

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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Maine Agriculture:



LOOKING AHEAD

The 1998 Biennial Report on Agriculture

SUBMITTED TO

GOVERNOR ANGUS S. KING, JR.

AND TO

THE FIRST REGULAR SESSION

OF THE

119TH LEGISLATURE

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1998 BIENNIAL REPORT ON MAINE AGRICULTURE



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Deanne Herman,
Division of Market & Production Development

1998 BIENNIAL REPORT ON MAINE AGRICULTURE

I. INTRODUCTION

This report presents a brief history of Maine agriculture, discusses the industry's economic value, describes the public's view of agriculture, and highlights major agricultural sectors and examines their future.

II. A BRIEF HISTORY OF AGRICULTURE IN MAINE

During the colonial period, settlers of the territory that would become the State of Maine relied on farming for sustenance, while generating cash income from other activities such as lumbering, fishing and commerce. At the time of Maine's statehood in 1820, the vast majority of the state's 300,000 people still relied on farming to meet their family's food needs. By the onset of the Civil War, changing economic and social forces caused farming to shift from a largely subsistence endeavor to a commercial enterprise. Many people left agriculture to find work in the factories of growing cities; and the 55,000 farmers in 1860 continued to largely meet their families' needs and to generate income from the sale of crops. For the next 80 years, the state's farming community slowly evolved toward commercial agriculture. By the 1940s, half of the state's 39,000 farmers were involved full-time in agriculture, the rest were either part-time or grew food to meet their own families' needs.

At the time of the Civil War, the total amount of land devoted to farming was 5.7 million acres, by 1880--at its height--it increased to 6.6 million acres, and by 1940 had declined to 4.2 million acres. This represented an increase from 29% of Maine's total land area (19.8 million acres) to 33%, and then a decline to 21%. Many factors caused this increase and subsequent decline in land farmed including changes in the population of Maine and the nature of agriculture. During this period, the average farm

size was 100 acres. Photographs of rural Maine taken in the late 19th and early 20th century reveal expansive rolling fields of hay and pasture bounded by stone walls. These fields supported a prosperous sheep industry and an extensive animal-based agriculture dependent on draft animals. Horses and oxen were used for pulling farm equipment, as well as wagons and carriages used for transportation. Maine's livestock inventory has declined substantially since an 1837 survey of farms reported 327,000 cattle and calves (versus 107,000 in 1998), 117,000 hogs and pigs (versus 5,500 in 1997), and 619,000 sheep and lambs (versus 11,000 in 1998). Sheep wool remained a relatively profitable commodity until the 1920s, when the industry experienced a precipitous decline due to plummeting domestic wool prices resulting from foreign competition and the advent of synthetic fibers.

With the decline of an animal-based agriculture, much of the open hay and pasture land began to slowly revert to forest. Walking through almost any woodland in the southern part of the state one frequently finds stone walls and rusted, broken barbed wire fences, remnants of a bygone era. While some lament the loss of this pastoral landscape, these changes gave way to the more intensive and diversified agriculture that currently exists in the state.

In 1997, Maine had 7,300 farms using 1.34 million acres of land, or 7% of the state's land base (New England Agricultural Statistics 1997). Approximately 540,000 acres, or 3% of the state's land base, is used for growing field crops including feed corn, dry hay, oats, fall potatoes, and sweet corn (1997 Census of Agriculture). Compared to the period prior to World War II, when the average farm size was 100 acres, the current average is 184 acres. Table 1 shows the number of farms, their average size, and total acres of farmland in Maine from 1850 to 1997 (Farms of Maine and New England Agricultural Statistics 1997).

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TABLE 1.

**Maine Farms by Number and Size
Selected Years From 1850 Through 1997**

Year	Farms	Average Farm Size	Land In Farms
	Number	Acres	Million Acres
1850	46800	113	4.555
1860	55700	108	5.728
1870	59800	104	5.838
1880	64300	99	6.553
1890	62000	98	6.180
1900	59200	97	6.300
1910	60000	105	6.297
1920	48200	113	5.426
1930	39000	119	4.640
1940	39000	108	4.223
1950	30400	138	4.128
1959	17360	178	3.082
1964	12875	201	2.590
1969	7971	221	1.760
1974	6436	237	1.524
1978	6775	221	1.500
1982	7003	200	1.580
1987	7300	199	1.450
1992	7300	199	1.420
1997	7300	184	1.340

farms by various size categories as measured by total acreage (1997 Census of Agriculture). Figure 2 shows the regions where some of Maine's important agricultural commodities are produced.

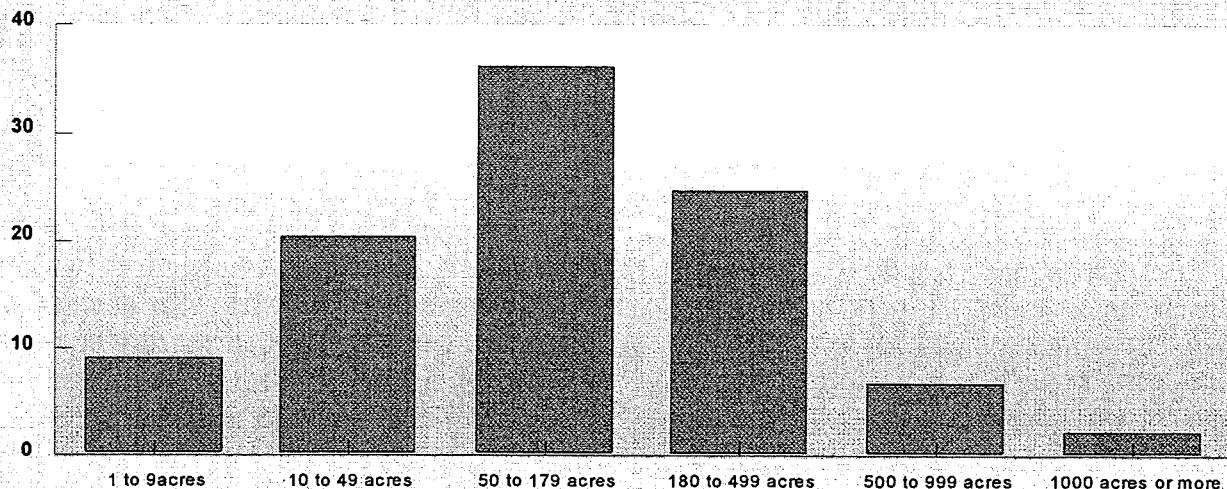
In 1947, full-time employment on Maine farms totalled 46,700 workers, as compared to the 1997 full-time employment of 16,158 workers (consisting of 12,000 farm family members and an additional 4,158 year-round employees. (Maine State Planning Office). Half of Maine farmers list farming as their principle occupation, while the other half derive most of their income from other sources. The decline in full-time farm employment is due to a decrease in the number of acres farmed, an increase in the efficiency of farm machinery, and an increasing reliance on part-time and contract labor.

Maine farms remain primarily family-owned businesses. Based on 1997 Census of Agriculture data, 87% of Maine farms were sole proprietorships owned by an individual or family, 6% were family-held corporations, 5% were owned by partnerships, and less than 2% were held by other types of ownership such as a non-family held corporation, cooperative, estate or trust.

As people exited farming, remaining farmers purchased available land to expand their own operations, allowing for more efficient use of management and capital resources. Figure 1 shows Maine

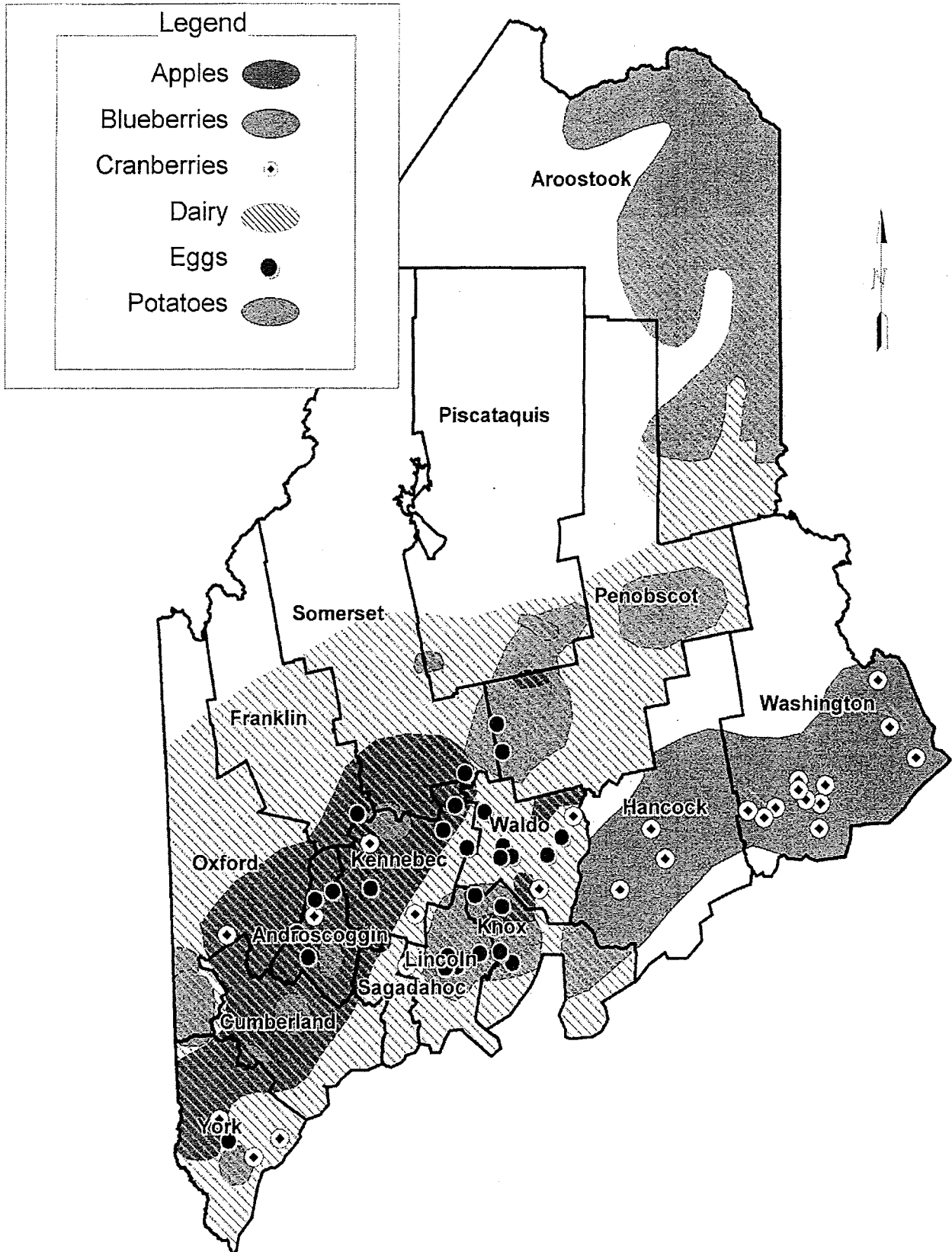
Figure 1. Percent of Farms by Size in Maine

Source: 1997 Census of Agriculture



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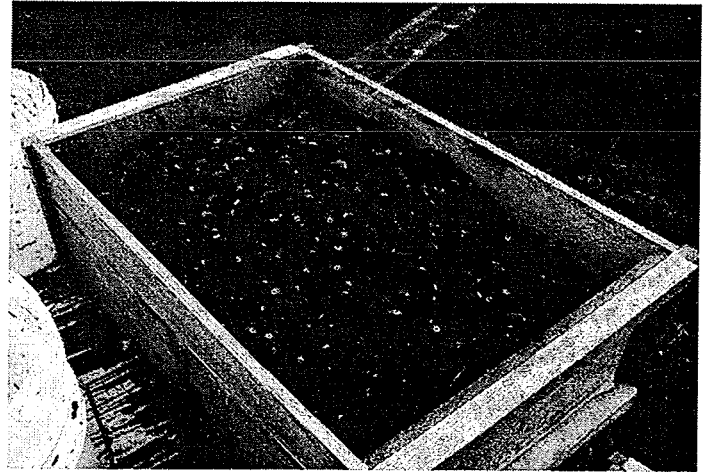
Figure 2. Maine's Agricultural Commodities



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III. THE ECONOMIC VALUE OF MAINE'S AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRIES

Maine's agricultural, food and fiber processing industries contribute over \$1.5 billion annually to the state's economy. Maine produces more food crops for human consumption than any other New England state, except Vermont. Maine ranks first in the world in blueberry production, producing 50% of the world's wild blueberries. Maine produces 20% of all blueberries in North America (including cultivated and wild). Production is increasing at the rate of several hundred acres annually. Maine is the largest producer of brown eggs in the world! In New England, Maine ranks first in potato production and second in the production of milk, aquaculture products, and apples. Nationally, Maine ranks third in maple syrup and eighth in potatoes. The greenhouse/nursery and aquaculture sectors have also shown steady growth in total sales since 1990. Cranberry production has recently enjoyed a resurgence in Maine. One hundred-eighty acres have been developed by 30 growers through a \$4.5 million capital investment. In 1998, 67 acres were harvested yielding 3,500 barrels. At a barrel price of \$60, Maine growers produced \$210,000 in cranberry cash receipts. Receipts should more than

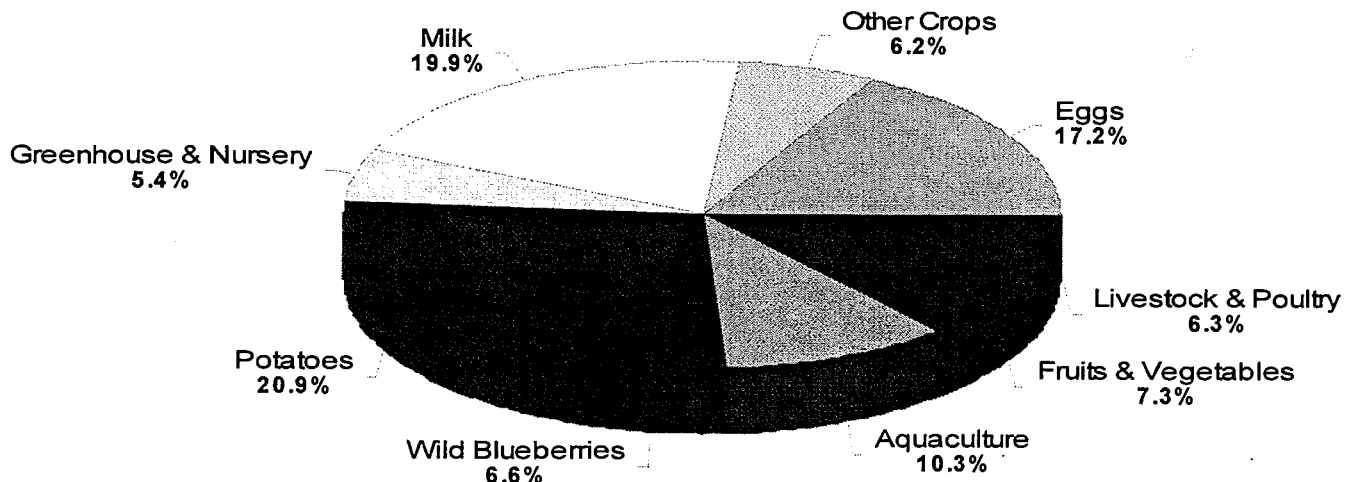


triple in the next few years as the other developed acreage comes into production.

Producer receipts at the "farmgate" for Maine's crop, livestock and aquaculture industries totalled \$481 million in 1997 (the latest year for which complete data is available). Figure 3 shows the percent each major commodity contributes to Maine's farmgate receipts (the price the producer receives for products sold, also referred to as cash receipts) (1997 Cash Receipts, New England Agricultural Statistics Service, U.S.D.A.).

Figure 3. Maine Farmgate Receipts for Agriculture in 1997

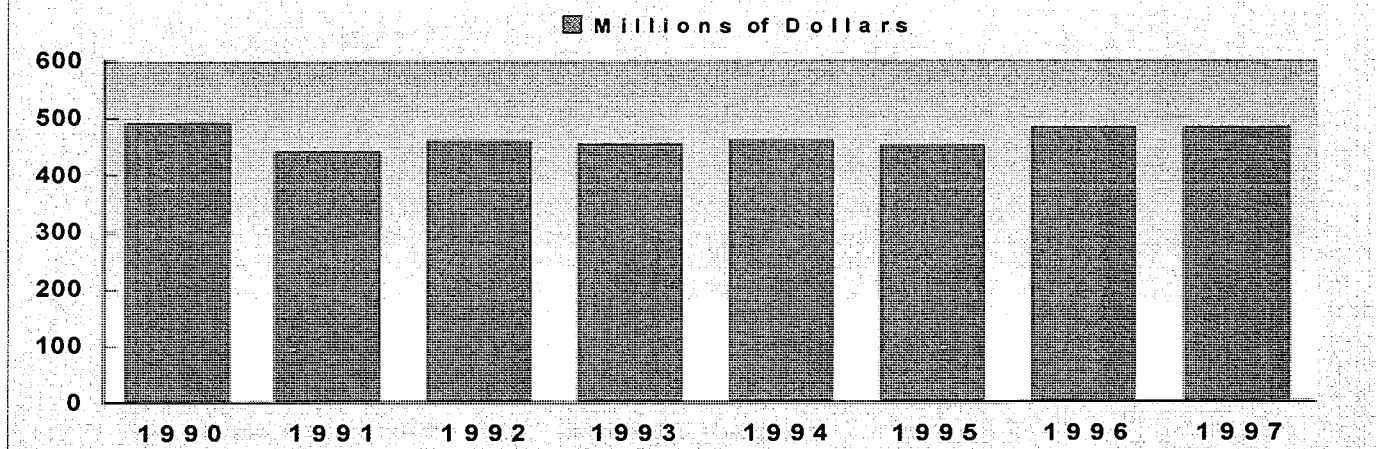
Source: New England Agricultural Statistics Service (Latest Available Data)



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Figure 4. Maine Cash Receipts 1990 through 1997

Source: New England Agricultural Statistics 1998



Maine's 1997 farmgate receipts (\$481 million) were fourth in New England. Massachusetts and Connecticut, ranked first and third respectively, both have large greenhouse and nursery industries to meet the needs of their large urban and suburban populations. Vermont ranked second. Figure 4 shows Maine's total farmgate receipts from its agricultural industries for the period 1990-97 (New England Agricultural Statistics 1998).

Farming has always been a risky enterprise due to the uncertainties of climate, biological factors such as insects and disease, and changing market conditions. Figure 5 shows the variation in net farm income for the period 1988-1997 (New England Agricultural Statistics 1997). Net farm income is the profit the farmer realizes: it is derived by sub-

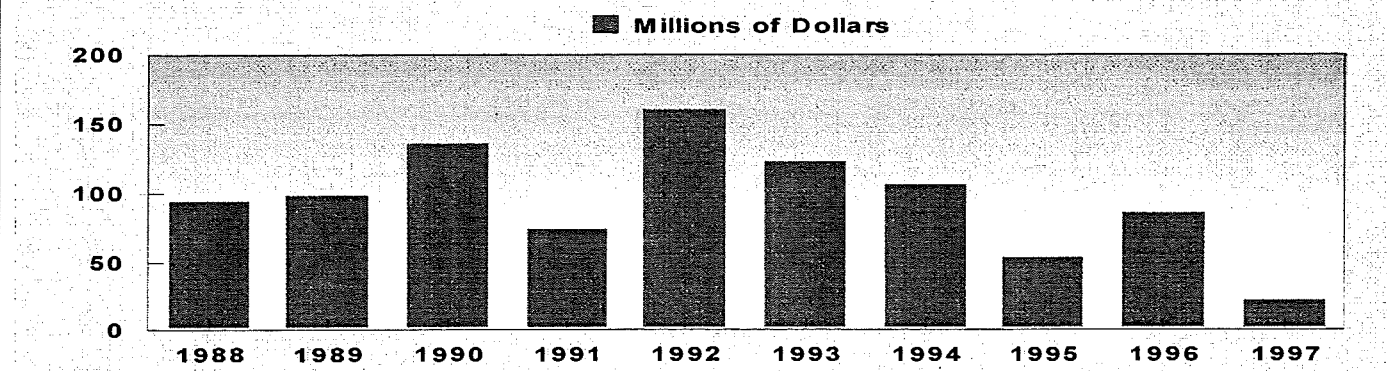
tracting farm production expenses from farmgate receipts for the farm products marketed. Over the last decade, net farm income has fluctuated from a low of \$22 million in 1997 to a high of \$160 million in 1992.

Figure 6 shows percent of farms by market value of products sold in 1997. In 1997, the average net cash return from agricultural sales for Maine farms was \$13,478. Because of this relatively low and variable income, many farmers and members of farm families seek regular employment off the farm.

It is estimated that there are 12,000 full-time farm family workers on Maine farms. Another 4,158 people are employed as farm laborers for most of the year. In total, there are 16,000 full-time workers

Figure 5. Net Farm Income

Source: New England Agricultural Statistics 1998

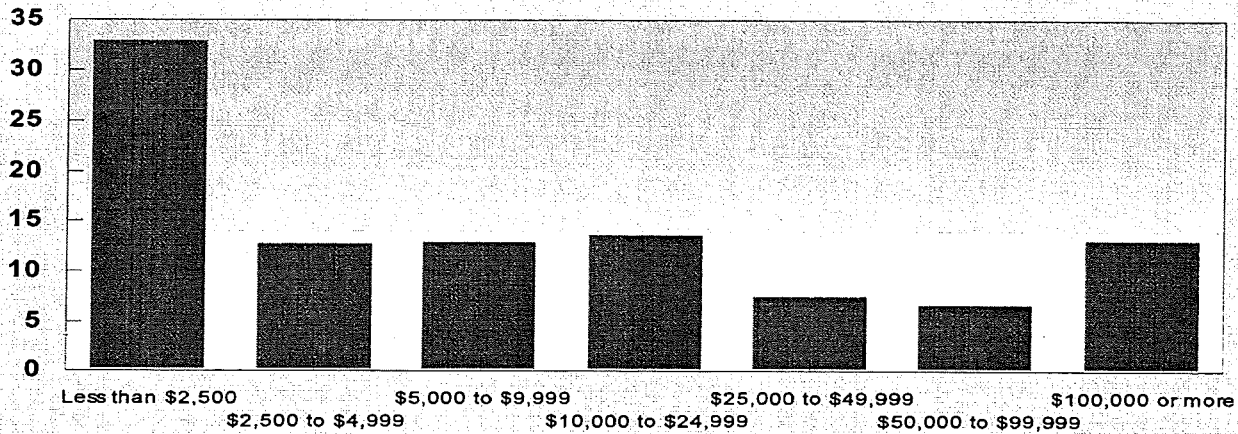


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Figure 6. Maine Farms by Market Value of Products Sold in 1997

Source: 1997 Census of Agriculture

■ Percent of All Farms



on Maine farms (Maine State Planning Office). An additional 22,000 people are employed seasonally or part-time (less than 150 days a year). Maine farms spend nearly \$70 million for hired and contract labor. In addition to salaries paid to farm laborers, Maine farms purchase a wide variety of goods and services, and provide raw materials used in other industries, which has a substantial ripple effect throughout the state's economy. Table 2 shows the number of people employed on the farm and in other agricultural industries (Maine State Planning Office). In total, 66,000 Maine people are employed in agricultural and agriculture-related industries.

Agriculture and farmland are important components of Maine's rural character. Rolling fields, croplands, orchards, and wild blueberry barrens enhance the scenic character of our landscapes and increase the diversity of habitats available for use by wildlife. Undeniably, Maine's \$3 billion tourism industry is dependent on the natural beauty of our farms, as well as our forests, mountains, rivers, and coastal areas. And, Maine's agricultural heritage is an important part of how we define ourselves as "Mainers".

TABLE 2.

1997 Employment in Maine's Agricultural Industries

Sector	Employment	Number of Jobs
On Farm	Farm Family	12,000
	Farm Employees-Year Round	4,158
	Farm Employees-Seasonal/Part Time	22,000
	Agricultural Services	Veterinary, Animal Services, Landscape/Horticulture
Manufacturing-Farm/Processor Inputs	Farm & Garden Machinery	10
	Industrial Machinery-Fluid Power Cylinders	53
	Fabricated Metal Tools	12
	Refrigeration	150
	Measuring, Controlling Devices	28
Manufacturing-Farm Output	Food	3,750
	Textiles (Wool, Yarn, Garments)	564
	Leather	980
Wholesale	Farm & Garden Equipment	400
	Raw Farm Products	80
	Food Products	2,370
	Florist Supplies	60
	Farm Supplies	300
Retail	Nursery & Garden	310
	Florist	760
	Food	1,735
General Services	Repair Services	117
	Total	65,979

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IV. THE PUBLIC VIEW OF MAINE AGRICULTURE

The Maine Development Foundation has for the last four years organized a telephone random survey of 600 Maine citizens to solicit their opinions on a variety of questions of public interest. The department contracted with the Maine Development Foundation to have five questions regarding the state's agricultural and food processing industries included in the 1998 survey. The department's strategic plan established a goal "to ensure that the public actively supports Maine agriculture." To accomplish this, the department periodically assesses the effectiveness of its programs and public support and awareness of Maine's agricultural industries.

The questions and percent distribution of the responses are listed below:

	Percent Distribution of Public Responses				
	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	
D o you consider your general knowledge of Maine's agricultural industries and its agricultural products to be.....?	8%	40%	40%	11%	
		(No answer: 1%)			
	Growing	Staying about the same	Declining	Don't know	
O ver the past 10 years, do you think the economic contribution of Maine agriculture to the state's economy has been.....?	13%	34%	45%	8%	
	Strongly Agree	(4)	(3)	Strongly Disagree	(1)
F ederal and State food safety programs ensure a safe food supply for citizens of Maine.....	20%	34%	33%	6%	5%
		(No answer: 2%)			
M ore state funds should be allocated to promote the availability of and access to Maine produced foods...	33%	32%	25%	4%	4%
		(No answer: 2%)			
	All of the time	Some of the time	Rarely	Never	Not aware of Maine Agricultural Products
W hen available, do you make an effort to buy Maine produced agricultural products rather than those produced elsewhere.....?	67%	27%	3%	1%	2%
	Yes	No	Can't Remember /Don't Know		
H ave you purchased Maine potatoes in the past 12 months?	91%	8%	1%		
	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	
H ow satisfied were you with the Maine potatoes you purchased?	64%	28%	5%	3%	

The department surmises from the survey responses that increased efforts are needed to make more of Maine's citizens aware of the state's agricultural industries. Overall, the state's agricultural industries are "holding their own"; however, nearly half of those responding view Maine agriculture as declining. Further efforts are also needed to reassure Maine citizens that their food supply is safe. By a substantial majority, Maine people make an effort to buy our agricultural products when available, and they support more state funding to promote them. The level of satisfaction with the quality of Maine potatoes is high, in large part due to the department's potato inspection program, which certifies the quality of potatoes being shipped to market.

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V. MAJOR AGRICULTURAL SECTORS

Among the New England states, Maine is the most diverse in terms of the agricultural commodities it produces. Vermont and Maine have consistently lead all of the New England states in the production of food crops. The following briefly highlights Maine's major agricultural crop and livestock industries:

Eggs

Maine is the largest producer of brown eggs in the world! Five million hens lay 1.4 billion eggs a year, worth \$83 million. The industry is dominated by one large producer, which utilizes state of the art production facilities: from the chicken to the carton eggs are never touched by human hands! A half dozen smaller producers also contribute to Maine's egg production. The Maine Department of Agriculture's Division of Quality Assurance and Regulations ensures production of uniform, good quality eggs by providing personnel to perform on-site grading in the various egg production facilities. In exchange for this service, producers agree to meet minimum standards for their packing and storage facilities, and sanitation, as well as the graded product.

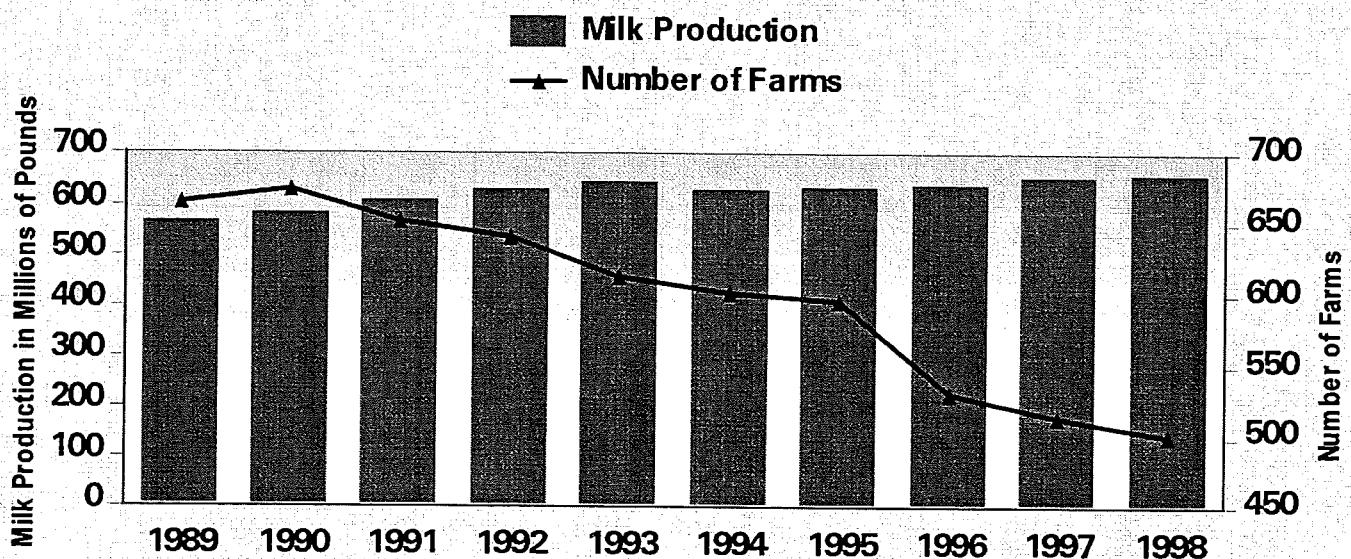
Dairy

Over the past ten years, Maine's dairy farm numbers have decreased 27%, while at the same time, milk production has increased 17% (see Figure 7). Maine milk production follows the trend of the rest of the nation: increased production on fewer but larger farms. While dairy farm numbers have declined, the land base, for the most part, is still in agricultural use. Milk production per cow has increased 18% since 1988, due to improved genetics and herd management.

Dairy farmer's income for 1998 was in excess of \$105 million, an increase of 15% over 1997. A portion of the increase, \$1.7 million or 2%, is attributable to the Northeast Dairy Compact's over order premium. Maine participates in the Com-

Figure 7. Milk Production 1989-1998

Source: Maine Milk Commission



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pact, so Maine farmers are paid a premium by processors for their milk above the Federal Milk Order minimum price. The future of the Compact is uncertain as it is only authorized to operate until October 1999. The remaining increase was a result of record prices for milk and butterfat that farmers received in the fourth quarter of 1998. Currently, there are twenty-one certified organic commercial dairy farms in the state that market their milk through two organic companies, the Organic Cow of Vermont and CROPP of Wisconsin. Organic milk production represents two percent of all milk produced in Maine. Maine's dairy farms continue to be an important part of the state's pastoral landscape.

Nursery & Greenhouse Crops

The ornamental horticulture industry is diverse including florists, greenhouses, garden centers, nurseries, and mass marketers. Maine growers produced \$26 million worth of nursery and greenhouse crops in 1997, a nearly 50% increase since 1990. This industry includes 1500 businesses licensed to sell plants in Maine with 64 acres covered by greenhouses and 1300 acres of nursery production. Many of the greenhouse businesses import young plant material from outside sources to grow to saleable size. These businesses are predominantly seasonal, selling most of their products in the spring. Nurseries tend to have small growing areas and therefore bring in most of their young stock to grow and sell. The industry's contribution to the state's economy is even greater if landscaping and other related services are included. Most horticulture businesses are located in the southern part of the state near the larger population centers and in coastal areas where summer residents exert a high demand for their products. The industry will continue to grow by 5 % annually as people's interest increases in gardening and landscaping. The industry is very labor intensive and currently faces a shortage of labor. Greenhouses in particular consume substantial amounts of energy and, while prices are currently favorable, increases in the future could have a large impact on business profitability and competitiveness.

Potatoes

Potatoes were the number one commodity in terms of cash receipts for 1997, having a farmgate value of \$110 million! Potato sales for 1997 increased 26% over 1996, due to improved prices, even though there was a decline in the acres harvested. The decline has been significant over the last few years, falling from 77,000 acres in 1996 to 72,000 acres in 1997 to 64,500 acres in 1998. With the opening of the new McCains potato processing facility in the Aroostook County Town of Easton, it is expected that the acreage in potatoes will stabilize. In addition, the amount of potatoes produced under contract will increase, thereby also stabilizing farmers' incomes. In recent years, Maine has ranked 8th nationally in potato production. Russet Burbank is the leading variety planted, followed by Superior and Shepody. The state also has a significant seed potato industry, producing seed stock for both domestic use and export to other states and countries.

Wild Blueberries

Maine is the largest producer of wild blueberries in the world! We produce 20% of all blueberries in North America, including wild and cultivated. Wild blueberries are grown on 60,000 acres, 30,000 of which are harvested each year. These fields have been developed from native plants that occur naturally in the under story of the forest. Wild blueberries were first cultivated by Native Americans who periodically burned the land to encourage their growth. Approximately 75% of the 500 blueberry growers have part-time operations and 75% of all blueberry farms are under 50 acres. Maine, however, also has the two largest fruit farms in the United States, with the farm size exceeding 6,000 and 8,000 acres. In 1998, 123 acres of blueberry fields received organic certification. Eight companies operate processing plants in Maine. Currently, 99% of the crop is frozen, but then five to ten percent of those berries are later canned. With an average crop of 65 million pounds, this represents a value of \$65 million which includes the value added resulting

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from fresh and processed sales. The blueberry harvesting and processing facilities in Washington and Hancock Counties provide a vital source of income to 8,000 local and migrant workers in this economically depressed part of the state. Wild blueberry fruit has been found to have the highest levels of antioxidant activity of 40 fruits and vegetables tested by the USDA. The anti-cancer and anti-aging phytochemicals found in wild blueberries provide additional health benefits that increase the demand for this unique fruit.

Cranberries

Cranberries were grown in Maine between 1850 and 1950 primarily Downeast and in the central part of the state. Competition and lack of markets caused the industry to die out. However, by the late 1980s, the demand for cranberries to make juices caused a major processor to express interest in having several thousand acres of new production established in Maine. The unmet demand sparked the interest of potential growers. The department worked with the Maine Department of Environmental Protection to amend state wetlands laws to allow cranberry bed development on lower-value wetlands on a case by case basis. Performance standards for permits require plans covering fertilization and pesticide use, water recovery, and erosion control. To assist potential growers, the department produced the "Cranberry Growers Guide"--a comprehensive "how-to" resource--for establishing new cranberry beds. On-site technical assistance is also provided. Currently, over 30 growers have planted 180 acres, representing \$4.5 million of new investment. The 1998 yield of 3,500 barrels, at \$60 a barrel, was worth \$210,000. Future prospects are for continued growth of this resurging industry!

Aquaculture

Aquaculture, the controlled cultivation of aquatic organisms and plants, is a growing industry in Maine. Because Maine has protected bays, generally clean and nutrient-rich waters and large tides, the entire coast is suitable for aquaculture in one form or another. In the early 1970s, a few entrepreneurs first

experimented with commercial mussel, oyster, coho salmon, and rainbow trout farming. Since then, aquaculture has grown to be a technologically sophisticated industry worth \$57 million wholesale (includes preparing raw product for sale to harvesters/processors) in 1997. There are 1,236 acres of ocean leased for farming at 79 sites. More than 1,200 people are employed full time at 40 aquafarms in Washington, Hancock, Lincoln, Knox, and York counties, where they raise Atlantic salmon, rainbow trout, mussels, and oysters. Much of this harvest ends up on restaurant tables. Research being conducted by Maine scientists might make raising cod, haddock, and halibut practical and cost-effective in the future.

Fruits & Vegetables

Fruits and vegetables (including sweet corn, all other vegetables, apples, and other fruits and berries) had a farmgate value of \$35 million in 1997, representing 7% of the state's agricultural cash receipts. Apples, with a farmgate value of nearly \$13 million, represent one third of the total. They are grown on 100 family farms ranging in size from under 10 acres to over 500 acres predominantly in the upland areas of the western and central parts of the state. In 1998, 25 acres of apples received organic certification. Vegetables are grown on 500 farms on 10,000 acres. Because of the labor intensive nature of vegetable cultivation, over half of the farms are less than 5 acres in size. The department estimates that \$20 million annually of Maine-grown fruits and vegetables are purchased by Maine consumers. There is a substantial opportunity to increase local sales. In 1998, organic growers produced vegetables on 359 acres for the expanding "organic" market.

Livestock

Livestock includes sheep, swine and cattle (dairy cull cows and calves and beef cattle). These enterprises generated Maine farmgate receipts of \$20 million in 1997. Cattle receipts were more than 90% of that amount. In the past 30 years, livestock numbers in Maine have declined and, as well, they all run in cycles.

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Producers by cooperatively marketing their products have increased the price they receive, bringing it closer to the national average. They are currently maintaining price contrary to an otherwise down national market. Maine livestock inventories include 2400 farms with cattle worth \$48 million, 1200 farms with swine worth \$0.5 million, and 550 farms with sheep worth \$1.5 million. Maine farms have enough feed and pasture to raise more livestock, but lack of an adequate marketing infrastructure limits expansion at this time. Insufficient volume and lack of uniformity make it hard to attract a processing plant into Maine, so most unfinished product goes out of state to be processed then brought back to be sold to the consumer. The Maine Department of Agriculture continues to assist producers with graded feeder beef sales and wool pools to enhance the viability of the state's livestock industry.

VI. THE FUTURE OF MAINE'S AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRIES

Making a living in agriculture is a dynamic and challenging enterprise. Not only do the vagaries of weather, insects, and disease pose production problems, but today's producers and food processors must compete in rapidly changing markets and avail themselves of the latest technological advances to stay competitive. A review of the last 10 years of net farm income data for all Maine farms shows that farmers experience dramatic fluctuations in income from year to year (see Figure 5). In fact, this is true of agriculture in general across the range of commodities that we expect to find on our supermarket shelves. Fortunately, the allure and challenge of wresting a living from the soil and sea keeps producers filling our pantries.

The rapidity of technological and economic change clouds our view into the crystal ball, making the forecast for Maine's agricultural industries uncertain. Of necessity, we need to look at the near-term, the next 5 years. The four food

crops that lead in cash receipts are potatoes, milk, eggs, and aquaculture products. The potato industry has experienced a significant decline over the last 30 years, with the number of acres producing potatoes reduced by more than half. However, it is expected that the remaining acres will continue in production because of strides made to both improve the quality of potatoes marketed and due to additional value-added processing which will occur at a new McCain's plant in Easton, Maine. Maine ranks third nationally in the production of seed potatoes and leads the nation in sale to out-of-state markets. The seed quality assurance program instituted by the department helps to maintain the viability of this industry. The number of dairy farms in the state is likely to continue its slow rate of decline, in part due to the economic obstacles posed for those who want to enter the business. However, it should be noted that milk production has actually increased by 17% over the last decade due to the increasing production and efficiency of those remaining in the business. Maine's brown egg production comes primarily from one large operation, which has maintained its production even in the face of a recent boycott through expanding its exports out of state. Cash receipts for Maine's relatively new aquaculture industry have continued to rise, and it is expected that this industry will maintain its steady growth because the Maine coast is an ideal location for aquafarms!

While some traditional products may experience declines, new crops are succeeding for Maine farmers. Acres planted to grains are expected to increase because the demand by Canadian hog and poultry growers for Maine-grown grains is rising. Currently, organically certified acreage represents only 1.4% of harvested acres in the state; however, the demand for organically produced crops is growing rapidly! Approximately, 180 acres have been planted to cranberries with 67 in production in 1998, and the acreage is expect to continue to grow. Cash receipts for greenhouse and nursery operations have also experienced a steady

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increase, and this trend is also expected to continue.

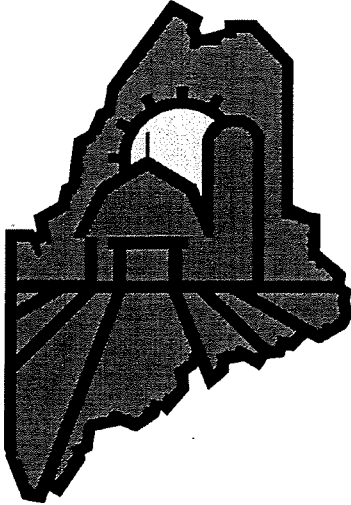
Maine's agriculture industries must now compete in a world economy driven by rapidly changing technological innovations. For Maine's producers to stay competitive, they must continue to produce high quality products efficiently at competitive prices. Producing and processing products for niche markets will be an important

survival strategy. Agriculture will continue to be a significant component of the Maine economy into the next century, and will likely continue to diversify to meet the demand for new products. The Maine Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources will work closely with Maine's producers to ensure that programs, technical services, and regulations effectively serve producers as well as consumers in the next millennium!

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL RESOURCES



The department's vision is "To be an extraordinary resource to Maine agriculture and the people of Maine." Its strategic plan goals are:

- ❖ To create opportunities for success and expansion of Maine agriculture and food businesses.
- ❖ To ensure the safety of consumers in the food they eat and to protect the integrity of services they receive.
- ❖ To ensure the health and well-being of Maine's agricultural plant and animal resources.
- ❖ To ensure the public actively supports Maine agriculture.
- ❖ To promote stewardship of Maine's agricultural and natural resources while protecting human health and the environment.
- ❖ To provide effective administration of Department programs, services, and functions, ensuring that public funds are expended efficiently and consistent with legislative intent.

The department's offices/divisions, responsibilities, and directors are:

- ❖ **Office of Planning, Policy, Legislation & Information Services** - is responsible for fiscal and computer support; provides policy coordination among the department's units; conducts special events such as the Big E, Agricultural Trades Show and Open Farm Day; coordinates the department's legislative program; administers the surplus food program; and staffs the Maine Milk Commission. (Tom Doak, Director - 287-3219)
- ❖ **Office of Agricultural, Natural & Rural Resources** - takes a proactive approach to issues relating to agriculture and the environment; provides technical support to assist farmers in implementing cost effective, best management practices to protect the environment; and staffs the Board of Pesticides Control. (Peter Mosher, Director - 287-1132)
- ❖ **Division of Animal Health & Industry** - is responsible for a variety of programs pertaining to animal health and welfare, as well as human health; works to prevent the introduction and spread of contagious, infectious, and parasitic disease among poultry and livestock, especially those diseases transmitted to people either directly or indirectly; tests all milk and milk products for compliance with federal law; and works with farmers to resolve problems and to improve milk quality and production. (Shelley Falk, Director - 287-7610)
- ❖ **Division of Plant Industry** - works to prevent the introduction and spread of injurious insects and diseases in Maine crops; protects the public from the sale of weak, diseased, or insect-infested commercial plant stock; inspects honeybees to ensure freedom from regulated pests; certifies seed potatoes and other crops that meet disease and insect tolerances; and ensures an adequate supply of high quality, disease-free seed potatoes for Maine's potato industry. (Terry Bourgoin, Director - 287-3891)
- ❖ **Division of Market & Production Development** - works cooperatively with producers to improve the production of existing commodities; researches and demonstrates the feasibility of new commodities; assists producers with product marketing; works cooperatively with agricultural associations to develop joint marketing ventures; and source directories. (Howard Jones, Director - 287-3491)
- ❖ **Division of Quality Assurance & Regulations** - provides inspection and regulatory programs to ensure that a safe, high quality food supply is maintained, that weighing and measuring devices used in commerce are correct, and that devices used in law enforcement are accurate; and staffs the Maine Harness Racing Commission. (Dave Gagnon, Director - 287-2161)

Robert N. Moore, Acting Commissioner (287-7576)
Maine Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources
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Offices located in the Deering Building at the AMHI Complex