Mansfield Agriculture Strategy

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Prepared By:

YELLOW WOOD associates, inc.

228 North Main Street
St. Albans, VT 05478
Phone: (802)524-6141
www.yellowwood.org
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Introduction & Methodology

*Mansfield Tomorrow* is a Town-wide project designed to provide the vision, strategies and tools for Mansfield to become the 21st century community Mansfield wants to be. This project includes a community participation process and the preparation of an updated Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD). A Town-wide visioning survey (with approximately 330 respondents), conducted by Goody Clancy as part of the Mansfield Tomorrow project found that more than 91% of respondents agreed that Mansfield's working farmland will remain an integral part of the town's character, confirming that the existence and success of agriculture in Mansfield is important to the majority of residents.

Yellow Wood Associates (Yellow Wood) was responsible for developing the agricultural strategy for the plan. Yellow Wood worked with the consultant responsible for the economic development strategy (Mt. Auburn Associates) to identify areas of synergy between the agriculture strategies and economic development strategies. Another member of the consulting team (Milone & MacBroom) focused on land preservation projects and Goody Clancy (the lead consultant on the Mansfield Tomorrow project) is responsible for understanding the zoning and planning implications of the selected strategies.

This agricultural strategy report is based on extensive public input and is intended to provide Mansfield with actionable strategies that are based in the current realities of agriculture in Mansfield, Connecticut and New England. These strategies provide the Town with a range of opportunities to support and grow the agriculture sector while addressing the challenges identified by the Town’s Agriculture Committee and participants in the Agricultural Forum and Agricultural Focus Group. Supporting and growing Mansfield’s agriculture sector will provide the Town with an opportunity to maintain the sense of rural character that is so highly valued by residents. The goals, strategies and actions presented in this report are focused on ensuring that agriculture in Mansfield is vibrant and able to contribute to the economy. They take into account the state of agriculture in Mansfield today, as well as in the region, and are designed to achieve a shared vision for agriculture in Mansfield over the next 20 years.

Definitions

It is important to note that when this report refers to “agriculture” and “farming,” it assumes the State of Connecticut definition inclusive of the “cultivation of the soil, dairying, forestry, raising or harvesting any agricultural or horticultural commodity, including the raising, shearing, feeding, caring for, training and management of livestock, including horses, bees, poultry; ...the operation, management, conservation, improvement or maintenance of a farm and its buildings.” See appendix B for the full text of the state's definition of agriculture.

The Census of Agriculture defines “farm” as, “any place that produced and sold, or normally would have sold, $1,000 or more of agricultural products during the Census year.”

Data

This report uses the most recent data available. In many cases, that is data from the 2007 Census of Agriculture. While this data may not be reflective of the most current conditions it is the most useful data to use to establish conditions that can be compared to other points in time and to other Towns, counties and states. Data from the 2012 Census of Agriculture will be available in 2014. We recommend that the Town update the appropriate data and statistics in this report based on the 2012 census data when it becomes available. Likewise, the most
recent data available from the Connecticut Center for Land Use and Education (CLEAR) is from 2006. While it is likely that land use in Mansfield has changed since the study this is the most accurate data available at this time. Using the CLEAR data also provides historical information to show change over time. We recommend that the Town update the appropriate data and statistics in this report when new land use data is made available.

**Process**

**Figure 1: Process Diagram**

After reviewing background material provided by the Mansfield Agriculture Committee and a basic review of Census of Agriculture data, resources and programs related to agriculture at UConn and other information relevant to understanding the context for agriculture in Mansfield, Yellow Wood proposed three **broad goals** that were approved by the Agriculture Committee, for the Town over the next 20 years. Yellow Wood then facilitated an **Agriculture Forum** with a diverse group of 44 participants (including local and regional farmers, agricultural service providers, UConn staff, municipal staff, state representatives and interested residents) to identify indicators of progress towards each of the three goals. Based on the results of the February workshop, Yellow Wood developed four **targeted goals** with key questions as the focus for developing strategies. The strategies were reviewed and prioritized with an agriculture **focus group**. Yellow Wood then conducted **best practices research** to develop the **agriculture strategy** in this report. After reviewing the draft goals, strategies and actions, the Mansfield Agriculture Committee recommended two foundational goals and three “actionable” goals. All goals, strategies and actions were then reviewed and updated by the Agriculture Focus Group. Please see Appendix A for a more detailed overview of the process.
Agriculture in Mansfield Today

Located in Tolland County, Mansfield, CT has a total population of 26,543; just under half of this population consists of UConn students, leaving a population of 13,653 living in households. Mansfield has a long agricultural history and it has been home to an agricultural college since 1880 when the Storrs brothers offered 170 acres and $5,000 to start an agricultural school. In addition to the agricultural college (now known as the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Connecticut), Mansfield is home to Mountain Dairy, one of the few remaining dairy processing plants in the state, that has been producing and processing milk on the Stearns farm for more than 140 years.

Agricultural Land

Mansfield is a New England hill town with about 58% of its land classified as farmland soils (4,202 acres of prime farmland soils, 2,896 acres of statewide important farmland soils and 9,911 acres of locally important farmland soils). The Report on Lands of Unique Value completed for Mansfield in 2003 has a comprehensive set of maps showing that these prime agricultural soils are predominant in southwestern Mansfield and generally dispersed elsewhere in Town. These maps also show that wetlands are pervasive throughout the community (limiting agricultural uses) and many areas of natural diversity (areas of concern with regard to threatened or endangered species) are associated with agricultural land.

A 2006 study of land cover over agricultural soils by the Center for Land Use Education and Research found 24.4% of the Town's land (7,133 acres) was prime agricultural soil, with 1,947 acres of that land being used for farming (27% of all land with prime agricultural soils, down 7% from 1985) with an additional 1,092 acres of land being used for farming that was not on agricultural soils (for a total of 3,039 acres of farmland, 10.4% of the Town's total land). In contrast, 20% of Mansfield land with prime agricultural soils has been developed (an increase of 23% between 1985 and 2006) and there is “turf and grass” on 11% of Mansfield's prime agricultural soils (an increase of 37% from 1985).

Approximately 75% of the Town is zoned Rural Agricultural Residential (RAR 90), where agriculture or 2-acre house lots are permitted.

If Mansfield continues to lose farmland at the same rate over the next 20 years, agricultural field on prime agricultural soils will decrease another 138 acres, down to just 25% of all land in prime agricultural soils. Loss of farmland at this rate provides a challenge to maintaining and/or growing agriculture in Mansfield and highlights the need for the Town to continue to focus on preserving farmland. Development pressure in Mansfield also threatens open space with the market value for excess acreage (non-farm/forest land, non-building/house lot) in Mansfield ranging from $7,000 to $12,000 per acre for road frontage and $3,500 - $6,000 per acre for rear acreage.
This is in contrast to the 2010 State-wide recommended land use values that range from $90 per acre of pasture to $2,400 per acre for soils that are, “excellent, well drained, typically flat or level, no stones.”

While it is unlikely that prime agricultural soils that have been developed will be converted back to agricultural land, there is an opportunity to increase the percentage of Mansfield’s prime agricultural soils being farmed through the conversion of some of the land in turf and grass and in forest back to agricultural field.

**Figure 3: Town of Mansfield Farmland Soils**

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**Farmland Preservation**

Since the mid-1980’s Mansfield has funded, and managed, an active open space acquisition program. Since 1990, Mansfield has purchased over 32 open space parcels, totaling over 1,000 acres of land. In addition to Town purchases, the Town has acquired open space through donations and dedication requirements included in the Town’s land use regulations. As of September 1, 2013, the town owns or manages over 2,500 acres of undeveloped open space land, including over 400 acres of private land with conservation easements. These acquisitions include eight properties with agricultural land that are leased to local farmers and three agricultural easements on private land. The Town is actively engaged with state and regional...
entities to identify farmland for protection and is working to make farmland preservation a reality. See Appendix C for detailed information about the Town's open space acquisitions that include farmland. In addition to the Town's acquisitions, more than 300 acres of farmland has been preserved through the purchase of development rights by the state during that same time period.

Farms

According to the 2007 Census of Agriculture, there are 4,196 farms in the state of Connecticut, 405,616 acres in farmland and the market value of agricultural products sold is $5.5 million. A recent study showed that the total impact of Connecticut’s agricultural industry on the state economy was $3.5 billion (approximately 2% of the Gross State Product).

Agriculture is changing across America, as farms get bigger in the mid-west, farms in New England are getting smaller and the number of farms is increasing, up an average of 19% in New England between 2002 and 2007 (with a 0.1% increase in Connecticut).

Following national trends, the median farm size in Tolland County decreased from 38 acres in 2002 to 25 acres in 2007, while the number of farms increased from 398 to 484.

The 2007 Census of Agriculture identified 19 farms in Mansfield, five of which support farming as a primary occupation. According to a 2012 report by the Congressional Research Service, at the national level, the share of farm income derived from off-farm sources has increased steadily in recent decades and appears to have peaked at about 95% in 2002. In 2012, off-farm income sources are forecasted to account for about 84% of the national average farm household income, compared with about 16% from farming activities.

A 2010 survey done by the Town identified close to 40 agricultural enterprises (19 of which identified themselves as farmers, other enterprises included farm stands, agritourism destinations, retail outlets, etc.). Agriculture in Mansfield is diverse, producing dairy products, livestock and meat products, fruits and vegetables, honey, maple syrup, Christmas trees and nursery stock as well as agritourism experiences. While the Mansfield dairy farms own or lease over 1,800 acres of land, the majority of Mansfield farms operate on less than 50 acres and some on less than 5 acres.

### Mansfield’s Agricultural Enterprises

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enterprise</th>
<th>Products/Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arrowhead Farms</td>
<td>Honey, goat milk, pumpkins, berries, vegetables, angora wool and non-edibles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bailey’s Maple Syrup and Honey, LLC</td>
<td>Maple syrup and honey.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bird Walk Farm</td>
<td>Eggs, seasonal lamb, pork, chicken.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country Stop &amp; Goods</td>
<td>Produce and country goods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’s Rhubarb</td>
<td>Rhubarb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foxfire Farm</td>
<td>Raw milk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formerly Sweet Acre Farm</td>
<td>Vegetables and goats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hillside Farm</td>
<td>Milk, mulch bark and feed hay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hye Acres</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ledgecrest Greenhouses</td>
<td>Annuals, perennials, herbs, vegetable plants and spring flowering plants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maple Crest Farm</td>
<td>Rhubarb, blueberries, raspberries, are sold wholesale. Tree fruit, jams, honey, yellow wax beans, potted raspberry plants, Aloe, Christmas cactus, hand-painted egg shells, are sold retail, by appointment only.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathews Farm</td>
<td>Blueberries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mike’s Stand</td>
<td>Organic tomatoes, peas, broccoli.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountain Dairy</td>
<td>Milk and dairy products.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karen Green</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phenix Farm</td>
<td>Maple syrup, hay/alfalfa.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pleasant Valley Harvest</td>
<td>Organic fruits and vegetables.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Round the Bend Farm</td>
<td>Tomatoes, peppers, green beans, cucumbers, squash.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mansfield Agriculture Strategy
**UConn**

In addition to the private agricultural enterprises in Mansfield, UConn also has a significant agricultural presence in the town. Approximately 700 acres (approximately 23%) of active farmland in Mansfield is owned by UConn. The Department of Animal Science is home to an Equine Center, which maintains 85 horses and specializes in breeding of Morgan horses; the Dairy Center, operating with 100 cows to send milk to the Creamery; the Livestock Unit for beef cows, sheep and pigs; and the Poultry Unit, housing 3,000 chickens. (UConn also owns approximately 900 acres of Forest land in Mansfield and an additional 86 acres of farmland in Coventry). Many of these facilities are open to the public 365 days a year, making UConn a popular agritourism destination. UConn’s Dairy Bar, serving award winning ice cream produced in the Creamery from UConn dairy cows, is one of the top 10 tourism destinations in Connecticut. UConn largely attributes the success of the Dairy Bar to the School’s location, half way between New York and Boston, two cities with large populations looking for day-trips and weekends relating to agritourism.

**Economics of Farming**

In a 2010 survey of Mansfield farmers, “financial stability, lack of funding, input costs” were identified as some of the major challenges faced by farmers and help with marketing and accessing funding was requested. The majority of Mansfield farms are small, under 50 acres and with sales less than $50,000. Seven (39%) of 19 Mansfield farms identified in the 2007 census had sales over $50,000 (2 horticultural operations, 2 dairy operations, 2 animal operations, including products, and 1 cattle and calves operation). While Mansfield farms make up just under 4% of farms in Tolland County, they account for more than 7% of the operations in Tolland County with sales over $50,000.

The 2007 Census showed that the average net income for farms in Tolland County was $15,307, up significantly from an average of $5,833 in 2003 but still significantly below the state average of $25,087. Assuming the average net income for Mansfield farms is the same as for Tolland County it is not surprising that only 26% of Mansfield farms support farming as the primary occupation, versus 55% of all Connecticut farms and 49% of farms in New England. If we assume the 19 farms in Mansfield make the average Tolland County farm income it would account for 0.1% of all the income earned by residents in Mansfield.

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**Mansfield’s Agricultural Enterprises cont.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Farm/Seller</th>
<th>Products</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shundahai Farm</td>
<td>Vegetables, CSA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staples Farms</td>
<td>Year-round farmers market. “Our focus is food.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storrs Farmers Market</td>
<td>Christmas trees, plants, eggs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gardens at Bassetts Bridge Farm</td>
<td>Rhubarb, tomatoes, asparagus, pumpkins, blueberries, hanging baskets, annuals and perennials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thistle Springs Farm</td>
<td>Hay, and beef cattle. Sand and gravel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thompson and Sons, Inc.</td>
<td>Farm supply.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thompson’s Christmas Tree Farm</td>
<td>Christmas trees, vegetables.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three Green Acres/Chelsea’s Blue Ribbon Lamb</td>
<td>Sheep-lamb for meat, wool blankets, show animals (Hampshire Sheep and Jersey Cattle)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Towill’s Tree Farm</td>
<td>Christmas Trees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tri County Greenhouse</td>
<td>Annuals, perennials, herbs, vegetables, hardy mums</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twin Ponds Farm</td>
<td>Hay, lumber, firewood, nursery stock, plant stock, seasonal berries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Connecticut Valley Farms</td>
<td>Ice Cream, eggs, chickens, beef cows, horses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windover Farm</td>
<td>Kobe-style beef, hogs, free-range eggs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Connecticut Ice Cream, eggs, chickens, beef cows, horses.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valley Farms</td>
<td>Kobe-style beef, hogs, free-range eggs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windover Farm</td>
<td>Heritage swine, cattle, sheep.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Farming Jobs

Data from the 2010 census showed that less than 2% of the Mansfield population was employed in agriculture compared with Connecticut communities with the highest proportion of residents employed in agriculture, like Scotland and Preston that have between 4% and 8% of the population.\(^{21}\) The majority of farms in Tolland County do not hire farm labor and of the farms that do, 90% hire less than 10 workers. The Connecticut Department of Labor reports 398 jobs in Tolland County in the agriculture, fishing and hunting sector in 2011, making up just 1% of all Tolland County jobs.\(^{22}\) Participants of the February 2012 agricultural forum identified that access to farm labor was a challenge for local and regional farms.

Markets

Forum participants also identified access to markets as a challenge faced by Mansfield farmers. According to the 2010 survey of Mansfield farmers, the majority of farmers direct market their products to consumers through roadside stands or farmers markets and/or sell direct wholesale to restaurants and stores. Of the 19 operations where the respondent identified themselves as “farmers,” 11 do direct marketing only, one does wholesale only and seven do a combination of direct marketing and wholesale. According to the 2007 Census of Agriculture, Connecticut had the second highest percentage of farms involved in direct sales in New England, and the entire country, suggesting that Mansfield farmers are following a state-wide trend in selling products directly to consumers. While this type of marketing and sales usually ensures that farmers get the highest possible price for their products, this type of marketing and sales requires that farmers spend a lot of time building and maintaining relationships with many individual buyers. Direct marketing and direct wholesale marketing also puts the burden of transportation and distribution on the farmer.

Mansfield is home to a year-round farmers market, Storrs Farmers Market, providing a direct-market outlet to local farmers and value-added producers. (Currently just under 30% of the producers on the Storrs Farmers Market website are from Mansfield.) In addition to the farmers market, the Town produces a “Mansfield Grown” brochure featuring a guide to locally produced agricultural products and services – the brochure includes 29 farms and stores (in addition to the farmers market) providing locally produced goods. One Mansfield farm offers a CSA\(^ {23}\) program. Farmfresh.org, a local food guide for Southern New England, identifies 6 producers in Mansfield with farm stands making direct sales to consumers.

Mansfield is located 20 miles from I-91, a major North/South transportation corridor and 73 miles from I-90 (East/West) corridor – it is 29 miles from Hartford, 85 miles from Boston and 137 miles from Manhattan. This location places the Town, and its agricultural enterprises, in a prime location for Agritourism (as mentioned by the University when asked to explain the success of the Dairy Bar). The new Adventure Park at Storrs, an aerial park set in the trees off of Storrs road, is another natural-resource-based destination attracting visitors to the Town. According to the 2007 census of agriculture 2% of CT farms (and 2% of Tolland County farms) offered agritourism and recreational services, ranking Connecticut #3 in New England for the percentage of farms involved in agritourism. (Rhode Island led New England with 3.5% of all farms reporting income from agritourism activities). The success of the Dairy Bar offers Mansfield farmers with an interest in agritourism a ready-made opportunity for cross-marketing.
Access to Local Food

In the 2013 “Locavore Index” which ranks states based on number of farmers markets, CSA and food hubs per capita, Connecticut ranks 15th (behind all other New England states) with 154 Farmers Markets, 96 CSAs and 2 Food Hubs. This is an improvement from its ranking of 29 in 2012. The same study showed that while Connecticut has 25% of the New England population it has only 22% of the region’s farmers markets, 18% of the region’s CSAs and 10% of the region’s food hubs. These statistics are evidence of growth in locally-driven direct and wholesale marketing, and they also indicate room for further expansion. While Mansfield is already well served by a year-round farmer’s market and has one active CSA farm, this is a movement to which Mansfield can continue to contribute and benefit from the lessons learned by others and the structures they develop.

A 2012 report by the Zwick Center for Food and Resource Policy estimated that locally-produced food accounts for approximately 2.5% of Connecticut’s total food expenditures and if all locally-grown food was consumed in-state it would account for 3.5% of all food expenditures. The Governor’s Council on Agricultural Development has developed a target of 5% of food expenditures on locally-grown food by the year 2020.

Non-Market Benefits of Mansfield Farms

While agriculture is not a significant sector in Mansfield’s economy from the standpoint of direct income and jobs, agriculture does play an incredibly important role in the Town’s economy, sustainability and identity. Many studies have been done to identify, and attempt to quantify, the myriad of benefits that working farmland has on our communities. Farmland:

- contributes to food security and local food supply
- generates more in tax revenues than it costs in services (if privately owned and managed)
- provides food and cover for wildlife / increases biodiversity
- helps protect against flooding
- protects wetlands
- maintains/improves air quality
- can absorb and filter waste water
- retains soil for plant growth and absorbing and sequestering carbon
- enhances local heritage and sense of place
- maintains rural integrity
- provides scenic views / amenity value
- encourages well-being and social health

A 2003 study by the Massachusetts Audubon Society placed a value of $1,381 per acre of farmland and $984 per acre of forestland for these non-market services provided by the land. If you use this value of $1,381, land in agricultural use in Mansfield would be valued at more than $4 million above and beyond the market value of the land (ranging from $90 - $2,400 per acre of farmland based on soil types).

Working lands have impact on other economic drivers in the community. Many studies have found that people will pay more for houses near farmland and we know that working lands
attract visitors and tourists that spend money not just on agricultural products and experiences but across other economic sectors. A vibrant agricultural sector that provides all of the non-fiscal benefits listed above, plays a significant role in quality of life and provides access to local foods supports other economic development activities. As indicated in the larger economic development strategy for Mansfield Tomorrow, “enhancing quality of life” amenities is a key strategy for attracting economic development opportunities such as spin-offs from the proposed Technology Park, attracting companies seeking partnerships with UConn and companies in regional growth industries. The amenities provided by a vibrant agricultural sector make Mansfield a more attractive place for entrepreneurs and others to base their companies, bringing quality jobs and increased economic activity to the town.

One of the main challenges indicated in the economic development strategy is balancing development with quality of life concerns. This means, in part, supporting agriculture and ensuring the conditions exist for agriculture to thrive in Mansfield.

**Supporting Mansfield’s Agricultural Enterprises**

“Mansfield 2020: A Unified Vision Strategic Plan,” developed in 2008 identified “historic and rural character, open space and working farms” as a priority vision point for the town and the 2006 Plan of Conservation and Development includes a policy goal (#2) to, “conserve and preserve Mansfield’s natural, historic, agricultural and scenic resources,” with one of the objectives being, “to protect agricultural and forestry resources and to encourage retention and expansion of agricultural/forestry uses.”

The Town has an active Agriculture Committee that serves as an advisory board to the Town Council and other Town officials, has implemented many of the recommendations from the 2006 POCD and has achieved other significant accomplishments such as being the first town in Connecticut to pass all three local agriculture tax exemptions and abatements (property tax abatements on farm businesses, exemptions on farm buildings and structures and exemptions on farm machinery) – see appendix H for the full language of these tax exemptions and ordinances.

Additional steps the Town has taken to support agriculture include:

- Passed a Right-to-Farm ordinance
- Encouraged agricultural use of Town-owned land
- Published the “Mansfield Grown” brochure, marketing agricultural enterprises in Mansfield
- Supported the Storrs Farmers Market by providing town land for the outdoor market and space at the public library for the indoor market.
- Hired a Natural Resources and Sustainability Coordinator
- Held events, such as a “Farmers Meeting” (2012)
- Made a presentation on agriculture to the Town Council (2010)
- Included an “agriculture” section in the Business portal of the Town website
- Participated in Farm-to-School (apples, pears, peaches, corn, pumpkins, squash from Palazzi Orchards) at Mansfield Public Schools
• Reviewed zoning related to agriculture in 2011 with a commitment to reassess when the “Guidance and Recommendations for CT Municipal Zoning Regulations and Ordinances for Livestock” was published.
• Preserved farmland through subdivision process

**Mansfield Agriculture By the Numbers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mansfield</th>
<th>Tolland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>25,543</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population Living in Households</td>
<td>13,653</td>
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**Land in Agriculture**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land in Agriculture</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prime Farmland Soils</td>
<td>4,202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statewide Important Farmland Soils (acres)</td>
<td>2,896</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locally Important Farmland Soils (acres)</td>
<td>9911</td>
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<tr>
<td>Farmland as a percentage of all land</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in Land in Agriculture 1985-2006</td>
<td>-16%</td>
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</table>

**Distribution of Uses on Mansfield’s Prime Agricultural Soils**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distribution</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Developed</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Turf &amp; Grass</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest</td>
<td>39%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agricultural Field</td>
<td>27%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Land Cover</td>
<td>2%</td>
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**Mansfield Farmland Preservation Fund Acquisitions 1990-2010:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acres</th>
<th>Properties</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>200</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>$973,600</td>
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**Farms**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Farms</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Farms</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of farms which support farming as the primary occupation</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm size (acres)</td>
<td>3 - 700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Agricultural Enterprises</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diverse Production</td>
<td>Dairy products, livestock and meat products, fruits and vegetables, honey, maple syrup, Christmas trees and nursery stock, agritourism experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Uconn</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active Farmland (acres)</td>
<td>700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilities</td>
<td>Equine Center, Dairy Center, Creamery, Livestock Unit, Poultry Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual visitors to the Dairy Bar</td>
<td>20,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Economics of Farming**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Farms with sales over $50,000</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average net Income*</td>
<td>$15,307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in Net Income from 2002-2007*</td>
<td>162%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farming as % of Mansfield's Total Income</td>
<td>0.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population employed in agriculture</td>
<td>&lt;2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmers that sell through Direct Marketing only</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmers that sell wholesale only</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmers that sell through a combination of Direct Marketing and Wholesale</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Retail Outlets**

| Farmers Markets                  | 1 |
| CSA programs                     | 1 |
| Farm stands                      | 6 |
| Other Retail Outlets             | 12 |
| Farms offering Agritourism Experiences or Services* | 2% |

*Data for Tolland County*
Challenges and Opportunities

Identity

Despite all of the work the Town has done to support agriculture and the Town’s diverse and historic agricultural sector, many feel Mansfield is not currently recognized as an agricultural community and Mansfield farmers feel underappreciated. Many feel that the Town “has failed to recognize the importance of local small farms,” and that agriculture is currently seen as a stand-alone issue rather than something that is integrated into the identity of the Town.

Increasing the visibility of this diverse sector and sharing the value of its multiple contributions to the Town will play a major role in the short, medium, and long term viability and growth of agriculture in Mansfield. Integrating knowledge of the agricultural sector and agricultural goals across municipal government and continuing to review and revise regulations to support agricultural production and sales will decrease the chances of municipal-level decisions negatively impacting agricultural viability and improve coordination of services for and support of agricultural enterprises.

It is these kinds of actions that will make existing farmers feel supported and valued and will attract new farmers and agricultural entrepreneurs to Mansfield.

Land

Access to agricultural land is one of the most pressing challenges facing Mansfield’s agriculture. If the loss of farmland continues at the historic rate (total land in agricultural land decreased 16% between 1985 and 2006\textsuperscript{32}) availability of land will pose a significant challenge to the viability of both existing and potential future farmers.

In addition to preserving farmland, it is essential that the Town preserves the existing farmland viewsheds from Route 32, Route 195, Route 6, Pleasant Valley Road, Stearns Road, Mansfield City Rod, Crane Hill Road and Browns Road and considers farmland views when prioritizing farmland for preservation.

Mansfield has the opportunity to increase the percentage of the Town’s prime agricultural soils being farmed through the conversion of some of the land in turf and grass and in forest back to agricultural production.\textsuperscript{33} Defining and protecting existing farmland and prime agricultural soils will help the Town to effectively balance development with a viable agricultural sector and the quality of life concerns associated with open space. Encouraging clusters of agricultural activity and improving signage will increase the visibility of agriculture, and may also contribute to viability by increasing opportunities for sharing infrastructure and knowledge among producers.

Development pressure in Mansfield also threatens open space with the market value for excess acreage (non-farm/forest land, non-building/house lot) in Mansfield ranging from $7,000 to $12,000 per acre for road frontage and $3,500 - $6,000 per acre for rear acreage.\textsuperscript{34} This is in contrast to the 2010 State-wide recommended land use values that range from $90 per acre of pasture to $2,400 per acre for soils that are, “excellent, well drained, typically flat or level, no stones.”\textsuperscript{35} High land values make it more difficult for young farmers to put down roots in Mansfield; this is mitigated to some degree by the opportunity to farm intensively on relatively small acreages.
The Connecticut Department of Agriculture, Working Lands Alliance, Connecticut Farmland Trust and the Connecticut Land Conservation Council are all working to preserve farmland and facilitate access to working lands. The Town has an important role to play in connecting farmers and other landowners with agricultural land with resources and programs available for preservation. In addition to land preservation, the Town can pursue opportunities to make land available for farming through the identification of preserved land with prime agricultural soils that is not currently being farmed and the identification of private land with prime agricultural soils that could be leased to farmers.

Working with UConn to identify other potential lands for active use by new and existing local farmers provides Mansfield with another significant opportunity for increasing activity on productive land in Town. Any farmland developed as part of the Tech Park will be replaced at a 1:1 ratio, with the schedule of conversion to be determined in the permitting process. The University estimates that there will be a total of 34.1 acres disturbed in the development of the Tech Park and has identified 54 acres of land north of the Depot Campus that is suitable for conversion to farmland (48 acres prime agricultural soils and 6 acres with soils of statewide importance). UConn’s commitment to preserve farmland, and to replicate or mitigate for farmland that would be lost to development, is documented and made enforceable through the Economic Impact Statement (EIS). UConn also intends to further reinforce the mitigation commitments through an internal agreement with the Dean of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources (CANR) on a plan and schedule for converting the land to farmland. This could be an opportunity for Mansfield to work with UConn on identifying farmland available for lease for new farmers.

Economics of Farming

There are many components to creating an agricultural identity, but one critical component is maintaining agricultural activity. Farmland that is conserved and farmed is the ultimate goal. In this regard, agriculture in Mansfield faces many of the same challenges being faced throughout the state, the region and even the country.

The average age of farmers in Connecticut is 57.6, higher than the New England average of 56.6. While the average age of farmers has been a concern regionally and nationally for a number of years, in recent years we have seen more young people choosing to farm. With the presence of the University, Mansfield is in a position to engage young people in its agricultural community in ways that would be harder for a more isolated community. There is evidence that some young people are already interested in farming in Mansfield. More can be done to attract and retain a new generation of farmers. It will be important to work with the current generation on transition plans as well where there is interest in passing the farm to another generation.

A significant majority (95% in 2002) of farm households in the United States rely on off farm income to support themselves. There is no evidence that this is likely to change in the near future. Historically, UConn has provided employment to faculty and staff that has supported farming as a seasonal activity. Today, in addition to income, farm households seek off-farm employment to obtain health insurance coverage. It is unclear how this imperative will be affected by changes in health insurance options at the federal level. In the meantime, it will be important to identify and increase the visibility of employment opportunities in and around Mansfield that can complement farming enterprises as one way of encouraging more people to farm.
As consumer tastes change and the costs of production rise, farming has become an increasingly entrepreneurial endeavor in which those seeking to farm full-time (and even part time) often need to move from production of raw materials to production of value-added products. Even those producing raw materials, must, if they choose to market at any significant scale, meet ever higher safety and quality standards to find and maintain a footing in the marketplace. Some of the costs associated with value-added production, trainings and certifications, labeling and packaging, and enhanced distribution can be shared among groups of farmers, but only when there is sufficient volume of similar product to warrant it. With the exception of its dairy operation, Mansfield’s agricultural activity is so diverse and currently at a scale so small as to make it difficult to justify individual farmers investments in any particular type of shared value-added facility. However, as subsidized facilities come on line, existing and future Mansfield farmers will have the opportunity to develop new products and serve new markets.

Throughout the country, not only in Mansfield, farming is often a lifestyle choice as much as an economic endeavor. This means that farmers often lack, or fail to apply, the business skills required to grow their enterprises, establish track records of sales, and qualify for investments that would help them further expand. While those who choose to farm as a lifestyle can and do make important contributions to the working landscape, the environment, and other indirect economic and social aspects of quality of life, continuing agriculture into the future will likely require a mix of lifestyle farmers and entrepreneurial farmers. The entrepreneurial farmers will require the same types of business planning, management, and financing assistance that any small business needs. By understanding the potential for farming as a business, the Town can encourage innovative enterprises and help connect agricultural entrepreneurs with appropriate business-related services.

Markets

Identifying and accessing appropriate market channels is a challenge facing all small farmers in New England. Like others in the region, Mansfield farmers have a number of marketing opportunities available to them. Accessing any of these market channels will take marketing and relationship building; accessing some markets might require the development of a producer cooperative to meet the needs of larger buyers or updating practices to meet GAP certification or organic growing requirements. Investments in marketing, relationship-building, cooperative development and certifications will help facilitate expanded access to markets for Mansfield farmers.

Direct Sales

The value of agricultural products sold was close to $2.6 billion in New England in 2007 up 20% from 2002. With 73% of agricultural products in crop sales and 27% in livestock, Connecticut is similar to Massachusetts and Rhode Island, while Maine and New Hampshire have closer to a 50/50 split and Vermont has a larger majority of livestock sales (85%).

Increasing direct sales to consumers is an emerging market opportunity for all New England farmers. Direct sales make up a little more than 5% of the total market value of agricultural sales New England, and more than 20% of New England farmers do some direct sales (including 26% of Connecticut farms). Connecticut leads the region with the highest average direct market sales per farm at $28,072. While 32% of Tolland County farms had direct sales, it made up only 8% of all agricultural products sold in the State.
Mansfield’s geographical location places the town in proximity to a large population, with many people seeking access to local food. A recent report by The Last Green Valley (TLGV) - Mansfield is one of 35 towns making up the “last green valley” in Massachusetts and Connecticut - identified 300,000 people living in the region and 11 million people living within 2 hours of TLGV, indicating significant potential local demand.42 According to consumption statistics published in the TLGV report, Mansfield residents (living in households, not students) consume approximately 8 million pounds of vegetables, 300,000 pounds of cheese and butter, 2.4 million pounds of poultry and meat and 1.7 million quarts of dairy products annually.43 This indicates significant potential for local food. The current state average household expenditure of food dollars on local food44 is 2.5% of the food budget. If we assume Mansfield residents spend 2.5% of their food dollars on locally produced food they would spend more than $850,000 annually. If that goes up to 5% (the goal set in the Governor’s Council report by 202045) this would go up to $1.7 million in annual spending on local foods.46 This volume of local consumption could support 111 farms at the county average income of $15,307 or 38 farms at $44,568 (livable wage for a family of four)47.

Agritourism

UConn’s Dairy Bar, serving award winning ice cream produced in the Creamery from UConn dairy cows, is one of the top 10 tourism destinations in Connecticut with 20,000 visitors annually. This provides a powerful engine for further development of agritourism, eco-tourism, and adventure tourism opportunities that can be compatible with agricultural enterprises. If 30% of annual dairy bar visitors also visited a local farm or other agritourism destination in Mansfield, that would be 6,000 annual visitors to Mansfield farms.

Agricultural conditions in Mansfield are compatible with production of many different types of crops and agritourism experiences, including nature-based tourism. Many areas of natural diversity (areas of concern with regard to threatened or endangered species) are associated with agricultural land. Many of the lands designated as agricultural include wetlands and areas of significant habitat that can form the basis for combined agri and eco-tourism activities.

Wholesale Markets

Emerging and potential wholesale or direct wholesale markets for Mansfield farmers include the Connecticut Farm-to-School program, new local restaurants, new food outlets, new companies at the Tech Park, and UConn Dining Services. Mansfield Public Schools already participate in the Farm-to-School program, receiving apples, pears, peaches, corn, pumpkins and squash from Palazzi Orchards (in Killingly, CT). The Connecticut farm-to-school program is actively recruiting local farmers to participate in the program.48 Similar to the farm-to-school program, the Connecticut Department of Agriculture also supports a farm-to-chef program, helping to connect restaurants with locally produced food. As more restaurants open in the new Storrs Center, restaurants interested in sourcing local food offer a new marketing opportunity for Mansfield farmers.49 As the Tech Park develops and new business enterprises come to Mansfield, there is potential for increased direct sales through employer-based CSAs. Effective participation in these programs may require scaling up of production and adherence to stricter quality standards, as well as a willingness to accept wholesale prices. A business analysis of farming enterprises for those interested in growth would help farmers identify the mix of crops and market channels that will yield the best overall return. Even though direct sales may occur at a higher price per unit sold, farmers may not be considering the total cost of
per unit direct sales including their time and travel costs. Sometimes, when these costs are considered, and if the quantity of production can be increased and appropriate distribution connections are made, a mix of direct and wholesale markets can prove profitable.

The director of UConn Dining Services, Dennis Pierce, is committed to procuring local foods whenever possible. Dennis has been actively engaged in an initiative to change procurement guidelines for state institutions, making it easier for them to procure local food. There are tentative plans for UConn to move the central warehouse for dining services to a new facility on the Depot campus which will allow the university to do more of their own processing (cut, cook, chill, freeze) making it easier for Dining services to contract directly with local farmers. This type of contracting could increase the stability of revenues for farmers that choose to participate.

One way for Mansfield farmers to take advantage of emerging markets is by working with local distributors and other regional farmers to plan production to meet emerging demand; forming a farmer cooperative is another option for taking advantage of wholesale demand for locally produced foods.

**Organic Production**

New England leads the United States in another agricultural trend, with more than 5% of New England farms with organic sales (versus less than 1% for the entire United States). This is up significantly from just over 2% in 2002. Connecticut's organic sector also increased from 2002 to 2007, with 4% of Connecticut farms being certified organic. The 2007 census showed that less than 0.5% of land in farms is being farmed organically in Connecticut (0.3% of land in Tolland county is being farmed organically) versus 9% of farms and 5.5% of land in Vermont. New England trends toward increased organic certification show that there is significant opportunity for expansion of organic production in Connecticut. While becoming organically certified can be time consuming and expensive, organic production leads to higher prices for farmers and lessens the negative environmental impacts from farming and may actually improve environmental conditions.

**Food Security**

In a recent UConn study evaluating community food security at the town level, Mansfield ranked 145 out of 169 Connecticut towns in terms of the likelihood that a resident lacks access to enough nutritious food for an active, healthy life. In other words, based on Mansfield’s population mix of income and socioeconomic characteristics, there is a relatively higher likelihood that a Mansfield resident is food insecure compared to 144 other towns in the state. In terms of food purchasing, Mansfield residents have slightly below average number of opportunities to purchase food at grocery stores and other food retailers compared to the rest of the state (ranking 89 out of 169). Finally, Mansfield residents are slightly above average in terms of their successful utilization of public food assistance programs compared to other towns (ranking 56 out of 169). Addressing access to food, food assistance and access to food retail (which will be addressed in part by the new Price Chopper planned for the Storrs Center) can provide new opportunities for local farmers. These issues have been addressed in other communities through greater access at farmers markets through the acceptance of SNAP/EBT (this is a strategy the Storrs Farmers Market should pursue with the Connecticut Department of Social Services) and the use of mobile markets or pop up markets. The USDA recently announced increased funding to expand support for farmers markets accepting SNAP.
benefits through the availability of Point-of-sale equipment and extends the funding to direct
marketing farmers serving consumers receiving SNAP benefits. These are all potential
additional outlets for Mansfield farmers that will also increase food security for the community.

**Infrastructure**

Gaps in food system infrastructure have been identified as a challenge to agricultural viability
at the state, regional and local level. The gaps consistently identified include facilities for value-
added processing, aggregation and distribution of locally produced products and meat
processing services. The Governor’s Council on Agriculture plans to focus on studying
“infrastructure gaps and opportunities for the aggregation, light processing, and distribution of
Connecticut Grown products,” with a focus on the existing Hartford Regional Market and the
opportunity there to develop a “green-goods hub” to serve institutional markets across the
state. Recommendations include the addition of a food processing center that aggregates and
processes produce from local farms. The Last Green Valley strategy calls for a regional food
hub with a commercial kitchen to process and prepare food as well as a facility to aggregate
and distribute to local markets, and restaurants, retailers, schools and other institutions.
Both of these initiatives offer opportunities for Mansfield producers and others in food system
businesses. Additional initiatives to support a mobile slaughtering unit and the re-activation of
slaughtering facilities that have gone off-line and multi-use processing centers that allow for
meat, poultry, fruit and vegetable processing are ongoing in the region and should be followed
and supported by the Town. These infrastructure upgrades and additions are essential to a
sustainable local food system and provide the opportunities Mansfield farmers need to support
and grow agricultural enterprises whether the infrastructure is located in Mansfield or nearby.
Filling infrastructure gaps will provide farmers with access to value-added processing and
access to aggregation and distributions systems that can facilitate access to a broader range of
buyers and markets.

**UConn**

It is clear that there is an important role for UConn to play in the success of agriculture in
Mansfield. UConn appears to have underutilized potential to contribute to a vibrant local
agriculture sector and there are many roles the University could play in Mansfield’s agriculture
strategy. A strong, collaborative relationship with UConn that supports the Town’s
agricultural vision should provide multiple opportunities for collaboration and achieve goals of
both the Town and the University.

While the development pressure caused by the University provides a challenge to Mansfield
agriculture the school also provides local and regional farmers with opportunities. And while it
is true that UConn is a state university with obligations beyond the Town in which it is located,
the fact that it is located in Mansfield provides many potential opportunities for productive
partnerships.

The Dean of the UConn School of Agriculture and Natural Resources recommended that the
Mansfield Agriculture Committee invite a representative from the college to participate on the
Committee as a non-voting or ex-officio member. This type of collaboration would provide a
clear and consistent way to make connections between the University and the Town that is
solely focused on agriculture. It would also allow for a regular transfer of information and
identification of opportunities for mutually beneficial collaboration.
An example for potential collaboration is the new funding available through the federal Local and Regional Food Systems Marketing Program. This funding is available to state entities, including universities, for projects that:
- Create wealth in rural communities through the development of local and regional food systems and value-added agriculture; and
- Develop direct marketing opportunities for producers, or producer groups.
- Assess challenges and developing methods or practices that could assist local and regional producers in marketing agricultural products that meet the mandates of the Food and Drug Administration’s new Food Safety Modernization Act.

The solicitation prioritizes applications that industry groups, community-based organizations and other local and regional project stakeholders.57

The presence of the University means there is a large population of students, some of whom have a demonstrated interest in agriculture. While many residents are skeptical of student labor on farms, farm apprenticeship programs do exist and function successfully in the United States and abroad. There is an opportunity to explore more direct engagement of interested students and the Town’s own youth in supporting agricultural production and marketing not only at the University but on area farms. The more youth that have positive experiences on Mansfield farms, the greater the likelihood that some will choose to continue farming in or around Mansfield.

The new Vice President for Economic Development at the University, Mary Holz-Clause, is interested in developing a central processing facility, developing cooperatives and providing information on opportunities to purchase agricultural products through a website or smartphone application.58 These are all activities that align with the goals and strategies identified in this report.

Additional opportunities for partnership with the University were identified in this work, including: working with Career Services around farm labor issues and the potential of a farm-to-work program; co-sponsoring agriculture-related events; cross pollination of UConn staff on Mansfield boards and Mansfield staff or farmers on relevant UConn committees. Other opportunities included connecting with “non-agriculture” resources at the university, such as working with the Landscape Architecture program to do large landscape planning in town and presenting maps and other sophisticated documents for selling a concept (like farmland restoration), connecting with researchers to work with Mansfield farmers to understand their water needs (ensuring that their voice is heard at the table when water allocation is discussed), and engaging the science and natural resources clubs in discussion on sustainable agriculture in Mansfield.

While some in town are reluctant to engage UConn, interviews conducted for this strategy suggest openness to productive partnerships on the part of the University that should not be dismissed without further exploration. The resources UConn brings to the table and the myriad ways in which they could be instrumental in strengthening agriculture in Mansfield and the region as a whole are simply too significant to ignore.

Regional Partnerships

Mansfield faces many of the same challenges faced by neighboring communities in the region. These shared challenges can be turned into shared opportunities by partnering with...
neighboring communities and others in the region to support and grow a viable regional food system. Many of the goals and strategies identified in this report align with those of the Governor’s Council on Agriculture and The Last Green Valley’s regional Call to Action, including:

- Study infrastructure gaps and opportunities for the aggregation, light processing, and distribution of Connecticut Grown products. (Governor’s Council 2012 Recommendation.)
- Develop and Invest in a comprehensive marketing strategy for Connecticut agriculture. (Governor’s Council 2012 Recommendation.)
- Perform a comprehensive review of agricultural labor issues and develop initiatives that provide an adequate workforce for Connecticut farm businesses. (Governor’s Council 2012 Recommendation.)
- Establish a bridge between the state departments of Agriculture and Education through a dedicated agricultural education coordinator, and develop ways to integrate agriculture into Connecticut’s K-12 curriculum. (Governor’s Council 2012 Recommendation.)
- Earmark state and federal funding to develop a food science program and facility at UConn (Food Innovation Center). (Recommendation to the Governor’s Council.)
- Create a regulatory environment that promotes energy diversification, efficiency, and resiliency for agriculture. (Recommendation to the Governor’s Council.)
- Commission a study for the feasibility of a Connecticut Agricultural COOP/Processing Center. (Recommendation to the Governor’s Council.)
- Hold “on farm” legislative picnics/forums which includes a tour, food and educational presentations for legislators and their families. (Recommendation to the Governor’s Council.)
- Create an Agriculture Education Matching Program under the Agriculture Viability Grants to be used to educate public about the benefits of CT grown. (Recommendation to the Governor’s Council.)
- Protect land that is currently farmed or identified as valuable for farming, because of its soils or other characteristics and maximize its use for agricultural purposes. (TLGV Call To Action Priority Strategy.)
- Ensure that farmers have sufficient knowledge, tools, infrastructure and workforce to succeed. (TLGV Call To Action Priority Strategy.)
- Expand the markets, products and processing available to farmers and end-users.
- Advocate the use of local foods by local restaurants, grocery stores and institutions, including schools and hospitals. (TLGV Call To Action Priority Strategy.)
- Educate residents of TLGV and the surrounding region about the significant value of local foods and their production. Facilitate easy access to those foods. (TLGV Call To Action Priority Strategy.)
- Educate municipal officials about the value of working lands and encourage support of agricultural operations through their fiscal and land use policies. (TLGV Call To Action Priority Strategy.)
- Encourage the start of new agricultural operations and the continuation of existing farms by new generations. (TLGV Call To Action Priority Strategy.)
- Promote agritourism and agritainment. (TLGV Call To Action Priority Strategy.)

This overlap means that Mansfield not only has a ready set of regional partners but also that there is no need to start from scratch on many of the strategies and actions identified.
## Summary of Challenges and Opportunities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenges</th>
<th>Opportunities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Identity</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some do not recognize Mansfield as an agricultural community.</td>
<td>Increase the visibility and knowledge of local agriculture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some farmers feel underappreciated and that the town does not recognize the value of local farms.</td>
<td>Promote agricultural experiences for the public.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture is not integrated into the identity of the town (seen as a stand-alone issue).</td>
<td>Update Town website to give agriculture a significant presence (provide relevant information for residents, visitors and producers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Become a regional leader and model of farm-friendliness.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Educate and engage municipal staff, boards and commission about the impact of their decisions on the agriculture sector</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ensure regulations, policies and incentives support agricultural viability</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Integrate agriculture throughout the updated POCD</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Land</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Loss of farmland (total land in agricultural land decreased 16% between 1985 and 2006(^{59}))</td>
<td>Increase the percentage of the Town's prime agricultural soils being farmed through the conversion of some of the land in turf and grass and in forest back to agricultural production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High price of farmland in Mansfield</td>
<td>Support small-acreage farming</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Continue farmland preservation with local, regional, state and federal resources</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Facilitate access to farmland</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Make new farmland to come available at the Depot campus available for lease</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Economics of Farming</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average age of Connecticut farmers is 57.6</td>
<td>Attract new farmers and agricultural entrepreneurs</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Support transition planning</td>
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<tr>
<td>The significant majority of farm households in the US (and Mansfield) rely on off-farm income to support themselves</td>
<td>Increase the visibility of complementary employment opportunities in and around Mansfield</td>
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<tr>
<td>Challenges</td>
<td>Opportunities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cost of agricultural production is on the rise</td>
<td>Move from production of raw materials to production of value-added products</td>
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<td>Understand the potential for farming as a business; help connect agricultural</td>
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<td></td>
<td>entrepreneurs with business-related services</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Connect farmers with available local, regional and statewide resources.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Attract and support agriculture-related businesses and agribusiness expansion</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Markets</th>
<th>Support agribusiness marketing efforts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mansfield farmers desire, and need, access to more and more diverse markets</td>
<td>Direct Sales: Mansfield's geographical location places the town in proximity to a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>large population, with many people seeking access to local food.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Capture significant potential for local demand. If Mansfield residents spent 2.5%</td>
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<td></td>
<td>of their food budget for vegetables, dairy products and meat locally it would</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>amount to $850,000 annually, if this increased to 5% it would amount to $1.7</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>million.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Promote agritourism. UConn’s dairy bar serves more than 20,000 customers</td>
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<td></td>
<td>annually and is a top tourist destination in the state providing local and</td>
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<td></td>
<td>regional farmers with a ready supply of agricultural tourists. If 30% of</td>
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<td></td>
<td>dairy bar visitors also visited a local farm of farmers market that would be</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>an additional 6,000 visitors annually.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agricultural conditions in Mansfield are compatible with production of many</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>different types of crops and agritourism experiences, including nature-based</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>tourism. Many areas of natural diversity are associated with agricultural</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>land, areas of significant habitat that can form the basis for combined agri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and eco-tourism activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenges</td>
<td>Opportunities</td>
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<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barriers to wholesale markets for small farm operations include production volumes, packaging, certifications (GAP, organic), and relationships with aggregators.</td>
<td>Emerging and potential wholesale or direct wholesale markets for Mansfield farmers include the Connecticut Farm-to-School program, new local restaurants, new food outlets, new companies at the Tech Park, and UConn Dining Services. Support exploration of the feasibility of a regional producer cooperative to provide access to more markets for Mansfield farmers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organic Production</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Less than 0.3% of land in farms in Tolland County is being farmed organically. Organic certification can be time consuming and expensive.</td>
<td>Organic production leads to higher prices for farmers and lessens the negative environmental impacts from farming. The Connecticut DOAG has a cost-share program which reimburses up to 75% of the cost of organic certification.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Food Security</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mansfield ranked in the bottom 25% of all Connecticut towns in a ranking of Population at Risk (likelihood that a resident is food insecure)</td>
<td>Addressing access to food retail for Mansfield residents (which will be addressed in part by the new Price Chopper planned for the Storrs Center) can provide new opportunities for local farmers. Greater access to local foods through the acceptance of SNAP/EBT at the Storrs Farmers Market. USDA recently announced new funding to support the use of SNAP benefits at Farmers Markets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Infrastructure</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaps in food system infrastructure have been identified as a challenge to agricultural viability at the state, regional and local level. The gaps consistently identified include facilities for value-added processing, aggregation and distribution of locally produced products and meat processing services.</td>
<td>State-wide and regional initiatives exist to address these gaps. Mansfield can partner with other Towns and organizations in the region to fill some of the infrastructure gaps in Mansfield or support the development of needed infrastructure in neighboring communities. Filling infrastructure gaps will provide farmers with access to value-added processing and access to aggregation and distributions systems that can facilitate access to a broader range of buyers and markets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenges</td>
<td>Opportunities</td>
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<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>UConn</td>
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<tr>
<td>UConn expansion will increase development</td>
<td>Increase communication that is focused on agriculture between the Town and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pressure.</td>
<td>UConn by appointing a UConn staff member to the Agriculture Commission.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some Mansfield residents are reluctant to</td>
<td>Potential for a Food Innovation Center to be located at UConn with access to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>engage UConn.</td>
<td>value-added processing, business services, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collaborate with UConn to address food systems issues in Mansfield and across</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the state (central processing facility, developing cooperatives, marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>opportunities, etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Engage UConn students to work on farms or provide other support of Mansfield's</td>
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<td></td>
<td>agricultural vision through engagement of the appropriate student clubs.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Take advantage of existing UConn events (such as Cornucopia) to highlight and</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>market Mansfield farms.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Regional Partnerships**

Mansfield faces many of the same challenges faced by neighboring communities in the region. These shared challenges can be turned into shared opportunities. Partnering with neighboring communities and others in the region to support and grow a viable regional food system. Many of the goals and strategies identified in this report align with those of the Governor's Council on Agriculture and The Last Green Valley's regional *Call to Action* (see full text of *Challenges and Opportunities* for a complete list of the overlapping goals, strategies and actions.)
Agriculture in Mansfield Tomorrow

Mansfield residents, represented by members of the Agriculture Commission and participants in the agricultural strategy development process, have a shared vision for the future of agriculture in Mansfield that includes:

- An agricultural sector that is visible, understood, and appreciated by Town staff and the public;
- Citizens that are supportive of agriculture based on its multiple contributions to the larger economy, sense of place, and environment;
- A municipal government that facilitates the development of agriculture based on shared understanding of its needs and contributions;
- The Town is “known” for being agriculture-friendly;
- Working lands and prime agricultural soils are recognized and protected;
- Increased land in agricultural production;
- Producers access multiple markets for locally produced agriculture products;
- A new generation of farmers and agricultural entrepreneurs are engaged and supported; new types of agriculture are viable;
- Integration into regional agriculture initiatives; farmers benefit from regional collaboration;
- Producers take advantage of regional and state initiatives;
- Producers benefit from Mansfield’s position as a top agritourism destination;
- A strong, collaborative relationship with UConn that supports the Town’s agricultural vision.

The goals strategies and actions presented in this report are focused on ensuring that agriculture in Mansfield is vibrant and able to contribute to the economy. They take into account the state of agriculture in Mansfield today, as well as in the region, and are designed to achieve the shared vision (above) of agriculture in Mansfield over the next 20 years.

Relevant State-wide and Regional Initiatives

There is a buzz about agriculture in Connecticut, with the industry of agriculture experiencing, “something of a renaissance, with more and more of the state’s residents interested in both the practice of farming and in the outcomes of that vocation,” according to the first annual report by the Governor’s Council for Agricultural Development.60 Mansfield’s shared vision for the future of agriculture in the Town does not exist in a vacuum and cannot be achieved by working within the Mansfield community alone. When it comes to supporting and growing agriculture, Mansfield does not have to go it alone; in fact, it will be well served by partnering with the neighboring communities, relevant agriculture and consumer organizations, and the State in addressing its concerns, many of which are widely shared.

The Town has the opportunity to align its resources and strategies with those being put forth at the regional level by The Last Green Valley in “Green and Growing. A Call to Action: A Comprehensive Regional Plan to Sustain and Expand Food, Fiber, and Forest Production and Related Agricultural Economies in The Last Green Valley” and at the State level by the Governor’s Council for Agricultural Development. Both of these plans addresses many of the same challenges and opportunities prioritized in Mansfield and provide the Town with an important opportunity to identify partners and opportunities for collaboration to achieve this agricultural vision. In addition to the two strategic plans mentioned above there are numerous
organizations and programs, such as AGvocate, Working Lands Alliance and Farm Bureau that are working to achieve some of these same goals, and community initiatives, like the CLiCK (commercially licensed cooperative kitchen) in Willimantic, that can play an important role in the development of new market opportunities and agriculture viability for Mansfield producers. Relevant initiatives and potential partners are identified throughout the Goals, Strategies and Actions section to identify some existing opportunities for collaboration, these opportunities are sure to evolve and grow in the coming years. See appendix J for general information about these relevant partners and projects.

There are many opportunities for partnership with other Towns and local, state and regional organizations like, AGvocate, Working Lands Alliance, Joshua’s Trust, CT Farm Bureau, CT Farmland Trust, American Farmland Trust, CT Department of Agriculture, Cooperative Extension, CT agricultural research station, CT Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) and CT Department of Agriculture (DOAG).
Goals, Strategies and Actions

This work synthesizes input from the public agriculture forum, interviews with more than 20 local, regional and state-wide agricultural stakeholders, input from the focus group and best practices research focused on prioritized strategies. Strategies were discussed and prioritized by a focus group of 18 people representing a wide variety of interests and areas of agricultural expertise in the region. Based on draft goals, strategies and actions, the Mansfield Agriculture Committee recommended two “foundational” goals (conditions that will result when action goals are achieved) for the Town’s agriculture strategy and three “actionable” goals that have detailed strategies and actions for achievement. The strategies and actions under each goal appear in the order of priority determined by the agriculture focus group and the Agriculture Committee. “Call out” boxes in this section (highlight examples of best practices and opportunities related to the goals, strategies and actions. The table below summarizes the goals and strategies.

Figure 4: Goals and Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Foundational Goals</th>
<th>Mansfield is an active leader in the region’s agricultural identity and successes</th>
<th>Mansfield supports sustainable, productive agriculture, farmland preservation and restoration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Actionable Goals: Strategies:**

**Agriculture is visible and valued in the community**
- Increase visibility of local/regional agriculture
- Promote agricultural experiences for the public
- Share information on agriculture-related activities, policies, products, activities and experiences

**Mansfield’s agribusinesses are green and growing**
- Support the expansion of agricultural operations and agriculture-related businesses
- Support new market channels for local agricultural products
- Support marketing of agriculture and agriculture-related businesses
- Preserve existing farmland resources and increase access to land for agricultural use
- Connect farmers with resources

**Mansfield is a model and regional leader for farm-friendliness**
- Mansfield Town Council understands and declares that agriculture is essential to Mansfield and ensures municipal staff, boards and commissions are engaged and educated about the impact of their decisions on agriculture
- Integrate agriculture throughout the updated Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD). Farmers’ voices are heard on a range of Town Commissions and Boards to bring the challenges and opportunities related to agriculture to the table.
- Continually review and revise regulations, policies and incentives to support agricultural viability
- Ensure farmers and landowners are aware of agriculture-related regulations, tax exemptions, conservation options, etc.
Foundational Goal: Mansfield is an active leader in the region’s agricultural initiatives and successes

Growing Mansfield’s agriculture sector and providing tools, markets and infrastructure Mansfield farmers need to thrive needs to be done at a regional level. It is not possible, nor does it make sense, for Mansfield to try to accomplish all of the strategies and actions identified in this document alone. This foundational goal names the need and desire for Mansfield to collaborate with other Towns in Eastern Connecticut and The Last Green Valley to meet the challenges facing agriculture in the region and take advantage of the opportunities. Successful achievement of all the “action” goals will contribute to this “foundational” goal.

Foundational Goal: Mansfield supports sustainable, productive agriculture, farmland preservation and restoration

Without land available for farming, Mansfield will lose not only its agricultural sector but also the rural character and identity that is so important to the large majority of Mansfield residents. Ensuring that available land is in productive use and local farmers are practicing sustainable agriculture is vital to the role of agriculture in the overall sustainability of Mansfield. Successful achievement of all the “action” goals will contribute to this “foundational” goal.

Actionable Goal # 1 Agriculture is visible and valued in the community

Mansfield engages residents and showcases benefits of agriculture – economic, cultural, health, environmental.

Engaging and educating the public about the role and value of agriculture in Mansfield will lead to an environment where citizens are supportive of agriculture based on its multiple contributions to the larger economy, sense of place and healthy environment. Educating the public about the economic, environmental and cultural importance of farming and agriculture in Connecticut is a primary goal of the Working Lands Alliance. TLGV has a similar goal, to “educate residents of TLGV and the surrounding region about the significant value of local foods and their production [and] facilitate easy access to those foods.” The State of Connecticut’s Buy CT Grown campaign and Farm Map tool are raising awareness at a state-wide level.

West Virginia Value Chain Cluster:

The West Virginia Value Chain Cluster funded through a Rural Jobs and Innovation Accelerator Challenge grant, provides business coaching, training and marketing for food-related businesses in 17 West Virginia counties. The goal of this work is “better coordination of the many ‘links’ involved in bringing to market fresh local food from small-scale producers. In addition to coordination, any new or existing producer, processor, aggregator of distributor of local food in the 17-county region can apply for:

- Business planning help
- Legal assistance (e.g contracts, incorporation)
- Web technology to access markets
- Consulting services for marketing and branding
- Flexible, patient loans through Natural Capital Investment Fund
- Development of HACCP Plans
- Recipe Formulation
- Facility Design; Compliance with State & Federal Regulations & 3rd Party Audits
- Website Development & Label Design
- Transition to Organic Certification
- Energy Audits
- Assistance with REAP Cost Share Grant Applications and other programs
- Set-up of Accounting Systems
- Market Assessment and Planning
- Feasibility Studies for processing or distribution facilities

www.vc2.org
http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/ruraljobsaccelerator.html
Strategy 1.1: Increase visibility of local/regional agriculture

Increasing the visibility of local agricultural production contributes to both a shared understanding of the value of agriculture and the viability of local producers. There are many ways to increase the visibility of agriculture in Mansfield and the actions below provide opportunities for engaging the range of Mansfield citizens from school children to seniors in the Town’s agricultural sector. When the Town recognizes and celebrates agriculture it sends a message to all citizens that this agriculture is valued in the community.

Enhancements to the farm to school program that both increase the volume of local products being served and the educational component of the program impact farmers directly and educate the Town’s youngest citizens. The Growing Minds Farm to School program in North Carolina incorporates school gardens, local food cooking classes and demonstrations, farm field trips and the serving of local food in school cafeterias. In addition to these activities geared towards students, the program provides resources for teachers, nutrition directors, cafeteria staff, parents, extension staff and farmers to encourage and sustain farm-to-school efforts. A holistic approach to farm to school like Growing Minds engages students, staff, parents and farmers to fully realize the role and value of local agriculture.

Signage is a way to increase the visibility of agriculture for both local residents and visitors.

Surveying residents on their attitudes about agriculture allows people to reflect on the role of agricultural in their personal lives and in the Town, provides collated information about the citizen’s support of agriculture and measures opinions about locally grown food, land preservation, or other investments. The Town of Lebanon used an agriculture viability grant to conduct a survey of residents regarding land usage and current referendums and used findings to illustrate community support in the POCD and other venues.

Actions:

- **School Engagement.** Highlight local foods on school menus; incorporate nutritional and agriculture-based curriculum; provide students experiential learning opportunities through farm visits, taste-tests and composting.
- **Community Engagement.** Encourage programs and resources for residents to grow their own food at home or in community gardens as a way to increase interest and awareness of local agriculture.
• Signage. Post signs at Town gateways showing support for agriculture. Develop signage to identify preserved land. Increase the visibility of agricultural producers through directional signs.
• Celebrate (awards, dinner, etc.) farmers or others who are making a contribution to agriculture in the community with “farmer of the year” awards or “farmer appreciation” awards.
• Feature local products at community events.

**Strategy 1.2: Promote agricultural experiences for the public**

Engaging the public through agricultural experiences provides an opportunity for residents and visitors to see up close what agriculture is, where agricultural products come from and meet the farmers in the community.

**Actions:**

- Encourage agritourism in Mansfield (weddings, farm to table events, agriculture and natural resource tourism)
- Support and encourage private/family non-commercial agriculture
- Support and encourage 4-H and FFA students and projects
- Work with UConn to link events with Mansfield farmers and agriculture. (Trips to local farms and other agritourism sites, food from local farms, etc.)
- Support community gardens and community farm projects.

**Strategy 1.3: Share information on agriculture-related town policies, activities, products and experiences.**

Disseminating information is another important way to increase awareness of the agricultural sector so that it is understood and appreciated. Information sharing needs to happen on a consistent and on-going basis; running a one-time column on town policies to support agriculture is not going to have a significant impact. Sharing information regularly and across multiple formats (newspaper, Town website, direct mail, brochures, etc.) will increase the likelihood that more people will see the material and many will see it more than once. Other communities have:

- Sent an annual town-side mailer to let people know about the Town’s support

A survey of Lebanon registered voters found:

- 96% believe that having working farms makes Lebanon a better place to live.
- 93% consider it important to preserve additional open space and farmland in Lebanon.
- 86% assume Lebanon is one of the largest agricultural communities in Connecticut.
- 77% believe the Town should fund open space preservation efforts.
- 71% feel that farmland and open space preservation should be Lebanon’s planning focus over the next decade.

- From Lebanon, CT POCD

More than 20 years of COCS [Cost of Community Services] studies around the country have shown that farmland and other open space generate more public revenue than they require in municipal services. Even when farmland is assessed at its current agricultural use value under Public Act 490, farmland generates a surplus to help offset the shortfall created by residential demand for public services. A review of COCS studies done in Connecticut towns shows that for each dollar of property tax revenue generated by working lands, on average only 31 cents is required in municipal services.

- Planning for Agriculture: A Guide for CT Municipalities
Run monthly quizzes/games to increase agriculture awareness in the local paper
Worked with realtors and new homeowners to provide education about living next to a farm and the Town’s “right to farm” ordinance.

Actions:
- Communicate the fiscal and other benefits of farmland and open space and any town policies applicable to agriculture to relevant audiences. Document current revenues and expenses on a land use basis through a Cost of Community Services (COCS) study.
- Develop/understand the full range of benefits related to agriculture to help communicate why agriculture is important to people with different priorities (i.e. highlight the role that agriculture plays in sustainability, economic development, tourism, etc.).
- Add an “Agriculture Portal” to the Town website that includes a listing of all agricultural businesses, and highlights local agricultural products and experiences.
- Encourage articles and features spotlighting an agriculture enterprise or activity.

Actionable Goal # 2 Mansfield’s agribusinesses are green and growing

This goal references The Last Green Valley’s 2011 report, “Green and Growing - A Call to Action: A comprehensive regional plan to sustain and expand food, fiber and forest production and related agricultural economies in the Last Green Valley.” This “call to action” by TLGV is intended to provide a useful regional strategy that will identify factors affecting successful agricultural and related businesses, synchronize efforts of partners and provide a reliable local/regional food system.

Sustainable Agriculture:
- Sustains the economic viability of farm operations (profitable)
- Maintains or enhances the resource base upon which it depends (maintain or improve soil, groundwater, surface water and air quality through soil conservation and regeneration, nutrient management and recycling, biodiversity; protects the integrity of natural systems)
- Integrates natural biological cycles and pest control tools with production practices (grazing, cover crops, ecological weed and pest management, and crop, livestock and landscape diversity)
- Improves the quality of life of individuals and communities (access to employment opportunities, health care, education, social services, cultural activities; community vitality)
- Makes productive use of the knowledge and skills of farmers
- Is durable and resilient to disturbances (pest outbreaks, market variability)
- Uses resources efficiently / uses renewable and recyclable resources effectively (minimize use of non-renewable inputs that cause harm to the environment or human health; use energy saving devices and on-farm renewable energy generation; maintain the use of recyclable resources such as groundwater at rates less than recharge rates to sustain such resources)

What does it mean to for Mansfield’s agribusinesses to be green and growing? It means supporting and expanding the agriculture sector in Mansfield in a way that ensures that...
agricultural enterprises have positive impacts on the economy and on the environment and human health. It means Mansfield prioritizes agricultural economic development and sustainable agricultural practices.

Economic development activities that support and grow the agricultural sector in Mansfield are essential to the shared vision for the future of Mansfield. This type of support facilitates the development of agriculture, supports producers in accessing multiple markets and attracts a new generation of farmers and agricultural entrepreneurs. Ensuring that growth in the agriculture sector prioritizes healthy farm practices and emphasizing the environmental benefits of farming to the public will emphasize the role of agriculture in a sustainable future for Mansfield.

Strategy 2.1: Support the expansion of agricultural operations and agriculture-related businesses

In attracting and supporting agriculture-related businesses, it is essential that Mansfield work on a regional level to reduce any duplication of efforts, support existing infrastructure initiatives and ensure that they will meet the needs of Mansfield’s producers. The first recommended action from the Governor’s Council on Agricultural Development is to, “study infrastructure gaps and opportunities for the aggregation, light processing, and distribution of Connecticut Grown products.” TLGV strategies also address the need for expanded agricultural infrastructure and processing capacity as integral to the viability of the region’s farmers.

Town staff or members of the Agriculture Committee should be aware of and engaged in regional initiatives such as CLiCK (Commercially Licensed Cooperative Kitchen) in Willimantic and initiatives around a regional and/or mobile slaughter unit. The Town should also work with UConn to follow the progress of the potential Food Innovation Center and the potential relocation of the commissary, which will include facilities for washing, chopping and freezing produce.

Actions:

- Support food processing and agricultural product distribution initiatives (at both the town and regional levels)
- Provide flexibility in zoning to enable development of infrastructure that would support agriculture-related businesses such as inputs, food waste, aggregation, processing, distribution, etc.
- Identify a liaison for the potential Food Innovation Center being planned to ensure that it will meet the needs of local and regional farmers.
- Incubate and retain new farm operations.
- Give out small grants to farmers for development of a CSA, signage or other marketing materials.
- Support initiatives to remove market barriers (institutional purchasing policies, GAP certification) for producers.

“In looking at strategies to promote agriculture, you need to be holistic … you need to promote storage, processing tractor sales, etc. If it isn’t in your town, it needs to be in your region” – Jim Gooch, CT Farmland Trust
### Food Innovation Centers

The Food Innovation Center (FIC) program was developed by the USDA to provide technical and business development assistance to agricultural producers seeking to enter into ventures that add value to commodities or products they produce.

There are currently about a dozen innovation centers funded through the USDA, and a number of private or non-profit food hub efforts that also aim to help support value-added producers. These innovation centers typically offer services that help aggregate small to medium sized farmers products to enable them to reach new or larger markets that farmers may not have been able to reach on their own. The centers also typically offer processing facilities that help create a graduated system for value-added producers to scale up their operations without investing too much money in infrastructure and equipment costs. Innovation centers also tend to offer SERVSAFE classes and other educational opportunities for producers, such as speakers that may offer insights on marketing methods, labeling requirements, or other topics. These centers also can serve as a congregating place for producers at similar stages of growth to learn from each other and make connections. Farmers and producers typically have the opportunity to request equipment and educational needs to be incorporated into the facility as funding allows.

Existing Food Innovation Centers Include:

- **Agriculture Innovation and Commercialization Center**, Center for Food and Agricultural Business, Purdue University.
- **Agriculture Utilization Research Institute**, Minnesota.
- **Georgia Centers of Innovation**
- **Kansas AgriFoods Innovations**, Kansas State University.
- **The Keystone Agricultural Innovation Center**, Pennsylvania State University.
- **Montana Agriculture Innovation Center**
- **New York Agricultural Innovation Center**, Cornell University.
- **Product Center for Agriculture and Natural Resources**, Michigan State University.
- **Rutgers University Food Innovation Center**, New Jersey.
- **Vermont Agriculture Innovation Center**, Vermont Agency of Agriculture.
- **Wisconsin Agriculture Innovation Center**, University of Wisconsin.

(http://agmrc.org/directories__state_resources/agmrc_directories/usda-agricultural-innovation-centers/)

### Strategy 2.2: Support new market channels for local agricultural products

Mansfield farmers have identified the need to access more profitable markets and find markets for their products. Connecting farmers with restaurants, institutional buyers and other potential wholesale markets is one way to increase access to markets. Due to the small scale of many Mansfield farms, accessing these buyers would likely require a cooperative agreement between farms or an independent aggregator to act as a liaison between individual farms and larger buyers.

**Actions:**

- Support campaign/incentives that encourage the use/sale of local products at restaurants, retail establishments, schools and institutions (including UConn Dining Services).
• Help connect restaurants with local farmers by encouraging/supporting participation in the State’s “Farm to Chef” program.
• Increase the volume of local foods in public and private institutions (i.e. school food service, day care, and pre-k programs, hospitals, correctional facilities, etc.).
• Help make connections between farmers and new restaurants, stores, and the distributors that supply them.

**Strategy 2.3: Support marketing of agriculture and agriculture-related businesses**

Marketing is essential to the success of many of Mansfield’s agricultural businesses. This can include direct sales of locally produced products through signage, advertising, CSA development and investment in the Storrs Farmers Market. Farmers Market investments can include an electronic terminal to accept and process SNAP benefits, construction of a pavilion in a dedicated location, incentivizing vendors by subsidizing insurance, vendors fees and the development of a marketing plan that is incorporated into the Town’s tourism and economic development plan.

The Town also has an opportunity to make Mansfield a major agritourism destination in the state. Anchored by the UConn dairy bar (with 20,000 annual visitors and named one of five “Best Classic Attractions” by Yankee Magazine, Best in Connecticut for Ice Cream and a top tourist destination in the state65) the Town can become an all-day destination for visitors looking for an agricultural experience and promote producers choosing to include an agritourism component to their business. The CT DOAG Agricultural Direction Signage Program (example at right) is designed to direct tourists and regional consumers off state roadways to local roads where farm operations are established. Currently, signs are paid for by farmers, but Mansfield could have a program that provides cost-sharing for the signs or integrate the implementation of directional signage into a larger Agricultural Viability Grant. The University of Vermont had developed an agritourism web-based resource for farmers that provides a place for farmers to gather information about agritourism, learn about events near them, and network with farmers, practitioners and professionals. The site features a number of different resources ranging from agritourism "how-to" guides and economic benefit studies to state-wide and/or region-wide agritourism associations.66 The University of Vermont has also published a research brief summarizing the regional, national and international government activities in support of agritourism.67 The Town can also play a role in connecting farmers to other local and regional agritourism activities and initiatives (UConn Dairy Bar and animal barns, Walktober, Winter Wandering, Summer Sensations) and ensure interested farmers are listed on the State’s “Farm Map” and in The Last Green Valley’s Visitor Guide.

Using the Town website to share information is a relatively inexpensive way to provide information about Mansfield’s agricultural enterprises and provide access to relevant resources for farmers by including information that is relevant to Mansfield farmers from other places already aggregating information, like AGvocate, CT Farm Bureau, The Last Green Valley.
Actions:

- Facilitate a vibrant farmers market.
- Apply annually for money through Connecticut’s Farm Viability Grant program and identify appropriate projects to market local agriculture.\(^{68}\)
- Share sponsorship of events for regional farmers that allow for networking, provide education on marketing channel selection and explore the potential for a regional cooperative to facilitate sales to institutions, restaurants, and grocery stores.
- Support and promote agritourism in Mansfield and the region. Ensure that regulations support compatible commercial enterprises on farms and appropriate signage and parking. Support non-profit community farms (local and regional) that provide education and community food and farm experiences. Help connect interested farmers to other local and regional agritourism destination, activities and initiatives.
- Update Town website to contain information on events, resources, and opportunities offered by organizations relevant to agriculture in Mansfield.

**Strategy 2.4:** Preserve existing farmland resources and increase access to land for agricultural use

Access to farmland is essential to engaging a new generation of farmers and increasing the land in production in Mansfield. This is a national, as well as state-wide, regional and local issue being addressed by many organizations in response to the decreasing land in farming trend. The Connecticut Department of Agriculture, Working Lands Alliance, Connecticut Farmland Trust and the Connecticut Land Conservation Council are all working to preserve farmland and facilitate access to working lands.

The Town has an important role to play in connecting farmers and other landowners with agricultural land with resources and programs available for preservation. Identifying UConn-owned land that could be available for lease to farmers is one potential strategy that was identified during this process.\(^{69}\)

Actions under this strategy fall into four categories, 1) Preservation; 2) Expanded use of agricultural land; 3) Restoration of agricultural land; and 4) Stewardship.

**Actions:**

*Preservation*

- Commit municipal funds and support to farmland preservation.
- Provide financial match to state and federal programs that purchase development rights on agricultural land in Mansfield.
- Identify all farms that are 30 acres or less and conduct outreach for the State’s Community Farms Preservation Program.\(^{70}\)
- Support the preservation of state and federal agricultural land including UConn agricultural land.\(^{71}\)
- Identify and consider Town-owned farmland for permanent preservation for agricultural use.

“Gaining access to high quality, affordable farmland is one of the most difficult obstacles for beginning farmers and expanding agricultural operations.” – Vermont Land Trust Farmland Access Program
Expand use of agricultural land

- Identify opportunities for farming on Town and other public lands in Mansfield, including state (including UConn) and federal lands and support advocacy for its agricultural use.
- Identify private land and land trust parcels that could be leased for agricultural use and explore opportunities with landowners to lease land for farming (utilize the CT Farmlink program and Farmland ConneCTions Guide).
- Continue to lease Town-owned land to local farmers for agricultural use.
- Support efforts to connect farmers and farmland, including succession planning with current farmers.

Restoration of agricultural land

- Identify and consider Town-owned farmland for permanent preservation for agricultural use.
- Identify privately owned and land trust parcels that could be restored to agricultural use.
- Assist landowners in applying for the State’s Farmland Restoration Program.

Stewardship

- Support and promote environmentally sensitive farming practices.
- Prioritize new farmers for lease of select Town-owned farmland.

Strategy 2.5: Connect farmers with resources

Bringing farmers together to connect directly with one another and resources available helps producers take advantage of regional and state initiatives and resources and can facilitate regional collaboration. Because many farmers in the region face the same challenges as Mansfield farmers and require access to the same type of information and resources sharing these events with neighboring towns makes a lot of sense. These events should be structured so that Mansfield farmers have opportunities to get to know farmers in surrounding communities. Event topics could include: Land preservation options and strategies; Best agricultural practices that provide environmental and public benefits; development of a Plan of Conservation for individual farms; transitioning to organic production; and opportunities for expanded production, coordinated farmer efforts and marketing channels.

University of Missouri Extension Field Days

The University of Missouri sponsors “field days” at research areas throughout the state. These field days showcase techniques, tools and technology in response to the current needs of the State’s farmers.

"Research presented at our field days is almost totally driven by those we serve. Our scientists gather information about problems farmers are facing and work to solve those. Research is done in collaboration with farmers, industry, government and other universities in order to determine the best approach - economically, environmentally and socially - for the challenges that confront Missouri farmers." John Poehlmann, assistant director of the Missouri Agriculture Experiment Station.


Alliance for Sustainable Agricultural Production Field Day

Focus on sales, marketing and networking to develop relationships and help farmers coordinate efforts to access markets like specialty food stores, local schools. The goal is to help local farmers coordinate efforts and dramatically increase sales with a 4-part agenda.

1. Share information and help increase sales of locally grown foods
2. Discuss sales/marketing options: Sales-to-buyers and direct-sales to consumers
3. Discuss produce needs and requirements
4. Develop stronger relationships between local farmers and local buyers
Actions:

- Work with other Towns to share the responsibility for putting together an annual or semi-annual event that brings together regional farmers, people from relevant support organizations and resources.
- Partner with UConn to make information about upcoming speakers, events, research related to agriculture more easily accessible to the public.
- Support the development of a network of Mansfield farmers that communicate regularly, collaborate and share information.
- Connect farmers with state programs and resources at CT Department of Agriculture like Farm-to-School, Farm-to-Chef, Farm Viability Grants, etc.

Actionable Goal # 3 Mansfield is a model and regional leader for farm-friendliness

Welcoming new farmers and agribusinesses while building on the foundation of work already done at the town-level, Mansfield has the opportunity to become a regional leader and “model town” when it comes to farm friendliness and welcoming new farmers and agribusiness. Integrating agriculture into the identity of the Town through training, education, outreach and Town regulations, policies and incentives that support agricultural viability is an important step in becoming known as a regional leader for farm-friendliness. It is these strategies and activities that will attract the next generation of Mansfield farmers and agricultural entrepreneurs and an increase in the productive use of the Town’s prime agricultural soils.

Strategy 3.1: Mansfield Town Council understands and declares that agriculture is essential to Mansfield and ensures municipal staff, boards and commissions are engaged and educated about the impact of their decisions on agriculture.

Enabling a common understanding of agriculture among all municipal departments is identified as a permitted activity for agriculture councils in the State’s Act Authorizing Local and Regional Agricultural Councils.74

Based on the results of the February 2nd workshop, there is a felt need to infuse awareness of benefits and issues related to agriculture throughout the local government (and community); to ensure that local government understands how government decisions impact agriculture in the community and to increase the knowledge, engagement and empathy for agriculture. It is important for local government to understand both the range of issues faced by farmers and the benefits of agriculture to the community as a whole.

Having this declaration be understood and declared by the Town Council will ensure that Mansfield’s agricultural identity is infused throughout the town government and boards.

There are a numerous ways that Town can go about educating municipal employees and others who serve on boards, committees and commissions on the role of agriculture in the community. Whether the Town moves forward with developing a structured training that is delivered annually to all staff and commission members or puts together events for employees and other decision-makers to highlight the role of agriculture in Mansfield, building a shared understanding of challenges and opportunities and educating decision-makers is an important
step in ensuring that Mansfield has a municipal government that is supportive of agriculture and able to facilitate the development of agriculture. As is ensuring that potential impacts of each department on agricultural viability (e.g., where culverts are placed can impact usability of pasture) are identified and staff are educated accordingly.

There is an opportunity for this type of training to be integrated into a “Know Your Town” education campaign that ensures municipal employees, decision-makers and committee members have an up-to-date understanding of agriculture as well as other important issues, sectors and components of Mansfield’s identity.

The Last Green Valley has identified, “Educate municipal officials about the value of working lands and encourage support of agricultural operations through their fiscal and land use policies.” as one of its primary strategies and the AGvocate program is actively engaged in the education of municipalities on agricultural issues. Both The Last Green Valley and AGvocate can act as resources for Mansfield in the development of training for Mansfield’s municipal staff, boards and commission members.

**Actions:**

- Provide ongoing education to municipal employees and committee members on the importance of agriculture in the community, the contributions it makes to the community, and why it is the Town’s policy to support agriculture. Education will include the identification of potential impacts of each department, board and commission on agricultural viability and educate staff accordingly.

**Strategy 3.2: Integrate agriculture throughout the updated Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD).**

The POCD provides the Town with an important opportunity to highlight the role and value of Agriculture in Mansfield and illustrate how agriculture is integrated into the Town’s current and future identity. The Town of Lebanon uses its Plan of Conservation and Development as a training tool, requiring, “all new commission members to read the POCD and follow the plan.”

The Lebanon POCD not only has a significant agriculture section, but references the role of agriculture in six of the eight sections of the plan, including Economic Development, Natural Resources, Historical and Cultural Resources, Future Land Use Plan, and implementation.

**Actions:**

- Ensure that the POCD highlights the role and value of agriculture in Mansfield.
- Include an Agriculture section in the Plan of Conservation and Development that provides a summary of agriculture in Mansfield, context and the selected goals, strategies and actions.
- Include agricultural information and goals in all of the relevant sections of the POCD, including, but not limited to, sustainability, economic development, natural resources and overall priorities of the Town.
- Include specific steps to address the needs of local farmers and the agricultural goals of the community with an implementation plan that assigns responsibility for each action.

**Strategy 3.3: Farmers’ voices are heard on a range of Town Commissions and Boards to bring the challenges and opportunities related agriculture to the table.**
Farmers are often the best advocates for agriculture and will play an important role in ensuring that Mansfield has an agricultural sector that is visible, understood and appreciated. Farmers will also be the first to understand how decisions being made by other boards and committees at the municipal level will impact the viability of agriculture. Providing opportunities for members of the Agriculture Committee to “roll up their sleeves” with the Town Council, Planning and Zoning Commission and other relevant committees will help to successfully integrate agriculture at the municipal level. If there are not farmers serving on relevant Town committees, the Agriculture Committee should make presentations to, or conduct joint meetings with, those committees to ensure cross-fertilization of goals, activities, etc.

**Actions:**

- Allocate space for, and invite farmers to serve on all relevant Town committees, commissions and boards such as, Commission on Community Quality of Life, Conservation Commission, Economic Development Commission, Clean Energy Team, Open Space Preservation Committee, Strategic Planning Committee, Sustainability Committee, Town/University Relations Committee.
- Plan semiannual meetings at which representatives of each committee inform the Agriculture Committee and others of the actions being taken related to agriculture.

**Strategy 3.4: Continually review and revise regulations, policies and incentives to support agricultural viability.**

The Town should continue to review regulations, policies and incentives that impact agricultural viability (looking for impacts on farm productions and sales, compatible commercial enterprises on farms and farm energy) to ensure that regulations are continually improved as opportunities become available to be farm-friendly. "Planning for Agriculture: A Guide for Connecticut Municipalities," updated in 2012, also provides detailed information on how agriculture is affected by municipal rules and regulations, how these rules can hinder farm viability and changes that can be made to support agriculture at the municipal level. The Agriculture Committee should continue to provide valuable information and guidance about zoning issues relating to agriculture and there are several resources available specifically for Connecticut municipalities that identify potential changes to regulations to support agriculture.

**Actions:**

- Advocate for legislation and policies that support farming.
- Conduct annual outreach with farmers to identify any existing regulations that are impacting agricultural viability.
- Develop regulations that support, and remove barriers to, farm viability, including but not limited to: keeping of livestock (per Recommendations for Connecticut Municipal Zoning Regulations and Ordinances for Livestock), compatible farm businesses, signage, parking, housing for seasonal workers, hoop houses or other growing structures, horticulture, farm-energy opportunities and incentives for low-income households in order to purchase local food.
Strategy 3.5: Ensure farmers and landowners are aware of agriculture-related regulations, tax exemptions, conservation options, etc.

If few people know about the work the Town is doing to pass right-to-farm laws, tax exemptions and revise regulations to support agricultural enterprises, this work has very limited value. Getting the word out on these accomplishments as well as conservation options will increase the impact of these actions and let everyone know that Mansfield is an agriculture-friendly community.

Actions:

• Conduct annual outreach to all farmers and landowners to make sure they are aware of new and existing agriculture-related regulations, tax exemptions and conservation options and publish on Town website.
**Foundational Goals, Actionable Goals, Strategies and Actions Summary**

**Foundational Goals:**
- Mansfield is an active leader in growing the region’s agricultural identity and successes
- Mansfield supports sustainable, productive agriculture, farmland preservation and restoration

### Actionable Goal 1: Agriculture is visible and valued in the community

#### Strategy 1.1: Increase visibility of local/regional agriculture

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>School Engagement. Highlight local foods on school menus; incorporate nutritional and agriculture-based curriculum; provide students experiential learning opportunities through farm visits, taste-tests and composting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Community Engagement. Encourage programs and resources for residents to grow their own food at home or in community gardens as a way to increase interest and awareness of local agriculture.</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Signage. Post signs at Town gateways showing support for agriculture. Develop signage to identify preserved land. Increase the visibility of agricultural producers through directional signs.</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>Celebrate (awards, dinner, etc.) farmers or others who are making a contribution to agriculture in the community with “farmer of the year” awards or “farmer appreciation” awards.</td>
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<td>E</td>
<td>Feature local products at community events.</td>
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#### Strategy 1.2: Promote agricultural experiences for the public

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Encourage agritourism in Mansfield (weddings, farm to table event, agriculture and natural resource tourism)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Support and encourage private/family non-commercial agriculture</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Support and encourage 4-H and FFA students and projects</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Work with UConn to link events with Mansfield farmers and agriculture (trips to local farms and other agritourism sites, food from local farms, etc.).</td>
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<td>E</td>
<td>Support community gardens and community farm projects.</td>
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#### Strategy 1.3: Share information on agriculture-related policies, products, activities and experiences

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<td>A</td>
<td>Communicate the fiscal and other benefits of farmland and open space and any town policies applicable to agriculture to relevant audiences. Document current revenues and expenses on a land use basis through a Cost of Community Services (COCS) study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Develop/understand the full range of benefits related to agriculture to help communicate why agriculture is important to people with different priorities (i.e. highlight the role that agriculture plays in sustainability, economic development, tourism, etc.).</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Add an “Agriculture Portal” to the Town website that includes a listing of all agricultural businesses, and highlights local agricultural products and experiences.</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Encourage articles and features spotlighting an agriculture enterprise or activity.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Actionable Goal 2: Mansfield’s Agribusinesses are Green and Growing</td>
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<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Strategy 2.1: Support the expansion of agricultural operations and agriculture-related businesses</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Support food processing and agricultural product distribution initiatives (at both the town and regional levels).</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>B. Provide flexibility in zoning to enable development of infrastructure that would support agriculture-related businesses such as inputs, food waste, aggregation, processing, distribution, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>C. Identify a liaison for the potential Food Innovation Center being planned at UConn to ensure that it will meet the needs of local and regional farmers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>D. Incubate and retain new farm operations.</td>
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<td>E. Give out small grants to farmers for development of a CSA, signage or other marketing materials.</td>
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<tr>
<td>F. Support initiatives to remove market barriers (institutional purchasing policies, GAP certification) for producers.</td>
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| **Strategy 2.2: Support new market channels for local agricultural products** |
| A. Support campaigns/incentives that encourage the use/sale of local products at restaurants, retail establishments, schools and institutions (including UConn Dining Services). |
| B. Help connect restaurants with local farmers by encouraging/supporting participation the State’s "Farm to Chef" program. |
| C. Increase the volume of local foods in public and private institutions (i.e. school food service, daycare, and pre-k programs, hospitals, correctional facilities, etc.). |
| D. Help make connections between farmers and new restaurants, stores, and the distributors that supply them. |

| **Strategy 2.3: Support marketing of agriculture and agriculture-related businesses** |
| A. Facilitate a vibrant farmers market. |
| B. Apply annually for money through Connecticut’s Farm Viability Grant program and identify appropriate projects to market local agriculture. |
| C. Share sponsorship of events for regional farmers that allow for networking, provide education on marketing channel selection and explore the potential for a regional cooperative to facilitate sales to institutions, restaurants, and grocery stores. |
| D. Support and promote agritourism in Mansfield and the region. Ensure that regulations support compatible commercial enterprises on farms and appropriate signage and parking. Support non-profit community farms (local and regional) that provide education and community food and farm experiences. Help connect interested farmers to other local and regional agritourism destination, activities and initiatives. |
| E. Update Town website to contain information on events, resources, and opportunities offered by organizations relevant to agriculture in Mansfield. |

| **Strategy 2.4: Preserve existing farmland resources and increase access to land for agricultural use** |
| A. Commit municipal funds and support to farmland preservation. |
| B. Provide financial match to state and federal programs that purchase development rights on agricultural land in Mansfield. |
| C. Identify all farms that are 30 acres or less and conduct outreach for the State’s Community Farms Preservation Program. |
**Strategy 2.4: Preserve existing farmland resources and increase access to land for agricultural use**

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<tr>
<td><strong>D</strong></td>
<td>Support the preservation of state and federal agricultural land including UConn agricultural land.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>E</strong></td>
<td>Identify and consider Town-owned farmland for permanent preservation for agricultural use.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>F</strong></td>
<td>Identify opportunities for farming on Town and other public lands in Mansfield, including state (including UConn) and federal lands and support advocacy for its agricultural use.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>G</strong></td>
<td>Identify private land and land trust parcels that could be leased for agricultural use and explore opportunities with landowners to lease to land for farming (i.e. Farmlink and Farmland ConneCTions programs).</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>H</strong></td>
<td>Continue to lease Town-owned land to local farmers for agricultural use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>I</strong></td>
<td>Support efforts to connect farmers and farmland.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>J</strong></td>
<td>Identify and consider Town and other public land in Mansfield that could be used or restored for agricultural use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>K</strong></td>
<td>Identify privately owned and land trust parcels that could be restored to agricultural use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>L</strong></td>
<td>Assist landowners in applying for the State’s Farmland Restoration Program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>M</strong></td>
<td>Support and promote environmentally sensitive farming practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>N</strong></td>
<td>Prioritize new farmers for lease of select Town-owned farmland.</td>
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**Strategy 2.5: Connect farmers with resources**

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<tr>
<td><strong>A</strong></td>
<td>Work with other Towns to share the responsibility for putting together an annual or semi-annual event that brings together regional farmers, people from relevant support organizations and resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B</strong></td>
<td>Partner with UConn to make information about upcoming speakers, events, research related to agriculture more easily accessible to the public.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C</strong></td>
<td>Support the development of a network of Mansfield farmers that communicate regularly, collaborate and share information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>D</strong></td>
<td>Connect farmers with state programs and resources at CT Department of Agriculture like Farm-to-School, Farm-to-Chef, Farm Viability Grants, etc.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Actionable Goal 3: Mansfield is a model and regional leader for farm-friendliness**

**Strategy 3.1: Mansfield Town Council understands and declares that agriculture is essential to Mansfield and ensures municipal staff, boards and commissions are engaged and educated about the impact of their decisions on agriculture**

| A | Provide ongoing education to municipal employees and committee members on the importance of agriculture in the community, the contributions it makes to the community, and why it is the Town’s policy to support agriculture. Education will include the identification of potential impacts of each department, board and commission on agricultural viability and educate staff accordingly. |

**Strategy 3.2: Integrate agriculture throughout the updated Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD)**

| A | Ensure the POCD highlights the role and value of Agriculture in Mansfield. |
| B | Include an Agriculture section in the Plan of Conservation and Development that provides a summary of agriculture in Mansfield, context and the selected goals, strategies and actions. |
| C | Include agricultural information and goals in all of the relevant sections of the POCD, including, but not limited to, sustainability, economic development, natural resources and overall priorities of the Town. |
| D | Include specific steps to address the needs of local farmers and the agricultural goals of the community with an implementation plan that assigns responsibility for each action. |

**Strategy 3.3: Farmers’ voices are heard on a range of Town Commissions and Boards to bring the challenges and opportunities related to agriculture to the table**

| A | Allocate space for, and invite, farmers to serve on all relevant Town committees, commissions and boards such as, Commission on Community Quality of Life, Conservation Commission, Economic Development Commission, Clean Energy Team, Open Space Preservation Committee, Strategic Planning Committee, Sustainability Committee, Town/University Relations Committee. |
| B | Plan semiannual meetings at which representatives of each committee inform the agriculture committee and others of the actions being taken related to agriculture. |

**Strategy 3.4: Continually review and revise regulations, policies and incentives to support agricultural viability**

| A | Advocate for legislation and policies that support farming. |
| B | Conduct annual outreach with farmers to identify any existing regulations that are impacting their agricultural viability |
| C | Develop regulations that support, and remove barriers to, farm viability, including but not limited to, keeping of livestock, compatible farm businesses, signage, parking, housing for seasonal workers, hoop houses or other growing structures, horticulture, farm-energy opportunities and incentives for low-income households in order to purchase local food. |

**Strategy 3.5: Ensure farmers and landowners are aware of agriculture-related regulations, tax exemptions, conservation options, etc.**

| A | Conduct annual outreach to all farmers and landowners to make sure they are aware of new and existing agriculture-related regulations, tax exemptions and conservation options and publish on Town website. |
Appendices

*The following appendices are available under separate cover.*

Appendix A: Process
Appendix B: Connecticut Definition of Agriculture
Appendix C: Mansfield Open Space Acquisitions with Farmland
Appendix D: Agriculture Forum Summary
Appendix E: Agriculture Focus Group Summary
Appendix F: Focus Group Worksheets
Appendix G: Phone Interviews
Appendix H: UConn College of Agriculture and Natural Resources Land Use Task Force Report
Appendix I: Mansfield Agriculture Ordinances and Tax Abatements
Appendix J: Mansfield Farmer Survey
Appendix K: Relevant Partners and Projects
Appendix L: Case Studies
1 For more information on Mansfield Tomorrow, go to www.mansfieldtomorrow.com.
3 http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Help/FAQs/General_FAQs/
4 2010 Census Data.
8 Email Communication. Irene Luciano, Town of Mansfield, Assessor. LucianoIE@Mansfieldct.org, 5/20/13.
9 Act 490 - 2010 Recommended Land Use Values.
10 There are a range of opinions regarding the transformation of forest land to agricultural field. There is a common understanding that tracts of forest land larger than 100 acres should be left in tact, but many believe that smaller parcels adjacent to open farmland can, and should, be converted back to farm land.
18 Phone Interview. Greg Weidemann, Dean, UConn College of Agriculture and Natural Resources. 4/8/13.
20 Assumes 11,027 jobs in the community at average salary of $49,637 per Peter Kwass, Mansfield Economy Fact Sheet.
23 CSA stands for Community Supported Agriculture, a popular way for consumers to buy food directly from farmers through a subscription program. In this model, the consumer pays for a “farm share” (a percentage of the product produced that season) up front and receives a weekly box of produce during the growing season. This provides farmers the opportunity to do marketing and have cash flow during the winter and spring seasons.
26 Act 490 - 2010 Recommended Land Use Values.
30 Mansfield Land Cover Over Agricultural Soils.
http://clear.uconn.edu/projects/town.asp?townname=78&Go=Go
31 Mansfield Land Cover Over Agricultural Soils.
http://clear.uconn.edu/projects/town.asp?townname=78&Go=Go
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33 There are a range of opinions regarding the transformation of forest land to agricultural field. There is a common understanding that tracts of forest land larger than 100 acres should be left in tact, but many believe that smaller parcels adjacent to open farmland can, and should, be converted back to farm land.
34 Email Communication. Irene Luciano, Town of Mansfield, Assessor. LucianoIE@Mansfieldct.org. 5/20/13.
35 Act 490 - 2010 Recommended Land Use Values.
36 Phone Interview. Tom Callahan, Vice President, UConn, 05/29/13. Email Correspondence. Tom Callahan, Vice President, UConn. 5/29/13.
39 Email Communication. Rich Miller, Director of Environmental Policy, UConn. 06/13/13. The Economic Impact Statement is available at: http://www.envpolicy.uconn.edu/NHR%20Final%20EIS.pdf
40 2007 Census of Agriculture. State and County Data.
43 Assumes Mansfield population living in households, 13,653 (per US Census); assumes annual consumption of 585 pounds of vegetables, 22 pounds of cheese and butter, 176 pounds of poultry/meat and 124 quarts of milk per person per year (http://www.tlgv.org/uploads/Publications/Green_Growing/GreenGrowingWeb.pdf)
46 Assumes same consumption rates identified in TLGV report “Green and Growing” and vegetables purchased at $1.50 per pound, cheese and butter purchased at $5 per pound, meat and poultry purchased at $7 per pound and milk products purchased at $2.25 per quart.
47 The living wage in Connecticut is calculated at $21.47 for two adults and two children (http://livingwage.mit.edu/states/09). If we assume 2080 hours in a year, that is an annual income of $44,567.60. The number of farms supported by local consumption is calculated by dividing the annual income by the estimated expenditures on local food of $1,70,601.03 – see previous note.
48 Information about participating in the CT Farm-to-School program can be found at: http://www.ct.gov/doag/lib/doag/farm_to_school_images/farm-to-school_how_to_participate.pdf
Information on the Farm-to-Chef program is available at:
http://www.ct.gov/doag/cwp/view.asp?a=2778&q=330830

Phone Interview. Dennis Pierce, Director of Dining Services, UConn. (860) 486-3128. April 10, 2013.


Email communication. Jiff Martin. 7/23/13.


“Green and Growing - A Call to Action: A comprehensive regional plant to sustain and expand food, fiber and forest production and related agricultural economies in the Last Green Valley.” 2011. Page 52.


Phone Interview. Phil Chester, Planner, Town of Lebanon. 3/28/13.

“Green and Growing - A Call to Action: A comprehensive regional plant to sustain and expand food, fiber and forest production and related agricultural economies in the Last Green Valley.” 2011.

http://msuextension.org/publications/AgandNaturalResources/MT200813AG.pdf

Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE). “What is Sustainable Agriculture?” http://www.sare.org/Learning-Center/SARE-Program-Materials/National-Program-Materials/What-is-Sustainable-Agriculture

http://www.umass.edu/umext/jgerber/principi.htm

http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2610163/


Any open space developed as part of the Tech Park will be replaced at a 1:1 ratio, likely at the Depot Campus (Phone Interview. Tom Callahan, Vice President, UConn, 05/29/13). This could be an opportunity for
Mansfield to work with UConn on identifying farmland available for lease for new farmers and/or a farmer incubation program in Mansfield. For more information, see Challenges and Opportunities.


71 It is important to note that while this strategy was widely supported by many people interviewed for this report and attending the Agriculture Focus Group, this is not a strategy that has received support from the University. While there has been a clear message from the University that there are no existing plans to develop land in active use (or stop active use of these lands) now or in the near future, the University feels that it is not in the University’s best interest to put restrictions on that land and constrain the University for future generations. (Phone Interview. Tom Callahan, Vice President, UConn, 05/29/13.) Mansfield should partner with Working Lands Alliance (WLA) to pursue this project. WLA is actively engaged in the preservation of state-owned agricultural land.

72 The Connecticut Farmlink Program is a State-run clearinghouse for connecting farm seekers with owners of farmland interested in selling or leasing their land. http://www.farmlink.uconn.edu/


75 Participants in the April 30th agricultural focus group were mixed on whether or not the training for municipal employees, board members and decision-makers should be required. Twelve participants felt the training should be required to ensure that it was received and to highlight the Town’s commitment. Seven participants felt that the training should not be required. This group felt that requiring the training would backfire and create a negative feeling towards agriculture. One potential solution they offered was, “to make the training so fun everyone would want to participate.”

76 Phone Interview. Phil Chester, Planner, Town of Lebanon. 3/28/13.
