



**Progress Report
Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan Development**

**Towns of Seward and Carlisle
June 29, 2009**

Prepared by Laura Ten Eyck, Field Consultant, American Farmland Trust

Maps & Inventories

The committee continues to work on the maps identifying active agricultural land in the town. Carlisle is still in the process of completing its inventory. Neither the Carlisle nor the Seward committee were able to meet in June to work on finalizing mapping and inventories but will do so as soon as possible. Seward is working on verifying which parcels receive agricultural assessment.

Seward Comprehensive Plan Survey

The Town of Seward is preparing to develop a comprehensive land use plan. They are going to conduct a survey of town residents that will be useful for development the agriculture and farmland protection plan as well as the comprehensive land use plan. The town's boards are currently reviewing a survey done for the Town of Sharon by the Southern Tier East Regional Planning Board. The boards will meet to discuss the survey on June 30th. The Schoharie County Planning Department Agency will facilitate the survey for the Town of Seward.

Farmer and Landowner Interviews

An initial draft of Carlisle's interview summary is complete and currently being reviewed by David Haight, AFT's New York Director. It will be e mailed to committee members later this week. The Seward interview summary is in progress and should be completed by the end of the week. Two interviews in each town remain to be done. These will interviews will be conducted as soon as possible and the summaries will be revised accordingly.

Goals

The committee has continued its discussion of goals and recommendations to be made in the plan. At their June meeting the committee reviewed suggested goals drafted by Laura. The committee discussed a number of changes and additions to the draft goals. Laura will make these revisions and present a list of goals to be finalized by the committee at the July meeting.

Economic Impact of Agriculture

David Cox from Cornell Cooperative Extension attended the meeting to share statistics offered by agriculture and farmland protection plans for the Towns of Charlton and Parma. He asked the

committee if they would like to include statistics for marginal agricultural land as well as idle land in the Towns of Seward and Carlisle. The consensus of the committee was that marginal agricultural lands were important to get statistics for because of their value as pasture for both conventional agriculture and the recent trend toward grass-fed meats and small livestock production. The committee believes marginal agricultural land will also be potentially useful for the production of biofuels

Timeline

Laura presented the committee with a proposed timeline for completion of the plan by the February deadline required by the terms of the grant. In general the committee felt that this would not be enough time but agreed to proceed accordingly and revise deadlines as needed.

Next Meeting: Monday, July 27, 2009, 7 PM, Schoharie County Planning Department