Agriculture in Westport

THE WESTPORT AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION
REPRESENTS THE AGRICULTURAL INTERESTS OF
THE TOWN—BOTH WITHIN TOWN GOVERNMENT
AND WITH THE AGRICULTURAL CITIZENRY.

THE COMMISSION ENCOURAGES THE PURSUIT
OF AGRICULTURE, PROMOTES AGRICULTURAL
BASED ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES, AND
ACTS AS EDUCATORS, ADVOCATES, MEDIATORS,
NEGOTIATORS, AND ADVISORS OF FARMING
ISSUES.

WHAT DOES THIS SIGN MEAN AND WHY IS IT
IMPORTANT?

The Agricultural Commission has installed these signs on all major roads leading into Westport. It tells visitors (and residents) that Westport has adopted a Right to Farm Bylaw to protect and encourage commercial agriculture by protecting farmers and farm operators against nuisance lawsuits.

Over the past 30 years, as productive farmland has been converted to residential development, persons not involved in farming have moved into traditionally agricultural areas and with them they sometimes bring new complaints concerning odor, flies, dust, noise from field work, spraying of farm chemicals, slow-moving farm machinery, and other necessary products of farming operations.

Many states, including Massachusetts, adopted Right to Farm language in their state statutes to protect active farmers from nuisance lawsuits from neighbors. To see the actual bylaw, visit the Agriculture Commission page in the Town of Westport's website. (www.westport-ma.gov/acom)

WESSTPORT AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION

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in Westport

Agriculture

WESTPORT'S AGRICULTURAL PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

Why Buy Local?

Locally grown produce, meat, and value added products are fresh, healthy, and of high quality. Buying locally grown products also supports the farming traditions and agricultural economy in Westport.

How do farms benefit Westport and its residents?

- Farm products offer our residents and visitors a wide array of meats and produce, cheeses, eggs, plants, natural fibers, wine and beer. Our horse farms bring both boarding horse owners and visitors interested in equine events.
- Farms are an integral part of Westport's pastoral landscape and attract tourists to our farms and other businesses in town.
- Farm operations and acreage place lower demand on Town services and infrastructure than land that has been developed into residential lots. Therefore, the presence of large agricultural tracts in Westport helps keep property taxes down for all residents.

Today, farming in Westport carries on the independent spirit and individualism of the past. The increase in smaller, retail farm operations over the past 30 years has led to a high diversity of crops being raised and sold. Westport farmers sell their products at roadside stands, farmers markets, and to niche markets such as high end restaurants in the Boston and Providence metro areas. The interest in organic food has led several farms to convert to organic production. Beekeepers are benefitting from the wise variety of orchard blossoms and vegetable flowers.

Livestock farming also has responded to changing and smaller markets. Westport's farms now house dairy cows, dairy goats, beef cattle, horses, chickens, ducks, and alpacas. Value-added products such as specialty cheeses made from Westport milk are the signature of today's Westport farming.

As the public's appetite for locally grown foodstuffs and farm products increases, so grows the success of small and large scale farms alike.