

A Northeast Farm Bill Agenda:

Priorities for the 2007 Farm Bill



February 2007

**Proceedings from *A Commitment to Place: Northeast Regional Policy Summit*
November 9-10, 2006**

Facilitated by the Northeast Ag Works! Project

A Northeast Farm Bill Agenda:

Priorities for the 2007 Farm Bill

February 2007

Table of Contents

I.	Introduction and Policy Priorities Summary	P. 3
	a. Purpose	
	b. Background	
	c. About the Northeast	
	d. Policy Priorities Summary	
II.	Policy Priorities and Why They are Important to the Northeast	P. 6
	a. Farm Viability and Economic Development	
	b. Conservation	
	c. Food and Nutrition	
III.	Inventory of Policy Options to Address Priorities	P. 11
	a. Farm Viability and Economic Development	
	b. Conservation	
	c. Food and Nutrition	
IV.	Resources and Links	P. 17
V.	Northeast Policy Summit Participants	P. 18

I. Introduction

a. Purpose

The purpose of this Northeast Farm Bill Agenda is to articulate and promote Farm Bill priorities for the Northeast – ten “must have” farm and food policy goals that specifically address the characteristics and needs of the Northeast U.S. The Northeast is defined as twelve states: Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware and West Virginia.

The Agenda highlights policy priorities that are *specifically important* to the Northeast region. Some of these priorities are important for other regions as well. Northeast policy advocates welcome opportunities to work with other regions around common issues. We promote an integrated approach to the Farm Bill – one that emphasizes *flexibility and equity for all regions*.

This Agenda is not an endorsement of any specific bill or proposal. It is an organizing and advocacy tool. It is intended to:

- Present the case for our region and guide our Northeast Congressional delegation
- Encourage and assist groups to address policy details and differences
- Help Northeast advocacy groups develop strong and consistent messages

While this Agenda does not endorse any specific bill or proposal, we have listed a number of policy options and proposals identified by partners as supporting various priorities included in the Agenda. This list is by no means exhaustive. During the months ahead, legislators will file new bills and groups will advance new and revised proposals. We will do our best to update the online version of the list of policy options and proposals in the online version of this Agenda document.

b. Background

Many of the groups in the Northeast working on the 2007 Farm Bill attended the Northeast Regional Policy Summit held November 9-10, 2006 in Baltimore, Maryland. The Summit was hosted by the Northeast Ag Works! Project. The Northeast Farm Bill Agenda is a significant outcome from that event. The Agenda represents general agreement -- but not formal consensus -- among the region’s farm and food system leadership and policy advocates at the Summit about how the Farm Bill can more equitably and appropriately meet Northeast needs. See Section VI for a list of Summit participants. The Agenda also integrates input from other Northeast groups’ work on the 2007 Farm Bill.

c. The Northeast

The Northeast’s working farms and forests provide a rich variety of food and other agricultural products and about \$15 billion in annual cash receipts to our region’s economy. They also enhance our water supplies, air quality, recreational and tourism opportunities, and community quality of life. Our working landscapes provide scenic surroundings and cultural experiences to enhance our important recreational and tourism industries. Most significantly, they reflect the culture and heritage of the Northeast.

The Northeast is often viewed as mainly urban -- with old established urban centers and a constantly spreading suburban areas. While that is true, it is hardly the entire picture. Sixty-one million people live on or near 26 million acres of working land that is home to nearly 170,000 farms in the Northeast. Despite challenges and pressures, the many rural Northeast communities are thriving. They continue to be places where people want to live, work and raise families. Proximity to urban centers is seen as an advantage. In many parts of the region – rural, suburban and urban -- food and fiber are produced efficiently, economically and competitively.

The livelihoods of more than 4 million people in the region rely on agriculture. That equals 13 percent of the entire Northeast workforce and more than 17 percent of the rural workforce. Agriculture continues to be an essential aspect of the rural economy of the Northeast.

According to the USDA Economic Research Service, in 2002 farms provided more than \$12 billion in product sales. The products of the Northeast would fill many farm market baskets with good food, fiber and plants. The 12-state region is home to nearly 15,000 dairies, producing 23.6 billion pounds of milk in 2005. Direct-to-consumer sales are over twice the national average, and specialty crops constitute nearly one-third of the region's total farm sales. Northeastern forests cover 60% of the land base and provide 13% of the nation's timber. These are indications of our farmers' and working landowners' entrepreneurship and the diversity and resilience of our region's agriculture sector.

Nevertheless, the competitiveness of Northeastern farmers is compromised by the fact that federal programs have historically failed to address the region's unique agricultural needs. Despite the importance of farms, food and forestry to the Northeast, current federal farm and food policies provide just pennies for our region's producers. Northeast farmers produce relatively small quantities of the program crops now receiving commodity program subsidies under current farm legislation. As a result, most of our farmers are not eligible for the federal farm subsidies that consume over half of all farm spending. While some states receive as much as 15 cents from USDA for every dollar in farm sales, much of our region receives 2 cents or less.

Significant improvement was made in the 2002 Farm Bill, which increased funds in the Conservation Title and began to address regional equity, for example. While federal working lands conservation programs are

particularly suited to Northeast farmers and forest landowners, they are under-funded and oversubscribed. The result is a Northeast inadequately served – *in terms of policy design as well as funding* -- by federal farm policies.

The Northeast is also home to nearly 69 million people, with a population density of four times the national average. Our consumers are diverse. They are concerned about food quality and safety, and about the environment. They evidence a growing interest in local and regional ethnic products; as a region we lead the nation in organic, community supported agriculture and farmers markets. At the same time, many experience food insecurity and barriers to accessing fresh, affordable and culturally appropriate foods.

If agriculture is to be healthy nationally and provide significant food security to all citizens, the 2007 Farm Bill must build upon the efforts in 2002 to address the unique economic and environmental challenges facing the Northeast. It is vitally important that the next federal farm bill do a better job helping Northeast agricultural and forestry businesses address their challenges and opportunities as well as provide adequate food assistance and healthy food choices to its citizens. The next Farm Bill must offer more flexibility to respond to regional differences. A Farm Bill that serves the interests of each region based on its needs and circumstances will, in fact, serve all of agriculture better. It must apply federal programs more equitably across regions. In doing so, federal policy will better serve Northeast farmers, forest landowners and consumers.

For more information about the Northeast's food and farming system and policymaking, please see:

- *Regionalist Approaches to Farm and Food System Policy*, Northeast Ag Works! Project (2006)

- *Regional Policy checklist*, Northeast Ag Works! Project (2006)
- *Northeast Farms to Food: Understanding Our Region's Food System*, Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Working Group and collaborators (2002)
- *Northeast Farms to Food 2006 Update with a focus on the Farm Bill*, Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Working Group and collaborators (2006)
- *Meeting Northeast Needs in the 2007 Farm Bill*, participating Northeast collaborators (2006)
- *Repositioning Northeastern Agriculture*, J. Beach, NJ Dept. of Agriculture (date unknown)

All documents may be found at www.northeastagworks.org.

d. Policy Priorities Summary

These are the ten “must have” priorities for the Northeast. They are not necessarily unique to our region. All Farm Bill policies must be appropriate, flexible and equitable so that they work for the Northeast.

a. Farm Viability and Economic Development:

1. *Provide appropriate safety net and risk management tools for Northeast farmers.*
2. *Foster economic and regional market development.*
3. *Support the Northeast dairy industry.*
4. *Provide incentives for regionally appropriate farm energy production and efficiency.*

b. Conservation:

5. *Significantly increase funding for working lands conservation programs.*
6. *Provide appropriate conservation program flexibility to address national, state, and local resource concerns and priorities.*
7. *Provide more technical assistance with greater flexibility in how it can be used.*

c. Food and Nutrition:

8. *Assure food security for all Northeast citizens.*
9. *Promote access to fresh, local and culturally appropriate foods.*
10. *Encourage and promote programs that reflect national health goals and nutrition guidelines.*

* * *

Many in the Northeast also consider the following issues important for our region and for U.S. agriculture and food systems:

1. Farm opportunity: beginning, minority, women, immigrant and limited resource farmers
2. Payment limitations reform
3. Country of Origin Labeling
4. Contract reform (specifically as affects N.E. hog and poultry)
5. Research, Extension and Education (including SARE, organic, specialty crop, IFAFS); land grant funding and formulas
6. Farm labor

II. Policy Priorities and Why They are Important to the Northeast

a. Farm Viability and Economic Development

1. Provide appropriate safety net and risk management tools for Northeast farmers

- At its heart, the federal Farm Bill is concerned with “the methods and levels of support that the federal government provides to agricultural producers”¹; such support should be *appropriate and equitable across all producers and regions*.
- Risk management tools must be appropriate, accessible and affordable to all Northeast farmers.

Why: U.S. Farm policy should provide all farmers (ranchers and forestland owners) with an adequate safety net and appropriate risk management tools. USDA Secretary Johanns stated that one of the Administration’s three main objectives for the next Farm Bill is to increase “equity” through greater support to those 60% of producers who receive no commodity payments². *Northeast farmers receive approximately 3% of federal commodity subsidies*. If allocations of farm subsidies were based on the value of agricultural production rather than the current commodity program authorities, the Northeast would see a 200% increase in support levels.

Diversity and entrepreneurship are the region’s most effective risk management strategies. However, to address production and market fluctuations, crop insurance products must meet the particular needs and circumstances of all Northeast farmers, and must be accessible and affordable.

2. Foster economic and regional market development

- A viable Northeast farm and forestry sector must develop and expand local and regional markets. The Farm Bill should support local and regional economic development programs and state farm viability programs that help Northeast communities and food, fiber and renewable fuel businesses.
- As a region, we must invest in – and have federal support for -- scale-appropriate agriculture infrastructure, including both service and “bricks and mortar”; this includes federal formula funding for the region’s land grant universities.
- We must assure eligibility to rural development programs, including in areas in close proximity to urban areas (requiring more flexibility in eligibility for “rural” programs).
- Farm Bill programs should encourage regional approaches to economic development.
- Federal programs should support farm entry, through programs that are flexible to meet the needs of diverse new farmers, including the non-farm background, women, ethnic, immigrant and refugee farmers that are notably on the increase in the Northeast.

Why: The clearest advantages of N.E. agriculture are its diverse production base and its proximity to large and diverse markets. With international exports accounting for 17% of N.E. sales (compared to other regions with 25-37%), the region’s producers rely heavily on local and regional markets. In fact, with 12% of farms selling direct to consumers, the Northeast leads the nation in direct-to-consumer sales – more than twice the national average. With about half of N.E. farms and farmland in metro areas, only 8% of federal agriculture and natural resource dollars go to metro areas, nationally. The Northeast should realize a more equitable distribution of resources.

¹ Womach, Jasper. Preveiwng a 2007 Farm Bill, Congressional Research Service, August 2005, p. 1.

² Sustainable Agriculture Coalition Weekly Update, September 18-22, 2006.

About one-third of N.E. farms sales are specialty crops. Specialty crops are defined as: 1) vegetables, melons, potatoes, fruits, tree nuts, berries, nursery, greenhouse, floriculture, sod, cut Christmas trees, short rotation woody crops and aquaculture³; or 2) all non-program crops⁴. In 2005, less than \$40 million was directed toward local and state marketing programs, compared to nearly \$20 billion on commodity programs and export subsidies.⁵

N.E. farmers don't want a handout; they want production and marketing assistance to help them capture a larger share of the region's food, fiber and energy markets. They deserve programs that do not disadvantage them by favoring crops of a type and scale not found in the Northeast. Product and market development also rely on adequately supported research and development capacity at land grant institutions, and on federal competitive grant programs whose priorities and eligibility criteria address the needs of all regions.

3. Support the Northeast dairy industry

- Federal policies must respond to regional differences and allow for regional solutions for milk producers.
- National energy policies should respond to regional differences on behalf of dairies (ethanol plants are adding to the cost of feed; research should be done to utilize ethanol plant waste efficiently and cost-effectively for farms in the Northeast).
- Within a larger framework of dairy policy reform, the Milk Income Loss Contract program should be continued.

Why: The dairy industry represents approximately one third of Northeast agricultural sales and 18% of U.S. sales.

Dairy farms are the "anchor tenants" of N.E. agriculture and they steward the vast majority of the region's working open spaces. While actual farm numbers have been decreasing, production and efficiency have increased accordingly, and we provide quality milk and other dairy products for our region. Because of diverse land use, terrain and climate, our cost of production is higher than other areas of the country and can cause problems when nationally set milk prices are so volatile. Consequently, milk prices paid to the farmer should reflect local value, not national price. While continued diversity in the Northeast farm base develops, dairy farms support the necessary infrastructure (feed, vet, equipment, etc) all types of farms require to survive. The future of the Northeast's dairy industry depends on an effective federal policy response coupled with state and regional initiatives.

4. Provide incentives for regionally appropriate farm energy production and efficiency.

- Public policy should support on-farm energy conservation and renewable energy production.
- The Farm Bill should promote and support research and development of biofuels in harmony with each region's capacity.

Why: New sources of energy can benefit farmers in all regions, and the U.S. should not focus only on one or two types of renewable energy from agriculture. The Northeast has capacity to develop certain biofuels from stocks suited to the region, and from agricultural bi-products. The Northeast can do its part to address energy conservation, renewable energy production and climate change.

³ USDA Agriculture Census

⁴ NASDA 2007 Farm Bill Recommendations, p. 16.

⁵ Farm and Food Policy Project, Achieving Balance in U.S. Farm and Food Policy 10/10/06 p. 4.

b. Conservation

5. Significantly increase funding for working lands conservation programs

- All states should receive a minimum base allocation of funding for working lands conservation programs.
- Allocation formulas for working lands conservation programs should reflect states' characteristics such as population density, intensity of land use, land values, cost of conservation practices, and state matching funds.
- Annual expenditures (authorizations and appropriations) should increase for federal farm and forest conservation programs that are most in demand in the Northeast and most effective in meeting the needs of Northeast farmers and the environment. These programs are:
 - Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
 - Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP)
 - Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)
 - Conservation Security Program (CSP)
 - Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)
 - Agricultural Management Assistance Program (AMA)
 - Forest Lands Enhancement Program (FLEP)
 - Forest Legacy Program
- Federal programs such as those in the Farm Bill should do more to help family forest owners conserve and manage their lands and explore market-based incentives to private landowners for ecosystem services.

Why: Farmers and forest landowners in the Northeast not only produce an extraordinary bounty of food, fuel and fiber, as well as clean air, clean water and wildlife habitat. The region faces continued rapid conversion of farmland to non-agricultural uses. Less than 19

million acres of cropland and pasture remain in the Northeast, representing just 14.5% of the region's total land area. As a result, farm entry and expansion are challenging, and the environmental demands upon those open lands continue to grow.

Because a majority of Northeast farms are located in or near metropolitan areas, funding for farm conservation programs provides dual benefits—helping farmers meet environmental regulations, providing critical environmental benefits to millions of people, and addressing the challenges of farming in densely populated areas. Conservation programs promote environmental safeguards, recreational opportunities and access to fresh local food, while directly improve farm economic viability.

Given these varied demands upon the region's agricultural and forest lands, combined with the strong stewardship ethic of Northeast farmers and forest landowners, the need and demand for conservation assistance programs is very high. In fact, demand far exceeds available funds. An additional challenge is the fact that federal land retirement programs such as the Conservation Reserve Program, which currently constitutes 68% of all farm conservation program spending, do not work well for most of the Northeast. Unfortunately the working lands conservation programs most in demand in the Northeast are significantly underfunded. While 22% of farmers nationally receive conservation payments, just 8% of Northeast benefit from these critical programs.

6. Provide greater program flexibility to address national, state, and local resource concerns and priorities

- To meet regional needs, federal programs should increase state-level flexibility, ensure that most funds are distributed at state level, and not jeopardize delivery of existing conservation programs.

- There should be greater flexibility in producer eligibility to reach all eligible producers.
- Farm and forest conservation programs must reflect and address resource challenges and priorities identified and established by state and local governments and State Technical Committees.

Why: Northeast farms have unique characteristics and needs. They are on average ¼ the size of farms nationally, with diverse climate, soils and production systems. The Northeast region needs farm and forest conservation programs that are flexible and can address resource challenges specific to a state or region. A one-size-fits-all approach inhibits innovation and often ignores state-level conservation priorities and resource concerns. As Northeast states increasingly direct state resources toward water and air quality concerns, combating sprawl and protecting working lands, it is important that federal conservation programs recognize and work in tandem with these state priorities and efforts.

7. Provide more technical assistance with greater flexibility in how it can be used

- Federal spending for the Conservation Technical Assistance Program and technical assistance from Farm Bill programs is inadequate to meet Northeast producers' needs.
- There should be additional flexibility in how NRCS technical assistance funds can be used, in order to adequately address state and local resource concerns and opportunities.

Why: The Northeast's high population density and the proximity of its farms to population centers and non-farming neighbors create special conservation management challenges for Northeast farmers. Many farmers seek technical assistance from NRCS even though not participating in Farm Bill programs; for these farmers, technical assistance is available

only through NRCS Conservation Technical Assistance, funding for which has been gradually but consistently cut over the past few years. Additionally, given the typical Northeast farm's numerous, small fields and diversity of soil types, delivery of technical assistance for Farm Bill programs such as CSP is often significantly more complex than for the type of farm operations found in the Midwest. Providing NRCS with adequate resources to provide assistance and outreach to all farmers interested in conservation planning or Farm Bill conservation programs is essential to improve stewardship of working lands and meet the Northeast's increasingly complex environmental challenges.

c. Food and Nutrition

8. Assure food security for all Northeast citizens.

- Public food assistance programs should provide an adequate food safety net for all eligible Northeast citizens.
- The Food Stamp Program application and documentation process should be simplified.
- Nutrition education programs should be expanded to reach out to all at-risk populations.

Why: Public food assistance programs are the first line of defense against hunger for low-income households. Approximately 12% of N.E. population lives in poverty, equally distributed between urban and rural communities; 43% are Black and Hispanic. All N.E. states have seen a rise in Food Stamp Program participation rates, with a regional average of 46% increase between 2001 and 2006. Yet, 5 of 12 N.E. states rank in the lowest 11 states in terms of average rate of Food Stamp participation for eligible participants. In addition, many eligible people in the Northeast do not take advantage of the food assistance programs due to insufficient resources and enrollments hampered by shortfalls in N.E. state technology and supports. Too many eligible people—

especially working poor and elderly persons—are missing out on benefits.

Regional and community food security means reducing dependence on oil and long-distance transport of food products. It means producing, processing and purchasing as many food products as close to home as possible – by citizens and institutions. Regional distribution systems have been shown to be the most efficient.⁶ The Northeast has a great advantage in producing a wide range of foodstuffs suitable for local and regional markets.

9. Promote access to fresh, local and culturally appropriate foods.

- Increasing access to locally and regionally produced foods serves the dual purpose of building healthier diets for consumers and markets for producers.
- Local and community-based food systems can provide more diverse, healthful food choices for consumers while building connections between urban, suburban and rural communities in the N.E.
- We need to rebuild local and regional processing and distribution infrastructure in the Northeast by reducing regulatory barriers and providing capital and technical support.

Why: Many Northeast communities do not have access to healthful food because they lack supermarkets and other retail food outlets as well as farmers markets. This lack of access to healthful foods limits their ability to improve their diets and overall health. While there are many existing programs to promote healthful foods and support expanding infrastructure for local foods systems, they are starved for funds. The Northeast is blessed with productive farms near to urban markets, but there are substantial hurdles to making effective connections. Increasing the supply and distribution of fresh, local produce through research, technical assistance and

investment in distribution infrastructure is in the interest of both the public health community and producers.

10. Encourage and promote programs that reflect national health goals and nutrition guidelines.

- Nutrition education is a foundation for healthy eating and healthy living.
- Nutrition programs should be more reflective of federal dietary guidelines.

Why: The Farm Bill is also a food bill; it should reflect national health and nutrition goals. The Institute of Medicine estimates that national health care expenditures related to obesity range from \$98 billion or \$117 billion annually. The USDA’s nutritional guidelines call for increased consumption of fruit, vegetables, nuts and whole grains. However, current U.S. farm policy does very little to support farmers who produce these products and doesn’t require nutrition programs to allocate food in accordance with them. Studies of food consumption patterns by calories showed 42% from animal products, 52% refined and processed foods, and 6% whole vegetables, fruits, legumes, unprocessed nuts, seeds and whole grains. Programs and policies should promote increased consumption of healthy foods such as fruits and vegetables, especially for children.

⁶ [Pirog et al.]

III. Inventory of Policy Options to Address Priorities

This section contains an inventory of current bills and policy proposals that address the Northeast's ten "must have" priorities for the next Farm Bill. The specific bills listed here by number have been filed by Members of Congress. The policy proposals have been generated by one or more groups. Some are quite specific – naming particular programs, recommended funding amounts, and/or suggested reforms. Others are broader proposals that are being discussed and fleshed out.

The list is evolving, and is not exhaustive. It is meant to help advocates and policymakers find the places where policies that interest them are being addressed and advanced. Each section will be updated as new ideas, information and bills are proposed. *If your group has a proposal to add or update, please email nesawg@nesawg.org and it will be added to the document online.*

Listing bills and proposals here does not imply endorsement. In fact, the details in one bill or proposal may run counter to something proposed in another. These are the devilish but important details that advocacy groups and policymakers will be addressing together in the coming months of deliberation.

a. Farm Viability and Economic Development

1. Provide appropriate safety net and risk management tools for Northeast farmers

Inventory of current bills and proposals:

- Provide disaster payments for specialty crop producers: eligibility; flexible payment limitations to reflect specialty crop producers' cost of production; disaster assistance for first handlers. (HR 6193 sections 101-103) [new]
- Provide Whole Farm Revenue Insurance for *all* crop and crop-livestock farmers –

affordable, flexible premium subsidies, to provide protection against production loss, low prices and disasters. (NASDA 9/18/06 p. 8; SAC) [new]

- Reimburse losses by organic producers at organic prices (NASDA 2007 p. 9; NCSA Organic Committee); eliminate 5% surcharge for organic farmers (NCSA Organic Committee; SAC)
- Develop a cost of production-based insurance program (NASDA 9/18/06 p. 8) [new]
- Develop appropriate risk management tools for specialty crops, e.g. additional crop insurance premiums subsidies (NASDA 9/18/06 p. 9) [new]
- Provide higher levels of coverage on AGR/AGR-Lite whole farm revenue programs (proposed NE marker bill)
- Reform current whole farm revenue insurance programs (AGR and AGR-Lite) (N.E. market bill; SAC)
- See also under Dairy, below.

2. Foster economic and regional market development

Inventory of current bills and proposals:

- Expand Specialty Crop Block Grants Program (HR 6193 sec. 801); incorporate state block grants and other provisions of the Specialty Crops Competitiveness Act of 2004; extend provisions through lifespan of the farm bill (PA Dept. of Ag.)
- Create a grants program to promote the creation, expansion or operation of value-added processing in connection with production of a specialty crop (HR 6193 sec. 806) [new]
- Create or adequately fund federal competitive research and other grant programs (e.g., NRI, IFAFS, SARE); and assure that eligibility criteria do not disadvantage the Northeast (no source identified)
- Reform eligibility formulas and extend eligibility for federal economic development programs to include agriculture development beyond

traditionally defined rural counties (HR 6193 sec. 602, 604; also NASDA 9/18/06 p. 28)

- Allow interstate shipment of state-inspected meat and poultry (S. 3519; NASDA p. 31-32; NSAAS)
- Create a grants program to fund state and local-level activities related to market promotion, product development, farm viability, agricultural infrastructure, consumer education, business planning and new business and farm ownership models; available to all producers and commodity types (proposed NE marker bill) [new]
- Develop Farm and Ranch Viability Partnership Agreements with base appropriation for each state, plus flexibility in application of funds (NASDA, p. 26) [new]
- Provide targeted investments to address the needs of fruit and vegetable growers and increase consumer demand for foods recommended in nutritional and dietary guidelines (FFPP 10-20-06, p. 5)
- Increase funding for the Value-Added Producer Grant Program: (NASDA; FFPP; SAC);
- Make “dramatic investment” in support for business planning and transition assistance... and marketing tools and infrastructure to support local and regional market development (FFPP 10-20-06, p. 5)
- Allow states flexibility to establish a hierarchy of purchasing for food programs from local to regional, then national sourcing... “to purchase locally produced foods, to the maximum extent practicable and appropriate” (proposed NE marker bill)
- Fund development of regional processing and distribution infrastructure that complements emerging retail and institutional markets for local and regional farm products (FFPP, 10-20-06, p. 6)
- Encourage development of shorter, regional supply chains and market opportunities for mid-size farms (HFC 4-22-06); support for supply chain

innovations that link family farm businesses with new markets and distribution networks (FFPP, 10-20-06, p.6); create set-aside in VAPG Program for value chain development (SAC)

- Assure that N.E. land grant institutions are not disadvantaged in formula funding (no source identified)
- Allow Farm Credit cooperatives to finance agricultural infrastructure businesses that support farmers including supply businesses and those that provide markets and value-added opportunities for farmers. (Farm Credit Horizons; NASDA 9/18/06)

3. Support the Northeast dairy industry

Inventory of current bills and proposals:

- [Maintain] states’ rights to create multi-state marketing agreements in order to enhance milk prices within their regions (NASDA 9/18/06 p. 8)
- Continue Milk Income Loss Contract (MILC) (NASDA 9/18/06 p. 8)
- Create revenue insurance pilot program to provide comprehensive and adequate revenue insurance for dairy producers that is cost effective, and payments are triggered by price fluctuations at a level to enhance the viability of small-scale dairy farms (NASDA 2007 p. 8)
- Create appropriate risk management tools for milk, e.g., additional premiums subsidies (above the 50% level) (NASDA 9/18/06 p. 17)
- Develop a Milk Revenue Insurance program specifically for the dairy industry. (PA Dept. of Agriculture)
- Eliminate the Dairy Price Support Program and restructure MILC Program into new Milk Target Price Program; payments to all producers whenever the Class III price falls below a target level (PA Dept. of Agriculture)
- Revisit and consider changes to federal Milk Marketing Orders, including moving toward a two class system: fluid and manufacturing (PA Dept. of Agriculture)

4. Provide incentives for regionally appropriate farm energy production and efficiency.

Inventory of current bills and proposals:

- Significantly expand the bio-refineries program for capital, grants, and loan guarantees to farmer-owned cooperatives and businesses developing fuels and energy on farms, and forests; increase funding for on-farm energy audits; expand annual funding for renewable energy grants; expand funding for biomass research and development; expand program to develop measurements of carbon sequestration and greenhouse gas mitigation by farms, ranches, and forest lands (HR 6064; proposed NE marker bill)
- Continue the bio-energy program to compensate producers of fuels made from farm products (HR 6064)
- Replace Section 9010 subsidies with mix of incentives to encourage retooling of industrial sites into cellulosic biofuel production sites (proposed NE marker bill)
- Create a program to inventory specialty crop biomass waste as part of annual assessment of renewable energy sources [new]; reauthorize Department of Agriculture Bioenergy Program; create a grant program for development of business plans and construction of facilities to use specialty crop waste and residues as raw material to produce energy [new] (HR 6193)
- Do not jeopardize environmental gains with biofuel production; possible need for environmental criteria (NACD)
- Invest in farm-based renewable energy systems – from biofuels to wind power – that result in measurable net environmental gains and build community assets (FFPP p. 11)
- Promote local and farmer ownership and investment opportunities in farm-based

renewable energy production (FFPP p. 9; SAC p. 53)

- Require that states allow net metering with reasonable requirements on all farm renewable energy systems (proposed NE marker bill).

5. Significantly increase funding for working lands conservation programs.

Inventory of current bills and proposals:

- Significantly increase funding for EQIP, including increases for the Conservation Innovation Grants and water conservation subprograms, and direct 10% of funds to reward states that prioritize innovation, cooperation, and cost effectiveness; significantly increase funding for FRPP, WHIP, and AMA; increase CREP/CRP continuous sign-up goal to 7 million acres; include \$15 million base allocation to states; uncap CSP (Healthy Farms, Food, and Fuel Act (HR 6064))
- Significantly increase funding for EQIP, including increased funding for water conservation; significantly increase funding for FRPP and WHIP (HR 6193)
- Authorize a pilot program to assist local governments and qualified land trusts in acquiring community forests and other open spaces [new]; provide mandatory funding for the Healthy Forests Reserve Program and allow an option for permanent easements (HR 6064; proposed NE marker bill)
- Create a new subprogram in EQIP to reward stewardship of small, private forest lands [new] (HR 6064)
- Create an IPM initiative that would prioritize regions where integrated pest management practices can most benefit producers seeking to comply with environmental regulations (HR 6064 and HR 6193) [new]
- Create an air quality program within EQIP (HR 6193) [new]
- Increase EQIP, FRPP, WHIP, AMA; expand Conservation Innovation Grant subprogram; double CREP/CRP

- continuous sign-up goal; include \$15 million base allocation to states; create new conservation loan guarantee program; require that 75% of cooperative conservation initiative funding be distributed at the state level; make CSP/successor green payment program universally accessible (proposed NE marker bill)
- Uncap/expand scope and eligibility the Conservation Security Program; streamline (AFT, NASDA p. 25; NCSA, SAC; FFPP)

6. Provide appropriate conservation program flexibility to address state/ local resource concerns and priorities

Inventory of current bills and proposals:

- Establish new cooperative conservation partnership initiative that reserves 20% of all working lands incentive funds for multi-year grants to groups of producers and other stakeholders addressing local and regional environmental priorities (HR 6064 allocates 50% of funds at state level; AFT allocates 75% of funds at state level and includes in 20% appropriate level of land retirement program funding) (HR 6064; FFPP 10-20-06 p. 11; AFT; proposed NE marker bill)
- Reauthorize Partnership and Cooperation Initiative as the Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative as mandated initiative; strengthen, expand; bulk of funding administered on the state level (SAC p. 43)
- Modify EQIP to give priority to projects that meet national and local priorities; (HR 6064)
- Modify EQIP to give priority to offers that reflect national, state or local priorities; 20% EQIP “hold-back” provision that allows additional allocations to that ensure that State Technical Committees address state conservation priorities. (HR 6193)
- Modify FRPP to provide greater flexibility to states, local governments, and entities such as land trusts to administer the

program (HR 6064; proposed NE marker bill).

- Modify FRPP to provide greater flexibility to states and local governments, and entities such as land trusts to administer the program, while retaining the national 2-6% impervious cover limit (NJ Conservation Foundation)
- Simplify CSP payment structures and eligibility criteria; make CSP universally available; mandate that all certified organic farmers and producers implementing a resource-conserving crop rotation be deemed to meet any minimum requirements related to soil quality and preservation of soil carbon (HR 6064)
- Reform EQIP provisions similar to HR 6064, *except*: “hold-back” provision allows additional allocations to states based on 7 criteria, including a state’s ability to leverage federal funds with state and local funding (proposed NE marker bill)
- Create an Agriculture Stewardship Partnership Agreements program -- a new “block grant” type initiative for states to address agricultural conservation priorities (NASDA: 9/18/06)
- Create revolving fund (Chesapeake Bay Commission)
- Establish a Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative to address environmental problems and meet community needs; create incentives designed to reward innovation and performance by states and localities (FFPP; SAC)

7. Provide more conservation technical assistance with greater flexibility in how it can be used.

Inventory of current bills and proposals:

- Create a new mechanism to establish a private sector cadre of experts trained to access, identify, and introduce producers to cost-share programs and assist them in completing program applications (HR 6193)

- Increase funding for technical assistance by increasing overall funding for conservation programs (HR 6064)
- Provide both financial and technical assistance to help farmers interested in transitioning to organic production (HR 6064; N.E. marker bill; SAC, p. 60)
- Build the technical assistance infrastructure needed to assist farmers (and ranchers) with becoming better stewards of the nation's lands (FFPP)
- Create pilot comprehensive conservation planning program (proposed NE marker bill; SAC)

8. Assure food security for all Northeast citizens.

Inventory of current bills and proposals:

- Maintain adequacy of the food stamp benefit by increasing the minimum benefit level (HFC 4/22/06 p. 5, AFT p. 12, NASDA p. 33).
- Restore Food Stamp eligibility to legal immigrants; improve access to, benefits and operation of Food Stamp Program (proposed NE marker bill)
- Allow states (and provide grants to cover costs) to innovate to, for example, remove barriers, streamline process, improve quality of food purchases (NASDA p. 33)
- Provide funding for state food emergency response and preparedness plans (NASDA p. 34)
- Increase funding for The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) (proposed NE marker bill)
- Incorporate fresh and minimally processed local and regional food into the emergency feeding system (HFC 4-22-06 p. 5)
- Provide clear support for community food security applications of Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program (FSNEP) and Emergency Food Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) (proposed NE marker bill, FFPP)
- Strengthen Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program by allowing states

greater program implementation flexibility (HR. 6193 sec.508)

- Create a new Food Stamp Fruit and Vegetable EBT Pilot Program (H. 6193 sec. 510)

9. Promote access to fresh, local and culturally appropriate foods.

Inventory of current bills and proposals:

- Increase funding for Community Food Projects Competitive Grants Program (HR 6064 sec. 301): also HFC 4-22-06 p. 5, proposed NE marker bill)
- Expand the Farm to Cafeteria Program that links local farmers with schools (HR 6064 sec. 303; AFT; proposed NE marker bill)
- Expand Farmers Market Promotion Program (HR 6064; proposed NE marker bill)
- Allocate portion of Farmers Market Promotion Program or Community Food Projects Competitive Grants Program funding to support Electronic Benefits Technology (EBT) use at farmers markets (CFSC; N.E. marker bill)
- Increase funding for Senior and WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Programs (HR 6064 sec. 304 and 305; proposed NE marker bill; see also below)
- Expand funding for development of farmers markets and other direct markets that link farmers with consumers (HR 6064, sec. 306)
- Create a new pilot project for food policy councils (FFPP)
- Allow states new flexibility to establish a hierarchy of purchasing for food programs, starting with local, then regional, then national sourcing to the maximum extent practicable (proposed NE marker bill)
- Create new mechanisms and incentives for community-based planning and financing for grocery stores, farmers markets and community gardens for areas without current access to adequate, healthy and affordable foods. (HFC 4-22-06 p. 4)

- Create/renew community gardening and school garden programs (HFC 4-22-06 p. 5)

10. Encourage and promote programs that reflect national health goals and nutrition guidelines. Inventory of current bills and proposals:

- Expand Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (HR 6193, Sec. 502); HR 6064, Sec. 301; proposed NE marker bill)
- Establish a new Fruit and Vegetable Nutrition Program Promotion matching grant program and ensure that all federal feeding programs meet USDA dietary guidelines (HR 6193: sec. 503, 504)
- Increase funding for purchase of fruits, vegetables and other specialty crops through DOD Fresh and Section 32 Specialty Crop Purchases (HR 6193; NASDA; proposed NE marker bill)
- Allow FMNP, SFMNP and WIC FMNP redemption at farm stands and other farm retail operations; allow for increased flexibility at the state level (NASDA p. 32)

V. Resources and Links (to bills and proposals referenced in this document)

1. HR 6064, “Healthy Farms, Foods and Fuels Act of 2006”:
www.govtrack.us/congress/bill.xpd?bill=h109-6064
2. HR 6193, “Equitable Agriculture Today (EAT) for a Healthy America Act”:
www.govtrack.us/congress/bill.xpd?bill=h109-6193
3. S. 3519, “Agriculture Small Business Opportunity and Enhancement Act of 2006”
www.ag.state.ut.us/pressrel/S3519.pdf
4. American Farmland Trust, “*Northeast/Mid-Atlantic Priorities for the Farm Bill*” (DRAFT):
www.farmland.org
5. National Association of State Departments of Agriculture 2007 Farm Bill Recommendations:
www2.nasda.org/NR/rdonlyres/BCA10C72-3D50-4EB7-ABC7-2780A8002A4E/965/NASDA2007FARMBILLRECOMMENDATIONS1.pdf
6. Farm and Food Policy Project, “*Declaration: Seeking Balance in U.S. Farm and Food Policy*”: www.farmandfoodproject.org
7. NCSA Organic Committee Farm Bill recommendations:
www.sustainableagriculture.net/OrganicFarmBill.php
8. Healthy Food and Communities discussion paper 4-22-06
9. Farm Credit Council, “*21st Century Rural America: New Horizons for U.S. Agriculture*”:
www.fchorizons.com/uploads/horizonsfinal.pdf
10. Chesapeake Bay Commission, *2007 Federal Farm Bill: Concepts for Conservation Reform in the Chesapeake Bay Region*: <http://www.chesbay.state.va.us/Farm%20Bill%20Report.pdf>
11. Northeast States Association for Agricultural Stewardship www.csgeast.org/agriculture.asp
12. Community Food Security Coalition, “Farm Bill Priorities”
www.foodsecurity.org/CFSC%20FARM%20BILL%20PRIORITIES%202-pager.doc
13. Sustainable Agriculture Coalition, “No Time for Delay: A Sustainable Agriculture Agenda for the 2007 Farm Bill” <http://msawg.org/key-farmbill.html>
14. Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture www.agriculture.state.pa.us
15. New Jersey Conservation Foundation www.njconservation.org

VI. Northeast Regional Policy Summit Participant List

Brenda Adams
Maine School Food Service
Organization, ME

Karen Anderson, NJ

Brian Baenig*
Office of Sen. Patrick Leahy, DC

Billie Best
NESAWG, MA

Grace Bottitta
Ducks Unlimited, MD

Fran Boyd
Council of State Governments, DC

Deborah Burd
National Campaign for Sustainable
Agriculture, ME

Margaret Christie
CISA, MA

Kate Clancy, MD

Chris Coffin +
American Farmland Trust, MA

Nevin Cohen
The New School, NY

Kelly Coleman
CISA, MA

Ed Cooney*
Congressional Hunger Center, DC

Jerry Cosgrove
American Farmland Trust, NY

Tom Crane
Great Lakes Commission, MI

James Daukas +
American Farmland Trust, DC

Mark Davis
Delaware Department of
Agriculture, DE

Rachel Dawson
Ducks Unlimited, MD
Trevor Dean
National Farmers Union, DC

Stephanie Demmons
Oxfam America, MA

Roger Doiron
NESAWG, ME

Valentine Doyle
Lawson Valentine Foundation, CT

Bill Duesing
CT NOFA, CT

Rich Duesterhaus +
NACD, DC

Bob Ehart
National Assoc. of State
Departments of Agriculture, DC

Fern Gale Estrow
Consultant, NY

Scott Faber
Environmental Defense, DC

Patrick Field
Consensus Building Institute, MA

Denise Finney
Center for Environmental Farming
Systems, PA

Jackie Folsom*+
VT Farm Bureau, VT

Suzy Friedman #+
Environmental Defense, VT

Tom Gilbert
The Wilderness Society, PA

Commissioner Douglas Gillespie
MA Department of Agricultural
Resources, MA

Henry Gillet
Cape Cod Cranberry Growers
Assocation, MA

Vanessa Green #
Senate Budget Committee, DC

Allen Hance*+
Northeast Midwest Institute, DC

Jim Hanna
CEI Consultant, ME
Amy Hansen
NJ Conservation Foundation, NJ

Jay Healy
Working Landscapes, MA

Michael Heller*
Clagett Farm/Chesapeake Bay
Foundation, MD

Ferdinand Hoefner
Sustainable Agriculture Coalition,
DC

David Holm
NE SARE, Univ. of VT, VT

Liana Hoodes
National Campaign for Sustainable
Agriculture, NY

Alan Hunt
Northeast Midwest Institute, DC

Sue Ellen Johnson #
New England Small Farm Institute,
MA

Danielle Jones
NSAAS, ME

Jerry Jones
Hartford Food System, CT

Virginia Kasinki
Glynwood Center, NY

Tom Kelly
UNH Office of Sustainability, NH

Secretary Steve Kerr #
VT Agency of Agriculture, VT

Aley Kent #
Heifer International, NY

Marge Kilkelly +
NSAAS, ME

Secretary Charles Kuperus*
NJ Department of Agriculture, NJ

Mark Lapping*
Muskie School of Public Service,
ME

Jeffrey LaFleur
Cape Cod Cranberry Growers'
Association, MA

Kathy Lawrence*
NESAWG, NY

Joseph Lomax
National Association of
Conservation Districts - NE, NJ

Ron Maribett
NOFA/MA, MA

Peter Marx
Northeast Midwest Institute, DC

Pat McMillan
MD Dept. of Agriculture, MD

Duane Musser*
Schramm, Williams & Assoc., DC

Ginger Myers
Howard County Economic
Development Authority, MD

Glenda Neff +
Environmental Defense, NY

Dennis Nuxoll
American Farmland Trust, DC

Carolyn Orr*
Senate Ag and Rural Leaders, KY

Gary Overmier
Great Lakes Commission, MI

Mike Pechart
PA Department of Agriculture, PA

Judith Pojda
Agribusiness Accountability
Initiative, MD

Ned Porter
Maine Department of Agriculture,
ME

Helen Rankin
Maine School Food Service
Organization, ME

Peter Riggs #
Forum on Democracy & Trade, NY

Secretary Lewis Riley*
Maryland Department of
Agriculture, MD

David Rogers #
NOFA/VT, VT

Brian Ronholm #
Office of Rep. Rosa DeLaura, DC

Marjorie Roswell, MD

Kathy Ruhf +
NESAWG, MA

Kevin Schmidt
American Farmland Trust, DC

Gus Schumacher
Consultant, DC

Doug Siglin
The Chesapeake Bay Foundation,
DC

Bob Smith
CoBank, MA

Tazuer Smith
Sustainable Agriculture Coalition,
DC

Meghan Stasz
Environmental Defense, DC

Nadja Strucker
Capital Area Food Bank, DC

Josh Stull #
Office of Senator Arlen Specter, DC

Stanley (Lee) Telega
Cornell University, NY

Jody Tick
Capital Area Food Bank, DC

Liz Wheeler
NESAWG, WV

* Speaker/panelist

Registered but unable to attend

+ Drafted this Agenda document