



## Develop Agriculture-Friendly Practices

### Action Updates

This action has been revised for the **current certification cycle**. Edits are highlighted in yellow. (Last updated 2023)

### Objective

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

Complementary Actions:

- [Develop and Promote Community Growing Spaces](#)
- [Encourage an Equitable and Just Food System](#)
- [Support Equitable Food Access and Local Farmers](#)

### What to Do

**The more you do, the more points you earn. (up to ~~35~~ 65 points)**

***If you apply for points under this action, you may not apply for points for the same activities under 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 should promote equity within agricultural zoning. **(20 points)**

These policies could include:

- Ensuring that zoning aligns with or builds upon the existing Connecticut "Right to Farm" Law
- Allowing farm support activities (e.g., roadside farm stands) in certain zones, including in urban settings
- Reducing barriers to and/or encouraging agri-tourism
- Reducing barriers to and/or encouraging use of renewable energy on working farms, in accordance with state regulations addressing solar siting on prime farmland (see resources section)

**Note:** Policies or regulations submitted for 5.6.1 may not be applied to any sub-action listed above.

**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. Promote community access to land for farming and agricultural uses. **(up to 20 points)**

*All elements must be completed to earn points*

- a. Create a process and tools to facilitate community land access through one or more of the following strategies: **(5 points per strategy, up to 15 points)**
  - Collaborate with other departments within your municipality to identify and create a list of municipal land suitable for agriculture that could be used by the community.
  - Develop a toolkit (see resources section for example) to help community members in acquiring municipally-owned vacant or underutilized lots and lands for farming.

Disseminate the toolkit through a community outreach process.

- Work across municipal departments to make public or municipal land more accessible to community members.
- 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.

**Submit:** A description of your municipality's specific actions to promote community land access, along with supporting documentation. For example, if your municipality conducted outreach and created a toolkit for community members to acquire municipally owned land for farming, submit the toolkit and a description of the outreach process.

**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).

- b. Conduct community outreach to publicize the strategy or strategies selected from the above list. This might include promoting the strategy through municipal newsletters, email lists, or social media; advertising the strategy at a community event; or partnering with community organizations. **(5 points)**

**Submit:** A description of your community outreach and at least one example of outreach, promotional, or event materials.

**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)**

**Note:** Activities that are used to earn points toward this Action may not be used to earn points toward any other Sustainable CT Action (i.e., "double-counting").

**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 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. 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 \(MGP\)](#)
- [2022 Sustainable CT Community Match Fund](#)
- CT Department of Agriculture, [Farmland Preservation Program](#), [Farmland Preservation Application](#), [Community Farms Preservation Program Application](#)

### 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.

**For a complete list of funding opportunities, implementation resources, and success stories specific to this action, please visit the full Action write-up on the [Sustainable CT Actions webpage](#).**