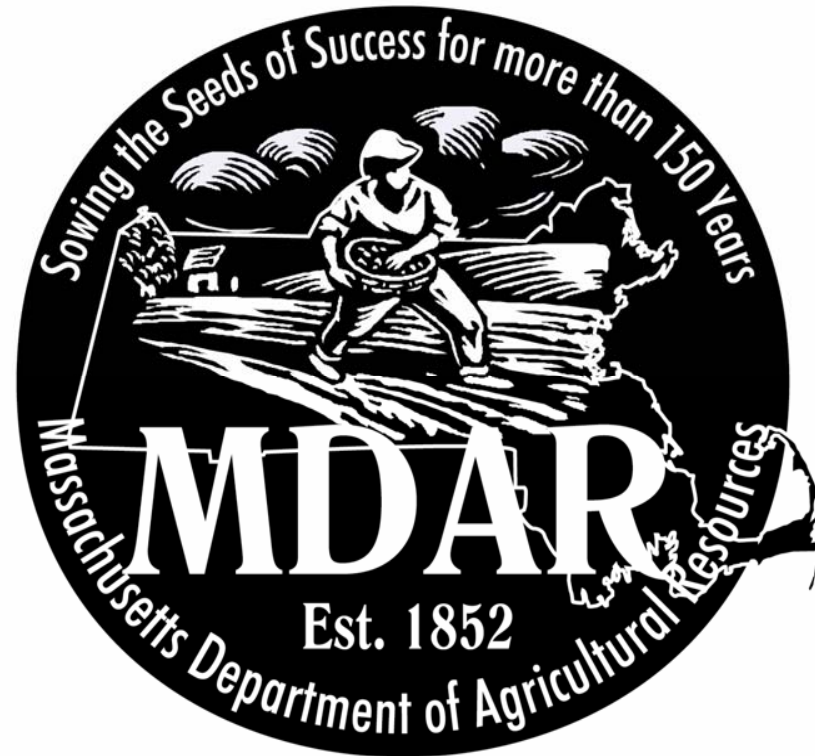


# Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources



[www.Mass.gov/AGR](http://www.Mass.gov/AGR)



# ***FARM VIABILITY BASIC PHILOSOPHY***

The **BEST** way to keep land in agricultural use is to make agriculture **PROFITABLE** for those who use the resource.



# **PRIMARY CONCEPTS OF THE FARM VIABILITY PROGRAM**

**Improve individual farm's economic viability**

- Encourage more value-added & direct retail**
- Promote vertical integration**
- Enhance product diversity**

**Improve environmental practices used on farms.**



# **ADDITIONAL CONCEPTS TO SUPPORT FARM VIABILITY**

**Protect agricultural land and open space more economically**

**Increase access to capital**

**Provide access to technical assistance no longer available elsewhere**

**Improve business and management skills among farmers.**



# **CRITERIA for SELECTION**

- 1.) Threat to the continuation of agriculture;**
- 2.) Number of acres to be placed in the covenant;**
- 3.) Whether the farm has diversified or is interested in retail or value added activities;**
- 4.) Number of years & type of experience of applicant;**
- 5.) Degree to which the project would accomplish environmental objectives;**
- 6.) The suitability/productivity based on soil classification, features and location.**





# **Program Description**

**Phase I – Business Planning**

**Phase II – Covenant, Contract and Check**

**Phase III – Receipts, Reporting and Evaluation**



# Phase I Business Planning:

- Orientation meeting following notification
- Initial Site visit by Point Person – assemble “Team”
- Historical Financials
- Individualized Technical Assistance
- Environmental Planning/Projects
- Marketing Plan
- Construction/Architectural Planning
- Business Plan Writing Assistance



# Phase II – Covenant, Contract and Check

## COVENANT OPTIONS

- *5 years - \$25,000*
- *10 Years - \$50,000*
- *10 Years - \$75,000 - if over 135 acres*

## CONTRACT

*What is to be accomplished with funds and when*

## CHECK

*6 to 8 weeks following signing*

*A Successful, Environmentally-Sound Farm  
Business is the Best Farmland Protection Tool*



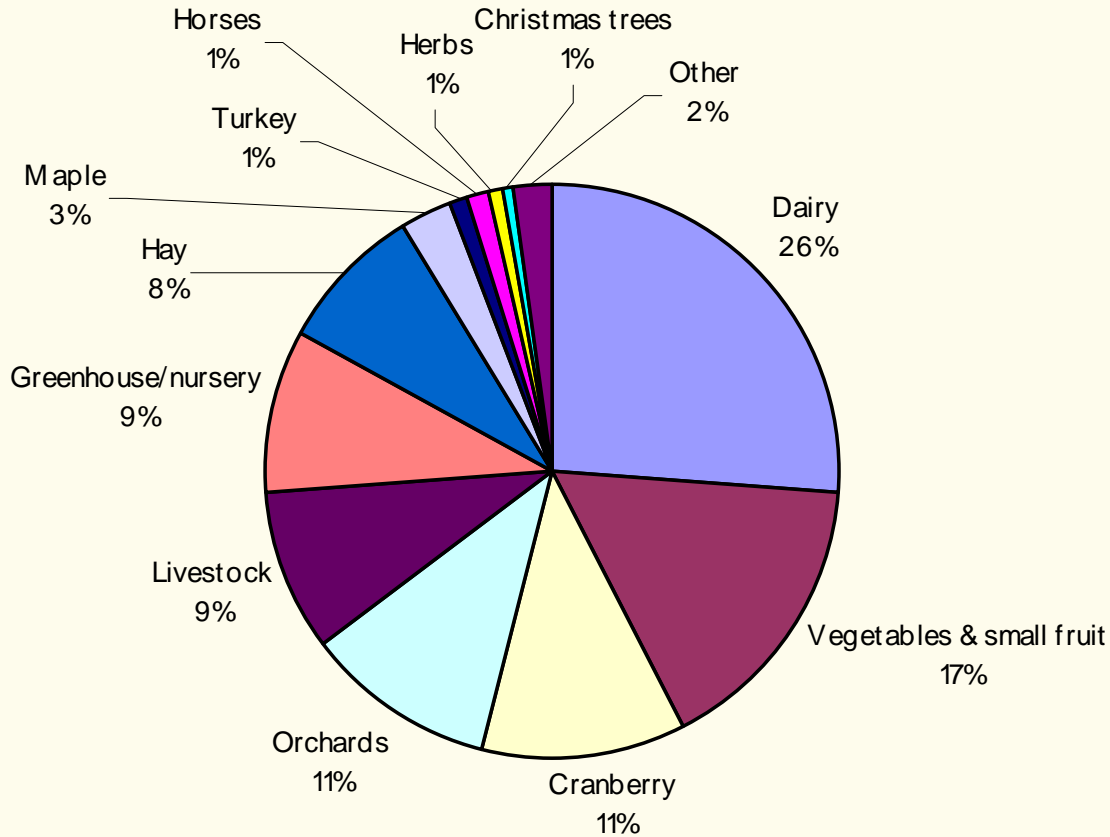


# FARM VIABILITY ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

- ✓ Established in 1995 – over 300 farms selected
- ✓ Replicated Since In At Least Five States
- ✓ 27,300 Acres Under Covenant
- ✓ Cost per acre of covenant land - \$400
- ✓ 23,367 Additional Acres Impacted
- ✓ Cost per acre included impacted - \$216
- ✓ 73% make additional investment averaging \$31,701 per farm
- ✓ Average projected increase to bottom line \$18,585



# Farm Viability Enhancement Program Participating Farms 1996 - 2006



Dairy	72
Vegetables & small fruit	46
Cranberry	31
Orchards	30
Livestock	26
Greenhouse /nursery	25
Hay	23
Maple	8
Turkey	3
Horses	3
Herbs	2
Christmas trees	2
Other	6



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