



# Farmland Protection

Update for the Natural and Working Lands Work Group

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Dec. 11, 2025



**We are a member-powered statewide organization that works to protect farmland,  
support farmers, and advance the future of farming.**



**Hope Orchards, 45 ac, Hope**



**Halledge Farm, 186 ac, Windham**



**Frost Meadow Farm, 50 ac, Gorham**





- Maine has approximately 1.23M acres of farms (*according to the Ag Census*), of which approximately 60,000 acres (~400 farms) have been protected.
- That includes approximately 25,000 acres of open field (4.8%).

MFT's Farmland Protection Efforts			
Year	# of Farms	Acres	Open Acres
2021	24	2552	767
2022	12	1183	383
2023	13	1619	608
2024	11	1598	559
2025	8	1290	450



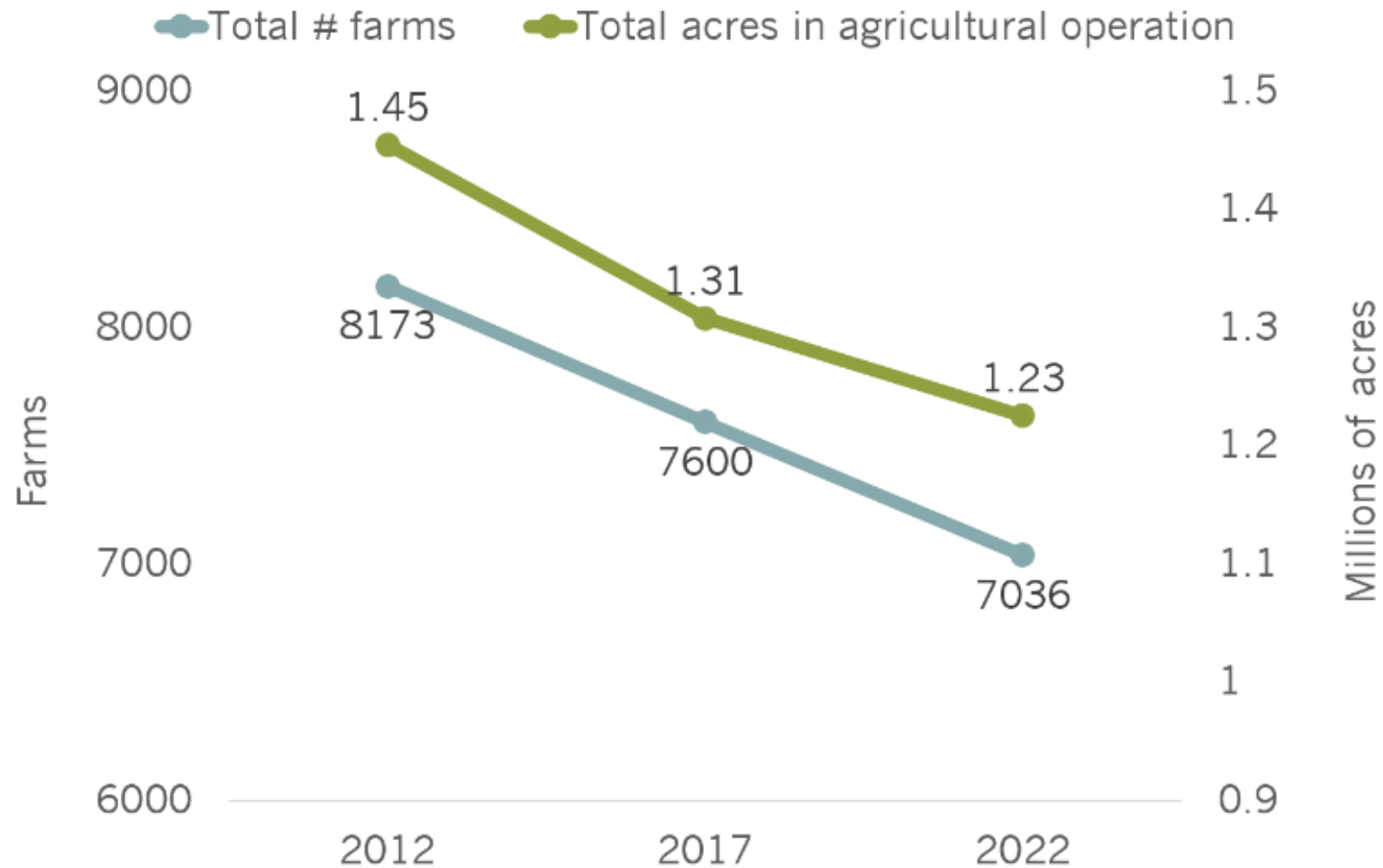


# Farmland Protection

- Maine lost almost 230,000 acres of farmland between 2012 and 2022 (*2022 Ag Census*)
- Low-density residential development is one of the biggest threats to farmland in Maine (*American Farmland Trust*)
- Additional threats include infrastructure (e.g. roads, transmission lines), commercial solar development, reforestation/succession, and other development types.



# The Rapid Pace of Farmland Loss



Farmland Protection Funding*			
State	Total Funding	State Funding	Other Funding
Massachusetts	\$328,333,316	\$249,189,465	\$79,143,851
Vermont	\$231,122,176	\$95,532,538	\$135,589,638
Connecticut	\$191,997,482	\$138,554,256	\$53,443,226
Rhode Island	\$123,193,645	\$39,523,630	\$83,670,015
New Hampshire	\$61,775,802	\$22,497,708	\$39,278,094
Maine	\$53,706,622	\$12,706,622	\$41,000,000**

#### Sources:

·American Farmland Trust (2024), *Status of State PACE Programs*

..Estimate based on Maine Farmland Trust spending analysis

**Maine lags behind due to lack of public investment in farmland protection:**

*\*Sources: Farms Under Threat, A New England Perspective (American Farmland Trust, 2020), Status of State PACE Programs (American Farmland Trust 2022)*

State	Total Farmland Protection Funding	State Funding	Other Funding
New Jersey	\$1,845,914,559	\$1,194,385,386	\$651,529,173
Pennsylvania	\$1,156,534,321	\$1,105,213,366	\$51,320,955
Maryland	\$1,018,134,473	\$986,023,683	\$32,110,790
Massachusetts	\$319,623,984	\$243,135,421	\$76,488,563
Delaware	\$264,455,368	\$172,300,005	\$92,155,363
New York	\$230,145,489	\$230,145,489	\$0.00
Vermont	\$215,378,925	\$88,794,121	\$126,584,804
Connecticut	\$179,215,249	\$131,842,666	\$47,372,583
Rhode Island	\$117,549,027	\$37,143,700	\$80,405,327
West Virginia	\$79,470,398	\$49,118,007	\$30,352,391
Maine	\$50,222,483	\$12,574,122	\$37,648,361





## **Recommendations from NWLWG in 2024:**

The state's 2024 update to the ***Maine Won't Wait*** climate action plan established new targets specific to farmland protection. The Plan and the NWLWG recommendations in the May 2024 report called for Maine **to:**

- **Secure and commit to ongoing, dedicated funding for farmland conservation to double the amount of permanently protected, open farmland in the state by 2030**
- **Annually invest \$20 million in state funding toward farmland protection (separate from other LMF funding)**
- **Commission a Maine Farmland Action Plan**

# Select Farmland Protection Strategies

- Agricultural conservation easements and Buy/Protect/Sell
- State policy efforts
  - Increase public investment in farmland protection
  - Increase ability to match federal funds
- Municipal planning, programs, ordinance development and implementation
- Multifaceted efforts to support farm viability





Thank you.

