The Status of Agriculture in Barnstable County

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Mission and Goals of Project

• Protect existing farms in Barnstable County
• Encourage future agricultural growth
• Encourage land use programs and regulations that ensure farmland protection
• Increase public awareness of local agriculture and its benefits
Rationale of the Agricultural Study

Need for understanding the current status of farming on Cape Cod!

- Unprecedented population growth
- Lack of policies, regulations, and programs that support agriculture
- Expanding interest in locally grown products
- Community desire to preserve Cape Cod’s rural character
Components of Project

• Assess the contribution to Cape Cod’s economy of land currently in agriculture

• Determine the loss of farmland in Barnstable County over time.

• Identify existing undeveloped land that is suitable for agriculture.

• Analyze the benefits of locally grown food and products.

• Research the incentives and impediments to agriculture at the local, regional, state, and national level.

Our focus today:
• Compile a detailed farm inventory of current agricultural land use on Cape Cod as well as historical land use.
The Farmland Inventory

Follows the Massachusetts General Law Chapter 128: Section 1A. Farming, agriculture, farmer; definitions include the following:

- Cultivation and tillage of the soil
- Dairying
- Production, cultivation, growing and harvesting of any agricultural, aquacultural, floricultural or horticultural commodities
- Growing and harvesting of forest products upon forest land
- Raising of livestock including horses
- Keeping of horses as a commercial enterprise
- Keeping and raising of poultry, swine, cattle and other domesticated animals used for food purposes
- Keeping of bees and furbearing animals for commercial purposes
- Forestry or lumbering operations
Collecting Tabular Data

**Other Resources**
- Town Agricultural Commissions
- Town historical records
Information included:
- Retail name (if retail)
- Owner(s)
- Assessor's ID
- Physical address
- Land use code
- Classification
- Acreage
- Top products produced
## Results #1: Acreage in Agricultural Use on Cape Cod

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town</th>
<th>Land in 61A</th>
<th>Land not in 61A</th>
<th>Aquaculture</th>
<th>Total Farmland acreage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barnstable</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>865</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brewster</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dennis</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mashpee</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bourne</td>
<td>424</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>502</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harwich</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>374</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truro</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastham</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orleans</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yarmouth</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provinctown</td>
<td>426</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>660</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandwich</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>293</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>463</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chatham</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wellfleet</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>1737</td>
<td>1675</td>
<td>580</td>
<td>3992</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3,992 acres in agriculture in Barnstable County.
2007 acres less than the USDA Agricultural census in 2002 (5,999 acres).

Barnstable, Falmouth, Bourne, Sandwich and Harwich have the highest acreage of farmland.
Results #2: Farmland Acreage Distribution for Barnstable County
### Results #3: Largest Farm Parcels in Barnstable County

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Farm</th>
<th>Town</th>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Acres</th>
<th>Top Product</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Country Farm Estates</td>
<td>Sandwich</td>
<td>Accessory Land</td>
<td>228</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barnstable County Farm</td>
<td>Barnstable</td>
<td>County Protected Land</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>Flowers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grazing Fields Farm LTD.</td>
<td>Bourne</td>
<td>61A-Productive Woodland</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>Riding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not retail</td>
<td>Harwich</td>
<td>Ag/Hort land not classified 61A</td>
<td>53</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perry's Farm</td>
<td>Truro</td>
<td>Farm Buildings not classified 61A</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Veggies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green Hill Farm</td>
<td>Yarmouth</td>
<td>Two Family Home</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Veggies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mashpee Wampanoag Equestrian Center</td>
<td>Mashpee</td>
<td>Horseback not classified 61A</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Riding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not retail</td>
<td>Barnstable</td>
<td>61A-Nurseries</td>
<td>28</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blueberry Hill Farm</td>
<td>Barnstable</td>
<td>Single Family Home</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>PYO Berries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cape Cod Organic Farm</td>
<td>Barnstable</td>
<td>61A-Truckcrops</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Veggies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results #4: Top Products in Towns with Highest Acreage

Town of Barnstable
- Cranberries: 22%
- Flowers: 9%
- Equestrian goods/services: 3%
- Woodland Products: 16%
- Meat Products: 13%
- PYO Fruits & Veggies: 6%
- Fiber: 9%

Town of Falmouth
- Cranberries: 35%
- Flowers: 5%
- Equestrian goods/services: 12%
- Woodland Products: 12%
- Livestock: 9%
- Compost: 5%
- Fruits: 1%
- Fiber: 3%
- Vegetables: 1%

Town of Bourne
- Cranberries: 22%
- Equestrian goods/services: 11%
- Vegetables: 34%
- Fiber: 11%
- Compost: 6%
Spatial Data

Acquiring spatial data lets us locate the agricultural lands, see where they are in proximity to prime soils, and serves as a check on the tabular data. Ideally, these independent data sets will match but if they do not then looking at the discrepancies may provide us with useful information.

Finally, a key use of the spatial data with a GIS system lets us make a series of maps such as changes in agricultural lands over time, locations of retail farms, and proximity of agricultural lands to conservation or town-owned lands.
Falmouth Farmlands 1951 to 1999

Farm Lands 1951
- Green: Croplands
- Orange: Pasture
- Blue: Water
- Pink: Woody Perennial

Farm Lands 1999
- Green: Croplands
- Orange: Pasture
- Blue: Water
- Pink: Cranberry

Legend:
Other Spatial Data
• Soils
• Parcels
• Open Space
• Land Cover:
  1951 (CC)
  1971,
  1985,
  1990,
  1999,
  2005?
Uses for the Farmland Inventory

- Provide current agricultural status of Barnstable County
- Provide a comparison of independent tabular and spatial data sets
- Identify priority parcels currently unprotected
- Utilize as a planning tool for the town development plans
Where do we go from here with the information?

- Work to keep all existing farms
- Help Land Trusts to include protecting farmlands in their mission
- Grow locally
- Support & publicize local farms
- Distribute maps of our agricultural resources
- Encourage more community gardens
- Discourage outdated Blue Laws from inhibiting future growth
Entering the “New Food Age”

• We need to rethink our food model
• We need to revitalize and maintain local farms
• We cannot consider smart growth without local agriculture
Thank You!

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