



**2021 Network Cafe Series:
Growing Agricultural Commissions**

May 7, 2020

12-1PM

Learn more about how your town can be a champion of local agriculture by establishing an agriculture commission during the NH Food Alliance's monthly Network Cafe. We will define what an agricultural commission is, how they are formed, structured, and developed, as well as the various collaborations and projects a commission can take on within its town or region.

Representatives from the Durham, Lee, and Boscawen agricultural commissions will discuss their work and will be available for a Q&A.

DESIRED OUTCOMES

- Arrive at a shared understanding of what an agricultural commission is, how it functions, and the legislative processes involved in forming one
- Understand and network around the current challenges, successes, and work of existing agricultural commissions
- Establish ways to support agriculture in your town, with or without creating an agricultural commission

AGENDA	TOPICS	TIME STAMP
<i>Welcome</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Introductions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Panelists/Facilitators introduce themselves ○ Attendees enter name and affiliation in the chat 	12:00
<i>Panel Presentations</i>	<p style="text-align: center;">LINK TO SLIDE PRESENTATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Erick Sawtelle, Lee Agriculture Commission, esawtelles@aol.com <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Defining an agriculture commission ○ Legislative processes and information ● Theresa Walker, Durham Agriculture Commission & Michael Behrendt, Durham Town Planner, theresawalker@comcast.net <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Structure & Function: working with town government to fund, grow, and maintain an ag commission ● John Keegan, Boscawen Agriculture Commission, peoresnada@tds.net <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Community collaborations and agriculture commission projects ○ Education 	12:10

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● GENERAL DISCUSSION TOPICS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Effects of COVID-19 ○ Current Use & Easements ○ Ag Commission Succession 	
Q&A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Facilitated by NHFA staff and panelists 	12:40
<i>Next Steps/Closing</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● If not an agricultural commission, how to support agriculture and conservation in your town? 	12:50

RESOURCES

[New Hampshire Towns with Agricultural Commissions](#)

[Agricultural Resources Chapter of the Durham Master Plan](#)

[Preserving Rural Character Through Agriculture, NH Coalition for Sustaining Agriculture](#)

[Local Regulation of Agriculture Toolkit, NH Coalition for Sustaining Agriculture](#)

["Creating an Agricultural Commission In Your Hometown" Lorraine Stuart Merrill, NH Coalition For Sustaining Agriculture](#)

[NH Office of Strategic Initiatives Resource Library: Agriculture, Farmland and Open Space Preservation](#)

[Legal Guide for New Hampshire Agricultural Producers, UNH Extension](#)

[New Hampshire Department of Agriculture Markets and Food-Laws and Rules Index](#)

[NH Office of Strategic Initiatives "Innovative Land Use Planning Techniques Handbook " Section on Agricultural Incentive Zoning"](#)

[Farm Friendly Checklist](#)

[Local Regulation of Agriculture Toolkit \(2017\)](#)

PANEL PRESENTATIONS NOTES

- John Keegan– always trying to reach the community and staying involved. Partnering with Extension and other organizations to present events/education
- Wrote a project proposal in Boscawen for possible locations for a common kitchen for value add products, would not have happening if commission was not at the center

- Active community garden program, Boscawen identified town land to house the program, started with 40 plots, now up to 74, focused on people who live/work in town and others
- COVID has really had an effect on people wanting to produce their own food
- Tangible example of how to get started, things to consider as you continue getting started, turn ideas into activities and product

GENERAL CHAT NOTES

- I think it's important to bear in mind that not only farmers and/or supply chain actors may have strong knowledge of food system opportunities & challenges, direct awareness of the interests of farmers as farmers see them, and how to effectively support and communicate those interests vis the community and its stakeholders.
- Durham Ag Comm works with school district sustainability committee to promote ag in the classroom and purchasing of locally produced food by school food service. Amazing food service director in our schools, very vested in purchasing locally produced food
- Here in NH it's the role of our state, under the "Granite State Farm to Plate" statute to encourage, and never to discourage agriculture in all of our municipalities. Secondly, with all the interest in renewable energy, we should note that solar collectors work very well in combination with sheep and sometimes other livestock.. Finally, regardless of how many farms and farmers are in your town, all of us eat. Therefore we all need AgComs! If you eat, your in!
- Q: How many ag commissions are there in NH? Is there an association of Ag Commissions in NH that coordinates policy advocacy at the state level?
- A: approx. 20 ag comms in NH, some more active than others, a couple towns have heritage commissions that advocate for ag; no formal statewide association but we do stay in touch via email list serve and annual gathering in February NH Farm and Forest Expo
- The Town of Warner voted to establish an Agriculture Commission at this year's town meeting.