

Grand Island OKs law making it easier to own livestock in farm districts



Buffalo News Story by [Nancy A. Fischer](#) Published Tue, May 2, 2017

Farming is part of the history of Grand Island, and there are about 50 farms operating in the town.

Now the Town Board is giving approval to local farmers with a local law that will make it easier for residents to own livestock in state-certified agricultural districts.

"This is saying that people in these districts don't have to come to the town for a permit – it's inherently part of living in an agricultural district," Supervisor Nathan D. McMurray said after the law was approved Monday. "We don't need people to come in for a special use permit because it is not a special use." It had taken over a year to get the local law approved, he said.

McMurray said there are several pockets of agricultural districts throughout the town.

He said the goal is to recognize the right to farm in the Town of Grand Island and pointed to the grand opening of the Grand Island Farmers Market and the Farmer Fest, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, at E.H. Enterprises, 555 Ransom Road.

Farmer Fest will feature live music and food and drinks provided by Grand Island farmers. Vendors will be selling flowers, plants, local meat and eggs, honey, maple syrup, baked goods, herbal teas and salves, jams and jellies, and locally made picnic tables.

"We are now unanimously embracing farming, but it took a lot of work to get there," said McMurray.

He said farming is part of the history of Grand Island and noted that what they are protecting are not just "mega farms," but also backyard farms.

"I don't think we should be a clone of Amherst and other places," said McMurray. "These people are using their land in very unique ways to make very unique products. It's a fantastic development. It's a local movement to embrace farming."

He said Monday's vote will keep Grand Island green and make sure they are "not another Thruway exit where you have five Home Depots and two Olive Gardens."