

# Strengthen the Economic Viability of Farms

Improving farm viability integrates many approaches, including climate-smart agriculture practices, land and market access, increased funding and/or opportunities for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) farmers, urban agriculture, and other measures that increase opportunities for farmers from all backgrounds.

In 2022, almost sixty percent of New England’s nearly 31,700 farms had less than \$10,000 in sales. While their individual sales numbers may seem small, these farms collectively operated one-third of the region’s agricultural land. The remaining forty percent of farms with more than \$10,000 in sales operated just over 2.5 million acres of farmland. The economic



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viability of both groups is key to maintaining the region’s agricultural land base.\*

As recent climate disasters and the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrate, there is a dire need for policies that support farms and businesses. Local

farms are often a primary source of locally grown and fresh produce for BIPOC communities in urban areas. Improved farm viability measures will help incentivize more urban growers as a secondary source of income, strengthening agricultural and climate resilience.

Our policy work seeks to improve the agricultural viability of New England’s farms and farmers. New England’s land base must be able to withstand the pressures of development, climate impacts, and the changing face of the market while retaining adequate soil quality, being equipped for land transfer, and managing financially profitable operations.



CHERYL CESARIO

*Dairy heifers grazing on spring pastures in Addison County, Vermont.*

\* USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service, 2022 Census of Agriculture. Complete data available at [www.nass.usda.gov/AgCensus](http://www.nass.usda.gov/AgCensus).



WINTER CAPLANSON

*Sugar House at Trapp Family Lodge, Stowe, Vermont*

**Priorities**

- ▶ Identify, expand, and fund market opportunities for New England producers.
- ▶ Increase funding and opportunities for farm-to-institution grant and incentive programs.
- ▶ Sustain investments in on-farm viability through business planning, technical assistance, and implementation of grants for value-added processing or direct-to-consumer marketing.
- ▶ Increase food security infrastructure funding to improve local food system supply chains such as the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural

Resources Food Security Infrastructure Grant Program.

- ▶ Reduce tax burdens for small farms and urban farms.
- ▶ Implement farm investment tax incentives.
- ▶ Make assistance and funds for BIPOC farmers a priority to increase their long-term land tenure and agricultural viability.

**Relevant New England Programming**

- ▶ New England Farmer Microgrants Program
- ▶ New England Climate and Agriculture Programs