permaculture LLC
Land Access Project
Land For Good
Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont
University of Vermont Center for Sustainable Agriculture

CONNECTING FARMERS AND LANDOWNERS

ApplesSeed Permaculture LLC
Connecticut Department of Agriculture-FarmLink Program
Land Access Project
Land For Good
Maine FarmLink
Listing and Linking

Outcomes

• Improved linking programs in all New England states
• Stronger relationships and collaboration among farm access programs
• A sustainable, coordinated system to locate available farm properties
• Serves the region and links to essential complementary services
• Designed to be automated, modest and sustainable
Looking Ahead...

• Emphasis still on education, information, and individual support for seekers and owners
• Better technology to synchronize postings
• Sustainability and ongoing collaboration
• Promotion, promotion, promotion
Challenge #2: Engaging Non-farming Landowners

• Increase the amount of land available for farming, especially for NBF
• Improve tenure models and agreements
• Address concerns of landowners
  • Legal and financial
  • Cultural, social and environmental
• Reach and support all potential farm landlords and sellers
Non-farming Landowners (NFLO)

• Who are they?
  • Former farmers and farm families who own farms
  • Private non-farmers: e.g., large properties, second homes, inheritors, corporations
  • Institutional: e.g., educational, religious, therapeutic
  • Organization: e.g., conservation/environmental, land trusts
  • Public: municipal, state, federal, public institutions
  • Other: e.g., intentional communities, agri-subdivisions
Non-farming Landowners

• Finding NFLOs: local on-the-ground & networks
• Working with NFLOs
  • Workshops for landowners, farmers, land trusts, towns, and institutional owners in all six New England states
  • Guides for private owners, municipalities, institutions, and land trusts
  • Individual assistance and “coaching”
Non-farming Landowners

• Working with NFLOs
  • Reasons for putting (or keeping) land in agriculture
  • Assessing potential (and realistic) farm uses
  • Relate farm uses and tenure model to personal, family, organizational goals
  • Legal and financial considerations
  • How to find a farmer and establish a working relationship
Non-farming Landowners

• Engaging in the lease process
  • Model and sample leases
  • Legal and planning assistance
  • Determining the rent and the lease term
  • Managing the relationship and avoiding problems

• Balancing landowner and farmer needs
  • Risk
  • Security
  • Exit
Non-farming Landowners

- Public lands offer unique opportunities and challenges
  - Legal parameters and constraints
  - Farmer selection process
  - Models and standards e.g., conservation practices
  - Handling repairs and improvements
  - Monitoring
Non-farming Landowners

• Opened eyes to the benefits of, need for, and interest in land for farming
  • Acquainted owners to the potential of making farmland available
  • Familiarized owners with people and groups who provide assistance
  • Connected owners and farmers
  • Heard first-hand stories of owners and farmers

• Opportunities to promote and meet stewardship values and objectives

• Farmland leasing has the potential to bring productive land back into production, increasing New England’s food supply

• “The workshop significantly increased my awareness of the multiple considerations before establishing a relationship with a beginning or other leasing farmer.”

• “I greatly appreciated hearing about this issue from different perspectives.”
Non-farming Landowners

• Looking ahead...
  • Finding and engaging NFLOs; unique by sector
  • Addressing NFLO (and farmer) concerns (e.g., risk, stewardship, exit)
  • Connecting to larger food system interests
  • Appropriate models, methods and information
  • Sustained support
Challenge #3: Improving Farm Transfer and Succession

• Lack of adequate planning (for many reasons)
• No identified successor
• Pushing off “retirement”
• Farm viability → new business(es)?
• Gaps in services, programs and tools
Farm Transfer and Succession

• The “soft issues” – values, goals and communication
• Business Plan
• Land Use Plan
• Retirement (and health care) Plan
• Estate Plan
• Transfer: assets, income and management
A. Build the service network to increase successful transfers

B. Develop tools to assist farm transfers

C. Help farm families with transfer and succession
Farm Transfer and Succession

A. Build the service network

• Peer and cross-discipline training for 40 professionals

• Invigorated Farm Transfer Network of New England (www.FarmTransferNewEngland.net)
  • New service providers
  • New and updated resources

• A Team Approach to Farm Succession Planning Assistance
Farm Transfer and Succession

B. Develop tools to fill gaps and address unique New England needs

• Many standard resources out there
• **Gaps addressed:**
  • A Guide for Farmers without Identified Successors
  • A Farm Succession Guide for Junior Operators
C. Help Farm Families with Succession

• New partners
• LFG coaching
• Incentives and support
  • VT and MA Farm Viability Programs support succession planning
  • Cost-share
  • Policy- and program-based incentives...
    • E.g., couple easements with succession planning?
    • Build into business planning?
Farm Transfer and Succession

• Looking Ahead...
  • More service providers doing this work
  • Incentives and messages to encourage timely succession planning
  • Mechanisms to bring in non-family successors
  • Public policy opportunities?
Challenge #4: New models, approaches and policies

- It takes a system: seekers, owners, service providers, communities
- Roles for private, public, philanthropies, NGOs
- Not making land cheaper, but *more affordable access*
- NBF but also established farmers
- Further exploration and more ideas within and among states
Access and Tenure Innovations

Policy and Program Suggestions

A. Engage private landowners

B. Promote government programs and services

C. Engage private investors
A. Engage Private Landowners

• Encourage leasing land to farmers
  • State income tax credit incentive to lease land on a longer-term basis and/or to new and beginning farmers
  • Tied to property tax paid by landowner

• Offer State tax incentives to sell land to farmers
  • Capital Gains tax; recording fees; RE transfer tax

• Promote and educate about lease-to-own options
B. Promote Government Programs and Services

1. Access to capital and business planning:

• Improve access to capital for land purchases e.g.,
  • Iowa Beginning Farmer Loan Program
  • New Brunswick New Entrant Farmer Loan Program

• Provide business planning assistance and Farm Viability Programs

• Incentivize farm succession planning in business planning programs
Access and Tenure Innovations

B. Promote Government Programs and Services

2. Transition Assistance:

• Provide a State Investment Tax Credit to assist with the establishment of new farms
  • Purchase of equipment and infrastructure

• Provide a State Sales Tax Exemption to assist with the establishment of new farms
  • Purchase of equipment and infrastructure
B. Promote Government Programs and Services

3. State-owned Farmland:

• Provide access to state-owned farmland to farmers
  • Preference or acreage target of available land to NBF

• All state-owned farmland be set aside for farm use and protected with an Ag Conservation Easement
B. Promote Government Programs and Services

4. PACE Programs:

- Fully fund state PACE programs

- Include an Option to Purchase at Agricultural Value (OPAV) in all State PACE programs

- Create new PACE-like programs or sub-programs targeting NBF
  - E.g., Delaware Young Farmers Farmland Purchase and Preservation Loan Program
Access and Tenure Innovations

B. Promote Government Programs and and Services

4. PACE Programs (cont’d):

• Develop a “Starter Farm” Program within existing PACE programs

• Purchase retroactive OPAVs on previously protected farms

• Create a Farm Viability Program specifically targeting previously protected farms
  • E.g., MA APR Improvement Program
B. Promote Government Programs and Services

5. Federal Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program:

- Fully fund FRPP

- Remove restriction on Land Trusts applying to protect land owned by trust

- Provide flexibility to allow for the subdivision of previously protected farms
B. Promote Government Programs and Services

6. Ground Leases:

- Ensure that NGOs are eligible to apply directly to State PACE programs and FRPP as an applicant

- Ownership of buildings by farmer and land by NGO should not be considered a “subdivision” under State PACE or FRPP Rules

- Farmers holding a ground lease should be afforded full access as an “owner” to federal and state grant and financing programs
C. Engage Private Investors

- Encourage Land Trusts to focus projects on NBF
  - VLT Land Access and MFT Buy-Protect-Sell Programs
- Promote values-based models that benefit the farmer and the land
  - Individual investors, pooled funds
  - Philanthropies
- Secure larger farms for multiple farmers (lease/own)
  - “Beyond the Incubator”
  - Explore and promote legal and financial structures
Access and Tenure Innovations

Looking ahead...

- Ideas and values about owning vs. leasing
- Housing
- Lease-to-own
- Non-farming landowner engagement
- Succession
- Farmland investment models: “wild card”?
- Strengthening services and policies
Coaching, Advising and Supporting

- Individual and family level assistance is crucial
- “Hard issues” and “soft issues”
- Facilitation (LFG coaching)
  - Local knowledge and networking
  - Assessment, coordination, TA and ongoing support
- Specialists
Coaching, Advising and Supporting

• Many roles to play
  • Build basic knowledge of issues
  • Know what’s out there
  • Improve referrals

• Farmland Advisors Project
  • Joint LFG and AFT project funded by SARE
  • Over 80 participants from all sectors
Thanks to all LAP participants
Thanks to USDA and other funders
Building capacity and the network: onward!
Resources