Manchester

**Agriculture and Forestry**

State Goal: Safeguard the state’s agricultural and forest resources from development that threatens those resources.

**PRINCIPLE ISSUES** (In Plan not included here)

**POLICIES**

A.Safeguard lands identified as prime farmland, established farm or capable of supporting commercial forestry

B. Promote use of best management practices for timber and agriculture production

C. Support farming and forestry and encourage economic viability

**IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES**

1) Consult with the Maine Forest Service District Forester when revising land use standards pertaining to forest management practices. *Land Use Ordinance Review, Short term*

2) Consult with Soil and Water Conservation District staff when revising land use standards pertaining to agricultural management practices. *Land Use Ordinance Review, Short term*

3) Retain subdivision standard in Land Use Ordinance that protects high value farmland and requires lots to be sited on soils least suitable for agriculture. *Land Use Ordinance Review, Short term*

4) All new commercial development in rural areas must preserve prime farmland soils as open space to the greatest practical extent. *Land Use Ordinance Review, Short term*

5) In high value natural and scenic resource areas (*see* Figure 16, Open Space Plan) encourage development of farms, farm markets, commercial woodlots, nature tourism, outdoor recreation, and home occupations. *Land Use Ordinance Review, Short term*

**6) Encourage owners of productive farms to enroll in the current use taxation programs. *Town Assessor, Conservation Commission, Ongoing***

7) Continue to allow activities that support small farms and wood lot operations, such as roadside stands, plant nurseries, and pick-your-own/cut-your-own operations. *Planning Board, ongoing.*

8) Include farming and commercial forestry support in local and regional economic development plans. *Town Manager, Mid term*

9) Manage town forest land primarily for timber harvesting, conservation, and trails, using non-intensive timber management techniques. Use these lands as demonstration forest of these techniques. *Town Manager, Town Forester, Ongoing*

**10) Research and make recommendations for tax relief or other forms of financial assistance for farmers and foresters who are actively working their land, especially those who allow access to their land. *Conservation Commission, Short term***

**11) Establish a small education fund for workshops and technical assistance for farmers to stay up to date on regulations and best practices. *Conservation Commission, Mid term***

**12) Inform townspeople about right to farm laws by including information on website and providing brochures at the town office. *Conservation Commission, Town Office staff, Mid term***

**13) Develop an “electronic Farmers Market” on the Town website for farmers to list products for sale. *Conservation Commission, Town Office staff, Short term***

**14) Consult the Maine Farmland Trust’s guide to encouraging local farming (“Cultivating Maine’s Agricultural Future”) for other strategies to implement in Manchester. *Conservation Commission, Short term.***