

Holliston Agricultural Commission

How to be a GOOD NEIGHBOR

Holliston is considered a Right-to-Farm town, but what does this really mean? And why should we all care about being good neighbors in a Right-to-Farm town?

Equipment noise, crowing roosters, free-ranging chickens, the odor of animals and fertilizers, and the occasional animal visits to neighboring properties can all cause tension in the neighborhood. How can agricultural businesses and homeowners get along? Following are insights shared by both agriculturalists and non-agriculturalists:

1. **The appearance of your farm** plays an important role in determining what neighbors and others think about you and your farm operation, including perceived property value. A farm that is known as a neighborhood eyesore will have less goodwill in the community and get less public sympathy if problems arise.
2. **Getting to know your neighbors** is the most important and simplest action you can take to help minimize conflicts. When you know your neighbors, it is easier to talk to them when problems occur and to keep problems from escalating into misunderstandings, hard feelings, blame, or intense community conflict.

Knowing your neighbors makes it more likely that when they have a concern about your farm operation (such as noise or odor), they will call you directly

to work it out instead of reporting you to the township or a government agency. It also means that when you have a complaint about a neighbor, such as trespassing or littering, that they will be more open to discussing it with you.

3. **Simply using common sense** makes a big difference in minimizing conflicts with neighbors. The timeliness of farming means that sometimes, you don't have much choice about when you plow, spray, or harvest. Often, however, you *do* have some control over when farm tasks are performed. Spreading manure on holiday weekends or a day when you know a neighbor is planning a picnic, for example, will do little to build community harmony.
4. **Free-range—at home.** Your animals need enough space to roam on your property without getting into your neighbor's prized flower or vegetable beds. Get permission or a fence.
5. **Think twice about a rooster.** If you want to breed your own chickens, you will end up with more roosters, and potentially more issues with neighbors who don't appreciate the crowing at all hours of the day and night.
6. **Have a livestock dog that barks** occasionally at night? Make sure you let your neighbors know.

