

Division of Agriculture and resource Marketing (by Goal)

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES AND ECOSYSTEMS

Objective:

Farm Viability – continue initiatives to maintain and enhance the economic viability of the agriculture industry in Rhode Island

Indicators:

Rhode Island gross agricultural income and income per acre, direct marketing sales per farm, acres of land in agriculture, number of farmers, acres of farmland protected, number of farmer markets and farmer and customer participation.

Natural Resource Stewardship

FARM VIABILITY STRATEGIES

Strategy:

- Develop and implement farm viability strategic partnership with Economic Development Corporation.

Performance Measure:

- Develop and implement partnership by 7/03 with focus on joint marketing and promotion, agri-tourism, farm financing and business development, and joint advocacy.

Strategy:

- Marketing and Promotion - Continue development and expansion of programs and venues to market and promote RI agriculture products and the agriculture industry in general.

Performance Measures:

- Continue operation and management of farmers markets at 4 state parks in FY 04,05 in collaboration with Division of Parks and Recreation. Support RI farmers markets in general and other direct marketing outlets in Rhode Island. Distribute farm viability funds for promotion of farmers markets by 7/04.
- Implement “Harvest New England” in concert with New England states as means of identifying and promoting local products in major supermarkets, by 9/04. Evaluate and implement other programs to improve the wholesale market for RI agricultural products, including use of locally grown products at private and public institutions, including Brown University, local schools and state institutions.
- Target promotion of specific commodities where important and necessary, in particular dairy, aquaculture and the nursery and horticulture industry.
- Organize and promote “RI Agricultural Day” each March at the RI State House, with continued emphasis on event to highlight to public and legislature the importance of agriculture to economy and quality of life of RI.
- Revise and update promotional literature and publications – yearly
- Advertise RI grown products to public via newspaper and radio – seasonally
- Evaluate feasibility of video presentation/advertisement regarding RI Agriculture – by 12/03
- Develop promotional literature regarding agri-tourism in RI – by 7/04
- Update and publish “RI Agricultural Facts” – by 9/03

Strategy:

- Farm Viability Committee and Grants - Continue statewide meetings of RI Farm Viability Committee as method of coordination and collaboration of among farmers, agencies and public groups interested in long term viability of agriculture in RI.

Performance Measures:

- RI Farm Viability Committee to meet 3 to 4 times a year
- Readvertise committee and broaden membership and organizational representation - by 10/03
- Follow and evaluate implementation and effectiveness of 36 Farm Viability Grants issued 4/02, with grant completions scheduled for 4/05. Develop publication of grant activities and accomplishments - by 7/05.

Strategy:

- Farmland Protection – Continue efforts to protect important farmland in collaboration with Agricultural Land Preservation Commission, USDA, and non-profits

Performance Measures:

- Protect on average 4 farms per year in FY 04, 05
- Review easements for farm already protected, 10 farms each year in FY 04, 05
- Develop promotional and information literature for purchase of development rights program, by 12/04
- Eliminate backlog of pending applications to purchase of development rights program – by 12/04

Strategy:

Community Farming – continue development and enhancement of community and farm interactions in Rhode Island.

Performance Measures:

- Continue support and assistance to Hmong population in relation to use of farmland at Curran State park for community farm. Provide technical assistance, and water access through use of temporary storage facilities, and fund construction of permanent well by 10/04.
- Oversee lease and management of Urban Edge Farm (owned by DEM) to the Southside Community Land Trust for community farming purposes. Evaluate on yearly basis and explore other opportunities for state acquisition of farmland for community, non-profit uses.
- Continue assistance and collaboration with RI Community Farms, which serves to grow food for the RI Community Food Bank at several farm locations in RI. Assist other community farm venues having the same objectives.
- Support other initiatives to enhance community interactions, including farm promotional events, community supported agriculture, fairs and exhibitions.

Strategy:

- Farm/School Connections and Agricultural Education Initiatives - continue and enhance interactions between elementary and secondary schools and RI agriculture, and support other activities designed to enhance public awareness of the importance of local agriculture.

Performance Measures:

- Support activities of RI Agricultural Education Coalition to enhance public awareness of importance and value of local agriculture. Provide funding and office space to Coalition.
- Explore opportunity for a segment on agriculture to be included in New England Botanical Gardens to be constructed at Roger Williams State Park - by 7/03
- Fund “Radio Disney” to and “Project Discovery” to conduct agricultural education programs with elementary school children, FY’04, and 05 if possible.
- Continue development of collaborations with local schools and colleges and RI farms, including program to use local products in Brown University Food System initiated by 12/03, and in one local school system by 12/04, and enhance general awareness of importance of local agriculture.
- Expand and enhance Division of Agriculture website with segments added pertaining to farm viability (by 9/03, Good Agricultural Practices (by 9/03), Farm Home Kitchens (by 9/03), Farm Signs (by 1/04), Agricultural Wetlands (by 1/04), Purchase of Farmland Development Rights (by 1/04), Animal Damage Abatement (by 3/04), Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey (by 3/04) and Farm Financing (by 7/04), and additional information as needed.

Strategy:

- Farming and the Environment - Continue and expand efforts to evaluate, promote and implement farming practices which are environmentally protective.

Performance Measures:

- Maintain groundwater monitoring for pesticides and nutrients in proximity to selected farming environments in RI through FY'04, 05.
- Maintain program to evaluate impact of use of best management practices on water quality at 4 farms in FY'04, 05.
- Implement program to assess for offsite movement of atrazine, implement by 7/03.
- Development framework for agricultural "Water Withdrawal Management Plans" by 12/04, and implement provisions of RI "Drought Management Plan" as necessary in 04 and 05 (weather dependent).
- Continue assistance to farmers regarding implementation of best management practices on farm, in collaboration with USDA.
- Monitor and evaluate emergency ponds constructed during drought of 03, with on site assessments conducted annually in FY'04, 05.
- Participate in activities of RI Water Resources Board in developing and implementing Water Allocation Strategy/Program for RI.

Strategy:

- Protection of Animal Health, Control and Management of Animal Diseases and Plant Pests.

Performance Measure:

- Implement USDA Cooperative Agricultural Pest Survey program. Complete first year data collection by 12/03, second year by 12/04.
- Develop and promulgate animal care regulations by 9/03.
- Implement strategies and programs to prevent and if necessary control animal disease outbreaks, including avian influenza, chronic wasting disease, foot and mouth disease etc., as needed and necessary.
- Develop and implement Dairy Quality Assurance Program, by 9/03.
- Revise and update procedures for Disaster Animal Response Team, by 12/03.

Public Health and Safety**Strategy:**

- Protect public from animal and insect borne diseases, including West Nile Virus, EEE, and Rabies

Performance Measures:

- Continue West Nile Virus monitoring and prevention programs in FY'04, 05, including distribution of larvicides, municipal employee training, trapping and surveillance for WNV and EEE in mosquitoes, biweekly meetings with Department of Health, public education campaigns. Evaluate municipal participation in larvicide program by 7/04.
- Implement modified mosquito abatement grant program by 7/03 (if funding available).
- Continue research assessing potential for offsite impacts of use of larvicides for WNV control, with URI. Results compiled by 12/05.
- Continue rabies surveillance and response programs in collaboration with Department of Health.
- Establish internal committee with Department of Health regarding animal diseases and food safety, by 7/03.