

**Article 25** To see if the Town will vote to adopt a Right to Farm by-law to read as follows:

### **Section 1 Legislative Purpose and Intent**

- A. The purpose and intent of this By-law is to state with emphasis the Right to Farm accorded to all citizens of the Commonwealth under Article 97, of the Constitution, and all state statutes and regulations thereunder including but not limited to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40A, Section 3, Paragraph 1; Chapter 90, Section 9, Chapter 111, Section 125A and Chapter 128 Section 1A. We the citizens of the Town of Adams restate and republish these rights pursuant to the Town's authority conferred by Article 89 of the Articles of Amendment of the Massachusetts Constitution, ("Home Rule Amendment").
- B. This General By-law encourages the pursuit of agriculture, promotes agriculture-based economic opportunities, and protects farmlands within the Town of Adams by allowing agricultural uses and related activities to function with minimal conflict with abutters and Town agencies. This By-law shall apply to all jurisdictional areas within the Town of Adams.

### **Section 2 Definitions**

- A. The word "farm" shall include any parcel or contiguous parcels of land, or water bodies used for the primary purpose of commercial agriculture, or accessory thereto.
- B. The words "farming" or "agriculture" or their derivatives shall include, but not be limited to the following:
  - 1. farming in all its branches and the cultivation and tillage of the soil;
  - 2. dairying;
  - 3. production, cultivation, growing and harvesting of any agricultural, aquacultural, floricultural, viticultural, or horticultural commodities;
  - 4. growing and harvesting of Christmas trees;
  - 5. cultivation of sugar maple trees for the production of maple products;
  - 6. growing and harvesting of forest products and any other forestry or lumbering operations; raising of livestock, including horses;
  - 7. keeping of horses as a commercial enterprise;
  - 8. keeping and raising of poultry, swine, cattle, sheep, goats, rabbits, ratites (such as emus, ostriches and rheas), camelids (such as llamas, alpacas, and camels) and other domesticated animals for food and other agricultural purposes, including fiber and fur-bearing animals (not to include exotic animals);
  - 9. keeping of honey bees;

10. fish hatcheries.

C. "Farming" shall encompass activities including, but not limited to, the following:

1. operation and transportation of slow-moving farm equipment over roads within the town;
2. control of pests including, but not limited to, insects, weeds, predators, and disease organisms of plants and animals;
3. application of manure, fertilizers, and pesticides;
4. conducting agriculture-related educational and farm-based recreational activities, provided that the activities are related to marketing the agricultural output or services of the farm;
5. processing and packaging of the agricultural output of the farm and the operation of a farmer's market or farm stand including signage thereto;
6. maintenance, repair, or storage of seasonal equipment or apparatus owned or leased by the farm owner or manager used expressly for the purpose of propagation, processing, management, or sale of the agricultural products;
7. on-farm relocation of the earth and the clearing of ground for farming operation;
  
8. construction and use of farm structures and facilities for the storage of animal wastes, farm equipment, pesticides, fertilizers, agricultural products and livestock, for the processing of animal wastes and agricultural products, for the sale of agricultural products, and for the use of farm labor, as permitted by local and state building codes and regulations; including construction and maintenance of fences.

### **Section 3 Right To Farm Declaration**

A. The Right to Farm is hereby recognized to exist within the Town of Adams. The above –described agricultural activities may occur on holidays, weekdays, and weekends by night or day and shall include the accompanying incidental noise, odors, dust, and fumes associated with normally accepted agricultural practices. It is hereby determined that whatever impact may be caused to others through the normal practice of agriculture is more than offset by the benefits of farming to the neighborhood, community, and society in general. The benefits and protections

of this Bylaw are intended to apply exclusively to those agricultural and farming operations and activities conducted in accordance with generally accepted agricultural practices. Moreover, nothing in this Right to Farm Bylaw shall be deemed as acquiring any interest in land, or imposing any land use regulation, which is properly the subject of state statute, regulation, or local zoning bylaw. This Bylaw does not supersede local, state or federal laws or regulations or private covenants.

#### **Section 4 Disclosure Notification**

- A. The Town will provide a copy of the following notice by posting a copy of the notice at the Adams Town Hall and at the Adams Public Library, and will include the notice and copy of the bylaw on the Town's official website.

“It is the policy of the Town of Adams to conserve, protect and encourage the maintenance and improvement of agricultural land for the production of food, and other agricultural products, and also for its natural and ecological value. This disclosure notification is to inform buyers or occupants that the property they are about to acquire or occupy lies within a town where farming activities occur. Such farming activities may include, but are not limited to, activities that cause noise, dust and odors. Buyers or occupants are also informed that the location of property within the Town may be impacted by commercial agricultural operations including the ability to access water services for such property under certain circumstances”.

#### **Section 5 Resolution of Disputes**

- A. Any person who seeks to complain about the operation of a farm may, notwithstanding pursuing any other available remedy, file a grievance with the Select Board, the Zoning Enforcement Officer, or the Board of Health, depending upon the nature of the grievance. The filing of the grievance does not suspend the time within which to pursue any other available remedies that the aggrieved may have. The Zoning Enforcement Officer or Select Board may forward a copy of the grievance to the Agricultural Commission or its agent, which shall review and facilitate the resolution of the grievance, and report its recommendations to the referring Town authority within an agreed upon time frame with all involved parties.
- B. The Board of Health, except in cases of imminent danger or public health risk, may forward a copy of the grievance to the Agricultural Commission or its agent, which shall review and facilitate the resolution of the grievance, and report its recommendations to the Board of Health within an agreed upon time frame with all involved parties.

#### **Section 6 Severability Clause**

- A. If any part of this Bylaw is for any reason held to be unconstitutional or invalid, such decision(s) shall not affect the remainder of this Bylaw. The Town of Adams hereby declares the provisions of this Bylaw to be severable.

***RECOMMENDED:** The Finance Committee voted to take no action on this article at this time.*

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