

Agriculture provides Carver's rural character

What attracts people to Carver? No doubt it's the town's beauty, history, peacefulness and overall quality of life. Agriculture is an integral part of Carver's rural character and rich history.

Agriculture has a significant impact on Carver's economy. In fact, the number one industry in Carver is cranberries.



In the 1940s, Carver produced more cranberries than any other town in the world. It still produces over 20 percent of the cranberries grown in Massachusetts, more than any other town.

Other agriculture in Carver includes small acreage operations producing greenhouse and nursery products, vegetables, fruits and forage crops. Carver is unlike other rural Massachusetts communities, with its concentration of agriculture in one commodity: cranberries.

Some 12,500 acres of land in Carver – or about half of the town's total area – are associated with agriculture, consisting of cranberry bogs, other productive farmland, related buffer land, reservoirs and wooded uplands. Cranberry production accounts for 93 percent of the agricultural land in Carver.

Benefits of agriculture are economic

Often overlooked as an economic engine, agricultural production in Carver contributes more than \$55 million annually to our economy. Of the \$23.65 million of estimated gross revenues generated on Carver's farms, 57 percent is reinvested locally. This reinvestment takes the form of wages to nearly 570 full and part time employees and expenditures on fuel, supplies, equipment services, and creating jobs at processing facilities and other businesses. These funds turn over multiple times in our community keeping the economy going.

Economic benefits of agriculture

Gross farm revenue	\$23,646,710
Funds spent locally	\$10,322,377
Gross wages paid	\$3,177,052

source: First Pioneer Farm Credit

Agricultural land helps to keep Carver's tax rates down. For each dollar in tax revenue that farmland generates, farms use only 31 cents in town services. That's compared to residential land which uses \$1.14 for every tax dollar paid.

Cost of community services

	For each \$1 in tax revenue
Agricultural land	.31
Commercial/industrial land	.38
Residential land	1.14

source: Town of Carver Master Plan, 2001

Carver agriculture is viable but needs community support

An influx in residential development is rapidly replacing our agricultural landscape and threatening family farm businesses. While the development potential of cranberry bogs is limited by state wetlands regulations, much of the upland owned by cranberry growers is developable.

Proactive planning is critical to managing the loss of farmers and farmland. Increases in residential land usage means higher land values and greater potential for complaints from non-farming neighbors. On the other hand, the residential community offers greater opportunity for retail sales.

High prices in the early 1990s resulted in significant growth in the state's cranberry industry. A precipitous price drop later in that decade caused severe economic stress. Today, cranberry growers and other farmers are adapting to economic trends to remain viable.

Did you know that the average Carver farmer is 52 years old and that half of Carver's farms have a successor and expect to be in business for over twenty more years?

Carver's agricultural businesses support the community by contributing to the economy, conserving land, and retaining open space and rural character. Learn what you can do to support Carver's agriculture.

How can you support Carver agriculture?

Farming is a business. Supporting profitable farming in Carver will sustain the agriculture that is our beautiful New England countryside. You can support Carver's farmers...

With your food dollar. Choose to buy local farm products at farmers' markets, retail farmstands, garden centers, restaurants and at the grocery store.

With your vote. Attend Town Meeting. Vote in favor of articles that encourage farmland and farmer retention and agricultural economic development.

With your time. Volunteer to help your agricultural commission as a "Friend of Agriculture." Town residents have varied and valuable talents and skills. You can be helpful in countless ways.

By educating yourself. You live in an agricultural town; educate yourself about farming and farm practices, meet your farmer neighbors, learn about the crops they grow, and learn about issues that affect agriculture and farmers' every day existence.



The Carver Agricultural Commission

The mission of the Agricultural Commission is to represent the Town of Carver's agricultural community and interests.

Activities of the Agricultural Commission include the following:

- Serving as facilitators for encouraging the pursuit of agriculture in Carver
- Promoting agricultural-based economic opportunities in the town
- Acting as mediators, advocates, educators and/or negotiators' in an advisory capacity on farming issues for established town committees and department
- Pursuing all initiatives appropriate to creating a sustainable agricultural community
- Encouraging the pursuit of agriculture as a career opportunity and lifestyle

For more information:

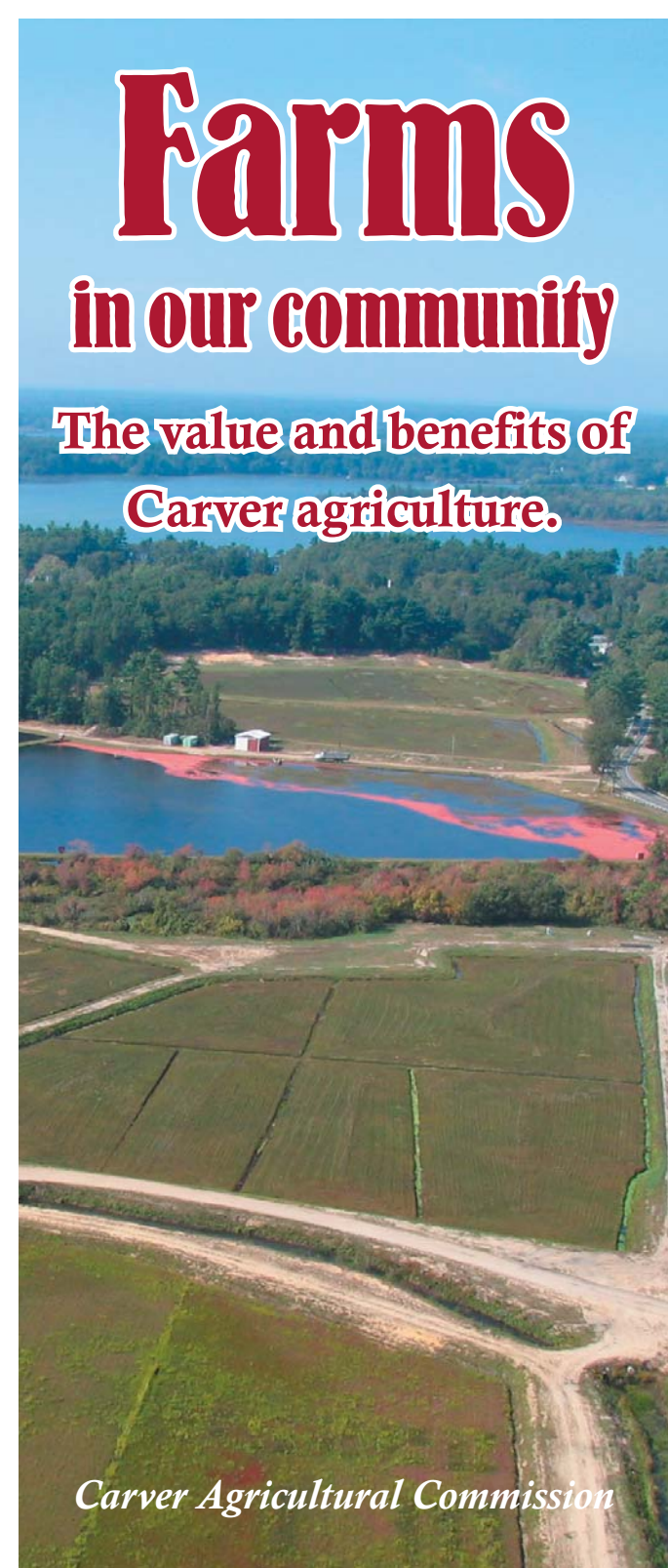
Contact information for the Carver Agricultural Commission and links to additional resources are available on-line at:

www.carverma.org/agricultural_commission.html

The Carver Agricultural Commission wishes to recognize the A.D. Makepeace Neighborhood Fund and Decas Cranberry Products, Inc. for supporting the production of this brochure.

Farms in our community

The value and benefits of
Carver agriculture.



Carver Agricultural Commission