5.3 Develop Agriculture-Friendly Practices

5 – 35 Points

Action Updates

This action has been revised for the **current certification cycle**. A version of this action from the prior program year is available for comparison. Edits are highlighted in yellow. (Last updated 2020)

Objective

Create an agriculture-friendly community through taking steps to actively support farms and farmers in your city or town.

Complementary Action:

- Develop and Promote Community Growing Spaces

What to Do

The more you do, the more points you earn. **(up to 35 points)**

If you apply for points under this action, you may not apply for points for the same activities under Sustainable CT Action Integrate Sustainability into Plan of Conservation and Development.

1. Adopt land use policies and regulations that promote and support active agricultural uses. Such policies or zoning regulations could include: a right-to-farm ordinance; allowing farming as-of-right in certain zones in your zoning regulations; allowing farm support activities (e.g., roadside farm stands) in certain zones; or reducing barriers and/or encouraging agriculture, agri-tourism, and use of renewable energy (including anaerobic digestion) on working farms. ***Note:*** Policies or regulations submitted for 5.6.1 may not be applied to any sub-action listed below. **(5 points)**

   Submit: A copy of the policy formally adopted by your governing body or a copy of the relevant section(s) of your zoning regulations.

   Timeframe for Credit: Eligible for new action credit and rolling credit. This action falls under the action type "Websites, Maps, Inventories, Checklists, Assessments, Plans, Ordinances, Policies, Regulations and Resolutions" (see "Timeframe for Credit" Guidance Document for submission requirements).

2. Allow active agricultural use of municipal land or provide outreach on CT Farmlink, linking available municipal or private land to farmers looking for land to farm. **(5 points)**

   Submit: Documentation showing active agricultural use of at least one municipal parcel (such documentation may include a lease or other written agreement between the municipality and a farmer, specifying the parcel location and the type of agricultural use); or documentation of outreach provided on CT Farmlink.

   Timeframe for Credit: Eligible for new action credit and rolling credit. This action falls under the action type "Outreach, Education, Programs, Campaigns, Recognition/Designation in External Program, and Funding" (see "Timeframe for Credit" Guidance Document for submission requirements).

3. Develop a Transfer or Purchase of Development Rights program. **(10 points)**

Submit: A description of your Transfer or Purchase of Development Rights program (and a hyperlink to the program if available).

Timeframe for Credit: Eligible for new action credit and rolling credit. This action falls under the action type "Outreach, Education, Programs, Campaigns, Recognition/Designation in External Program, and Funding" (see "Timeframe for Credit" Guidance Document for submission requirements).

4. Hold a farmer forum to identify critical needs or issues for agriculture in municipality. **(5 points)**

   Submit: The date of the farmer forum and at least one additional piece of documentation related to the forum, such as a promotional flyer, an agenda, minutes, presentations, sign-in sheets or photographs.

   Timeframe for Credit: Eligible for new action credit. This action falls under the action type "Events, Meetings, Trainings" (see "Timeframe for Credit" Guidance Document for submission requirements).

5. Establish a farmland acquisition fund. **(10 points)**

   Submit: Documentation establishing the fund, noting the dollar amount available in fund.

   Timeframe for Credit: Eligible for new action credit and rolling credit. This action falls under the action type "Outreach, Education, Programs, Campaigns, Recognition/Designation in External Program, and Funding" (see "Timeframe for Credit" Guidance Document for submission requirements).

Timeframe for Credit

Actions can either be "New" or considered for "Rolling Credit."

New Action Credit. Any action completed within the past three years (from January 1 of the year seeking certification) is eligible for potential certification points. If you are applying for recertification in your year of expiration, you may not claim New Action Credit for items that previously received credit.

Rolling Credit. For any action older than three years (from January 1 of the year seeking certification), you must demonstrate ongoing, currently relevant, and meaningful impact in your community to be considered for certification points. If you are applying for recertification in your year of expiration, you must apply for Rolling Credit for any item that previously received credit, even if it was completed within the past three years.

View the "Timeframe for Credit" Guidance Document for detailed submission requirements.

Engaging Partners

Sustainable CT encourages regional collaboration and other forms of partnership. For every action, please complete the "Partners" box in your submission, indicating the name(s) of any municipalities and/or organizations you partnered with (if any) and a brief description of your municipality's role. If you collaborate with other municipalities, each community will receive points. For additional information, please see the "Partners Guidance Document".

Potential Municipal and Community Collaborators

Staff from the town council, planning and zoning, public works, parks and recreation departments and the agriculture, conservation, planning and zoning, and inland wetlands commission, as well as local farming advocates, and local land trusts could be helpful in implementing this action.

Funding

If available, below are potential funding sources specific to this Action. For a complete listing of potential funding opportunities to assist with implementing Sustainable CT Actions, please visit the Sustainable CT Grants Portal, which is searchable by Action. Please also visit the Support for Your Town page for opportunities for technical assistance and other supports.

- Urban Act Grant Program

- Municipal Grant Program (MGP)
- 2021 Sustainable CT Community Match Fund

- CT Department of Agriculture, Farmland Preservation Program, Farmland Preservation Application, Community Farms Preservation Program Application

Resources

Toolkits, Calculators, Guidance Documents

- American Farmland Trust and Connecticut Conference of Municipalities, "Planning for Agriculture: A Guide for Connecticut Municipalities"
- Capitol Region Council of Governments, "Regulating the Farm: Improving Agriculture's Viability in the Capitol Region" Model Regulations
- Acadia Center, "Community Energy Vision, Action Guide for Connecticut"

Organizations and Relevant Programs

- AGvocate
- American Farmland Trust
- Connecticut Farmland Trust
- Connecticut Farm Bureau Association
- Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station
- Connecticut Farmlink
- CT Farm Energy Program
- Farm Service Agency
- UConn Center for Land Use Education and Research (CLEAR)
- CT NEMO (Non-point Education for Municipal Officials) Program
- Working Lands Alliance
- USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service, Connecticut Office
- Connecticut Environmental Review Team
- Connecticut Conservation Districts
- Connecticut Resource Conservation & Development Area, Inc.

Why This Matters

Agriculture is part of the fabric of many communities in Connecticut. The state's agriculture industry is a $3.5 billion industry, and it is invaluable to preserving our Nutmeg character. As municipalities grow and change over time, regulations and policies may limit agricultural development, or may make it challenging for farmers to diversify their income to stay viable and/or meet the needs of the ever-changing market.

Benefits

Farms provide a variety of benefits to a community and the state, from increasing access to fresh, local produce, dairy and meat; to preserving open space and providing habitat; to celebrating our historical and cultural practices; to providing opportunities for tourism. Farms provide an industry for many businesses such as food manufacturers and processors, garden centers, veterinarians, farm equipment wholesalers and repair shops. Amending existing regulations and creating new regulations to support farms, will help the agriculture sector flourish in your community.

CT Success Stories

- Coventry - Oct 2019 Certification
- Guilford - Oct 2019 Certification
- Portland - Oct 2019 Certification
- South Windsor - Oct 2019 Certification
- Killingly - Oct 2020 Certification
- Stratford - Oct 2020 Certification
- Wethersfield - Oct 2020 Certification
- Windsor Locks - Oct 2020 Certification