# Cover Sheet

# The Bureau of Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources is happy to provide support and technical assistance to your community as it works through developing or updating your comprehensive plan. Thanks for considering the role that agriculture, aquaculture, and Maine’s heritage industries have in building sustainable, diverse, and thriving communities.

As part of the Municipal Planning Assistance Program’s process, BAFRR staff have compiled several documents and reports to inform your work. Though some of the publications included in this packet are dated, the intent to support municipalities through farm-friendly policy and ordinance development remains the same and several tools exist to support your community towards this end.

# Agriculture & Soils Data

* **USDA NRCS (Natural Resource Conservation Service) Soil Maps for your community**

USDA NRCS hosts an online, navigable database of all soil types in the United States. The included map highlights the soils in your municipality classified as “Prime” or “Soils of Statewide Importance,” both of which are soil types that can support a variety of agricultural activities and should be considered a natural resource of note. This database is available online here: <https://websoilsurvey.sc.egov.usda.gov/App/HomePage.htm>

* **USDA FSA (Farm Service Agency) mapping data for current agricultural production**

The Cropland map provides a basic snapshot of agricultural production in your community from 2021 or 2022, depending on available satellite data. Examining this map will give you a general sense of how farmland in your community is being used: are farmers growing a diversity of crops or is there a predominant product in your area? Are farmers managing fields in pasture for hayland or tilling the soil for row crops?

# Planning Resources

* **Chapter 8: Agriculture from *Comprehensive Planning: A Manual for Maine Communities***
* **“Planning for Agriculture: Farm-Friendly Communities”, a publication from GrowSmart Maine in collaboration with ME DACF.**
* **“Cultivating Maine’s Agriculture Future: A guide to Farm-Friendly Municipal Policy”, a publication from Maine Farmland Trust in collaboration with ME DACF.**
* **“Balancing Solar Development and Farmland Protection: A Guide for Maine Towns”, a publication from Maine Farmland Trust in collaboration with ME DACF.**

These four documents provide planners and community members with a general overview of agriculture in Maine, outline a robust set of questions for planners to consider in their comp plan process, and provide a suite of policies that municipal officials might consider. The “Cultivating Maine’s Agricultural Future” guide is currently being revised and updated – municipalities are encouraged to contact Alex Redfield at BAFRR (see below for contact) if a particular chapter or element is of interest to receive updated guidance and support.

# Current Use Taxation Information

* **Program Outline**

The State of Maine incentivizes the active management and utilization of working lands through its Current Use Taxation Program. By enrolling eligible parcels in this program, landowners can receive favorable property tax assessment reductions and municipalities can encourage the active use of natural and working lands.

# 2020 Statistical Summary

Maine Revenue Services compiles and publishes a summary of working lands enrolled in Current Use programs by county and municipality. Data on your community’s enrolled lands are available in this document. Farmland assessment results begin on pg. 54.

Questions about these publications and the information they contain should be directed to:

Alex Redfield

Farm Viability and Farmland Protection Specialist

Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry

[Alexander.Redfield@maine.gov](mailto:Alexander.Redfield@maine.gov)

207-592-0640