

House Republican Press Release

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Press Office: 860-240-8700

A VIEW FROM THE INSIDE **State Representative Ruth Fahrbach**



New laws aimed at bolstering state's agriculture industry

During the 2007 legislative session, the General Assembly acted on a number of bills to help our state's agricultural businesses and interests. Below is a summary of some of the legislation that was passed.

- **Farmland Preservation – Public Act 07-131**

This new law allows eligible municipalities to receive loans to purchase agricultural land. The Department of Agriculture will be responsible for dispensing the loans. In order to be eligible for a loan, a municipality must pay at least 20 percent of the purchase price, and the term of the loan must not exceed five years.

PA 07-162 requires the State Bond Commission to vote on whether to issue bonds that the legislature approved for agricultural land preservation programs but the commission has not allocated.

The act creates a 12-member Farmland Preservation Advisory Board to help the agriculture department with its purchase of development rights program and other efforts to preserve agricultural lands. It establishes the board's composition and duties, and places it within the department for administrative purposes only.

- **Vocational Agricultural Centers – Public Act 07-03**

This legislation increases the state's per-student grant to districts operating vocational-agricultural centers from \$700 to \$1,355. This change is obviously welcomed and was long overdue.

- **Farmers' Market Produce Sales to Restaurants –Public Act 07-252**

Connecticut Grown produce is as good as you can get anywhere. This law allows Connecticut Grown produce to be sold directly to restaurants and other food establishments.

- **Livestock – Public Act 07-59**

This law creates a process for dogs that bite livestock, pets or other animals. The process is similar to the process when dogs or animals bite people. The law requires anyone whose animal is attacked by a dog to report the incident to an animal control officer, and for the animal control officer to investigate the incident, and make recommendations including restraint or disposal of the attacking animal.

- **Veterinarians - Public Act 07-252**

This act requires graduates of foreign veterinary schools to graduate from a program acceptable to the American Veterinary Medical Association in order to receive certification from the Educational Commission for Foreign Veterinary Graduates.

- **Replacement Wells – Public Act 07-244**

This law makes changes to the permit process for replacement wells and wells on residential properties. It changes the changes the 200-foot standard (of measurement to an existing public water supply) by specifying that this distance is measured from the property's boundary.

The act authorizes a local health director to issue an order requiring the immediate implementation of mitigation measures, up to and including permanent abandonment of the well, according to the Connecticut Well Drilling Code, if he determines that an irrigation well creates an unacceptable risk of injury to the health or safety of those using the water, the general public, or to any public water supply. The act also allows the owner of the system to terminate service to the premises if a cross connection with the public water system is found.

- **Biodiesel Programs – Public Act 07-4**

This legislation creates grant programs to encourage the production and use of biodiesel fuels for heating and transportation needs. It also encourages the use of biodiesel in state buildings and requires the creation of a fuel diversification program for some state institutions.

If you would like a copy of any of these laws affecting agriculture, you may call my office at 240-8700 or log on to our Web site at www.cga.ct.gov.

Rep Ruth Fahrback represents the 61st District, including Suffield, and parts of Windsor and East Granby, in the General Assembly.