

§162. Maine Farm Agricultural Resource Management and Sustainability recognition program

The commissioner shall establish a process for designating Maine Farm Agricultural Resource Management and Sustainability recipients according to this section. This designation provides farmers an opportunity to recognize their commitment to sustainable agricultural practices and long-term resource management and to increase public awareness of agricultural producer commitment to best management practices. [PL 2017, c. 160, §1 (AMD).]

1. Application. An applicant for designation as a Maine Farm Agricultural Resource Management and Sustainability recipient shall submit a completed application for verification in accordance with subsection 3 to the department. The department shall develop an application and make it available through the offices of the soil and water conservation districts and private organizations and public agencies that support or represent farmers in the State. [PL 2017, c. 160, §1 (AMD).]

2. Eligibility. A farm is eligible for designation under this section if it engages in the management of cropland or the production of livestock, specialty crops or value-added products and meets the criteria established by the commissioner as follows:

A. The farm consists of land classified as prime farmland, land of statewide or local importance or unique farmland by the Natural Resources Conservation Service within the United States Department of Agriculture. In counties where land of local importance has not been identified, land that is actively farmed may be eligible as provided in rules adopted under subsection 4; [PL 2009, c. 356, Pt. A, §1 (NEW).]

B. The farm is engaged in the commercial production of agricultural products; or [PL 2017, c. 160, §1 (AMD).]

C. The farm complies with additional criteria established in rules adopted under subsection 4. [PL 2017, c. 160, §1 (AMD).]

A farm that is farmed under a lease may be designated as long as the landowner and the lessee sign the application.

[PL 2017, c. 160, §1 (AMD).]

3. Verification of eligibility. An applicant for designation as a Maine Farm Agricultural Resource Management and Sustainability recipient shall submit a completed application form together with support materials as required in rules adopted under subsection 4 to the department for verification of eligibility.

[PL 2017, c. 160, §1 (AMD).]

4. Rules. The commissioner may adopt rules to further define the verification process under subsection 3 and establish additional eligibility criteria as needed for designation of Maine Farm Agricultural Resource Management and Sustainability recipients. The commissioner may provide signs or certificates or develop other means of recognizing a farm that has attained designation as a Maine Farm Agricultural Resource Management and Sustainability recipient. Rules adopted under this subsection are routine technical rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.

[PL 2017, c. 160, §1 (AMD).]

5. Fee. The commissioner may charge fees as necessary for the administration of this section. [PL 2017, c. 160, §1 (AMD).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2009, c. 356, Pt. A, §1 (NEW). PL 2011, c. 682, §38 (REV). PL 2017, c. 160, §1 (AMD).

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