

Fulton County, New York

**Agricultural  
Development and Farmland  
Protection Plan**



**Fulton County Agricultural  
and Farmland Protection Board**

**2002**

Prepared with assistance from  
Shepstone Management Company  
[www.shepstone.net](http://www.shepstone.net)

# **Fulton County, New York**

## **Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan**

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### **Executive Summary**

Farming in Fulton County involves some 176 business locations that generated sales of \$9,625,000 in 1997. The average value of land, buildings and equipment used in these businesses was \$294,646 for a total investment of approximately \$51,858,000. Many nonagricultural businesses also supply the needs of farmers. Fulton County farmers, for example, own and must maintain and replace 130 mower/conditioners, 119 balers, 252 trucks and 449 tractors. They also purchase: \$332,000 of electricity; \$317,000 of petroleum products; \$679,000 in repairs and maintenance; \$546,000 of hired farm labor; \$568,000 of seed, fertilizer and chemicals; \$1,719,000 of feed; and approximately \$2,180,000 of other products and services. Agriculture, as a result of this recirculation of income, contributes a total of approximately \$22,000,000 annually to the Fulton County economy.

Fulton County farmers paid almost \$600,000 in property taxes in 1997. The industry typically produces \$1.00 in tax revenue for every 15¢ to 40¢ of town and school expenditures it generates, whereas residential development costs \$1.09 to \$1.56 per \$1.00 of taxes gathered. Farms also contribute to Fulton County's largely rural character and protect open spaces essential to the quality of life for both permanent and seasonal residents. They help support the County's 24 lodging facilities. They provide urban residents of the County, as well as visitors, with locally grown fresh fruits, vegetables and flowers. The presence of three operating farmers markets in Montgomery and Fulton Counties (two in Amsterdam and one in Gloversville) combined with the large increases in sales of these products demonstrate the importance of this activity (sales of fruits and vegetables increased by 167% between 1987 and 1997).

The County's base of both small and mid-sized farms provides a foundation for exploring of new opportunities for added-value ventures and development of still more niche businesses. There is much growth potential. Sales of agricultural product, in fact, increased by 12% between 1987 and 1997. Vegetable sales gained 224%, fruits sales were up 133% and hay and silage crops grew by 97%, all major expansions in activity. Grain sales expanded 20% and nursery, greenhouse and other crops gained 35%. Crop sales as a whole increased by 66%. Dairy product sales increased by 15%. Key strengths of Fulton County for agriculture include the following:

- Its role as the "Gateway to the Adirondacks" offers an advantage in marketing to tourists and a basis for branding of agricultural products.

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- Farm agency, governmental and community support of agriculture is strong.
- It is advantageously located to market agricultural products both within and outside the area, including the immense New York City metropolitan market.
- It offers large areas of farmland available for use at reasonable prices.
- It offers a quality water supply in generous quantities to support farm and agricultural processing enterprises.

This Plan sets out several major goals for building on these strengths. Fulton County, through its Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board and other cooperating agencies, should:

1. Coordinate and focus the efforts of all agencies involved in promoting agriculture.
2. Diversify Fulton County agriculture and establish new markets for all farm products.
3. Increase public awareness of agriculture as an economic resource and valuable career path.
4. Support farm investment by the private sector.
5. Create and use economic incentives to develop agricultural enterprises, particularly local suppliers of farm support services.
6. Encourage farmers to manage farm woodlands for additional profit as secondary crops.
7. Protect the rights of farmers to use sound agricultural practices.

These goals are supported by detailed objectives that, together, lay out a comprehensive program for agricultural economic development and farmland protection in Fulton County. A number of agricultural policies employed in other areas to meet these goals are reviewed in Chapter V, "Policy Options." Farmland preservation is useless and irrelevant unless there is profit in farming and, therefore, the thrust of this Plan is to address means by which agriculture as an industry can be further developed to increase economic returns. Chapter VIII, "Recommendations" identifies those particular policies most appropriate for Fulton County and

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lays out several major agricultural initiatives. These include the following:

1. Create an Agricultural Economic Development Specialist.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Fulton County should work with Montgomery County and Cornell Cooperative Extension to offer the services of a shared agricultural development specialist to the farm community. This individual should be assigned both economic development and education responsibilities. The dual responsibilities are essential to highlighting the value of agriculture to the local economy and further integrating the industry into the County's economic development program.

2. Pursue agricultural added value initiatives.

**RECOMMENDATION:** The Fulton County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board should work with the Agricultural Economic Development Specialist, if such a position is created, and use the staff resources of Cornell Cooperative Extension of Fulton and Montgomery Counties to develop those opportunities that exist to add value to agricultural products produced in the County. These include on-farm dairy processing, Kosher and Halal products, maple products, organic foods and woodcraft.

3. Develop a Mohawk Valley farm recruitment program.

**RECOMMENDATION:** The Fulton County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board should work with other Mohawk Valley counties and the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets to recruit new farmers to region. The New York State Thruway (I-90) makes it a highly visible area and provides easy access from other regions and urban areas. This asset, combined with fertile soils, makes the Mohawk Valley an appealing location for farmers relocating from New England for reasons of taxes and congestion.

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4. Promote agricultural tourism.

**RECOMMENDATION:** The Fulton County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board should assist the Fulton County Chamber of Commerce in developing an agricultural tourism initiative around the Gateway to the Adirondacks theme, including packaging of bus tours and Bed & Breakfast promotions. These need to be marketed to nearby urban regions. The initiative also needs to include assistance to farmers in the development of new agricultural tourism attractions as additional sources of farm income.

5. Establish Right-to-Farm policies.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Right to farm laws should be encouraged in all Fulton County towns with significant agricultural activity. Members of the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board should meet with local officials of these towns on an individual basis over the next two years to explain the benefits of agriculture and advocate the adoption of a Right-to-Farm law. Other towns with particularly significant individual agricultural enterprises should also be encouraged to consider Right-to-Farm policies.

6. Promote agricultural education and public awareness.

**RECOMMENDATION:** The Fulton County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board should work with Cornell Cooperative Extension of Fulton and Montgomery Counties to develop an ANNUAL newspaper insert publication that continually promotes Fulton County farms and the strength of agriculture as a foundation of the County economy. It should include a map, farm descriptions, farm facts and invitations to participate in other agricultural awareness programs.

This mission will demand a proactive Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board capable of providing leadership on agricultural policy issues and initiating projects to implement this Plan.

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### **I - Introduction**

In September of 2000, the Fulton County Board of Supervisors submitted an application to the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets requesting a \$40,000 State grant to pay for 50% of the projected cost to prepare an Agricultural Plan for Fulton County.

In November 2000, Fulton County was awarded a \$40,000 grant from the New York State Department of Agriculture to prepare this Plan.

In December of 2000, Fulton County distributed a Request for Proposal to various firms seeking cost proposals to prepare the Agricultural Plan. Three (3) proposals were received. On March 12, 2001, the Fulton County Board of Supervisors adopted Resolution #93 awarding a contract to Shepstone Management Company of Honesdale, Pennsylvania to prepare an Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan for Fulton County.

Over the past fifteen (15) months, Shepstone Management Company has been working with Fulton County's agricultural community, governmental agencies, elected officials, the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board, and others to prepare this Agricultural Plan. This Plan is an expression of the communities' beliefs on how to strengthen the role of agriculture in Fulton County's economy.

Special recognition goes to the members of the Fulton County Board of Supervisors for their foresight in having an Agricultural Plan prepared. The following is a list of those members of the 2002 Fulton County Board of Supervisors:

Richard Bedell	:	City of Gloversville (Ward 1)
Frank Lauria Jr.	:	City of Gloversville (Ward 2)
Michael F. Gendron	:	City of Gloversville (Ward 3)
Anthony C. Buanno	:	City of Gloversville (Ward 4)
Michael R. Rooney	:	City of Gloversville (Ward 5)
Richard J. Ottalagano	:	City of Gloversville (Ward 6)
Richard Handy	:	City of Johnstown (Ward 1)
Pasquale O'Lucci	:	City of Johnstown (Ward 2)
John E. Callery	:	City of Johnstown (Ward 3)
James P. Callery	:	City of Johnstown (Ward 4)
George B. Manchester	:	Town of Bleeker

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Lee A. Hollenbeck	:	Town of Broadalbin
Stephen L. Barker	:	Town of Caroga
Todd Bradt	:	Town of Ephratah
David Edwards	:	Town of Johnstown
Carol L. Hart	:	Town of Mayfield
Theodore J. Collins	:	Town of Northampton
Peter M. Stone	:	Town of Oppenheim
Valerie Orłowski	:	Town of Perth
Anita Wineberg	:	Town of Stratford

The preparation of the Plan would not have been possible without the input, guidance and direction provided by Fulton County's Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board whose members are listed below:

James Howard, Chairman  
Greg Fagan, Vice Chairman  
Lee Hollenbeck  
Berlin Argotsinger  
Richard Hart  
Jack Putman  
Jack Buchanan  
Marilyn Smith  
Frank Parker  
James E. Mraz

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## **II - The Top Ten Contributions of Agriculture to Fulton County**

Farming is much more than a starting point on the development scale. It represents a fundamental economic opportunity. It also pays cultural, environmental and social dividends for Fulton County. Consider the following:

### **1. FARMING REPRESENTS A \$51,858,000 BUSINESS INVESTMENT IN FULTON COUNTY.**

Farming in Fulton County involves some 176 business locations, both large and small, that generated sales of \$9,625,000 in 1997. The New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets estimates that cash receipts in 1997 were \$8,659,000, increased to \$11,176,000 in 1998, and dropped back to \$10,913,000 in 1999. These variations reflect the volatility in milk pricing. According to the U.S. Census of Agriculture for 1997, the average farmer's investment in land, buildings and equipment used in these businesses was \$294,646. Demonstrating the importance of farming as an industry, this represented a total investment in the Fulton County economy of approximately \$51,858,000, the equivalent, from an economic development standpoint, of several major manufacturing facilities. Market values averaged \$232,450 for land and buildings and \$62,196 in machinery and equipment.

### **2. FARMING PROVIDES YEAR-ROUND BUSINESS FOR OTHER FULTON COUNTY ENTERPRISES.**

Agriculture is much more than farming. Many non-agricultural businesses supply the needs of farmers. These include processors, vehicle and equipment dealers and other enterprises. Fulton County farmers, for example, own and must maintain and replace 130 mower/conditioners, 119 balers, 252 trucks, 449 tractors and numerous other pieces of farm equipment and machinery.

They also, according to the Census of Agriculture, annually purchase: \$332,000 of electricity; \$317,000 of petroleum products; \$679,000 in repairs and maintenance; \$599,000 of property taxes; \$546,000 of hired farm labor; \$568,000 of seed, fertilizer and chemicals; \$1,719,000 of feed; and approximately \$2,180,000 of other products and

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services from Fulton County and other nearby enterprises, many of which would not be considered farm supply businesses (e.g. insurance and auto businesses).

### **3. INCOME FROM AGRICULTURE GOES FURTHER THAN OTHER SECTORS IN HELPING THE ECONOMY.**

Agriculture produces much higher economic multipliers than any other sector of the Fulton County economy. A report entitled "Economic Multipliers and the New York State Economy," (Policy Issues in Rural Land Use, Cornell Cooperative Extension, December 1996) indicates dairy production, for example, enjoys a 2.29 income multiplier compared to 1.66 for construction, 1.48 for services, 1.41 for manufacturing and 1.40 for retail and wholesale trade. Crops produce a multiplier of 2.28 and nursery and wood products yield 1.78 times sales. Applying these multipliers indicates agriculture represents a total contribution to the economy of approximately \$22,000,000, not including forestry enterprises, many of which take place on farms and all of which are part of agriculture.

### **4. AGRICULTURAL OPPORTUNITIES CAN ACTUALLY INCREASE WITH DEVELOPMENT OF AN AREA.**

While development can, obviously, create conflicts for farmers, the leading agricultural county in New York is Suffolk County. It is home to 1.3 million people and one of the most highly developed suburban environments in the nation, suggesting not only that farming and urbanization can co-exist, but also that the local demand for agricultural products increases with the latter and raises the value of farming as an economic enterprise.

The County has not been experiencing the same growth as the metropolitan areas (it gained only 1.6% in population between 1990 and 2000) but there has been some development outward from Johnstown, Gloversville, Amsterdam, Schenectady and Albany. The Town of Broadalbin, as an example, grew by 15.2% during the same period. Indeed, every town in the County other than Oppenheim gained population. This growth, combined with the presence of the urban centers, presents opportunities for diversification and specialization on which the County can also capitalize in its role as the "Gateway to the Adirondacks" for tourists. Farming will, therefore, become ever more important to the County as it continues to develop, whatever the pace. This is particularly true for small crop farmers that depend so much on direct marketing and the value of those cash receipts increased almost two-

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thirds between 1987 and 1997.

### **5. FARMS PAY TAXES.**

Fulton County farmers, as noted above, paid almost \$600,000 in property taxes in 1997. This is despite preferential assessments afforded by the Ag District Law. Other studies also demonstrate that farms are tax winners. A 1995 study of Tompkins County, as an example, found "agricultural .. uses should be recognized as beneficial because they do not demand a large amount of services and provide other benefits such as employment."

Data from the Costs of Community Services Study, Tompkins County by Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County, in fact, indicate agriculture typically produces \$1.00 in tax revenue for every 15¢ to 40¢ of town and school expenditures it generates, whereas residential development costs \$1.09 to \$1.56 per \$1.00 of taxes gathered. A similar analysis from the Schoharie County Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan, 2000 indicated agriculture produced \$1.09 to \$2.06 in tax revenue for every \$1.00 of municipal and school costs created.

These results are consistent with those of a number of other similar studies by American Farmland Trust, Cornell Cooperative Extension, and Commonwealth Research Group, Inc. of communities in Dutchess and Oneida Counties in New York and various other Connecticut and New England areas.

### **6. FARMS CREATE RURAL CHARACTER AND ATTRACT TOURISM.**

Farms contribute to Fulton County's largely rural character and protect open spaces essential to the quality of life for both permanent and seasonal residents. Surveys of rural residents and second-home dwellers (Fulton County has over 3,600 such dwellings) indicate the primary reasons people live in such areas have to do with their appreciation of the natural resources and open spaces offered.

The anecdotal evidence is perhaps even stronger and local tourism brochures provide examples. They include references not only to the County's recreational opportunities but also its "beautiful farmland," "open skies," "fresh air" and "rustic country atmosphere." They also speak of the "bountiful selection of local products" throughout the County as an

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attractive feature for visitors. The "I Love New York Harvest Tour In Fulton and Montgomery Counties" map/brochure is perhaps the best example of this.

These facets are directly created by working farm landscapes in many instances. They help support some 24 lodging facilities offered throughout the County. There is, indeed, a direct relationship between farming and the attractiveness of Fulton County as a place to both live and visit.

### **7. SUCCESSFUL FARMING LIMITS SUBURBAN SPRAWL.**

Preserving farming as an economic use of land discourages expensive suburban sprawl, steering development toward hamlets and villages with existing services. "Gasoline taxes and other user fees only cover about 70% of the direct cash costs of building and maintaining the nation's road system," according to a April 27, 1998 article on sprawl entitled "Who Pays for Sprawl?," in U.S. News and World Report. Hook-up fees for sewer systems within areas of sprawl often cover less than half the real costs of those extensions. These differences are attributable to the high costs of servicing development spread out along highways and the deficits must be made up by all taxpayers.

### **8. FARMS AND FORESTS PRESERVE NATURAL ENVIRONMENTS.**

Farms and forests provide working self-sustaining landscapes which preserve and enhance environmental quality. Use of New York City watershed lands in the West-of-Hudson region of New York State (including nearby Schoharie County) for largely farm and forestry uses have, for example, allowed Federal water drinking quality criteria for filtration avoidance to be met. The suburbanized Croton and other East-of-Hudson area watersheds, by contrast, cannot meet these same standards and demand extraordinarily expensive filtering processes to produce potable drinking water.

Forest land, which is a part of nearly every farm, "may reduce sediment, nutrient and other pollutant loadings by as much as 85% by minimizing soil erosion and filtering watershed runoff" according to a Watershed Agricultural Council publication. A recent study of land use and water quality along 100 Wisconsin streams also found that "watershed with more than 20% of land in urban use had very poor biological diversity," according to an American Farmland Trust article in [Land Works Connection](#).

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### **9. FARMS AND FORESTS SUPPORT WILDLIFE AND SPORT HUNTING.**

Farms support wildlife such as deer, turkeys and small-game and thereby sustain hunting as a source of tourism to the area. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation reports that the 1997 white-tail deer harvest was, in fact, some 685 deer with the largest takes being in Johnstown, Oppenheim and Ephratah, respectively. The 1996 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation estimated that \$154,450,000 in retail sales and \$575,535,000 in total economic output was generated for New York State as a result of deer hunting. This equals \$712 and \$2,654, respectively, for each deer harvested, yielding a \$1,818,000 deer hunting economy for Fulton County.

### **10. FARMLAND IS AN INVALUABLE RESOURCE FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS.**

Farmland is a valuable future resource for the County in providing for a healthy and plentiful local supply of food products and generating new sources of farm income. Urban residents of the County, as well as visitors, are seeking locally grown fresh fruits, vegetables and flowers, both organic and non-organic. The presence of three operating farmers markets in Montgomery and Fulton Counties (two in Amsterdam and one in Gloversville) combined with the large increases in sales of these products demonstrate the importance of this activity (sales of fruits and vegetables increased by 167% between 1987 and 1997).

Likewise, the County's base of both small and mid-sized farms provides a foundation for exploring of new opportunities for added-value ventures and development of still more niche businesses. These resources offer tremendous economic potential for the future. Once again, Suffolk County provides an illustration. Its agricultural economy has been reinvented several times with urbanization but today yields well over \$167,000,000 in annual sales. Its lead as New York's most valuable agricultural producer is lengthening because of the shift to these higher valued products (nursery products, cut flowers and wine).

# Fulton County, New York

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### III - Agricultural Inventory

The following represents an overview and inventory of the agricultural industry sector of the Fulton County, New York economy.

#### 1. NATURAL RESOURCES FOR AGRICULTURE

The southern area of Fulton County outside the Adirondack Park boundary includes a number of soil types suitable for active agriculture. Unfortunately, there is no published Soil Survey for Fulton County other than a preliminary General Soils Report and map. Class I and II soils, which are those typically classified as “prime farmland soils” by the Natural Resources Conservation Service, include the following:

**Table 2.1 - Prime Farmland Soils in Fulton County**

<u>NO.</u>	<u>SOIL NAME</u>	<u>SLOPE</u>	<u>SUITABILITY CLASS</u>
20	Nellis Silt Loam	2-8%	Ile-2
21	Galway Silt Loam	3-8%	Ile
22	Amenia Silt Loam	3-8%	Ile
22	Amenia Silt Loam	0-3%	Iiw-8
32	Mohawk Silt Loam	3-8%	Ile-2
34	Manheim Silt Loam	0-3%	Iiw-8
34	Manheim Silt Loam	3-8%	Ile
42	Lansing Silt Loam	3-8%	Ile-2
44	Appleton Silt Loam	3-10%	Iiw-2
44	Appleton Silt Loam	0-3%	Iiw-2
72	Broadalbin Loam	3-8%	Ile-22
74	Mosherville Loam	3-8%	Iiwe-10
74	Mosherville Loam	0-3%	Iiw-2
81	Charlton Stony Fine Sandy Loam	2-8%	Ile-5
81	Charlton Stony Fine Sandy Loam	8-15%	IIIe-5

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Table 2.1 (Continued) - Prime Farmland Soils in Fulton County

<u>NO.</u>	<u>SOIL NAME</u>	<u>SLOPE</u>	<u>SUITABILITY CLASS</u>
83	Sutton Fine Sandy Loam	3-10%	IIwe-9
90	Palatine Silt Loam	3-8%	IIe-1
120	Herkimer Silt Loam	2-8%	IIe-5
130	Hudson Silty Clay Loam	3-8%	IIe-20
131	Cayuga Silty Clay Loam	3-8%	IIe-20
152	Scio Very Fine Sandy Loam	3-8%	IIw-2
152	Scio Very Fine Sandy Loam	0-3%	IIw-2
160	Agawam Fine Sandy Loam	3-8%	IIe-5a
160	Agawam Fine Sandy Loam	0-3%	I-3
162	Ninigret Fine Sandy Loam	3-8%	IIwe-9
162	Ninigret Fine Sandy Loam	0-3%	IIw-2
182	Elmridge Loamy Fine Sand	3-8%	IIwe-9
182	Elmridge Loamy Fine Sand	0-3%	IIw-2
192	Phelps Gravelly Silt Loam	0-3%	IIw-2
192	Phelps Gravelly Silt Loam	0-3%	IIw-2
192	Phelps Gravelly Silt Loam	3-8%	IIwe-9
197	Fredon Loam	0-3%	IIw-2
200	Howard Gravelly Loam	3-8%	IIe-5
200	Howard Gravelly Loam	0-3%	I-3
201	Alton Gravelly Sandy Loam	3-8%	IIs-3%
210	Merrimac Fine Sandy Loam	3-8%	IIe-5
210	Merrimac Fine Sandy Loam	0-3%	I-3
214	Sudbury Gravelly Fine Sandy Loam	3-8%	IIwe-9
214	Sudbury Gravelly Fine Sandy Loam	0-3%	IIw-2
230	Hamlin Silt Loam		I
232	Teel Silt Loam		IIw-7
240	Ondawa Fine Sandy Loam		IIw-6
242	Podunk Fine Sandy Loam		IIw-6
330	Allard Silt Loam		I-3

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These prime soils are found in the same areas of the County that are presently being farmed, mostly in towns bordering Montgomery County (e.g. Oppeheim and Perth).

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### **2. AGRICULTURE LAND AND DISTRICTS**

Fulton County created its first and only New York State approved Agricultural District in 1977. It encompassed approximately 9,500 acres of farmland in the Towns of Johnstown, Mayfield and Perth. The Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board, in the course of its 8 year district review process, has proposed to expand Agricultural District No. 1 to 27,312 acres (see map on next page).

Agricultural District No. 1, with the additions proposed, would account for most major agricultural areas of Fulton County. It represents an estimated \$9,620,000 of sales or 99% of the 1997 County total based on average gross annual farm sales reported by District farmers. The District accounts for 64 or 71% of the farms with sales of \$10,000 or more reported in the 1997 Agricultural Census and 75% of all farmland.

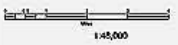
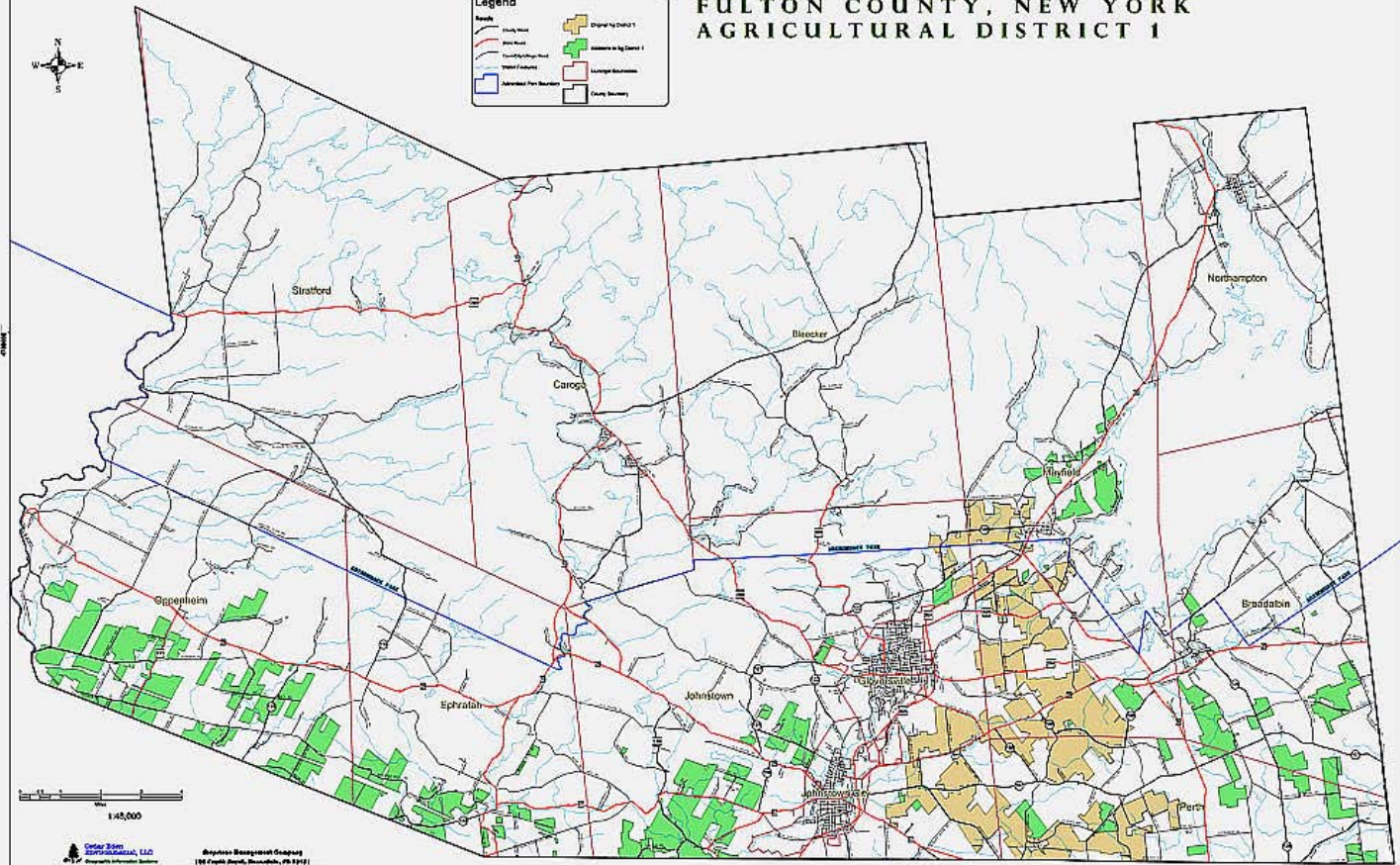
These farms are found in the plateau areas between the Adirondack Mountains to the North and the Mohawk River Valley to the South (see Land Use Map following). Most of the farms are located in the Towns of Broadalbin, Ephratah, Mayfield, Johnstown, Oppenheim and Perth. There are pockets of farmland both east and west of the Cities of Gloversville and Johnstown. Dairy farms predominate as the following listing of farms within the District by principal enterprises indicates:

<b>PRINCIPAL FARM ENTERPRISE</b>	<b>FARMS</b>
Dairy	41
Livestock (Nondairy)	21
Hay/Silage	13
Cash Crops (Grain)	6
Vegetables	4
Christmas Tree:	4
Orchard	2
Other Livestock	2
Other Crops	4
<b>TOTAL =</b>	<b>97</b>

# FULTON COUNTY, NEW YORK AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT 1

**Legend**

 Road	 Original Ag District 1
 County Road	 Addition to Ag District 1
 Interchange/Expressway	 Exchange Reservation
 Interstate Port Reservation	 County Boundary

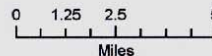
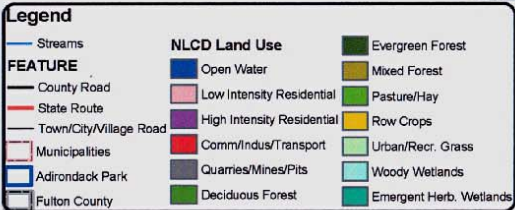


**Center Stream**  
Geographic Information Systems  
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610.661.8024 www.centerstream.com

**OpenGIS Background Group**  
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# NLCD LAND USE IN FULTON COUNTY, NY



# Fulton County, New York

## Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan

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### 3. LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT TRENDS

Between 1990 and 2000, Fulton County's population grew very slowly, yielding only limited development pressures on a few specific areas of the County. These areas, however, include most of the County's farms as the following Table 2.2 indicates:

**Table 2.2 - Population Growth, 1990-2000**

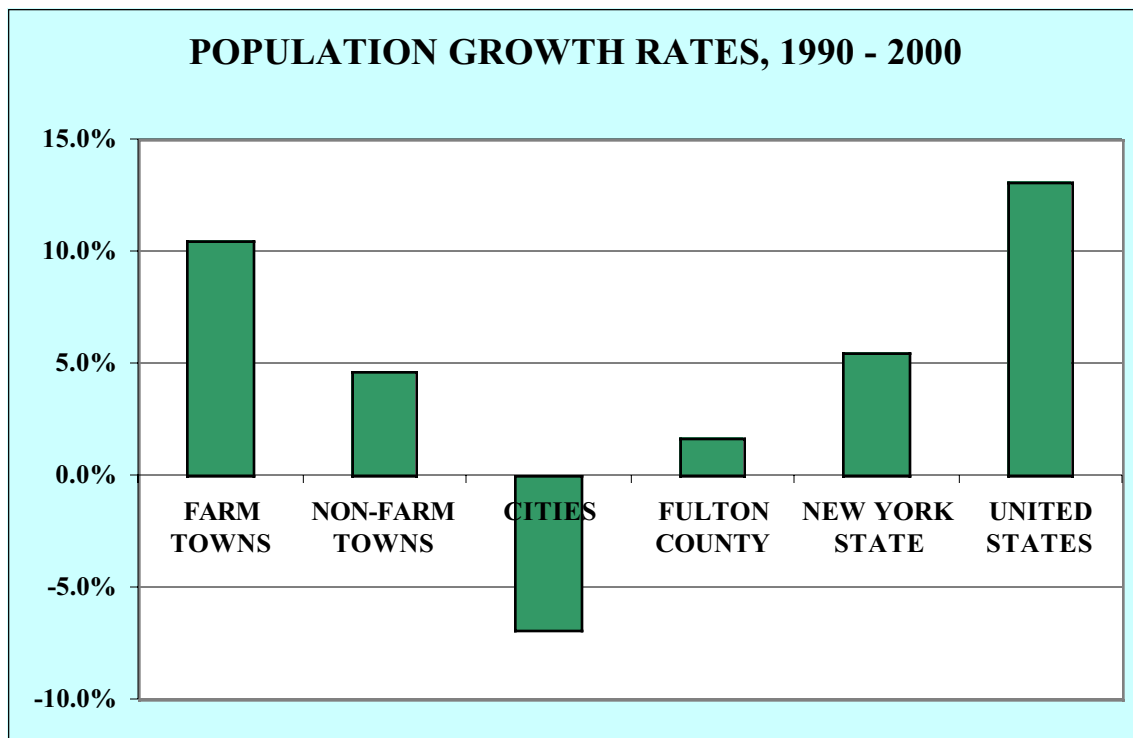
<u>TOWN/CITY</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>% Chg.</u> <u>90-00</u>
Broadalbin	4,397	5,066	15.2%
Ephratah	1,556	1,693	8.8%
Johnstown	6,418	7,166	11.7%
Mayfield	5,738	6,432	12.1%
Oppenheim	1,848	1,774	-4.0%
Perth	3,377	3,638	7.7%
<b>FARM TOWNS SUBTOTALS</b>	<b>23,334</b>	<b>25,769</b>	<b>10.4%</b>
Bleecker	515	573	11.3%
Caroga	1,337	1,407	5.2%
Northampton	2,705	2,760	2.0%
Stratford	586	640	9.2%
<b>NON-FARM TOWNS SUBTOTALS</b>	<b>5,143</b>	<b>5,380</b>	<b>4.6%</b>
Gloversville City	16,656	15,413	-7.5%
Johnstown City	9,050	8,511	-6.0%
<b>CITIES SUBTOTALS</b>	<b>25,706</b>	<b>23,924</b>	<b>-6.9%</b>
<b>FULTON COUNTY TOTALS</b>	<b>54,183</b>	<b>55,073</b>	<b>1.6%</b>
<b>NEW YORK STATE (000's)</b>	<b>17,990</b>	<b>18,976</b>	<b>5.5%</b>
<b>UNITED STATES (000's)</b>	<b>248,710</b>	<b>281,422</b>	<b>13.2%</b>

# Fulton County, New York

## Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan

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Farms towns along the southern border of the County have gained population at a rate about double that of the State as a whole while the County has remained relatively stable. The growth pressure is limited overall but there has been a slight loss of farmland within the County, about 1.2 acres per day between 1987 and 1997. This is partly attributable to new commercial and residential development. Some farms have also simply spun off unusable acreage, the average size of Fulton County farms having actually declined from 199 acres to 195 acres over the decade. Overall, however, the general loss of farmland can probably be attributed more to other factors such as low profitability and shifts to less land intensive forms of agriculture.



# Fulton County, New York

## Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan

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### 4. THE ECONOMICS OF FULTON COUNTY AGRICULTURE

The 1997 Agricultural Census (source of all data for this section unless otherwise indicated) reported that 34,291 acres of Fulton County were farmed that year. This represents approximately 10% of the land mass of the entire County. There were 336 farms generating sales of at least \$2,500 in 1997 and 165 of these produced \$10,000 or more of product. Altogether, these farms produced some \$24,016,000 in sales in 1997, of which \$19,347,000 or 81% was livestock-related. These various products accounted for 633 full or part-time jobs (including 241 owner-operators primarily occupied with farming). This is the agricultural economic base of Fulton County. Table 2.3 and the chart following provide further data.

**Table 2.3 - Market Value of Fulton  
County Agricultural Products, 1997**

<u>Agricultural Products</u>	<u>1997 Cash Receipts</u>	<u>% of Category</u>	<u>% of Total</u>	<u>No. of Farms</u>
Dairy products	\$7,626,000	91.3%	79.2%	57
Cattle/calves	\$556,000	6.7%	5.8%	87
Other livestock	\$174,000	2.1%	1.8%	40
<b>Livestock Subtotal</b>	<b>\$8,356,000</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>86.8%</b>	<b>111</b>
Hay/silage	\$389,000	30.7%	4.0%	49
Nursery/greenhouse	\$443,000	34.9%	4.6%	26
Fruits/nuts	\$149,000	11.8%	1.5%	9
Vegetables	\$123,000	9.7%	1.3%	16
Other crops	\$165,000	13.0%	1.7%	18
<b>Crops Subtotal</b>	<b>\$1,268,000</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>13.1%</b>	<b>92</b>
<b>Total Agricultural =</b>	<b>\$9,625,000</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>176</b>

Totals in the above Table 2.3 may not agree due to rounding,. Also, because multiple products are often produced from the same farm, the numbers of farms overlap and cannot be directly totaled. The New York State Agricultural Statistics Service surveys indicate

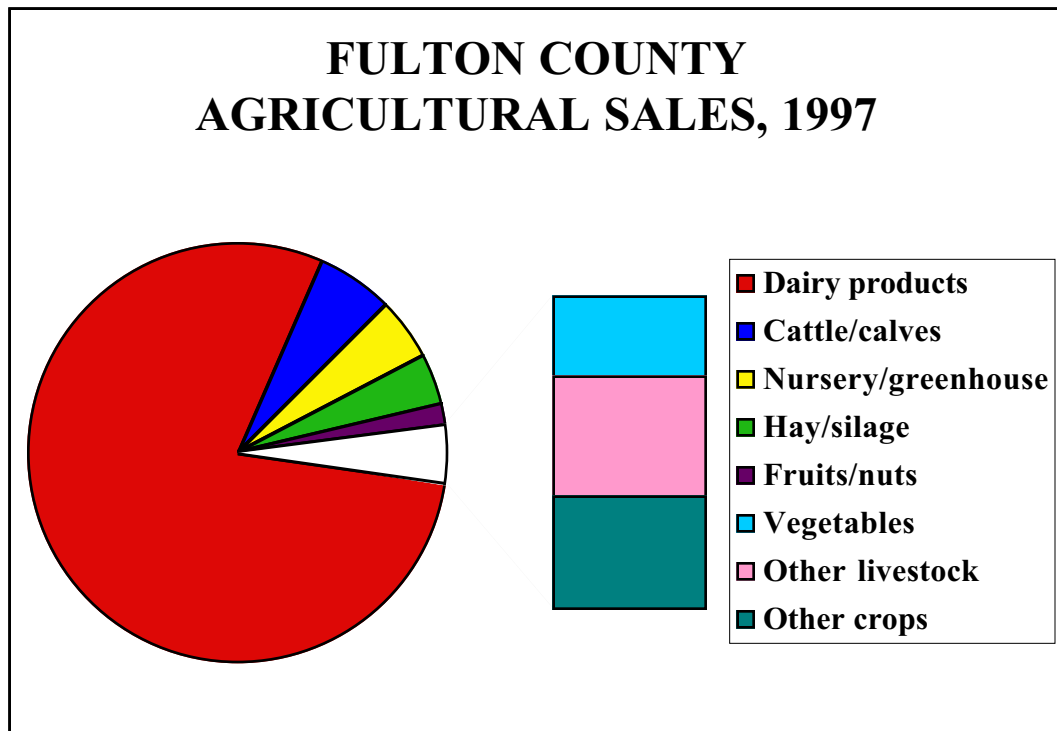


# Fulton County, New York

## Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan

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significantly higher numbers of farms (e.g. 210 farms in 1997 versus the 176 counted in the Census). This is attributable to the State's more frequent data analysis. Nevertheless, Census numbers are more complete overall and, therefore, more suitable for planning.

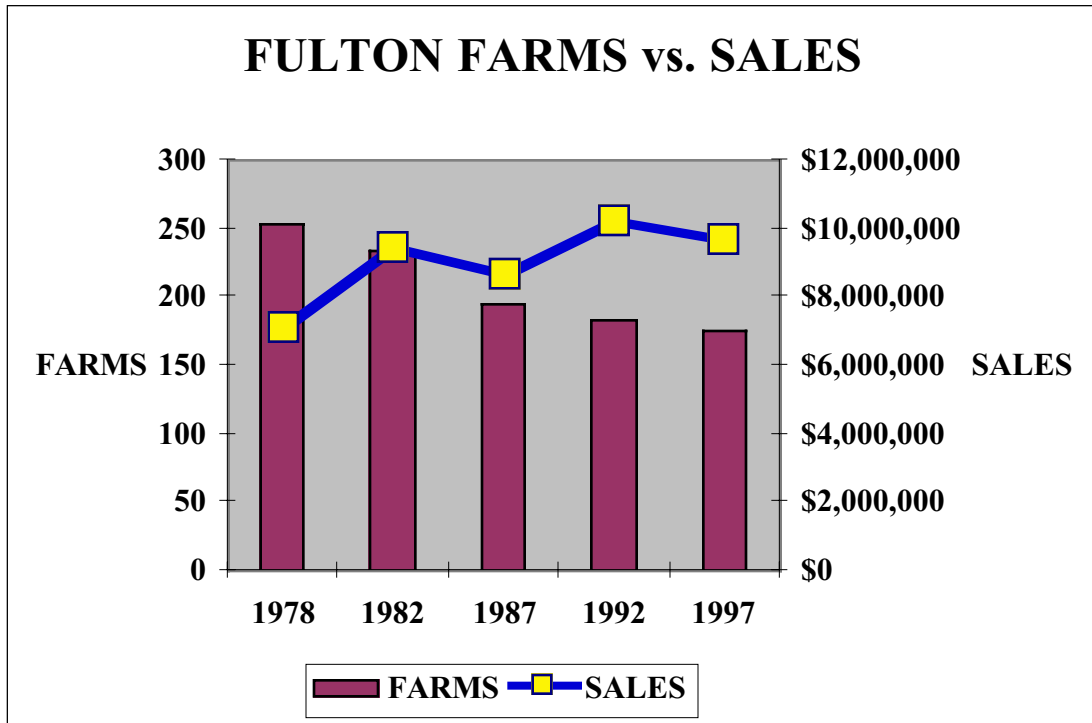


The charts following illustrate additional trends with respect to sales of dairy and other agricultural products. Sales of agricultural product increased by 12% between 1987 and 1997 (before adjustment for the inflation during this same period - approximately 43%). Vegetable sales gained 224%, fruits sales were up 133% and hay and silage crops grew by 97%, all major expansions in activity. Grain sales expanded 20% and nursery, greenhouse and other crops gained 35%. Crop sales as a whole increased by 66%, well ahead of inflation. Dairy product sales increased by 15%, cattle and calf sales declined 29% and others livestock operations decreased by 62% for the decade. These trends tend to counter those of other upstate areas where nursery, greenhouse and "other livestock" operations have led the increases. The vegetable and fruit sales increases are encouraging, however. Moreover, dairy product sales gains in periods of extreme fluctuations are also good.

# Fulton County, New York

## Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan

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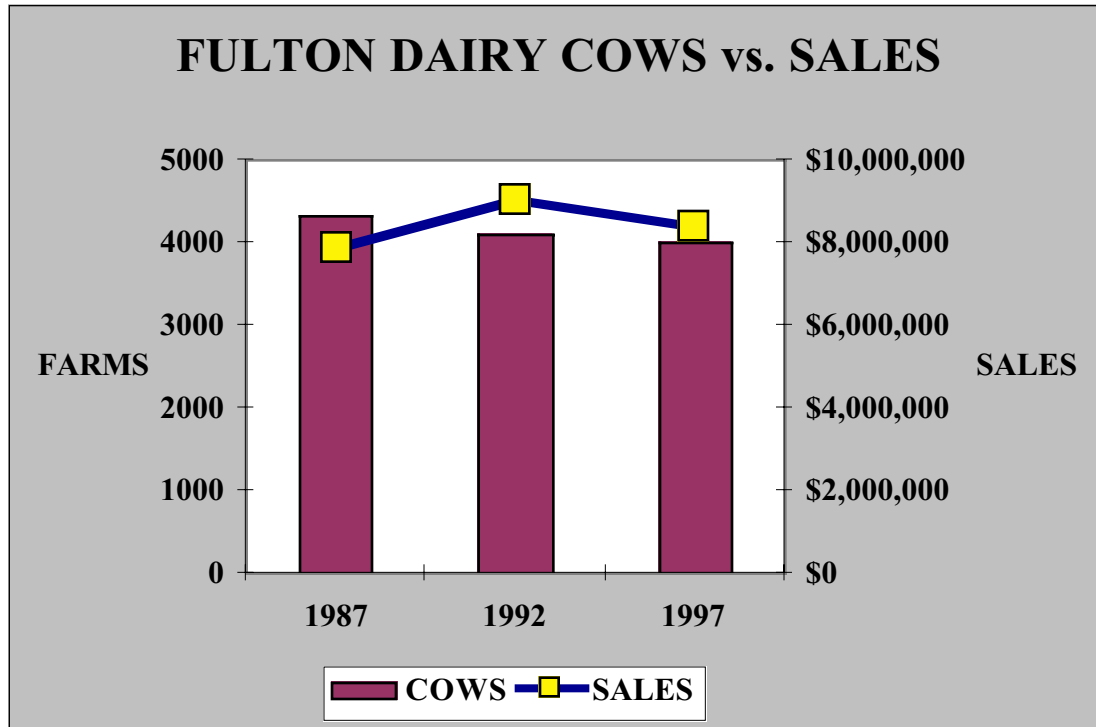
New York is one of the top states in the nation in milk production. Fulton County is ranked 42nd among New York State counties in dairy sales. Sales of dairy products in the County have, as the chart below demonstrates, remained relatively stable in a commodity line where prices have generally not increased with inflation. Cow numbers have declined, but this reflects consolidation in the dairy industry and price fluctuations that have had a major impact in driving out less efficient producers. Those who remain are producing similar amounts of product, but much more cost-effectively, enabling them to compete in this commodity market.

There are, in fact, some major dairy farms in Fulton County. There were two 200+ cow operations in 1997 and another eight dairy farms with 100+ cows. The future of the dairy industry will largely rest on these farms and their continued growth. There were no 200+ cow herds in 1987 and seven 100+ cow herds.

# Fulton County, New York

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Vegetable production has gained strength in Fulton County and, based on the experience of other counties with comparable farm economies (e.g. Broome County), has the potential to expand further to serve the County's urban population base. Harvested vegetable acreage more than doubled between 1987 and 1997 (growing from 48 to 93 acres). Vegetables commercially produced include broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, cucumbers, pumpkins, squash, sweet corn and tomatoes. There was growth in nearly all categories since 1987. Sweet corn, a very profitable crop, is now grown on some 10 farms and consumes 49 acres versus the 30 used for this purpose in 1987.

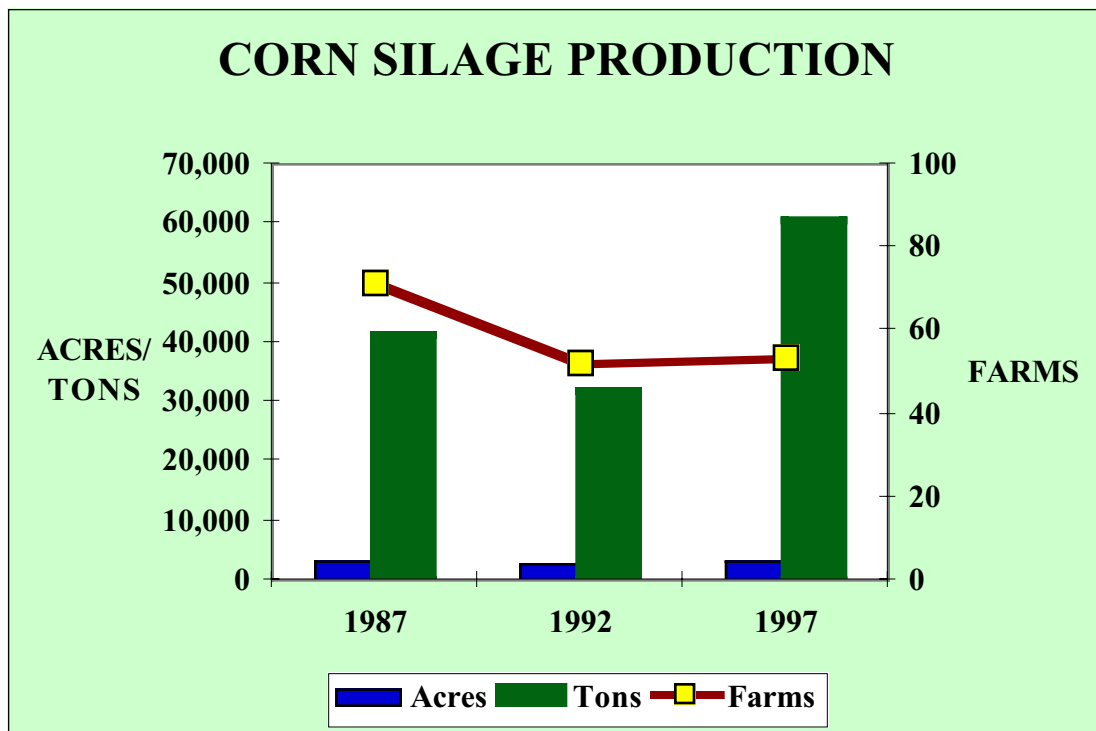
Commercial fruit production in Fulton County consists entirely of apples. The number of producers declined from seven in 1987 to only four in 1997. Berries are counted separate from other fruits in the Census of Agriculture and blueberry farmers dropped from nine to seven over the 10 years, Strawberry operations dropped from seven to three. Despite these declines, the combined market value of fruit produced grew from \$64,000 in 1987 to

## Fulton County, New York Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan

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\$149,000 in 1997. Although small, this sector, like vegetables, involves many cash sales that may not be fully reported.

Corn silage acreage increased from 3,035 acres in 1987 to 3,215 acres in 1997. Production increased from 41,211 tons to 60,707 tons over the same period even though the number of farms growing corn silage declined from 71 to 53.



Hay production acreage decreased from 13,247 acres in 1987 to 12,716 acres in 1997. Production decreased from 26,019 tons of dry matter to 22,084 tons of dry matter over the same period. The number of farms growing hay declined from 150 to 115. The combined acreage in these crops, oats and corn for grain dropped very slightly, from 17,060 in 1987 to 16,727 acres in 1997. Nevertheless, sales grew from \$315,000 to \$530,000.

Nursery and greenhouse operations grew from 7 in 1987 to 26 in 1997. The production area under glass went from none reported in 1987 to 23,720 square feet in 1997. Open

# **Fulton County, New York**

## **Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan**

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acres expanded from none reported to 379 over the same period. Bedding plant sales alone grew from none reported in 1987 to \$99,000 in 1997. There was also, in 1997, some \$73,000 in reported Christmas tree sales. “Other nursery and greenhouse crops” grew from none reported in 1987 and 1992 to \$203,000 in 1997.

Another feature of the agricultural economy, which is not addressed in much detail in the Census of Agriculture, is the equine industry. The New York State Equine Survey, conducted by the New York State Agricultural Statistics Service in 2000, indicated that Fulton County had 1,000 equines with a total value of \$4,700,000. The 1997 Agricultural Census indicated that 386 of these animals were found on commercial farms.

The Equine Survey indicated that, on average, each New York equine represented \$4,188 of expenditures within the economy, up 40 percent from total expenses of \$2,998 per equine on hand in 1988. Operating expenses per equine averaged \$3,112, or 74 percent of the total, while the remaining 26 percent was accounted for by capital expenses averaging \$1,076 per head. The Fulton County equine industry, as a whole, therefore, accounts for \$4,188,000 of the local economy on an annualized basis. Fulton County is one of only a few counties in New York State that do not allow agricultural assessment for horse boarding operations. It has 11 such operations, however. Given these positive economic impacts, it may wish to do so (see Chapter III, Goal 5, Objective 5.5).

The multiplier effects connected with farm sales affect the size and nature of an agricultural economy. Farmers typically purchase most of their goods and services from within a 20-25 mile range of the farm, while their product is marketed outside the region. This export of product and import of dollars puts them on the high side of multiplier scales according to a 1996 Cornell University Department of Agricultural, Resource and Managerial Economics report entitled “Economic Multipliers and the New York State Economy.”

That Cornell research, conducted for 1991, indicates the following range of multipliers, by sector of the New York State economy, for both total income and full-time equivalent jobs:

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**Table 2.4 - Economic Multipliers by Sector, New York State, 1991**

	<u>Total Income</u>	<u>Employment</u>
<b><u>Production Agriculture Industries</u></b>		
Dairy	2.29	1.52
Crops	2.28	1.51
Nursery and wood products	1.78	1.39
Poultry and livestock	1.64	1.37
<b><u>Agricultural Manufacturing Industries</u></b>		
Dairy processing	2.61	3.53
Grain processing	2.16	2.58
Fruits and vegetables processing	1.67	2.09
Meat processing	1.65	1.99
<b><u>Other Economic Sectors</u></b>		
Construction	1.66	1.57
Services	1.48	1.39
Manufacturing (nonfood)	1.41	1.62
Retail and wholesale trade	1.40	1.30
Finance, insurance and real estate	1.19	1.54

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## Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan

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### 5. THE FORESTRY SECTOR

The source of all forestry data, unless otherwise indicated, is the USDA Forest Service, Northeastern Station, "Northeastern Forest Inventory and Analysis Project," 1993 and 1996. Unfortunately, although this is the only official source of the data available, it is based on sampling of a mere 32 plots and, as a result, is often prone to error. Therefore, great caution must be exercised in using the data to make any definitive specific conclusions regarding the industry. The information is used herein general analysis purposes only.

Trees represent a distinct agricultural crop for Fulton County and one of significant importance to the regional economy. Their value, however, is often underrated because the crop rotation period is so long and opportunities to claim income are relatively infrequent. Some 159,400 acres or slightly less than half of Fulton County is considered timberland. Sawtimber represents 113,400 acres with the remainder consisting of seedlings, saplings and pole timber. A total of 87% of the timberland is owned by farmers or private individuals. It is a valuable income-producing asset for these landowners. Private corporations and the forest industry own another 20,500 acres of woodland.

The following is a breakdown of privately owned woodland in the County by forest type:

**Table 2.5 - Fulton County  
Private Timberland by Forest Types, 1993**

<u>Forest Type</u>	<u>Acreage</u>
White-red pine	49,600 acres
Elm-ash	15,200 acres
Maple-beech-birch	89,600 acres
<u>Aspen-birch</u>	<u>5,000 acres</u>
<b>Total Timberland</b>	<b>159,400 acres</b>

These largely (69%) hardwood forests produce high quality timber and colorful fall foliage which attract tourism throughout the Northeast. The Forest Service studies indicate the most common species, in terms of numbers of live trees, are Eastern Hemlock, Hard Maple,

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Yellow Birch and Soft Maple. Significantly, some 128,500 acres or 81% of Fulton's timberland is rated as fully stocked or overstocked. Altogether, timberland represents 268,300,000 cubic feet of growing stock (usable portions of trees) It includes an estimated 754,300,000 board feet of sawtimber (net volume of saw logs in trees) and is growing by 30,300,000 net board feet per year. The following table compares Forest Service estimates of growth compared to average annual removals of sawtimber (net growing stock harvested, killed in logging operations, cleared or reclassified from forest to non-forest land):

**Table 2.6 - Fulton County Average Net Annual Growth and Average Annual Removals of Sawtimber by Species Group, 1993**  
(All figures, except percentages, are in board feet)

<u>Species Group</u>	<u>Sawtimber Base Volume</u>	<u>Annual Growth</u>	<u>Annual Removals</u>	<u>Cutting Rate</u>
Eastern White - Red Pine	121,300,000	6,800,000	1,900,000	1.6%
Spruce-Fir	17,700,000	200,000	200,000	1.1%
Eastern Hemlock	203,500,000	8,100,000	700,000	0.3%
Other Softwood	800,000	100,000	0	0.0%
<b>Total Softwoods =</b>	<b>343,400,000</b>	<b>15,200,000</b>	<b>2,800,000</b>	<b>0.8%</b>
Select Red Oak	6,000,000	200,000	400,000	6.7%
Hickory	4,200,000	200,000	0	0.0%
Yellow Birch	37,800,000	1,300,000	500,000	1.3%
Hard Maple	75,800,000	2,100,000	1,200,000	1.6%
Soft Maple	134,800,000	5,300,000	300,000	0.2%
Beech	31,200,000	1,800,000	200,000	0.6%
Ash	49,100,000	2,100,000	300,000	0.6%
Aspen	17,400,000	1,000,000	0	0.0%
Basswood	11,500,000	400,000	0	0.0%
Other Soft Hardwoods	43,000,000	700,000	900,000	2.1%
<b>Total Hardwoods =</b>	<b>410,900,000</b>	<b>15,000,000</b>	<b>3,800,000</b>	<b>0.9%</b>
<b>All Species =</b>	<b>754,300,000</b>	<b>30,300,000</b>	<b>6,600,000</b>	<b>0.9%</b>



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The estimated 754,300,000 board feet of sawtimber suggests average production of 4,732 board feet per acre of forest land. Moreover, managed stands, according to regional industry representatives, typically produce no more than 2,000-3,000 board feet per acre and the Forest Service numbers, therefore, may well overstate yields for Fulton's largely unmanaged woodlands. Moreover, annual growth in the case of managed stands is about 100 board feet per year per acre. This suggests a gain in sawtimber of roughly 16,000,000 board feet per year as compared to Forest Service estimate of 30,300,000 board feet. Annual growth, nevertheless, does appear to exceed removals.

The Forest Service data indicates cutting rates within the County are about the same as New York State's 0.8% average and slightly below those of neighboring Pennsylvania (1.0%) and the New England region (1.3%). The rates for most species are sustainable, with the exception of Red Oak. Indeed, the ratio of annual growth to removals as well as other evidence, indicates a continually maturing forest.

Neither hardwoods nor softwoods are being harvested to the extent they could be. This is not good for wildlife management, the long-term vitality of woodlands or the forest industry. Too many large trees crowd out the understory vital to regeneration and to the animal populations for cover and as food. More timbering using best management practices would create a healthier forest for the long-term.

There are, nevertheless, serious concerns with the harvesting patterns that have been taking place throughout much of the hardwood-rich Northeast. The trend has been to "high-grade" forests to remove the better quality trees while leaving behind the less-valuable stock. This is what is happening with the Oak. There is a threat that local forests will be taken over by low grade species if markets are not identified for them as well. Development of markets, employment of sustainable forest management practices, deliberate efforts to cull or market low-grade materials and commercial thinning can all help to address high-grading issues but they will remain a challenge for the industry in this region.

Much like the remainder of the agricultural sector, Fulton County's forest industry would benefit by the development of additional secondary processing and value-added industries that would utilize locally produced wood. Niches could include specialty products for marketing to nearby metropolitan areas (e.g., fence boards, quality dimension lumber, wood

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flooring, wooden lawn furniture).

There are, too, a number of possibilities for using forest land to develop recreational attractions. If such activities are constructed as recreational leases they also hold the potential to generate added income for forest owners and, thereby, help the industry. Forest land is ideally suited to mountain biking, wilderness camping, hunting and other similar endeavors. If promoted properly in conjunction with area bed and breakfasts and restaurants, such activities can contribute in substantial ways to the economy.

Unfortunately, New York has been a high tax state and, while many recent reforms have helped to lower taxes on farmers (see Appendix 1), seniors and other residents, forest land is still often taxed at rates that exceed the annual income which can be derived from forest management. A recent analysis of real estate taxes on private forest land in the Catskill counties of New York State indicated annual tax rates of \$7-\$33/acre compared to forest revenues averaging less than \$5/acre. This can produce poor stewardship when farmers and other landowners are forced to do quick harvests to pay taxes. This has, in turn, led to some backlash efforts by individual municipalities to regulate all forest activity with very negative impacts on the industry. The best approach probably involves encouragement of sustainable forest management practices, combined with right-to-forest protection and positive tax relief.

Section 480(a) of the Real Property Law provides a measure of relief for participating landowners, but there is a strong disincentive to promote this program because the tax "costs" (savings to individual landowners) must be made up within the municipality and the strings attached in terms of management are too entangling. Clearly, there are no compelling reasons for private owners to hold onto forest land except for speculative purposes and this poses a substantial threat to long-term maintenance of forest land uses.

A better solution for taxing forest property would be to collect, at the time of harvest, based on a percentage of sales or some similar measure of productivity. This is a matter that should be pursued by the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board, working together with organizations such as Farm Bureau and the Empire State Forest Association. At a minimum, more training for local assessors and more effective programs for determining the real economic value of forest land are needed (see Chapter VI, Goal 6, Objective 6.4).

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## **Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan**

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### **IV - Agricultural Goals and Objectives**

The following are the goals and objectives are the basis of Fulton County's agriculture development and farmland protection program as set forth in this Plan. They are based on detailed surveys of agricultural producers summarized in Appendix 2 and input received at the Agricultural Conference conducted by the Fulton County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board in September, 2001.

The goals are long-term and reflect the basic policies of the Fulton County Board of Supervisors and Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board for agricultural development and farmland protection. The objectives spell out more specific criteria for measuring success. Together, they are intended to lay out a framework for agricultural development and farmland protection in Fulton County that can be followed by the Board of Supervisors and the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board.

A number of cooperating agencies will also be involved including but not limited to Cornell Cooperative Extension, the Soil and Water Conservation District and the Fulton County Economic Development Corporation. The goals and objectives set forth a unified policy, adopted by the Board of Supervisors and to be used by each of these entities. The specifics of major recommendations may be found in the Section VIII.

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## **Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan**

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**1. GOAL: COORDINATE AND FOCUS THE EFFORTS OF ALL AGENCIES INVOLVED IN PROMOTING AGRICULTURE IN FULTON COUNTY.**

*Lead Responsibility:* Fulton County Board of Supervisors and Fulton County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board.

*Measures of Success:* Degree of coordination and cooperation among agencies and organizations involved in agriculture in Fulton County, sales of agricultural products and farmland maintained in productive use.

**Objectives:**

- 1.1 Employ an Agricultural Economic Development Specialist to provide staff leadership in agricultural coordination and development. *Note: An Agricultural Economic Development Specialist shared between the two Counties is specifically recommended in Section VIII of this Plan).*
- 1.2 Convene regular meetings of agricultural groups to coordinate policy and exchange information.

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## **Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan**

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### **2. GOAL: DIVERSIFY FULTON COUNTY AGRICULTURE AND ESTABLISH NEW MARKETS FOR ALL FULTON COUNTY FARM PRODUCTS.**

***Lead Responsibility:** Cornell Cooperative Extension of Fulton and Montgomery Counties.  
**Note:** An Agricultural Economic Development Specialist shared between the two Counties (see Section 4.0 Recommendations) should eventually assume most of this responsibility.*

***Measures of Success:** Hours of training and assistance provided to farmers and volumes of new products and services marketed from Fulton County farms.*

#### **Objectives:**

- 2.1 Train and assist farmers in marketing, pricing and promoting agricultural products.
- 2.2 Expand farm-based tourism by cross promoting with Bed & Breakfast operators to take advantage of the County's position as the "Gateway to the Adirondacks."
- 2.3 Continually research new and added-value agricultural production opportunities for Fulton County, such as specialty cheeses processed on-farm.
- 2.4 Work with food stores to market local farm products.
- 2.5 Increase the number of Fulton County farmers using the Pride of New York label and create Mohawk Valley and Adirondack region branding programs with adjacent counties to capture more intrastate and tourist sales.
- 2.6 Add value to Fulton County farm products by increasing participation in quality certification programs (e.g. the New York State Cattle Health Assurance Program).

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### **3. GOAL: INCREASE PUBLIC AWARENESS OF AGRICULTURE AS AN ECONOMIC RESOURCE FOR FULTON COUNTY AND VALUABLE CAREER PATH FOR ITS YOUTH.**

***Lead Responsibility:** Cornell Cooperative Extension of Fulton and Montgomery Counties, together with the Fulton County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board, Herkimer-Fulton-Montgomery BOCES and the Fulton-Montgomery Community College as sponsors.*

***Measures of Success:** Numbers of education programs conducted, materials developed and farm and non-farm participants.*

#### **Objectives:**

- 3.1 Conduct broad-based public education programs designed to increase public awareness of the value of agriculture as an industry to Fulton County.
- 3.2 Work with public schools, Herkimer-Fulton-Montgomery BOCES, the Fulton-Montgomery Community College and work force development agencies to add agriculturist training tracks wherever possible and promote the "Ag in the Classroom" curriculum.
- 3.3 Encourage more 4-H program participation in both rural and urban areas of the County, increasing the range of offerings to emphasize the high-tech nature of modern agriculture.
- 3.4 Conduct more on-farm demonstrations of the science involved in agriculture, thereby also creating farm tourism opportunities for visitors.
- 3.5 Increase the level and frequency of farm community communications with the non-farm community.

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### 4. GOAL: SUPPORT FARM INVESTMENT BY THE PRIVATE SECTOR.

*Lead Responsibility:* Cornell Cooperative Extension of Fulton and Montgomery Counties.  
*Note:* An Agricultural Economic Development Specialist shared between the two Counties (see Section VIII Recommendations) should eventually assume some of this responsibility.

*Measures of Success:* Hours of training and assistance provided to farmers and the profitability of Fulton County farms, based on farm business summaries and amount of new investment.

#### **Objectives:**

- 4.1 Provide farmers training in how to lower the costs of farm inputs (e.g. rotational grazing or direct commodity purchasing).
- 4.2 Conduct intensive annual training for farmers regarding farm tax relief under State and Federal law, business planning and labor management.
- 4.3 Assist farmers in creating bargaining cooperatives to negotiate higher prices for other agricultural products on the basis of quality and volume.
- 4.4 Assist farmers in on-farm specialization (e.g. raising high-bred cattle for export) and diversification (e.g. combining dairy and beef operations).
- 4.5 Promote recreational leasing as a means of supplementing farm incomes.
- 4.6 Conduct "train the trainer" in business and financial planning for farm agricultural advisors (including bankers, accountants, lawyers and agency personnel).
- 4.7 Reduce the impact of estate taxes and assist new farm transfers through the Farm Link program, farmer education and technical assistance in estate planning.
- 4.8 Work with Farm Bureau and others to eliminate all State and Federal capital gains and estate taxes on farm transfers.
- 4.9 Form bargaining groups to jointly purchase farm supplies, cooperatively advertise farm products, provide outlets for products and facilitate use of custom services.
- 4.10 Maintain lists of sources for intra-county purchases, similar to the "hayfinder" program but extending the concept to other forages, products, services and labor.

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## **Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan**

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**5. GOAL: CREATE AND MAXIMIZE THE USE OF ECONOMIC INCENTIVES FOR DEVELOPMENT OF AGRICULTURAL ENTERPRISES, PARTICULARLY LOCAL SUPPLIERS OF FARM SUPPORT SERVICES.**

*Lead Responsibility: Fulton County Economic Development Corporation (EDC) and Fulton County Industrial Development Agency (IDA).*

*Measures of Success: Amount of new investment in farm and agribusinesses ventures.*

**Objectives:**

- 5.1 Integrate agriculture into the Fulton County's economic development strategy.
- 5.2 Encourage the EDC to develop agriculture based commerce and industry.
- 5.3 Use the Fulton County IDA tax abatement program to solicit agri-businesses such as feed mills, farm machinery dealers, other farm suppliers, agricultural processors and marketing organizations.
- 5.4 Disseminate information to farmers and other agricultural entrepreneurs on sources of capital for farm and agribusinesses ventures.
- 5.5 Allow commercial horse boarding operations to take advantage of agricultural assessment.
- 5.6 Encourage the EDC to allocate a portion of their revolving loan pool to agricultural enterprises.
- 5.7 Establish and/or promote new revolving loan programs specifically targeted at agriculture by working with the Mohawk Valley Economic Development District and State and Federal funding sources.



# **Fulton County, New York**

## **Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan**

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**6. GOAL: ENCOURAGE FARMERS TO MANAGE FARM WOODLANDS FOR ADDITIONAL PROFIT AS SECONDARY CROPS.**

*Lead Responsibility:* *Fulton County Soil and Water Conservation District , the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and the United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service.*

*Measures of Success:* *Number of farmers with sustainable forest management plans in place and additional farm income generated from woodlots.*

**Objectives:**

- 6.1 Provide landowner education and technical assistance in applying best management practices to farm woodlands.
- 6.2 Create additional markets for wood products in the County by establishing economic incentives for the development of new wood processing ventures (including on-farm enterprises).
- 6.3 Develop a technical assistance and training program on effective deer control to reduce crop damage and promote forest regeneration.
- 6.4 Provide more training for local assessors and more effective programs for determining the real economic value of forest land.

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### **7. GOAL: PROTECT THE RIGHTS OF FARMERS TO USE SOUND AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES.**

*Lead Responsibility: Fulton County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board.*

*Measures of Success: Numbers of farmers participating in Agricultural Districts and on local planning boards, protective measures adopted by towns and amount of training provided to towns.*

#### **Objectives:**

- 7.1 Increase the participation of farmers and agribusinesses owners on town planning boards through town appointment of agricultural members under the authority of § 271.11 of the Town Law.
- 7.2 Conduct regular training programs for local officials on how to accommodate both agriculture and development and apply the latest elements of State law affording protection for farmers and agri-businesses.
- 7.3 Encourage development of sewer and water infrastructure within already developed areas with infrastructure rather than agricultural areas to ensure development in these areas is compatible with farming.
- 7.4 Encourage agricultural towns to adopt Right to Farm Laws.
- 7.5 Promote the use of disclosure notices to put land buyers and home builders on notice they are locating within agricultural areas where sound management practices can produce odors, slow moving traffic and other consequences.
- 7.6 Continue to include Fulton County's most valuable farmland in the County's Agricultural District as the District is reviewed and updated, to offer farmers all the protections afforded under State law.
- 7.7 Encourage towns with zoning to enhance the Agricultural District by developing agricultural zoning districts that provide for compatible forms of development within the District.
- 7.8 Promote development of town Comprehensive Plans and encourage Towns to incorporate agricultural components into those plans.

# **Fulton County, New York**

## **Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan**

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### **V - Policy Options**

The following analysis is intended to offer descriptions and observations regarding specific farmland preservation tools employed in the Northeast. While a variety of programs are examined from both high growth and low growth areas, all were studied from the perspective of their possible usefulness in Fulton County.

The selected programs do not exhaust those being used but do provide representative examples of several different approaches. The Department of Agriculture and Markets also offers a number of programs discussed in this Plan (e.g. Ag Data Statements, Disclosure Notices, Ag Districts, etc.). Still other programs include Ontario County's Agriculture Industrial Park, the Town of Eden's Agricultural Advisory Committee, Lewis County's Farm Recruitment Program and Monroe County's Open Space Program.

Some general observations that can be drawn from this review include the following:

- 1) New York State already does a great deal for farmers. Its School Tax Credit program is without equal and effectively provides a large measure of farmland preservation within Fulton County. It may be possible to build on this (and the Agricultural District program) to recruit farmers to the County.
- 2) Heavy land use regulatory approaches aren't practical in Fulton County. Also, they only work well when combined with expensive PDR or LDR programs that compensate farmers for the downzoning. Land value is all the equity that many farmers have for their retirement. Taking it away is unpopular policy in any form.
- 3) Economic development approaches seem to be the area with the most potential for the future. They are also an area where there is clearly a gap, because farmers have traditionally been "price-takers" instead of "price-makers."
- 4) There are several separate and distinct values associated with farmland preservation (e.g. retaining an industry, maintaining a culture, saving open space) that need to be segmented and prioritized for purposes of policy making. Open space is not a major issue in Fulton County and, therefore, an economic approach is more practical.

<b>Overview of Farmland Preservation Policies Employed in the Northeast</b>			
<b>Approach</b>	<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Analysis</b>
<p>Leased Development Rights (LDR)</p> <p>Tax Abatements</p>	<p><b>Town of Perinton, Monroe County, New York</b></p>	<p>The Town has exercised its authority under § 247 of the NYS General Municipal Law to acquire conservation easements on farmland and other open spaces, paying for those easements with preferential tax treatment. Landowners apply for the program and the decision to accept or reject the application is made on the basis of benefit to the Town. These applications are reviewed by a Conservation Board and are subject to a public hearing. The owners are also required to principally and actively use the property for "bona fide agricultural production" for the term of the easement. Easements can be cancelled through a similar application but penalties apply. The proportion of pre-easement property value remaining subject to taxation varies depending on the length of the easement, ranging from 40% for 5 year easements (the minimum length accepted) to 10% for agreements of 15 years or more.</p>	<p>This program has existed since the 1970's. A total of 81 farming easements (62% of all open space acquired under the program) were in effect as of 2000 with some 3,034 acres of farmland protected. This represented 13.% of the Town land area. Perinton, however, is self-described as a suburban Rochester community desiring to preserve remaining open spaces. It is, at over 46,000 persons, larger than many rural counties. The key to the success of this program (rated "fabulous" by the assessor's office) is that it lowers the assessed value well below agricultural value and renders agricultural assessment meaningless. There have been very few cancellations by farmers. This means that it should work just as well in areas where there is a small differential in agricultural and development value. It is also politically appealing due to the flexibility offered to both farmer and municipality. The difficulty with it, of course, is in paying for the lost taxes in communities where there is not a large non-farm base to carry the load. This might be addressed with State assistance or by applying the program across a wider geography.</p>

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<b>Approach</b>	<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Analysis</b>
Agriculture Protection Zoning	<b>Shrewsbury Township, York County, Pennsylvania</b>	<p>The Township has used its general authority under the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code to "preserve prime agriculture and farmland" by creating an agricultural zoning district that limits development on prime agricultural soils. Dwelling numbers are limited on the basis of a sliding scale that allows reasonable amounts of development on smaller tracts of land (1 units for 0-5 acres) but restricts larger parcels to agricultural densities (no more than 7 units for 120-150 acres). There is also a prohibition against subdividing farm parcels into new lots of less than 50 acres each. Similar zoning districts are found in various areas of Pennsylvania (mostly in the Lancaster-York area but also in less pressured areas such as Crawford and Lycoming Counties). Large buffers, maximum building lot sizes, agricultural nuisance notices, design review guidelines, deed restrictions on remaining land and provisions allowing B&amp;B's, farm stands and other ag-related businesses are also common in these districts.</p>	<p>The Township's agricultural zoning district was created in 1976. It covered 12,442 acres or two-thirds of the Township in 1994. Shrewsbury had a population of 5,947 persons in 2000, a density of over 200 persons per square mile. This is a community that is, therefore, urban in some respects but it has many prime farmlands and may have struck a balance between the two. The district was challenged but upheld by the State's highest court in a 1985 case that validated the large lot sizes and low densities on the basis of "extraordinary justification" related to the high quality of the farmland within the district. The ordinance is supported, however, by Pennsylvania's extensive PDR program, which tends to insulate the regulations from farmer challenges. It was enacted, nonetheless, before that program was created. An analysis of development patterns before and after the district's creation (up to 1981) suggested it reduced the rate of development within the district by two-thirds and increased it outside fourfold.</p>

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Approach	Jurisdiction	Description	Analysis
Transfer of Development Rights (TDR)	<b>Town of Eden, Erie County, New York</b>	<p>The Town of Eden adopted Transfer of Development Rights provisions in 1977 as part of its Zoning Law. They remain in the Town Code in 2002 and allow transfers of residential density into three districts where more intense development is allowed, from three other conservation and agricultural districts where agriculture uses predominate. A combination of conservation easements and optional density permits are used to effectuate the transactions. The provisions are written in a fairly straight-forward simple manner and require developers to secure optional density permits at the time they apply for subdivision approval. The application must include a conservation easement that gets recorded by the Town before granting the density permit and final plat approval. The law spells out densities that may be transferred (e.g. one development right per acre of eligible land in the APO District and two per acre in the A District). Overuse use of cross-referencing makes it difficult to assess the extent of developer incentives.</p>	<p>The Town had, as of 2000, processed one transfer involving 31 acres of farmland - not much success, but more than many towns with TDR provisions. Nationwide there are some 50+ jurisdictions with TDR provisions in place and only 56% have protected any farmland. An estimated 67,707 acres have been protected through such programs but two-thirds of that has been in Montgomery County, Maryland. Only 15 programs have protected more than 100 acres. Eden's program has appealing simplicity and the densities that are allowed to be transferred are twice what a developer can achieve by simply subdividing the farmland (e.g. one house per two acres in the APO District and four per acre in the A District). Yet, the program has received little use in a Town with a vibrant farm sector and over 8,000 persons population. The difference may be in the size of the landowner incentives. Successful programs have allowed landowners to develop at only 20-25% of the density available for sale under TDR and have greatly lowered density at the outset. TDR also requires both demand and supply side that don't exist in every instance, particularly in areas not experiencing development pressure.</p>

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<b>Approach</b>	<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Analysis</b>
<p>Forest Land Tax Reductions (RPTL § 480-a)</p>	<p><b>New York State</b></p>	<p>New York State has a program in effect now to give preferential tax treatment to forest land. The 480-a program reduces the assessed value of woodland by 80%. It requires a 10 year commitment renewed annually along with a forest management plan. Woodlot owners in the program must thin and/or harvest based on the plan written by a certified forester and approved by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation. A six percent (6%) stumpage fee is paid to the town when a harvest takes place. There is a large rollback penalty for conversion or if the management plan is not followed. Overall, this program requires a major long term commitment (30+ years) to benefit from the tax savings. It can provide many farmers with added tax benefits from forest land, however. It is, therefore, a farmland protection tool to the extent it improves farm income and lowers the economic rent required from the farmland. NYS-DEC has proposed legislation to improve this program by shifting some its costs and streamlining it.</p>	<p>Approximately 10% of New York State's forestland is held by farmers (nearly 1.5 million acres) and this represents roughly 20% of all farmland. There are some 1,500 enrolled 480-a parcels Statewide that encompass about 500,000 acres or 2-3% of all State forestland. Very little farmland appears to be enrolled. The program hasn't worked well because municipalities have had to absorb all the costs and, therefore, have resisted it. Small landowners have been scared of it because of its stringent rules and the length of the commitment involved. The DEC proposed klegislation would correct many of these problems by; 1) reimbursing counties, schools and municipalities for much of their tax loss, 2) allowing some more flexibility in the 50 acre minimum, and 3) somewhat liberalizing the penalties. However, the legislation would not deal with principal landowner objections having to do with the rolling 10-year committment required. This is also essential if the the program is to appeal to smaller landowners such as farmers.</p>

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Approach	Jurisdiction	Description	Analysis
Purchase of Development Rights (PDR)	<b>The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania</b>	<p>The Pennsylvania Agricultural Conservation Easement Purchase Program was created in 1988 to enable county governments to purchase development rights from owners of quality farmland. Counties in the program appoint agricultural land preservation boards oversee purchases. Easements must be a minimum of 50 acres in size unless adjacent to existing preserved farmland or used for the production of unique crops. At least half the tract must either be harvested cropland, pasture or grazing land and it must contain specified amounts of good farming soils. Farms are also rated on the use of conservation practices and best management practices of nutrient management and likelihood of conversion. Other factors can include proximity of farm to sewer/water lines, extent of non-agricultural uses nearby, amount and type of agricultural use in the vicinity and the amount of other preserved farmland inclose proximity. Farmers may choose to receive the proceeds from easement sales in a lump sum payment or in installments. The program has been funded with a combination bond funds, Federal dollars (small) and a dedicated 1% cigarette tax.</p>	<p>Pennsylvania's PDR program has been the most successful in the nation and has worked in areas of the Commonwealth which have not experienced development pressure by allowing farmers to capture farm equity for agricultural development and transfers to younger generations. Since 1989, Pennsylvania has protected more than 1,750 farms, totaling more than 212,000 acres, spending some \$425,000,000 to acquire easements in 48 out of 67 counties. Some 176 of the farms were in counties that actually lost population from 1990 to 2000. Less than half were in counties facing development pressure. Susquehanna County borders upstate New York and grew by 4.6% - very comparable to the study area. Fifteen easements on 3,625 acres of farmland have been acquired there at an average of \$650/acre, indicating Pennsylvania's program works well in areas without development pressure. A weakness of the program may be that it has too much money to work with. A number of marginal farms have been acquired only to later go out of business. A number of poorly run operations that deserved to go out of business have been continued by using the program as a crutch. These farms are left to compete with good managers and arguably make it more difficult for them to succeed.</p>



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<b>Approach</b>	<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Analysis</b>
<p>Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)</p> <p>Wetland Reserve Program (WRP)</p>	<p><b>U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)</b></p>	<p>These three programs are designed to take certain farmland out of production but serve to protect it for future use. More importantly, they function as limited LDR/PDR programs for operating farms, turning unproductive farmland into cash and recovering farm equity for reinvestment. Under the CRP program farmers receive annual rental payments to stop growing crops on erodible or environmentally sensitive acreage and plant protective covers of grass or trees. Cost-share payments are also available to establish permanent areas of grass, legumes, trees, windbreaks, or plants that improve water quality and support wildlife. Under the WRP program, the USDA purchases easements from farmers who agree to restore and protect wetlands. Related programs help farmers improve, or restore wetlands through 10-year rental agreements to protect important nesting, breeding, and feeding areas for migratory waterfowl. It is quite common for the CRP and WRP programs to be used in tandem with other PDR programs as a source of funding in a package of assistance to farmers who are selling off their development rights. This has been done in the West of Hudson and Delaware watersheds of the New York City water supply system, for example, to make City PDR funds go further.</p>	<p>The CRP and WRP programs have been moderately used in New York State. There were 59,000 acres enrolled in the CRP program in 2001 and 16,000 acres in the WRP program, a total of 75,000 acres. This is a decline from 1997 when 85,000 acres were enrolled by some 1,762 farmers. The current total represents about 1.5% of all cropland in the State. This compares to 2% for Pennsylvania, 3% in Maryland and 7% in Iowa. The amount of use varies from county to county, the primary factor appearing to be motivation of Soil &amp; Water Conservation District officials to enroll participants. Relatively small Yates County, for example, is one of the leaders in New York in promoting this program, largely due to the aggressive approach of its District. It is also a program particularly well-suited to the small farm operations that Yates County is gaining in such large numbers. They tend to be more diversified farms where maximization of income from every acre is important. The overall impact of the programs is, however, limited. They are effective complementary tools in conjunction with other programs but unlikely to preserve much farmland in their own right.</p>

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<b>Approach</b>	<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Analysis</b>
Farm Property School Tax Credit	<b>New York State</b>	New York taxpayers whose federal gross income from farming equals at least two-thirds of excess federal gross income are allowed a credit against income tax equal to the school property taxes they paid on certain agricultural property. The tax credit is limited to 100% of the school taxes paid on a base acreage of qualified agricultural property plus 50% of the school taxes paid on land exceeding the base acreage. The current base acreage is 250 acres; and includes farm buildings. Qualified agricultural property is land used for agricultural production. If agricultural property is converted to a non-qualified use, no credit is allowed that year and recapture is triggered for the previous two taxable years. Excess federal gross income is federal gross income from all sources for the taxable year in excess of \$30,000. If the adjusted gross income of the taxpayer less principal paid on farm indebtedness exceeds \$100,000 the credit is phased out and completely lost at \$150,000. The school tax credit has been expanded to farmers who pay school taxes under a contract to buy farmland.	This has been a remarkably effective program and has no known equal among the States. It provides major benefits to all farmers who are able to pay their taxes. More importantly, it does not penalize municipalities because the reimbursement is through State taxes. It makes New York State very appealing from the standpoint of farm taxes. A comparison of two 60-cow dairies in adjoining Wayne County, PA Pennsylvania and Sullivan County, NY, indicated a \$7,500 advantage in net property taxes paid by the New York farmer, despite property tax rates being much higher in New York State. Homeowner tax benefits under the STAR program contribute to this advantage and comparable programs for homeowners exist in other states (including PA) but the major factor is the School Tax Credit. Capitalized, the \$7,500 per year is a \$80,000 to \$120,000 value, approximately \$400 to \$600 per acre for a typical dairy farm of this size. This is close to PDR value in areas not experiencing development pressure. Therefore, the Farm Property School Tax Credit (combined with STAR) is a very effective farm preservation tool. The fact it is a reimbursement program also tends to steer the help to viable farm operations, although the \$150,000 income limit discriminates against the most successful farmers.

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Approach	Jurisdiction	Description	Analysis
Economic Development Initiative	<b>Watershed Agricultural Council (WAC)</b>	<p>Part of New York City's agreement with the towns in its watershed area to protect the water supply provided for the creation and funding of a unique entity known as the Watershed Agricultural Council. WAC was given several responsibilities and among them were the coordination of "Whole Farm Planning" and an economic development initiative to put the watershed's farmers on a firmer economic foundation. The Whole Farm Plans were designed to qualify area farmers for City financial assistance with nutrient management and conservation improvements that also served to upgrade the farm operations and enhance their prospects for long-term survival. The economic development program used seed money from the City to secure additional grant funds and technical assistance from USDA and Cornell for the purpose of establishing a restaurant supported agriculture program with the City's best eating places. Interested farmers were organized and trained in the growing of specialty crops, including fingerling potatoes. Markets were developed and the Catskill Family Farms cooperative was formed. Several dairy farms diversified into specialty crops and some eventually converted entirely to these new ventures. The cooperative is now largely on its own, supported by its membership. It continues to serve restaurants (through a distributor) and is now involved in Consumer Supported Agriculture (CSA) ventures.</p>	<p>This has been a successful program for a number of farmers. There are now 15 farmers involved who are producing 200,000 pounds of fingerling potatoes and numerous other specialty agricultural products. The project has gone through several changes and faced many start-up issues. Distribution and management proved to be very difficult. Ultimately, Catskill Family Farms opted to take somewhat lower prices (still well above commodity price levels) in return for the services of a distributor. This is a common pattern, however. It is unlikely a distributor could have been attracted without the Cooperative having first demonstrated that there was a market to serve. Likewise, the Cooperative would not have been formed or the new product ventures attempted without the organizational skills and seed money of WAC. The transition period to stability was several years in the making but the Cooperative has, ultimately, achieved its objectives of keeping farmers in business and improving their incomes. These should also be the goals of farmland preservation. The WAC experience is being replicated with smaller projects in various counties where agricultural economic development programs have been created. The Catskill program demonstrates that larger scale success is possible but a combination of adequate seed money, technical assistance, enthusiasm and management is essential. These are far easier to provide on a Statewide or regional basis than as county programs.</p>

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Approach	Jurisdiction	Description	Analysis
<p>Deregulation of Agricultural Processing (Farm Winery Act)</p>	<p><b>New York State</b></p>	<p>The New York State Farm Winery Act, passed in 1976, allowed, for the first time, the establishment of wineries making up to 50,000 gallons per year with tasting rooms and retail sales on-site seven days a week, a privilege not accorded to commercial wineries within the State. Wineries had been required to sell 95% of their wines through distributors. So as to encourage the wine industry in the state, the Act provided that farm wineries could use only New York grapes they grew themselves or purchased from other New York State vineyards. The maximum annual production was expanded to 150,000 gallons in 1990. The Act also specified that no more than 15% of the grapes used for a regional label wine can come from another New York State wine region. Farm wineries are, today, still strictly regulated in New York State but the Farm Winery Act makes it economically feasible to establish small wineries selling directly to the public, opening up an agricultural niche within the wine-making regions of the State. Several other states are now emulating New York's example with farm winery laws of their own that create opportunities for vineyard owners to construct wineries or wineries to be established that buy grapes from local vineyard owners.</p>	<p>The Farm Winery Act has been a great success story by any measure, including farmland preservation. Before the Act, New York had only 21 wineries, but 37 more opened within the next 10 years. Some 102 of New York's 160 wineries have opened since 1985, including 61 during the 1990's and 11 more in 2001 alone. Wineries now operate in 32, or a majority, of New York's counties, with concentrations in such low growth areas as the Finger Lakes and Lake Erie region. Farm wineries, most in the range of 10,000 to 30,000 gallons per year of production, account for 80% of all wineries in the State. Farm wineries produced 1,600,000 gallons of wine in 2000, a threefold increase in 15 years. They only account for about 4% of New York's total wine production but helped to produce a 65% increase in the total due to the attention they drew to the State's wines. The 1,100,000 gallon gain in farm winery wine production since 1985 is equivalent to approximately 31,500 tons or 8,750 acres of grapes. Old vineyards have been recycled for use in growing new varieties and additional acreage has also been brought into production. The economic impact from both wine sales and tourism generated from the wine trails is, at an estimated \$30/gallon or \$13.50 per visitor, some \$33,000,000 to \$36,000,000 minimum and probably much higher. The Farm Winery Act demonstrates the potential for smaller agricultural producers released from restrictive regulations on processing.</p>

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Approach	Jurisdiction	Description	Analysis
<p>Economic Development Initiative (Ag Industry Tax Abatement Program)</p>	<p><b>Sullivan County, New York</b> <b>Schuyler County, New York</b></p>	<p>The County of Sullivan Industrial Development Agency has enacted a targeted tax abatement program specific to agricultural industries. Their program was created in response to a Sullivan County Economic Development Strategy recommendation to make "targeted efforts ... to produce job growth through business expansion." Many of the County's employers were agricultural enterprises and considering expansion. Agriculture enterprises were also acknowledged to generate very high economic multipliers and be "the single most important segment of the County economy after tourism." The program is a targeted tax incentive designed to complement the County's Agricultural Revolving Loan Fund (described below). It allows the County to offer unique packages of benefits to agricultural enterprises and makes it the place to be if one is in those businesses. The abatement schedule is quite generous and allows for 5 years of no taxes on the improvements made, phasing in at 10% per year thereafter. Schuyler County adopted a similar program to help its wineries and Steuben County's Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan recommends it. Other counties have comparable programs or have offered similar benefits to processors in negotiations to recruit them as industries. These include Broome, Fulton, Greene, St. Lawrence and Yates Counties.</p>	<p>There have been a number of successes with these programs in attracting and keeping those agricultural processors and support industries that ensure a critical mass of agricultural activity within an area. The Sullivan County IDA has used its program twice since adoption in 1998 - once by a feed manufacturer and another time by a farm equipment dealer. Both were located in towns lacking eligibility under Section 485-b of the Real Property Tax Law (which abates 50% of taxes in the first year and phases in at 5% per year). The machinery dealer made a \$100,000 expansion. The feed company invested \$1,000,000 in modernization of its mill. Each supplier had but one effective competitor. Maintaining that competition was essential to keeping the costs of supplies to local farmers competitive. Greene County was able to attract a large Canadian floral processor using its program (although the deal died following property acquisition for unrelated reasons). Yates County and some others have designed their programs around value-added manufacturing. It recently provided tax abatements to Glenora Wine Cellars with a major expansion project, for instance. That particular project was not treated as value-added because it was primarily a lodging project but IDA officials indicate a winery itself would qualify as value-added, thus giving Yates County a distinct advantage in promoting winery development with associated farmland preservation benefits.</p>

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<b>Approach</b>	<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Analysis</b>
<p>Economic Development Initiative (Ag Industry Revolving Loan Program)</p>	<p><b>Sullivan County, New York</b></p>	<p>Sullivan County has used the HUD Community Development Block Grant program to establish an Agricultural Revolving Loan Program. The fund is to agricultural industries, including both farms and processors as well as support enterprises. A \$600,000 grant was secured to establish the revolving loan fund. The terms are 4% interest with 7-10 years to amortize the loans. There is a requirement that at least one new job be generated for each \$25,000 in funds loaned out.</p>	<p>This program is now almost three years old. Two loans have been made - one in the amount of \$360,000 for an egg-breaking operation and another loan of \$100,000 to an egg-layer poultry operation recovering from a fire and needing to update equipment. The egg-breaker created 50 new jobs, is making all payments and looking to further expand. The egg-laying operation loan is new but supports a long-standing poultry business in the County. The program is modestly successful but suffers from HUD paperwork and documentation requirements. Also, the terms haven't been especially attractive in the current low-interest private market. Agricultural enterprises also have difficulty meeting job targets even though their indirect (multiplied) economic benefits are large. Still another program is that farm assets make difficult collateral because they tend to be special purpose and unusable for other enterprises. A poultry house is, in fact, probably a liability to anyone other than the farmer himself. This type of program is only likely to make a major impact on farmland preservation if linked to other financing as a source of second-position matching funds. The investment of time and resources in making it available may not be justified considering the limited market for the assistance. Also, stand-alone programs of this type tend to support unworthy applicants from a credit standpoint, distorting the marketplace, or provide resources already available from private lenders.</p>

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### **VI - Groups Responsible for Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection in Fulton County**

The following agencies and organizations play important roles in agricultural development and farmland protection in Fulton County:

1) **Fulton County Farmers**

Farmers themselves bear the most responsibility for implementation of this Plan because it is based primarily on agricultural economic development that requires individual farmers to take risks, change practices and invest in new initiatives. This Plan is intended to stimulate private sector revitalization of the industry and, therefore, the private sector has to make it work.

2) **Fulton County Board of Supervisors**

The Board of Supervisors is ultimately responsible for all County government policy with regard to agriculture in Fulton County. This Plan is that policy.

4) **Fulton County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board**

The Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board is responsible for advising the Board of Supervisors with regard to agricultural policy and implementing various programs set forth in this Plan and under the Agriculture and Markets Law, particularly those relating to farmland protection and Agricultural Districts.

5) **Agricultural Economic Development Specialist**

The proposed Agricultural Economic Development Specialist (see Recommendations) will be shared with Montgomery County under the auspices of Cornell Cooperative Extension and coordinate and focus all involved agencies on agricultural promotion within Fulton County.

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### **5) Cornell Cooperative Extension**

Cornell University's cooperative extension program is operated with the support of Fulton and Montgomery County governments and provides a combination of education in agriculture and related fields with technical assistance and training to farmers. It will continue in this role using the proposed Agricultural Economic Development Specialist to pursue agricultural development initiatives growing out of these efforts and others.

### **6) Fulton County Planning Board**

The Fulton County Planning Board has specific responsibilities to advise the County Planning Department, municipalities and the Board of Supervisors in reviewing projects and policies that impact upon agriculture and related land use issues. The Board also plays an oversight role with respect to the Fulton County planning initiatives and, because of its broad areas of interests, is in an excellent position to ensure that agriculture is integrated with other planning and economic development activities of the County.

### **7) Fulton County Planning Department**

The County Planning Department is responsible for Agricultural District maintenance and assistance to municipalities with comprehensive planning issues that impact on agriculture. It also supports the operations of the Industrial Development Agency and Economic Development Corporation, both of whom bear responsibility for incorporating agriculture into their economic development programs and ensuring the proper incentives are available to the this industry in the same manner they are available to others.

### **8) Fulton County Soil and Water Conservation District**

The Soil and Water Conservation District offers many complementary programs for agricultural development and farmland protection, including assistance with nutrient management planning and securing financial assistance for farmland preservation through the Conservation Reserve Program and others.



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9) **Fulton County Farm Bureau**

Farm Bureau describes itself as a "non-governmental, volunteer organization financed and controlled by families for the purpose of solving economic and public policy issues challenging the agriculture industry." Policy development begins at the county level with problem identification and, therefore, Fulton County Farm Bureau is the organization best equipped to go before governmental bodies to directly advocate policies important to Fulton County farmers and the implementation of this Plan.

10) **Natural Resources Conservation Service**

Formerly known as the Soil Conservation Service, NRCS plays a supportive technical role in assisting the Soil and Water Conservation District and farmers with conservation and nutrient management practices. It can also help to access funding for these programs.

11) **New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets**

The Department of Agricultural and Markets is an advocate for agriculture within State government. It also administers the Agricultural District program and provides financial support for both purchase of development rights and agricultural economic development initiatives. It also plays a regulatory role in the industry, provides technical assistance with exports, documents the contributions of agriculture and does quality control promotion with its Pride of New York program.

12) **Fulton County Chamber of Commerce**

The Chamber is the organization chiefly responsible for tourism promotion in Fulton County. It plays a critical role in helping to promote farm products sold at farmers' markets and in identifying farm stands and agricultural tourism attractions. It also offers business support services to farm businesses as well as others.

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### **VII - Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats to Fulton County Agriculture**

Approximately 15-20 individuals representing the agricultural industry and Fulton County gathered on September 12, 2001 at the Holiday Inn in Gloversville, NY to take part in a conference to gather ideas for this Plan. The conference was entitled "Fulton County Agriculture - New Ideas: New Opportunities" and included speakers on agricultural economic development, farmland preservation, farm taxes and the agricultural economy. A portion of the conference was also devoted to identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the County for agricultural development, opportunities in agriculture and threats to its future. There are summarized below with the most important item labeled as "Priority Items."

#### **1. STRENGTHS OF FULTON COUNTY AGRICULTURE**

##### **Priority Items**

- 1.1 Fulton County's role as the "Gateway to the Adirondacks" offers an advantage in marketing to tourists and a basis for branding of agricultural products.
- 1.2 Farm agency, governmental and community support of agriculture is quite strong in Fulton County.
- 1.3 Fulton County is advantageously located with respect to I-90 (New York State Thruway), I-87 (Northway), NYS Rt. 30 and NYS Rt. 30A to market agricultural products both within and outside the area, including the immense New York City metropolitan market.
- 1.4 Fulton County offers large areas of agricultural land that are mostly available for use at a reasonable price.
- 1.5 Fulton County offers a quality water supply in generous quantities to support farm and agricultural processing enterprises.

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### **Other Strengths**

- 1.6 Fulton County produces generally high quality agricultural products.
- 1.7 There is already a solid base of direct marketing activity in Fulton and adjoining Montgomery activities that is promoted through an excellent tour map/brochure linking these activities.
- 1.8 The County offers a reliable supply of products that has attracted at least one new processor (Euphrates Cheese).
- 1.9 The working landscapes and scenic vistas created by Fulton County farms and topography are a tourism asset.
- 1.10 Several agricultural support businesses exist within the region of which Fulton County is part.
- 1.11 Fulton County's Agricultural District No. 1 provides protection of the farm community from complaints by neighbors and unreasonable local ordinances.
- 1.12 Fulton County's very successful industrial and business parks have created a vibrant local economy for additional new agricultural enterprises.
- 1.13 Fulton County offers several locations with sewage treatment capacity to accommodate new agricultural processors.
- 1.14 Fulton County includes some good agricultural soils.
- 1.15 Fulton County's location offers it the ability to identify with the Mohawk Valley from promotional and agricultural image perspectives.
- 1.16 Fulton County has historically been a hardwood production area and continues to possess substantial forest resources.
- 1.17 Fulton County also possesses many mineral resources that can provide extra sources

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of revenue for farmers.

- 1.18 Fulton County residents, particularly newer ones, and second-home visitors value the open space farms offer and this makes agriculture a very compatible type of economic development.

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### **2. WEAKNESSES OF FULTON COUNTY FOR AGRICULTURE**

#### **Priority Items**

- 2.1 Farm prices are so variable, and often so low, that it is difficult for small to moderate size operations to survive.
- 2.2 Fulton County itself lacks certain needed farm support businesses such as feed dealers, making it necessary to travel long distances for these services.
- 2.3 Fulton County's agriculture industry has difficulty finding, attracting and managing a quality labor force.

#### **Other Weaknesses**

- 2.4 Land development pressures, coming from the Saratoga direction in particular, have raised land values beyond agricultural levels in Towns such as Broadalbin and Perth.
- 2.5 Many agricultural and natural resources are located close to residences where they are difficult to use.
- 2.6 Fulton County's geography is split by its two cities, making it difficult to link agricultural areas.
- 2.7 Farmers tend to be older in age and this, combined with lack of interest in agriculture by many youth, limits potential for intergenerational farm transfers.
- 2.8 The opportunity costs of choosing agriculture as a career discourage younger individuals from entering the industry.
- 2.9 Lack of protection for agricultural enterprises in some local zoning ordinances makes these enterprises vulnerable to objections from residents unfamiliar with agriculture and opposed to the odors and other impacts of farm operations.
- 2.10 Fulton County agriculture is vulnerable to unreliable weather conditions and a

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somewhat short growing season.

- 2.11 Manure odor and runoff concern and associated Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) regulations raise issues of cost and uncertainty for farmers wanting to expand.
- 2.12 Consolidation within the agricultural industry, while offering new marketing opportunities, has also reduced competition and the access of Fulton County farmers to processors.
- 2.13 Fulton County's agricultural base is relatively small and unlikely to attract larger processors.
- 2.14 Wetland designations have limited capacity to drain farm properties and use them effectively.
- 2.15 New York State's generally high taxes and the perception that real estate taxes are high for agriculture tend to discourage new farm investment.
- 2.16 Much of Fulton County's vacant agricultural land is held in speculation and not available for sale or agricultural use.
- 2.17 Fulton County's location at the foothills of the Adirondacks puts it at the outskirts of market areas for regional supply businesses.
- 2.18 The poor conditions of some farms has created a negative image of agriculture .
- 2.19 Industrial marketing success has limited Fulton County's labor market for agriculture.

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### **3. OPPORTUNITIES FOR FULTON COUNTY AGRICULTURE**

#### **Priority Items**

- 3.1 Fulton County farms have an opportunity to build on the direct marketing system, taking advantage of tourism and other traffic to diversify or specialize in new product lines.
- 3.2 Fulton County's integrated planning and economic development program offers an opportunity to focus some of these efforts on agriculture through development of targeted IDA benefits.
- 3.3 The Fulton-Montgomery Community College and offers a special resource that, together with Herkimer-Fulton-Montgomery BOCES and related programs, can be used to provide special training for agriculture-related jobs.

#### **Other Opportunities**

- 3.4 There is an opportunity to build on existing direct marketing programs to do more cooperative market development for Fulton County farm products.
- 3.5 Existing "Ag in the Classroom" and "Ag Awareness" programs offer an opportunity to further improve on the image of agriculture in the County and market products locally.
- 3.6 The Euphrates Cheese manufacturing facility demonstrates there is potential to attract more to moderate size agricultural processors to the County.
- 3.7 Historically, Fulton County supported many milk producer-handlers and the small urban markets that exist in the area offer potential for new on-farm processing operations.
- 3.8 Fulton County's industrial/business parks and other infrastructure serve to offer several suitable sites for promotion of agricultural business development.

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- 3.9 Christmas tree farming to serve nearby urban markets offers an opportunity to use some of Fulton County's presently vacant farm land.
  
- 3.10 Agricultural tourism opportunities (e.g., corn mazes, pumpkin patches, petting zoos, etc.) exist based on the large numbers of second-home and other visitors to the County.
  
- 3.11 There may be opportunities on larger farms to convert manure wastes to soil conditioner products.
  
- 3.12 There are additional opportunities to strengthen the agricultural industry by creating and expanding Agricultural Districts, particularly on the western side of the County.
  
- 3.13 Exports of farm products to nearby Canada and other counties represent untapped markets for Fulton County farmers.
  
- 3.14 There are numerous unexploited opportunities among Fulton County to engage in strategic alliances for sharing of custom services, pooled buying and intra-county commodity sales.



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### **4.0 THREATS TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF AGRICULTURE IN FULTON COUNTY**

#### **Priority Items**

- 4.1 Continued volatility in farm product pricing and the costs of farm inputs threatens the stability of the industry absent tools to better manage the risk.
- 4.2 The capacity of both farms and farm support enterprises to develop and expand as needed are limited by funding and already high tax burdens as well as access to financial capital.
- 4.3 Erosion of agricultural support businesses and consolidations within the financial industry are removing services (including knowledgeable agricultural lenders) further from the farm and could result in a loss of the critical mass necessary to survive and prosper.
- 4.4 Heavy impact environmental regulations that create unknown capital costs for improvements and limit the ability of small farmers to employ ordinary management practices and technology could make farming economically impractical at certain sizes.

#### **Other Threats to Fulton County Agriculture**

- 4.5 Development pressure from the Saratoga and Albany directions is likely to increase possible raising land prices beyond the reach of farmers and create more residential conflicts.
- 4.6 Farmers needing to expand to achieve competitive economies of scale in their enterprises face increasing conflicts with their neighbors unless appropriate buffers are maintained.
- 4.7 As farms have become more efficient, fewer people have maintained contact with the industry, increasing the potential for conflicts due to misunderstandings.
- 4.8 Competition among farmers and between states have led to Western farmers claiming dairy market share away from New York State and Fulton County and this pressure

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is likely to increase.

- 4.9 New processing technology such as ultra-pasteurization has made it more feasible for out-of-state farmers to enter New York markets, adding further to competitive pressures.
- 4.10 Many farmers lack the pricing savvy to take advantage of the marketing niches and quality that their products offer.
- 4.11 Imports of agricultural products from other countries have also eroded market share for Fulton County producers and, unless all trade barriers are removed to create equal opportunity for exports, threaten to continue to do so.

The strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats identified above are limited to those observed by the Conference participants.

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### **VIII - Recommendations**

Agriculture is always in transition and farming will remain healthy as an industry if it continually adapts to these changes and evolves. New markets, new products, new ways of doing business and new partnerships are needed. The Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board has an opportunity to lead this effort and if it does so, there can be substantial payoffs in tourism, quality of life and the long-term growth of the Fulton County economy. The Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board should make implementation of the recommendations that follow its primary mission over the next 3-10 years.

**Accomplishing this mission will demand a more proactive Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board than now exists. The Board needs to meet regularly (no less than quarterly) and demonstrate leadership on Fulton County agricultural policy issues. It should serve as the oversight body for an Agricultural Economic Development Specialist position, if one is created, and provide continuing advice to the Board of Supervisors. It should be the lead agency on all projects recommended in this Plan.**

A number of the goals and recommendations set forth in this Plan also demand an Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board willing to take a lead role in initiating projects by simply bringing the right people together, asking the right questions, posing actions that might be taken and supporting the efforts of cooperating agencies. This Plan provides the opportunity for a continuing effort along this line and the Board needs to seize it. It can do so by using the Plan as a form of checklist, taking the recommendations one by one and soliciting the help of those parties needing to be involved in each by inviting them to its meetings.

Farmland preservation is useless and irrelevant unless there is profit in farming and, therefore, the thrust of this Plan is to address means by which agriculture as an industry can be further developed to increase economic returns. Preserving farmland and the right to farm are also essential. The following measures are recommended:

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### **1. CREATE AGRICULTURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST**

**RECOMMENDATION:** Fulton County should work with Montgomery County and Cornell Cooperative Extension to offer the services of a shared agricultural development specialist to the farm community. This individual should be assigned both economic development and education responsibilities. The dual responsibilities are essential to highlighting the value of agriculture to the local economy and further integrating the industry into the County's economic development program.

#### **Background**

Approximately 25% of the counties throughout upstate New York and several other states (e.g. Maryland, Virginia) have, over the last decade, appointed agricultural development specialists to help farmers with product development, marketing and related assistance. These are, typically, new positions with shared responsibilities to County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Boards, Cornell Cooperative Extension and economic development or planning agencies. Some are located within Cornell Cooperative Extension and others are part of county government. Nearby counties with such positions include Montgomery and Schoharie. The role of agricultural development specialists, however, has been distinctly more entrepreneurial than educational or governmental.

#### **General Responsibilities:**

Responsibilities of agricultural development specialists typically include:

- Promoting a positive image of the agricultural industry through a variety of media efforts.
- Communicating the advantages of counties to commercial agricultural industry representatives, industrial prospects (agricultural processing) and real estate brokers.

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- Improve the economic prospects of local farmers through diversification, niche product development and direct marketing.
- Working with economic development agencies to assemble financial resources and capital for the production, marketing and processing of agricultural products.
- Representing a county's agriculture industry before local restaurateurs, industries, schools and government institutions to increase use of locally grown and processed products.
- Representing the agricultural industry within groups focused on economic development, business retention and workforce preparation.
- Serving as a resource to Agricultural and Farmland Protection Boards in implementing economic development aspects of the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plans.

### **Specific Responsibilities:**

Agricultural development specialists in other areas have been responsible for working with individual farmers, agri-businesses and other agricultural entrepreneurs in an advocacy role to develop and successfully implement marketing strategies and business plans. These responsibilities typically include assisting these entrepreneurs with the following tasks:

- Gathering market data that will assist them in exploring who the potential consumers of their product are.
- Researching the industry and the business environment connected with the product including government policies and regulations, technological changes and industry trends.
- Investigating products and services, price ranges, reputation, promotional activities and successes of the competition.
- Developing product or service ideas based on the information from the consumer

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and industry research.

- Identifying profitable target markets based on consumer behavior and business trends
- Testing the market potential.
- Determining specific and measurable marketing objectives relating to sales, net profits and market share.
- Selecting marketing strategies such as product differentiation, market segmentation, diversification and other alternatives to accomplish objectives.
- Evaluating the need for complementary services such as packing, grading, storing, and inventory management.
- Developing distribution plans that fully addresses product delivery systems, hours of operation and number of locations.
- Creating promotional campaigns that include a variety of advertising, public relations, and sales promotion activities.
- Identifying and soliciting available project financing from both private and public sources.
- Developing implementation programs for who will be responsible, what tasks they are responsible for and when the tasks are to be completed.
- Monitoring, evaluating and modify the business/marketing plan, including setting up performance standards to monitor sales, costs, net margin and customer satisfaction.

### **Required Skills:**

Agricultural development specialist are typically required to be skilled in communications and marketing and possess a working knowledge of the agricultural industry. Experience in

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advertising, sales and/or marketing, ability to write effectively and work well in both professional and nonprofessional environments are necessary capacities. Negotiating skills and the ability to act as a forceful marketplace advocate in promoting both a county's agricultural industry as a whole and the interests of individual entrepreneurs are critical.

### **Options:**

There are a number of options for Fulton County in offering the services of an agricultural development specialist to the farm community. These include the following:

- 1) The specialist could be employed as a staff member with Cornell Cooperative Extension of Fulton County, or
- 2) The specialist could be employed as a staff member of the County Planning Department, or
- 3) The specialist could be hired as a consultant by any one these organizations, or
- 4) The specialist could be shared with an adjoining Montgomery County which already has a half-time specialist on the Cornell Cooperative Extension staff.

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Fulton and Montgomery Counties is the most logical location for an agricultural support mission because of the extensive resources available and the contacts Extension has established with the industry. Extension already has a person in this position assigned to Montgomery County (see Appendix 4 for details). It is recommended this position be given additional shared responsibilities for Fulton County.

Cornell Cooperative Extension is, by its very nature, concentrated on educational goals. Advocacy, negotiation and entrepreneurship are not roles that Extension agencies are traditionally comfortable in assuming. Therefore, the specialist must have clearly defined responsibilities apart from the educational and governmental missions of Extension. The position will be of no benefit to the industry if the person taking the job is, for reasons of Cornell or Fulton County policy, unable to freely engage in economic development initiatives on the part of farmers and agri-businesses.

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It is recommended that the Agricultural Economic Development Specialist be assigned specific responsibilities to both economic development staff and Cornell Cooperative Extension as a resource person. The dual responsibilities are essential to highlighting the value of agriculture and forestry to the local economy and further integrating agriculture into the County's economic development program. This endeavor could be approached at the outset as a demonstration project, with the objective of transition, over the long-term, to a private and self-supporting endeavor on a fee-for-service or cooperative basis. It may also be possible to secure grant funds from larger agri-businesses and State or Federal sources to help launch the project. Additional ongoing funding for this position could come from a variety of sources including producer and agribusiness contributions and the County.

**Implementation Period:** 1) Startup 2003  
2) Demonstration period 2003-2006

**Responsible Parties:** 1) Cornell Cooperative Extension of Fulton County  
2) Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board



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### **2. ADDED VALUE INITIATIVES**

**RECOMMENDATION:** The Fulton County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board should work with the Agricultural Economic Development Specialist, if such a position is created, and use the staff resources of Cornell Cooperative Extension of Fulton and Montgomery Counties to develop those opportunities that exist to add value to agricultural products produced in the County. These include on-farm dairy processing, Kosher and Halal products, maple products, organic foods and woodcraft.

One of the key functions of the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board should be to identify and stimulate the development of those opportunities that exist to add value to agricultural products produced in the County. This function should be pursued using the Agricultural Economic Development Specialist, if such a position is created, and the staff resources of Cornell Cooperative Extension of Fulton and Montgomery Counties. Extension's resources are limited but it can effectively encourage added-value initiatives through educational programs, as many other counties have done (Greene County's Agroforestry program being a good example). An Agricultural Economic Development Specialist, nevertheless, could focus additional energies on specific initiatives.

The mini-dairy concept is an excellent example of these opportunities. Cornell Cooperative Extension should take the lead in educating dairy farmers on this subject by conducting a seminar on the possibilities. The Agricultural Economic Development Specialist and Extension together should assist interested farmers in further exploring the possibilities, identifying financing and helping to get a demonstration project going.

The best opportunity may exist with cheeses for which the proximity of the trendy New York City market and the ports for export could be a distinct advantage. Small Vermont cheese producers are now successfully selling to both the New York City and European markets and there is no reason a small to medium sized commercial cheese plant couldn't be done. New York cheeses are among the best in the world and need to be marketed in the fashion of its wines.

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A Mohawk Valley label on cheese could be an asset if there is effective work done to build on and market this image. Other opportunities exist in Kosher and Halal products, pastured livestock and poultry, maple syrup products and specialty crops and livestock. Each of these should be approached in the same manner - start with a seminar, follow with a working group, identify financing, promote and continue with technical assistance through startup. Pricing of products is one of the areas where such technical assistance could pay great benefits.

**Implementation Period:** 2003-2006

**Responsible Parties:**

- 1) Agricultural Economic Development Specialist
- 2) Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board
- 3) Cornell Cooperative Extension of Fulton County

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### **3. DEVELOP A MOHAWK VALLEY FARM RECRUITMENT PROGRAM**

**RECOMMENDATION:** The Fulton County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board should work with other Mohawk Valley counties and the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets to recruit new farmers to region. The New York State Thruway (I-90) makes it a highly visible area and provides easy access from other regions and urban areas. This asset, combined with fertile soils, makes the Mohawk Valley an appealing location for farmers relocating from New England for reasons of taxes and congestion.

There are parts of New York State that are gaining large numbers of farmers. Yates County is a powerful example. Its growth stems from its popularity among Mennonite farmers who see it as a good farm area with reasonable taxes (see Appendix 1), limited development pressure and opportunities to direct market farm products. Fulton County and the Mohawk Valley offer similar advantages, particularly with New England farmers being squeezed out by urban growth, higher taxes and lack of agricultural support businesses. Moving west to the Mohawk Valley is appealing to these farmers because they can still sell into New England using the I-90 access. They also face less development pressure but, by remaining relatively close to urban markets, ensure they will gain property values over time.

These advantages and a strong agricultural support network have motivated Oneida County, New York to develop an excellent program to solicit new farmers, entitled "The Mohawk Valley - The Agricultural Edge." Lewis County also has an excellent program. Oneida's program is managed by their Agricultural Economic Development Specialist and a special subcommittee of their Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board. The Fulton County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board should piggyback onto the Oneida program by working with it and other surrounding counties to develop a Mohawk Valley farm recruitment program. Fulton County offers a good alternative within the region for those farmers seeking to direct market to urban residents and Adirondack tourists.

**Implementation Period:** 2004

**Responsible Parties:**

- 1) Ag & Farmland Protection Board
- 2) Agricultural Economic Development Specialist

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### **4. PROMOTE AGRICULTURAL TOURISM**

**RECOMMENDATION:** The Fulton County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board should assist the Fulton County Chamber of Commerce in developing an agricultural tourism initiative around the Gateway to the Adirondacks theme, including packaging of bus tours and Bed & Breakfast promotions. These need to be marketed to nearby urban regions. The initiative also needs to include assistance to farmers in the development of new agricultural tourism attractions as additional sources of farm income.

Fulton County is a natural location for additional agricultural tourism businesses. There is an opportunity to build on the Gateway to the Adirondacks theme already employed on County welcome signs to promote new agricultural tourism enterprises such as farm tours and fruit and vegetable stands.

Packaging of bus tours and Bed & Breakfast promotions with these agricultural tourism attractions is the key to successful marketing outside the region. Additional signage, using the Gateway to the Adirondacks theme in the context of a tourism trail, is also needed. New York's successful wine trails provide an illustration of how this can be accomplished. The signage not only leads tourists from attraction to attraction but also reinforces the advertising theme and serves to promote the County itself as a tourist area.

A two-year demonstration project to develop and market bus tours centered around agricultural, historical and Adirondack attractions is appropriate. Incentives should also be created for the development of additional agricultural tourism ventures such as fruit and vegetable stands, corn mazes, farm tours, u-pick operations and the like.

**Implementation Period:** 2005

**Responsible Parties:**

- 1) Ag & Farmland Protection Board
- 2) Fulton County Chamber of Commerce
- 3) Agricultural Economic Development Specialist

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### **5. AGRICULTURAL POLICY - RIGHT TO FARM**

**RECOMMENDATION:** Right to farm laws should be encouraged in all Fulton County towns with significant agricultural activity. Members of the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board should meet with local officials of these towns on an individual basis over the next two years to explain the benefits of agriculture and advocate the adoption of a Right-to-Farm law. Other towns with particularly significant individual agricultural enterprises should also be encouraged to consider Right-to-Farm policies.

Right-to-Farm laws are intended to complement the New York State Agricultural District Law and provide a means for resolving farm-neighbor conflicts. They do so by protecting the rights of farmers using sound agricultural practices to continue those practices and to grow and expand within the community. They establish a policy which recognizes agriculture as a priority land use and puts the burden of proof that a farm practice constitutes a nuisance squarely upon those who would oppose such practices.

Fulton County's major agricultural should have such laws. These towns include Broadalbin, Ephratah, Johnstown, Mayfield, Oppenheim and Perth - the southern tier of farming communities bordering the Mohawk Valley.

A model Right-to-Farm Law is attached as Appendix 3. It establishes specific criteria broadly defining the nature of sound agricultural practices and make it extraordinary difficult for such practices to be declared nuisances. The real strength of such laws, however, is that they create a mechanism to discuss problems, educate the parties and resolve conflicts on a local level. They also set forth a statement of town policy which, it is hoped, will carry over to other aspects of local government.

**Implementation Period:** 2003-2005

**Responsible Parties:**

- 1) Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board
- 2) Cornell Cooperative Extension of Fulton County
- 3) Fulton County Planning Board
- 4) Fulton County Planning Department

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### **6. EDUCATION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS**

**RECOMMENDATION:** The Fulton County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board should work with Cornell Cooperative Extension of Fulton and Montgomery Counties to develop an ANNUAL newspaper insert publication that continually promotes Fulton County farms and the strength of agriculture as a foundation of the County economy. It should include a map, farm descriptions, farm facts and invitations to participate in other agricultural awareness programs.

Creating public awareness of the important role of agriculture in the County economy is essential to marketing initiatives geared toward buying local. Maintaining this public awareness also promotes greater appreciation and tolerance of farm practices, thereby reducing farm and neighbor conflicts.

An annual publication similar to Saratoga County's "Saratoga Farms" resource guide to farms in the County should be developed to map Fulton County farms and promote agriculture in general. It can be published as a newspaper insert. The Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board together with Cornell Cooperative Extension should develop such a publication on an annual basis as the vehicle for agricultural promotion.

This "Fulton Farms" publication should include not only the map but also economic data on agribusinesses and farming, excerpts from this Plan, descriptions of all significant farms in the County by category and promotional material. The goal should be to use this annual publication for education of both the farm and non-farm community and to instill pride among members of the industry.

There should also be increased efforts to get this type of information and agricultural vocational training into BOCES and local high schools. The "Feed the Green Machine" video is one place to start and there are several similar curriculum programs. A program of seminars and, eventually, courses should also be developed, particularly in the areas of agricultural diversification and specialization, with the Community College as an active partner.

These programs need to be heavily promoted in the non-farm community. Annual "farm

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and city" events are also appropriate. Sullivan County's "Down on the Farm Day" is an excellent example.

**Implementation Period:**

1) "Fulton Farms"	2004
2) Presentations	2005
3) Seminars, Courses & Events	2006

**Responsible Parties:**

- 1) Cornell Cooperative Extension of Fulton County
- 2) Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board
- 3) Farm Bureau

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **Lowering Farm Taxes**



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### **Lowering Farm Taxes**

by G. J. Skoda

Farmers typically identify taxes as one of the most significant factors affecting the future of their farming operations. They are affected by three major categories of taxes: the real estate/school tax; income tax; and estate tax.

This article addresses the real estate tax, which is typically three or four different taxes (Town, Village, County and School). These taxes are levied on the value of real property and are determined by local taxing jurisdictions. Their impacts on farmers and other landowners, however, are also affected by various exemption and tax benefit programs.

Real estate tax breaks for farmers began in the early 1970's with the New York State (NYS) Agricultural Districts law. The most significant gain for farmers took place in 1997 with the Farmers School Tax Refund Program. There are three distinct categories of breaks; tax refunds/credits, tax exemptions and reduced assessments; and each is dealt with separately below:

## **I - Tax Refunds and Credits**

There are three (3) programs that can result in tax refunds for farmers. Applications for these as well, as all refunds and credits, are made through the preparation of a NYS income tax return.

### **A. Farm Property School Tax Credit (Form IT-217)**

A very important tax relief program was included in the 1996 New York State Budget Bill and was modified in 1997 and 1998. As a result of those modifications, New York taxpayers whose federal gross income from farming equals at least two-thirds of excess federal gross income for the 1999 and future tax years, will be allowed a credit against personal income tax, or corporation franchise tax, equal to the school property taxes they paid on certain agricultural property. Gross income from farming includes gross farm income from Schedule F, gross farm rents (Form 4835) and gains from livestock (Form 4797). It also includes gross income from farming under a partnership, S corporation, estate or trust.

The tax credit is limited to 100% of the school taxes paid on a base acreage of qualified agricultural property plus 50% of the school taxes paid on land exceeding the base acreage. The current base acreage is 250 acres; and includes farm buildings. The credit is claimed against NYS personal income tax, corporate franchise tax, S corporation tax liabilities or LLC income tax liabilities. Refunds can be claimed or carried over.

Qualified agricultural property is land, located in New York State, that is used for agricultural production. The credit is not allowed for a farm lessee, as the operator must be the owner of the leased land. Lessors of farm land, however, may or may not qualify depending upon their qualifications as farm taxpayers. If agricultural property is converted to a non-qualified use, no credit is allowed that year and recapture is triggered for the previous two taxable years.

Recent legislation resulted in some changes in definitions that made more farmers eligible for the school property tax credit. Effective for the 1998 and future tax years, NYS taxpayers whose federal gross income from farming equals at least two-thirds of excess federal gross income are allowed to receive the School property tax credit. Previously, the credit was only available to those farmer households who made two-thirds of their total income from the farm operation and this disqualified many households with extra off-farm income. Excess federal gross income is federal gross income from all sources for the taxable year in excess of a special \$30,000 subtraction. The special \$30,000 subtraction can be earned income (wages, salaries, tips and items of gross income included in

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computation of net earnings from self employment), pension payments (Social Security), interest and dividends. For 1998 and thereafter, the federal gross income of a corporation may, likewise, be reduced by up to \$30,000. A special ruling, for this section of law, also now includes gross income from the production of maple syrup and cider, and from the sale of wine from a licensed farm winery, in the term "federal gross income from farming."

If the modified NYS adjusted gross income of the taxpayer exceeds \$100,000 the credit is phased out and completely lost at \$150,000. Modified NYS adjusted gross income is the NYS gross income for the taxable year reduced by the principal paid on farm indebtedness during the tax year. Farm indebtedness is the debt incurred or refinanced that is secured by farm property, where the proceeds of the debt is used for expenditures incurred in the business of farming.

Effective for taxable years after January 1, 1999, the farmer's school tax credit has been expanded to farmers who pay school taxes under a contract to buy agricultural land. This means an eligible farmer, who is the actual property taxpayer on a contract for deed, can now claim the credit against NYS corporate franchise (income) tax and personal income tax.

### **B. New York State Investment Credit (NYIC Form IT-212)**

New York State offers an investment tax credit for new business related capital expenses. The credit for farmers is 4% of the purchase price of qualified real estate, equipment, livestock and other tangible business property acquired, constructed, reconstructed or erected during the tax year. For corporations, the rate is 5% on the first \$350,000,000 of qualified base and 4% on any excess.

Qualified real estate includes single purpose livestock structures (most barns); storages (silo's, manure and grain); fences and roadways; but not land or multi purpose buildings (garages, shops). This type of property must have a depreciation life of 5 or more years.

Qualified 3-year depreciation class property can also be used for the credit if kept in use for 3 years and will earn the full credit (over-the-road tractors, certain breeding livestock). Pick-up trucks do not qualify; heavy trucks do qualify. The credit can be used to offset NYS Income Tax in the year earned or can be carried forward for 10 years. There is no carryback, however. If property on which NYIC was taken is disposed of or removed from qualified use before its useful life or holding period ends, the credit is prorated and recaptured. However, there is a 12 year limit.

New businesses can receive a refund of unused NYIC. The election to claim a refund of unused NYIC can be made only once in one of the first four years. Therefore, tax management can be very important. A business is considered new during its first four years in New York State. The business cannot be of similar operation and ownership to a previously operated business for the refund.

Businesses that qualify for NYIC can also receive an employment incentive tax credit if they increase employees by more than 1% during the year. The credit is 1.5% of the investment credit base if the employment increase is less than 2%. It is 2% if the increase is between 2 and 3% and 2.5% if the increase is 3% or more for each of the two years following the taxable year in which NYIC was allowed. Effective January 1, 1998 this credit was expanded from corporations to sole proprietorships, partnerships and S-corporations. The credits are available in the years following the qualified increase in investment and expansion of employee numbers.

### **C. Real Property Tax Credit (Form IT-214)**

Few farm or nonfarm real estate owners will qualify for this benefit because owners of real property valued in excess of \$85,000 are excluded. Nevertheless, there are some very small agricultural operations that could take advantage of it. The requirements for 2001 tax year are as follows.

- 1) The household gross income limit is \$18,000.
- 2) The maximum adjusted rent is an average of \$450 a month. The taxpayer must occupy the same residence for 6 months or more to claim rent paid to qualify for the credit. Credit for renters is

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computed the same as for owners.

- 3) The real property tax credit is the lesser of the maximum credit determined from the table following or 50% of excess real property taxes. Taxpayers age 65 and older who elect to include the exempt amount of real property taxes will receive no more than 25% of excess real property taxes. Excess real property taxes are computed by multiplying household gross income times the applicable rate from the table following and deducting the answer from real property taxes. This tax credit is reduced by any other personal income tax credit to which the taxpayer is entitled.

### Partial Table for Computing Real Property Tax Credit, 2001

<u>Household Gross Income</u>	<u>Applicable Rate</u>	<u>Credit Allowed</u>	
		<u>Under 65</u>	<u>65 &amp; over</u>
\$0 - 3,000	0.035	\$75-71	\$375-341
3,001 - 5,000	0.040	69-67	324-307
5,001 - 7,000	0.045	65-63	290-273
7,001 - 9,000	0.050	61-59	256-239
9,001 -11,000	0.055	57-55	222-205
11,001 -14,000	0.060	53-49	188-154
14,001 -18,000	0.065	47-41	137 - 86

## II - Real Estate Tax Exemptions

The following categories of Real Estate Tax Exemptions (explained below) are in place for farmers:

- New York State School Tax Relief (STAR)
- New Farm Buildings
- Commercial, Business or Industrial Property
- Reconstruction or Rehabilitation of Historic Barn
- New Orchards and Vineyards
- Complete Exemptions on Certain Structures

### **A. New York State School Tax Relief ("STAR Program" - Form RP 425)**

This program provides a partial exemption from school property taxes for owner-occupied primary residences. Senior citizen property owners must be 65 years of age or older, and their income on their latest available federal or state income tax return cannot exceed \$60,000 adjusted gross income reduced by any distributions from an IRA or individual retirement annuity. The "enhanced" STAR senior citizen program amends the original phased-in tax benefits to provide seniors an immediate \$50,000 exemption off the full value of their property. The eligible senior citizen must apply with the local assessor for the "enhanced" STAR exemption by March 1 in most towns. This is the "taxable status date" but deadlines vary so most taxpayers should apply earlier.

Age requirements were amended in 1999. Previously, to qualify for the enhanced exemption all owners had to have satisfied the age requirement excepting the spouse of a 65 year old owner. Age is determined on December 31. However, for the 2000-2001 school year, only one of the owners must be 65 years old for residential property owned by siblings. Also, in the case of a property owned by a husband and wife, one of whom is at least 65, the exemption will not be rescinded solely on the death of the older spouse if the other is at least 62 years old.

The "basic" STAR program is available to all primary residence homeowners and farmers regardless of age, starting with school year 1999-2000. An assessment exemption will be phased in from \$10,000 to \$30,000 by the school

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year 2001-02. An owner, to be eligible, must own and live in a one, two or three-family residence, mobile home, condominium, cooperative apartment or farm house. The exemption for persons with the disabilities and limited incomes will be deducted from assessed value before applying the STAR exemption.

### STAR Property Tax Exemption Table

School Year	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02 and after
<b>Eligible Senior Citizen Homeowners</b>	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000
<b>All Primary Residence Homeowners</b>	None	\$10,000	\$20,000	\$30,000

#### **B. New Farm Buildings (Form RP 483)**

For newly constructed or reconstructed agricultural structures, New York's Real Property Tax Law (Section 483) allows a 10-year property tax exemption. Application for the exemption must be made within one year after the completion of such construction. The agricultural structures and buildings are exempt from any increase in the property's assessed value resulting from the improvement.

Once granted, the exemption continues automatically for ten years. The exemption terminates before the ten-year period if (1) the building or structure ceases to be used for farming operations, or (2) the building or structure or land is converted to a non-agricultural or non-horticultural use.

Eligibility is determined by the assessor or board of assessors with whom the application is filed. If denied, the applicant has the right to an administrative review by the Board of Assessment Review. The following requirements must be met.

- 1) The structure or building must be essential to the operation of lands actively devoted to agricultural or horticultural use.
- 2) The structure or building must be actually used and occupied to carry out the agricultural or horticultural operations.
- 3) The farmland must be actually used in bona fide agricultural or horticultural production carried on for profit.
- 4) The farmland must be not less than 5 acres in area.
- 5) An application for exemption must be filed within one year of completion of construction.

A structure, building or any portion qualifies for the exemption when it is used directly and exclusively either: (1) in the raising and production for sale of agricultural or horticultural commodities, or necessary for their storage for sale at a future time; or (2) to provide housing for regular and essential employees and their immediate families who are primarily employed in connection with the operation of lands actively devoted to agricultural and horticultural use.

A structure, building or any portion cannot qualify if it is used for: (1) the processing of agricultural and horticultural commodities; (2) the retail merchandising of such commodities; (3) the storage of commodities for personal consumption by the application; or (4) the residence of the applicant or his immediate family. The word "agricultural" means the art or science of cultivating the ground, the raising and harvesting of crops and the feeding,

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breeding and management of livestock, poultry, or horses. The traditional meaning of the word "horticultural" is the cultivation of a garden or orchard, the science and art of growing fruits, vegetables, and flowers or ornamental plants from seed, cutting, or rootstock.

A farm commodity is processed whenever something is done to the commodity to prepare it for market, as distinguished from raising or producing it. For example, a building on a dairy farm in which cows are fed and milked would qualify as used directly and exclusively in the raising and production for sale of milk. However, buildings used for processing milk -- in which the milk is pasteurized or put into containers that are ultimately sold to the consumer -- would not qualify nor would a winery. The slaughtering of cattle is processing, as is the cleaning, sorting and packaging of fruits and vegetables. When the processing carried on in a building is only incidental to the main use of the building or the building is used for processing only on a limited basis, the building may be eligible for the exemption.

Any agricultural structure or portion that is used for the retail sale of an agricultural or horticultural product cannot qualify. A roadside stand or any store or building in which agricultural products are sold to the public is not eligible for the exemption.

If only a portion of a building meets the requirements of the statute, then only that portion is eligible for the exemption. If a single building or structure combines both a farm use and a non farm use but the activities are so commingled that the portions devoted to each use cannot be separated, the building would not qualify since the law requires that the building or portion be exclusively used for agricultural purposes. However, when the "non farm use" carried on in a building is only incidental to the main use of the building or the building is used for "non farm use" only on a limited basis, then the building may qualify for the exemption.

Some counties have developed a special IDA tax break for added-value industrial or farm processing and marketing buildings excepted by this program. In most taxing jurisdictions these buildings would qualify for RP 485-b - Exemption for Commercial, Business or Industrial Real Estate (see below).

### **C. Exemption for Commercial, Business or Industrial Real Property (Form 485-b)**

Farm processing and marketing buildings that do not qualify for the 10 year exemption on Form RP 483 qualify for the 485-b program unless the town or school district has opted out of this program (most remain eligible).

The building receives an exemption for 10 years under this program. The first year 50% of the increase in assessed value attributable to the improvement is exempted from taxation. The exemption then decreases 5% in each of the next nine years. The improvement, therefore does not become fully taxable until the 11th year.

The 485-b program covers all taxes except pertaining to fire districts. Improvements must exceed \$10,000 unless a higher minimum has been set by local law. The exemption continues as long as eligibility requirements continue to be satisfied.

The Amsterdam School District is not presently 485-b eligible according to the New York State Office of Real Property Tax Services.

It must also be noted that the Fulton County Industrial Development Agency offers a tax abatement program qualified industries that can include food processing or other agri-businesses. This program gives a 100% abatement for the first five years and then reduces the abatement by 20% per year for 4 years (80%, 60%, 40%, 20%) with a 10% abatement in the tenth year and all improvements involved fully taxed in the eleventh year. This is much better than the 485-b program for those businesses that are eligible. It requires a major investment to justify the legal and other fees involved in obtaining this particular benefit but with the real property tax abatements also come sales and mortgage tax abatements in most instances.

### **D. Reconstruction or Rehabilitation of Historic Barns (Form RP 483-b)**

A barn must have been at least partially completed prior to 1936 and originally designed and used for storing farm

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equipment, agricultural products, or for housing livestock to qualify as a historic barn for this exemption. The increase in assessed value due to reconstruction or rehabilitation is totally exempt in the first year and the exemption is phased-out over the next succeeding nine years by 10% per year.

A major limiting factor of this program is that the county, city, town and villages must adopt local laws to permit the exemption. School districts must also authorize the exemption by resolution.

### **E. New Orchards and Vineyards (Form RP 305-c)**

This law further exempts new orchards and vineyards from taxation. It applies on top of Agricultural Assessment benefits (see later discussion).

Newly planted or replanted orchards or vineyards received 100% exemption in the first four years following planting. A maximum of 20% of the total orchard or vineyard acreage may be eligible in any given year.

### **F. Complete Exemptions on Certain Structures**

#### **1) Silo's, Grain Storages, Bulk Tanks and Manure Facilities (Form RP483-a)**

Adopted by New York State in 1996, this law exempts farm silos, farm feed grain storage bins, commodity sheds, bulk milk tanks and coolers (bulk heads), and manure storage and handling facilities from all taxation, special ad valorem levies and special assessments. There is no requirement that the structures be in current use by a farmer.

#### **2) Temporary Greenhouses (Form RP 483-c)**

Adopted in 1998, this law exempts temporary greenhouses used for agricultural production from full real property taxation, special ad valorem levies and special assessments. Once the exemption has been granted, the exemption continues provided the eligibility requirements continue to be satisfied. It is not necessary to reapply for the exemption after the initial year in order for the exemption to continue.

To qualify, the temporary greenhouse must be specialized agricultural equipment having a framework covered with demountable polyethylene or polypropylene material or materials of a polyethylene or polypropylene nature. The equipment must be specifically designed and constructed and used for agricultural production. The temporary greenhouse may include, but is not limited to, the use of heating devices, water and electrical utilities and embedded supporting poles. Greenhouse cattle barns and storages also appear to qualify. A number of assessors have agreed to this interpretation.

## **III - Reduced Assessments on Farm and Forestry Land**

### **A. Agricultural Value Assessment on Farmland (Form RP 305)**

One of the provisions of the New York State Agricultural District Law allows owners of eligible land to file for Agricultural Value Assessment on their property. This establishes the taxable value of the land based on its soil quality and agricultural value rather than market value or other locally determined criteria.

The following criteria must be met to be eligible for an Agricultural Value Assessment.

- 1) The land must be in a state certified Agricultural District or be placed under Individual Agricultural Commitment.

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- 2) The land must have been farmed for the last two years.
- 3) A minimum of 10 acres must be involved a (higher gross applies if less land is involved).
- 4) The farmer must make at least \$10,000 in gross sales from crops or animals produced on the land or \$50,000 in gross sales on acreage under 10 acres.
- 5) Renters must have a 5 year lease agreement and be renting to a farmer who makes \$10,000 from his total operation.
- 6) Crops may include field crops, vegetables, fruits, and horticultural specialties such as nursery stock, flowers, ornamentals and Christmas trees, and maple sap.
- 7) Livestock and livestock products may include cattle, sheep, hogs, goats, horses, poultry, ratites, farmed deer, farmed buffalo, fur bearing animals, milk, eggs, fur, and honey.
- 8) Aquaculture products (added in 1992) may include fish, fish products, water plants, and shellfish.
- 9) Commercial horse boarding was made eligible in 1994. This category, however, requires local legislative approval. Most counties have provided such approval.
- 10) Fifty (50) acres of woodland can be included.
- 11) Support land including ponds qualify.
- 12) This program does not include buildings.
- 13) Federal Conservation Reserve Program land is eligible and payments qualify as income.

Agricultural (Ag) Value Assessment must be applied for each year by the taxable status date (March 1). The initial application is somewhat involved. A farmer must obtain copies of tax parcel maps from either the Real Property Tax Office or from the local Town Clerk to begin the process of filing for Ag Value Assessment. An appointment with the Soil and Water Conservation District Office to have a Soil Group Worksheet completed is the next step. This is a listing of the various soil types on your property along with the acreage of each. Since the Ag Value Assessment is based on the relative productivity of soils, this is critical information. An RP 305 Form must be completed along with the Soil Group Worksheet and returned to the Town Assessor. These forms are available through the local assessor or Cornell Cooperative Extension.

Provided there are no additions or deletions in property, an RP 305-r Form should be filed for subsequent years. This is a short form that reports any changes in the status of your land or farming operation.

There are certain penalty payments incurred when land is converted to non-agriculture use. The penalty is charged to the converter of the land and is assessed only to that portion of the parcel taken out of production. The seller and converter may not necessarily be the same person and the act of selling does not automatically constitute a conversion. The current penalty is five (5) times the amount of taxes saved during the last year of participation, plus a six percent interest charge compounded annually for each year during the last five years that the land received an ag value assessment.

### **B. Woodlots over 50 Acres (Form 480-a)**

This program reduces the assessed value of woodland by 80%. It requires a 10 year commitment renewed annually along with a management plan that requires forestry management.

Woodlot owners in the program must thin and/or harvest based on the plan written by a certified forester and approved by the Department of Environmental Conservation. A six percent (6%) stumpage fee is paid to the town

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when a harvest takes place. There is a rollback penalty for conversion or if the management plan is not followed. Overall, this program requires a substantial long term commitment (30+ years) to benefit from the tax savings.



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More information about these program, forms and updates are available from:

- Your town or county assessor
- Your county Department of Real Property Tax Services
- Cornell Cooperative Extension in your county
- New York State Offices of Real Property Services  
16 Sheridan Avenue,  
Albany, NY 12210  
[www.orps.state.ny.us](http://www.orps.state.ny.us)

This summary explanation of tax benefits related to farming has been prepared by Gerald J. Skoda, an Agricultural Consultant with an extensive background in farm taxation and farm income tax preparation. It was edited by Thomas J. Shepstone, AICP of Shepstone Management Company, an agricultural, environmental, planning and transportation consulting firm that provides service throughout New York, Pennsylvania and the Northeast. Also included are excerpts from New York State Office of Real Property Services publications.

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## **APPENDIX 2**

**Agricultural Producer Survey - Responses**  
**Agribusinesses Survey - Responses**  
**Non-Farm Resident Survey - Responses**

**Fulton County Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan  
Appendix 2 - Agricultural Producer Survey - 21 Responses**

1) Please tell us, by town(s), where the land you farm is located.	Bleeker	0
	Caroga	0
	Johnstown	5
	Northampton	0
	Perth	4
	Broadalbin	4
	Ephratah	4
	Mayfield	6
	Oppenheim	2
	Stratford	1

Have you considered relocating outside Fulton County?	Yes	2
	No	18

If yes, why?

Too many houses.

Considered Wisconsin because farms were affordable and area is farm-oriented.

	Acreage	Average
2) How many total acres of land do you farm within Fulton County?	4,446	211.7
How many acres of this farmland do you rent or use that belongs to other landowners?	1,279	127.9
How many acres of the land you own is simply idle (not presently used for buildings, crops or pasture or as an active woodlot)?	333	41.6
How many total acres of land, if any, do you farm outside of Fulton County?	30	30.0
Fulton County created New York State recognized Agricultural District No. 1 in 1977. If your farm is part of that District, please tell us how many acres of the farmland you own or rent is in it.	1,863	232.9

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3)

Crop Acreage in 2000

	Acres	Average
Hay	1,180	118
Timberland	653	73
Silage corn	457	65
Grain corn	238	79
Other field crops	149	30
Other vegetables	41	21
Christmas trees	32	16
Small fruits or vineyards	9	5
Potatoes	5	3

Number of Animals in 2000

	Animals	Average
Dairy cows	550	92
Sheep	427	214
Beef cattle	351	50
Dairy heifers	307	31
Calves	175	25
Horses/ponies	36	12
Poultry	30	30
Dairy goats and sheep	28	9
Hogs	4	2
Rabbits	2	2
Holstein steer	1	1

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Appendix 2 - Agricultural Producer Survey - 21 Responses**

**4) How do you sell what you produce?**

Sell directly to consumers (farm stands, U-pick, mail order, CSA, etc.)	11
Sell through auction or to broker, dealer or other third party	8
Sell to a cooperative or dairy/food processor	7
Sell directly to other businesses or organizations for use in their operations	5

Do you operate a roadside stand?	Yes	4
	No	17

If so, is it a seasonal operation?	Yes	4
	No	6

Do you need additional help with direct marketing?	Yes	5
	No	7

If your answer to the last question was yes, please check the appropriate category or categories below:	Product distribution	3
	Promotional campaign/advertising	2
	Business planning and related help	2
	Identifying and evaluating markets	1
	Internet site development	1

<b>5) What percentage of your household income comes from your farm operations?</b>	Less than 25%	9
	25-49%	6
	50-75%	2
	More than 75%	4

<b>What percentage of your farm income comes from retail sales or other direct marketing?</b>	Less than 25%	8
	25-49%	0
	50-75%	1
	More than 75%	3

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6) Is any of the land you farm under the Agricultural Assessment Program?	Yes	11
	No	8
Are you aware of New York assessment breaks on new farm buildings?	Yes	11
	No	8
Have you taken advantage of the assessment break for farm buildings?	Yes	7
	No	11
Are you aware silos and commodity sheds are tax-exempt under State Law?	Yes	12
	No	6
Are you aware of the STAR School Tax Exemption?	Yes	17
	No	1
Did you receive a STAR School Tax Exemption?	Yes	12
	No	6
Are you aware of the school tax credit New York offers farmers?	Yes	10
	No	9
Do you qualify for the school tax credit New York offers farmers?	Yes	4
	No	9
Did you get a refund of school taxes as a farmer last year?	Yes	2
	No	17
Will you get a refund of school taxes as a farmer this year?	Yes	2
	No	16
Are you aware of the tax credit for the rehabilitation of Historic Barns?	Yes	11
	No	7
Have you ever challenged your real property assessment?	Yes	14
	No	4
Was it through a local assessor?	Yes	13
	No	2
Was it at Grievance Day?	Yes	10
	No	3
Were you successful in gaining a reduction?	Yes	11
	No	4
Did you receive the reduction you requested?	Yes	9
	No	6

**Fulton County Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan  
Appendix 2 - Agricultural Producer Survey - 21 Responses**

7)	Do you sell or lease hunting or fishing rights to any portion of your property?	Yes	0
		No	20
	Do you lease any portions of your property for other recreational activities?	Yes	1
		No	18
	Do you lease property out for cell towers, mining/quarrying, utilities, etc.?	Yes	2
		No	17
8)	If you've had problems with neighbors your farm operation please indicate the type(s).	Boundary or trespassing conflict	6
		Manure application or odor complaint	4
		Stray animals or animal conflicts	4
		Dumping/littering issue	3
		Slow-moving vehicle complaint	2
		Noise complaint	1
		Mud on road	1
		Crop leaves blowing off dump truck	1
	If so, how was the complaint resolved?	Not resolved	4
		Compromise	3
		Voluntary change in farm practices	3
		Dropping of complaint after farmer explanation	2
		Litigation	1
		Movement of complainer out of area	1
9)	How much do regulations (environmental and other) impact on your business?	Very negatively	5
		Slightly negatively	8
		Not at all or positive	4

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Appendix 2 - Agricultural Producer Survey - 21 Responses**

<b>10) How long do you personally expect to be farming?</b>	Less than 5 years	1
	5 to 10 years	3
	10 to 20 years	7
	More than 20 years	7

<b>If you retire, what do you expect to do with your farm/land?</b>	Transfer to family for farming	10
	Sell to other farmers	5
	Transfer to family for non-farm use	4
	Sell to non-farmers	0

**11) Which one of the following would most help you to keep your land in agriculture?**

Increased farm profitability	10
Lower property taxes	9
Availability of someone else to take the farm over	5
Ability to sell or lease development rights and get back some equity	4

**12) Please rate the importance of each of the following to the future of farming in Fulton County.**

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	Not Sure
Right to farm laws	14	8	0	0
Health insurance cost reductions	13	6	1	0
Capital gains & estate tax reform	11	8	2	1
Property/liability insurance cost reductions	11	8	5	1
Limiting increases in other property taxes	11	7	3	0
State school tax reform	10	5	1	1
Workmens comp. insurance cost reductions	10	2	2	0
Environmental regulation reform	8	9	2	0
Utility cost reductions	8	6	5	2
Direct marketing of products to consumers	7	11	3	0
Financing availability	7	10	1	1
Agriculture district development	7	9	1	0
Development of new products and markets	7	8	4	0
Income tax cuts	7	6	4	0
Availability of skilled labor	6	8	3	0
Estate planning education	5	9	0	0
Access to support businesses	5	8	0	0
Disaster relief payments	4	7	4	0
Consumer "buy local" education	4	2	2	0
Youth agricultural education	4	1	4	0
Labor regulation reform	3	9	4	0
Farm neighbor education	3	8	3	1
Agricultural land cost	3	7	4	0
Government support payments	3	6	3	2
Purchase of development rights programs	2	4	8	1



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Appendix 2 - Agricultural Producer Survey - 21 Responses**

		Average
13) How many years have you been farming at your current farm location? How many years have you farmed elsewhere in Fulton County (if at all)? How many years have you farmed outside of Fulton County (if at all)?		27
		21
		12
14) Are you a full or part-time farmer?	Full-time	9
	Part-time (Less than 40 hours/week)	11
Do you have income from off the farm?	Yes	15
	No	4
15) What proportion of your work time is devoted to your farming operations?	20% or less	1
	21-40%	5
	41-60%	6
	61-80%	1
	81-100%	7
16) Is any other member of your family actively involved in the farm operation?	Yes	11
	No	9
Does your spouse have income from off farm?	Yes	13
	No	6
17) What proportion of your family/spouse's time is devoted to the farming operation?	20% or less	11
	21-40%	3
	41-60%	3
	61-80%	0
	81-100%	3
18) Is your farm/business a member of a marketing cooperative?	Yes	3
	No	18
Do you participate in any buying groups or associations?	Yes	4
	No	17
Is there a need for additional buying cooperatives for farmers?	Yes	12
	No	5
19) Please indicate the approximate percentage of materials, supplies and services used in your operation that you purchased from enterprises located within Fulton County?	Less than 25%	10
	25-49%	4
	50-74%	3
	75-100%	2

**Fulton County Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan  
Appendix 2 - Agricultural Producer Survey - 21 Responses**

20) Do you utilize any migrant labor?	Yes	0
	No	19

21) Which category best represents your gross annual sales for a typical year?	Less than \$10,000	2
	\$10,000 - \$24,999	8
	\$25,000 - \$49,999	1
	\$50,000 - \$99,999	3
	\$100,000 - \$249,999	2
	\$250,000 - \$499,999	2
	\$500,000 - \$999,999	1
	\$1,000,000+	0

22) Rate government help to agriculture in the following (F-fair, G-good, E-excellent):

	Federal			State		
	F	G	E	F	G	E
Planning/zoning matters	5	4	0	4	6	1
Provision of services	8	3	1	7	5	0
Keeping taxes reasonable	11	1	0	10	3	0
Protecting right to farm	6	5	0	6	6	0
Loans and grants	5	5	0	7	3	0

	County			Town		
	F	G	E	F	G	E
Planning/zoning matters	3	7	2	6	4	1
Provision of services	7	5	0	3	4	1
Keeping taxes reasonable	10	2	0	6	5	2
Protecting right to farm	4	6	1	4	5	2
Loans and grants	8	1	0	7	1	0

23) Have you, in the past 5 years:	Purchased additional equipment	16
	Raised additional animals	8
	Renovated building(s)	8
	Constructed new building(s)	7
	Brought inactive acreage into production	7
	Leased or purchased additional animals	6
	Rented additional acres	6
	Hired additional employees	6
	Diversified into additional farm ventures	3
	Purchased additional acres	2

**Fulton County Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan  
Appendix 2 - Agricultural Producer Survey - 21 Responses**

<b>24) If you did not expand, what were the primary reasons?</b>	Age of owner/operator	6
	Poor profit margins	5
	Satisfied with current size	4
	Personal or other reasons	3
	Environmental or other governmental restrictions	2
	High cost of additional labor	2
	Lack of available land to rent	1
	Lack of available labor	1
	Lack of available land to be purchased	1

**25) Please indicate those changes you expect to make in the next 5 years, if any:**

I expect to construct new building(s)	9
I expect to renovate building(s)	8
I expect to purchase additional equipment	7
I expect to raise additional animals	7
I expect to hire additional employees	5
I expect to direct market some or all of product	5
I expect to include more family members in the operation	5
I expect to bring inactive acreage into production	5
I expect to purchase additional acres	4
I expect to lease or purchase additional animals	4
I expect to add new technology	4
I expect to diversify into additional farm ventures	4
I expect to convert to rotational grazing	3
I expect to use more custom services	3
I expect to offer custom services to others	3
I expect to rent additional acres	3
I expect to specialize in parts of the business	2
I expect to transfer ownership to others	1
I expect to contract with other farmers for products	1

<b>Does your farm/business currently own or lease enough property to expand?</b>	Yes	12
	No	6

<b>How much capital do you think your farm/business will need for renovation and/or expansion?</b>	Less than \$10,000	0
	\$10,000 - \$24,999	2
	\$25,000 - \$49,999	6
	\$50,000 - \$99,999	3
	\$100,000 - \$249,999	3
	\$250,000 - \$499,999	2
	\$500,000 - \$999,999	0
	\$1,000,000+	0

<b>26) Have you had difficulty receiving the necessary amount of financing to develop or expand?</b>	Yes	4
	No	13

**Fulton County Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan  
Appendix 2 - Agricultural Producer Survey - 21 Responses**

<b>If you were offered financing, were the terms reasonable?</b>	Yes	6
	No	2
	Not Sure	2

<b>What programs or institutions have you approached for financial assistance?</b>	Commercial bank or savings and loan	9
	Farm Credit Agency	6
	Private investors or other	2
	Local revolving loan fund	1
	USDA loan/grant programs	1

**27) Over the LAST 5 years, have the following increased, stayed the same or decreased for your operation? (Check one for each factor and do not consider short-term price changes.)**

	Increased	Same	Decreased
Your number of customers	6	8	2
Your sales quantity volume	10	7	1
Your sales dollar volume	11	5	2
Your profit	7	7	4

**Over the NEXT 5 years, do you expect the following to increase, stay the same or decrease for your operation? (Check one for each factor and do not consider short-term price changes.)**

	Increased	Same	Decreased
Your number of customers	7	8	1
Your sales quantity volume	11	7	0
Your sales dollar volume	13	5	0
Your profit	12	4	2

<b>28) From which of the following sources do you regularly seek information on agricultural issues such as production, regulations, farm programs, etc.?</b>	Farm magazines/books	15
	Cornell Cooperative Extension	13
	Soil & Water Conservation Dist.	11
	Farm Bureau	9
	Other farmers	9
	NYS Dept. of Ag & Markets	8
	USDA (NRCS, FSA)	8
	Agricultural businesses	8
	Computer/Internet	6
	Newspapers	6
	Television/radio	5
Friends/relatives/other	4	

**Fulton County Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan  
Appendix 2 - Agricultural Producer Survey - 21 Responses**

**29) Which of the following measures would be most helpful to the long-term economic success of your farm operation?**

More flexible rules for School Tax Refund, etc.	10
Help in negotiating lower utility rates	10
Additional right-to-farm protections	9
More reasonable environmental regulations	8
Help in identifying/developing new markets	7
Additional loan/grant financing	6
Help in negotiating better pricing	6
Zoning ordinances that protect agriculture	6
New York State in Northeast Dairy Compact	6
Assistance and training in direct marketing	5
Technical assistance with rotational grazing	5
Agricultural awareness and career training	5
Help with nutrient management programs	5
Woodlot management assistance	5
Ability to sell/lease development rights for cash	4
Help in identifying/developing new niche businesses	4
Help with marketing and sales promotions	4
Tax-abatements for new agri-business ventures	4
Assistance with farm transfer/estate planning	4
Additional promotion of ag tourism in County	3
Assistance in organizing buyer groups	3
Help in securing or managing labor	3
Business planning assistance	3
Development of business alliances among farmers	2
Recruitment of additional farmers to County	2
Help in developing ag tourism opportunities	2
Help in obtaining processing services	2
Technical assistance with forward pricing/futures	1
Assistance in establishing CSA's	1
Help in accessing export markets	1

**Fulton County Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan**  
**Appendix 2 - Agricultural Producer Survey - 21 Responses**

**30) Please list up to three of your own ideas for retaining and improving agriculture in Fulton County in each of the following categories:**

**Ideas for farmers to implement:**

6	Improve marketing and access to markets and directly to consumers.
2	Keep farms neat and maintained.
2	Improve business practices.
2	Do not pollute water supplies, groundwater, spilling manure on roads, etc.
1	Increase management of forest land on farms.
1	On-farm processing.
1	Be neighbor friendly.
1	Conserve energy.
1	Diversification.
1	Tour of farms.
1	Implement or improve grazing systems.
1	Having custom work done.
1	Cooperative purchasing.

**Ideas for County government to implement:**

6	Property tax relief to land owners who maintain "open space" for forestry, farming & outdoor recreation.
5	Protect land for farming through purchase of development rights and other measures.
2	Consolidate many services that the Town and County are providing and help lower costs.
2	Promote direct marketing and better access to all markets.
2	Encourage young farmers to locate here
2	More Ag Districts
2	Support and improve right to farm
1	IDA or similar revolving low interest loans for business start-up/expansion.
1	There should be a county highway system.
1	Property assessment should be done by one assessor appointed by the County for the whole county.
1	More programs to help farms.
1	Help keep agri-businesses
1	Work with Town government to keep zoning from being too restrictive

**Ideas for Town government to implement:**

5	Continue supporting right to farm.
3	Support zoning that enhances "open space."
2	Lower taxes.
2	Farmland protection.
2	Promotion of more local farm product sales.
1	Control costs of Town highway department to help lower costs.
1	Advertise for farmers.
1	Recognize unique problems facing farmers such as manure spreading, spraying, moving equipment.
1	Better fire protection (Mayfield).
1	Rights to have other enterprises on farm land.
1	Push more ag education in schools.

**Fulton County Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan  
Appendix 2 - Agricultural Producer Survey - 21 Responses**

**Ideas for others to implement:**

3	Public education regarding farm and value of agriculture practices.
2	Curtail acquisition of State land in the Adirondack Park region.
2	Sensible anti-pollution laws and regulations.
1	Financially and programatically support private landowners who manage their land.
1	Agricultural education in schools.
1	Help in securing affordable financing.
1	Consolidate schools or take other measures to control taxes.
1	Promote off farm business and sales.
1	Impose tariffs on beef from other countries.
1	Ease regulation on small farms.
1	Protect the right to farm.

**My concerns for the future are:**

6	Profitability.
5	Lack of young people interested in farming.
4	Environmental regulations and restrictions on rights to farm.
4	Lack of markets, processors and auctions.
3	Inability to secure adequate land resources for the larger operations as housing increases.
2	Need to meet open space objectives through public/private partnerships.
2	Affordable insurance and other taxes.
2	Labor and labor regulations.
2	Foreign competition with subsidies and cheap labor
2	Lost number of farms and agribusinesses.
2	Run away spending from poor support from Town Board.
2	Even more dangerous conditions on highways for farm equipment due to drivers

**Fulton County Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan  
Appendix 2 - Survey of Agribusinesses - 5 Responses**

NOTE: This survey is for businesses, such as those listed in No. 4 below, who serve the agriculture industry.

1) Please tell us, by town, where your closest place of business (feed mill, office, processing plant, etc.) is located: (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)	Bleeker	0
	Broadalbin	0
	Caroga	0
	Ephratah	0
	Johnstown	1
	Mayfield	1
	Northampton	0
	Oppenheim	0
	Perth	0
	Stratford	1
	City of Johnstown	0
	City of Gloversville	0
	Albany County	0
	Hamilton County	0
	Herkimer County	0
	Montgomery County	1
	Saratoga County	0
	Schoharie County	1
	Schenectady County	0
	Elsewhere in NYS	0
Out-of-State	0	
2) How many people do you employ locally?	Full-time	31
	Part-time	8
3) How long has this business been in operation at this location?	Less than 5 years	0
	5-10 years	1
	10-20 Years	2
	More than 20 years	2
4) What type of agri-business do you operate?	Logger/forester	1
	Dairy Artificial Inseminator	1
	Government Agency	1
	Financial/insurance	1
	Equipment dealer	1
	Equipment repair	1
	Seed/agri-chemical	1
5) Please tell us what percentage of your business comes from the farm community?	Less than 25%	0
	25-49%	1
	50-74%	0
	75% or more	4



**Fulton County Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan  
Appendix 2 - Survey of Agribusinesses - 5 Responses**

Please tell us what percentage of your business comes from Fulton County?	Less than 25%	2
	25-49%	1
	50-74%	1
	75% or more	0
6) How valuable to your business are your farm customers, considering the amount of activity promptness of payment and seasonality of business in general?	Not all that valuable	0
	Somewhat valuable	0
	Quite valuable	1
	Extremely valuable	4
7) Over the LAST 5 years have you:		
	Added new products lines for farmers	3
	Increased agricultural inventories & sales	3
	Increased your operation size	3
	Grown your service area to hold market share	2
	Added new product lines for non-farmers	1
	Decreased your operation size	1
	Grown your service area to increase market share	1
	Stayed the same size, more or less	1
Over the NEXT 5 years do you expect to:		
	Increase agricultural inventories & sales	3
	Increase your operation size	3
	Add new product lines for farmers	2
	Grow your service area to hold market share	2
	Add new product lines for non-farmers	1
	Decrease your operation size	1
	Grow your service area to increase market share	1
	Stay the same size, more or less	1
8) Based on your business activity, what trends have you observed regarding agriculture in Fulton County?	A change in emphasis to other types of farms	3
	A smaller number of larger operations	2
	More sophisticated farm operations	2
	More part-time farms	2
	Movement of farms out of the County	2
9) If you have NOT expanded in the last 5 years what were the primary reasons?	Regulatory obstacles	1
	Loss of market share	1

**Fulton County Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan  
Appendix 2 - Survey of Agribusinesses - 5 Responses**

10) Over the LAST 5 years, have the following increased, stayed the same or decreased for your operation?  
(Check one for each factor and do not consider short-term price changes.)

	Increased	Stayed the Same	Decreased
Your number of customers	2	1	2
Your sales quantity volume	3	0	1
Your sales dollar volume	3	0	1
Your profit	2	0	2

Over the NEXT 5 years, do you expect the following to increase, stay the same or decrease for your operation? (Check one for each factor and do not consider short-term price changes.)

	Increased	Stayed the Same	Decreased
Your number of customers	1	2	2
Your sales quantity volume	2	2	0
Your sales dollar volume	3	1	0
Your profit	2	1	0

11) If you're planning to expand or renovate, how much capital do you think your farm/business will need?

Less than \$10,000	0
\$10,000 - \$24,999	0
\$25,000 - \$49,999	1
\$50,000 - \$99,999	0
\$100,000 - \$249,999	1
\$250,000 - \$499,999	0
\$500,000 - \$999,999	1
\$1,000,000+	0

**Fulton County Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan  
Appendix 2 - Survey of Agribusinesses - 5 Responses**

12) Please rate the importance of each of the following to the future of farming in Fulton County.

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	Not Sure
Health insurance cost reductions	4	1	0	0
Environmental regulation reform	4	1	0	0
Workmens compensation insurance cost reductions	3	1	0	1
State school tax reform	3	2	0	0
Right to farm laws	3	1	1	1
Development of new products and markets	3	1	1	0
Youth agricultural education	2	3	0	0
Utility cost reductions	2	2	0	0
Property/liability insurance cost reductions	2	2	0	1
Limiting increases in other property taxes	2	3	0	0
Labor regulation reform	2	3	0	0
Estate planning education	2	3	0	0
Direct marketing of products to consumers	2	2	1	0
Capital gains & estate tax reform	2	3	0	0
Availability of skilled labor	2	3	0	0
Agriculture district development	2	3	0	1
Income tax cuts	1	3	0	1
Financing availability	1	4	0	0
Consumer "buy local" education	1	4	0	0
Access to support businesses	1	4	0	0
Purchase of development rights programs	0	2	2	1
Farm neighbor education	0	5	0	0
Agricultural land cost	0	4	1	0

13) Have you had difficulty receiving the necessary amount of financing to develop or expand?	Yes	1
	No	4
If you were offered financing, were the terms reasonable?	Yes	3
	No	1
What programs or institutions have you approached for financial assistance?	Farm Credit Agency	4
	Commercial bank or savings and loan	2
	Industrial Development Agency	1
	USDA loan/grant programs	1

**Fulton County Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan  
Appendix 2 - Survey of Agribusinesses - 5 Responses**

14) Which of the following measures would be most helpful to the long-term economic success of your customers and yourself?

Additional loan/grant financing	4
Additional right-to-farm protections	3
Help in identifying/developing new markets	3
Help in identifying/developing new niche businesses	3
Help with marketing and sales promotions	3
Labor management training	3
More reasonable environmental regulations	3
New York State in Northeast Dairy Compact	3
Assistance and training in direct marketing	2
Help in negotiating better pricing	2
Ability to sell/lease development rights for cash	2
Additional promotion of ag tourism in County	2
Agricultural awareness and career training	2
Help in securing migrant or other labor	2
Assistance with farm transfer/estate planning	2
Business planning assistance	2
Zoning ordinances that protect agriculture	2
Help with nutrient management programs	2
Woodlot management assistance	2
Technical assistance with forward pricing/futures	1
Help in accessing export markets	1
Assistance in organizing buyer groups	1
Development of business alliances among farmers	1
Tax-abatements for new agri-business ventures	1
Recruitment of additional farmers to County	1
Help in developing ag tourism opportunities	1
More flexible rules for School Tax Refund, etc.	1
Help in negotiating lower utility rates	1
Help in developing quality certification program	1

15) Please list up to three of your own ideas for in retaining and improving agriculture in Fulton County in each of the following categories:

Ideas for farmers to implement: 1) Need to learn better business practice.

Ideas for County government to implement: 1) Support right to farm  
2) Ease regulations where possible

My concerns for the future are: 1) The aging of farmers

**Fulton County Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan  
Appendix 2 - Non-Farm Resident Survey - 150 responses**

These questions below are to help us understand the views of the non-farm community as we prepare the County Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan.

1) Please tell us, by town, where, you reside.	Bleeker	1
	Broadalbin	14
	Caroga	6
	Ephratah	0
	Johnstown	37
	Mayfield	19
	Northampton	9
	Oppenheim	2
	Perth	8
	Stratford	2
	City of Johnstown	11
	City of Gloversville	2
	Outside of County. I'm 2nd home owner	20
2) Please tell us your age group by answering for the head of your household.	< 25 years	0
	25-49 years	43
	50-64 years	51
	65+ years	56
3) How many persons are in your household?	1 persons	28
	2 persons	62
	3 persons	33
	4 persons	11
	5+ persons	21
4) How long have you lived in Fulton County?	< 5 years	7
	5-9 years	6
	10-14 years	11
	20+ years	107
	2nd home owner	20
5) If you lived elsewhere before coming to Fulton County, where was this?	Another rural area of NYS	36
	Metropolitan New York/NJ	11
	Another Northeast state	8
	Outside the Northeast	5
6) Have you ever lived on a farm?	Yes	32
	No	116

**Fulton County Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan  
Appendix 2 - Non-Farm Resident Survey - 150 responses**

7) Have you ever owned or operated a farm?	Yes	13
	No	138
8) Do you live near (within 1/4 mile) of a farm?	Yes	53
	No	98
Is or was that farmer a good neighbor?	Yes	53
	No	3
9) When was the last time you visited a farm?	Within last year	62
	Within last 2-10 years	44
	10+ years ago	31
	Never	7
10) Which of the following best represents your view of Fulton County agriculture over the last 5 years?		
Agriculture is a declining industry with no future growth potential		29
Agriculture is holding its own as an industry and may have some future growth potential		28
Agriculture is an expanding industry with significant future growth potential		5
Agriculture is important to this County for a variety of reasons, both economic and non-economic.		94
11) Please estimate the size of the County's agricultural industry based on your observations.	Less than \$5,000,000	43
	\$5,000,000 - \$10,000,000	60
	More than \$10,000,000	26
12) Do you feel that the County should take steps to help preserve farmland?	Yes	130
	No	7
	Not Sure	13
13) Should agricultural business be encouraged to expand in Fulton County?	Yes	127
	No	2
	Not Sure	17

**Fulton County Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan  
Appendix 2 - Non-Farm Resident Survey - 150 responses**

**14) Do you patronize or participate in any of the following?**

Fruit and vegetable stands	129
Stores featuring other local farm products	129
U-Pick fruit or vegetable operations	78
Christmas tree farms	72
Stores featuring local dairy products	70
Local sawmills	43
Custom-cut meat processors	28
Horse farms or stables	22
Farm tourism sites (corn mazes, etc.)	12
Farm open houses	8
Local egg producers	1
Wool from sheep farms for textile crafts	1
Farmers' markets	1
Community gardens	1
Maple syrup operations	1
Visit family farms	1
CSA's (Community Supported Agriculture)	0

**15) What features, if any, cause you to spend more for food?**

Superior taste	91
Produced locally (Fulton County & environs)	90
Leaner and less fat	73
Produced in New York York State	67
Convenience	62
Produced on farm of known high standards	55
No pesticides	53
Superior nutrition	53
Produced on known family farm	50
Produced in Adirondacks	49
No hormones or antibiotics	48
Produced in Mohawk Valley	46
Large selection	46
Animals humanely treated	42
Produced in North Country	33
Organically produced	34
Pasture-raised	29
Produced on farm managed for water quality	15

**Fulton County Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan  
Appendix 2 - Non-Farm Resident Survey - 150 responses**

<b>16) Have you ever experienced problems with a farm neighbor regarding any of the following?</b>	Odors	16
	Slow-moving vehicles	13
	Manure application	12
	Noise	5
	Boundary/trespass issues	4
	Drainage issues	3
	Fencing problems/cattle loose	3
	Dogs	2
	Pesticide use	1
	Personal issues	1

<b>17) Please tell us whether you agree or disagree with the following statements:</b>	Agree	Disagree
Agriculture and farming are high-technology industries	106	20
Farmers are good neighbors	142	1
Farmers get paid too little for their labor	129	13
Farmers need to act more like other businesses and compete	66	51
Farming enhances the scenic beauty of Fulton County	127	12
Farming is positive for the environment	117	14
Farming presents a good career opportunity for bright, enterprising individuals	68	55
Farming preserves valuable open space to the County	129	7
Loans and grants to develop farm enterprises in the area are important	127	9
Local farmers deliver generally high-quality products	124	5
Tax breaks for farmers are important	114	13
Farmers get too many tax breaks already	14	110
This really isn't a farm area any more and encouraging more farming is pointless	11	114
The price of most farm food commodities is relatively low	98	25

<b>18) Are you interested in visiting a farm from time to time?</b>	Yes	94
	No	46



**Fulton County Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan**  
**Appendix 2 - Non-Farm Resident Survey - 150 responses**

**19) Please list up to three of your own ideas for retaining and improving agriculture in Fulton County in each of the following categories:**

**Ideas for farmers to implement:**

- 11 Keep farms well maintained especially fences, buildings, signs, etc.
- 9 Start a co-op for milk, cheese and butter, etc..
- 6 Diversify - grow and raise variety of crops and animals.
- 5 Sell direct to customers - local stands, farmers markets, niche markets, etc..
- 5 More farm stands in local community.
- 5 Help farmers keep their farms.
- 4 School trips, group tours to farms to see how they work.
- 4 Keep up-to-date on farming; new technology.
- 3 I believe farming and tourism would be good for Fulton County.
- 3 Sensitivity for neighbor's property re noise and manure storage.
- 3 Tax breaks.
- 3 No hormones or messing with nature.
- 3 Hire lobbyists, public relations and promote tourism, products.
- 3 More advertisement (newspaper, TV, etc.).
- 2 Providing land and expertise to local "city" people to grow vegetables like a "Co-op."
- 2 Pay more to farmers for products.
- 2 Organic produce, no pesticides.
- 2 Get DEC, EPA out of their hair.
- 2 On-going compliance to Health Dept standards.
- 2 Grants.
- 2 Low interest loans.
- 2 Avoid water pollution.
- 2 Clean up roadways
- 2 Treat their animals humanly
  - Best left to those who know more about this
  - Save old barns
  - Sharing time and/or equipment
  - More visibility in local grocery stores
  - Work with sportsmen and people won't feel the way they do about farmers.
  - Open houses.

**Fulton County Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan**  
**Appendix 2 - Non-Farm Resident Survey - 150 responses**

**Ideas for Town government to implement:**

- 18 Tax breaks
- 5 Why not open a farmers' market in each town and sell produce, cheese, etc..
- 5 Pride, get people to clean up their property
- 2 Restrict development in farm areas
  - Limit building lots to 1 acre or more
  - Work together with County
  - Amish are spoiling farm image
  - Advertising
  - Make better use of State and Federal programs already available.
  - Let the free market work
  - Using jail persons to help paint barns, fix fencing, etc.
  - Encourage big chain stores to sell local dairy/produce products.
  - Buy local products for schools, etc.
  - Advertise "NY State - Grown in Fulton County"
  - Education
  - Meet with farmers to help improve production and needs
  - Advertisement of local foods and farms
  - Do not restrict the farmers on everything
  - Become more familiar with farm operations
  - Low interest loans
  - Zoning
  - Exemptions
  - Grants
  - Export local brands, example - sweet corn
  - Work with farmers on uses for unused farm land - community gardens, etc.
  - Agricultural zoning and taxing policies
  - Town-wide clean up day
  - Having laws protecting farmers from law suits involving accepted farm practices.
  - Use road signs for directions
  - Keep roads in good condition
  - Preserve farm and pass laws favorable to farming.
  - Let farmers pay taxes in product
  - Composted manure free for home gardening
  - Community gardens
  - Handle wetlands with common sense
  - Become more involved with agriculture
  - Get a sister city/town in the south United States to exchange ideas
  - Garbage pickup
  - Promote farming through Chamber of Commerce

**Fulton County Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan**  
**Appendix 2 - Non-Farm Resident Survey - 150 responses**

**Ideas for County government to Implement**

- 14 Tax breaks
- 13 Grants and loans to help farmers.
- 3 Larger farmers' markets
- 2 Jail work crews for trimming brush lots, farm upkeep.
- 4 Incentive programs
  - Make it difficult to convert farm property
  - More police checks on open trucks with silage
  - Encourage tourism at a historic region and at the same time farms.
  - Get information to farmers on crop products in high demand
- 2 Promote buy local idea
  - An old fashion way of farming
  - Garbage pick up already doing recycle
  - Make better use of State and Federal programs already available
  - Emergency funds for poor crop
  - Help farmers whenever they need help - money or otherwise
  - Zone areas for farming
  - Do not loan U.S. dollars to someone in Turkey to start a cheese factory
- 3 Set up program to educate farmers on better business practices
  - Some subsidizing
  - Favorable tax treatment for open land
  - If farmers are willing to be good producers of their crops, reduce taxes for a few years until back on feet.
  - Wean farmers off subsidies
- 2 Community gardens
- 4 Cooperation with farmers/don't tie their hands
- 2 Stop allowing farm land to be used for housing development
  - Appearance and pride
  - Support agriculture stability and growth
  - Keep in touch with New York State Farm Bureau and needs of farmers
  - The natural way of farming
  - Improve recreation trails for snowmobiles and 4-wheelers
- 2 Having laws protecting farmers from law suits involving accepted farm practices
  - Restrict mining operations
  - Have a farmer's Co-op do the factory and it would increase income for them
- 8 Promotion of ag industry
  - Composted manure free for home gardening
  - Remove the middleman and allow the farmer to get a good price
  - Push realtors to sell pre-existing homes
  - Create a farm assistance public citizen committee
  - Improve road marking signs poorly placed
  - Keep good water quality
  - Community service work crews in field trip
  - Use common sense on what is wetlands
  - Create incentive scholarships for local children or out of towners to return to area to work
  - Show pride in ownership; keep buildings and lots cleaned and maintained

**Fulton County Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan**  
**Appendix 2 - Non-Farm Resident Survey - 150 responses**

**Ideas for others to implement:**

- 7 Open a farmers' market in town and sell produce, cheese, etc.
- 3 Promote local farm products
- 2 Inspect farms for health issues
- 2 Support of local growth - products, produce, dairy, etc.
  - Educate the citizens on local economic impact
  - Make low-interest loans available
  - Break on land tax for farmed lands
  - Too many middle men causing dairy products to cost too much
  - Guidance for farmers to avoid damage to neighbors through their construction projects and habits
  - Less government control
  - Clean up industrial site (example bike trail)
  - Learn more about farming and what is involved in the day to day operations
  - Farm equipment is very expensive so farmers should get a tax break on implements
  - Advertising breaks
  - Farmers have tough jobs and are under-appreciated
  - Buy and store local goods (non-perishables)
  - Farmers in our area need to be innovative and educated
  - More money for milk
  - Form Co-ops to sell produce
  - Promote farming in local education
  - Spotlight farm families in local news
  - If their crops have had a bad year, waive their loan payments for a year
  - Encourage unused land to be planted with trees, etc.
  - Put numbers on commercial properties
  - Organic growing practices
  - Support existing farms and establishment of new farms
  - Encourage farmers to continue agriculture
  - More Ag Day programs for children to be exposed to
  - Create incentive scholarships for local children or out of towners to return to area to work
  - Show pride in ownership; keep buildings and lots cleaned and maintained
  - Educate children on food option alternative sources
  - Buy county and state produced farm products
  - Community gardens
  - Visit farming operation for insight

## **APPENDIX 3**

### **Model Right to Farm Law**

# Fulton County, New York

## Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan

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### Model Right to Farm Law

Be it enacted by the Town Board of the Town of \_\_\_\_\_ as follows:

#### Section 1. Legislative Intent and Purpose

The Town Board recognizes farming is an essential enterprise and an important industry which enhances the economic base, natural environment and quality of life in the Town of \_\_\_\_\_. The Town Board further declares that it shall be the policy of this Town to encourage agriculture and foster understanding by all residents of the necessary day to day operations involved in farming so as to encourage cooperation with those practices.

It is the general purpose and intent of this law to maintain and preserve the rural traditions and character of the Town, to permit the continuation of agricultural practices, to protect the existence and operation of farms, to encourage the initiation and expansion of farms and agri-businesses, and to promote new ways to resolve disputes concerning agricultural practices and farm operations. In order to maintain a viable farming economy in the Town of \_\_\_\_\_, it is necessary to limit the circumstances under which farming may be deemed to be nuisance and to allow agricultural practices inherent to and necessary for the business of farming to proceed and be undertaken free of unreasonable and unwarranted interference or restriction.

#### Section 2. Definitions

1. "Farmland" shall mean land used in agricultural production, as defined in subdivision four of section 301 of Article 25AA of the State Agriculture and Markets Law.
2. "Farmer" shall mean any person, organization, entity, association, partnership, limited liability company, or corporation engaged in the business of agriculture, whether for profit or otherwise, including the cultivation of land, the raising of crops, or the raising of livestock.
3. "Agricultural products" shall mean those products as defined in section 301(2) of Article 25AA of the State Agriculture and Markets Law, including but not limited to:
  - a. Field crops, including corn, wheat, rye, barley, hay, potatoes and dry beans.
  - b. Fruits, including apples, peaches, grapes, cherries and berries.
  - c. Vegetables, including tomatoes, snap beans, cabbage, carrots, beets and onions.
  - d. Horticultural specialties, including nursery stock, ornamental shrubs, ornamental trees and flowers.
  - e. Livestock and livestock products, including cattle, sheep, hogs, goats, horses, poultry, llamas, ratites, such as ostriches, emus, rheas and kiwis, farmed deer, farmed buffalo, fur bearing animals, milk and milk products, eggs, furs, and poultry products.
  - f. Maple sap and sugar products.
  - g. Christmas trees derived from a managed Christmas tree operation whether dug for transplanting or cut from the stump.
  - h. Aquaculture products, including fish, fish products, water plants and shellfish.
  - i. Short rotation woody crops raised for bioenergy.
  - j. Production and sale of woodland products, including but not limited to logs, lumber, posts and

# Fulton County, New York

## Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan

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firewood.

4. "Agricultural practices" shall mean those practices necessary for the on-farm production, preparation and marketing of agricultural commodities. Examples of such practices include, but are not limited to, operation of farm equipment, proper use of agricultural chemicals and other crop production methods, and construction and use of farm structures.
5. "Farm operation" shall be defined in section 301 (11) in the State Agriculture and Markets Law.

### Section 3. Right-to-Farm Declaration

Farmers, as well as those employed, retained, or otherwise authorized to act on behalf of farmers, may lawfully engage in agricultural practices within this Town at all times and all such locations as are reasonably necessary to conduct the business of agriculture. For any agricultural practice, in determining the reasonableness of the time, place, and methodology of such practice, due weight and consideration shall be given to both traditional customs and procedures in the farming industry as well as to advances resulting from increased knowledge, research and improved technologies.

Agricultural practices conducted on farmland shall not be found to be a public or private nuisance if such agricultural practices are:

1. Reasonable and necessary to the particular farm or farm operation,
2. Conducted in a manner which is not negligent or reckless,
3. Conducted in conformity with generally accepted and sound agricultural practices,
4. Conducted in conformity with all local state, and federal laws and regulations,
5. Conducted in a manner which does not constitute a threat to public health and safety or cause injury to health or safety of any person, and
6. Conducted in a manner which does not reasonably obstruct the free passage or use of navigable waters or public roadways.

Nothing in this local law shall be construed to prohibit an aggrieved party from recovering from damages for bodily injury or wrongful death due to a failure to follow sound agricultural practice, as outlined in this section.

### Section 4. Notification of Real Estate Buyers

In order to promote harmony between farmers and their neighbors, the Town requires land holders and/or their agents and assigns to comply with Section 310 of Article 25-AA of the State Agriculture and Markets Law and provide notice to prospective purchasers and occupants as follows: "It is the policy of this state and this community to conserve, protect and encourage the development and improvement of agricultural land for the production of food, and other products and also for its natural and ecological value. This notice is to inform prospective residents that the property they are about to acquire lies partially or wholly within an agricultural district and that farming activities occur within the district. Such farming activities may include, but not be limited to, activities that cause noise, dust and odors." This notice shall be provided to prospective purchase of property within an agricultural district or on property with boundaries within 500 feet of a farm operation located in an agricultural district.

A copy of this notice shall included by the seller or seller's agent as an addendum to the purchase and sale contract at the time an offer to purchase is made.

# **Fulton County, New York**

## **Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan**

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### **Section 5. Resolution of Disputes**

1. Should any controversy arise regarding any inconveniences or discomfort occasioned by agricultural operations which cannot be settled by direct negotiation between the parties involved, either party may submit the controversy to a dispute resolution committee as set forth below in an attempt to resolve the matter prior to the filing of any court action and prior to a request for a determination by the Commission or Agriculture and Markets about whether the practice in question is sound pursuant to Section 308 of Article 25AA of the State Agriculture and Markets Law.
2. Any controversy between the parties shall be submitted to the committee within thirty (30) days of the last date of occurrence of the particular activity giving rise to the controversy or the date the party became aware of the occurrence.
3. The committee shall be composed of three (3) members from the Town selected by the Town Board, as the need arises, including one representative from the farm community, one person from Town government and one person mutually agreed upon by both parties involved in the dispute.
4. The effectiveness of the committee as a forum for the resolution of disputes is dependent upon full discussion and complete presentation of all pertinent facts concerning the dispute in order to eliminate any misunderstandings. The parties are encouraged to cooperate in the exchange of pertinent information concerning the controversy.
5. The controversy shall be presented to the committee by written request of one of the parties within the time limits specified. Therefore after, the committee may investigate the facts of the controversy but must, within twenty-five (25) days, hold a meeting at a mutually agreed place and time to consider the merits of the matter and within five (5) days of the meeting render a written decision to the parties. At the time of the meeting, both parties shall have an opportunity to present what each consider to be pertinent facts. No party bringing a complaint to the committee for settlement or resolution may be represented by counsel unless the opposing party is also represented by counsel. The time limits provided in this subsection for action by the committee may be extended upon the written stipulation of all parties in the dispute.
6. Any reasonable costs associated with the function of the committee process shall be borne by the participants.

### **Section 6. Severability Clause**

If any part of this local law is for any reason held to be unconstitutional or invalid, such decision shall not effect the remainder of this Local Law. The Town hereby declares that it would have passed this local law and each section and subsection thereof, irrespective of the fact that any one or more of these sections, subsections, sentences, clauses or phrases may be declared unconstitutional or invalid.

### **Section 7. Precedence**

This Local Law and its provisions are in addition to all other applicable laws, rules and regulations.

### **Section 8. Effective Date**

This Local Law shall be effective immediately upon filing with the New York Secretary of State.



**APPENDIX 4**

**Agricultural Economic Development Specialist  
Job Description**

# **Montgomery County Job Description and Related Material Relating to Position of "Coordinator - Agriculture Economic Development Project"**

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## **Position Description**

### General Responsibilities

- To promote and develop programs that will enhance the economic vitality and sustainability of agriculture and the food systems industry in Montgomery County.
- To assist farmers on agricultural marketing and business development issues.
- To work with the county economic development staff to incorporate agriculturally based economic development strategies into the county economic development strategies and programs.
- To monitor proposed legislation and advocate for agricultural policy.

The primary audience for programming will include agricultural producers and related service providers, new entrepreneurs in production, processing and agriculture related business including agricultural tourism, and community members whose support of agriculture is important. Work with individuals and organizations to enhance the viability of local agriculture through product diversification, direct marketing, promotion of local product labels and value-added opportunities by linking with available expertise. Provide leadership for the development of promotion of county agricultural resources.

### Program, Development and Implementation

- Develop a collective relationship with the agriculture community and other key agencies and organizations to provide leadership for the implementation of county farmland protection plans.
- Educate legislative bodies and local officials regarding the benefits and challenges of the agriculture and food systems industry.
- Working with other collaborators (Farm Bureau, Planning Department, Economic Development Department, Cornell Cooperative Extension, environmental groups, community development organizations, groups of farmers, etc.), develop a strategy or strategies for agricultural-based economic development that links them to community

## **Montgomery County Job Description and Related Material Relating to Position of "Coordinator - Agriculture Economic Development Project"**

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economic development efforts in the County and region.

- Promote the positive image of the agriculture and food systems industry through a variety of efforts, including connecting with local media, and a web site.
- Publicize the economic and environmental advantage to buying locally grown products to consumers, restaurant owners, schools and other institutions.
- Serve as a resource to the agricultural community by responding to requests for speakers, resource materials, funding assistance or resources from clientele.
- Represent the agriculture and food industry on various committees relevant to issues such as business retention and revitalization, attraction of new businesses, workforce development and preparation.
- Search for funding sources appropriate for the county agricultural industry and write proposals.

### Education

Bachelors degree in agricultural economics, marketing, public policy or closely related field. Masters degree in agricultural economics, adult education, finance, administration or related field is strongly recommended. A minimum of three years experience.

### Knowledge, Skills and Abilities

- Background in business management and marketing.
- Experience with and knowledge of challenges facing agriculture locally and in New York State.
- Ability to plan and manage projects and programs.
- Capacity to link industry needs with available expertise and to apply expert information to local situations.

## **Montgomery County Job Description and Related Material Relating to Position of "Coordinator - Agriculture Economic Development Project"**

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- Ability to understand and manage the planning process.
- Ability to successfully market programs.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills.
- Computer skills in word processing, spreadsheets and database management.
- Demonstrated ability to secure and administer grants, contracts and agribusiness loans.
- Ability to work effectively with a variety of groups and individuals and establish and maintain networks.

### Other Requirements

- Willingness to work flexible schedules, including weekends and evenings.
- Willingness to travel to conferences and promotional events.
- Must have reliable transportation and valid driver's license.

### Special Arrangement and Supervision

This position will receive administrative supervision from the Chair of the Agricultural Economic Development Committee. Cornell Cooperative Extension of Fulton and Montgomery Counties will provide office space and administer funds.

## **Montgomery County Job Description and Related Material Relating to Position of "Coordinator - Agriculture Economic Development Project"**

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### **Agricultural Economic Development Accomplishments - 2001**

The Agricultural Economic Development Project has made significant progress toward the goals outlined in the grant from Assemblyman Paul Tonko.

As Agricultural Economic Development Coordinator I have several different areas to work on:

1. Develop a market for existing agriculture and encourage more agribusinesses to open in Montgomery County.
2. Discourage the loss of farmland to nonagricultural uses. Marketing to farmers who may be pushed out by development in urban areas.
3. Serve as a one-stop resource center for farmers and agribusinesses.

To achieve these goals the Agricultural Economic Development Project has:

1. Developed the initial design and content for the web page:

[www.montgomery.ny.com/agriculture.htm](http://www.montgomery.ny.com/agriculture.htm)

The site is currently linked to the county planning web site. The web page is designed to encourage farmers and agribusinesses to come to the Mohawk Valley to do business.

2. "Produced, in the Mohawk Valley," a buy local produce project, was continued, this year with Price Chopper. Six farmers sold produce at the Amsterdam and Palatine Bridge Stores. This is the maximum number of farmers Price Chopper was willing to have this year. "PROduced in the Mohawk Valley" logo stickers were placed on apple bags to help identify local products.

#### **KEEPS MONEY LOCAL**

- Local farms mean more jobs for local people.
- The "economic effect" of the family farms is higher than other business sectors. Every dollar is turned over up to 5 times when farmers buy supplies, equipment, fuel,

## **Montgomery County Job Description and Related Material Relating to Position of "Coordinator - Agriculture Economic Development Project"**

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groceries.

- When you buy directly from the farmers, the farm family receives more of the food dollars spent.
  - Farming in Montgomery County has an impact of 117 million dollars on the local economy.
  - For every tax dollar collected from a farmer, he or she will utilize only 34 cents in community services, while residents in new developments will use \$1.15 in community services.
  - The more farms, the more economic opportunities for people in rural communities,
3. A marketing flyer was developed for use at out-of-state trade shows and the local fair. By joining the Mohawk Valley Leatherstocking Region Agricultural Economic Development Group of six counties, our promotion materials have traveled to Pennsylvania, Connecticut, and other Agricultural Trade Shows is the east. This has been very cost effective for Montgomery County. The Pennsylvania effort resulted in 16 contacts wanting information on New York farms.

The first question asked is "are the taxes bad in New York?" A flyer, developed by G.J. Skoda, was edited to reflect New York State farm taxes and incentives to be distributed to potential farmers.

4. Currently, creating a network and database of realtors, agribusinesses and farmers that can be distributed to potential farmers wanting to farm in the Mohawk Valley. Farmers will realize that the infrastructure is already in place to farm and transport products to markets.
5. Working with schools to get local agricultural product into the cafeteria program. Again, this keeps local money local and definitely helps with the tax base.
6. Worked with Farm Bureau to plan a Farm Tour on September 20. The goal of the farm tour was to show people how farms operate.
7. Working with the Agriculture in the Classroom Program to teach local school children what

## **Montgomery County Job Description and Related Material Relating to Position of "Coordinator - Agriculture Economic Development Project"**

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foods are grown locally and the cost of local food production. In September, talked to 167 children plus teachers and chaperones.

8. Currently, we've secured a small grant from NY Farms! to develop a market of local products to local restaurants. Earlier this year, took two chefs to a conference on the "Finger Lakes Culinary Bounty." This conference allowed two local chefs to see how buying local helped the restaurant business. Again, by developing this niche market for food products, the dollars are staying local.

Right now, a market is growing for organic and ethnic food's in the Capital District and NY City areas. Farmers with year-round greenhouses can have a quality product for this market.

9. Have purchased a UPC code for "PROduced in the Mohawk Valley." This will allow local products to compete in large store chains with their own bar code and pricing. An example this would allow a small farm cheese plant to sell their specialty cheese to Hannaford's or Price Chopper and not have to take the lower prices on a lost leader. In the future, other new value-added farm products will be using this code to sell to a broader market or establish a cooperative to wholesale to larger markets.

The value-added products are in addition to other farm products already being sold. Now over 50% of the farms in Montgomery County are dairy, however the price of fluid milk changes every month making farm budgeting very difficult. By adding another product line, a farmer can add revenue to farm pot and slowly change products without selling the farm and changing professions.

10. The Agricultural Economic Development Project is not yet a year old and several projects have been started that need to be finished. Farms are cost effective when compare to housing developments; they don't require sidewalks, streetlights, town or city water and sewers. The Agricultural Economic Development Committee recommends putting \$10,000 in the budgets of the Chamber, Planning Department and Cornell Cooperative Extension. to continue finding new marketing opportunities for agricultural products, agribusiness and farmers.