



## QUESTIONS FOR THE AGRICULTURE COMMISSIONER NOMINEE

By: Kristen Miller, Associate Legislative Attorney  
Janet Kaminski-Leduc, Senior Legislative Attorney

### COMMISSIONER OF AGRICULTURE ([CGS §§ 22-4](#) AND [22-6](#))

- Encourages and promotes the development of agriculture.
- Investigates (1) methods of practical husbandry and (2) the adaptation of agricultural products to soil, climate, and markets.
- Publishes (1) information and statistics about agriculture and animal industries and interests and (2) bulletins on the production cost of farm products in cooperation with the University of Connecticut.
- Obtains an inventory of state agricultural land, establishes criteria for designating land of which the state could acquire the development rights, and helps municipalities identify agricultural lands worthy of preservation.
- Reviews proposed capital projects, which would convert at least 25 acres of prime farmland or at least one acre of shellfish grounds to a nonagricultural use.

## **QUESTIONS**

### ***Animals***

1. In 2014, the legislature enacted a new law ([PA 14-77](#)) that, among other things, requires the agriculture commissioner to develop a standard of care breeders must provide their dogs and cats.
  - a. Have you developed these standards?
  - b. If so, were the standards communicated to the affected parties?
2. The Department of Agriculture collaborates with the Department of Correction to operate a facility at the York Correctional Facility to care for large animals seized in animal cruelty cases. How successful is this facility at rehabilitating the abused animals?

### ***Aquaculture***

1. Describe the state of the aquaculture (shellfish) industry in Connecticut.
2. The department shares responsibility for the state aquaculture program with the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection.
  - a. How well do the departments work together and communicate on shellfish issues?
  - b. Do you believe responsibility for the program should be assigned to one agency? If so, which one?
3. In 2014, the media reported issues concerning shellfish bed leases and actions the department took to develop new lease terms, which some in the industry took exception to. Describe the (a) issues with the leases, (b) action the department took, and (c) department's current relationship with the industry.

### ***Farming***

1. What is the department doing to encourage a new generation of farmers to carry on the state's agricultural traditions and increase agriculture's contributions to the state economy?
2. Describe the Connecticut Farm Link program, which matches farmers with available farm land. Is the program successful? How many matches have been made under the program?
3. Are Connecticut dairy farms viable and competitive with those in other regions? What does the department do to help dairy farmers keep their businesses viable?

4. Farmland preservation is a goal of the department. How would you characterize the current state of farmland preservation in Connecticut? How can the state further farmland preservation?

***General Questions***

1. What do you consider to be your greatest successes during your time as agriculture commissioner?
2. What are the greatest operational challenges the department currently experiences?
3. Looking forward, what are your priorities for the department?

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