

Connecticut Food Policy and Agricultural Development Councils

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Issue

Provide information about the Connecticut Food Policy Council and the Governor's Council on Agricultural Development, including how they were created, their responsibilities, recent proposed legislation affecting either council, and if they have issued reports.

Summary

The Connecticut Food Policy Council and the Governor's Council on Agricultural Development were established in 1997 and 1991, respectively, by legislation. Each is summarized below.

Connecticut Food Policy Council

Creation and Membership

The legislature established the Connecticut Food Policy Council in 1997 and placed it within the Department of Agriculture (DoAg) ([PA 97-11, June Special Session \(§ 21\)](#)).

The council consists of 12 voting members appointed as follows: (1) six legislative appointees, representing agriculture, anti-hunger programs, the UConn Cooperative Extension Service, and the retail and wholesale food industry; and (2) six state agency commissioners (or their designees), from the departments of Agriculture, Administrative Services, Education, Social Services, Transportation, and Public Health. Additionally, the council includes as nonvoting members all other state agency heads, as defined in statute, and the Environment Committee chairpersons.

Responsibilities

By law, the council must:

1. develop, coordinate, and implement a food system policy linking local economic development, environmental protection, and preservation with farming and urban issues;
2. review and comment on proposed state legislation and regulations that would affect the state's food policy system;
3. advise the governor on the state's food policy; and
4. submit an annual report to the Environment Committee with any recommendations concerning food policy ([CGS § 22-456](#)).

Reports

According to DoAg, the council meets regularly (see [here](#) for its meeting agendas and minutes) but has not submitted annual reports in recent years. The most recent report the Legislative Library found was from [2002](#).

2019 Proposed Legislation

In 2019, the Government Administration and Election Committee favorably reported [sSB 252](#), which would have amended the council's membership and duties.

Specifically, the bill would have increased the number of voting members from 12 to 19 and removed all nonvoting members. (It also would have made the council part of DoAg for administrative purposes only.)

Among other duties, the bill would have required the council to (1) examine food and nutrition-related programs, issues, and policies and (2) develop recommendations to promote a strong food economy and support community access to healthy foods.

The Senate passed the bill unanimously; the House did not take it up for a vote.

Governor's Council on Agricultural Development

Creation and Responsibilities

In 1991, the legislature established the Governor's Council on Agricultural Development to (1) advise DoAg on developing, diversifying, and promoting agricultural products, programs, and

enterprises and (2) provide for an exchange of ideas among the commodity groups and organizations it represents ([PA 91-307](#)).

In 2011, the legislature expanded the council's responsibilities by requiring it to also recommend to DoAg ways to increase the percentage of consumer dollars spent on Connecticut-grown fresh produce and other farm products ([PA 11-189](#)). The recommendations must include ways to increase, by 2020, the amount Connecticut residents spend on locally grown farm products to at least 5% of all money spent on food. (We did not identify any proposed legislation concerning the council since 2011.)

Membership and Meetings

As originally constituted, the council consisted of between 25 and 30 members, including representatives of agricultural production, processing, marketing, sales, education, and trade associations. [PA 11-189](#) reduced the council's membership to 15 and set qualifications for appointees.

The members now include (1) the DoAg commissioner, who serves as chairperson; (2) the dean of UConn's College of Agriculture and Natural Resources or the dean's designee; (3) the Connecticut Milk Promotion Board's chairperson or designee; and (4) 12 appointees (six gubernatorial and six legislative) with specific qualifications (i.e., agricultural production, processing, marketing, sales, and education; and representatives from a trade association and the green industry) ([CGS § 22-26e](#)).

By law, the council must meet at least quarterly, but it does not appear to have met since January 2018. The council posts its agendas and minutes on its [website](#).

Reports

The law does not direct the council to publish reports. However, after its 2011 reconfiguration, the council published a [strategic plan](#) in 2012 for Connecticut agriculture and subsequently updated the plan in 2013 and 2014. The 2014 update included the following five recommendations:

1. invest strategically in the state-owned Hartford Regional Market to revitalize it and provide code-compliant, modern facilities for aggregating, processing, storing, distributing, and selling Connecticut Grown farm products;
2. streamline the federal Food Safety Modernization Act's implementation by designating DoAg as the lead state agency responsible for regulating food production, processing, handling, and transport;

3. enhance educational and training programs and Cooperative Extension for Connecticut agricultural producers;
4. plan, design, and create an agricultural innovation center to research, develop, and teach state-of-the-art controlled environment production models that will enhance Connecticut farmers' opportunities for long-term economic success and expand consumer access to fresh, healthful Connecticut-grown foods year round; and
5. fortify DoAg's existing Connecticut Grown marketing efforts to provide additional resources to farmers and consumers.

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