



**Progress Report Oct./Nov.
Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan Development
Towns of Seward and Carlisle
November 25, 2009**

**Next Meeting: Monday, December 28, 2009, 7 PM, Schoharie County Planning
& Development Agency, Cobleskill**

Seward Comprehensive Plan Survey

The Town of Seward land use plan survey is now complete. A total of 1,624 surveys were sent out and 413 surveys were returned. The results have been tabulated. The survey showed an overwhelming support for agriculture in the Town. Zachary Thompson, planning assistant for Schoharie County Planning and Development Agency (SCPDA) will prepare a report on the results of the survey. This report will be presented to the town board in January. The town board will then decide whether or not it wants to pursue the development of a land use plan. If so a committee will be appointed to work on the plan.

Review of Regulations

The review of the land use regulations for the Towns of Seward and Carlisle conducted by American Farmland Trust (AFT) has been completed and was presented to the Seward and Carlisle joint executive agriculture and farmland protection plan committee at the October meeting. The review was prepared by George Franz, a consultant for AFT.

Carlisle's review recommended adjustments to the site plan review regulations regarding agricultural operations. The review calls for more guidance to be offered to applicants regarding desired conformity to the Town's master plan. Also suggested is a concrete definition of the types of applications that would require less intensive review. Another issue taken up in the review is the need for expanded and improved definitions for terms relating to agriculture and ag-related businesses. The review also recommends design standards language regarding landscaping and screening be clarified.

Seward's review suggests the Town clarify the language regarding when special use permits will be granted and recommends a new category be created for agricultural enterprises. This category should be subject to site plan review instead of the special use permit process. The review recommends the Town revise its regulations to allow for non-commercial wind energy systems and also calls for its large minimum lot size and set back requirements to be re-examined as well as to clarify definitions of terms relating to agriculture.

Goals & Recommendations

AFT prepared and submitted draft recommendations to achieve the goals agreed upon by the committee for the plan to accomplish. These draft recommendations were presented at the November meeting and the committee has begun to review them. For the December meeting, Laura Ten Eyck, field consultant for AFT will create a new draft, merging AFT's recommendations with all of the potential recommendations made by the committee to date. The committee will continue its review process.

Maps & Inventories

Brian Fleury, GIS specialist for SCPDA, has updated Seward's agricultural lands map with the new information provided at the September meeting. The Carlisle committee continues to work on the maps identifying active agricultural land in the town and is still in the process of finalizing its inventory of types of agriculture.