

RIGHT- TO- FARM ORDINANCE

(As proposed for adoption at the Annual Town Meeting of September 29, 2009)

Section 1: Purpose and Intent

Agriculture plays a significant role in Columbia's heritage and future. The Town officially recognizes the importance of farming to its rural quality of life, heritage, public health, scenic vistas, tax base, wetlands and wildlife, and local economy. This Right-to-Farm ordinance encourages the pursuit of agriculture, promotes agriculture-based economic opportunities, and protects farmland within Columbia by allowing agricultural uses and related activities to function with minimal conflict withabutters and Town agencies.

It is the declared policy of the Town of Columbia to conserve, protect and encourage the maintenance and improvement of agricultural land for the production of food and other agricultural products and for its natural and ecological value. It is hereby further determined that whatever impact may be caused to others through generally accepted agricultural practices, such impact is offset and ameliorated by the benefits of farming to the neighborhood, community and society in general.

Section II: Definitions

The terms "agriculture" and "farming" shall have all those meanings set forth in Section 11(q) of the Connecticut General Statutes, as amended.

Section III: Right-to-Farm

No present or future agricultural operation conducted or maintained in a manner consistert with accepted agricultural practices, which is engaged in the act of farming as defined in this ordinance shall become or be considered a nuisance solely because such activity resulted or results in any changed condition of the use of adjacent land. Agricultural operations may occur any day or night provided such activities do not violate applicable health, safety, fire, zoning, wetlands, life safety, environmental or building codes and regulations and shall include, without limitation:

- 1) The incidental noise from livestock or farm equipment used in generally acceptable farming practices;
- 2) Odors from livestock, manure, fertilizer or feed;
- 3) Dust and fumes associated with normally accepted farming practices;
- 4) The use of agricultural chemicals provided such chemicals and the method of their application conform to practices approved by the State of Connecticut; and
- 5) Irrigation and water management associated with nomally accepted farming practices.

Inspection and approval of the agricultural or farming operation, place, establishment or facility by the Commission of Agriculture or his/her designee shall be prima facie evidence that such operations follow generally accepted agricultural practices. Nothing contained in this ordinance shall restrict the powers of Columbia's Inland Wetlands Commission, Planning and Zoning Commission, Building or Health Departments under Connecticut General Statutes.

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