

A Plan to Enhance the
Agricultural Economy in
Schoharie County.

Adopted by the Schoharie
County Board of Supervisors

March 17, 2017

Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan

Schoharie County

Contents

Acknowledgements.....	3
Funding	3
Executive Summary.....	4
Schoharie County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan Highlights	4
Goals	5
Recommended Actions	5
Schoharie’s Vision for Agriculture.....	8
Long-Term Goals and Strategies for Agriculture in Schoharie County	9
Goals	9
Snapshot of Recommended Strategies.....	9
Introduction	11
A. Why an updated Plan.....	11
B. The 2016 Planning Process	13
C. Role of Agriculture in Schoharie County	14
D. Definition of Agriculture	15
E. Farms, Farmland, and the Agricultural Economy in Schoharie County	15
F. Farmland Conversion in Schoharie County	22
G. Identifying Priority Farmlands	28
H. Summary of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats.....	31
Taking Action.....	34
Recommended Programs and Projects.....	34
Priority Projects.....	48
Appendix A: Maps.....	53
Appendix B: Description of Agricultural Resources in Schoharie County	54
Farmland Parcels.....	54
Agricultural Districts.....	55
Agricultural and Forest Land Value Assessments	56
Farmland Soils.....	56
Flood Hazards, Karst and Farmlands.....	58
State Owned, New York City and Other Preserved Parcels	58
Public Water and Sewer in Schoharie County	58

Recent Development (Since Year 2000)	58
Open Tillable Land on Identified Farmland Parcels	59
Priority Farmland Areas	59
Agricultural Districts in the Region	60
Towns in Schoharie County with Right-to-Farm Laws	61
Appendix C: Profile of the Agricultural Economy	62
Data on Schoharie County from the U.S. Census of Agriculture.....	62
Comparisons of Schoharie County to NYS and Other Counties.....	68
Appendix D: Public Input Results	74
Farm Community Workshops	74
Farmer Survey	78
Focus Groups.....	82
Dairy Reset Meetings	83
Appendix E: Other Helpful Information	86
The Schoharie County IDA and Agriculture	86
Ten Rules of Transition Management.....	90
The Hudson Valley Agri-Business Development Corporation Model	92
Town of Amenia Agricultural Profile (Model)	94
Resources	96
Appendix F. Schoharie County Agriculture and the Mohawk Valley Regional Economic Development Council.....	98



Photo Courtesy of Barbers Farm

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Executive Summary

Why an Agricultural Plan for Schoharie County?

Because agriculture has, and continues to be one of Schoharie County's most important industries. Agriculture uniquely and positively affects not only our economy, but is vital to Schoharie's rural landscape, community character, environment, and health of residents. This Plan is intended to be used to guide County-level actions, but also those of ag-service agencies and organizations, and of course, the farm community in Schoharie County.

In 2000, the County completed and adopted its first Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan. In the 16 years since, agriculture has changed and diversified, but continues to play a significant role in the quality of life for Schoharie County residents. Unfortunately, agriculture faces many challenges which threaten its long-term sustainability: Some of these issues are long-standing and the same as identified in the 2000 Plan, while others are new. Regardless, Schoharie County is committed to enhancing the success and sustainability of our farms, and this Plan offers a roadmap on how to accomplish that.

Farming and its support services are big business in Schoharie County. **\$157.7 million worth!** That figure includes all production, support services, agricultural-related manufacturing, and indirect economic impacts. The dairy industry is the single largest contributor to this agricultural economy. The market value of all agricultural products sold by County farmers in 2012 was \$39 million! There are at least 700 workers with a \$4.7 million annual payroll. The goal of the Schoharie County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan is to ensure this positive economic impact is enhanced.



Schoharie County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan Highlights

The Plan reflects current conditions and opinions about agriculture in the County. The planning process was coordinated through the Schoharie County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board (AFPB) with assistance from the Schoharie County Planning and Development Agency and several consultants. After receiving a grant from the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, work began in January 2016. To make sure this Plan meets the needs of Schoharie County farmers, the AFPB sought input from farmers, government agencies that support agriculture, not-for-profit organizations, and local agri-businesses. This input was received through meetings of the AFPB, a Farmers Survey, two focus groups, and two public workshops for farmers. Additional input came from a county-sponsored "Dairy Reset" meeting with local and state agencies and organizations involved with dairy farms, and a second dairy-oriented meeting with about 15 of Schoharie's dairy farmers. Both "Dairy Reset" meetings concentrated on solutions to the significant challenges dairy farms are facing from low milk prices and changes in the dairy processing industry. From these inputs, the AFPB identified agricultural strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in Schoharie County.

Schoharie County has many significant and positive features that make it a great place to farm. A combination of good natural resources, supportive agencies and organizations, easy access to urban markets, growing market demand for local products, and positive attitudes about the role farming

plays in the County provide a strong foundation for enhancing agriculture in the County. Those positives should not be overlooked and are features that create many opportunities.

However, there are still many challenges to overcome. Some are new, while others are long-standing issues that have been identified as barriers in the past. Low milk prices, small profits with high costs, difficulty finding and affording labor, taxes and regulations, lack of a next generation of farmers, lack of farm processing infrastructure, and poor marketing of the County and of local farm products are weaknesses that must be overcome if agriculture is to be successful here. Equally important is a general lack of understanding about the relationship between agriculture and economic development in the County.

The Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board desired an action-oriented plan to help continue to move agriculture forward. Developing such a plan must build on the positive features in the County and address the remaining hurdles. That process begins with a vision for the future. That vision helps to identify goals to reach for, which in turn, results in a list of strategies required to achieve these goals.

Goals

Ten specific goals have been established in the Plan to help Schoharie County attain their vision of economically profitable, sustainable and growing farms. The goals lay out a direction for:

- Increasing Farm Efficiency and Profitability;
- Diversifying Farm Operations;
- Expanding Farm Infrastructure;
- Promoting Schoharie County Ag Products;
- Increasing Understanding of Agriculture;
- Increasing Availability of Skilled Labor;
- Expanding the Next Generation of Farmers;
- Preserving Farmland;
- Promoting Farm-Friendly Policies; and
- Promoting Environmental Sustainability.

Recommended Actions

Six major initiatives have been developed to address those 10 goals and to enhance agriculture in Schoharie County. These are:

- Build organizational capacity;
- Initiate agricultural economic development programs;
- Enhance education and technical assistance programs;
- Market farms and farm products;
- Enhance farm infrastructure, including protection of farmland; and
- Diversify farm types and farm activities.

To accomplish these initiatives, the Schoharie County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan recommends the following specific actions:

- Form a County Agricultural Economic Development Roundtable to spearhead implementation of this Plan.
- Staff an Agricultural Economic Development Coordinator to facilitate implementation efforts with the Roundtable and be the ‘boots on the ground’ person to help accomplish tasks.
- Initiate economic development programs such as:
 - Forming an Agri-business Development Corporation;
 - Writing grants to fund programs, and provide grant writing assistance to farmers seeking to start or expand their business;
 - Offering revolving and micro-loans for farm business retention and expansion efforts; and
 - Creating an Agricultural Business Expansion and Retention Program.
- Offer training and technical support to assist farmers incorporate new methods, alternative crops, and value-added products:
 - Ensure that dairy profitability programs are accessible to County dairy farmers;
 - Promote craft beverage start-ups including hops and small specialty grains;
 - Initiate mentoring and internship programs between area schools, SUNY Cobleskill, and area farmers; and
 - Create an online clearinghouse to provide a one-stop shop of information for farmers.
- Offer training on agricultural land uses for Planning Boards and Towns.
- Develop a comprehensive marketing plan for farms and farm products. This should detail methods to reach the general public about the important role of agriculture, promote local food and other agricultural products, attract new farmers to Schoharie County, and promote agri-tourism. Some of the programs that should be detailed in this include new programs such as:
 - County farm produce map and online web information;
 - ‘Come Farm With Us’ website to promote farms and link farmland in Schoharie County with those farmers seeking land;
 - Promotion of local food products with labeling, branding and innovative marketing; and
 - Initiation of a Farm to Table, and Chef Connect program.
- Expand the Farm to School effort in Schoharie County.
- Aggressively work to provide full broadband infrastructure to all parts of the County.
- Conduct feasibility studies related to food processing and value-added facilities in the County so that farmers, economic development efforts, and agricultural support agencies know what crops and processing should be promoted and prioritized in Schoharie County.
- Create model farm-friendly regulations that can be used by towns to support agriculture.

- Offer training and incentives to diversify farm activities to include wood products, biomass, use of farm woodlots for hunting and recreation, hay for horses, hops and small grains for craft beverages, grass-fed beef, and value-added dairy.

To implement some the priority projects identified in this Plan, additional funding will be necessary. One of the critical recommendations of this Plan is to seek additional funding through the primary mechanism New York State has established for such funding - The Mohawk Valley Regional Economic Development Council (MVREDC). The Schoharie County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan is aligned with the goals and strategies of the MVREDC. As the County works to implement its agricultural and farmland protection programs, it is critical to work closely with the MVREDC to make the projects recommended in this Plan a reality.

Schoharie County agriculture has an exciting future. Those same positive features that made Schoharie the 'breadbasket of the Revolution' remain today, and it is a place offering unique opportunities for farming. Agricultural activities in the County have always changed – from primarily hops in the mid-1800's to predominance of dairy farms now. This Plan offers actions that can help the County and its farm community take advantage of new ideas, new methods, and new opportunities. With leadership, coordinated efforts, and collaboration, Schoharie County will be able to attain its vision of having an economically profitable, sustainable and growing farm economy.



Photo Courtesy of Kymar Farm

Schoharie's Vision for Agriculture

A vision statement can be an important tool to help set the bar for future direction and expectations. The vision communicates the ideal conditions for agriculture in Schoharie County – how things would look if the issues facing farms are perfectly addressed. The vision statement is a brief proclamation that conveys the County's dreams for the future.

The Schoharie County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board used the input from two farmers' workshops, group meetings with representatives from the tourism industry and economic development agencies in the County, and a county-wide survey of farmers to identify what the desired vision is for agriculture in the County. Although a variety of words were used to describe this desired future, and people recognize that agriculture here is likely to change over time, there was a common, optimistic theme.

The vision for agriculture in the future is described as:

"The next decade will be an exciting time for Schoharie County agriculture. The farm economy will be economically profitable, sustainable, and growing. Farms will be vibrant, optimistic, and flexible to meet changing needs, markets, and technologies. Our farm infrastructure, including ag-service and educational agencies will be in place to help farmers take advantage of our location, land resources, and emerging markets. Diversified in scale and product, Schoharie County will support new farms of all sizes, young farmers, and startup operations. The County's dairy and livestock farms continue as a significant economically viable part of the local farm economy, but we will expand into food processing, agri-tourism, buy-local, and many diverse forms of farming. Coordinated programs and policies are in place to keep farmland open and land prices for farming affordable. Farmers will have the technology and educational support they need, and the general public is well-informed about the important role agriculture plays in the County's economy and quality of life."

Long-Term Goals and Strategies for Agriculture in Schoharie County

Goals

Goals are general statements of what needs to be accomplished to implement the vision. The following long-term goals are established for Schoharie County agriculture:

- A. Increase Farm Efficiency and Profitability;
- B. Diversify Farm Operations;
- C. Expand Needed Farm Infrastructure;
- D. Promote Schoharie County Agricultural Products;
- E. Increase Public Education and Awareness about Agriculture;
- F. Increase Skilled Labor for Farms;
- G. Expand the Number of New Ag-Entrepreneurs and the Next Generation of Farmers;
- H. Preserve Farmland;
- I. Institute Farm-Friendly Policies; and
- J. Promote Environmental Sustainability of Farms.



Photo Courtesy Barbers Farm

Snapshot of Recommended Strategies

Strategies outline more details focused on how Schoharie County will achieve our vision and goals, stated above. Strategies offer more specifics on how to meet the goals, and refer to measurable actions. A wide variety of strategies have been developed to help Schoharie meet its agricultural goals. Because there is overlap between the different goals, strategies have been organized into six major topic areas. These topics and associated strategies are:

Organization and Capacity

- 1. Create a County Board of Supervisors working group tasked to implement this Plan, coordinate activities, report on progress, and seek funding.
- 2. Make it a priority to collaborate and coordinate programs with the agencies, organizations and other efforts related to agriculture in the County.

Agricultural Economic Development Strategies

- 3. Make agriculture, and agribusinesses enhancement and retention a county priority for economic development and create a structure that promotes collaboration and increased capacity to carry out necessary programs.
- 4. Increase the diversity of farm operations.

5. Increase training, technical support, farm business planning, and continuing education for farmers.
6. Expand food processing opportunities.
7. Develop aggregation, distribution, and refrigeration facilities and operations as needed.
8. Expand broadband infrastructure throughout the County.
9. Support County dairy farms with supportive programs such as dairy business planning, dairy profit programs, farm transition planning, and mentor/intern opportunities.
10. Decrease costs of farming.

Marketing, Promotion, and Education Strategies

11. Develop and promote new agricultural products, new markets, and niche operations, and support them with expanded marketing efforts designed to increase sales of Schoharie County agricultural products both locally and regionally.
12. Increase public knowledge and understanding of the important role of agriculture in the County and on the business of farming.
13. Expand agri-tourism.



Farm Labor Strategies

14. Enhance mentorship and internship programs.

Next Generation of Farmers Strategies

15. Market Schoharie County as an attractive location for new farming operations.
16. Provide first-time farmer programs to build the next generation of farmers.
17. Assist the new/next generation of farmers address their land and capital needs.
18. Provide farm-transition planning programs.
19. Promote Schoharie County as a great place to come farm and promote the County as a unique place for 'lifestyle' farming.

Farmland Protection Strategies

20. Protect open lands and forests for agricultural uses.
21. Enhance and promote use of farm-friendly policies at the local and county level.

Environmental Sustainability of Farms Strategies

22. Increase environmental sustainability of farms.
23. Mitigate climate change.

Introduction

A. Why an updated Plan

In 2000, Schoharie County adopted its first Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan. That plan established nine goals and 56 different objectives. Of those, 14 priority projects were identified related to:

- Agricultural Economic Development
- Right to Farm
- Education and Public Relations
- Taxation
- Land Use Planning
- Farmland Protection and Equity Redemption

Agriculture remains a critical economic driver in Schoharie County and to ensure its continued success and sustainability, the County decided that it needed an updated plan that reflects up-to-date data, maps and strategies. After 16 years, it was important to ensure that a plan is in place to meet current issues, needs and opportunities.



Since adoption of the first plan, the towns of Seward, Carlisle, Cobleskill, and Wright have developed and adopted town-level agricultural and farmland protection plans. Those plans establish local goals for sustaining agriculture and offers recommendations on those towns can achieve their goals. These local towns have positioned themselves to remain viable farming communities in the future. This county-wide plan recognizes and is designed to further support those local efforts.

This updated plan was developed so that Schoharie County has the tools in place to ensure that there will be:

- a long-term vision and direction to guide policies and programs that enhance agriculture;
- strategies to maintain agriculture as a critical land use and economic driver;
- a framework for organization and collaboration to promote existing and new farm operations;
- identification of potential project partners and sources of funding;
- data, maps, and other information that can be used to support public relations, marketing, grant writing, and other programs related to agriculture; and
- resources about agriculture to be used by county staff, elected officials, and farmers.

As highlighted in this updated Plan, the overall desire to maintain agriculture as a key economic driver in the County remains unchanged. The Schoharie community still desires a rural lifestyle and maintenance of our rural character. Issues related to dairy and milk pricing, taxes, labor, the need for better public relations with our non-farm neighbors, and to have farm-friendly communities remains as relevant today as it was 16 years ago.

Yet, there are other new issues and opportunities identified in this Plan. Craft beverages, a resurgence of hop growing, niche agriculture, local foods, and opportunities to link farms better with larger institutions have a new emphasis today. This Plan identifies different priorities and many new ideas that should be put to work to promote agriculture in the County. And while some of the projects identified in 2000 are equally important to implement today, new ideas have been identified. This updated Plan builds upon the knowledge gained from the 2000 Plan and provides an up-to-date toolbox for the County and its various partners to use over the next decade.

It is hoped that this Plan will chart the future for a successful and sustainable agricultural industry in the County by:

- Providing resources, options and projects for the future;
- Helping maintain and improve the agricultural infrastructure in the County;
- Providing data that will be helpful to all sized farms;
- Enhancing awareness and education about agriculture here;
- Protecting agricultural lands;
- Helping farmers adapt to new agricultural uses for land, facilities and new revenue streams;
- Promoting farmers, lenders, and farm agencies to work together;
- Renewing the ability to build capacity, organization, and collaboration;
- Retaining and expanding farm businesses including increasing the region's capacity to grow and market; and
- Attracting young and new farmers.



Photo Courtesy of SUNY Cobleskill

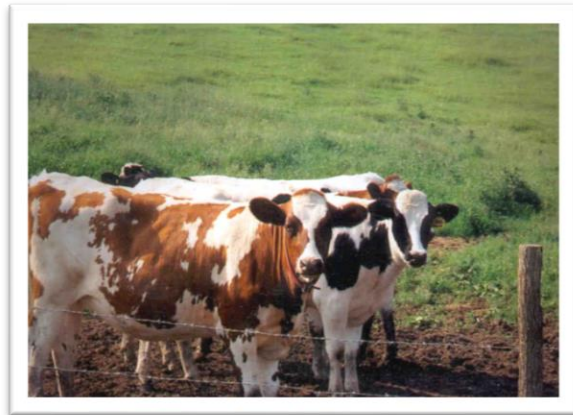
B. The 2016 Planning Process

The planning process began in January 2016. The planning process included the following steps:

1. Data was collected to document current types, conditions, and characteristics of farms and farmland in the County. Maps were created to help visualize and analyze information such as soils, agricultural districts, location of farmlands, and other features.
2. Input from farmers and farmland owners was collected from farmer workshops and a survey to identify issues, needs, and opportunities to strengthen agriculture in the County. Forty-five farm operators participated in the survey and 50 attended two farmers' workshops.
3. An economic development focus group was held to learn about opinions from different agencies and organizations working in general economic development or agricultural development in the County.
4. A tourism and hospitality focus group was held to learn about the relationship between and opportunities for better links between the agricultural and tourism sectors in the County.
5. Information learned from all public input and collected data was analyzed to identify Schoharie County agricultural strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.
6. A long-term vision and a set of goals were established based on that public input.
7. Specific strategies and actions were identified to help the County meet its long-term goals. Of these, several were identified as priority projects for the County to pursue with its partners.
8. A full document was drafted that meets the statutory requirements of Section 324-a of Article 25-aa of the New York State Agriculture and Markets Law, along with Circular 1500.
9. A public meeting was conducted to present the plan and hear comments from the public and farmers.
10. The Schoharie County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board reviewed and accepted the draft Plan.
11. The Plan was submitted to the County Board of Supervisors for adoption.
12. The Plan was then submitted to the NYS Commissioner of Agriculture and Markets for final approval.



C. Role of Agriculture in Schoharie County



Since its earliest days, Schoharie County has been an agricultural community. Originally subsistence farms, the County later played a key role in the American Revolution and was considered the 'Breadbasket of the Revolution'. Later, the County was one of the largest hops producers in the State. As hop production waned, farms converted to dairy and crops such as corn and hay.

Today, agriculture remains the largest land use in the County and dominates the economy. However, as stated in the original Schoharie County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan (2000), "Farming is too

often viewed as simply a starting point on the development scale – a temporary use of land until growth brings something better along. Unfortunately, even some farmers see it this way, perceiving growth and development as the end of the line." This updated Plan seeks to illustrate the importance of farming to Schoharie County. Section F, below highlights the important economic role agriculture plays.

Agriculture is an important industry and land use in Schoharie County because:

- **Farming and its related support services are big business in Schoharie County. \$157.7 million worth!** Agriculture has significant impact on the economy of the County. That is the estimated total contribution of agriculture from all direct and indirect effects are considered. Of that, \$111 million is directly related to agricultural production, support services for agriculture and agriculture related manufacturing.¹ The dairy industry is the single largest contributor to the agricultural economy.
- The 2012 US Agricultural Census reports a **\$39 million market value of agricultural products** sold by Schoharie County farmers.
- County farms had **\$36 million in expenses in 2012 – much of that spent locally.**
- In 2012 **farms employed 700 workers with a \$4.7 million annual payroll.**
- Farms are a major contributor to Schoharie's **rural character and quality of life.** Farms maintain the rural character and open spaces that Schoharie County is known for.
- Farming attracts tourists and **provides space for outdoor recreational opportunities.**
- Farms and their associated woodlands **preserve natural environments.**
- Farms provide great **access to fresh, healthy, local food** products in the County.

¹ From 2014 IMPLAN data from Cornell University.

- Schoharie County has ample farmland and is in a prime location with **easy access to urban areas** of the Capital District and New York City.
- **Farms keep property taxes lower** than other land uses.

D. Definition of Agriculture

For the purposes of this Plan, agriculture in Schoharie County is defined as...

An activity that produces food, fiber, animal products, horticulture, timber, and other goods and services from the land including value-added, direct sale, and agri-tourism farm operations.

Schoharie County agriculture includes

those farms large and small, as well as new and old. All farm operations as defined by New York State in the Agriculture and Markets Law 25-aa² as well as those considered hobby, small acreage, niche, and new, start-up farms are part of agriculture here.



E. Farms, Farmland, and the Agricultural Economy in Schoharie County

Understanding current conditions and characteristics about farming in Schoharie County helps identify gaps and needs for improvement. Appendix C of this Plan offers more detail on data from the U.S. Census of Agriculture on Schoharie County farms, farmland, and agricultural economic characteristics. The following information summarizes those current conditions and recent trends:

Farms and Farmland

- The 2012 Census of Agriculture reported 532 farms in Schoharie County, a decline of 8.1% from the number in 2002. This is nearly twice the rate of decline statewide (4.6%) during the ten-year period.
- Land in farms in Schoharie County totaled 98,369 acres in 2012, reflecting a net loss of more than 14,000 acres (-12.7%) since 2002 (Figure 1). Approximately 25% of the County's total land area is in farming.

² New York State Agriculture and Markets Law 25-aa defines Farm operation as "the land and on-farm buildings, equipment, manure processing and handling facilities, and practices which contribute to the production, preparation and marketing of crops, livestock and livestock products as a commercial enterprise, including a "commercial horse boarding operation" as defined in subdivision thirteen of this section, a "timber operation" as defined in subdivision fourteen of this section and "compost, mulch or other biomass crops" as defined in subdivision sixteen of this section and "commercial equine operation" as defined in subdivision seventeen of this section. Such farm operation may consist of one or more parcels of owned or rented land, which parcels may be contiguous or noncontiguous to each other.

- The average farm in the County in 2012 was 185 acres, smaller than the New York State acreage of 202 acres but comparable to neighboring Otsego County, where the average was 182 acres. Only 36 farms in Schoharie County, or 6.8%, had at least 500 acres, while 282, or 53.0% of farms, had between 100 and 499 acres.

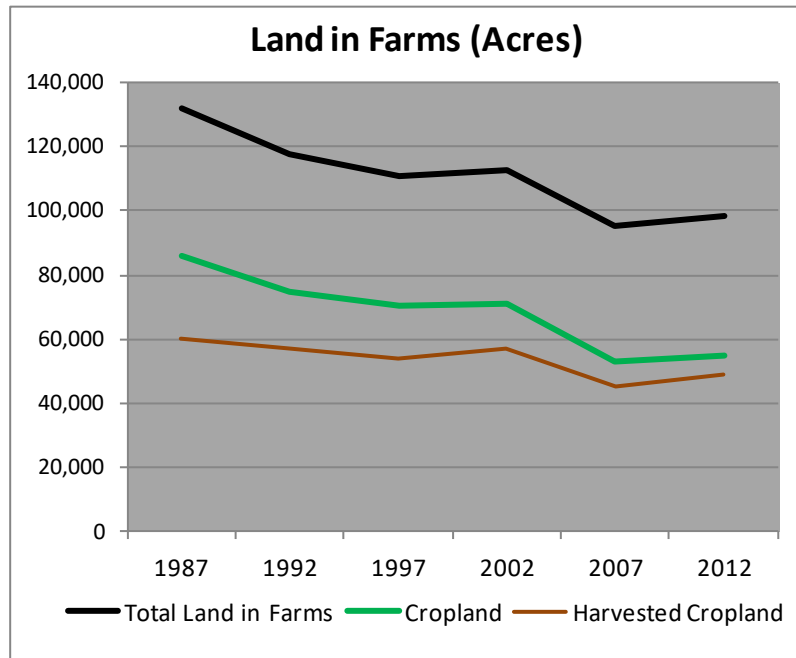


Figure 1: Farmland Acreage in Schoharie County 1987 - 2012

Farm Products and Sales

- Schoharie County farms generated \$39.5 million in sales in 2012. Livestock, poultry, and their products accounted for 61% of total farm sales, with crop sales comprising the remainder. The leading commodities included dairy products (\$19.3 million), grain and beans (\$5.4 million), other crops and hay (\$5.0 million), and vegetables (\$3.5 million).
- Since 2002, the composition of farms by type in the County has shifted slightly towards beef cattle, goats, vegetables, and fruits and away from dairy and nursery and greenhouse production (Figure 2). There are also more farms with a mix of livestock.

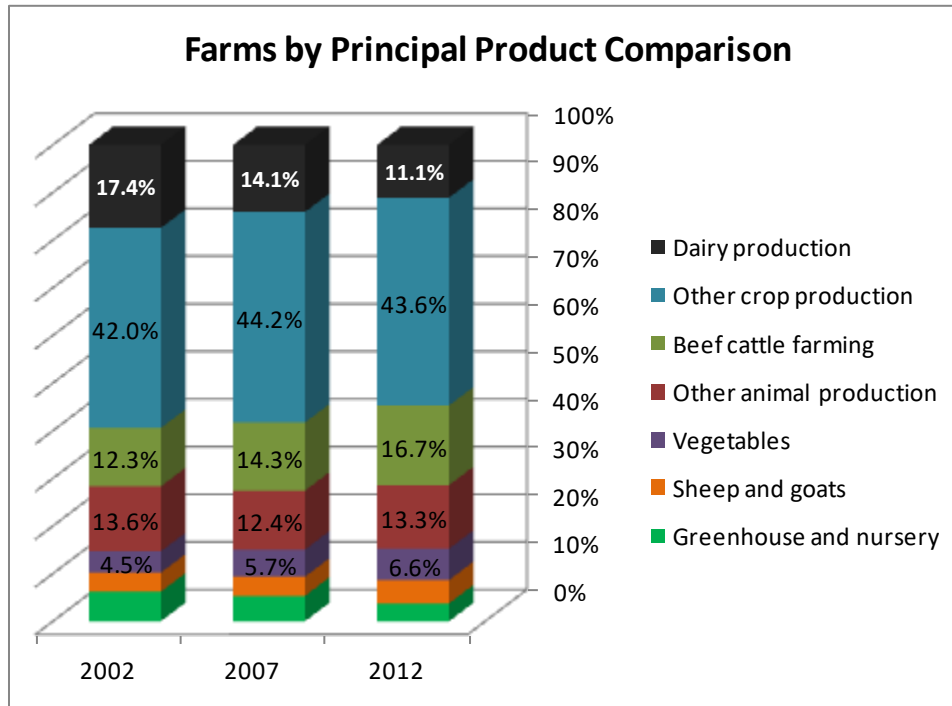


Figure 2: Changes in Farm type, 2002-2012

- Milk from cows remains the number one agricultural product in Schoharie County, accounting for nearly 49% of total sales, or \$19.3 million, in 2012 (Figure 3). However, the number of dairy farms as well as the number of milk cows has been steadily declining for the last ten to twenty years. And, the dairy industry is also the most at risk.

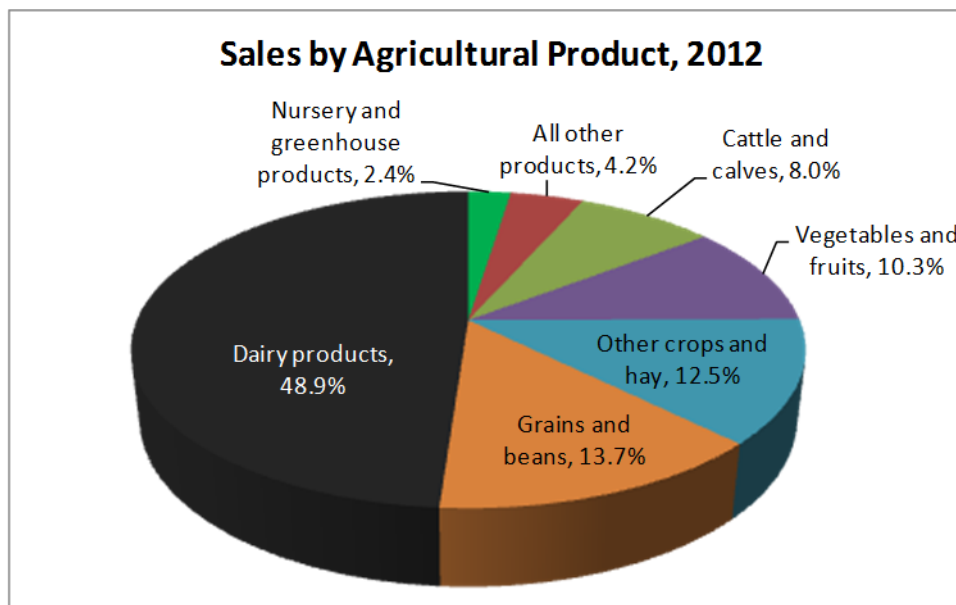


Figure 3: Sales by Agricultural Product, 2012

- In 2015, according to the Federal Milk Marketing administrator, there were 52 dairy farms in Schoharie County selling 102.3 million pounds of milk for the year, compared to 88 dairy farms selling 107.4 million pounds of milk in 2005. Average milk production per farm grew from 1,220,000 pounds in 2005 to 1,968,000 pounds in 2015 (Figure 4).

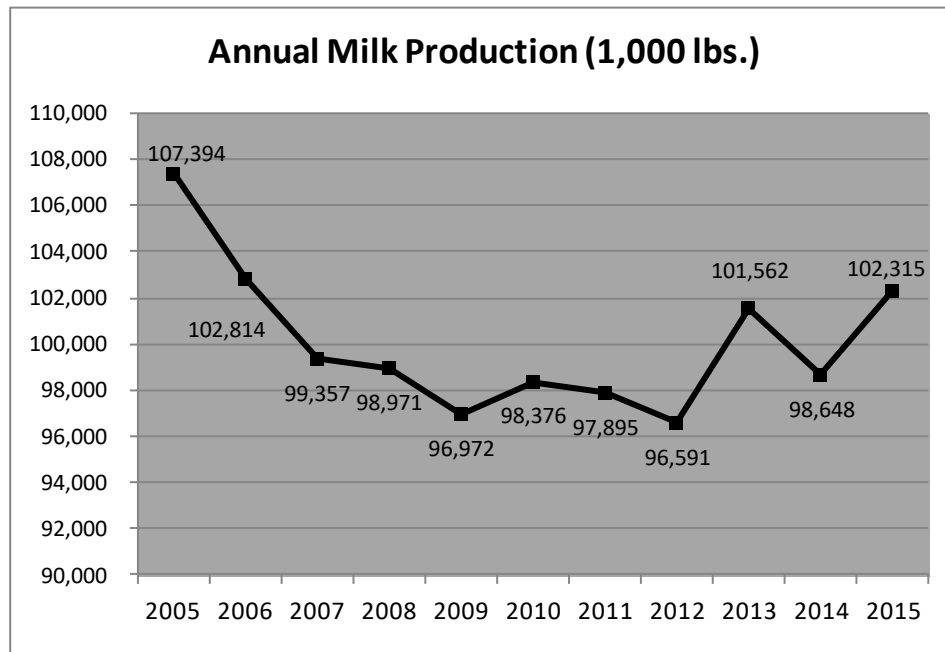


Figure 4: Annual Milk Production, 2005 - 2015

- In 2012, Schoharie County ranked #9 in the state in the number of goats (983), #12 in the value of hogs and pigs sold (\$538,000), and #15 in the value of sheep, goats, and their products (\$423,000). It ranked #43 in overall agricultural sales.
- Seventeen farms in Schoharie County sold organic products in 2012, reaching \$425,000 in sales. This was an increase of 87.2% from 2002.
- An increasing number of Schoharie County farmers sell their products directly to consumers through such venues as farm stands and farmers markets. The value of direct-to-consumer sales in 2012 was more than \$2.6 million, compared to \$1.2 million in 2002.
- The Agricultural Census reports that in 2012, 44 Schoharie County farms (8.3%) produced or sold value-added commodities; 36, or 6.8%, marketed their products direct to retail outlets; and 13 (2.4%) had an on-farm packing facility. Only 4 farms in the County earned income through agri-tourism and recreational services, down from 12 in 2007.
- The market value of agricultural products sold in Schoharie County appears to have increased nearly 50%, from \$27.0 million in 2002 to \$39.5 million in 2012, with increases in the sales of both crops

and animal products (Figure 5). Adjusting all figures to 2012 dollars, however, the real value of farm sales increased by 15%. Moreover, sales of livestock and animal products decreased by about 3%.

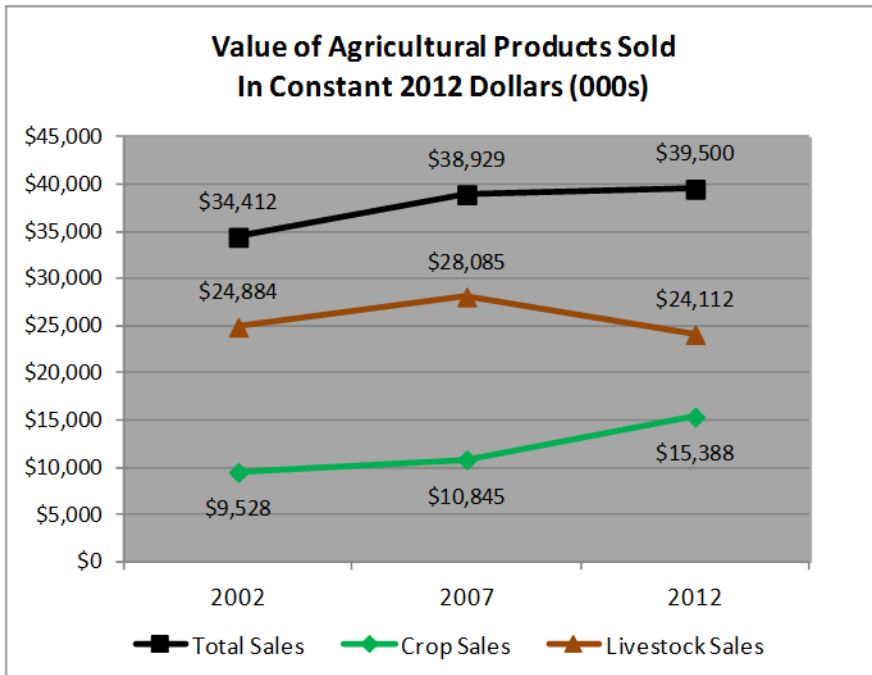


Figure 5: Changes in Value of Agricultural Products sold, 2002 - 2012

- Local farms incurred nearly \$36 million in production expenses in 2012, with feed for animals being the largest single expense (\$7.9 million), followed by hired and contract labor (\$4.9 million). Many products and services used in farming are purchased from local businesses in and around Schoharie County.
- Schoharie County farms owned more than \$224 million worth of land and buildings in 2012. They also owned 793 trucks, 1,543 tractors, and other farm machinery and equipment with an estimated market value of \$46.1 million. The *average* value of land, buildings, and equipment used by farms in the County was \$508,000, for a total investment in the local economy of \$270.3 million.
- Net cash farm income totaled \$8.9 million in 2012, up from \$5.0 million in 2002. In real terms (i.e., with values adjusted for inflation), farm income increased 39.2% over the ten-year period. However, just 38.8% of farms in Schoharie County reported net gains. Although this figure is an increase over 2002, when 35.6% of farms earned a profit, it is nonetheless lower than in the neighboring counties of Otsego, Montgomery, and Delaware or the state overall.

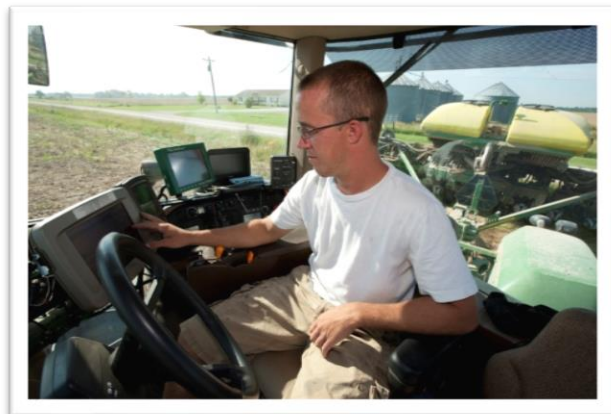
Farm Operator Characteristics

- In 2012, 62% of principal farm operators in Schoharie County reported their primary occupation as farming. Fully 80% have been on their present farm for 10 years or more.
- The aging of farmers in upstate New York has been an ongoing concern. In Schoharie County, the average age of principal farm operators is 58.4, above the New York State average of 57.1. Fewer than 5% of farm operators (26) are under age 35, while 9% (48) are between the ages of 35 and 44.
- According to the Agricultural Census, 150 farms had on-farm hired labor in addition to their principal operators. These farms accounted for approximately 700 workers, with \$4.7 million in annual payroll, although 70% of these employees worked for less than 150 days out of the year.

Agriculture and the Economy

There are several other ways to measure the economic impact of agriculture in Schoharie County. The following information illustrates earnings, economic output, jobs, and labor income for agriculture:

- Personal income data produced by the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) shows that earnings in Schoharie County totaled \$515.5 million in 2014. Of this amount, \$15.9 million was farm earnings. “Earnings” is defined as the compensation of employees (i.e., wages and salaries) plus “proprietor’s income” (income earned by non-employers like sole proprietorships, partnerships, and cooperatives). The data is reported on a place of work basis, so the figures reflect the amounts paid by establishments located in Schoharie County. By industry, the largest share of nonfarm earnings was from state and local government, which includes education. Manufacturing contributed \$12.1 million in earnings, less than the agricultural sector.
- As an industry, agriculture has a relatively high economic impact because farmers purchase supplies and services from many other businesses, and the income earned by employees of those businesses generates successive rounds of spending. According to a recent statewide study by Cornell economist Todd M. Schmit, for every additional dollar generated in on-farm agricultural output, an additional 45 cents is generated in backward-linked (nonagricultural) industry sectors such as



wholesale trade, agricultural support services, and animal food manufacturing. (For additional information, see “The Multiplier Effect of Agriculture” in Appendix C.)

- Agricultural industries, including agricultural production, support services, and manufacturing activity, directly contributed \$111.1 million in output, 650 jobs, and \$15.8 million in labor income to the Schoharie County economy in 2014. When multiplier effects are considered, these values increase to an estimated \$157.7 million in economic output, 1,124 jobs, and \$33.9 million in labor income. The economic impact of agricultural industries would be higher if the County had more agricultural processing activity.

Benchmarking Schoharie County

Data presented in Appendix C also benchmarks Schoharie County against three of its peers – Otsego, Montgomery, and Delaware Counties – and compares it to New York State. Some observations are provided below.

Schoharie County:

- Had higher average sales per farm in 2012 (\$74,248) than the counties of Otsego (\$67,095) and Delaware (\$67,735) but fewer farms than the comparison areas.
- Has the smallest amount of land in farms as measured by acreage, but has a higher percentage of its total land area in farms (24.7%) than the state average (23.8%).
- Is remarkably like Otsego County with respect to the average acreage per farm and the percentage of large farms with 500 acres or more. Montgomery and Delaware Counties have a higher proportion of large farms.
- The rate of decline in the number of farms between 2002 and 2012 (-8.1%) exceeded the state average (-4.6%). Only Delaware County experienced a steeper rate of decline (-10.7%).
- Lost farmland at a rate that was twice the state average between 2002 and 2012, but far less than in the counties of Montgomery or Delaware. Delaware County, in fact, lost farmland at nearly four times the state average.
- Had lower farm sales in 2002, 2007, and 2012 than in each of the other counties.
- Had a smaller proportion of profitable farms (38.7%) than its peer counties in 2012.

F. Farmland Conversion in Schoharie County

Farmland can be lost when it is converted to urban uses, abandoned, or converted to protected, but non-farmed open spaces. Although loss of farmland has not been identified by the farm community as a critical issue in Schoharie County and there is a perception that there is not a great deal of development pressure, there has been nonetheless a steady loss that cumulatively, raises concerns. See Map ____ (Recent Development) which shows over 1,100 new residential uses built on approximately 18,700 acres of land. have been converted to non-farm uses since 2000. Nearly 40% of this land has been identified in this plan as existing or potential farmland.

Since 2002, there has been a 12.7% loss of farmland (14,366 acres). The rate of farmland loss has varied greatly over the years: Between 1997 and 2001, there was a slight increase in the amount of land farmed (+1.7%). Between 2002 and 2007 however, there was a 15% loss.

In addition to understanding changes in numbers of farms and farmland acres, conversion pressure on farmland can be measured in several other direct and indirect ways:

1. Population Change – Where and how much is taking place?
2. Housing Changes – Where and how much additional housing is being built?
3. Infrastructure (Water, Sewer, Roads) Changes – Where is infrastructure located in relation to population and housing growth and farmland?
4. Critical Mass of Farmland – where is the critical mass of priority farmland in Schoharie County and are these areas under conversion pressure?

Population Changes

Between 2000 and 2010, the County's population increased by about 3.7% (31,582 to 32,749). The US Census has estimated a slightly lower population of 32,153 people in 2014. Growth in the County has historically been low, but steady. It is likely that flooding from Hurricane Irene in 2011 has been a factor in the decrease of population.

The growth pattern in Schoharie County is low density residential development and farmland/forest areas surrounding several more densely traditional population centers such as the villages and hamlets. The low density residential development pattern here has other implications for agriculture: it can increase conflicts between new rural residents and agricultural operations, fragment access to farm fields, degrade the environment, as well as lead to an increase in property values and taxes.

Table 1 shows population changes town by town. Two towns (Fulton and Schoharie) lost population, two remained largely unchanged (Sharon and Wright) and the remaining towns all gained at least some population between 2000 and 2010. The rate of change in population ranged from 1.1% to 14.2%. The highest growth in population was seen in the southern county towns of Blenheim (14.2%) and Jefferson (9.7%), along with Carlisle (10.8%). Gilboa, Richmondville, and Middleburgh saw moderate rates of growth between 6.6% and 8.2%. Low rates of population growth were seen in other towns.

Table 1: Population Trends

	Population		
Town	2000 Census	2010 Census	% change 2000 to 2010
Blenheim	330	377	14.2
Broome	947	973	2.7
Carlisle	1758	1948	10.8
Cobleskill	6407	6625	3.4
Conesville	726	734	1.1
Esperance	2043	2076	1.6
Fulton	1495	1442	-3.5
Gilboa	1215	1307	7.5
Jefferson	1285	1410	9.7
Middleburgh	3515	3746	6.6
Richmondville	2412	2610	8.2
Schoharie	3299	3205	-2.8
Seward	1637	1763	7.7
Sharon	1843	1846	0
Summit	1123	1148	<1
Wright	1547	1539	<1
County	31,582	32,749	3.7

Housing Changes

County-wide, there was a 8.3% increase in the number of housing units in Schoharie County between 2000 and 2010 (Table 2). By 2010, there were 17,231 housing units in the County. The Recent Development Map shows specific locations considered to have been built upon since 2000. (Note that this map includes newly developed locations up until 2016 whereas the Census documents changes only between 2000 and 2010).

In the decade between 2000 and 2010, housing growth outpaced population growth (3.7% population increase compared to 8.3% housing unit increase). All but one town (Cobleskill) had increases in the number of housing units, even in those towns that lost population. Cobleskill lost housing units, Carlisle had no change, and Conesville experienced only a 1.3% increase in housing units.

The highest growth in the number of housing units was in Blenheim and Seward (19.1% and 15.7% respectively). Middleburgh, Richmondville, Sharon and Wright all saw above average increases in the number of housing units. While Schoharie lost population, it gained 6.3% additional housing units. Most of the towns had housing increases ranging from 3% to 9% (Table 3). In all towns but Cobleskill, Carlisle and Jefferson housing growth outpaced population growth.

A mismatch between housing growth and population growth is a common pattern seen throughout upstate New York. When this occurs, it often indicates some level of rural sprawl. The explanation for this could be partly attributed to construction of or use of second homes. Between 2000 and 2010, there was at least a 3% increase in the number of homes categorized in the Census as 'seasonal'.

Growth in the northwestern corner of the County and in some southern towns may be explained by increases in second homes. Note on the Recent Development Map, the majority of recent development has occurred in areas that are farmed. Route I-88 may also have some influence on where additional homes/dwellings have occurred. Housing changes in Wright, Middleburgh, Richmondville, Seward, Sharon, and Fulton may be more relevant to concerns about farmland because these are the towns where a lot of farming activities take place.

Table 2: Housing Trends

Town	Housing Trends		
	2000 Census	2010 Census	% Change 2000 to 2010
Blenheim	303	361	19.1
Broome	767	821	7.0
Carlisle	728	728	0
Cobleskill	2509	2421	-3.5
Conesville	777	787	1.3
Esperance	856	915	6.9
Fulton	805	869	8.0
Gilboa	992	1071	8.0
Jefferson	904	965	6.7
Middleburgh	1676	1851	10.4
Richmondville	1141	1251	9.6
Schoharie	1435	1526	6.3
Seward	683	790	15.7
Sharon	838	915	9.2
Summit	879	926	5.3
Wright	622	675	8.5
County	15,915	17,231	8.3

Table 3: Comparison of Housing and Population Growth

Town	Population % change	Housing % Change
Blenheim	14.2	19.1
Broome	2.7	7.0
Carlisle	10.8	0
Cobleskill	3.4	-3.5
Conesville	1.1	1.3
Esperance	1.6	6.9
Fulton	-3.5	8.0
Gilboa	7.5	8.0
Jefferson	9.7	6.7
Middleburgh	6.6	10.4
Richmondville	8.2	9.6
Schoharie	-2.8	6.3
Seward	7.7	15.7
Sharon	0	9.2
Summit	<1	5.3
Wright	<1	8.5
County	3.7	8.3

Recent Development

The Map 'Recent Development' shows all the parcels in Schoharie County that have been built upon since 2000. This map offers a different understanding of the conversion pressure in the County. While the level of development in the County is relatively low, growth is spread throughout the county and not concentrated in any one area.

As seen in the map, every town in the County except Blenheim have had some level of building in the past 16 years. There were 1,190 parcels that have had new structures built on them since the year 2000. That represents 19,952 total acres, with 410 of the recently built parcels located in or partially in a NYS Agricultural District. 774 of the recently built parcels are on or adjacent to existing or potential farmland (as identified on the map). Almost all (1,170) are within ½ mile of existing or potential farmland. Cobleskill, Richmondville, and Schoharie had the most number of parcels recently built on. Middleburgh, Carlisle, and Gilboa had the fewest. In the northern part of the County where most active farmland is (Wright, Schoharie, Cobleskill, Carlisle, Sharon, Seward, Richmondville), 608 parcels had building on them, or 51% of the newly built parcels in the County.

Infrastructure

The Public Water and Sewer Map shows locations of water and sewer infrastructure in the County. That infrastructure is concentrated in and near the villages. Farmland loss and conversion does not highly influence non-farm growth in the County. However, because provision of water and sewer is known to

promote non-farm growth, Schoharie County and its municipalities should be aware of the potential adverse impact expansion of that infrastructure could have on farm activities.

Cost of Community Service Studies

Communities often evaluate the impact of growth on local municipal budgets. Many municipalities believe that residential development benefits the fiscal health of the community and that it will lower property taxes. Others view farmland as a land use that should be developed to a higher and best use as residences or commercial property. However, a variety of fiscal impact studies done throughout New York State have shown that residential development is a net fiscal loss and that maintaining land in farming is fiscally beneficial.

A Cost of Community Service Study (COCS) is a form of fiscal impact analysis that helps communities measure the contribution of agricultural lands to the local tax base. Farmlands may generate less tax revenue compared to residential, commercial, or industrial properties, but they also require little infrastructure or public services.³ Multiple studies done throughout the State show farmlands generate more public revenue than they receive back in public services. COCS not only show that there is a high cost of residential development, but that agricultural land uses offer fiscal benefits similar for commercial and industrial land uses. “In nearly every community studied, farmland has generated a fiscal surplus to help offset the shortfall created by residential demand for public services. This is true even when the land is assessed at its current, agricultural use.”⁴ In the American Farmland Trust study, the median cost per dollar of revenue raised to provide public services is \$0.29 for commercial and industrial land uses, \$0.35 for farmland and open lands, and \$1.16 for residential land uses.

No specific cost of community service study has been conducted in Schoharie. However, the pattern of agricultural, forested, and other open lands has consistently been shown to bring in more tax dollars than they require in services compared to residences and commercial land uses. The following chart (Figure 6) illustrates some of the other COCS studies done throughout New York State. While the exact dollar figures change from location to location, these studies both within New York State as well as other locations in the United States show a great amount of consistency in the general results: agricultural land uses are important to the fiscal health of a community.

³ Adapted from the American Farmland Trust, Farmland Information Center Fact Sheet on Cost of Community Service Studies, August 2010.

⁴ American Farmland Trust, Farmland Information Center Fact Sheet on Cost of Community Service Studies, August 2010.

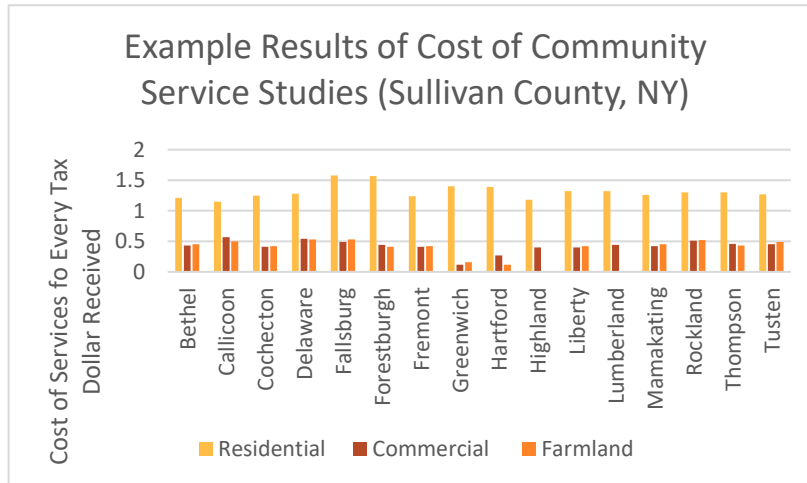


Figure 6: Examples of Cost of Community Service Studies From several New York State Towns

Growth Patterns and Farming

Schoharie County has experienced slow to moderate yet steady increases in population and housing over the years. While it does not seem to be acutely recognized as taking place, or as being an issue related to farmland and farming activities, there is conversion pressure as shown by rising population and housing levels in most of the locations where agriculture takes place in Schoharie County. There has also been subdivision of land into building lots on and near farmland. Some of this activity does not show up in the population and housing data, as many of these new lots have not been built on. But it does result in fragmented farmland ownership, eventual loss of farmland, and may lead to conflicting land uses in the future. Currently, locations served with water and sewer infrastructure are concentrated near villages and hamlets in the more heavily farmed northern portion of the county. That affords opportunities to concentrate future growth in those locations, but also poses risks if that infrastructure were to spread out into farm areas. Ongoing scattered, large lot, rural development raises potential for conflicts, increased property values, higher taxes, loss of farmland, and more pressure for divergent land uses that will likely negatively affect agriculture long-term.

G. Identifying Priority Farmlands

New York State Priority Farmland Criteria

New York State requires county farmland protection plans to identify any farmland or farmed areas that are to be protected.⁵ A landowner who wishes to sell their development rights through the state's Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program must show that the proposed land is "...at a minimum, consistent with the location of any land or areas proposed to be protected in a county's or a municipality's agricultural and farmland protection plan".

The State PDR program is designed to:

- preserve "viable agricultural land" as defined in §301 of the NYS Agriculture and Markets Law;
- protect farmland in areas facing significant development pressure; and
- protect lands that serve as a buffer for a significant natural public resource containing important ecosystem or habitat characteristics.

The specific state-level criteria for farmland preservation revolve around how well the proposed project:

- will preserve "viable agricultural land";
- is in areas facing significant development pressure;
- serve as a buffer for a significant natural public resource containing important ecosystem or habitat characteristics;
- protect prime farmland soils;
- protect farmland of statewide importance soils; and
- protect land used in agricultural production.

Identifying the farms and farmland in Schoharie County

Farms cannot be successful without land resources. This Plan recognizes that having financially successful and sustainable farms is the best way to preserve farmland. However, Schoharie County communities will change and grow over time, and farmland here will remain at risk for development or in some areas, abandonment. Therefore, identification of important farmlands is a crucial part of the Plan so that programs can be targeted to those critical areas. Additionally, the State's Circular 1500, that establishes components to be discussed within a County-level agricultural and farmland protection plan requires identification of important farmlands that could be protected.

This section outlines the steps taken by the County to identify those farmlands. The County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board worked to identify parcels already being farmed as well as other characteristics that define 'important farmland.' The Board discussed features that affect the value,

⁵ The state has elevated the importance of county-level priority farmland identification because NYSDAM provides funding to farmland protection projects that are consistent with local agricultural and farmland protection plans.

condition, and usefulness of a piece of farmland in Schoharie County. The committee discussed items that affect its value, productivity, viability, and how it is affected. It then identified a list of criteria to use that fit into the broad topics previously identified.

The criteria used to define important farmlands were

- All 100 class parcels (agriculture);
- Property class 241 – (Primarily residential, also used in agricultural production);
- Parcels that receive an agricultural assessment, but not classified as agriculture in the tax parcel data;
- Parcels that receive a forest assessment, but are not classified as agriculture in the tax parcel data;
- Parcels that are in a NYS agricultural district, are not classified as agriculture in the tax parcel data, but appear to be used for an agricultural use (via aerial photo); and
- Other vacant and large residential parcels that appear to be used for agriculture (via aerial photo).

Criteria used for the ranking:

As part of this planning update, the AFPB discussed the relative importance of these criteria, along with other possibilities. The results are listed below. Some of these criteria have data and are mappable, while others are not. To further the understanding of where the critical mass of farmland in Schoharie County is, a map has been created showing farmlands that score higher using mappable criteria.

Using a geographic information system, each parcel identified as a farmed parcel was evaluated and ranked by identifying those mappable criteria found on or near it, applying a score for each criterion, and adding them up to produce a total score for each parcel (using the list that follows). The Priority Farmland Area map shows those farmed parcels and their relative scores. This shows the relative importance of all farmland in the County.

The Priority Farmland Area Map includes all farmland in the County. It should not be interpreted to mean areas with lower rankings do not have viable farmland. On the map, the darker the color, the more criteria that parcel meets.

The analysis done for identification of important farmland areas included giving each of the following criteria a score. If an identified farmland parcel meets any of the following criteria, it got a score of 1 for each criterion met:

- Size of parcel (25 acres or larger)
- In an Ag District (If yes)
- Gets Ag Land Value Assessment (If yes)
- Amount of farm quality soils (50% or more prime, or 50% or more state important)
- Proximity to other Ag Land (50% or more within a ¼ mile surrounding area)
- Proximity to Public Water Supply (0.5 miles)
- Proximity to Public Sewer System (0.5 miles)
- Proximity to Village (0.5 miles)
- In or near developed areas (3 or more parcels within ½ mile built since 2000)

- ### Layers to map, but not added to the ranking:



- The map shows the total 'score' of each parcel: The more features from the list above the parcel had, the higher the 'score' and thus the darker the color on the map. All farmland is considered important in Schoharie County, but those that are colored the darkest are those that meet more of the important farmland criteria. This map can be used to support farmland protection initiatives.

Due to the dynamic nature of some of the data used to produce this map, it will change over time. There are also some criteria used that are important, but cannot be mapped using existing data. This map should be updated as new information becomes available.

H. Summary of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats

All the data collected and information gathered from farmers, ag-businesses, ag-agencies and others throughout the planning processes was evaluated to determine what are the strengths of farming in Schoharie County as well as what the weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) are.

Knowing the SWOT's is important so that the County can maintain those features that make agriculture strong, improve those that are weaknesses or gaps, take advantage of opportunities, and address long-term threats. The features included on the Schoharie County SWOT also helped inform the vision and goals established in this Plan.

A summary of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats identified in this Plan is:

Strengths	Weaknesses
Land Resources for Farming Water resources Climate – air and rain Productive farmland soils Open land available for farming Development pressure is not critically high Scenic beauty of landscape Peace and quiet of rural area Location Near transportation corridor Near Capital District markets At center of a larger regional mass of active farms Farmers and Community SUNY Cobleskill The farm community Acceptance of agriculture and practices by community Dedication and perseverance of farmers Farmer and non-farmer connectivity Women involved in agriculture Schoharie's ag heritage and culture Community support Farm support agencies (CCE, Farm Credit, NRCS, SWCD located in County) There are many opportunities for sustainable growth in Schoharie County Farming Diversity of farming including type and size Direct Sales/Schoharie County Fresh	Labor Issues Lack of access to labor Cost of labor Regulations that prevent hiring young people to train Aging farmers and lack of succession planning Taxes Small Profit and High Costs of Business Cost of land Low milk prices/volatility Cost of organic certification Lack of local markets Regulations – state and federal High costs of production Lack of Next Generation of Farmers Lack of apprenticeship and mentoring programs Difficulty of starting new farms, especially dairy Ag Education not well funded Poor attitudes about ag as a career Lack of Infrastructure Lack of broadband/internet Lack of current supply of agricultural products to support more food processing including slaughterhouse, aggregation, refrigeration or other value-added facilities Limited access to specialized resources and training DOT and farm equipment access issues Distance to NYC and larger urban markets Limited infrastructure for food processing

	<p>Lack of quality lodging to promote ag-tourism</p> <p>Marketing and Education</p> <p>Poor marketing of farm products</p> <p>Poor marketing of County to gain more local and distant customers</p> <p>Farmers lack of marketing experience</p> <p>Lack of understanding about agriculture</p> <p>Disconnect between the farm community and SUNY Cobleskill</p> <p>Lack of understanding about rural development pressure taking place here</p> <p>Slow rural sprawl</p>
Opportunities	Threats
<p>New Farmers Program</p> <p>Internships in High Schools</p> <p>Mentoring of young adults/college-age</p> <p>Have an internship/mentor coordinator to work with high schools and Colleges</p> <p>Change labor laws to allow for more youth hiring</p> <p>Program to have students stay on farm</p> <p>Farmer succession/transition program</p> <p>First time farmer incentives</p> <p>Marketing</p> <p>Agri-tourism</p> <p>Marketing/recruit new farmers to come to County</p> <p>Farm product marketing to new and diverse markets</p> <p>Market to niche markets</p> <p>Hire a marketing specialist for farms and farm products</p> <p>More effective use of social media and use of internet advertising</p> <p>Increase local demand for local products</p> <p>Leadership and team building for marketing</p> <p>Create model working farm</p> <p>Agri-tourism enhancement</p> <p>Have farm tours/farm family day/farm stays</p> <p>Create website portal or clearinghouse for information about and for farms</p> <p>Expand Markets</p> <p>Encourage local retail stores to carry local products</p> <p>Market outlet at I-88</p>	<p>High cost of farming and low profitability</p> <p>Difficulty finding and keeping labor</p> <p>Perceptions about agriculture among non-farmers</p> <p>Lack of a next generation of farmers</p> <p>Development of farmland</p> <p>Fracking/industrialization that takes productive farmland</p> <p>Lack of profitability of dairy industry</p>

<p>More farmer's markets Farm to School Program enhancement Farm to Institution program Farm to Table Program Hop growing Small grain growing Beef/Grass-fed Beef Goat Milk</p> <p>Infrastructure Enhancements</p> <p>Dairy or value-added dairy processing plant Aggregation and refrigeration facility Meat processing facility for large and small animals Canning facility Improve broadband Use renewable energy sources Recycle ag products for energy Create shared use kitchen Develop aggregation with refrigeration facility Implement food hub</p> <p>Regulations</p> <p>Pass right-to-farm laws in towns Promote farm friendly zoning and land use laws</p>	
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Photo Courtesy of SUNY Cobleskill

Taking Action

Recommended Programs and Projects

This section of the Plan outlines what actions should take place, how those actions can be implemented, when to take those actions, and other details that discuss how strategies will be implemented to accomplish the goals developed earlier in this Plan. This part of the Plan refers to: a) specific programs and projects to be started, and b) specific action steps necessary to bring about those programs and projects.

The first part of this section outlines the action (what should happen). That is followed by a chart that offers more information for the high priority projects that should begin to be implemented immediately after adoption of the Plan.



Action #1: Build Organizational Capacity in the County to Support Agricultural Economic Programs.

Ultimately, implementation of any of the recommendations included in this Plan will require leadership, collaboration and communication between many people and agencies. The County, Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board, the many agencies, groups and organizations – and of course, the farm community – all have important roles to play in implementing these initiatives⁶. Efficient assignment of tasks, solid communication to prevent duplication, monitoring, and reporting will all be important to the success of implementing this Plan. Similarly, there is a critical need for a clearinghouse for information and one on one assistance and communication with farmers.

Currently there are a variety of organizations, agencies and institutions that are involved in supporting and promoting agriculture. There is a need to create and sustain a capacity and an organizational set-up to implement the actions from this Plan. While the County Board of Supervisors adopts and oversees the implementation of the Plan, the day to day work of that must be efficiently addressed. As identified throughout this process, creating and sustaining an organizational structure to carry out the needed projects is a foundational step the County must take. Further, it is recognized that there needs to be personnel to provide hands on and ‘boots on the ground’ help carry out and support that organizational structure.

⁶ See list of potential partners that the County could work with to help implement these programs at the end of this section.

The following strategies will provide the foundation for successful implementation of projects:

1. The Board of Supervisors should formally establish and appoint an **Agricultural Economic Development Implementation Roundtable** to assist in making this plan a reality. This is envisioned as a working group made up of representatives of all the farm agencies and organizations in the County – each of which can individually assist in various aspects of implementing a project. The roundtable should be established to accomplish specific tasks, with realistic time frames, identified roles, and with regular reporting to the County. Through regular communication there can be a sharing of information, identification of partnership opportunities, and assignment of lead agencies (among the members) to carry out specific actions. Participants should include representative(s) of the County Board of Supervisors, the Schoharie County Planning Agency, the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Schoharie and Otsego Counties, Schoharie County Farm Bureau, SUNY Cobleskill, the IDA, Farm Service Agency, two or three farmers/agri-business and others as needed.
2. Create an **Agricultural Economic Development Coordinator** position to serve as staff for the above roundtable and provide support to implement the priority projects identified in this plan. This position could be housed in the County, and coordinated with other programs such as at CCE, SUNY, and others. This coordinator would serve as a facilitator and take on some of these primary roles:
 - a. Be a clearinghouse for information and knowledge about local, regional, State and Federal programs.
 - b. Have individual outreach to county farmers to learn their specific needs and plans so that they can be effectively matched with programs and opportunities.
 - c. Assist and coordinate the work of the Roundtable.
 - d. Seek appropriate grants to fund projects outlined in this Plan.
 - e. Facilitate regular, informal get-togethers for farmers so that they can network, share information, learn from each other, and collaborate.
3. Encourage the development of a county-level or a regional-level **Agribusiness Development Corporation** (based on the Hudson Valley Agribusiness Development Corporation (HVADC) model) to serve Schoharie County. This entity would be appropriate to work closely with the Implementation Roundtable and staff to offer on-farm one-on-one business, economic, and farm planning assistance, business planning, and other services, and to assist in securing financing, grant writing, etc.
4. The County and its farm support agencies and organizations should continue a **strong partnership with SUNY Cobleskill**.
 - a. Find ways to enable farmers to gain more from the faculty, staff and students at SUNY Cobleskill.
 - b. Cooperate and participate in the new SUNY Institute programs (See Box, below).
 - c. Help farmers in the county become more knowledgeable about degree and non-credit programs in agriculture and food systems available at SUNY Cobleskill, especially that related to the dairy processing, fermentation and meat processing.
 - d. Work with SUNY Cobleskill to explore feasibility of allowing for processing of or sale of local agricultural products on campus and through their other programming

Institute for Rural Vitality at SUNY Cobleskill (Information Courtesy of SUNY Cobleskill)**Institute Vision**

The Institute for Rural Vitality at SUNY Cobleskill will foster and execute initiatives that align with SUNY Cobleskill's mission and leverage its intellectual capital, student capabilities, facilities and community partnerships to enhance community and economic vitality in rural New York State.

Institute Significance

SUNY Cobleskill and its larger community can create an effective and sustainable partnership that enhances quality of life in the region and generates opportunities for growth. An economically vibrant community replete with high-wage job opportunities and cultural, entertainment and business amenities is essential for faculty and staff work, student satisfaction and institutional growth. SUNY Cobleskill has the capacity to mobilize its human and physical resources through focused activities that generate these outcomes. The expectation is that work, as measured through evaluation protocols, will lead to positive impacts on quality of life in the community. The Institute will facilitate coordination of College-driven efforts that exemplify its institutional mission and achieve long-term college and community vitality.

Institute Framework

The Institute will be comprised of centers that advance the College's strategic priorities and carry out unique but complementary facets of its underlying mission. Each center's work will require leadership and input from SUNY Cobleskill faculty and staff and will thrive with student engagement and community member buy-in. Key professional staff and College administrators including representation from Academic Affairs, Operations, Business & Finance, Advancement, Marketing & Communications, Student Life, Continuing Education and Student Success will play vital roles in Institute operations and outreach.

Institute Centers include:

The Center for Farm and Food Entrepreneurship

The Center for Community Advancement

The Center for Business Development

Center for Art and Culture

Center for Rural Legal and Policy Services

5. **Prepare for consolidated grant applications** and other funding requests by completing project development for the projects outlined in this plan. Pre-planning should be done to fully detail the project, its goals, its relationship to Mohawk Valley Regional Economic Development Council strategies, as well as its budget, staffing needs, partners, time frames, and project match opportunities. Effective grant writing will depend on having this information ready and available to use in applications. Take advantage of funding opportunities that may arise because of the Southern Tier East Regional Planning Board's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), which prioritizes hops and craft beverage priorities established for Schoharie County. **Work closely with the Mohawk Valley Regional Economic Development Council** so that they understand and support Schoharie County needs and projects.

Action #2: Develop Agricultural Economic Development Programs

1. County economic development programs, including development of any county-wide economic plan, should **recognize agriculture as a major economic driver in the county**, and include strategies for farm and agribusiness retention and expansion with special emphasis on dairy profitability, value-added food/processing and craft beverage-related production. To that end,
 - a. Commit a portion of economic development funding in the County on ag-related programs that create, retain and attract farmers and agri-businesses.
 - b. Update the goals of the IDA and work aggressively to ensure that the Schoharie County IDA places more emphasis on supporting agricultural operations and businesses that support agriculture. Use Jefferson County IDA as a model to see how programming works this way (See Appendix F). The IDA should specifically add a definition to their tax exemption policy to incorporate agricultural processing.
 - c. Establish a revolving loan program targeted to agriculture especially for diversification, transitioning, and new farm operations.
 - d. Work with the existing farm business incubator. In 2015, SUNY Cobleskill, together with the Center for Agricultural Development and Entrepreneurship (CADE) received designation as a business incubator. The Farm and Food Business Incubator (FFBI) is currently working with clients and Schoharie County efforts related to incubator services should coordinate and work with the FFBI. Coordination between other Schoharie County agricultural economic development programs and the FFBI can be facilitated by the proposed Agricultural Economic Development Coordinator (see action below).
 - e. Institute an Agricultural Business Expansion and Retention Program designed to give that one on one assistance to farmers and to be able to rapidly address market changes.
2. To help improve dairy farm success, provide **real time financial information** to help dairy farmers monitor, benchmark and budget. The Cornell Cooperative Extension Farm Business Summary program should be made available to Schoharie County dairy farmers.
3. Provide **micro loans** to farmers to help them address new the food safety compliance requirements (Food Safety Modernization Act, or FSMA).
4. Encourage the formation of **buying cooperatives** to help farmers reduce production costs.
5. Encourage eligible farmers and farmland owners to apply for the State **agricultural assessments** if they are eligible.
6. Create mechanisms for **matching new markets in urban areas with farmers** and farm operations in Schoharie County.

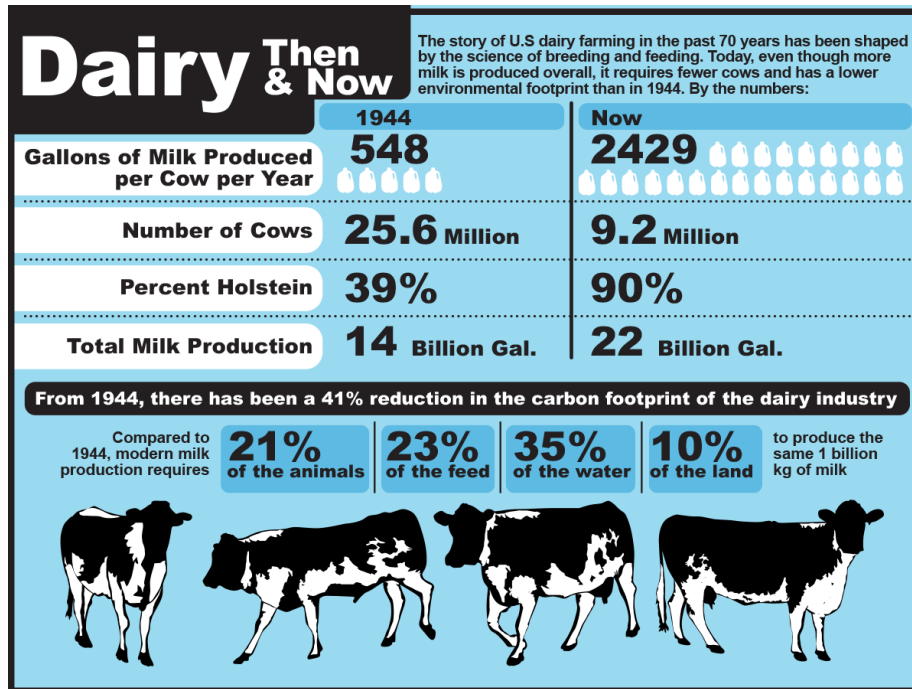


Action #3: Provide Educational Programs to Multiple Audiences and Technical Assistance to Farmers

1. Support farm diversification and transition to new products by providing training and information to farmers so that they can **add value to existing products**. For those farmers with direct sales, provide specific training and technical assistance related to business planning and marketing of products including finding markets, pricing strategies and marketing themes. Support expanding technical expertise from Cornell Cooperative Extension to Schoharie County farmers so that they can take advantage of livestock, dairy, farm business planning and vegetable specialists.
2. Continue to **promote and offer technical assistance and business planning** to farms in the NYC Watershed through the Watershed Agricultural Council.
3. Support **dairy profitability programs** through Schoharie/Otsego CCE programming and encourage dairy farmer participation. Seek funding and expand programs to provide access for Schoharie County farmers to Cornell's Harvest New York Program. Expand Pro Dairy team accessibility to dairy farmers in the County. Of critical importance is for these programs to provide:
 - a. Technical support to evaluate financial implications of farm practices such as heifer raising and feeding for optimal cost of production per cwt.
 - b. Identification of and technical support to identify underperforming resources.
4. Aggressively pursue **expansion of the craft beverage industry**. Coordinate with existing agencies and organizations to further the growing and processing of hops and small grains for beverages in Schoharie County. Involve both CCE and the Northeast Hops Alliance in these endeavors. Ensure that farmers are provided with information about these commodities.
5. Provide technical assistance to **address new food safety compliance requirements** (FSMA).
6. Make it a priority to enhance agricultural education in both schools and among the general public.



Photo Courtesy of SUNY Cobleskill



This Dairy-Info Graphic from the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Cornell University (periodCALS, Vol.6, Issue 2, 2016) illustrates the kind of important information needed to be conveyed to the public.

7. Establish a **mentoring program** in Schoharie County that matches new farmers with experienced farmers.
 - a. Work with SUNY Cobleskill to create more opportunities for SUNY agricultural students to mentor with County farmers.
 - b. Promote the availability of local high school interns with local farms. To do this, coordinate with SUNY as well as Schoharie Central School and Cobleskill-Richmondville school districts.
 - c. Work with and distribute SUNY Cobleskill's "Careers in Agriculture" brochure to promote careers beyond the farm.
 - d. Expand agricultural education and career awareness programs for high school students. [Note – The Mohawk Valley Regional Sustainability Plan includes an implementation action to "Integrate agricultural and forestry curricula into K-12 education" with additional details provided.]
8. Work with SUNY Cobleskill to initiate **P-TECH programs in Schoharie County schools**. Partner with SUNY Cobleskill to offer additional "College in the High School" offerings to educate and promote agriculture as a viable career choice with Schoharie County schools. The Ag P-TECH is a high school education curriculum that centers on project-based learning focusing on skills in nine clusters – agricultural business, agricultural science, agricultural engineering technology, animal husbandry, biological technology, culinary arts, environmental studies, fisheries/wildlife and sustainable crop

production. Selected students can earn associates degrees and be considered for participating companies when they graduate. Currently this program is active in the St. Johnsville School District.

9. Ensure that training programs offered in the County, through CCE, SUNY or other entities address **labor management** so farmers can increase their skills in obtaining higher productivity of labor and reducing farm labor turnover.

10. Develop an **online clearinghouse** with information for farmers on local, state and national agricultural resources, grants, technical support, etc. There is need for an organized one-stop place for this information. Once created, this must be kept up to date. Consider linking to the portal already in existence at Cornell Cooperative Extension.



11. Help new and potential farmers **understand funding programs and opportunities** available through state and federal funding programs.
12. Continue to **offer farm business planning, succession and transition assistance** through Cornell Cooperative Extension, NY FarmNet, and other organizations such as the Utica IT program or the Small Business Administration. See Appendix F for additional information.
13. Provide **training about agricultural land uses** to planning boards and ZBAs through required annual training for those boards.
14. The County Planning Department should train local Town Boards about the importance of having an **agricultural member of the Planning Board** as per Town Law 271 (11).
15. Work with area realtors so they understand the required **disclosures about agricultural districts** and ag data statements when sales or development of land in NY Ag Districts take place in Schoharie County.



16. Provide information to farmers on **how to adapt to and mitigate climate change**. Work with Cornell Cooperative Extension to disseminate this information.

Action #4: Market County Farms and Farm Products

1. Expand **'Farm to Institution' programs**. Farm to institution programs are marketing and sales programs to get local farm products into local schools and other institutions in a community. There are several opportunities for more farm to institution programs in Schoharie County but the infrastructure to support those efforts must also be in place. Needed infrastructure includes food distribution and storage mechanisms and building farmer capacity to meet institution needs. Farm to institution opportunities in the County include:
 - a. Expanding existing Farm to School program to additional school districts
 - b. Coordinating with Office for the Aging/Meals on Wheels program
 - c. Exploring opportunities with the Cobleskill Regional Hospital
 - d. Exploring opportunities with the County Jail (when re-built in the County)
 - e. SUNY Cobleskill (SUNY Cobleskill is currently building a START-UP NY partnership with a private firm to build virtual infrastructure to facilitate large-volume food buying/selling between area farms and SUNY and other institutions.)
2. Expand programming to involve local foods in **a farm-to-table dining program** and by developing a farmer-chef connect program.
3. Expand marketing and programming **support for farmers' markets**.
 - a. Continue support of the Cobleskill Farmers Market.
 - b. Work to expand and promote the online Schoharie Fresh market.
 - c. Aid those who want to initiate a new farmers market.
 - d. Consider creating a destination farmers market, like the Pakatakan Market – See Appendix F).

4. Develop a **comprehensive strategic marketing plan for agriculture** that includes strategies to reach multiple target markets (e.g., consumers, visitors, institutions, new farmers). Some of the actions that should be part of this strategic marketing plan include:
 - a. Farm visitation programs.
 - b. Develop a Schoharie County Farm Map as a tool to promote agritourism and increase sales of local food and farm products throughout the county.
 - c. Continue collaborating with neighboring counties, such as Montgomery or Otsego, on agritourism activities and promotion. Potential benefits include the ability to market a critical mass of farms and farm-based activities, share successes, and ultimately attract a higher level of visitation. Collaboration is already starting: in 2016, Family Farm Day, a signature event in Schoharie County during the peak of the growing and tourist season, is being coordinated with Otsego County.
 - d. Increase the participation of Schoharie County farms in existing branding programs such as Pure Catskills, and in the new 'New York State Grown & Certified' program and other new State labels/certifications.
 - e. Provide agritourism hospitality training for interested farmers on how to interact with the public on farm operations.
 - f. Encourage participation by Schoharie County farms and restaurants in cooperative advertising and marketing campaigns.
 - g. Develop a directory for the public showing all products available in the County.
 - h. Work with supermarkets and other outlets to label dairy cases in local stores indicating local dairy products.
 - i. Create mechanisms for matching new markets in urban areas with farmers and farm operations in Schoharie County.
 1. Educate local policy makers about importance of ag to the economy. Organize an annual or bi-annual tour of farms with local policy makers and county officials.
 - j. Educate local policy makers about importance of ag to the economy. Tour of farms with local policy makers.
5. Develop a **Schoharie County Farm Map** as a tool to promote agritourism and increase sales of local food and farm products throughout the county. Develop a directory for the public showing all



Photo Courtesy of Cathleen Berry

products available in the County. Use the Schoharie-Otsego Family Farm Day maps as a base map for this effort.

6. Increase the participation of Schoharie County farms in **existing branding programs** such as Pure Catskills and New York State Grown & Certified, and other State labels/certifications.
7. Provide **agritourism hospitality training** for interested farmers on how to interact with the public on farm operations.
8. Encourage participation by Schoharie County farms and restaurants in **cooperative advertising and marketing campaigns**.
9. **Expand agri-tourism opportunities** in the County by marketing and taking advantage of the Route 20 Scenic Byway, Farm Family Day, Beverage Trail, the Quilt Barn Trail, Trails to Tales, and the Schoharie County Beverage Trail. Support creation of other tourist oriented programs such as a Timothy Murphy Trail, and the proposed multi-use trails in the Schoharie Valley such as those in the Village of Schoharie and that being planned by SALT, INC.



10. **Create a Come Farm With Us program** (use Jefferson County Model) and website to promote agricultural opportunities in Schoharie County. This is also a marketing program for Schoharie farms and farm products. Promote the unique location of Schoharie for creation of 'lifestyle farms', homestead farms, use of leased lands for new farm start-ups and those farms that can take advantage of proximity to urban markets. As part of this, create a farmer/farmland match program to link people who have viable land that could be used for farming with farmers seeking land. It would be helpful to also develop a database of county-repossessed properties that would be available to new farmers at tax auction. Coordinate this program with new farmer recruitment initiatives.
11. **Advertise the County** on sites targeted to beginning farmers and other groups.
12. To aid in marketing efforts, create a **commodity-targeted set of statistics and data** that detail market needs and demand. This data will help new farmers understand market opportunities and is key to their business planning. Participate in workshops and conferences for prospective and new farmers.
13. Provide **technical assistance to address new Food Safety Modernization Act** requirements.

Action #5: Develop Needed Farm Infrastructure and Protect Farmland

1. **Expand broadband internet** availability to the entire county. Make it a priority to work with Middleburgh Telephone and other providers and the New NY Broadband Program to ensure that broadband services are provided to all areas of the County so that farm businesses can benefit from these technologies.
2. **Evaluate need and support for additional food processing facilities** using county-grown produce such as cheese, yogurt, smoked meat, etc. to create value-added products, including milk and milk-value-added processing. These should include evaluation of emerging markets, market feasibility, and understanding farmers' ability and desire to participate in new products. To implement this, Schoharie County must have the capacity and organizational structure to work with farmers on an ongoing basis (See Action #1).
3. **Resubmit the grant application** to fund the proposed Small/Specialty Grains Clearinghouse (virtual) to determine the supply of and demand for hops and malted barley in the region. *(Note: a USDA LFPP Implementation Grant application was previously submitted, but not funded. This application should be resubmitted for further consideration of funding.)*
4. Help farmers **expand on-farm facilities for hops** growing, drying, and storage. Involve both CCE and the Northeast Hops Alliance in these endeavors.
5. **Promote use of farmland protection tools.** While the most successful method of protecting farmland is to ensure economically successful farms, other tools are available to help protect farmland. Schoharie County should implement the following programs:
 - a. Promote use of New York State farmland protection grant funding with local farmers to protect priority farmlands in the County. Ensure that farmers are aware of this program, and when applications are submitted, Schoharie County and local town governments should support local farmers desire to protect their lands.
 - b. Help local towns and villages create land use plans and land use regulatory tools that align with both agricultural economic development and non-farm development policies. Develop a farmland protection toolkit for local municipalities with model policy statements, definitions, site plan review laws modified for agriculture, subdivision laws, solar laws, and other land use regulations for use by local towns. These models should be developed to promote farm-friendly land use regulations.



1. Provide information and training to towns on farm friendly tools such as use of conservation subdivision, agricultural buffers, and conservation easements, and model language for land use regulations that encourage rather than challenge farm uses. To remove barriers that may challenge agri-tourist farm operations, help local towns update their zoning to define agritourism and make it a permitted use wherever agricultural uses are allowed. This should include u-pick, farm-stays, bed and breakfasts, farm retail markets, wineries/wine tasting, breweries, farm tours, etc.
- c. Support Carlisle, Cobleskill, Wright, and Seward in implementing their town-level agricultural and farmland protection plans. This county-wide plan is not meant to supercede these plans but is designed to be consistent and support of them. Assist with mapping, regulatory updates, grant writing, and other support as they work to implement their plans.
- d. Promote existing town-level Right-to-Farm laws, and encourage adoption of such a local law in the few towns in the County that do not have one in place already. At the State-level, farmers and rural landowners enrolled in a State-certified agricultural district receive important 'right-to-farm' protections through the Agricultural Districts Law, Article 25-AA. County and town level right-to-farm laws are designed to keep a supportive operating environment for farmers by limiting conflicts between farmers and non-farm neighbors. They also show public support for agriculture, supplement the State law, and can help guide future town policies and decisions. Fourteen towns in Schoharie County have right-to-farm laws already in place (see Appendix) and all town officials, farmers and other residents should be well versed in the function of that local law and how it supports local farmers.
- e. Assist local municipalities in understanding the NYS smart growth law when it comes to extension of sewer lines proposed to run through farmland. Any expansions of water or sewer in the County should be encouraged to be in or near villages and hamlets, and in a manner, that will meet the New York State Smart Growth Law. Towns should discourage activities that require extension of sewer and water into active farm areas. Encourage use of development techniques that are farm friendly and that do not disrupt farming.
- f. Use the important farmlands map included in this Plan to target land preservation programs that serve to protect those critical lands. Keep this inventory up to date. Use this information to support farmers who desire to participate in Purchase or Lease of Development Rights (PDR or LDR) programs.
- g. Share this plan with the Schoharie Land Trust to promote coordination of their efforts at protecting land in areas that are identified as important farmlands. A strong partnership should develop between the Land Trust, the County, and farmers and the Land Trust can play a key role in helping protect farmland. Support grant writing efforts with the Land Trust to expand funding opportunities for conservation easements to protect additional farmland. Use Washington

County's Agricultural Stewardship Association as a model for how a land trust can be effective in farmland protection.

- h. Complete a town by town agricultural land inventory with maps and statistics, showing farmland, development pressure, and other ag resources so that each town can use this information in its long-term planning efforts. (See model in Appendix 5).
 - i. Educate farmers about farmland protection options such as easements and other tools that can be used to keep their land in farming after their retirement rather than allowing realtors to subdivide the land and sell it for non-farm uses.
6. Promote **farming as the best land use in the karst areas** of the County. Promote best management practices on farmland, and work with Schoharie County SWCD, NRCS, and farmers to develop specific BMPs for farmland in the Karst area.
 7. Work with SWCD on **training and cost share programs for alternative manure management** on farms.

Action #6: Diversify Farm Products Grown in Schoharie County

1. Encourage use of farm woodlands, especially in the southern part of the County, for wood products and biomass production.
2. Encourage leasing of farm wood lots for hunting and other outdoor recreational activities as a value-added activity on a farm. Provide materials, model leases, and education about how these leases should work.
3. Encourage diversification or new operations to grow high quality hay for horses.
4. Schoharie County may be in a good position to support hops, small grains, grass-fed beef, fiber-based products, and value-added dairy. In addition to the feasibility studies, diversification into these farm types will need to be coordinated with the economic development programs, loans, and technical training.



Photo Courtesy of SUNY Cobleskill

Action #7: Additional Recommended Actions

1. Schoharie County must work regionally to be successful in implementing many of the recommended actions in this Plan. The Agricultural Economic Development Committee and its Coordinator (recommended in Action #1) should work and collaborate with other counties and regional entities.
2. Create a 'rapid response team' made up of farm agencies, consultants, farmers, FarmLink and others that can rapidly address farmers needs to advice and support them to stay in business or transition when farms are in distress (such as when a milk processor closes).
3. Partners (from list below) along with farmers need to build networks and collaborative relationships. There is a need to rebuild the farm community cohesiveness and farmers have suggested more frequent events or get-togethers so they can share information and discuss challenges and issues. Several farmers have suggested regular, but informal in-county tours of farms to build that network and collaboration. Cooperative Extension, Farm Bureau and others could facilitate this effort.
4. Work with New York State to promote use of tax incentives offered to farmers who lease their lands to beginning farmers as part of a farm transition program.
5. Work with local realtors to develop a list of available agricultural property that would appeal to individuals looking to start, lease, or expand a farm operation.
6. Provide templates and model language for a lease-to-own agreement that landowners can use.
7. Farmers should make it a priority to become involved in planning and local government to ensure agricultural land uses and their needs are addressed locally.
8. Develop a County Comprehensive Plan that includes promotion of agriculture and conservation of farmland, or that incorporates this plan for those sections.

Potential Partners for Implementing the Recommended Actions

- Cornell Cooperative Extension of Otsego/Schoharie County
- Farm Credit East, NBT and other agricultural lenders
- Farm Service Agency
- Local Farmers Markets including Schoharie Fresh
- Local school districts
- Natural Resource Conservation Service
- Schoharie County
- Schoharie County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board
- Schoharie County Farm Bureau
- Schoharie County Industrial Development Agency
- Schoharie County Soil and Water Conservation District
- SUNY Cobleskill
- USDA/Rural Development
- Watershed Agricultural Council (for southern county farms)

Priority Projects

This section outlines several initiatives have been identified as priorities that should be implemented first, as they serve as the foundation for other successful outcomes. These were identified by the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board with input from the various input received from the broad farm community.

First and foremost is the need to **build capacity** in the County (and region) for the organization, collaboration and funding of these projects. Building capacity and leadership to carry out the projects recommended in this Plan will be important to provide a long-lasting foundation for other successes. Second, **enhanced marketing** of the County to attract new farmers and farm products is critical. Third, enhancing availability, quality and affordability of **labor** is needed. These three initiatives are outlined below as a 'checklist' for implementation.

Some strategies are short-term and low cost, while others are more complex and need more funding. Many can address more than one goal and strategy. This interrelationship of projects mirrors the interrelationships and complexities seen in the food system. That makes it critical that the County pay attention to collaboration and communication with all parties involved.

All the initiatives and actions recommended in this Plan will require partnerships and close collaboration between the various agencies and organizations that can lend expertise; some of these are within the County while others are most efficient to be implemented at a regional level.

Although the priorities are detailed below, that does not stop the County and its partners from starting any of the other projects recommended in this Plan. It is very likely that organizations such as Cornell Cooperative Extension, SUNY Cobleskill, and Farm Bureau could work on multiple initiatives at any given time. The charts below should be useful as a 'checklist' to focus work to ensure that the most important projects receive close attention.



Priority Project: Create the Organizational Structure for Success					
Priority Action Step	Target Date	Lead Person or Organization	Other Partners	Potential Cost	Local or Regional or Both
Create Implementation Roundtable with scope of work and expectation for results	March 2017	County Board of Supervisors	Cornell Cooperative Extension, Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board, County Planning, Soil and Water Conservation District, Farm Credit East, SUNY Cobleskill, IDA, Farm Service Agency, Farm Bureau, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and ag/forestry businesses.	Low ⁷	Local
Roundtable to create annual work plan for project implementation. Key programs are the Food Value Chain Initiative and the Marketing Agriculture Initiative	April 2017	Roundtable			Local
Assign lead person and agency to each task to be accomplished	May 2017	Roundtable			Local
Roundtable to report on progress to Board of Supervisors	Quarterly	Roundtable			Local
County to continue support for CCE, SWCD and other critical ag programs with expectation they participate in Roundtable and help support the actions outlined in Plan	Annually	County Board of Supervisors			Local

⁷ Potential costs are identified as low, moderate, or high. Low cost actions require minimum or no expenditures to accomplish. Moderate costs are those ranging under \$50,000 and high costs are those that are estimated to be > \$50,000.

Priority Project: Create an Agricultural Economic Development Coordinator Position					
Priority Action Step	Target Date	Lead Person or Organization	Other Partners	Potential Cost	Local or Regional or Both
Roundtable to create detailed job description for the Coordinator to fulfill the actions outlined in Plan.	April 2017	Roundtable	Roundtable and its members, and County Board of Supervisors	Low to develop the program, and high for supporting coordinator ⁸	Local
Roundtable to determine options to 'house' the Coordinator. Consider County, CCE, or formation of an independent local development corporation for this	May 2017	Roundtable and County Board of Supervisors			Local
Seek funding for position for at least a 3 or 4-year period through a CFA application	June/July 2017	Roundtable			Local
Hire position	Fall 2017	Roundtable			Local

⁸ Potential costs are identified as low, moderate, or high. Low cost actions require minimum or no expenditures to accomplish. Moderate costs are those ranging under \$50,000 and high costs are those that are estimated to be > \$50,000.

Priority Project: Marketing Schoharie County Farms and Farm Products					
Priority Action Step	Target Date	Lead Person or Organization	Other Partners	Potential Cost	Local or Regional or Both
Identify potential new markets; conduct studies to determine feasibility of those markets	Winter 2018	Ag Economic Development Coordinator	Roundtable members and County Board of Supervisors, SUNY Cobleskill especially important	High ⁹	Both
Seek funding to prepare the marketing plan and feasibility studies through CFA and other grant applications	For June and July CFA 2018	Ag Economic Development Coordinator			Both
Develop comprehensive marketing plan as detailed in Plan	2018 - 2019	Ag Economic Development Coordinator with marketing consultants			Both
Coordinate and work with farmers to enter and distribute to those new markets	2018-2019	Ag Economic Development Coordinator			Both
Work within the County to market and label local products in local stores	2017-2018	Ag Economic Development Coordinator	SUNY Cobleskill, County, Ag Economic Development Coordinator	Moderate	Both
Start a 'come farm with us' program to link farmers and landowners. Seek funds to develop a website.	2017-2018	Farm Bureau		Moderate	Both

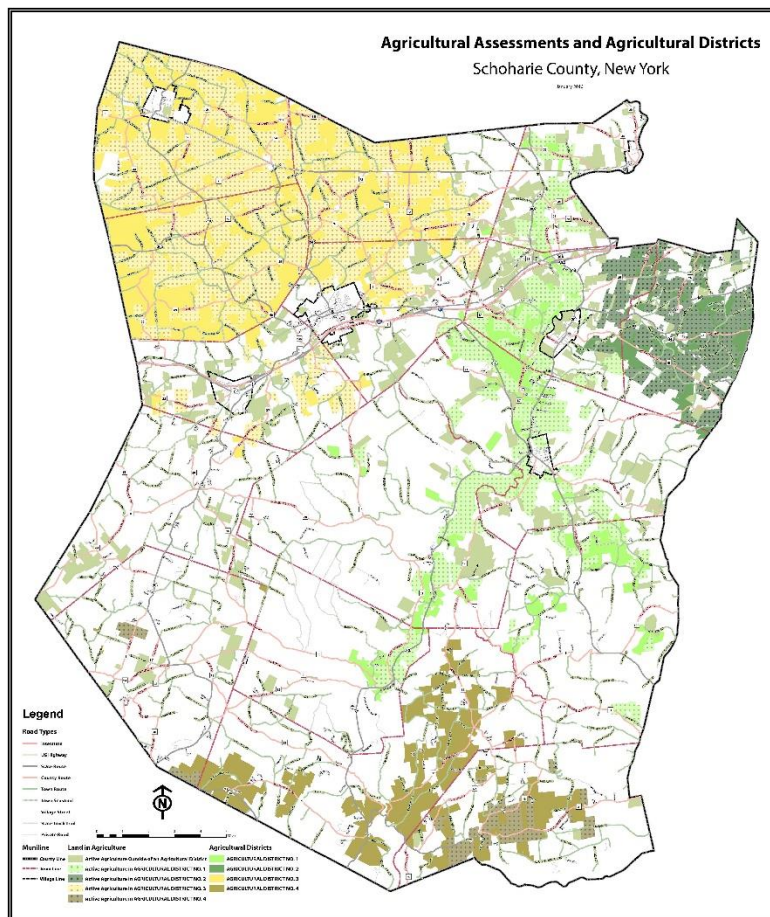
⁹ Potential costs are identified as low, moderate, or high. Low cost actions require minimum or no expenditures to accomplish. Moderate costs are those ranging under \$50,000 and high costs are those that are estimated to be > \$50,000.

Priority Project: Address Labor Issues					
Priority Action Step	Target Date	Lead Person or Organization	Other Partners	Potential Cost	Local or Regional or Both
Initiate a mentoring program	2017	Roundtable	SUNY Cobleskill, area High School Superintendents, Guidance Counselors, and Ag teachers Cornell University	TBD	Local
Develop materials and training for school guidance counselors and career days to increase awareness of agricultural careers	2017 and ongoing	Roundtable			Local
Work with SUNY Cobleskill and local school districts to expand P-TECH to Schoharie schools	2017	Roundtable			Local
Provide farm transition planning assistance	2017 and ongoing	Cornell Cooperative Extension of Otsego & Schoharie			Both

Appendix A: Maps

The following maps have been developed to help characterize existing conditions and agricultural resources in Schoharie County:

1. Farmland Parcels
2. Agricultural Districts
3. Agricultural and Forest Land Value Assessments
4. Farmland Soils
5. Flood Hazards, Karst and Farmlands
6. State Owned, New York City and Other Preserved Parcels
7. Public Water and Sewer in Schoharie County
8. Recent Development (Since Year 2000)
9. Open Tillable Land on Identified Farmland Parcels
10. Priority Farmland Areas
11. Agricultural Districts in the Region



Appendix B: Description of Agricultural Resources in Schoharie County

Farmland Parcels

Agricultural land can be found to some degree in every town in Schoharie County. The highest concentration of identified farmland parcels is found in the nine northern towns of Sharon, Carlisle, Seward, Wright, Schoharie, Cobleskill, Esperance, Middleburgh, and Richmondville. These nine towns have 40% or more of their land area identified as a Farmland Parcel, and all towns in the county have at least 20% of their area identified as a Farmland Parcel.

To inventory the farmland in Schoharie County, a comprehensive list of farmed parcels was developed using the County's tax parcel database and other sources. This inventory began with all parcels with a property class code in the 100 range (agriculture) or with a code of 241 (Residential parcels with an associated agricultural use). All parcels that receive an Agricultural Land Use assessment were added to this initial list. Then the entire county was visually scanned using aerial photos to help identify additional large parcels with open land that appears to be farmed, formerly farmed, or open to future farming activity.

It is important to recognize that many acres of farm land are owned by rural landowners and are rented or leased to farms. These parcels often serve multiple uses.

The resulting Identified Farmland Map (Map 1) constitutes a nearly complete inventory of farmed parcels in Schoharie County. This inventory forms the basis for additional analysis found in this plan, and the identification of the county's priority agricultural area map.

Table 4. Farmed parcels found in each of the towns in Schoharie County

Farmed Parcels by Town			
Town	Number of Farmland Parcels Identified	Total Acres of Identified Farmland Parcels	Percent of Town with Identified Farmland Parcels
Blenheim	48	4,429.5	20.2%
Broome	115	7,804.7	25.3%
Carlisle	240	14,444.0	65.9%
Cobleskill	188	9,560.9	48.7%
Conesville	97	6,170.7	24.0%
Esperance	109	6,040.3	47.2%
Fulton	152	12,301.9	30.1%
Gilboa	149	12,243.0	32.1%
Jefferson	174	10,251.7	36.9%
Middleburgh	210	14,260.4	44.4%
Richmondville	160	8,147.9	42.1%
Schoharie	232	11,545.1	60.2%
Seward	251	14,907.7	63.9%

Farmed Parcels by Town			
Town	Number of Farmland Parcels Identified	Total Acres of Identified Farmland Parcels	Percent of Town with Identified Farmland Parcels
Sharon	322	18,438.0	73.5%
Summit	134	7962.0	33.2%
Wright	232	11,621.2	63.3%
Whole County	2,813	170,128.9	42.4%

Agricultural Districts

The purpose of the New York State Agricultural District Program is to protect current and future farmland from nonagricultural development. This is a voluntary program to help reduce competition for limited land resources and help prevent local laws which would inhibit farming and raise farm taxes. Predominantly viable agricultural land is eligible to be included in the Agricultural District Program. Schoharie County has 135,452 acres of land in four agricultural districts.

Agricultural District 1 is found in the central portion of the county. It is predominately in the towns of Esperance, Schoharie, Middleburgh, Fulton, Broome and Blenheim

Agricultural District 2 is found in the northeast portion of the county, predominantly in the Town of Wright, and extending into Schoharie to the west, and Middleburgh to the south.

Agricultural District 3 is the county's largest, and is found predominately in the towns of Sharon, Carlisle, Seward, and Cobleskill. It extends south into the town of Richmondville, with a few parcels in the town of Summit.

Agricultural District 4 is found in the southern towns of Conesville, Gilboa, and Jefferson. The following table describes these three districts in more detail.

Table 5. Acreage by Agricultural District

Characteristics of Schoharie County Agricultural Districts	
Agricultural District	Total Acres
#1	28,943
#2	14,526
#3	72,765
#4	19,218

Agricultural and Forest Land Value Assessments

Farmers and farmland owners can take advantage of reduced tax assessments through the New York Agricultural Assessment Program. Generally, farmland that receives a reduced assessment must be actively farmed and show a commitment on the part of the farmer and/or landowner to continue farming.

There are 1,467 parcels in Schoharie County currently enrolled in the Agricultural Land Value Assessment program. This is about 52% of all the identified farmland parcels in the county. There are also 147 parcels enrolled in the New York State Forest Assessment Program. The Agricultural Value Assessment Map illustrates the parcels identified as farmland that receive agricultural value assessments or forest assessments.

Not all farmland qualifies to participate in the Agricultural Value Assessment Program. However, it appears there may be some eligible farmland that is not taking advantage of the lower tax rates offered.

Table 6. Agricultural Land Value Assessments by Town

Agricultural Land Value Assessment program participation rates by town:		
Town	Number of parcels enrolled in Ag Assessment program	Percent of Ag parcels enrolled in Ag Assessment program
Blenheim	19	40%
Broome	34	30%
Carlisle	168	70%
Cobleskill	109	58%
Conesville	29	30%
Esperance	87	80%
Fulton	53	36%
Gilboa	0	0%
Jefferson	23	13%
Middleburgh	115	55%
Richmondville	95	59%
Schoharie	169	73%
Seward	178	71%
Sharon	197	61%
Summit	30	22%
Wright	161	69%
Whole County	1,467	52%

Farmland Soils

Successful agriculture depends on quality soils. High quality soils require less fertilizer and nutrients for growing crops. Farms with higher quality agricultural soils typically have lower costs and higher production rates. Prime Farmland Soils and Soils of Statewide Importance are defined by the USDA and New York State. These are considered the most productive soils for farming.

The highest concentration of contiguous prime farmland in Schoharie County is found to the north of Interstate 88 in the towns of Sharon, Carlisle, Esperance, Seward, Cobleskill, and Richmondville. There is also a concentration of prime farmland within the Schoharie Valley, in the towns of Schoharie and Wright, and following the Schoharie Creek through the towns of Middleburgh, Fulton, and a small portion of Blenheim.

The highest concentrations of soils classified as “Prime farmland if Drained” occur in the northern towns of Sharon, Carlisle, Esperance Wright, and Cobleskill. This is an indication that there are probably drainage problems on farmland in this area.

There is a strong correlation between the towns with high percentages of land in farming, and high quality farmland soils. The towns of Esperance, Carlisle, Wright, Sharon, Schoharie, Cobleskill, Summit, and Seward all have over 40% land coverage in high quality farmland soils.

Table 7: Farm Soil Characteristics by Town

High Quality farm soils - percentage of land area by town: (these percentages do not take into account urban development that has occurred on farm soils)					
Town	Land Acres	Percent Prime Farmland	Percent Soils of Statewide Importance	Percent Prime Farmland if Drained	Total Percent All Farm Soils
Blenheim	21,974	5%	21	0	26
Broome	30,829	2	32	0	34
Carlisle	21,929	14	22	33	69
Cobleskill	19,650	3	16	0	19
Conesville	25,696	15	35	27	77
Esperance	12,796	7	26	0	33
Fulton	40,866	2	23	1	26
Gilboa	38,101	2	36	0	38
Jefferson	27,754	11	18	1	30
Middleburgh	32,140	7	30	1	38
Richmondville	19,362	15	19	7	41
Schoharie	19,170	25	16	13	54
Seward	23,317	2	42	0	44
Sharon	25,077	22	15	19	56
Summit	23,971	34	11	8	53
Wright	18,348	20	15	14	49
County Totals	400,982	10.4%	23.9%	6.1%	40.4%

Flood Hazards, Karst and Farmlands

A narrow, but significant floodplain can be found along the entire length of the Schoharie Creek, most of the Cobleskill Creek, and along the Little Schoharie and Fox Creek (see Flood Hazard and Karst Geology Map). Many of these areas are predominated by agricultural activities – especially in the Schoharie Valley where significant vegetable farms are found.

Karst bedrock, or caves, sinkholes and sinking streams formed in limestone rock. Limestone rock can be found in the northern part of Schoharie County and coincides with much of the agricultural lands in Wright, Schoharie, Cobleskill, Carlisle, and portions of Sharon. All areas having karst features are sensitive to land uses. Soils here can be thin but more importantly, the cracks, holes, and caves are direct conduits for surface water to reach groundwater aquifers. Building can change water flows and disrupt underground water flow. Thus, these areas are sensitive to development and farmed land uses are preferred over residential or commercial development. The karst area in the Town of Wright is designated as a Critical Environmental Area.

State Owned, New York City and Other Preserved Parcels

The Protected and Preserved Lands Map shows the lands in Schoharie County that are preserved for natural resource protection purposes, or for public use, through ownership or conservation easement by a not-for-profit organization, Schoharie County, New York State agency, or Federal government agency.

The Schoharie Land Trust is the only county-based and the primary land trust that works in the County to preserve lands. However, there are others that are involved with land preservation in the County and these are the American Farmland Trust, The Nature Conservancy, and the Agricultural Stewardship Association (from Washington County).

The largest land trust working in Schoharie County on agricultural land preservation is Schoharie Land Trust. Like all land trusts in the County, SLT is a non-profit, non-governmental organization working to protect the Schoharie County's working farm and forest lands and other open spaces for the benefit of present and future generations.

Public Water and Sewer in Schoharie County

Public water and sewer is contained in or near the Villages in Schoharie County (See Public Water and Sewer Map). Gilboa, Middleburgh, Schoharie, Central Bridge, Cobleskill, Richmondville, and Sharon Springs all have public water services. Public sewer is found in all these locations except for Gilboa. Some locations such as along Route 443 between the Village of Schoharie and Gallupville, and along Route 7 outside Cobleskill have extended water services but not sewer.

Recent Development (Since Year 2000)

The Recent Development Map shows lands within Schoharie County that has been built on since 2000. Consistent with the data for population and housing growth, this map shows that building activity is taking place throughout Schoharie County, and is occurring on lands within or adjacent to one of the four New York State certified agricultural districts. See also the discussion of Farmland Conversion in this Plan.

Open Tillable Land on Identified Farmland Parcels

To get a better estimate of the actively farmed areas within the identified farmland parcels, an analysis was performed using the USDA Cropland Data Layer. This is a georeferenced GIS layer produced through satellite imagery used to identify crop-specific categorized land uses. In our case, we used it to identify all the open tillable land within the parcels identified as farmland for the purposes of this plan.

As was found with the identified farmland parcels, the highest concentration of open land in Schoharie County is also found in the nine northern most towns of Sharon, Carlisle, Seward, Wright, Schoharie, Cobleskill, Esperance, Middleburgh, and Richmondville. The percentage of open tillable land within these nine towns ranges from nearly 16% to over 46% of their total land area.

Table 8: Acreages of Open Tillable Land by Town

Open Farmland Areas by Town		
Town	Total Acres of Open Tillable Land	Percent of Town with Open Tillable Land
Blenheim	1,021.6	4.6%
Broome	1,424.7	4.6%
Carlisle	8,401.9	38.3%
Cobleskill	5,710.9	29.1
Conesville	1,387.1	5.4
Esperance	3,376.4	26.4
Fulton	3,293.2	8.1
Gilboa	3,778.5	9.9
Jefferson	3,268.2	11.8
Middleburgh	5,048.6	15.7
Richmondville	3,747.8	19.4
Schoharie	5,807.9	30.3
Seward	8,568.1	36.7
Sharon	11,708.5	46.7
Summit	2,545.4	10.6
Wright	6,099.0	33.2
Whole County	75,187.8	18.8%

Priority Farmland Areas

The New York State Farmland Protection Implementation Project is governed by the most recent, Request for Proposals for State Assistance for Farmland Protection Implementation Projects. This is the source of funding for State-sponsored purchase of development rights (PDR) and term easement monies. This funding source now requires a strong connection between any farmland proposed to be protected using state funds and farmland identified as priority agricultural areas in the county's Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan.

The current New York State Round 13 RFP states: “To be eligible for funding under this RFP, the location of each proposed project must, at a minimum, be consistent with the location of any land or areas proposed to be protected in a county’s or a municipality’s agricultural and farmland protection plan.” Further, on the Conservation Easement Proposal Rating Sheet, one of the criteria to be measured is: “Illustrate (in a mapped or other visual form) where the subject property is located within a portion of one or more local jurisdictional areas designated as a priority for protection.”

Identification of important farmlands is important not only to support landowners in Schoharie County interested in participating in the State PDR program, but it is essential information upon which many important projects and planning decisions can be made.

Schoharie County conducted a thorough process to define priority farmlands, and to map these areas to aid in future planning. This process is outlined in section H of this plan “Identifying Priority Farmlands”. See also the discussion above for full details on how priority farmland areas were identified.

While all the farmland identified in this plan should be considered a priority, as far as preservation efforts are concerned, some areas are of greater concern. The Priority Farmland Area map ranks the identified farmland parcels into 5 categories. The higher ranked farmland parcels, symbolized in a darker red color on the map, deserve extra attention, especially when local or regional projects will have a significant impact on their continuation as farmland.

The farmed parcel inventory and some of the data used to calculate individual scores will change from year to year. Given the fluid nature of this data, we feel it is important to note that:

The Priority Agricultural Areas Map should not be interpreted to mean other areas not included do not have viable farmland that deserves protection. Due to the dynamic nature of some of the data used to produce this map, it will change over time. For example, farmed parcels can be added to the agricultural districts during the annual enrollment period, and the 8-year review. As farmland conversion and farmland preservation occurs, development pressure will increase in some areas, while decreasing in others. This map and the scores applied to the individual farm parcels should be updated as new information becomes available.

Agricultural Districts in the Region

The Regional Agricultural District map shows the relationship between the agricultural districts in Schoharie County and surrounding counties. From this map, we can see that Schoharie’s Agricultural District 3 is substantially contiguous with adjacent Montgomery and Otsego County’s agricultural districts. And although the other agricultural districts in Schoharie might appear to be somewhat detached from agricultural district 3, they are located adjacent to agricultural districts in Albany County to the east, and Delaware County to the south.

Towns in Schoharie County with Right-to-Farm Laws

Fourteen towns in Schoharie County currently have adopted Right-to-Farm Laws (see Table 9). Most have been adopted after 2000, but several had such laws in place in the 1990's. Schoharie and Summit currently do not have such a local law.

Town	Date Adopted	Date Filed with Secretary of State
Blenheim	04/01/2002	04/05/2002
Broome	08/18/2004	08/24/2004
Carlisle	03/06/2002	05/08/2002
Cobleskill	06/11/2001	06/20/2001
Conesville	05/09/2007	05/21/2007
Esperance	12/20/2001	02/20/2002
Fulton	03/11/1991	04/21/1991
Gilboa	02/04/2002	02/15/2002
Jefferson	08/10/2000	09/01/2000
Middleburgh	07/10/2008 (12/09/1999)	07/16/2008 (12/15/1999)
Richmondville	04/04/2001	04/13/2001
Schoharie		
Seward	06/01/1998	07/02/1998
Sharon		02/12/2001
Summit		
Wright	11/15/2001	11/21/2001

Appendix C: Profile of the Agricultural Economy

Data on Schoharie County from the U.S. Census of Agriculture

All the following tables use various years of the US Agricultural Census as the data source.

Farms and Farmland	2012	2007	2002	1997	% Change, 1997-2012
Number of Farms	532	525	579	518	2.7%
Total Land in Farms (Acres)	98,369	95,490	112,735	110,773	-11.2%
<i>Proportion of County Land Area</i>	<i>24.7%</i>	<i>24.0%</i>	<i>28.3%</i>	<i>27.8%</i>	-
Average Acres Per Farm	185	182	195	214	-13.6%
Cropland (Acres)	54,964	53,031	71,008	70,120	-21.6%
Harvested Cropland (Acres)	49,006	44,961	57,030	53,756	-8.8%
<i>Proportion of Total Farm Acreage in Farmland</i>	<i>55.9%</i>	<i>55.5%</i>	<i>63.0%</i>	<i>63.3%</i>	-

Summary - Sales of Agricultural Products (not inflation-adjusted)	2012	2007	2002	1997	% Change, 1997-2012
Total Sales	\$39,500,000	\$35,153,000	\$26,979,000	\$26,973,000	46.4%
Crop Sales, Incl. Nursery and Greenhouse Products	\$15,388,000	\$9,793,000	\$7,470,000	\$5,847,000	163.2%
Sales of Livestock, Poultry, and Their Products	\$24,112,000	\$25,361,000	\$19,509,000	\$21,126,000	14.1%
Agricultural Products Sold Directly to Individuals	\$2,649,000	\$2,120,000	\$1,196,000	\$1,183,000	123.9%
<i>Average Sales Per Farm</i>	<i>\$74,248</i>	<i>\$66,959</i>	<i>\$46,596</i>	<i>\$52,071</i>	<i>42.6%</i>

Summary - Sales of Agricultural Products (in constant 2012 dollars)	2012	2007	2002	1997	% Change, 1997-2012
Total Sales	\$39,500,000	\$38,929,125	\$34,411,990	\$38,587,983	2.4%
Crop Sales, Incl. Nursery and Greenhouse Products	\$15,388,000	\$10,844,961	\$9,528,061	\$8,364,807	84.0%
Sales of Livestock, Poultry, and Their Products	\$24,112,000	\$28,085,271	\$24,883,929	\$30,223,176	-20.2%
Agricultural Products Sold Directly to Individuals	\$2,649,000	\$2,347,730	\$1,525,510	\$1,692,418	56.5%
<i>Average Sales Per Farm</i>	<i>\$74,248</i>	<i>\$74,152</i>	<i>\$59,434</i>	<i>\$74,494</i>	<i>-0.3%</i>

Detail - Sales of Agricultural Products (not inflation-adjusted)	2012	2007	2002	Change, 2002-2012	
				Number	Percent
Total Sales	\$39,500,000	\$35,153,000	\$26,979,000	\$12,521,000	46.4%
Crop Sales, Incl. Nursery and Greenhouse Products	\$15,388,000	\$9,793,000	\$7,470,000	\$7,918,000	106.0%
Grains, oilseeds, dry beans, and dry peas	\$5,420,000	\$2,144,000	\$1,276,000	\$4,144,000	324.8%
Vegetables, melons, potatoes, and sweet potatoes	\$3,461,000	\$2,620,000	\$1,864,000	\$1,597,000	85.7%
Fruits, tree nuts, and berries	\$587,000	\$741,000	NA	NA	NA
Nursery, greenhouse, floriculture, and sod	\$963,000	\$681,000	\$1,006,000	-\$43,000	-4.3%
Other crops and hay	\$4,952,000	\$3,567,000	\$3,001,000	\$1,951,000	65.0%
Sales of Livestock, Poultry, and Their Products	\$24,112,000	\$25,361,000	\$19,509,000	\$4,603,000	23.6%
Poultry and eggs	\$182,000	\$112,000	NA	NA	NA
Cattle and calves	\$3,142,000	\$3,271,000	\$2,846,000	\$296,000	10.4%
Milk from cows	\$19,309,000	NA	\$16,191,000	\$3,118,000	19.3%
Hogs and pigs	\$538,000	\$136,000	\$48,000	\$490,000	1020.8%
Sheep, goats, wool, mohair, and milk	\$423,000	NA	\$73,000	\$350,000	479.5%
Horses, ponies, mules, burros, and donkeys	\$354,000	\$250,000	\$186,000	\$168,000	90.3%
<i>Organic Product Sales</i>	<i>\$425,000</i>	<i>\$272,000</i>	<i>\$227,000</i>	<i>\$198,000</i>	<i>87.2%</i>

Detail - Sales of Agricultural Products (in constant 2012 dollars)	2012	2007	2002	Change, 2002-2012	
				Number	Percent
Total Sales	\$39,500,000	\$38,929,125	\$34,411,990	\$5,088,010	14.8%
Crop Sales, Incl. Nursery and Greenhouse Products	\$15,388,000	\$10,844,961	\$9,528,061	\$5,859,939	61.5%
Grains, oilseeds, dry beans, and dry peas	\$5,420,000	\$2,374,308	\$1,627,551	\$3,792,449	233.0%
Vegetables, melons, potatoes, and sweet potatoes	\$3,461,000	\$2,901,440	\$2,377,551	\$1,083,449	45.6%
Fruits, tree nuts, and berries	\$587,000	\$820,598	NA	NA	NA
Nursery, greenhouse, floriculture, and sod	\$963,000	\$754,153	\$1,283,163	-\$320,163	-25.0%
Other crops and hay	\$4,952,000	\$3,950,166	\$3,827,806	\$1,124,194	29.4%
Sales of Livestock, Poultry, and Their Products	\$24,112,000	\$28,085,271	\$24,883,929	-\$771,929	-3.1%
Poultry and eggs	\$182,000	\$124,031	NA	NA	NA
Cattle and calves	\$3,142,000	\$3,622,370	\$3,630,102	-\$488,102	-13.4%
Milk from cows	\$19,309,000	NA	\$20,651,786	-\$1,342,786	-6.5%
Hogs and pigs	\$538,000	\$150,609	\$61,224	\$476,776	778.7%

Detail - Sales of Agricultural Products (in constant 2012 dollars)	2012	2007	2002	Change, 2002-2012	
				Number	Percent
Sheep, goats, wool, mohair, and milk	\$423,000	NA	\$93,112	\$329,888	354.3%
Horses, ponies, mules, burros, and donkeys	\$354,000	\$276,855	\$237,245	\$116,755	49.2%
<i>Organic Product Sales</i>	<i>\$425,000</i>	<i>\$301,218</i>	<i>\$289,541</i>	<i>\$135,459</i>	<i>46.8%</i>

Farm Production Expenses (not inflation-adjusted)	2012	2007	2002	Change, 2002-2012	
				Number	Percent
Total Production Expenses	\$35,942,000	\$30,120,000	\$22,145,000	\$13,797,000	62.3%
Agricultural Chemicals & Fertilizer	\$2,831,000	\$1,627,000	\$1,353,000	\$1,478,000	109.2%
Depreciation Expenses Claimed	\$4,072,000	\$3,505,000	\$2,666,000	\$1,406,000	52.7%
Electricity	\$1,158,000	\$1,268,000	\$1,027,000	\$131,000	12.8%
Feed	\$7,896,000	\$6,421,000	\$4,050,000	\$3,846,000	95.0%
Gasoline & Fuel	\$3,000,000	\$2,286,000	\$945,000	\$2,055,000	217.5%
Labor (Hired + Contract)	\$4,907,000	\$3,359,000	\$2,598,000	\$2,309,000	88.9%
Livestock and Poultry	\$1,192,000	\$1,348,000	\$2,195,000	-\$1,003,000	-45.7%
Property Taxes	\$2,743,000	\$2,236,000	\$2,411,000	\$332,000	13.8%
Seeds, Plants, & Trees	\$1,350,000	\$884,000	\$231,000	\$1,119,000	484.4%
Supplies, Repairs & Maintenance	\$3,431,000	\$4,276,000	\$2,608,000	\$823,000	31.6%
All Other Expenses	\$3,362,000	\$2,910,000	\$2,061,000	\$1,301,000	63.1%
<i>Average Production Expenses Per Farm</i>	<i>\$67,560</i>	<i>\$57,372</i>	<i>\$38,446</i>	<i>\$29,114</i>	<i>75.7%</i>

Farm Production Expenses (in constant 2012 dollars)	2012	2007	2002	Change, 2002-2012	
				Number	Percent
Total Production Expenses	\$35,942,000	\$33,355,482	\$28,246,173	\$7,695,827	27.2%
Agricultural Chemicals & Fertilizer	\$2,831,000	\$1,801,772	\$1,725,765	\$1,105,235	64.0%
Depreciation Expenses Claimed	\$4,072,000	\$3,881,506	\$3,400,510	\$671,490	19.7%
Electricity	\$1,158,000	\$1,404,208	\$1,309,949	-\$151,949	-11.6%
Feed	\$7,896,000	\$7,110,742	\$5,165,816	\$2,730,184	52.9%
Gasoline & Fuel	\$3,000,000	\$2,531,561	\$1,205,357	\$1,794,643	148.9%
Labor (Hired + Contract)	\$4,907,000	\$3,719,823	\$3,313,776	\$1,593,224	48.1%
Livestock and Poultry	\$1,192,000	\$1,492,802	\$2,799,745	-\$1,607,745	-57.4%
Property Taxes	\$2,743,000	\$2,476,190	\$3,075,255	-\$332,255	-10.8%
Seeds, Plants, & Trees	\$1,350,000	\$978,959	\$294,643	\$1,055,357	358.2%
Supplies, Repairs & Maintenance	\$3,431,000	\$4,735,327	\$3,326,531	\$104,469	3.1%
All Other Expenses	\$3,362,000	\$3,222,591	\$2,628,827	\$733,173	27.9%

Farm Production Expenses (in constant 2012 dollars)	2012	2007	2002	Change, 2002-2012	
				Number	Percent
<i>Average Production Expenses Per Farm</i>	\$67,560	\$63,535	\$49,038	\$18,522	37.8%

Farms by Value of Sales	2012	2007	2002	Change, 2002-2012	
				Number	Percent
All Farms	532	525	579	-47	-8.1%
Less than \$10,000	271	266	329	-58	-17.6%
Less than \$2,500	130	153	204	-74	-36.3%
\$2,500 to \$4,999	57	53	70	-13	-18.6%
\$5,000 to \$9,999	84	60	55	29	52.7%
\$10,000 to \$99,999	187	185	174	13	7.5%
\$10,000 to \$19,999	76	92	56	20	35.7%
\$20,000 to \$24,999	28	16	12	16	133.3%
\$25,000 to \$39,999	25	24	29	-4	-13.8%
\$40,000 to \$49,999	13	13	15	-2	-13.3%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	45	40	62	-17	-27.4%
\$100,000 or More	74	74	76	-2	-2.6%
\$100,000 to \$249,999	47	43	49	-2	-4.1%
\$250,000 to \$499,999	10	10	19	-9	-47.4%
\$500,000 or More	17	21	8	9	112.5%

Farms by Size	2012	2007	2002	Change, 2002-2012	
				Number	Percent
All Farms	532	525	579	-47	-8.1%
1-9 acres	26	33	23	3	13.0%
10-49 acres	91	90	116	-25	-21.6%
50-99 acres	97	90	89	8	9.0%
100-179 acres	128	124	127	1	0.8%
180-259 acres	80	72	76	4	5.3%
260-499 acres	74	80	107	-33	-30.8%
500-999 acres	29	30	33	-4	-12.1%
1,000 or more acres	7	6	8	-1	-12.5%

Estimated Market Value of Land & Buildings	2012	2007	2002	Change, 2002-2012	
				Number	Percent
All Farms	532	525	579	-47	-8.1%
Less than \$50,000	37	39	57	-20	-35.1%
\$50,000-\$99,000	23	35	127	-104	-81.9%
\$100,000-\$199,999	110	100	121	-11	-9.1%
\$200,000-\$499,999	227	216	179	48	26.8%
\$500,000-\$999,999	100	101	65	35	53.8%
\$1,000,000 or more	35	34	27	8	29.6%

Farms with Livestock Inventory	2012	2007	2002	% Change, 2002-2012
<i>Milk cows</i>				
Farms	72	87	113	-36.3%
Inventory	5,285	6,068	7,356	-28.2%
<i>Beef cattle</i>				
Farms	146	129	129	13.2%
Inventory	1,754	1,765	1,269	38.2%
<i>Layers</i>				
Farms	111	66	50	122.0%
Inventory	4,445	2,071	1,369	224.7%
<i>Hogs and pigs</i>				
Farms	41	38	30	36.7%
Inventory	971	291	415	134.0%
<i>Sheep and lambs</i>				
Farms	50	42	49	2.0%
Inventory	1,479	1,305	1,323	11.8%
<i>Horses and ponies</i>				
Farms	122	158	154	-20.8%
Inventory	783	1,031	871	-10.1%
<i>Goats</i>				
Farms	53	53	19	178.9%
Inventory	983	720	NA	NA

Farms with Selected Crops Harvested	2012	2007	2002	% Change, 2002-2012
<i>Forage</i>				
Farms	354	361	438	-19.2%
Acreage	35,947	35,495	46,640	-22.9%
<i>Corn for silage</i>				
Farms	66	66	103	-35.9%
Acreage	4,506	4,729	5,352	-15.8%
<i>Corn for grain</i>				
Farms	52	34	40	30.0%
Acreage	6,741	3,611	4,494	50.0%
<i>Vegetables harvested for sale</i>				
Farms	57	48	35	62.9%
Acreage	824	891	1,006	-18.1%
<i>Land in orchards</i>				
Farms	20	23	14	42.9%
Acreage	230	174	193	19.2%
<i>Soybeans for beans</i>				
Farms	5	2	6	-16.7%
Acreage	199	NA	111	79.3%

Farms with Selected Crops Harvested	2012	2007	2002	% Change, 2002-2012
<i>Oats for grain</i>				
Farms	12	18	12	0.0%
Acreage	120	382	380	-68.4%

Selected Farm Practices	2012	2007	2002	% Change, 2002-2012
All Farms	532	525	579	-8.1%
Earned income through agri-tourism and recreational services	4	12	8	-50.0%
Had an on-farm packing facility	13	NA	NA	NA
Marketed products directly to retail outlets	36	NA	NA	NA
Marketed products thru community-supported agriculture	5	7	NA	NA
Produced/sold value-added commodities	44	36	NA	NA
Sold organic products	17	20	9	88.9%

Farm Tenure	2012	2007	2002	% Change, 2002-2012
All Farms	532	525	579	-8.1%
Full Owners	343	334	350	-2.0%
Part Owners	176	171	216	-18.5%
Tenants	13	20	13	0.0%

Farms with Hired Labor	2012	2007	2002	% Change, 2002-2012
Farms with Hired Labor				
Farms	150	135	177	-15.3%
Workers	697	522	775	-10.1%
<i>Farms with 1 Worker</i>				
Farms	41	44	34	20.6%
Workers	41	44	34	20.6%
<i>Farms with 2 Workers</i>				
Farms	32	29	38	-15.8%
Workers	64	58	76	-15.8%

Farms with Hired Labor	2012	2007	2002	% Change, 2002-2012
<i>Farms with 3 or 4 Workers</i>				
Farms	35	31	32	9.4%
Workers	124	112	97	27.8%
<i>Farms with 5-9 Workers</i>				
Farms	26	23	67	-61.2%
Workers	159	159	433	-63.3%
<i>Farms with 10 or More Workers</i>				
Farms	16	8	6	166.7%
Workers	309	149	135	128.9%
Annual Payroll	\$4,742,000	\$3,084,000	\$2,510,000	88.9%

Principal Farm Operator Characteristics	2012	2007	2002	Change, 2002-2012	
				Number	Percent
All Principal Operators	532	525	579	-47	-8.1%
Primary Occupation					
Farming	330	303	333	-3	-0.9%
Other	202	222	246	-44	-17.9%
Years on Present Farm					
2 years or less	12	17	14	-2	-14.3%
3- 4 years	26	31	97	-21	-44.7%
5- 9 years	69	78	46	-27	-28.1%
10 years or more	425	399	422	3	0.7%
Age Group					
Under age 35	26	33	22	4	18.2%
35-44	48	69	110	-62	-56.4%
45-54	134	136	180	-46	-25.6%
55-65	141	150	123	18	14.6%
65 and over	183	137	144	39	27.1%
Average Age	58.4	56.0	54.4	3.0	5.5%

Comparisons of Schoharie County to NYS and Other Counties

Number of farms	2012	2007	2002	% change, 2002-2012
Schoharie County	532	525	579	-8.1%
Otsego County	995	980	1,028	-3.2%
Montgomery County	659	604	624	5.6%
Delaware County	704	747	788	-10.7%

New York State	35,537	36,352	37,255	-4.6%
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Average acres per farm	2012	2007	2002	% change, 2002-2012
Schoharie County	185	182	195	-5.1%
Otsego County	182	180	201	-9.5%
Montgomery County	199	206	244	-18.4%
Delaware County	207	222	243	-14.8%
New York State	202	197	206	-1.9%

Land in farms (acres)	2012	2007	2002	% change, 2002-2012
Schoharie County	98,369	95,490	112,735	-12.7%
Otsego County	180,750	176,481	206,233	-12.4%
Montgomery County	131,386	124,556	151,977	-13.5%
Delaware County	145,608	165,572	191,537	-24.0%
New York State	7,183,576	7,174,743	7,660,969	-6.2%

Large farms: % of farms with 500 acres or more	2012	2007	2002	% change, 2002-2012
Schoharie County	6.8%	6.8%	7.1%	-4.2%
Otsego County	6.8%	6.1%	8.5%	-20.0%
Montgomery County	9.3%	8.3%	12.5%	-25.6%
Delaware County	9.5%	10.2%	11.0%	-13.6%
New York State	8.4%	8.4%	9.4%	-10.6%

Total farm sales (not inflation-adjusted)	2012	2007	2002	% change, 2002-2012
Schoharie County	\$39,500,000	\$35,153,000	\$26,979,000	46.4%
Otsego County	\$66,760,000	\$51,407,000	\$50,703,000	31.7%
Montgomery County	\$86,791,000	\$73,612,000	\$51,798,000	67.6%
Delaware County	\$47,686,000	\$55,143,000	\$50,520,000	-5.6%

New York State	\$5,415,125,000	\$4,418,634,000	\$3,117,834,000	73.7%
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Total farm sales (in constant 2012 dollars)	2012	2007	2002	% change, 2002-2012
Schoharie County	\$39,500,000	\$38,929,125	\$34,411,990	14.8%
Otsego County	\$66,760,000	\$56,929,125	\$64,672,194	3.2%
Montgomery County	\$86,791,000	\$81,519,380	\$66,068,878	31.4%
Delaware County	\$47,686,000	\$61,066,445	\$64,438,776	-26.0%
New York State	\$5,415,125,000	\$4,893,282,392	\$3,976,829,082	36.2%

Average sales per farm (not inflation-adjusted)	2012	2007	2002	% change, 2002-2012
Schoharie County	\$74,248	\$66,959	\$46,596	59.3%
Otsego County	\$67,095	\$52,457	\$49,322	36.0%
Montgomery County	\$131,701	\$121,873	\$83,010	58.7%
Delaware County	\$67,735	\$73,820	\$64,111	5.7%
New York State	\$152,380	\$121,551	\$83,689	82.1%

Average sales per farm (in constant 2012 dollars)	2012	2007	2002	% change, 2002-2012
Schoharie County	\$74,248	\$74,152	\$59,434	24.9%
Otsego County	\$67,095	\$58,092	\$62,911	6.7%
Montgomery County	\$131,701	\$134,965	\$105,880	24.4%
Delaware County	\$67,735	\$81,750	\$81,774	-17.2%
New York State	\$152,380	\$134,608	\$106,746	42.7%

Farm profitability: % of farms with net gains	2012	2007	2002	% change, 2002-2012
Schoharie County	38.7%	43.4%	35.6%	8.7%
Otsego County	41.1%	41.8%	40.1%	2.5%
Montgomery County	52.8%	44.9%	50.5%	4.6%

Delaware County	41.6%	42.7%	50.5%	-17.6%
New York State	44.2%	44.1%	44.9%	-1.6%

Average production expenses per farm (not inflation-adjusted)	2012	2007	2002	% change, 2002-2012
Schoharie County	\$67,560	\$57,372	\$38,446	75.7%
Otsego County	\$57,967	\$44,253	\$45,709	26.8%
Montgomery County	\$108,690	\$96,538	\$67,665	60.6%
Delaware County	\$59,909	\$61,308	\$58,502	2.4%
New York State	\$127,617	\$96,372	\$75,081	70.0%

Average production expenses per farm (in constant 2012 dollars)	2012	2007	2002	% change, 2002-2012
Schoharie County	\$67,560	\$63,535	\$49,038	37.8%
Otsego County	\$57,967	\$49,007	\$58,302	-0.6%
Montgomery County	\$108,690	\$106,908	\$86,307	25.9%
Delaware County	\$59,909	\$67,894	\$74,620	-19.7%
New York State	\$127,617	\$106,724	\$95,767	33.3%

The Multiplier Effect of Agriculture

Various studies from Cornell University have calculated the multiplier effect of agriculture on the broader economy. A recent study from Cornell University¹⁰ offered the following conclusions about the economic impact of agriculture in New York State:

- Statewide, “agricultural production activity generated about \$6.6 billion in sales in 2014, which accounted for 0.3% of total industrial sales across the state. In terms of employment, agricultural production had over 54 thousand direct jobs, which represented about 0.5% of total state-level employment. Not surprisingly, on-farm dairy production was the largest single-industry agricultural production sector in the state.”
- The output multiplier for agricultural production in NYS is 1.45, meaning that for every additional dollar generated in on-farm agriculture, \$0.45 is generated in backward-linked

¹⁰ The Economic Contributions of Agriculture in New York State (2014). Todd M. Schmit. Charles H. Dyson School of Applied Economics and Management, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Cornell University. August 2016. EB 2016-09.

(nonagricultural) industries. If the multiplier effect is broken out into its indirect and induced components, the *indirect* effect is 0.20 (from business-to-business transactions), while the *induced* effect is 0.25 (from spending by households in the directly and indirectly affected industries).

- The indirect effects of agricultural production in NYS in terms of output are primarily on important supply chain industries for agriculture such as wholesale trade, agricultural support services, animal food manufacturing (i.e., feed), real estate and rental (e.g., rented or leased equipment), and finance and insurance.
- When the value of inter-industry linkages is considered, “agriculture, incorporating agricultural production, support services, and manufacturing, represents a \$63.8 billion industry in NYS, with over 250,000 jobs... While total agriculturally-related industry activity represents a relatively small proportion of total state output (3.0%), employment (2.1%), and contributions to GDP (1.9%), relative contributions for smaller rural agricultural areas and communities will vary.”

The estimated economic contribution of agriculture on Schoharie County was calculated by adapting the methodology and multipliers developed for the statewide study. As shown in the table below, agricultural production, support services, and manufacturing, directly contributed a total of \$111.1 million in output, 650 jobs, and \$15.8 million in labor income to the Schoharie County economy in 2014. When indirect and induced efforts are considered, using multipliers for New York State, these values increase to an estimated \$157.7 million in output, 1,124 jobs, and \$33.9 million in labor income.

The 1,124 jobs in agricultural industries represented approximately 9.5% of total employment in Schoharie County, with most jobs generated by agricultural production. The estimated \$157.7 million in output attributed to agricultural industries accounted for more than 10% of the County's total economic output.

	Agricultural Production	Support Activities for Agricultural and Forestry	Agricultural Manufacturing	TOTAL
Direct Contribution				
Employment	586	10	54	650
Industry Sales (Output)	\$52,701,792	\$305,928	\$58,060,094	\$111,067,815
Labor Income	\$12,817,269	\$168,416	\$2,772,815	\$15,758,499
NYS Multiplier Applied				
Employment	1.37	1.17	2.48	1.73
Industry Sales (Output)	1.45	1.62	1.58	1.42
Labor Income	1.59	1.37	2.81	2.15

	Agricultural Production	Support Activities for Agricultural and Forestry	Agricultural Manufacturing	TOTAL
Total Contribution (Direct+Indirect+Induced)				
Employment	802	12	134	1,124
Industry Sales (Output)	\$76,417,598	\$495,604	\$91,734,950	\$157,716,297
Labor Income	\$20,379,458	\$230,728	\$7,791,610	\$33,880,773
<p>Data Source: Minnesota IMPLAN Group, Inc.</p> <p>Table based on methodology developed by Todd M. Schmit, Associate Professor, Dyson School of Applied Economics and Management, Cornell University. <i>The Economic Contributions of Agriculture in New York State (2014)</i>, August 2016.</p> <p>Notes:</p> <p>Labor income includes employee compensation (wages and benefits) plus proprietor (self-employment) income.</p> <p><i>Indirect effects</i> represent all activity by the backward-linked supply chain industries.</p> <p><i>Induced effects</i> represent additional industry activity due to spending made by households earning income in the directly and indirectly affected industries.</p>				

Appendix D: Public Input Results

Farm Community Workshops

Two workshops were held to hear directly from farmers. The participants worked to identify strengths, weaknesses and opportunities for agriculture in Schoharie County. The results of this effort are:

Positive Features	Priority Votes Workshop # 1	Priority Votes Workshop #2	Total Priority Votes
Water quality/quantity/Ground water and rain water	7	4	11
Access/proximity and transportation to markets	4	4	8
Opportunity for sustainable growth	7	0	7
Productive Farmland/Soils, health and quality	3	4	7
SUNY Cobleskill	6	0	6
Ag lifestyle/Quite lifestyle/Peace and quite	2	3	5
Open land availability/Current open space/Room to grow	3	2	5
Scenic beauty/Beauty of the countryside	2	3	5
Ag/Farm Community	3	1	4
Diversity of farms	2	2	4
Showing where our food comes from	0	4	4
Ag Education in public schools	0	3	3
Response to Niche Markets	0	3	3
Acceptance of agricultural practices	2	0	2
Access to Ag infrastructure	0	2	2
Climate/Temperature	2	0	2
Dedication/perseverance of Farmers	2	0	2
Direct sales/Buy Local	2	0	2
Farmer and Non-Farmer connectivity	2	0	2
Farms provide recreational land base	2	0	2
Location	2	0	2
Women in agriculture	2	0	2
Ability to be your own boss	1	0	1
Ag support service e.g. CCE	1	0	1
Agricultural heritage/culture	0	1	1
Community Support/Loyal Customers	1	0	1
Family history of farming	1	0	1
Little development pressure	1	0	1
Optimism	1	0	1
Ability to network/Young farmer networks	0	0	0
Ability to work outside	0	0	0
Available/quality of produce	0	0	0

Positive Features	Priority Votes Workshop # 1	Priority Votes Workshop #2	Total Priority Votes
Clean air	0	0	0
Friendly terrain to farm	0	0	0
Grants	0	0	0
Institutional buying	0	0	0
Low population	0	0	0
Lower taxes relative to other areas	0	0	0
Organized resources	0	0	0
Second income opportunities	0	0	0
Tourism/Proximity to the Capital District	0	0	0
Value added products	0	0	0

Negative Features	Priority Votes Workshop # 1	Priority Votes Workshop #2	Total Priority Votes
Access/Cost of dependable labor	6	3	9
Development of farmland to non-farm uses	7	0	7
Lack of USDA custom Slaughter house	0	7	7
Negative view of farming/Scapegoating of farmers for broader issues	2	5	7
Taxes, County and School	4	3	7
Ag exemption policies/\$10,000 limit	3	3	6
Need better communications, networks, connections	6	0	6
Perception/understanding of farming/ understanding by youth	3	3	6
Ag Education in Schools funded at a minimum level	0	4	4
Cost of land	0	3	3
Eminent domain	3	0	3
EPA - water	3	0	3
Lack of broadband/Internet	1	2	3
Milk prices	0	3	3
Soil and water contamination potential (pesticides/herbicides)	3	0	3
Aging farmers	2	0	2
Conflicts with neighbors	0	2	2
Gas pipeline - effects of construction/maintenance on water quality	2	0	2
Labor regulations prevent young learning basics (training costs)	0	2	2
Lack of understanding of local products	2	0	2
New farmers not welcomed	2	0	2
Restrictive code enforcement	2	0	2

Negative Features	Priority Votes Workshop # 1	Priority Votes Workshop #2	Total Priority Votes
Threat of Fracking	2	0	2
Tourism perception of distance too far to visit	0	2	2
Flood recovery impacts	1	0	1
General lack of knowledge	1	0	1
Groundwater vulnerable to pollution	1	0	1
Local families cannot afford local food	1	0	1
Ownership transitions	0	1	1
Ability to use rough cut lumber	0	0	0
Conflicts with recreational vehicle uses	0	0	0
Cost of organic certification	0	0	0
Farmers are set in their ways	0	0	0
Government and corporate over reach - WOTUS, humane practices, pressures on ag	0	0	0
Hard soils	0	0	0
Inefficiency in land use	0	0	0
Lack of aggregation of distribution to markets (no food hub)	0	0	0
Lack of apprenticeship programs	0	0	0
Lack of cell service	0	0	0
Lack of contemporary land use delineation	0	0	0
Lack of modern building standards	0	0	0
Limited access to specialized resources/large animal vets	0	0	0
Loss of farmers	0	0	0
Mentoring challenges	0	0	0
People avoid hard work	0	0	0
Pockets of isolated farms	0	0	0
Restrictions on land use	0	0	0
Small scale facility regulations	0	0	0
Traffic safety/Farm equipment access/DOT bureaucracy	0	0	0
Travel/distance to markets	0	0	0
Water quality	0	0	0

Opportunities/Ideas To Improve Agriculture	Priority Votes Workshop # 1	Priority Votes Workshop #2	Total Priority Votes
Young farmer program/internship in school	1	11	12
Farm marketing to diversified markets/Niche markets/ (Beekman 180)	0	11	11
Lower taxes	6	0	6
Marketing/Distribution specialist	2	3	5
Change laws regarding hiring	4	0	4
Dairy processing plant	4	0	4
Embrace all sizes of ag, including homesteads	4	0	4
Markets that carry local products	3	1	4
Meat processing facility (large and small animal)	4	0	4
Point person for internship	4	0	4
Co-location of solar and farm land uses	3	0	3
Increase local demand for local products	3	0	3
Work more closely and communicate with college/students to stay and farm	0	3	3
Advocate for farmers that is not a farmer, participate in information sharing	1	1	2
Canning facility	2	0	2
Farm transfer mentoring program	2	0	2
Improve availability of broadband	2	0	2
Use renewable resources (biodiesel, solar)	2	0	2
Broad method to communicate to non-farmers/vegan groups	1	0	1
Central point of contact	1	0	1
Leadership/team building in marketing opportunities	1	0	1
Market outlets off I-88, dedicated to local farm products	1	0	1
Model working farm, Stone Barn Center	1	0	1
Recycling of ag products (energy)	0	1	1
Build agri-tourism opportunities	0	0	0
Farm tours/Farm family day	0	0	0
Farmers' market	0	0	0
Farms for boarding students	0	0	0
Farm-to-school/institutions	0	0	0
Infrastructure helps niche farmers reach markets	0	0	0
Internet advertising	0	0	0
People get involved in local government	0	0	0
Positive co-operative functions	0	0	0
Promote responsible animal welfare	0	0	0
Share farm by-products for sustainability	0	0	0
Specialty crops	0	0	0

Farmer Survey

A survey of the entire farm community was conducted in April of 2016. This effort was designed offer all farmers the chance to provide input into the plan. Questions explored what farmers though were critical issues affecting agriculture, positive features about farming in Schoharie County, feedback on opportunities that were identified at the farmers' workshops and focus groups, and some information about their farms. Forty-Five farms participated in the survey. The results are detailed in the following pages. Together with information from the other public input events, this data helped form the vision, goals, and strategies outlined in this Plan.

The following pages detail the questions that were asked, and highlights of the results. For full results, see files in the Schoharie County Planning Agency office.

1. How much of an issue are each of the following to farming in Schoharie County? (Answers= the top ten issues are highlighted below.)

- Access to skilled labor
- Cost of labor
- Costs for production such as fuel, seed, fertilizer
- Property Taxes - County and School
- Profit margins are small
- Difficult starting a dairy farm from scratch (unless passed down by a family member)
- Inexperienced/new farmers - need for mentoring
- Lack of access to affordable farmland
- Lack of processing, storage facilities
- Lack of broadband/Internet
- Development pressure to use farmland for non-farm uses
- Lack of marketing expertise
- Lack of knowledge about local products that are available
- Reluctance of farmers to increase revenue by getting into value-added production
- Lack of streamlined 'gateway' on information about farming and agri-tourism
- Lack of quality lodging restricts tourism/agri-tourism
- Lack of communication, networks, and connections
- Attitude that new farmers are not welcomed
- Negative view of farming among the public and scapegoating of farmers for broader issues
- Lack of understanding of agriculture as a career choice
- County doesn't see agriculture as having a role in economic development
- Regulations, state or federal
- Regulations, local
- Restrictive code enforcement
- Gas pipeline - effects of construction/maintenance on water quality
- Soil and water contamination potential through pesticides/herbicides
- The \$10,000 gross farm income needed to obtain an agricultural assessment
- Threat of Fracking
- Use of eminent domain
- Other issues that are important to your farm (please list):

2. From question 1, what three issues from the list do you think are the most critical ones the new plan should address to improve agriculture in the County? Answers are:

- Property Taxes
- Small profit margins
- Access to skilled labor

3. The following have been identified as positive features that attract people to farm or stay farming in Schoharie County. How do you rate each one? (Answers= the top strengths are highlighted below.)

- Acceptance of agricultural practices in the County
- Location in the Capital region
- Access, proximity and transportation to markets via I-88 and other highways
- Direct sales
- SUNY Cobleskill
- The Ag/Farm Community
- Women are involved in agriculture
- Diversity of farms in the County
- Dedication and perseverance of Farmers
- Farmer and Non-Farmer connectivity
- Open land is availability for farming
- Soil health and quality
- Good water quality, ground water
- Climate/Temperature
- Scenic beauty of the countryside and viewshed
- Provides rural lifestyle and Peace and quiet
- Opportunity for sustainable growth here
- Urban residents buying farms for farming
- Farms provide recreational land base
- Other features that are important to your farm (please list):

4. From question 3, what three features from the list do you think are the most critical ones the new plan should work to maintain or enhance? Answers Are:

- Acceptance of agricultural practices in the County
- Opportunity for sustainable growth here
- Direct sales

5. The following opportunities were identified at the workshops and meetings. How important do you think each one is? (Answers= the top opportunities are highlighted below.)

- Change laws regarding hiring youth on farms
- Young farmer program/internship in school
- First-time farmer programs
- Point person to coordinate internship opportunities
- Farm-business planning programs
- Establish farm transfer mentoring program

- Promote and market the county to new farmers and ag-businesses
- Establish a marketing and distribution specialist for local products
- Improved marketing of local farm products
- Create a local brand for Schoharie County products
- Farm based beverages
- Food hub
- Farm-to-Table programs
- Increase local demand for and use of local products
- Promote farm stays
- Establish dairy processing plant
- Establish a canning facility
- Establish meat processing facility (large and small animal)
- Expanded use of conservation easements to protect farmland
- Use lands in County tax sale for agriculture
- Embrace all sizes of farms, including homesteads
- Promote use of renewable resources (biodiesel, solar)
- Improve availability of broadband
- Lower taxes
- Pass right to farm laws in towns
- Promote farm-friendly zoning and local land use laws
- Promote co-location of solar facilities with farm land uses
- Other ideas to promote farming (please list):

6. From question 5, what three ideas from the list do you think are the most important to include in the new plan to include? Answers are:

- Promote farm-friendly zoning and local land use laws
- Pass right to farm laws in towns
- Lower taxes

7. What town is your farm primarily located in?(if multiple towns, pick the town you mainly operate from)

Towns that had participants in the survey are highlighted:

- Blenheim
- Broome
- Carlisle
- Cobleskill
- Conesville
- Esperance
- Fulton
- Gilboa

- Jefferson
- Middleburgh
- Richmondville
- Schoharie
- Seward
- Sharon
- Summit
- Wright

8. How long have you been farming in Schoharie County? (years) Average was 26 years

9. How many acres of land do you currently farm, and OWN yourself? Average was 168 acres

10. How many acres of land do you currently farm, and RENT from someone else? Average was 125 acres

11. What is the major agricultural enterprise on your farm?(for example, dairy, chickens, eggs, vegetables, hay, bees, Christmas trees, sheep, horses, maple, etc.): Variety, with most being dairy farmers

12. How do you sell your farm products?(Check all that apply) Most frequent answers highlighted:

- Through a farmer's market
- Through a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)
- A farm stand located at the farm
- At an off-site farm retail outlet
- Direct to restaurants
- Institutional buyers (public/government entities, schools, etc.)
- At a retail outlet (grocery store, produce markets, garden centers, big box stores)
- Wholesaler, non-dairy
- Through a milk processor or cooperative
- Other processors
- Other (please specify)

13. Please share with us any other concerns you have about agriculture in Schoharie County or ideas that might improve the future of farming here.

Focus Groups

Two focus groups were held in February 2016. These were efforts targeted to learn more about the relationship between agriculture and the tourism and hospitality industry in Schoharie County and economic development. Representatives from farms, Schoharie County Farm Bureau, tourism related businesses, restaurants, SUNY, the Chamber of Commerce and other area agencies, organizations, and businesses were invited to attend. This effort provided the following information:

Existing Programs & Initiatives

- Funding for ag economic development through regional, state, and federal agencies, but focus is often on job creation
- Watershed funding for water quality protection - Upper Susquehanna and Delaware watersheds
- SUNY Cobleskill
 - Educational programs - production, farm management, food systems
 - New USDA-certified slaughterhouse
 - Business planning assistance (also through CCE)
 - Interns
- Family Farm Day
- Watershed Ag Council
- FarmLink and FarmNet
- Proposed magnet school with an ag focus in St. Johnsville - initiative of HFM BOCES & SUNY Cobleskill (could this be done in Schoharie County?)

Challenges

- Inexperienced/new farmers - need for mentoring
- Difficult starting a dairy farm from scratch (unless passed down by a family member)
- Aging farmers... succession plans needed
- Reluctance of farmers to increase revenue by getting into value-added production
- Lack of marketing expertise
- Limited infrastructure for food processing
- Need for broadband
- Need for a shared-use kitchen and aggregated refrigeration facility
- Lack of quality lodging restricts tourism/agri-tourism
- Need a social media person to market County tourism – also a streamlined “gateway” to information

Opportunities

- Exporting beef to China
- Food hub - CCE finishing up a study
- Renewed appeal of farming and agriculture for some
- Recruiting new farmers on a regular basis
- Lands in county tax sale – could be used for agriculture
- Farm-based beverages
- Food hub, especially for local produce and possibly grain
- Farm-to-table activities
- Farmstays, if zoning would allow cabins, camping, etc. on working farms

Dairy Reset Meetings

During development of this Plan, dairy farmers continued to be severely stressed by low milk prices. This was exacerbated by the closure of Elmhurst Dairy's processing plant in Jamaica, NY, leaving several County dairy farms scrambling to find other markets for their milk. In response to this stress the County understood that the County in general and this Plan needs to specifically address the dairy farm issues.

To that end, the County conducted two meetings to specifically explore the issues and opportunities for dairy in Schoharie County. The first meeting was organized to hear from various agencies and individuals directly involved with the dairy industry. Participants included County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board members, members of the Board of Supervisors, NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Farm Credit East, SUNY Cobleskill, Schoharie County Planning & Development Agency, Schoharie County Administrator, Dairy Farms of America (DFA), Schoharie County Farm Bureau, New York Animal Agricultural Coalition, and several farmers.

The second meeting brought together 15 dairy farmers from Schoharie County to discuss the issues and offer their insight into possible solutions and opportunities for the future.

The solutions offered through the first Dairy Reset meeting are:

- Help farmers know about and implement suggestions from the Farm Credit East Dairy Reset document (see <https://www.farmcrediteast.com/-/media/farm-credit-east/knowledge-exchange/Reports/2016/>)
- Create a central hub for information to link farmers and farmland owners with those seeking to come to Schoharie County to farm (a farmlink program).
- Ensure that any county road and bridge work takes into consideration farm equipment use of them.
- Enhance consumer education about farming, especially about manure spreading and dairy farm practices so that the non-farm population understands dairy farm practices.
- Promote the Pathways to Agriculture Program, FFA, and expand County school participation in the P-TECH program with SUNY Cobleskill. Help schools and students understand there is a future in an agricultural career.
- Create a local marketing effort that labels local milk products so that consumers know the product comes from Schoharie County.
- Participate with SUNY Cobleskill in the implementation of the new Institute and farm incubator programs on campus.
- Work to find ways to help dairy farmers come to the table with the Co-ops when milk prices are negotiated.

- Create a position in Schoharie County to assist farmers with grants, marketing, business planning, and coordinate ag-related programs. It was noted that Cornell Cooperative Extension of Schoharie/Otsego has proposed such a staff position be funded in FY 2017 to support agriculture at the local and regional level and coordinated from CCE. And, it was also noted that the Dairy Team covers a 7-county area and hundreds of dairy farms with two specialists. Added staff with expertise in farm financial planning is needed to further support area dairy farms.
- Work with organizations such as the New York Animal Agricultural Coalition to address consumer concerns related to agriculture.
- Work more aggressively with the Mohawk Valley Regional Economic Development Council to access funding for ag-related programs.

In October, 2016, the County also sponsored a roundtable discussion with local dairy farmers. Fifteen people participated in the discussion. Actions suggested by the dairy farmers are:

- Local communities need to be overall more business friendly to attract a wider variety of agri-businesses such as machinery, equipment and supply dealers.
- Promote agricultural education in our schools. It was suggested that the STEM program be renamed STEAM to add in agriculture as a missing component. It was noted that there is a huge need to educate school administrators, guidance counselors, the public and students about careers in agriculture.
- Promote agri-tourism so that the general public can learn about agriculture.
- There needs to be more promotion of SUNY Cobleskill programs so that farmers can take advantage of those programs as well as build relationships and networks with faculty and students. It was noted that many programs go untapped because there is no knowledge about them.
- There needs to be a funded position within County government dedicated to agriculture. Since dairy is about half of the agricultural industry in the County, this position should spend half of their time on dairy support programs. This position should act as a facilitator and to provide individual support for farmers. As a facilitator, the staff person would need to understand the issues and needs of individual farms and then direct the appropriate program or planning available to meet that that. This would also allow this position to serve as a much-needed clearinghouse for information that farmers need. This facilitator is also needed because there is a great need to have someone help people learn how to do niche, value-added or other farming such as grass-fed or organic dairies. It was noted that Cornell Cooperative Extension could fill some of this role until a position was created.
- Value-added dairy has a lot of opportunities and Cowbella could be a model for development of other value-added operations.

- Be more aggressive about education of consumers about farms, farm practices, and local foods. Farmers felt this was very important so that the public understands how a farm works, and why certain practices contribute to the quality of the products they buy.
- Use local expertise that already exists in grass-fed dairying.
- There needs to be a mentoring program to help with farm transitions. There is a need for one-on-one assistance to assess the needs of a farm that is transitioning and match it with a new/next generation farmer. This could be a role of the facilitator mentioned above.

Appendix E: Other Helpful Information

The Schoharie County IDA and Agriculture

The County of Schoharie Industrial Development Agency offers a tax abatement program for value-added industries and this needs to be specifically opened to agricultural enterprises. A substantial number of the County's existing employers are agricultural enterprises and these industries generate extraordinarily high employment multipliers, offering a very logical rationale for the IDA to make its industrial value-added tax incentive program available to complement the Agricultural Revolving Loan Fund recommended above. It would allow the County to offer unique packages of benefits to agricultural enterprises and makes it the place to be if one is in those businesses (e.g. a cheese plant).

The County's existing program offers 5 years of no taxes on improvements for industrial valued-added enterprises and then phases in at 50% the 6th year, 60% the 7th and so on until the 10th year when the abatement expires. It is recommended that the IDA add a definition to its Uniform Tax Exemption Policy for the term "industrial value-added" that would specifically incorporate any agricultural processing facility, including feed mills, dairy processing facilities (on or off-farm) and fruit and vegetable processing. It is further recommended that the IDA provide a more aggressive abatement schedule for these enterprises on the basis that they are integral to the County's most important industry - agriculture. It is suggested that the schedule be modified to start with 10% of taxes in the 6th year and add 10% per year until 100% is reached in the 16th year. This type of schedule will be necessary to attract attention and provide the critical advantages required to secure major agri-businesses such as a cheese plant.

There are many opportunities for the IDA to have an enhanced role in agricultural economic development. From assisting in lease of development rights programs to additional tax relief for the forest industry, the IDA should be a significant player in enhancing agriculture in Schoharie County.

The following information offers highlights of three other IDA's in New York State as examples of such enhanced programming related to agriculture.

Otsego County

Otsego Now is the "umbrella" brand for the County of Otsego IDA (COIDA), Otsego County Capital Resource Corporation, and Otsego County Workforce Training Center.

There are no references to agriculture or ag-related industry in COIDA's by-laws, mission statement, annual report, or strategic plan; COIDA does not list *any* target industries. The IDA Board of Directors does include a retired farmer, though he was probably appointed because he was a member of the Otsego County Board of Representatives for 25 years.

However, COIDA's most recent (FY 2015) performance measurement report lists several agricultural business-related projects the agency has facilitated, including:

- Assisting the Cooperstown Distillery in opening the Cooperstown Beverage Exchange;
- Assisting Generations Malting in obtaining grant funding; and
- Initiating the Food and Craft Beverage Innovation/Food Hub Project in Oneonta.

COIDA also established an Agricultural Microenterprise Program “to encourage the development of new, and aid in the expansion of existing, agricultural microenterprise businesses within the County.” The program has grants available for up to \$35,000 to assist micro-businesses (with up to 5 employees, including owners) in financing the costs of starting or expanding their agriculture-related business operations. Grant funds require a 10% match, and may be used to offset a portion of the working capital, inventory and machinery/equipment expenses of the business project. Acquisition, construction or renovation expenses are not eligible for reimbursement, but may be used as part of the match.

Businesses awarded funding are required to participate in and successfully complete the Entrepreneurial Training provided by the SBDC before receiving grant funding reimbursement. Also, businesses must verify owner and/or employee income eligibility per HUD income guidelines; those pledging job creation must either make the jobs available to, or fill them with, low or moderate income eligible individuals.

The Otsego County Workforce Training Center has in the past offered training in “value-added agriculture and agribusiness planning and management” in partnership with CADE.

Genesee County

Genesee County Economic Development Center (GCEDC), formerly known as the Genesee County IDA, is the County’s primary economic development agency.

There are no references to agriculture or ag-related industry in the GCEDC’s by-laws or mission statement. One member of the GCEDC Board of Directors is managing partner of a large, 6,000-acre crop farm with more than 50 employees. He also owns a turf farming operation and a business that raises calves for local dairy farms. Another member is a Genesee County Legislator who also serves as Legislative Liaison to the Cornell Cooperative Extension Board of Directors and the Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board.

Agri-business and food processing is one of the GCEDC’s four target industry sectors. The Genesee Valley Agri-Business Park is a 250-acre, shovel-ready site focused on agri-business and food processing industries. It is home to several food manufacturers, including Alpina Foods and O-AT-KA Milk Products. In 2015, the GCEDC assisted O-AT-KA in securing grant funding as part of a nearly \$21 million expansion of its manufacturing plant. A yogurt manufacturing facility constructed at the Agri-Business Park in 2013 was recently purchased by Dairy Farmers of America, which plans to restore dairy processing operations.

Yancey’s Fancy, a producer of artisanal cheeses, is also located in Genesee County. The company reports that most their milk comes from farms within a 10-mile radius.

Genesee County has been recognized as a top 10 food processing location by *Business Facilities* magazine. Continued growth in the food manufacturing sector has led to growth in the agricultural industry.

The GCEDC recently started a program known as the GAIN (Growing Agricultural Industry Now) Loan Fund. Funded by an Empire State Development grant, it offers low-interest loans of \$25,000 to \$200,000 to capitalize new or expanding food processing businesses and operating farms that are adopting new technologies, diversifying, or expanding. Priority is given to ag-related projects that involve:

- Job creation;
- Farm diversification, including value-added products and farm-based retail or wholesale;
- Investment in new technology, including renewable energy projects, production, or harvesting equipment;
- Increase the amount of land in productive agriculture use;
- Growth in net revenue for agriculture enterprises;
- Leveraging other sources of funding; and
- Projects that produce secondary economic multipliers (e.g., other business expansions).

The requested funds must be combined with bank-approved financing or project development “equity” equal to at least 10% of the total project cost. Collateral is required.

Jefferson County

Jefferson County Economic Development provides access to a full range of local and regional programs that support business growth and expansion. These include finance and incentive programs available through the Jefferson County Industrial Development Agency (JCIDA), Jefferson County Local Development Corporation (JCLDC), and Jefferson County Civic Facilities Development Corporation.

There are no references to agriculture or ag-related industry in the by-laws or mission statements of the JCIDA or its affiliates. However, *food processing* is identified as one of three key industries in Jefferson County. The JCIDA/JCLDC Board of Directors includes a farmer and the plant manager at a local cheese manufacturer.

The value placed on agriculture in Jefferson County is reflected in the fact that Jefferson County Economic Development employs a full-time Agriculture Coordinator who works in partnership with agricultural and economic development organizations to help both farmers and ag-related businesses. The JCLDC’s annual report lists many activities in which the Agriculture Coordinator participated in 2014-15, such as:

- Organizing a group of wineries and distilleries to help kick start a joint marketing effort led by the Thousand Islands International Tourism Council;
- Providing start-up technical assistance and helping to secure grant funding for two wineries;
- Helping a local developer interested in establishing a mid-sized USDA meat processing plant to serve the dairy and livestock sectors;

- Assisting an international logistics company with the continued growth of their USDA inspection services for poultry exports into Canada;
- Continuing to work with two dairy processing plants in the County to address ongoing concerns, while actively seeking to recruit new processing capacity; and
- Collaborating with educators and local media to create an agricultural career video aimed at high school students.

The Agriculture Coordinator also maintains a website, separate from the Jefferson County Economic Development site, designed to tell the County's "agriculture story." It serves three targeted groups: the existing farm community, with information on current agricultural topics; consumers who are interested in local foods and agri-tourism; and agribusinesses, including food processors, feed manufacturers, and producers of agricultural equipment, that may be looking for a potential site.

The cooperation among the agencies that support agriculture in Jefferson County is impressive. Comprised of such groups and agencies as the Jefferson County Planning Department, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Jefferson Community College, Jefferson County Farm Bureau, and many others, the Ag Agency Roundtable meets quarterly, providing a great opportunity to share information and collaborate on various initiatives.

Ten Rules of Transition Management¹¹

Rule 1: Revenue/Net Income

Bringing in a new partner takes an estimated \$150,000 to \$250,000 in gross revenue, or \$40,000 to \$70,000 of net profit for a successful business transition. Violate this rule and you set yourself up for guerilla warfare, where family members or partners fight over scarce resources (including net income) to meet their standard of living.

Rule 2: Three-to-Five- Year Rule

Agricultural business transitions are twice as likely to be successful when the family member or potential business partner works for someone else for three to five years. Allow them to make mistakes with someone else's money! A recent study found that the farm businesses that allowed entering partners to work for others for three to five years found their business to be four times more profitable. A college education is not part of this experience; however, military and summer work experiences are part of the experience base.

Rule 3: Six-Year Rule

If a new partner is brought into the business, make sure you allow him/her to move into management and decision-making within six years. Farms and businesses that fail to do so are twice as likely to have an unsuccessful business transition and are less profitable. This past winter in a seminar in Wytheville, an 85-year- old gentleman, after the seminar, indicated that he needed to turn the books over to his boy. Well, his boy was 65 years old! The adage is you either teach or share with the younger generation, or you destroy the business.

Rule 4: Ripple Effect

When making changes to a growing business, you should over- estimate capital needs by at least 25 percent to avoid being short on working capital due to unexpected costs. For example, if you need \$200,000 to expand the business, then \$250,000 should be estimated and used to determine whether the growth is financially feasible. It is also wise to over-estimate the time needed to complete the change by 25 percent.

Rule 5: Don Shula Rule

Many managers and owners, like Don Shula, stay too long before turning over the business. The optimal time for ownership and management of a business is 30 to 35 years. Owners and managers who fail to heed this rule run into the trap of continuing to do "business as usual" without changing for the times. For managers to maintain the cutting edge, they must either follow this rule or surround themselves with new members who will bring renewed energy and new resources into the business.

Rule 6: You Can't Treat All Children Equally, But You Can Treat Them Fairly and Equitably

One of the most profound challenges in estate planning and transition management for farm businesses today is what to do with children who move away from the business. Usually, they have little interest in

¹¹ From Virginia Cooperative Extension.

the operation. When the parents die, the business interests of the children who have moved intensify because proceeds from the estate can be used to pay off mortgages or fund their children's college educations. The most successful transition plans have the business assets transferred to the child managing the business, and insurance policies to cover estate settlement costs and cash settlements for children who are not interested in the business. This strategy allows the children involved with the farm to continue to function without requiring them to buyout the non- farm children's shares, and have sufficient cash to pay estate settlement taxes. This strategy is simple and objective.

Rule 7: Non-Business Spouse

An increasing challenge in businesses is incorporating the non- business spouse into the family and business management process. Many more families are finding this incorporation a challenge as there are more non- business or non-agricultural spouses, and that spouse frequently does not understand erratic business schedules, time management, and prioritization problems that can occur. An operations agreement including time expectations, goals, responsibilities, and accountability can resolve many of these issues.

Rule 8: Getting Out of Business

A plan that covers dissolution of the business is critical in establishing a family business transition. Included is an operations agreement, a buy/sell agreement, and a time line for an orderly transition. Partners who are not willing to discuss these issues initially frequently find that getting out of business is more difficult than getting into business.

Rule 9: Transition Team

All businesses need to have a list of advisors or a transition team. This team includes a lender, a lawyer, an accountant, a financial planner, both spouses, and all partners. Annual team meetings with all member's present are critical. Outside professionals need to be placed on retainer rather than on an hourly fee structure.

Rule 10: The Nike Principle

Just do it! The biggest concern with family business transition plans is procrastination. Day-to-day matters frequently take priority over the planning process. A transition plan often takes two to three years to formulate, and must be updated at least twice a decade.

The Hudson Valley Agri-Business Development Corporation Model

Established as a nonprofit in 2007, Hudson Valley Agribusiness Development Corporation (HVADC) is dedicated to promoting balanced, market-based solutions that lead to enhanced agricultural entrepreneurship, rural economic growth, and community enhancement. HVADC commits tireless energy and resources to encourage and assist agricultural producers in becoming active participants in the growing market. Since its inception, HVADC has assisted over 100 businesses with a wide range of individualized services such as business development, financial planning, and market readiness preparation, and has expanded its network of farms, restaurants, and producers to over 600 businesses and counting.

HVADC continues to be a regional leader of agricultural development and strives to enhance the vital connection between land and food throughout the Hudson Valley. Their key areas of support include:

- Agricultural Development Support for Communities
- Technical and Professional Assistance
- Project Planning and Development Services
- Funding and Capital Access
- Feasibility Analysis

Incubator Without Walls

Operating an agriculture business in today's global marketplace requires strong entrepreneurial skills and a constant source of product, process and service innovation to remain competitive. Qualified businesses that are admitted into the program can tap into a wide range of services to accelerate their growth and increase their chances of long-term success. Examples of our services include:

- Comprehensive Business Planning
- Strategic Planning for Growth and Development
- Analysis and Projections
- Marketing and Promotion
- Project Planning
- Matchmaking Services
- Food Safety Certification/Planning/Permitting
- Value-Added Infrastructure
- Grant Writing
- Farm Transfer
- Land Access
- Production Diversification
- Local Product Sourcing

Information About the Pakatakan Farmers Market



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Pakatakan Farmers' Market



Open Saturdays / May 14 - October 8, 2016

From mid-May through mid-October area farmers and artisans gather to share their creativity and bounty at the Pakatakan Farmers' Market. Located at the historic Round Barn on Route 30 Halcottsville (approximately 5 miles north of Arkville/Margaretville) the market runs Saturdays from 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

Since its inception in 1991, the market has consistently been a popular shopping and socializing spot for locals residents, weekenders and even celebrities from near and far.

Among the many products featured at the market (depending on the season) are goods that are grown on local, organic and sustainable farms and crate farms. Items offered include: pasture-raised meats, trout, cheeses, breads as well as bedding plants for your garden and patio. Locally made indoor and outdoor furniture is also offered.

The market is a great place to enjoy breakfast or brunch, as there are many food vendors and picnic tables. Artisans also sell jewelry, soaps, quilts, wool, wood products and more. There is a holiday market in November. The Pakatakan Farmers' Market is held rain or shine. Out of consideration for everyone, dogs are not allowed at the market. As always, admission is free.

Saturdays
mid-May thru mid-Oct.
Admission Free!
rain or shine



Free Wi-Fi



2016 Season
Vendor
Application
download

2016 Season
Vendor Rules
download

Town of Amenia Agricultural Profile (Model)

The following profile of agriculture was developed in Dutchess County and provided to local towns to help them with local planning for agriculture.

Community Profile: Agriculture and Farms - 2014

Amenia, New York



Cornell University
Cooperative Extension
Dutchess County

Dutchess County Agriculture

Dutchess County agriculture comprises over 170,000 of the county's 512,000 total acres (30%). Our farms produce a total of \$44.8 million in goods and are a large part of the county's \$438 million. Agriculture is also the county's third largest employer; its diversity and impact on the local economy is substantial.



Coon Brothers Farm. Photo credit Sean Carroll

A Closer Look

Communities in Dutchess County contain a diverse range of farm enterprises, from dairy and livestock to specialty crops, horses, and vineyards. Many of the farms produce a variety of goods as well. For example, some dairy farms also produce hay or grains. However, if the majority of the farm's income is generated from dairy, dairy is considered the enterprise. Farm enterprise types were developed from documentation provided by the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets; they were then aggregated into larger categories for simplification.

Table 1. Farms and Acreage in Amenia

Number of Farms	154
Average Size of Farm	166 acres
Land in Farms	18,115 acres
Total Land in Amenia	27,904 acres
Percentage of Town in Farms	65%

Agriculture in Amenia

The Town of Amenia, in Agricultural District 21 (Figure 1) saw an increase in population between 2000 and 2010. The extension of the Metro-North Harlem Valley Line to Wassaic may be one of several factors influencing this growth. The Town's recent focus on developing the hamlet center and its participation in intermunicipal studies of local aquifers and the entire Route 22 corridor, have highlighted the importance of protecting the Town's outlying farmland and scenic viewsheds. The Town's Master Plan notes that there has been a shift from traditional farm uses (dairy, hay, and field crops) toward an increase in the number of horse farms and vineyards, contributing to Dutchess County's number 1 status in NYS for the value of our equine population.

The Town of Amenia adopted a Comprehensive Plan Update and revised Zoning Ordinance in 2007. The Plan notes the dramatic increase since 1991 in lands protected by conservation easements from 522 acres to 3,553 acres. Properties under easement include many of the equine operations that have proliferated over the last fifteen years. The viability of Amenia's large-scale farm operations, including its dairy farms, is essential to long-term protection of the Town's working landscape.

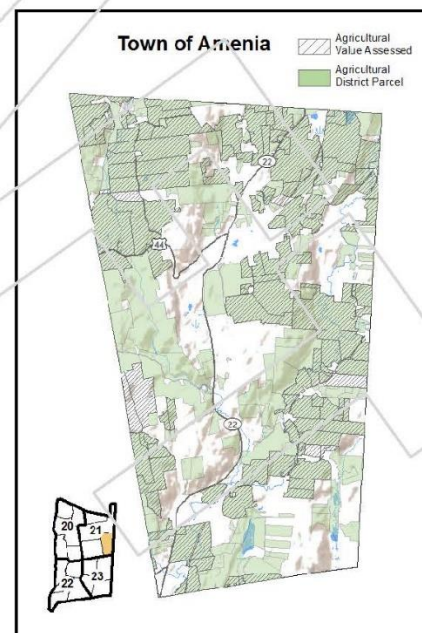


Figure 1. Map of Town of Amenia in Agricultural District 21

Figure 2 illustrates the relative distribution of farm enterprises in the town of Amenia. The largest segment (by acreage) is *Production Agriculture*, with 42 farm operations on 7,194 acres of farm property. Farm property includes all the property tax parcels owned and/or operated on by a farm operation. Actual cropped or pasture area may be less than the area of the entire farm property. *Dairy* is a particularly agricultural segment in Amenia, with 9 farms on 3,275 acres.

Other farm enterprises (see legend) was the next highest category by area, with 5 farm operations on 2,110 acres. *Buffer* properties followed with 39 on 1,950 acres. Buffer properties are often smaller sized, single parcels as opposed to the groups of parcels on which farms may spread. Buffer properties border larger farm property parcels, and therefore can be present in fairly high numbers, as in Amenia.

Beef and Livestock and *Specialty Crops* followed at 1,950 acres (39 farms) and 351 acres (9 farms), respectively.

Most farms in Dutchess County are small farms, grossing less than \$10,000 in annual sales. These farms typically make fewer capital investments. Amenia is not an exception. There are twice as many farms with annual gross sales or capital investments under \$10,000 than those with more (Figure 3).

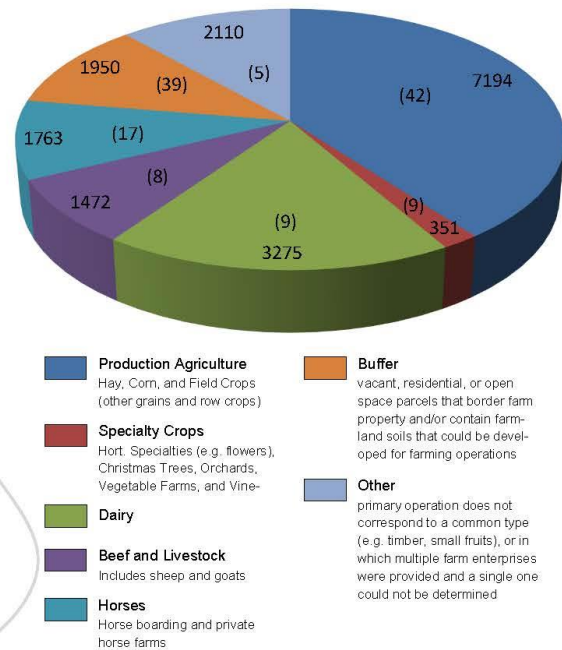


Figure 2. Acreage Distribution and Number of Farms by Enterprise Category

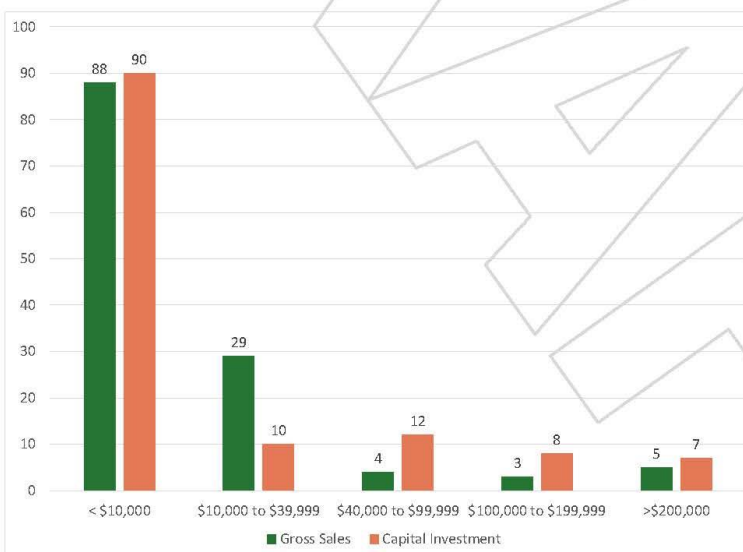


Figure 3. Number of Farms by Gross Sales and Capital Investment

The high number of farms in Amenia with less than \$10,000 in annual sales and capital investment is somewhat skewed by agricultural "buffer" properties, which are typically not in agricultural production and don't generate sales nor require capital investment.

Cumulatively small farms generate significant dollars that are then spent on investments (equipment, vet fees, etc.) that fuel the local economy. Larger farm operations, although fewer in number, generate higher gross sales and capital investment. A considerable number of Amenia's farms (29) gross between \$10,000 and \$40,000, and 8 farms gross \$100,000 or more (Figure 3). In addition, there were 12 farms in Amenia that spent between \$40,000 and \$100,000 in capital investments.

Sources:

Agricultural District Recertification Process 2007 for 2008 Recertification. Cornell Cooperative Extension Dutchess County. November 19, 2007.

Census and Demographics. Dutchess County Department of Planning and Development. Retrieved from <http://co.dutchess.ny.us/countygov/departments/planning/plcensus.htm>, September 2014.

CCEDC provides equal program and employment opportunities. The programs provided by this agency are partially funded by monies received from the County of Dutchess.

Resources

(On the table below, "Other" includes *information, advocacy, networking opportunities*)

Agency/Organization	Services Offered to Farmers			
	Funding	Technical Assistance	Training & Education	Other *
American Farmland Trust, New York Office http://newyork.farmland.org				X
Cornell Cooperative Extension of Schoharie and Otsego County, 518-234-4303, http://cceschoharie-otsego.org/		X	X	
Cornell Farm to School Program http://farmtoschool.cce.cornell.edu				X
Cornell Small Farms Program http://smallfarms.cornell.edu			X	X
Dirt Capital Partners www.dirtpartners.com	X			
Equity Trust www.equitytrust.org	X			X
Farm Aid http://ideas.farmaid.org	X			X
Farm Credit East http://www.farmcrediteast.com	X	X		
Farmer Veteran Coalition http://www.farmvetco.org			X	
Farmers Market Federation of New York http://www.nyfarmersmarket.com			X	X
Heroic Food Farm http://heroicfood.org/			X	
National Farm to School Network http://www.farmtoschool.org				X
National Good Agricultural Practices Program http://www.gaps.cornell.edu				X
National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service http://attra.ncat.org/index.php		X		X
National Young Farmers Coalition http://www.youngfarmers.org				X
New England Small Farm Institute http://www.smallfarm.org		X	X	
New York Ag Connection http://www.newyorkagconnection.com				X
New York Farm Bureau http://www.nyfb.org				X
New York Farm Viability Institute http://www.nyfvi.org	X	X		
New York FarmLink http://www.newyorkfarmlink.org		X		X
New York FarmNet		X		

Agency/Organization	Services Offered to Farmers			
	Funding	Technical Assistance	Training & Education	Other *
http://www.nyfarmnet.org				
NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets http://www.agriculture.ny.gov/	X			
NYS Energy Research and Development Authority http://www.nyserda.org	X	X		
New York Sustainable Agriculture Working Group http://www.ny-sawg.org				X
Northeast Beginning Farmers Project http://nebeginningfarmers.org			X	X
Northeast Center for Food Entrepreneurship http://necfe.foodscience.cals.cornell.edu		X	X	X
Northeast Organic Farming Association http://www.nofa.org/index.php			X	X
Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education http://www.nesare.org	X			X
Rodale Institute Your Two Cents Fund http://rodaleinstitute.org/assets/TwoCentsRFP-20Acres+.pdf	X			
Small Scale Food Processors Association of New York http://www.nyssfpa.com				X
Schoharie County Planning, 518-295-8770, http://www.schohariecounty-ny.gov/CountyWebSite/Planning/planninghome.html		X		
Schoharie County Farm Bureau, 518-431-9338 http://www.nyfb.org/about_nyfb/new_york_county_farm_bureau_detail.cfm?ID=47				X
Schoharie County Soil & Water Conservation District, 518-254-5741 http://Schohariecountyswcd.org	X	X		
USDA Agricultural Marketing Service http://www.ams.usda.gov				X
USDA Farm Service Agency, 518-295-8600 http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/newfarmers?navid=getting-started	X			
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, 518-823-4535 http://www.nrcs.usda.gov	X	X		
USDA Rural Development, 518-295-8600 ext 4 http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/NYHome.html	X			
U.S. Farmstay Association http://www.farmstayus.com/for-farms/starting-a-farm-stay				X
WWOOF (World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms) http://www.woof.net				X

Appendix F. Schoharie County Agriculture and the Mohawk Valley Regional Economic Development Council

To implement the priority projects identified in this Plan, additional funding will be necessary. One of the critical recommendations of this Plan is to seek additional funding through the primary mechanism New York State has established for such funding - The Mohawk Valley Regional Economic Development Council (MVREDC). This is our regions' pathway to a variety of New York State funding sources. They have established multiple strategies they will focus their funding on over the next few years. It is important that a) Schoharie County projects align with the goals and strategies of the MVREDC and b) that Schoharie County aggressively promote projects of critical importance to the farm community here to the MVREDC for funding consideration.

Many of the projects outlined in this Plan are very consistent with the goals and strategies established by the MVREDC. As the County works to implement its agricultural and farmland protection programs, it is critical that the County works closely with the MVREDC to take the projects recommended in this Plan a reality. It will require more than submittal of grant applications: The County must promote a working relationship and shared understanding of the projects needed to support agriculture so it can remain its role in the area's economy. Funding requests and grant applications need to clearly show how proposed projects in Schoharie meet the MVREDC strategies and criteria.

To that end, the following text, excerpted from the MVREDC 2016 Strategy Report, illustrates the important role agriculture has in the Region:

"Strengthening agribusiness through innovation, infrastructure, and institutional supports are fundamental to constructing sustainable food systems. The models are all around us, in neighboring places with similar assets like Greater Burlington and the Mid-Hudson region. The common denominator is people; vibrant communities and workforce availability are key components of sustainable local systems. In this plan, we demonstrate that, since the beginning of 2015, our refined strategies and concentrated investments are already bearing fruit.

Agribusiness and Food Processing are key regional concentrations for opportunity in the Mohawk Valley. Throughout the plan, we discuss how doors are opened to refugees and hard-to-place workers for entry level and advancement opportunities, as evidenced by the Mohawk Valley Resource Center for Refugees' partnership with Food Processors in the region. Four out of the top ten firms hiring refugees in our region are food processing and agribusiness supply chain companies – accounting for more than 500 new placements since 2009, and 90 in 2015 alone.

The MVREDC is prioritizing \$3.3 million in Priority Project funding for place-based agribusiness projects that leverage population centers, innovation in agriculture and food processing, and increased opportunity. The Susquehanna Regional Food & Beverage Hub is the cornerstone of Oneonta's winning DRI Proposal as well as the most ambitious of our Agribusiness-focused priorities. The multifaceted project involves a craft brewery, craft food incubator space, grain-

based research and development, and farm-to-table destinations in the heart of downtown Oneonta.

Brightwaters Farm further demonstrates modernization of the agriculture industry. It presents the opportunity for Veterans and new Americans to succeed in a growing regional industry cluster, and challenges Mohawk Valley producers to meet the domestic and international demand of major metropolitan restaurants and grocery chains. Additionally, the Vets2Farm project proposes to enhance the lives of our Veterans through agriculture and animal husbandry, while addressing the age cliff and skills gaps in agriculture and food processing.

Finally, to advance our URI strategy, MVREDC is proposing two complementary, multi-year initiatives to move the needle. First, a comprehensive asset map and cloud-based interactive inventory of Mohawk Valley producers and products. Second, funding to work with expert brokers in the food and beverage industry to identify new domestic and export markets – focusing on major metropolitan areas in the Northeastern US and Quebec. Together, the initiatives provide sustained capital over four years to build marketing capacity, increase exports and leverage current cooperative aggregation and packaging operations such as Mohawk Harvest, Schoharie Fresh, and Upstate Growers and Packers.

The Mohawk Valley cannot envision a comprehensive economic recovery without a scientific strategy to strengthen and grow regional agribusiness and food systems. As global climate change and drought continues to threaten crop production and sustainability in traditional agriculture like California and Mexico, Upstate New York – specifically, from Buffalo to Amsterdam – consistently ranks among the top five dairy-producing regions in the nation and is positioned to fill the gap to meet growing demand for food by large metropolitan economies.

MV500 Project research and key findings in 2015 helped to bring the regional picture into focus:

- The abundant natural resources and climate give us a competitive advantage in dairy production and water-intensive crops
- Mohawk Valley producers are only beginning to exploit major metropolitan markets of New York City, Montreal, Ottawa, Boston, or Philadelphia; and demand for upstate produce remains unmet in local and larger NYS metropolitan Farm-to-Table retail and wholesale markets
- Although the food processing and food manufacturing cluster is growing, there exists a skills gap as well as an age cliff in the agriculture production and food processing sectors. There has not been a true mechanism for on-farm capital support through the CFA process since 2011, and agricultural jobs generally fall outside of the traditional FTE paradigm. Our strategy, then, focuses less on what we cannot influence—namely, the climate and on-farm job support – and more on what we can through the CFA and URI:
- Brightwaters Farms. Situated on 150 acres of urban farmland in North Utica, Brightwaters is one of the largest greenhouse facilities in the northeast, currently shipping products to

major metropolitan areas like New York City, Boston, and Washington DC. Promising new job opportunities for veterans, refugees, and hard to place workers in the metro area, the project proposes to expand production capacity, improve energy efficiency, and streamline shipping operations to major metro markets and institutions.

- **Susquehanna Regional Food and Beverage Hub.** A follow-on to last year's priority project and complementary to Oneonta's DRI strategy, this project is the penultimate catalyst for revitalization of Oneonta's urban core. Creating a mixed-use environment for craft food and beverage producers, supply chain development, and tourism, the project features an on-site brewery, specialized training facilities, incubator space, and a boutique destination hotel.
- **Vets 2 Farm.** Through hands on training veterans learn the skills required to raise pigs or beef for market, in addition to skills associated with planting crops and managing forage for livestock through harvest management. Onsite training is accompanied by classroom training that is provided free of charge to participating veterans. Long-term, the Vets2Farm program will address the skills and age gap in agribusiness, as well as increase the number veteran-owned enterprises in a strategic regional cluster."