



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS

M. JODI RELL
GOVERNOR

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Governor Rell Announces Connecticut Farmlink Program to Foster a New Generation of Farmers

Governor M. Jodi Rell today announced a new state Web site that offers farm seekers and farm owners free listings in hopes that underutilized farmland will be put back into production. For more information, please visit www.farmlink.uconn.edu or call the Department of Agriculture at 860-713-2503.

“Farmland is irreplaceable and we want to do all we can to preserve this precious resource,” Governor Rell said. “The Connecticut FarmLink Program helps to foster a new generation of young farmers who want to pursue a career in agriculture but have no land to work. The Web site serves as a clearinghouse for information for new farmers and farm families preparing for the transition between generations of farmers – again, with the goal of keeping farmland in production.”

The Governor said FarmLink serves as a matchmaker for prospective farm owners and seekers. Interested parties register by completing an online application. Once accepted, the description of their available farm or farmland needs is posted on the site. When a participating farm or seeker sees a listing of interest, they contact the program administrator, Jane Slupecki, for a copy of the full application.

“FarmLink is a great way for interested individuals to find farmland partners. It also helps them find information about many topics that are important for a farm family business in transition,” said Slupecki. “The focus is on keeping the land in farming for generations to come.”

The Web site currently lists 13 farms of various sizes, locations and products, including horses, organic vegetables, dairy and poultry. Among the 20 farm seekers are persons interested in organic farming, raising horses, cattle ranching and developing nurseries.

In June, Governor Rell signed a bill creating a 12-member Farmland Preservation Advisory Board to help the state bolster its efforts to preserve agricultural lands.

“The Advisory Board will help us step up our preservation efforts,” Governor Rell said. “Our farmers are the clients of the state’s Farmland Preservation Program, so an Advisory Board that increases their involvement in decision-making will strengthen the entire program. This law will improve communication with the farming community and boost the program's ability to respond to farmers’ needs.”

Governor Rell noted that the goal of the state’s Farmland Preservation Program is to preserve 130,000 acres, but Connecticut is still about 100,000 acres short of that goal. Delaware and Massachusetts have set up similar committees and, as a result, both states have preserved more farmland.

The Board has been placed within the Department of Agriculture for administrative purposes only and will consist predominately of individuals representing the farm community. When funding exists and farmland preservation projects are pending, the new law requires the state Bond Commission vote on whether to authorize the issuance of unallocated bonds.

“Whether you live along the Long Island Sound, in the Litchfield Hills, in the rolling countryside or in any of our cities and towns, a walk or a drive through our state in any season reminds you within moments just why you love to live here,” Governor Rell said. “By curbing sprawl, Connecticut will be able to save farmland and forests while simultaneously revitalizing older suburbs and urban centers.”

In 2005, Governor Rell signed into law landmark legislation earmarking funding for farmland preservation, open-space acquisition, historic preservation and affordable housing – a combination of programs the Governor said represents the best of Connecticut’s past and holds great promise for the future.