

Should the Town of Minot consider the development of the Voluntary Municipal Farm Support Program (VMFSP)?

What is VMFSP? A voluntary program created and administered by a town that allows eligible landowners to apply for reduced assessment on the farmland and farm buildings. In exchange, the landowner grants the town a 20 year conservation easement. The purpose of the program is to reduce tax pressure on farm businesses while simultaneously protecting farmland and forest land from residential and commercial development.

VMFSP is:

A local program created by the town to meet community goals.

Based on rules adopted by the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry.

Voluntary for all landowners who meet program guidelines developed and approved by the town.

Currently in effect and helping farms in Monmouth and Winslow. Also being considered by Auburn, New Gloucester, and Windham.



Purpose – protecting current agricultural and forest lands from changing land use often caused by development.

State minimums guidelines for VMFSP eligibility:

- Farms are at least 5 contiguous acres producing specific agriculture crops
- Farms can include traditional farm infrastructure.
- Farms generate an annual gross farm income of \$2000 based on fair market value of products sold wholesale and retail

Any town can increase acreage and income criteria, identify additional crops, and provide more detailed guidance on types of farm buildings.

Minot's landowners, who are eligible, may already voluntarily enroll their lands in the "current use" property tax programs, i.e. Tree Growth, Farmland, or Open Space. These reduce land assessment by ~20%. These programs and the VMFSP program help Maine towns ensure that local farms and farmlands remain active and productive.

For more information and resources, please go to www.minotme.org