



2008 Key Issue Identification Form

1. In a few words, please come up with a title that succinctly defines the issue:

Achieving Food and Energy Sustainability in NH

2. Please describe the issue in 2-3 sentences (i.e. craft an issue statement that describes what the issue at hand is and why it is a significant issue):

The citizens of New Hampshire are almost entirely dependent on outside sources for food and energy, and are in a vulnerable position if the existing energy and food sources and delivery methods are threatened. A disruption in either food or energy availability (or both) is likely to negatively impact the majority of New Hampshire's citizens, and may easily escalate to crisis levels. Local solutions to prevent or respond to such disruptions are necessary, and will involve a complex set of governmental and non-governmental partners.

3. In 2-3 sentences, please describe what the public value for Extension to address this issue is/would be.

Ensuring an adequate supply of food and energy to the state benefits all sectors of the population. In addition, the development and implementation of local solutions to food and energy sustainability would be of significant value to other areas of the country that face similar issues.

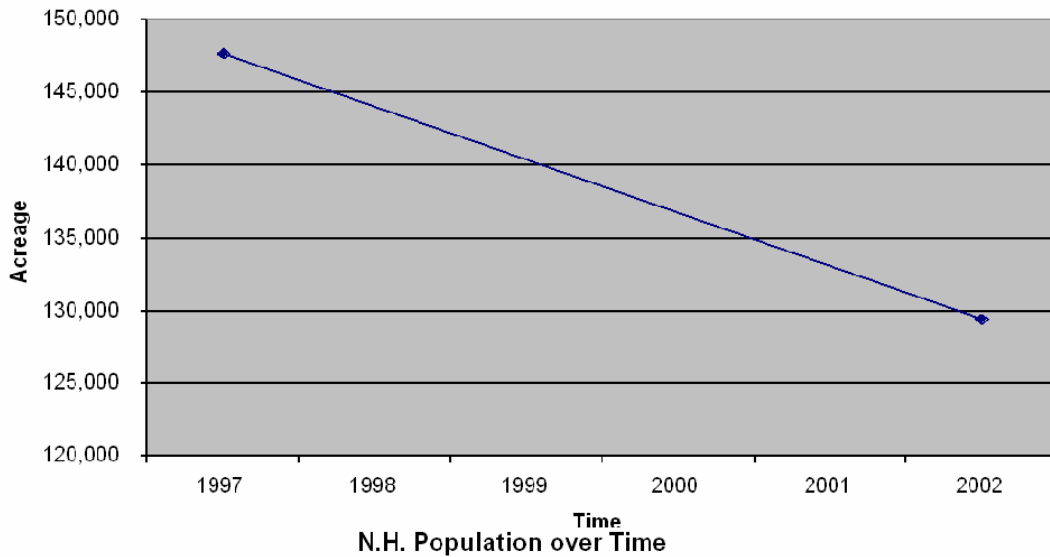
4. Identify and summarize key data that help make the case that this is a key issue (key data might include demographic trend data, University priorities, issues identified in plans/policies of other agencies and organizations, stakeholder input, etc.).

New Hampshire's population has been increasing over the past decade while at the same time the acreage dedicated to agriculture has been shrinking. (See following graph.) The following statistics from a presentation by the UNH Office of Sustainability provides further support for the conclusions of the table.

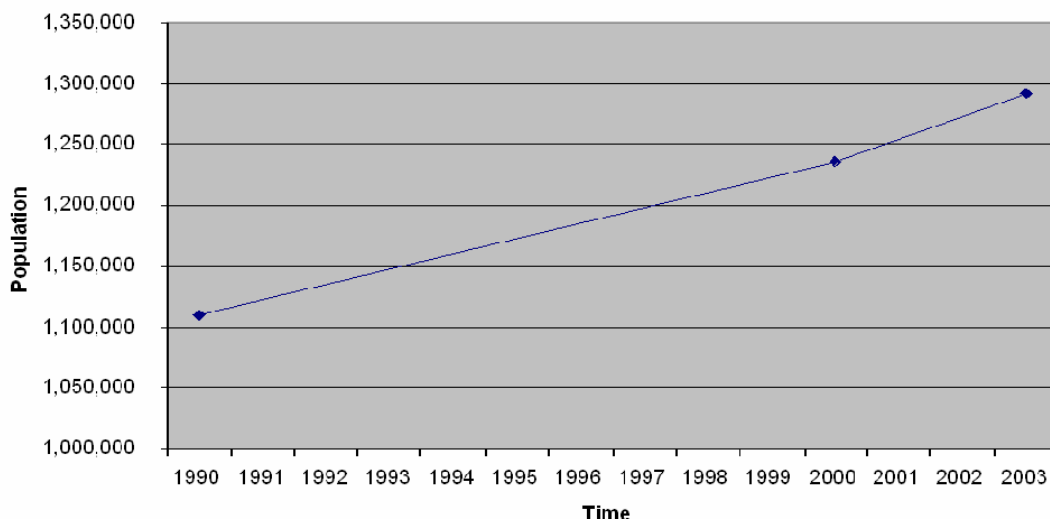
- NH's agriculture may account for the smallest percentage of the state's food supply in its history.
- Major trends show changes in NH's food environment that could increase our vulnerability to disruptions in the food supply.
- From 1990-2004 NH grew by 17.2%, twice as fast as the average for the rest of New England.
- The state gained more than 13,000 people per year during the period, for a total of 190,248 new residents and is projected to add 358,000 residents by 2025 (>28%).
- New Hampshire continues to rapidly lose farmland to development. In just five years (1997-2002), Rockingham County lost one-third of its productive cropland.

- Productive cropland amounts to only 2% of the state land base, and declined by 18,300 acres from 1997 to 2002, a 12.4% decrease.
- In most cases, areas with the best agricultural soils have the least farmland protection.
- NH lost farmland at a rate of five square miles per year

Acreage of New Hampshire Farms over Time



N.H. Population over Time



New Hampshire imports all of its energy sources except for hydro, wind, and wood which make up an important, but small, part of all energy sources required. With an increasing population and greater pressure on imported resources, the need to identify ways to decrease imported sources and increase local has grown.

5. How does/would addressing this issue tie into UNH Cooperative Extension’s Mission?

UNH Cooperative Extension’s mission is ‘... enhancing [NH citizen’s] ability to make informed decisions that strengthen youth, families and communities, sustain natural resources, and improve the economy.’ Certainly any wide-spread or long-term disruption of

New Hampshire's food and energy supply would challenge youth, families, and communities, threaten natural resources and cause potentially severe economic impacts.

6. What Extension programs/activities, if any, currently address this issue? For each, please succinctly describe how the program/activity addresses the issue.

Many of Cooperative Extension's current programs in agriculture, forestry, community development, and natural resources indirectly address the issue, but few (to my knowledge) do so with the specific goal of helping New Hampshire achieve food and energy sustainability.

7. What other organizations/agencies are currently addressing this issue?

The following is a list of organizations that have been involved in discussion of food sustainability issues, though their specific roles in identifying and implementing solutions are not identified.

- UNH Cooperative Extension
- UNH Department of Animal & Nutritional Sciences
- UNH Office of Sustainability
- UNH Hospitality Services
- UNH Campus Planning
CINEMAR/CICEET
- The Stop & Shop Supermarket Company
- Timberland
- NH Stories, Inc.
- Con-Val Food Service
- NH Food Bank
- Frisbee Memorial Hospital
- NH Department of Health & Human Services
- NH Department of Agriculture, Markets & Food
- NH Department of Education
- North Country Resource Conservation & Development Council
- NH Surplus Distribution

8. If Extension does not currently address this issue, how might we address this issue in the future? (Consider staff capacity, financial resources, volunteer capacity, and potential partnerships with other agencies/organizations, etc.).

A significant shift in Cooperative Extension programming would be to focus both research and outreach programming on a goal of sustainability. Defining that in specific terms, and collaborating with others to develop solutions, would form the basis for a variety of responses by all parts of Cooperative Extension. This is a far-reaching, complex, and tremendously important issue that might require a program-wide revision of priorities.

Cooperative Extension is in a unique position to:

- act as a facilitator among potential collaborators;
- function as the bridge between research, practical applications, and outreach; and,
- develop and implement effective education programs.