Agencies and Organizations Assisting Farmers

MAINE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL RESOURCES

28 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333
207-287-3871

"get real. get maine!"

a promotional branding campaign, to increase public awareness of Maine products, **Division of Market and Production Development, 287-3491**

Farmland Protection Program, 287-7520

Ag Business Planning Assistance

- **Farms for the Future**, administered jointly with Coastal Enterprises Inc., provides farmers grants to develop and implement business plans. **Dept. 287-7520** and **287-7620**, **CEI 772-5356**
- **NxLevel Business Planning**, coordinated by NRCS Heart of Maine Resource Conservation and Development Council, **368-4433**
- ***Food and Farms Resource Guide***—*Handbook for Maine Agricultural Businesses* provides farmers information on various agricultural subjects and programs, **287-3491**

Ag Business Loans and Grants

- Agricultural Marketing Loan Fund
- Potato Marketing Improvement Fund
- Agricultural Development Grant
- Agricultural Technical Assistance Grant Program
- Agricultural Water Source Development Cost Share Program

MAINE FARM BUREAU

A non-governmental, voluntary organization whose mission it is to analyze economic and public problems surrounding agriculture in Maine. Augusta, **622-4111**

MAINE FARM CREDIT

Specializes in lending to Maine's agricultural, fishing and forest products industries. Aroostook Regional Office, Presque Isle, **764-6431;** or Southern Regional Office, Auburn, **784-0193**

MAINE FARMLAND TRUST

A membership-based, non-profit organization working in the public's interest to protect Maine's precious farmland resources. Bucksport, **469-6465**

MAINE FARMLINK

A farm transfer program that connects farmers seeking farmland with retiring Maine farmers and farm owners who wish to see their agricultural lands remain active. Currently there are 35 prospective sellers and 67 prospective buyers statewide with 18 prospects in Oxford County. Freedom, **382-3255**

MAINE ORGANIC FARMERS AND GARDENERS ASSOCIATION

Developed from a loose affiliation of farmers and gardeners committed to growing healthy, chemical free food, to an internationally recognized advocate for food production that enhances and protects the ecological as well as economic vitality of rural communities. Unity, **568-4142**

MAINE WOMEN'S AGRICULTURAL NETWORK

A collaborative effort of farmers, agriculture and related non-profit, for profit and governmental agencies seeking to help women and other underserved individuals find the skills necessary to begin or continue farming profitably. Lisbon Falls, **800-287-1458**

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Assists farmers, landowners and communities with conserving and protecting natural resources. Each District works in partnership with the **USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), USDA Farm Service Agency** and other federal, state and local agencies, including the **NRCS–Resource Conservation and Development Council**. Oxford, **743-5789**

UNIVERSITY OF MAINE COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

A major educational outreach program of the University of Maine with offices statewide. South Paris, **800-287-1482** or statewide **800-287-0274**

Web Links

United States Department of Agriculture
www.usda.gov

USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)
www.nrcs.usda.gov

Maine Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources
www.maine.gov/argiculture/

"get real. get maine!"
www.getrealmaine.com

Maine State Web Portal
www.maine.gov

Maine Food and Farms Resource Guide
www.getrealmaine.com/connect/

References

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service

USDA Farm Service Agency

Maine Revenue Service

November 2003

Oxford County

2003-2004 COUNTY PROFILE OF MAINE AGRICULTURAL ENTERPRISES

Maine's agricultural future is inextricably linked to its ability to continue to build strong, long-lasting connections between farmers and the communities they serve. To help all citizens better understand how agriculture is connected to every aspect of life in Maine, this county profile provides citizens, community planners and natural resource conservation groups important facts about farmers, farms, farmland and agricultural enterprises in Oxford County.

Farmers in Oxford County

	1974	1978	1982	1992	1997
Farming as Principal Occupation	201	177	189	167	171
Male Operators (N)	NA	311	369	295	298
Female Operators (N)	NA	16	34	51	60
Average Age	55	51	52	54	55

**USDA/Dept. of Commerce, Agriculture Census 1974-1997*

Statewide, farming has a unique connection to the history of Maine. Farmers are stewards of the land; well-managed farmland protects natural resources and creates beautiful open space. Many of Maine's first settlers were farmers whose fields, farmhouses and barns shaped Maine's historic landscape. Today, Maine's agricultural producers and processors annually contribute over 1.2 *billion* dollars to Maine's economy and employ 65,000 Maine people!

Oxford County Farmland

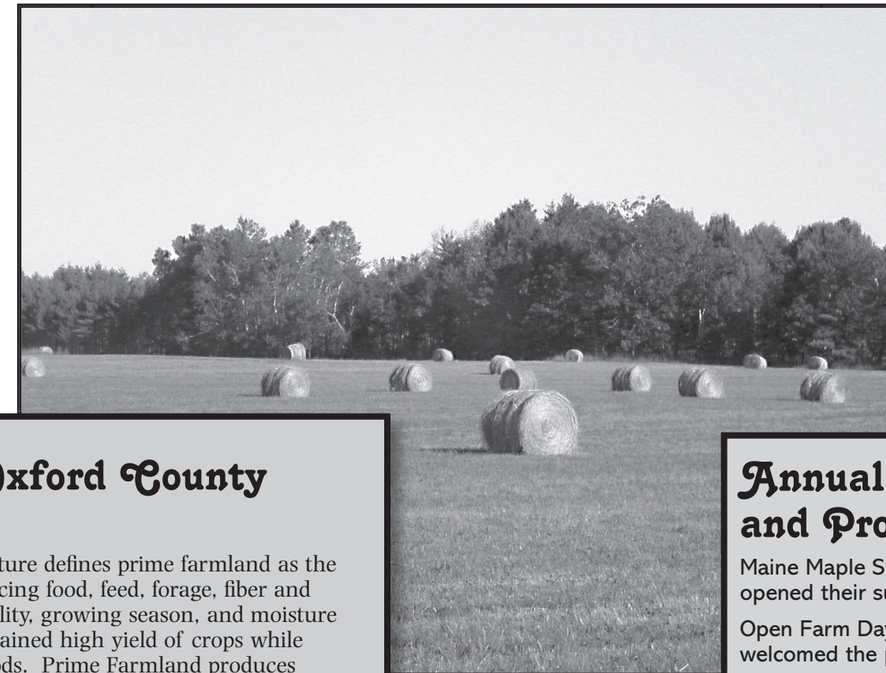
	1974	1978	1982	1992	1997
Number of Farms	335	327	403	358	346
Total Acres (A)	84,502	80,242	78,270	63,473	63,959
Average Farm Size (A)	252	245	194	183	179
Total Cropland (A)	28,260	25,502	24,866	20,834	20,673
Total Pastures (A)	NA	11,035	12,690	11,982	7,398
Total Orchard (A)	897	1,121	990	1,060	690
Total Berry (A)	37	119	138	292	NA
Total Hay (A)	11,264	12,844	13,197	9,276	9,964
Total Woodland (A)	49,185	49,670	46,878	36,235	39,601

**USDA/Dept. of Commerce, Agriculture Census 1974-1997*

Land in farms increased slightly from 63,473 acres in 1992 to 63,959 acres in 1997. Full time farms increased 2 percent from 167 farms in 1992 to 171 farms in 1997.

Unique to Oxford County

- There are 17 granges in the county. **County Grange**, Olive Risko, Master, 665-2909
- County Chapter **Maine Farm Bureau**, President, David Carter, Oxford, 539-4848
- **Guide to Farms, Farmstands and Farmers' Markets in Maine's Mountain Counties** published by Mountain Counties Heritage, Inc., 778-3885
- **Land Trust Organizations**
  Great Lovell Land Trust (founded 1985) 774-5159; *Mahoosuc Land Trust* (1988) 824-3806; *Rangeley Lakes Heritage Trust* (1991) 864-7311; *Western Foothills Land Trust* (1987) 743-8820
- The **State Historic Preservation Office** (287-2132) and **Maine Preservation** (775-7737) have information regarding the county's agriculturally related places of historic and cultural significance.



Food, Farms* and Fairs in Oxford County

48 Farmstands/Nurseries/Greenhouses open to the public

2 Farmers' Markets serving multiple communities

11 Farms offer Pick-Your-Own fruits and vegetables

17 Farms host special on-farm events and activities such as pumpkin hunts, animal viewing, hayrides and school programs

5 Agricultural Fairs (Fryeburg, Ossipee, Oxford, South Hiram, Waterford and World's Fair) drew up to 210,870 people in 2002.

**Some farms may be counted in multiple categories. Not all farm activities and retail services are listed here.*

Prime Soils in Oxford County

PRIME FARMLAND

The U.S. Department of Agriculture defines prime farmland as the land that is best suited to producing food, feed, forage, fiber and oilseed crops. It has the soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce a sustained high yield of crops while using acceptable farming methods. Prime Farmland produces the highest yields and requires minimal amounts of energy and economic resources, and farming it results in the least damage to the environment. Prime Farmland is a limited strategic resource. No more of it is being created.

22,916 acres (estimated)

SOILS OF STATEWIDE IMPORTANCE

This is land, in addition to prime and unique farmlands, that is of statewide significance for the production of food, feed, fiber, forage, and oilseed crops. Criteria for defining and delineating this land are to be determined by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. Generally, additional farmlands of statewide importance include those that are nearly prime farmland and that economically produce a high yield as prime farmlands if conditions are favorable.

85,170 acres (estimated)

Annual Statewide Events and Programs in 2003

Maine Maple Sunday (4th Sunday in March) 6 farms opened their sugarhouses.

Open Farm Day (4th Sunday in July) 10 farms welcomed the public onto their farms.

Maine Menus Month (October) 4 restaurants made special efforts to feature Maine grown, raised or harvested ingredients on their menus.

Great Maine Apple Day (November) many farms celebrated Maine's apple harvest.

Maine Senior FarmShare assisted 5 farmers with providing locally grown produce to 362 low-income seniors. Statewide, 185 farmers benefited from nearly $900,000 in sales and additional seniors received fresh produce through food pantries and community meal sites.

Farmland Protected in Oxford County

PERMANENTLY PROTECTED

- 182 acres (1 farm) has been protected by one nonprofit organization

TEMPORARILY PROTECTED

USDA Farm Service Agency

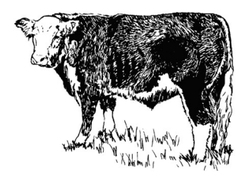
- 14 acres protected through the Conservation Reserve Program (10-15 years)
- 659 acres protected through Debt for Nature (50 years)

Enrolled in Farm and Open Space Tax Program

- 55,855 acres farmland in 2002 — 3,028 acres cropland plus 52,827 acres woodland
- 4,885 acres open space in 2001

Enrolled in Tree Growth Program

451,131 acres in 2001



The average market value of agricultural products sold in the county increased 30% from $41,933 in 1992 to $54,607 in 1997. Statewide market research in 2002 showed that 89% surveyed believe that buying locally grown food strengthens Maine's economy.

Oxford County Agricultural Sales

	1974	1978	1982	1992	1997
All crops	$3,225,000	$4,202,000	$6,374,000	$9,252,000	$10,398,000
Livestock/poultry and products	$6,596,000	$9,321,000	$8,355,000	$5,256,000	$9,152,000
Nursery and greenhouse products	$445,000	NA	NA	$2,834,000	$2,801,000
Fruits, nuts and berries	NA	$1,143,000	$1,995,000	$2,098,000	$2,074,000

**USDA/Dept. of Commerce, Agriculture Census 1974-1997*