Agriculture in Maine:
Are we the Future Food Basket of New England?

Forecasting the Future - KVCC

Fairfield, ME - June 28, 2015
# AGRICULTURE TRENDS

## Number of Farms - % change from 2002 to 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>US</th>
<th>New England</th>
<th>Maine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-1%</td>
<td></td>
<td>+12%</td>
<td>+12%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: US Agricultural Census

## Land in Farms - % change from 2002 to 2012

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>US</th>
<th>New England</th>
<th>Maine</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-2%</td>
<td></td>
<td>+6%</td>
<td>+6%</td>
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Source: US Agricultural Census
MAINE AGRICULTURE TRENDS

Number of Farms: change from 2002 to 2012

Source: US Agricultural Census
A New England Food Vision describes:

- A possible future in half a century, in which New England produces at least half of the region’s food, and perhaps as much as 2/3:
  - Farming and fishing are important regional economic forces
  - Soils, forests, the ocean and waterways are cared for sustainably
  - Healthy diets are promoted as the norm
  - All residents have access to healthy food and no one is hungry
Background:

- New England has gone from a largely wooded to a predominantly agricultural landscape, then returned to forest.

- The amount of land producing food today is very small—only about 5% (less than 2 million acres) of a region with almost 15 million inhabitants.

- Maine factors into this Vision in a big way – potential for 3-4x more land in agricultural production (up to 2-2.5 million acres)
WHAT IS NEEDED?

• **Farmers** – access to land and training; innovative/adaptive
• **Research & Technical Assistance** – scale appropriate/adaptive
• **Infrastructure development** – aggregation, distribution, processing, new markets/new ways to reach markets
• **Policies** – to support sustainable growth on many levels; local and state level tools to compliment/augment federal resources
• **Consumers** – educated and engaged base
• **Collaboration** – producers, researchers, economists, educators, NGO’s, State Departments, etc.
• **Innovation** – Cross-sector and systems thinking
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A NEW ENGLAND FOOD VISION

Sustainable Farming and Fishing

- Connects farmers & fisherman to consumers
- Promotes fair access to land for farmers
- Promotes equitable access for owner-operated fishing vessels
- Supports creation of community and school gardens, and farm education sites
- Ensures that expanded farming and fishing safeguards water quality, energy conservation by promoting environmental and biodiversity stewardship