

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

US	New England	Maine
- 1%	+ 12%	+12%

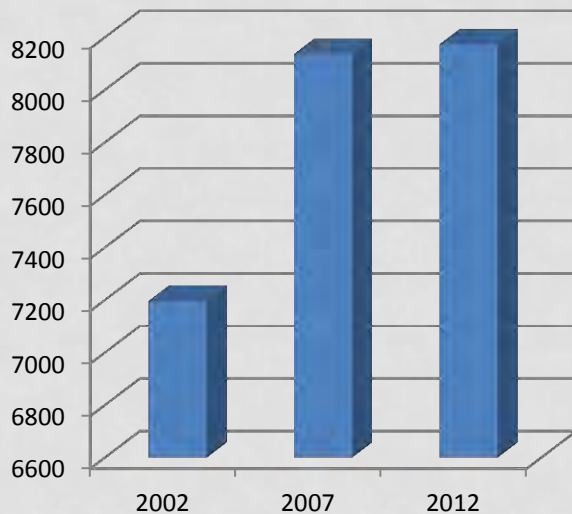
Land in Farms - % change from 2002 to 2012

US	New England	Maine
- 2%	+ 6%	+6%

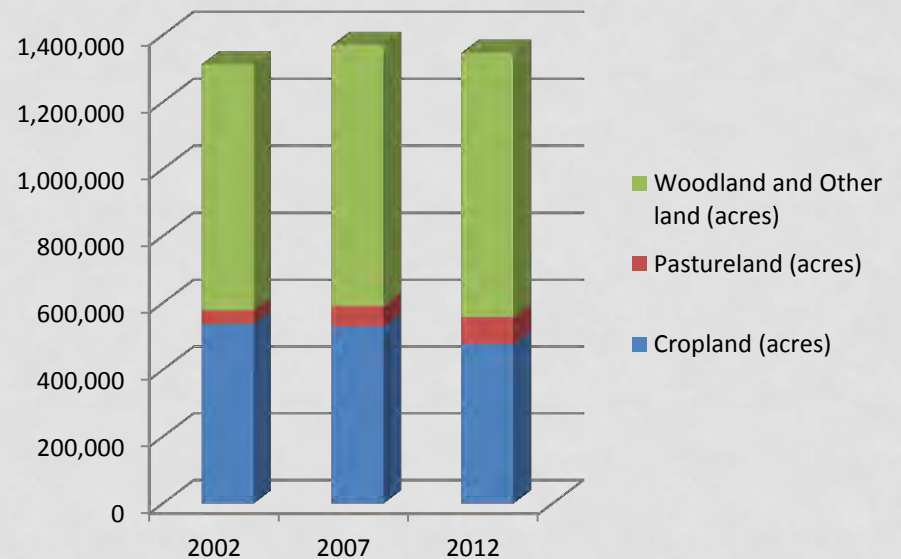
Source: US Agricultural Census

MAINE AGRICULTURE TRENDS

**Number of Farms:
change from 2002 to 2012**



Farmland in Maine



Source: US Agricultural Census

A New England Food Vision



- *Healthy Food for All*
- *Sustainable Farming and Fishing*
- *Thriving Communities*



Brian Donahue, Joanne Burke, Molly Anderson, Amanda Beal, Tom Kelly,
Mark Lapping, Hannah Ramer, Russell Libby & Linda Berlin (2014)

www.foodsolutionsne.org/new-england-food-vision

A NEW ENGLAND FOOD VISION



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

A NEW ENGLAND FOOD VISION

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

