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 traditional 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.com/agcom).

WESTPORT AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION

This brochure was funded by proceeds from 2010 Taste of Westport event, hosted by Westport Rivers Vineyards; photos: Steve Connors and Jon Alden; history notes: Norma Judson.

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.

WESTPORT’S AGRICULTURAL PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

Westport’s agricultural history is rich and varied. Early Westport settlers followed the lead of Native Americans, raising corn, beans, squash and tobacco. Westport farmers also grew potatoes, barley, wheat and rye. The Macomber Tumip originated here and is known across the country. Orchards of apple, peach, and pear have been a fixture of local agriculture, while native cranberries were raised in the Horseneck dunes. Farmers gathered seaweed for fertilizer and harvested marsh grass from along our tidal rivers.

For a brief period Westport was home to a fledgling silk industry that planted mulberry trees to feed the silkworms. Local farmers collected vegetable and flower seeds and raised bulbs, selling both locally and through mail order. Livestock including dairy cows, sheep, cattle, and poultry were commonly raised.

Westport farm products were shipped in all directions. The huge Macomber Nursery located in Central Village shipped nursery stock to Providence, Boston and beyond. Locally produced milk, eggs, vegetables, fruit and ice were sold off wagons in Westport and transported and sold in area towns. M aimsers, like Paul Cuffe, shipped products up and down the coast and to the islands.

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 wide variety of orchard blossoms and vegetable flowers.

Livestock farming also has responded to changing and smaller markets. Westport’s barns now house dairy cows, dairy goats, beef cattle, horses, chickens, ducks, and alpacas. Value-added products such as specialty cheese 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.

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.

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ACHESON FARM 508-636-4912
feed, grain

ALLEN FARMS organic
farmers mkt, wholesale, veg, herbs

BERRY HILL FARM 508-636-8976
open to public, blueberries, wholesale

JOHN BETTENCOURT FARM 508-636-4328
hay, straw

BRISTLECONE FARM 508-636-2552
xmas trees

DEVOL FARM 508-636-2210
pick your own blueberries

DIAMOND ACRE FARM 508-636-2834
open to public, farmstand

DRIFTWAY MEADOWS 508-636-8620
horses

FIGUERIDO’S GREENHOUSE 508-636-4084
open to public, plants

GOLDEN ROBIN 508-636-8579
farm stand, blueberries, strawberries, hay

GOLDEN TOUCH FARM 508-672-3727
alpaca

HANA’S HONEY 508-636-5564
honey

HILLTOP FARM 657-636-9674
open to public, farmers mkt

JUST BEER brewed at Buzzards Bay Brewing
508-636-2288 open to public, beer

C. LEDOUX WOOD FARM
wood

LYONS BROOK FARM 508-636-2552
open to public, milk goats

OLD WESTPORT FARM 508-636-5368
wood

ORR’S FARM 508-636-4274
open to public, farm stand

MOQUOCHOKE ORCHARDS 617-416-2140
open to public, fruit, veg, farmstand

NORTHSTAR FARM 508-636-0866
farmers market, veg, wholesale

PARADISE HILL FARM 978-590-6537
open to public, farmers mkt, veg, fruits

PINE CREST XMAS TREE FARM 508-636-4567
open to public, xmas trees

RIVER ROCK FARM 508-636-5586
open to public, organic meat

SAMPSON POTATO FARM 508-730-8641
open to public, farm stand, farmers mkt, wholesale, firewood

SANFORD FARM 508-672-0674
pick your own blueberries

SHY BROTHERS FARM 508-965-6560
cheese

SKINNY DIP FARM 401-592-0237
open to public, farmers mkt, veg, flowers

STONEHAVEN FARM vmerlier@verizon.net
open to public, eggs, meat

TRIPPS DAIRY FARM 508-763-1160
open to public, compost

TRIPPS XMAS TREE FARM 508-636-2126
open to public, organic blueberries, wholesale

WASONTUXET FARM 774-930-3463
meat

WESTPORT RIVERS VINEYARD 508-636-3423
open to public, wine