

**Tompkins County  
Agriculture and  
Farmland  
Protection Plan  
September 2015**



**Tompkins County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan**

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# **Tompkins County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan**

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**With special thanks to the many farmers who participated in focus groups, interviews and meetings.**

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# **Tompkins County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan**

## **Part I. Introduction**

### **A. Background**

In 1998, Tompkins County adopted one of the first New York State County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plans. Over the next 15 years, the Plan provided direction for the Tompkins County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board (AFPB), and in conjunction with Cornell Cooperative Extension Tompkins County (CCETC), many of the plans goals were met and exceeded.

New agricultural trends and issues have arisen since the original plan was written. In general, some farms have gotten larger, competition for farmland has resulted in an increase in land prices and agricultural land assessment, and smaller farms report having a harder time accessing land to start or expand. While there are fewer dairy farms than there were 15 years ago, some are getting larger and continue to expand. Increasing interest in locally produced and organic foods has fostered many smaller scale operations that grow produce, produce specialty products, and raise livestock for local customers. These trends point to the fact that agriculture remains active in Tompkins County; farmers are investing in business expansion, and new farmers are finding local marketing opportunities. Opportunities to protect farmland and explore agriculture economic development opportunities will help secure a future for agriculture.

However, with increasing residential development in agricultural areas, there is an impact on farming activities as farmers deal with more traffic and neighbor complaints. Fewer elected officials have an agricultural background, leading to a need to engage professionals from Cooperative Extension, the Soil and Water District, USDA programs, and even NYS Agriculture and Markets to help resolve farmer-municipality conflicts.

In response to these changes, this new plan was developed at the grassroots level, with farmer input gathered, compiled, organized, and prioritized into goals, strategies, and action steps.

The New York State requirements for updated County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plans include, but are not limited to:

- a) The location of any land or areas proposed to be protected;
- b) An analysis factors concerning areas and lands proposed to be protected:
  - i) Value to the agricultural economy of the county;
  - ii) Open space value;
  - iii) Consequences of possible conversion;
  - iv) Level of conversion pressure on the lands or areas proposed to be protected;
- c) A description of the activities, programs and strategies intended to be used by the county to promote continued agricultural use.

### **B. Past Plans and Studies**

The Tompkins County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board (AFPB) has actively led the implementation of the County's Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan, adopted by the Tompkins County Legislature in February 1998. The process of gathering input to write the County's first Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan began in 1994 with a survey of the farm community, followed in 1995 by a Cost of Community Services Study. In 1996, the County received funding from the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets to support the development of an Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan. The AFPB coordinated a process whereby focus groups provided input in three goal areas: Agricultural Economic Development, Education, and Government Policies.

The implementation of the County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan has involved the development of an annual work plan based on the goals, strategies, and action steps identified in the County Agriculture Plan. To remain relevant to the interests of farmers, the AFPB has gathered input during the Agricultural District Review period, and conducted a survey of all county farmers in 2002 to further help focus the annual work plan on goals supported by the farm community. Additionally, in 2006, the AFPB began reviewing the 1998 plan, analyzing data, trends, and pressures on the farming community.

## **Tompkins County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan**

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County Agriculture staff serves as lead support to the County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board in the implementation of many actions in the Agriculture Plan. To support this work, the Tompkins County Legislature provides funding that supports a half-time educator at Cooperative Extension, whose duty is to staff the AFPB and additionally support implementation of the County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan.

A study to assess the feasibility of a County Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program was undertaken in the 2002 *Tompkins County Agricultural Lands and Natural Areas Preservation Feasibility Study* in which priority farming areas based on soils and farming activity were identified for protection. In developing the 2004 Tompkins County Comprehensive Plan, these same areas were identified as the County's Agriculture Resource Focus Areas, the key areas countywide for farmland protection.

There has also been interest among Tompkins County towns to protect and promote agriculture. The Town of Ithaca established a Town PDR program in 1999 and, in 2011, completed the Town's Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan. The Town of Ulysses has also completed a Town Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan, and the Town of Lansing Agriculture Plan is in the final stages of development and adoption (2015). Dryden also recently received state funding (2015) to develop their municipal agriculture plan in the next 2 years and work has begun to that end.

The AFPB has also been actively promoting and supporting farmer applications for State Farmland Protection funding. Since 2003 a total of 2,597 acres of farmland have been protected on five different farms in the Towns of Lansing, Dryden, and Ithaca.

### **C. The Need for a New Plan**

The AFPB recognized the need to update the 1998 plan for the following reasons:

- The plan was developed 15 years ago and there is a need to re-examine the state of agriculture and issues impacting agriculture's future
- Many strategies and action steps were implemented
- There is a need for a plan that responds to emerging trends, current issues and opportunities
- Development pressure and land use around the county have continued to change, impacting farming operations
- Farmers are more cognizant of and interested in farmland protection
- Agriculture continues to diversify to include a strong dairy and field crop base along with many new enterprises exploring local/regional marketing options
- Economic development strategies are needed to support the expansion and diversification of farming

The purpose for updating the County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan is to prioritize and guide the actions of county and town governments, agricultural agencies, businesses, farmers, and the community at large in responding appropriately to the needs, conditions and opportunities that will maintain a viable agricultural economy in Tompkins County.

### **D. The Process for Updating the Plan**

With funding support from the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, the County undertook the plan update in 2013 and contracted with Cooperative Extension. In kicking off that update, Cooperative Extension, with direction from the AFPB, conducted Agriculture Focus Group meetings to gather sector-specific information. Focus Groups included in-depth interviews with farmers involved in: Dairy, Field Crops, Equine, Large Livestock, Small Livestock, Market Growers, Forestry, and Horticulture. Comments were compiled and organized, then reviewed by the AFPB. The working draft based on focus group input was reviewed by farmers at two public meetings – one on November 20, 2013 (attendance 35) and then again at the annual Ag Summit in February 26, 2014 (attendance 45).

## **Tompkins County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan**

Based on farmer input and APPB review, the resulting themes emerged:

- Agricultural Economic Development
- Local Foods
- Land Use Policy
- Agricultural Awareness
- Environmental Quality
- Future Farmers/Workforce

Farmer comments were organized by theme, and then developed into Strategies and Action Steps.

Data collection occurred concurrently. The most recent United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Census of Agriculture data for Tompkins County (2012) was reviewed and used to create tables and charts to provide a better understanding of agricultural trends. Cooperative Extension assembled a county-wide farmer database which contains where and how much owned and rented land farmers work in the county, including farms whose base of operation is beyond County borders. Information from County Assessment, Agriculture District review data, and Cooperative Extension Agriculture Staff knowledge of county farming operations further contributed to the database. NOTE: this database contains farm specific confidential information that is not released to the public.

The compiled data and theme goals and strategies were shared at a County Planning Advisory Board (PAB) meeting on June 25, 2014. A smaller group of PAB members agreed to work as a subcommittee and provided feedback plan content.

Further editing and compilation of the plan continued throughout 2014 with ongoing input from the County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board. Two farmer and landowner meetings were held on March 4, 2015 at the Ulysses Town Hall and March 10, 2015 at the Lansing Town Hall to gain further input on strategies in the plan and to identify any gaps. A compiled draft plan was submitted to the PAB on March 25, 2015. On May 20, 2015, the plan was shared with the County Planning, Economy, and Environmental Quality Committee (PEEQ), a subcommittee of the County Legislature. A presentation sharing the plan findings and recommendations was made at the Tompkins County Legislature Meeting on June 2, 2015. The plan was also presented at a public meeting at the Tompkins County Library, held on June 10, 2015 and to the Tompkins County Council of Governments (TCCOG) on July 23, 2015. Additionally, the legislature held the required public hearing on July 7, 2015 during which several people spoke in support.

Cooperative Extension Agriculture Educators, Monika Roth and Debbie Teeter, along with Scott Doyle from the Tompkins County Planning Department served as the lead authors of the plan. Input received at the above meetings and from NYS Agriculture and Markets has been incorporated into this document.

The plan can be found on the Tompkins County website at:

<http://tompkinscountyny.gov/files/planning/Rural%20Resources/documents/TC%20Ag%20%26%20Farmland%20Protection%20Plan%20Complete%207-20-15.pdf>

The final plan was shared with the PEEQ committee on August 19, 2015, with the County AFPB on August 26, 2015 and with the County Legislature on September 15, 2015. The County Legislature acted to adopt the plan at this meeting and recommended approval to the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets.

# Tompkins County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan

## Part II Status of Agriculture in Tompkins County

### A. Significance

*Agriculture in Tompkins County contributes to both the landscape and the economy in complex and significant ways.*

**LAND USE** - According to the 2012 USDA Census of Agriculture, 558 farms own or rent a total of 90,774 acres of land in the county resulting in an actively farmed landscape that occupies about 30% of Tompkins County total land area. Based on agricultural assessment data, Agricultural District surveys, and first-hand knowledge of the CCE-

Tompkins Agriculture team, the number of active farms is closer to 280. The difference in numbers is because individuals self-select to complete the Census and some respondents might more accurately be described as “backyard enthusiasts”, and also because the USDA has an elaborate system of estimating for non-respondents. The information in this section is based on both the USDA Census of Agriculture and locally-collected data in an effort to present a complete and accurate picture.

The amount of farmland has declined historically from our agrarian past when in 1950 over 200,000 acres of the county, almost two-thirds, was farmed. Over the past 20 years, there has been some stability within a range of 30-35% of the land being farmed. This stability is in part reflective of farming being primarily associated of prime or important soil types. Recently there is increasing demand for land among farmers and there is evidence that inactive, abandoned, and fallow land is being returned to farming (Tompkins County Planning Department Land Use Land Cover data, 2012).

Land used (owned and rented) by individual farmers’ ranges from under 10 to over 2000 acres. Fifteen years ago, there were five farms in the county working over 1000 acres, and none working more than 2000. Today, there are four farms working over 2000 acres, 17 working from 1000 to 2000 acres, and 29 working 500 to 999 acres – over one third of Tompkins County farms are working over 500 acres. There are at least a dozen dairy and field crop farms with a large base of operation outside of Tompkins County, who work land in the county that may not be counted in the Tompkins County Agriculture census data. However, this acreage is captured during the Agriculture District review process and receives agricultural assessment.

Agriculture is most concentrated in the northeastern corner of the county in the Towns of Dryden, Groton, and Lansing. On the northwestern edge, the Towns of Enfield and Ulysses have large,

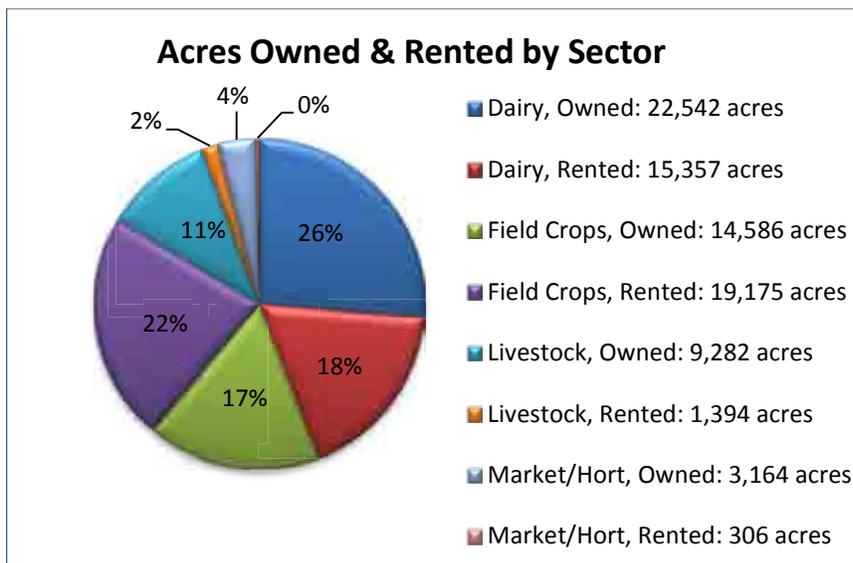


Chart 1

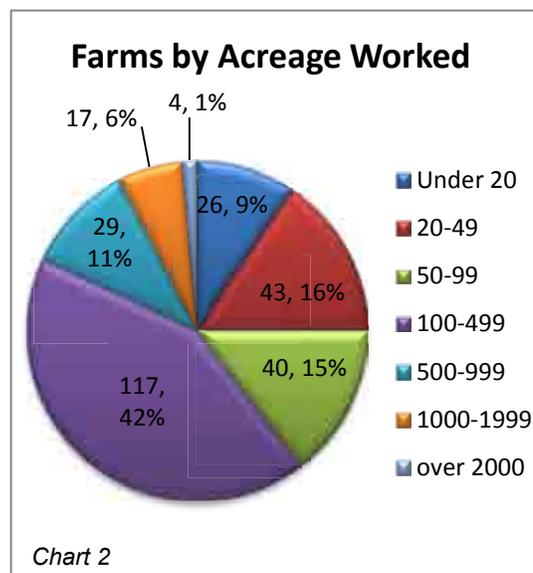
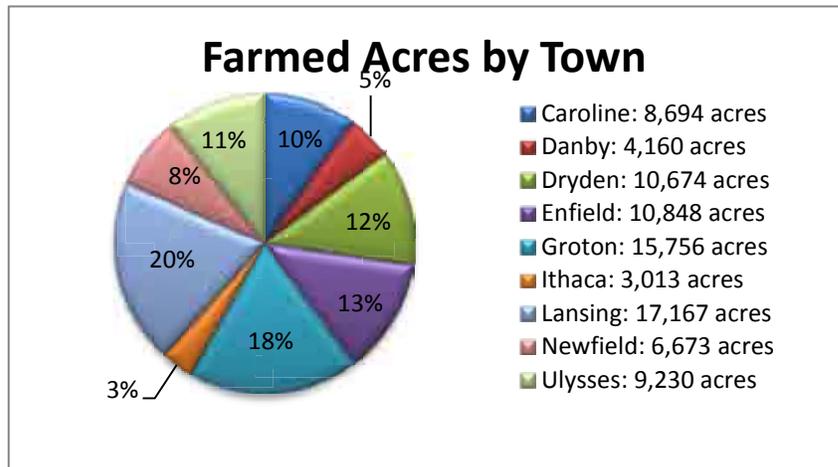


Chart 2

## Tompkins County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan

rolling tracts of farmland flowing into adjoining Schuyler and Seneca counties. In the southern portion of the county, in the Towns of Newfield, Danby, and Caroline, agriculture remains on the better soils both in valleys and hillsides. Agriculture in the Town of Ithaca is located near town's borders to the east, south, and west, bounded by residential development on the Ithaca side and other farmland in adjacent towns.



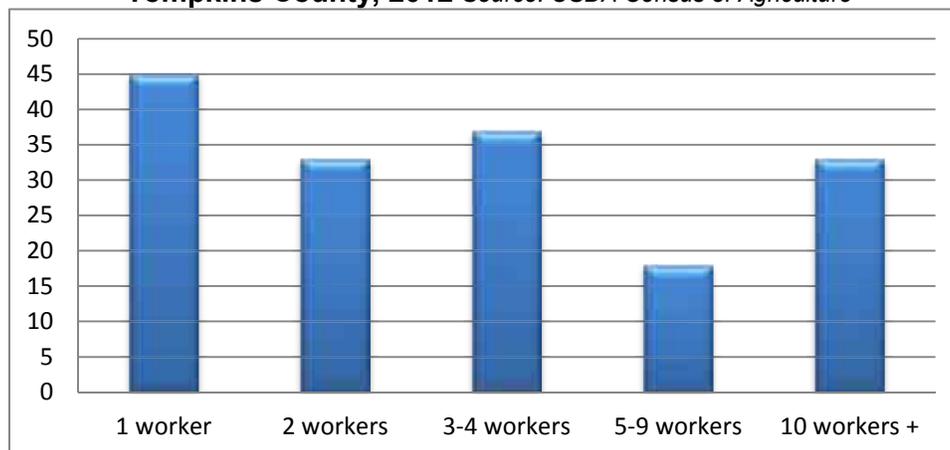
**ECONOMY** - While the Census of Agriculture reports 558 county farms, there are only 125 with sales above \$40,000. In the Ag Census, 49% or 273 of the 558 respondents indicated farming as their primary occupation. Farms that generate between \$10,000 and \$40,000 in sales are considered to be very part-time enterprises or limited resource farms. *The Ag Census defines small farms as having under \$250,000 in sales, which includes 85% (502) of the county's farms.* Of these small family farms, 241 are considered lower income farms. The balance being lifestyle farms, many with sales below \$10,000. A total of 213 farm operators receive New York State Agricultural Assessment, meaning they generate at least \$10,000.

Chart 3

County farmers generate \$67.4 million in product sales, the majority of which is exported in the form of milk, livestock and commodity crop sales (approximately \$50 million). The balance of sales includes horticultural crops and small livestock, primarily sold directly to consumers. These operations are not accurately captured in the Ag Census as many are new to farming and may not be receiving Ag Census surveys. Cooperative Extension estimates that direct market sales via farmers markets, CSA's, at farm sales, sales to restaurants and retailers is at least \$20 million, which is higher than the Census reports. However, some of the sales can be attributed to farmers located outside the county, which may account for some of the difference.

In 2012, 166 farms in Tompkins County hired farm laborers. Of the 975 workers hired, 444 workers were employed for 150 days or more within a year while the remaining 531 workers were employed for less than 150 days each year representing more seasonal work. In addition to paid employees, 262 farms also reported using unpaid workers. Unpaid workers include non-operator partners and family members.

**Chart 4—Number of Farms that Hire Farm Labor by Number of Workers**  
Tompkins County, 2012 *Source: USDA Census of Agriculture*



# Tompkins County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan

## **B. Agriculture Trends**

In analyzing agriculture trends in Tompkins County, it is important to look both at current data as well as past records. The USDA Census of Agriculture has been conducted at five-year intervals since the early 1900's and thus provides the only reliable source of long term data that illustrates trends. For this report, we focused on the past 20-30 years to assess more recent trends. Earlier historic data can be found in the Report: *Study of Tompkins Agriculture: Phase I – Tompkins County Agriculture & Farmland Protection Plan, October 1996.*

### **1. Historic Trends**

**Table 1—Historic Farm Base Summary, Tompkins County, 1978-2012**

*Source: USDA Census of Agriculture*

	1978	1982	1987	1992	1997	2002	2007	2012
<b>Number of Farms</b>	598	567	532	441	557	563	588	558
<b>Total Farm Acreage</b>	123,210	121,068	110,609	91,822	102,610	100,931	108,739	90,774
<i>Average Acreage per Farm</i>		214	208	208	184	179	185	163
<i>Harvested Cropland</i>	79,982	77,047	75,634	62,421	67,731	66,960	67,292	54,424
<i>Woodland</i>	~	~	20,329	16,921	19,245	18,959	21,838	19,183
<i>Other Land*</i>	~	~	14,646	12,480	13,898	15,012	19,609	17,167
<b>% of County in Farmland</b>	39%	39%	35%	29%	33%	32%	35%	30%
<b>Total Market value of Agricultural Sales (\$1,000)</b>	30,904	39,624	42,056	50,720	48,139	41,908	60,185	67,391

\*Other land: land that is not harvested crop or woodland, includes permanent pasture, farm roads, hedgerows, etc.

### **2. Number of Farms**

Table 1 includes US Census of Agriculture Data, collected at five-year increments from 1978 to 2012. While the total number of farms in the county has rebounded 33% from a 1992 low to 2007 high, this trend was reversed slightly in recent census data that reflected a 5% loss in total number of farms from 2007-2012. The current 558 operations represent an overall 6.8% loss from 1978 levels. Overall, these variations are relatively insignificant and could be attributed to Ag Census estimation errors or changes in methodology or changing economic conditions.

### **3. Land in Farms**

Similar to the total number of farms, total farm acreage was lowest in 1992, rebounded 18% from 1992 to 2007 and then fell 17% from 2007 to 2012. The current 90,774 acres in farmland in Tompkins County remains 26% below the 1978 peak. Again, the variation could be due to changes in Ag Census methodology. Over the past 35 years, the percentage of the county's total land area (308,500 acres) in farmland has consistently fluctuated between 29%-39%. Farmland currently occupies nearly one third of the county's total land area and therefore remains a significant land use.

### **4. Average Acreage per Farm (as shown in Table 1 above)**

The average acres-per-farm has been driven down by the increase in small farm numbers. While there is growth in the number of small farms, there is also a continued accumulation of land among larger farm operations which contributes to overall stability of land in agriculture; many dairy and crop farms are raising crops on more acres of land.

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## 5. Cropland Acreage

As seen in Table 1, the acres of harvested cropland have been decreasing over time from 79,982 acres in 1978 to 54,424 acres in 2012; a 25,558 reduction in land that is harvested. While cropland experienced nearly a 22% decrease from 1978-1992, it has slowly rebounded over the last decade. About 87% of farmland is currently harvested, representing a slight increase in intensity of use over 1997 levels.

The chart to the right illustrates that while acres of harvested cropland has decreased, farmers are harvesting crops from a greater percentage of the land. This means that farmers are using more of their land for active farming and leaving less idle. In part this is reflective of agricultural activities becoming concentrated on higher quality soils. Harvested cropland includes: annual crops and hay.

## 6. Farms by Type and Market Value

Between 1992-2012 the composition of farms by type has shifted slightly away from cattle, hogs/pigs and wheat and towards vegetable, soybean and poultry production. However, despite this shift, dairy remains the sector with the largest total market value sales. In 2012, milk sales represented a market value of \$37.8 million (out of \$67.8 million total ag sales). The market value of the dairy sector is 4.6 times greater than the next most profitable sector, which is grain. For the most part grain and hay are grown as feed for dairy cattle.

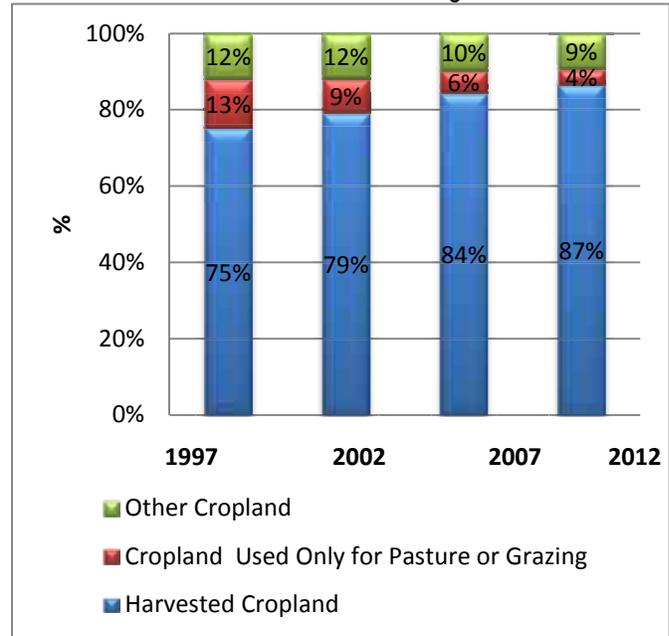
**Table 2 - Farms by Type  
Tompkins County, 1992 & 2012**

Source USDA Census of Agriculture

Enterprise Type	1992	2012	% change
Corn	80	84	5%
Wheat	45	17	-62%
Soybeans	13	29	123%
Vegetables	27	66	144%
Fruits, Tree Nuts, Berries	19	29	53%
Cattle, includes dairy & beef	221	123	-44%
Poultry	12	71	492%
Hogs, Pigs	25	18	-28%
Sheep, Lambs	32	40	25%

**Chart 5 - Farm Cropland by Use Tompkins County  
1997-2012**

Source USDA Census of Agriculture



**Table 3 - Farms by Type & Market Value  
Tompkins County, 2012**

Source USDA Census of Agriculture

Enterprise Type	Market Value (\$1,000)	Number of Farms
Grains, oilseeds, dry beans, and dry peas	\$8,310	110
Vegetables, melons, potatoes	\$5,396	66
Fruits, tree nuts, and berries	\$555	39
Nursery, greenhouse, floriculture, and sod	\$4,242	54
Cut Christmas trees and short rotation woody crops	\$237	15
Other crops and hay	\$3,950	172
Poultry and eggs	\$60	71
Cattle and calves	\$5,334	123
Milk from cows	\$37,831	55
Hogs and pigs	\$211	18
Sheep, goats, wool, mohair, and milk	\$430	56
Horses, ponies, mules, burros, and donkeys	\$713	16
Other animals and animal products	\$122	35

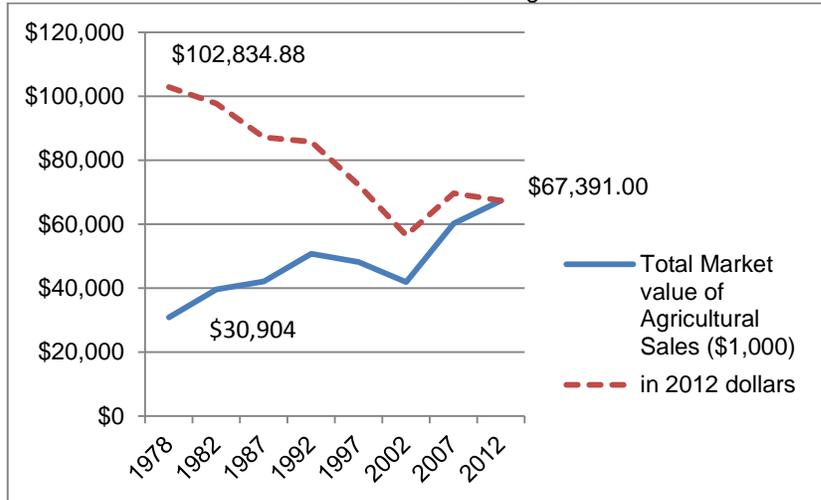
# Tompkins County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan

## 7. Agricultural Sales

As shown in Chart 6, the market value of agriculture products appears to have been increasing at a steady rate, having more than doubled since 1978 (\$30,904,000) compared to 2012 (\$67,391,000). However, adjusting all sales to 2012 dollars, the real value of agricultural sales in Tompkins County has actually gradually decreased 34.5% since 1978 to its current real value of around \$67.4 million.

**Chart 6—Total Agricultural Sales, Nominal & Adjusted Tompkins County, 1978-2012**

Source: USDA Census of Agriculture



## 8. Regional Comparison

A comparison of Tompkins County agriculture data with the surrounding south central New York counties provides an indication of the vitality of local agriculture. In the Ag Census official “Southern NY Statistical Region” (Broome, Chemung, Schuyler, Tioga, Tompkins), Tompkins County shows no significant increase in farm numbers. Growth in farm numbers in Schuyler County may be due to grape farms, and the large increase in farms in Seneca County is most likely due to the influx of Amish and Mennonite farmers. During the period of 1997 to 2012, all other surrounding counties lost farms some at a rate higher than NYS.

**Table 4—Number of Farms Southern New York Region, 1997-2012**

Source: USDA Census of Agriculture

County/Area	1997	2012	# Change	% Change
Broome	627	563	-64	-10.21%
Cayuga	1,022	891	-131	-12.82%
Chemung	393	372	-21	-5.34%
Cortland	538	518	-20	-3.72%
Schuyler	388	393	5	1.29%
Seneca	487	584	97	19.92%
Tioga	571	536	-35	-6.13%
<b>Tompkins</b>	<b>557</b>	<b>558</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0.18%</b>
<b>Regional</b>	<b>4,583</b>	<b>4,415</b>	<b>-168</b>	<b>-3.67%</b>
<b>NYS Total</b>	<b>38,264</b>	<b>35,537</b>	<b>-2,727</b>	<b>-7.13%</b>

**Table 5—Acres in Farms Southern Region, 1997-2012**

Source: USDA Census of Agriculture

County/Area	1997	2012	Change	% Change
Broome	93,922	79,676	-14,246	-15.17%
Cayuga	274,369	238,444	-35,925	-13.09%
Chemung	67,855	58,114	-9,741	-14.36%
Cortland	128,620	115,024	-13,596	-10.57%
Schuyler	74,440	69,222	-5,218	-7.01%
Seneca	126,052	130,206	4,154	3.30%
Tioga	114,289	107,873	-6,416	-5.61%
<b>Tompkins</b>	<b>102,610</b>	<b>90,774</b>	<b>-11,836</b>	<b>-11.53%</b>
<b>Regional</b>	<b>982,157</b>	<b>889,333</b>	<b>-92,824</b>	<b>-9.45%</b>
<b>NYS Total</b>	<b>7,788,241</b>	<b>7,183,576</b>	<b>-604,665</b>	<b>-7.76%</b>

Tompkins County acres of farmland dropped at a rate greater than New York State for the period of 1997-2012. From 1997-2012, Seneca County was the only county in the region to experience growth in land in farms, which corresponds to the gain in farm numbers most likely due to the increasing Amish/Mennonite farming community. From 1997-2012, Tompkins County experienced a negative growth rate of 11.53%.

# Tompkins County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan

## 9. Farm Composition by Acres

Small farms (1-99 acres) now make up the greatest percentage of Tompkins County farming enterprises, totaling 350 operations, a 22% increase from 1997. These farms represent 63% of all operations located within the county. Within this group, farms ranging in size from 10-49 acres constitute 34% of the county's farming operations. The increased presence of small farms helps to explain the falling average acreage per farm.

Extra-large farms (1000+ acres) increased from 9 farms in 1997 to 27 farms in 2007 representing a 200% increase. From 2007 to 2012, the number of extra-large farms fell back to 19 farms, representing a 30% loss from the 2007 peak. It is important to note that even at the 2007 peak of 27, extra-large farms still only represented 5% of all farming operations in Tompkins County. The difference between 2007 and 2012 data may be attributable to a data collection adjustment and the economic downturn in 2008.

In contrast, the number of medium farms (100-259 acres) and large farms (260-1000 acres) has decreased consistently over the past 15 years. From 1997 to 2012, large farms dropped by 40%, from 121 to 73 farms. Large farms now constitute about 13% of the total operations in Tompkins County. Medium farms dropped 17% from 139 to 116 farms and now constitute 21% of total operations in Tompkins County. This trend is consistent with national agriculture trends. The loss of farms in the middle does not necessarily equate to loss of land in farming. However, it does represent the loss of social and community capital in the farm sector.

There does not appear to be a large shift of small farms to the medium category, however, the small farm category is steadily growing. There also does not appear to be a shift of medium sized farms into the large farm category. However, there is some shift of large farms into the extra-large category as evidenced in the table and as noted by Extension Educators working with these farms.

**Table 6 – Percentage Change in Farms by Farm Size Tompkins County, 1997-2012**

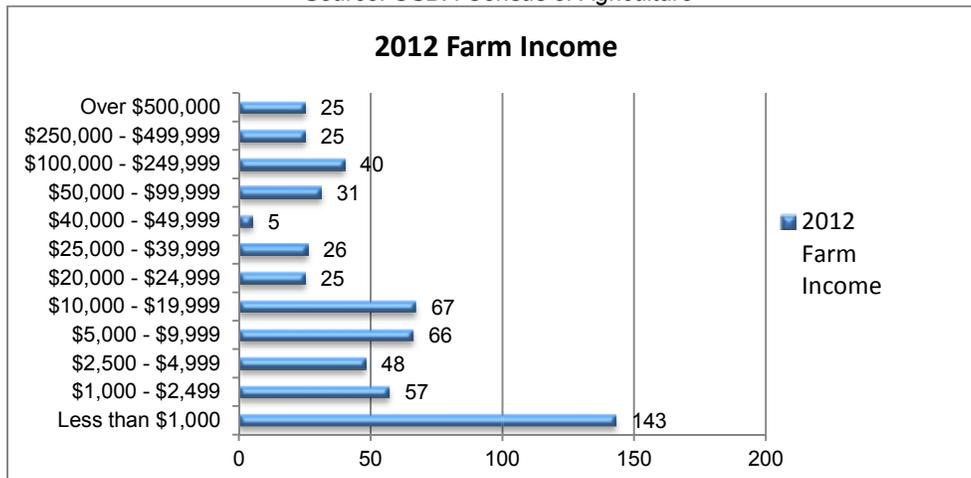
Source: USDA Census of Agriculture

Year	Small (1-99)	Medium (100-259)	Large (260-999)	Extra Large (1000-2000+)
1997	288	139	121	9
2002	323	126	99	15
2007	348	129	84	27
2012	350	116	73	19
<b>% Change</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>-17%</b>	<b>-40%</b>	<b>111%</b>

## 10. Farm Composition by Sales

**Chart 7—Number of Farms by Sales Class, Tompkins County, 2012**

Source: USDA Census of Agriculture



# Tompkins County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan

**Chart 8—Percentage of Farms by Sales Class, Tompkins County, 1997-2012**

Source: USDA Census of Agriculture

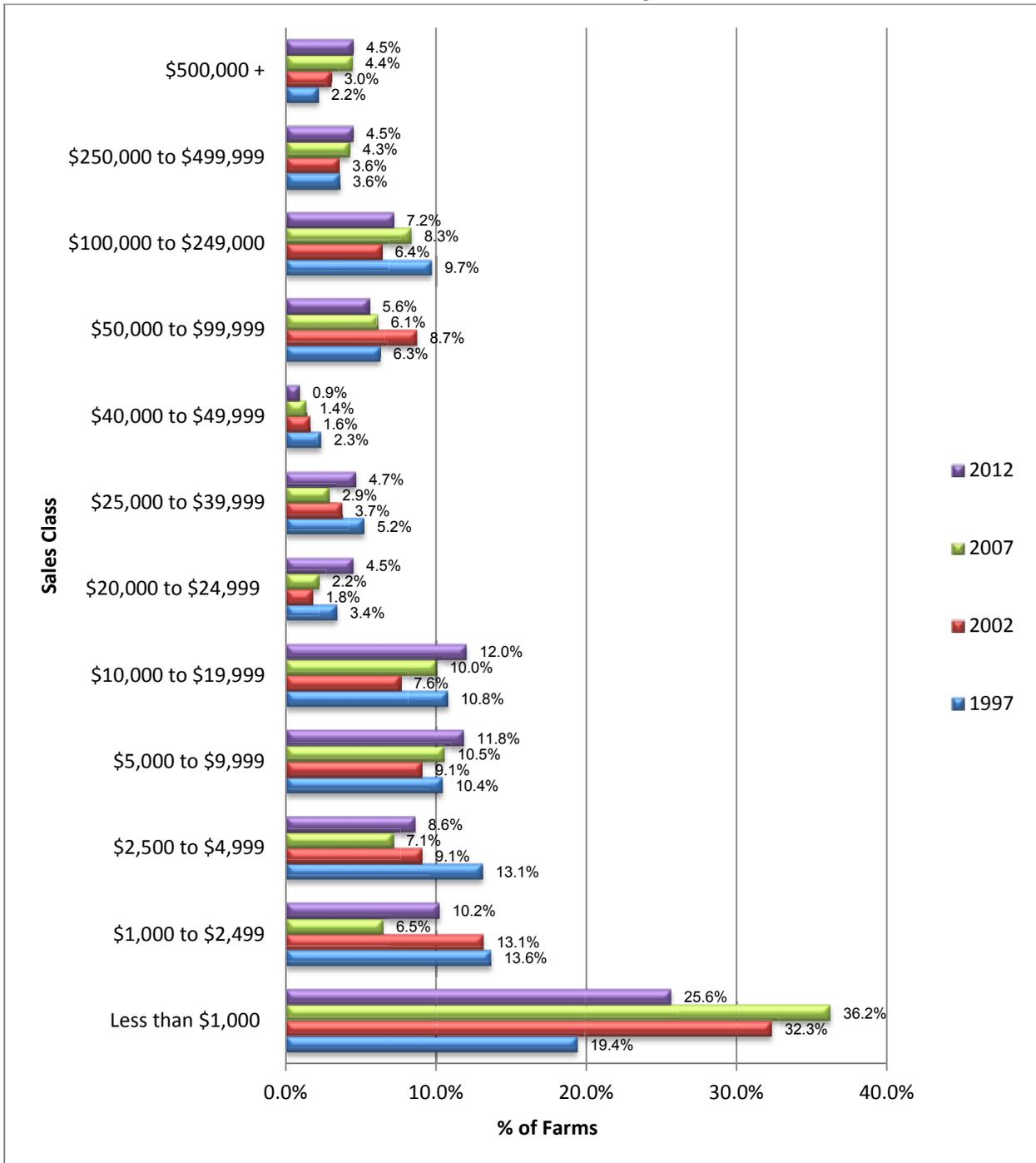


Chart 8 illustrates a general increase in sales for farm operations since 1997, and a consistent increase since 2007. In 2012, there was a decrease in farms reporting income of \$1000, and an increase in ranges above it until \$40,000 – \$49,999 (a range which defines the difference between small and large farms). Sales continued to increase in the middle of the range from \$40,000 to \$250,000, with sales increasing in every range above. This is reflective of a larger trend of shrinking farm profitability and the need to increase sales to remain viable especially in commodity agriculture.

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The Agriculture Census includes data representing farms making less than \$1,000. Of the total farms (558), 25.6%, or 143 farms fall into this sales class. The USDA identifies any operation grossing \$1000 or more (or having the potential to generate that income) as a farm. They identify these respondents through the collection and review of many data sources that may include landowners renting to farmers eligible for federal conservation programs via Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). This could include someone raising a few beef cattle and selling 1-2 per year, or a recreational equine owner who buys and sells horses from time to time. These farms grew in numbers, 16.8%, from 1997-2007, and then began falling from 2007 through 2012. Since the sales in categories above \$1,000 increased during that same period; it is possible that some of these operations increased their sales above \$1000 rather than went out of business.

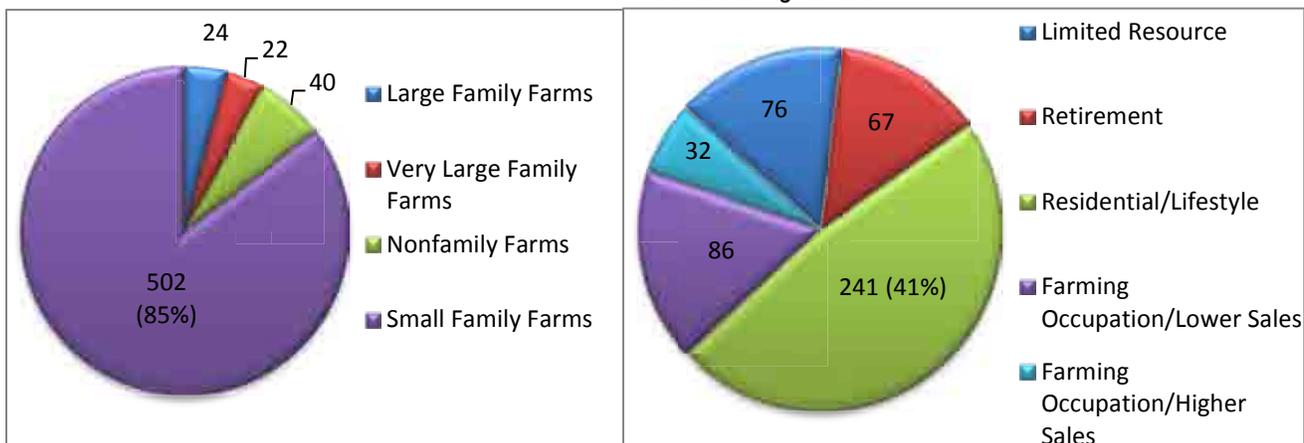
In general, farms with sales between \$20,000 and \$50,000 span the gap between part-time and full-time operations. This can pose financial challenges unless the individual or family income situation is flexible to accommodate lower sales. Off farm income plays an important role in farm and household viability. This group of very small to medium-sized farms includes produce and livestock farmers, as well as other specialty producers such as honey and maple. Farms with sales of \$50,000 and up include those raising livestock and produce for local markets as well as field crops and dairy operations.

It is important to note that many farms counted in the Census of Agriculture are run by operators whose primary occupation is something other than farming. In the 2012 Ag Census 282 farms reported their primary income from farming and 276 as from other than farming sources. Many retiring farmers may report farming as their primary income though they are phasing down. When land has been in farming for many generations, those who have operated the land tend to consider themselves as farmers even though the operation is no longer actively farmed.

Tompkins County increasingly consists of small, secondary operations and farms that have expanded steadily over time to remain economically viable.

**Chart 9—Number of Farms by Farm Type, Tompkins County, 2007**

*Source: USDA Census of Agriculture*



For the 2007 USDA Census of Agriculture, the department developed a typology of farms from small to large and lifestyle farms that further characterizes farming operations. Small family farms with sales of less than \$250,000 annually constituted 85% of Tompkins County farms. Of this group, residential/lifestyle farms made up the largest portion of these small family farms. The USDA considers a “small family farm” to fall into the residential/lifestyle category if the operation makes less than \$250,000 in sales and if the principal operator reports his/her primary occupation as other than farming. Small family farms constituted 41% of the number of farms in Tompkins County in 2007. When combined with retirement farms, this figure jumps to 52% of the county’s farms, indicating that 48% of the county’s farms in 2007 were run by operators whose sole occupation was farming.

NOTE: This data breakdown was not summarized in the 2012 Ag Census.

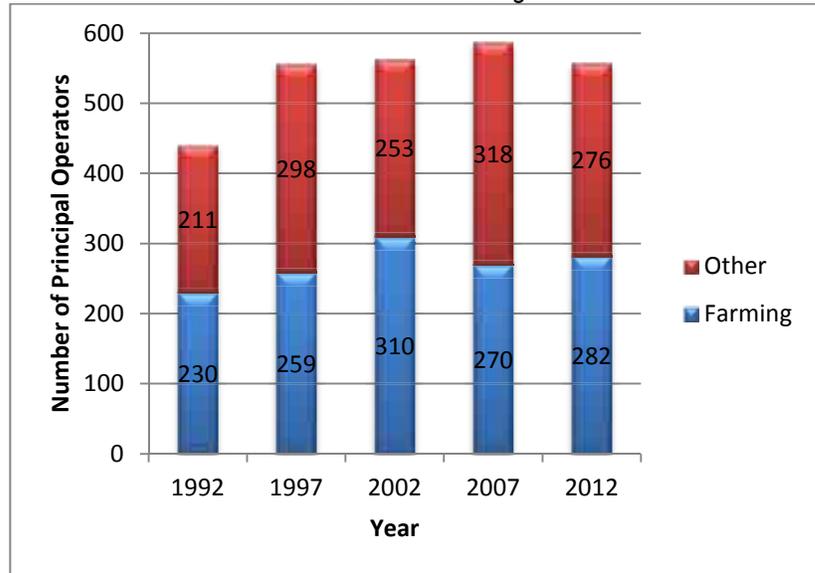
# Tompkins County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan

## 11. Farming as Primary Occupation

The percentage of operators reporting farming as their primary occupation has fluctuated above and below 50% of total farms over the past two decades. In 2012, 49.5% of principal operators in Tompkins County reported their primary occupation as something other than farming. In 2007, 52% of principal operators in Tompkins County reported their primary occupation as something other than farming. This roughly accounts for all the residential/lifestyle farmers (41%) as well as retired farmers (11%) described in the 2007 farm typology survey.

**Chart 10—Primary Occupation of Farmer  
Tompkins County, 1997-2012**

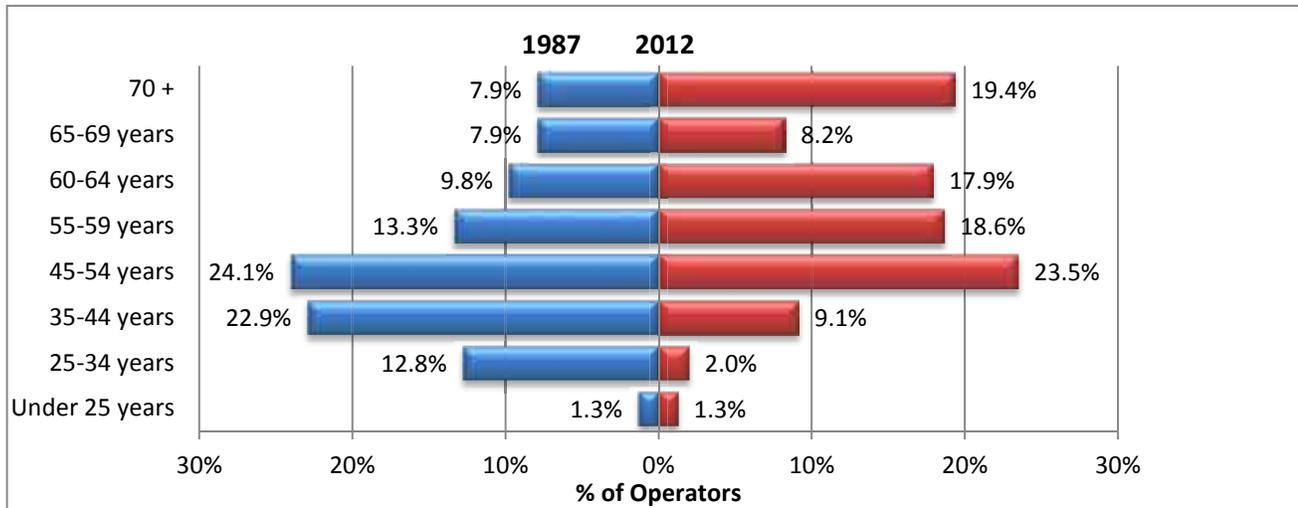
Source: USDA Census of Agriculture



## 12. Age of Farm Operators

**Chart 11—Percentage of Principal Operators by Age Group  
Tompkins County, 1987-2012**

Source: USDA Census of Agriculture



## Tompkins County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan

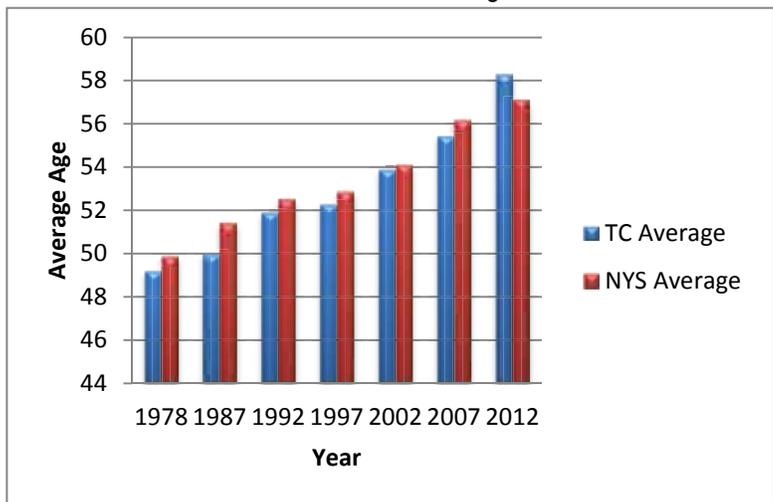
Tompkins County farmers are aging. From 1978 to 2012 there has been a steady increase in the average age of the county's farm population. Since 1978, the average age of principal operators in Tompkins County has increased from 49.2 years to 58.3 years. 2012 was the first year since 1978 in which Tompkins County farmers were older than the New York State average of 56.2 years Chart 8. The average age of principal operators in Tompkins County roughly equals the average age of principal operators in the United States at 58.3 years.

In 2012, principal operators 55 years or older constitute 64% of the county's farm operators. Meanwhile the base of young farmers under 35 years has decreased from 14% to just over 3% during the past twenty-five years.

This is a surprising statistic and is questioned given the significant increase in beginning farmers in Tompkins County. In the past 3 years, 36 new young farmers have started to farm in the area (data from Groundswell Center for Local Food and Farming). In addition, CCETC works with at least 12-15 new market farmers each year. [Also Note: according to the USDA General Explanation and Census of Agriculture Report Form, data is collected for up to three operators per farm; however older operators may be "retired" and still report farming as their primary occupation.]

**Chart 12—Percentage of Principal Operators by Age Group  
Tompkins County, 1987-2012**

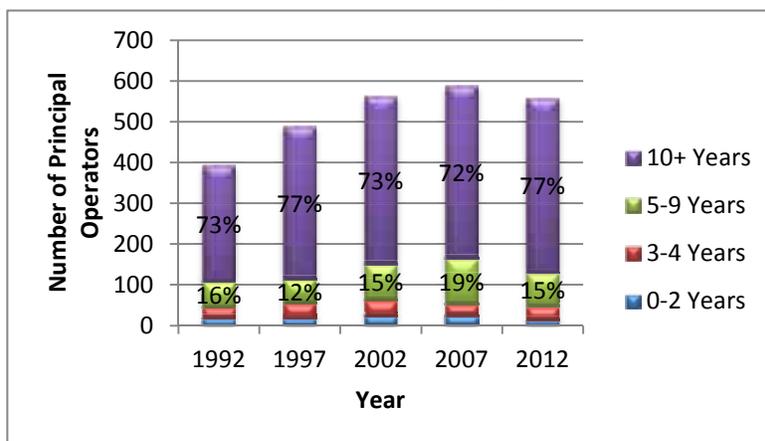
Source: USDA Census of Agriculture



### 13. Farm Tenure

**Chart 13—Tenure of Principal Operator Tompkins County, 1992-2012**

Source: USDA Census of Agriculture



The tenure of principal operators has not changed significantly over time. Most farmers (77%) report farming for 10 years or more. From 1992-2007, there was a slight growth in less experienced farmers. However, from 2007-2012, the number of newer farmers was slightly lower. This could be due to the graduation of those operators with 5-9 years of experience into the 10+years of tenure category with a lack of a new base to replace them.

This scenario becomes worrisome when combined with the age of operator data. Ag Census data suggests that Tompkins County farmers are becoming older and more experienced but lack a

## **Tompkins County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan**

base of younger, less-experienced farmers to pass this knowledge onto. If Tompkins County does not create this base of younger farmers, there may be a decrease in the total number of farmers and farm operations as an aging farm population retires without anyone to take up their legacy. These predicted trends are validated with 2012 data, showing a 5% decrease in the number of total farms in Tompkins County as well as a 5% increase in the age of principal operator from 2007-2012. This marks the largest percentage growth in the age of principal operator since 1978 as well as the first time that the number of farms has declined in Tompkins County since 1992. However, this may in part be a problem with data collection and the fact that younger farmers are not responding to the Census survey. Further study to document the actual age of farmers would be warranted as it has implications for the future of farming.

### **14. Gender of Operators**

**Table 11—Female Operators, Tompkins County, 2002-2012**

*Source: USDA Census of Agriculture*

	2002	2007	2012
<b>All Farms w/ a Woman Operator</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>345</b>	<b>311</b>
# of women operators	261	371	331
Land in farms (acres)	37,810	47,817	33,163
<b>Farms w/ a Woman Principal Operator</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>144</b>
Land in farms (acres)	11,102	11,719	8,530

In 2012, 144 or nearly 26% of the principal operators in Tompkins County were women. The number of principal operators who are women increased 50% from 2002-2007 before declining 18% from 2007-2012. Despite controlling over a quarter of the total number of farms, these farms only represent 8,530 acres, or 9.4% of the total land farmed in Tompkins County.

### **15. Farm Workers**

Historically, Tompkins County has had little, if any, migrant labor, as we don't have larger fruit orchards or vegetable farms. One nearby Cayuga County grower uses migrant workers to harvest sweet corn and owns and rents some land in Tompkins County.

For more than a dozen years, many Tompkins County dairy farms have employed predominantly Mexican and Guatemalan farmworkers to work in their milking parlors. Prior to the availability of these farmworkers, farmers experienced a chronic problem of attracting and retaining workers for the parlor. Dairy farmworkers receive a starting salary at or above minimum wage, and in many cases are provided housing as well. Many farms also provide weekly or biweekly transportation for shopping and other errands. These workers are generally single men; most are in the United States as short-term workers with the intent to return home. Until recently this has been a self-replacing work force.

According to Mary Jo Dudley, Director of the Cornell Farmworkers Program (CFP), farmworkers interviewed by the CFP identified issues that need addressing in order to help stabilize the immigrant dairy workforce. Requests include: having more opportunities to improve their English; increasing the frequency and quality of communication with farmers; improving housing quality; decreasing social isolation; and most importantly to have proper work authorization and documentation.

Comprehensive immigration reform has the most potential to provide long term solutions for immigrant workers; however, the political climate needed to bring about this needed reform has remained elusive. A more achievable interim goal could be the enactment of the Agricultural Job Opportunities, Benefits and Security Act (AgJOBS), AgJobs is a proposed immigration law that would provide agricultural employers with a stable, legal labor force while protecting farmworkers from

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exploitative working conditions. The AgJOBS compromise was reached after years of Congressional and labor-management conflict resulting in tough negotiations between the United Farm Workers (UFW), major agricultural employers, and key federal legislators.

If enacted, AgJOBS would (1) create an “earned adjustment” program, allowing many undocumented farmworkers and agricultural guestworkers to obtain temporary immigration status based on past work experience with the possibility of becoming permanent residents through continued agricultural work, and (2) revise the existing agricultural guestworker program, known as the “H-2A temporary foreign agricultural worker program.” (from <http://www.immigrationpolicy.org>)

### **Trends Summary**

Longer term historic trends show decreasing farm numbers and farm acreage, however in the past 30 years there has been relative stability in Tompkins County agriculture. The numbers of farms and land in farms has varied slightly but is not significant overall. The 558 Agriculture Census-identified farms in the county own and operate approximately 30% of the county’s land (90,774 acres), and generate \$67.4 million in sales. While sales appear to have doubled in the past 30 years, from \$30 million to \$67 million, when adjusted for inflation, there has been a 34% decline in value.

There is an increasing diversity of farm operations in the county; however, dairy continues to be the sector with the highest market value (\$37 million from milk sales). Local food production and organic agriculture are areas that have expanded significantly in the past 30 years. Local food sales (from farms within a 30 mile radius of Ithaca) amount to over \$20 million dollars annually (CCETC data sources). Many of the local food producers farm using organic methods. A total of 16,000 acres of the county’s harvested cropland is organically managed. There are five organic dairy farms, two organic crop farms (raising feed for organic dairies) and the balance are small produce farms. In addition, while many area livestock producers may not be certified-organic, animals are “naturally raised” on pasture (grazing) with no added hormones or antibiotics.

Small farms, according to the USDA definition of having sales under \$250,000, constitute 85% (502) of the Tompkins County farm community. Of the 558 total farms in the Ag Census, 50.5% of reported their primary occupation as farming. However, only 23% of total farms in Tompkins County have sales over \$40,000. In order to sustain their families, many depend on other sources of income.

Regardless of primary occupation, Tompkins County farmers are aging. When analyzed alongside patterns of tenure, both trends suggest that Tompkins County farmers are becoming older and more experienced but lack a base of younger, less-experienced farmers to pass this knowledge onto. This brings about serious questions as to how Tompkins County will pass its strong farmland base onto the next generation. However, programs are emerging to ensure this transition of farming and farmland will take place. Groundswell Center for Local Food and Farming and Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County are actively engaged in working with over 30 to 50 beginning and new farmers. Additionally, the Finger Lakes LandLink website, launched in March 2014, is serving as an online resource to help new farmers find land. As a result of this Agriculture Plan, a priority is being placed on fostering farm transitions and future farmers. CCETC has received a USDA Risk Management grant (March 2015) to assist established farmers with business transition planning.

Finally, women play a role as principal operators of 26% of the county farm operations yet only own about 10% of the farmland demonstrating some degree of gender inequality in farm ownership. In addition, while there are few minority farmers (race, ethnicity) in the county among the older generation, there is more diversity among new farmers (at present there are: four Asian, two African American, one Hispanic, and three new immigrant farmers in the county). The Hispanic workforce plays a significant role on area dairy farms. It is estimated that there are 60 dairies actively farming in Tompkins County, providing full time employment for over 100 owners (family members and partners) and around 275 employees. Eight of these dairies have their base of operation beyond Tompkins County borders, and account for about 20 owners and 115 full time employees. There are many other part-time and seasonal employees associated with local produce and crop farms who play a critical role during harvest.

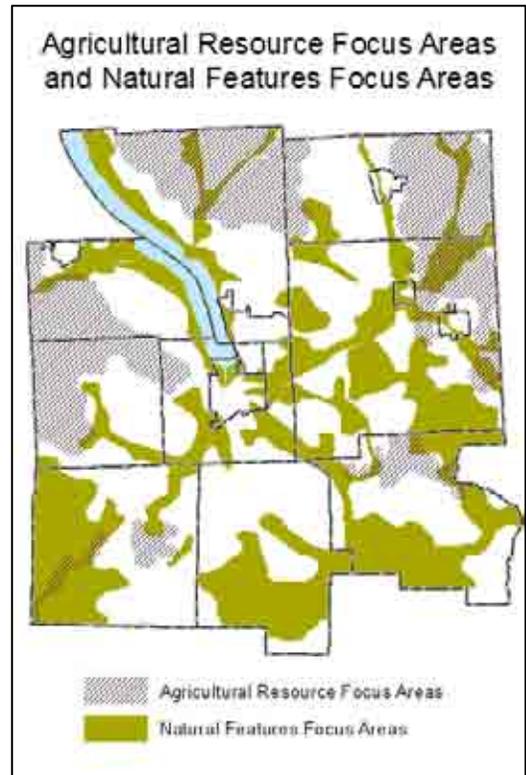
# Tompkins County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan

## **C. Tompkins County Agriculture and the Environment**

As a working landscape, agriculture in Tompkins County plays a key role in defining the region’s agrarian culture and wide sweeping scenic vistas. These agricultural resources also contribute to the health of our natural resources including forest land, soil and water resources including streams and wetlands. The relationship between working landscapes, natural and water resources may also be strained by a changing climate.

### **1. Natural Resources**

Tompkins County is known for high quality soils and historic farmland, and also its woods, viewsheds and clean water. The Tompkins County Comprehensive Plan identified important swaths of land within the Cayuga Lake, Owasco Lake and Susquehanna River watersheds including Unique Natural Areas (as identified by the Tompkins County Environmental Management Council), wetlands, stream corridors, public drinking water resources, Important Bird Areas, and hiking and multi-use trails and trail corridors. The Comprehensive Plan identified 14 distinct *Natural Features Focus Areas (NFFAs)*, which cover approximately 20,000 acres of land. Over 13,000 of that acreage intersects the *Agricultural Resource Focus Areas (ARFAs)*, those areas identified in the Comprehensive Plan as the highest quality farmland. Management of farmland in a way that supports the key functions of the NFFAs will provide multiple benefits to these important areas. As an example, a local farmer in the North Lansing – West Groton ARFA recently developed a Forest Stewardship Plan for an important riparian forest on this farm by a Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Forester. The plan, created at no cost, helped the farmer, and a Cooperating Forester, identify which stands to thin and with what frequency to maintain forest health and function. The result was a healthy harvest that also netted the farmer higher revenue.



### **2. Soil Resources**

Agricultural operations also play a vital role in maintaining soil health throughout the landscape. Soil health is being recognized globally as the optimization of physical, biological and chemical properties in the soil. Tompkins County has rich soils in the northeast and northwestern portions of the county. Through proper management techniques such as no-till cropping, cover crops, and other BMP’s, farmers help to maintain soil health. Organic farming and permanent pastures also help to rebuild the biological and chemical properties of the soil. Prime soils and soils of statewide significance are a finite resource. With development pressure threatening the loss of more and more prime soils and their associated soil health, the county loses the ability to retain more water in the soil, sequester carbon, retain and cycle nutrients, and detoxify harmful chemicals.

The soils of Tompkins County vary considerably in physical properties and in their suitability for crops and



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other uses. The complexity of soils arises from the glaciated landscape. The glacial topography has resulted in narrow deep valleys, intervening plateaus and hills (highest elevation 2100 feet). Farming is concentrated in valleys and on plateaus.

Tompkins County soil associations and soil types were mapped by the USDA Soil Conservation Service in 1965. Soil associations are mapped on a scale of 1 inch per 2 miles (1:126,720) and broadly represent the parent source of soil origin. A soil map is more detailed classifying soils by type at a scale of 1:20,000 and provides much more specific information about soil capabilities and limitations generally within a two acre area.

Ten soil associations are found throughout the county with the most productive soils in the northern plateau areas. Soil associations dominated by high lime occur in the northwest and northeastern parts of the county, it is these areas where crop farming dominates. Medium lime soils occupy transitional areas between high and low lime soils. The central, north central and southern parts of the county include areas of low lime soils with a strong fragipan (impervious layer). These areas are least suited to crop farming.

In Tompkins County prime soils occupy 41,453 acres of land, soils of statewide significance are found on 127,762 acres and there is an additional 19,428 acres suitable for farming if drained (see Soils Map). Farming has become increasingly concentrated on the best soils where there is higher yield potential.

In a 2001 study to assess the feasibility of a countywide PDR program, priority areas for farmland protection were identified based on soil type and contiguous farming. These areas were later included in the County's 2004 Comprehensive Plan and referred to as Agriculture Resource Focus Areas (ARFA). Of the 77,295 acres of land in the ARFA, 28% are prime soils and 38% soils of statewide importance are included.

### **3. Water Resources**

Virtually every farm in the county has an onsite water source in the form of a perennial or intermittent stream, wetland or pond. In most cases these resources are protected by the provision of stream or wetland buffers, though in some cases if mismanaged can have adverse impacts on surrounding properties, water quality, and plant and animal communities that rely on those resources. Farms can utilize local, state and federal funds to improve the on-farm multi-beneficial relationships between working lands and water resources. A holistic tool for planning for water quality improvement on farmland is the Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) process. This program is administered through the Tompkins County Soil and Water Conservation District.

The AEM Strategic Plan for 2015-2020 targets watersheds in the Cayuga and Owasco Lake drainage areas for Best Management Practice (BMP) planning and implementation. This corresponds to the high density of agricultural lands in the Groton, Dryden, Lansing and northwestern portions of the county. Practices such as cover cropping, barnyard improvements, proper manure storage and handling, and reduced tillage are examples of BMP's that can be utilized on working agricultural lands

through the AEM Program to protect water quality. The Federal government cooperates with this program through the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) to provide BMP standards and specifications to farmers along with funding assistance through various programs in the Federal Farm Bill. With nearly 30% of the county's total land base being owned or operated by farmers, and avenues to protect water resources through the AEM program and NRCS, proper farming practices can have a positive impact on protecting water quality and natural resources in Tompkins County.

As is noted in the 2015 *Tompkins County Comprehensive Plan*, the impacts of land use on water resources ultimately affect Cayuga Lake. The shallow southern end of Cayuga Lake is more vulnerable to pollution than the deeper portions of the lake. The creeks which feed the southern basin of the lake, Fall Creek, Cayuga Inlet, and Six Mile Creek, play a significant role in lake water quality. It is estimated that they contribute approximately 40 percent of all the surface water entering the southern end of the lake.

The Federal Clean Water Act requires states to periodically assess and report on the quality of their waters, and to identify impaired waters where designated uses, such as public drinking water, are

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not fully supported. For waters that are determined to be impaired, states must consider the development of a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) or other strategies to reduce the input of the specific pollutants. Impaired water bodies and their related pollutants, are published by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) on the *New York State Section 303(d) List of Impaired/TMDL Waters*. The most recent list published in 2012 identified the southern end of Cayuga Lake as impaired by three pollutants: phosphorus, silt/sediment, and pathogens.

Sediment binds to phosphorous carried by Fall Creek, Cayuga Inlet, and Six Mile Creek. This sediment is largely the result of stormwater runoff and erosion of streambanks. In addition to sediment-bound phosphorus, phosphorus also enters the southern end of the lake from point sources, including the City's wastewater treatment plant and the Cornell Lake Source Cooling heat exchange facility. Farming may contribute to phosphorous levels when this nutrient is applied in excess in the form of fertilizer or manure. Large livestock farms (300 head) monitor manure applications through the Federal CAFO (Confined Animal Feeding Operations). Others utilize soil testing as a way to monitor phosphorous levels and apply only what is needed.

As a condition of continuing the SPDES permit for the Lake Source Cooling facility, NYSDEC and Cornell University have agreed to conduct a detailed study of the sources and ultimate use of phosphorus in Cayuga Lake. The study, estimated for completion in June 2016, will build a water quality model based on a detailed analysis of the shallow southern end of the lake and contributing watersheds in order to provide a better understanding of where phosphorus comes from and how it affects the lake ecosystem. Once completed, the model will help NYSDEC determine whether a TMDL or other strategy is necessary to address the amount and concentration of phosphorus in the southern end of Cayuga Lake.

### **4. Sustainable Farming Practices**

Soil is the foundation for high yielding crops and productive farming. It is vital to farmers that soil and water resources on their farms are protected eliminating erosion, recycling nutrients, and protecting water supplies. The intimate relationship between farmers and the land is part of what defines a farmer as a steward of the land.

Since the 1970's, there has been increasing environmental consciousness along with government programs to encourage conservation and sustainable farming practices. Some of the notable changes in Tompkins County that have had a positive impact on farming and land use include:

- **Fewer acres in row crop production:** there has been a decline in acres of crops in general as farm numbers have declined and yields per acre have increased
- **Switch to grazing herds** - in the 1990's many dairy farmers switched from feeding year round in the barn to grazing, reducing the need for harvested feed crops with the added benefit of reduced manure handling (cows do it)
- **Nutrient management practices** – increasing awareness of excess phosphorous in soils and water bodies has led to best management practices for manure application. In addition, dairy herds with over 300 head are subject to US EPA confined animal feeding regulations (CAFO) which require farmers to follow a plan that specifies manure and nutrient management handling practices to avoid application of excess nutrients and protect water quality.

#### Protecting and Enhancing the Environment

Practices and infrastructure on farms that reduce or mitigate source and non-point source pollution since the late 1990's.  
(Compiled from Tompkins County Soil and Water Conservation District records)

<u>Practice/Infrastructure</u>	<u># Farms</u>
Nutrient management	2
Manure storage systems	7
Milk house waste systems	18
Silage leachate treatment systems	9
Barnyard water runoff control systems	31
Fuel spill prevention systems	9
Alternative watering systems	24
Buffer systems for nearby water courses	6
Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)	19
Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)	42
Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)	1
Prescribed grazing (fencing, water, laneways)	76
Waste transfer lines	2
Heavy use area protection	18
Access road	5
Stream crossing	2
Bedding recovery	1
Compost facility	1
Water and sediment collection	1
Best Management Practices (BMP)	8

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Larger herd sizes and CAFO regulations have resulted in bringing more farm land in agriculture production as the larger dairies require land for crop production and proper manure handling

- **Precision technology** – applies to planting, fertilizing and pesticide application. Farm equipment has enabled farmers to be much more precise in their planting operations reducing the potential for excess fertilizer or pesticide use
- **Changes in pesticide formulations and improved application technology** – as an example, where once 4 lbs. of atrazine might have been applied per acre, now only 1 lb. is needed; and low volume spray equipment enables farmers to use less water reducing runoff potential
- **Cost of inputs** – farmers constantly find themselves in a cost-price squeeze, meaning that input supplies are increasing at a rate higher than prices and returns for products. Some will choose not to use chemicals if they are too expensive relative to the risk of crop loss
- **Organic farming** – Over 16,000 acres of land are managed using organic or non-chemical practices. This includes harvested crop land and grazing land. Most of the county's organic acres are associated with 7 certified organic dairies.
- **Hay farming and pasture** – hay and pasture are dominant feed crops for livestock; these crops require very little inputs in the way of fertilizer or pesticides. Lime and fertilizer may be applied in spring to grass hay; most hay is planted with alfalfa there for does not require fertilization. Herbicides may be used at planting or if a field becomes weedy, but generally weeds are managed through proper cutting to avoid the need for pesticides. While hay and grass may have some pest problems, farmers generally do not use fungicides or insecticides on these crops.
- **Rotational grazing practices** – keeping grass healthy through rotational grazing allows it recover faster without additional fertilizer beyond what livestock leave behind
- **Crop rotation** – a common practice is to follow several years of row crops with a legume hay crop to build the soil nutrients and improve soil tilth
- **Strip cropping** – a common practice on sloping fields that minimizes erosion alternating row crops with hay crops across the slope of a hill
- **Grassland buffers near waterways** to protect from soil erosion and nutrient/chemical runoff
- **Practices that minimize runoff and water pollution include:** manure storage systems, milk house waste treatment, silage leachate treatment systems, barnyard water runoff control, fuel spill prevention systems – these practices require sophisticated engineering to ensure their proper functioning and may be paid for in part by USDA NRCS EQIP funds awarded to farms.

The above practices are evidence that farmers in our county have and are adopting technologies that protect the environment and making substantial investments in their farming operations to do so. While a thorough review of the changes in farming practices has not been made, it is safe to say, on the whole, farms are better managed and prepared to reduce pollution and protect soil and water. Given interest in how farming is practiced, it is important to raise public awareness of sustainable farming practices through tours, workshops and media articles. A more thorough review of the impact of farming on the environment would also document improvements made and opportunities for further emphasis.

# Tompkins County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan

## 5. Climate Impacts on Tompkins County Farmland

Absent of climate change, variations in the topography of Tompkins County have a significant impact on climate, particularly temperature differences throughout the county. The influence of Cayuga Lake on climate is greatest in areas close to the lake shore and in downtown Ithaca where temperatures may be as much as 10 degrees warmer than in the surrounding hillsides. In most years, the freeze free season ranges from May 5-20 to September 25-October 15. Annual precipitation totals from 30 to 40 inches.

2014 ClimAID Projections - # Days Over 90°F <sup>1</sup>	
Decade	Estimated # of Days
2020s	17 to 21
2050s	26 to 41
2080s	33 to 67

The 2014 National Climate Assessment (NCA), a report produced by a 60-member Federal Advisory Committee with guidance from more than 300 experts, noted that in the Northeastern United States between 1895 and 2011 temperatures rose by almost two degrees Fahrenheit. The report also noted that in the same time period precipitation increased by approximately five inches, or 10%. “The Northeast has experienced a greater recent increase in extreme precipitation than any other region in the United States; between 1958 and 2010, the Northeast saw more than a 70% increase in the amount of precipitation falling in very heavy events (defined as the heaviest 1% of all daily events).” A regional resource, NYSERDA’s ClimAID Report, notes “climate change is extremely likely to bring higher temperatures to New York State, heat waves are very likely to become more frequent, more intense, and longer in duration. Total annual precipitation will most likely not increase, but occur as more frequent intense rainstorms. Summer droughts could increase in frequency, intensity, and duration, especially as the century progresses. Meanwhile, there will likely be a reduction in snowpack and an increase in the length of the growing season.”

In Tompkins County, agriculture is likely to be impacted particularly from the increase in extreme precipitation events for which farms and their surrounding communities need to plan. The most serious of these impacts could be the loss of good, productive, topsoil subject to eroding into nearby waterbodies during periods of heavy rainfall. As notes in the NCA report, “climate disruptions to agricultural production have increased over the past 40 years and are projected to increase over the next 25 years. By mid-century and beyond, these impacts will be increasingly negative on most crops and livestock.” The report further notes that, “current loss and degradation of critical agricultural soil and water assets due to extremes in precipitation will continue to challenge both rain-fed and irrigated agriculture unless innovative conservation methods are implemented.” Best Management Practices (BMPs) which assist in stabilizing soil and protecting water quality will need to be more widely implemented and financial support for these measures needs to be increased. Agricultural communities in stream valleys, such as those in Tompkins County, may face increased risk of flooding from extreme rainfall events. Updated flood zones and flood plain mapping for purposes of future development is necessary for climate change adaptation. Communities in flood areas in the City of Ithaca and adjacent to major creeks and tributaries may be less able to cope with extreme rainfall events. Also, many of the rural areas of Tompkins County that utilize well water may struggle with water supply issues during future droughts. This also has an impact on livestock farms.

Aquatic health, habitat, and ecosystems and their host natural areas are likely to be disrupted as a result of even slight temperature increases. In the ClimAID Report an increase in days over 90°F is most likely to impact local agriculture. Opportunities may result with an increase in warmth, though extremes would likely strain some agriculture sectors more than others. As an example, heat stress on

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<sup>1</sup> Based on middle range climate/emissions scenario for Region 3 (Elmira) – 2014 ClimAID Update

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dairy cows and other farm animals is likely, impacting local agriculture. At the same time, the rural economy may be adversely impacted by reduction in maple syrup production and reduced winter recreation opportunities.

The farm community is on the “front lines” of the changing climate; they will need to adopt practices to limit risks and take advantage of new opportunities. Appropriate practices should be clearly communicated between farms and agencies to help the region’s agriculture survive, and potentially thrive in this new reality.

### **6. Invasive and Pest Species**

Local deer populations continue to threaten forest regeneration and inflict damage to agronomic and horticultural crops. Deer are a particularly distinct problem in all agricultural areas of the county, as well as in the urban and suburban areas. Vegetable, fruit and ornamental crops are most vulnerable to damage. Fencing has become a major cost for these crop producers.

The economic impact of pests and invasive species on agriculture continues to be significant. Fortunately, there is active monitoring and ongoing research when a new invasive pest is found that is a threat to agriculture or other parts of our environment. As with all invading species, there can be significant disruption of ecosystems and crop losses before a solution is found that minimizes or manages the problem. Farmers must however remain vigilant in protecting crops and livestock and will most likely have to bear additional costs of crop scouting and pest management.

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## D. Agriculture Sector Profiles – Introduction

Agriculture in Tompkins County can be categorized into distinct sectors, although many farms operate multiple enterprises. For example, a livestock farm might also grow and sell hay; a crop farm might also raise livestock; or a dairy farm might sell beef. There is typically one enterprise that dominates, and that is the enterprise used to assign a farm to a given sector. While there are common themes which apply to all sectors, individual sectors have unique strengths, production and marketing strategies, and associated farming challenges.

Some common themes include:

- constantly changing regulations that increase the cost of doing business, especially for small farmers
- rising input costs while the prices farmers receive for products do not rise at the same rate making it challenging to keep up with costs
- demand for land: finding suitable land to buy or rent
- increasing land prices and taxes
- local zoning regulations that are making farm operation and expansion more complicated and costly
- labor: finding quality labor; seasonal demands; unresolved immigration laws
- local markets: increasing competition; new markets to absorb growing supply
- consumer awareness of farms, farming practices, local purchasing opportunities

The Sector Profiles that follow describe unique needs of the most common farming enterprises in the county. Broadly speaking, the following enterprises represent the makeup of Tompkins County agriculture. The summaries include sector data and input from focus group meetings held with farmers involved with the various sector. Because some focus group meetings involved only a few participants, we can assume that the needs identified may be opinion of those individuals and not totally representative of the entire sector, however, further conversations with farmers and review by the AFPB farmer members helped to validate concerns expressed.

### Farm Profile: Scheffler's Dairy Farm *Ed and Eileen Scheffler*

The Schefflers are third generation dairy farmers in Groton, and Ed and Eileen have milked 45 cows since 1981.

Over the years Ed and Eileen have improved their operation and practices. They transitioned from corn silage to hay silage and then to Ag Bags, to improve cow forage quality and production rather than expand the herd.

Scheffler farm has always grazed their herd; cows to eat the grass and leave their manure behind as fertilizer. They have modified this practice over the years: they now grow grass and white clover, and the cows are moved every 12 hours rather than every couple of days. The cows are on pasture May 1<sup>st</sup> though the end of October.

Schefflers work 370 acres with one part time person and some spring tractor help. They use 80 acres for pasture; and on the rest they grow crops, including sunflowers. They press the sunflower seeds for oil, feeding the meal to the herd and using the oil in their diesel equipment.

Ed and Eileen began transitioning to organic production in 2000 and shipped their first certified organic milk in 2003.

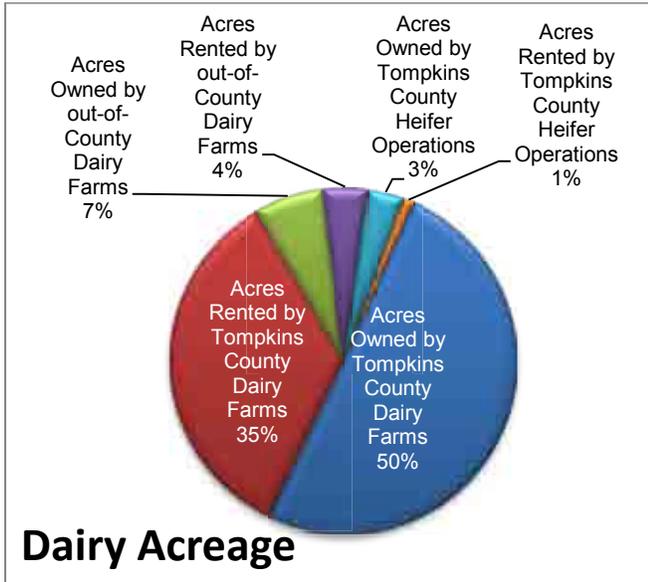
The Schefflers have a permit to sell raw milk from the farm, which they do on a limited basis. They also raise organic beef, and sell all cuts of meat, as well as various sausages, direct from the farm.



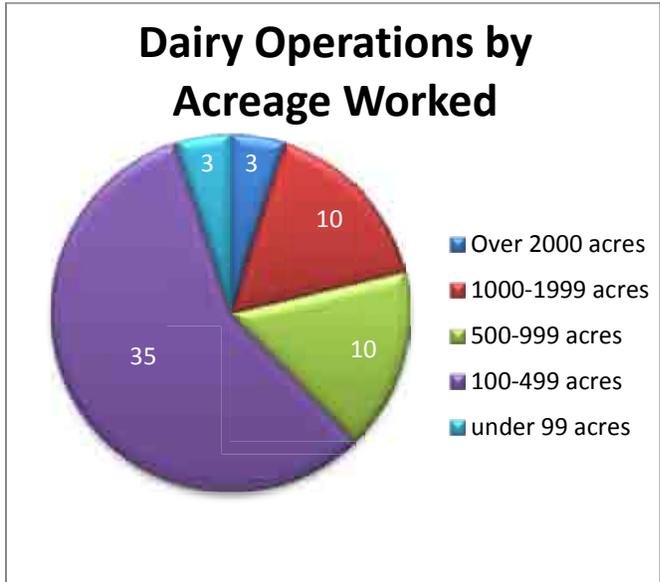
# Tompkins County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan

## Agriculture Sector Profiles: Trends and Challenges

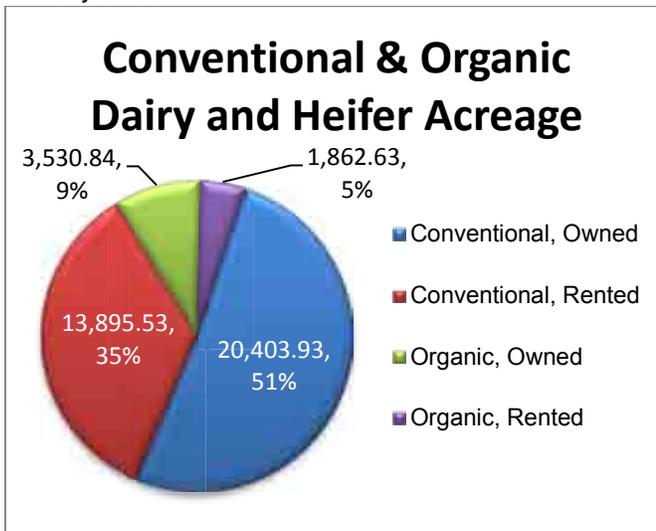
### 1. Dairy



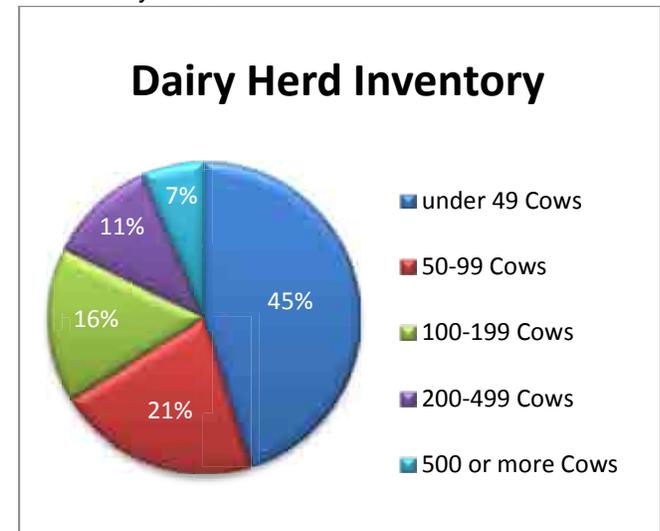
Dairy Chart 1



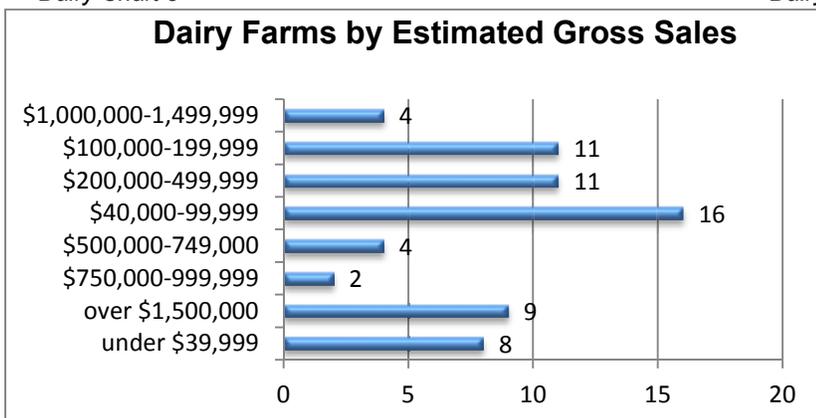
Dairy Chart 2



Dairy Chart 3



Dairy Chart 4



Dairy Chart 5

Dairy Charts 1-3 Source: 2014 Tompkins County Agricultural Data Base compiled by CCE Tompkins

Dairy Chart 4 Source: USDA Census of Agriculture 2012

Dairy Chart 5 Source: Tompkins County Agricultural District Surveys and CCE staff estimates based on type & size of operation

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## **Dairy Sector Overview**

Dairy farming is the foundation of agriculture in Tompkins County. Dairy farmers oversee the most land, produce the highest value product, provide employment opportunities for several hundred workers, as well as buffer and support smaller niche operations. A mix of operations is beneficial, and seems to “knit” the agricultural landscape together.

Tompkins County dairy farmers produce high quality milk and consistently have the highest per-cow milk production in the region; 197.5 million pounds annually, with a per-cow average of 19,800 (NY NASS 2010).

There is a mix of types of dairies including large and small, conventional and organic. There are new operations as well as expanding ones, and examples of cooperation and support. It’s possible to have a small herd on a rented farm and buy feed from a larger farm; this model offers a great opportunity for young farmers. Additionally, several former dairy farms are now housing young stock for larger farms.

Dairy farming is a full-time occupation, often involving family-member teams in all aspects of the farm operation. There are also smaller farms where one or more family members work off-farm. Farms of all sizes have hired help, either part-time, seasonally, or full-time year around. The generally accepted ratio of workers per number of cows is one worker for every 45 cows, so it is estimated that over 200 full-time positions are created by Tompkins County dairy farms.

Dairy farms are predominantly concentrated in Lansing, Groton, and Dryden. However, there are a few remaining dairy farms in Newfield, Enfield, Ulysses, and Caroline. Organic dairies tend to be smaller, and larger farms usually employ conventional practices, although there are exceptions. One of the largest organic dairies in the northeast is located on the border of Tompkins and Cortland Counties near Dryden.

The proximity of resources like DairyOne, Quality Milk, Cornell Cooperative Extension, the Ag College, Cornell Veterinary Clinics, etc. helps to provide assistance quickly.

## **Outlook, Trends, and Future Opportunities**

Dairy farm numbers have stabilized in recent years, due in part to consistent and growing demand for milk proteins (powdered and solids), both nationally and internationally, and also from the State’s Greek Yogurt industry. Milk prices have remained higher and more stable. This has allowed dairy farmers to pay down debt, budget and plan more accurately. With greater financial stability, dairy farms are able to purchase or rent more land to grow more of their own feed and meet their nutrient management plan’s manure-spreading requirements. This has led to a tightening up of land available for farming, and smaller farms, dairy and otherwise, are competing for land.

Another way dairy farmers are expanding is by boarding heifer (female) calves out to other farms. Many of these farms are former dairies, so they have the needed infrastructure (barns and pasture) to raise the heifers. There are currently seven farms raising heifers for dairy farmers, two of which raise heifers for dairies in adjacent counties.

Organic operations, including dairies, have returned idle land back into production. Most idle farm land can be certified for organic production immediately, and, at least initially, there is no competition for it.

Many county dairy farms are getting larger, which is a national trend. Fifteen years ago, there were five dairy farms working over 1000 acres, and land worked by farmers from other counties was barely noticeable. In 2014, there are three farms based in this county working over 2000 acres and ten working over 1000 acres. Ten dairy farms based in adjacent counties work over 5100 acres in seven Tompkins County towns. Of these ten farms, three work over a total of 2000 acres in support of their operation, and the others work over 1000 acres.

Still, there are plenty of operations that have found their right size, and figure out ways to make it work, such as diversifying with additional crops, providing custom work for other farms, or transitioning to organic production. There are currently seven organic dairies in Tompkins County.

## **Marketing Strategies**

Milk is transported by several haulers, including Alnye trucking, Preble Milk, and Cortland Bulk. Some haulers deliver milk directly to the processor, others take it to processing and distribution centers, like Dairy Marketing Services and Dairy Farmers of America. Processors receiving Tompkins County milk include Upstate Niagara, Byrne Dairy, Polly-O, and Organic Valley.

All seven organic dairy farms in the county say transitioning to organic production was the best decision they ever made. Organic dairy farmers consistently earn more per hundredweight of milk over conventional production. There are, however, noted drawbacks, including: in times of low prices, some processors move to a quota system and might not purchase all of a farmer’s milk at organic prices, so some ends up in the conventional stream.

The milk pricing formula is complicated, and dairy farmers have little influence over the price they get for fluid milk. As a result, there is on-going interest in facilities for value-added dairy products. Recently a farmers’

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cooperative, including several Tompkins County farmers, opened a powdered milk processing plant in Auburn to have more control over the price they receive for their milk.

Direct-to-consumer opportunities are limited due to the licensing requirement and/or needed processing facilities and equipment; there is one farm in the county licensed to sell raw milk, and two others have been selling farmstead cheese on a very limited scale.

### **Challenges**

Labor is a chronic problem for dairies, with farms specifying availability, attraction, and retention as issues. Many dairy farms in the county employ workers from outside the country, so there are concerns about labor crack downs and potential labor shortages. Legal issues are also of concern given worker rights watchdogs.

Dairy farmers note that State and Federal Labor laws restricting what farm children can do on farms can be difficult. In NYS, children age 12-13 are allowed to hand-pick berries on their family farm, and then at 14 and 15 they can get working papers but are prohibited from most mechanized activities (there are exemptions for 4-H'ers, vocational training programs, and those with tractor safety training). There are restrictions on what children can do until they are 18. Under age 12, children are not allowed to do any work on a farm, with the exception of feeding and caring for their own animal(s). Any child 12 or over working on a family farm with a payroll of \$3000 or more annually must include the child on the payroll and pay them at least minimum wage (there is a reduced minimum wage for children under 16).

Taxes are less of a concern for larger operations, as they are a much smaller percentage of the total costs. However, smaller operations feel the pinch, even with agricultural assessment. Lansing farmers especially cited concerns about the impact on property taxes if AES Cayuga shuts down.

Increasing feed costs are also consistently a concern. At times there are serious shortages of organic feed crops, and, as a result, some farms have returned to conventional production, although this is not the case in Tompkins County. Organic producers are growing more of their own crops due to these shortages and resulting higher prices.

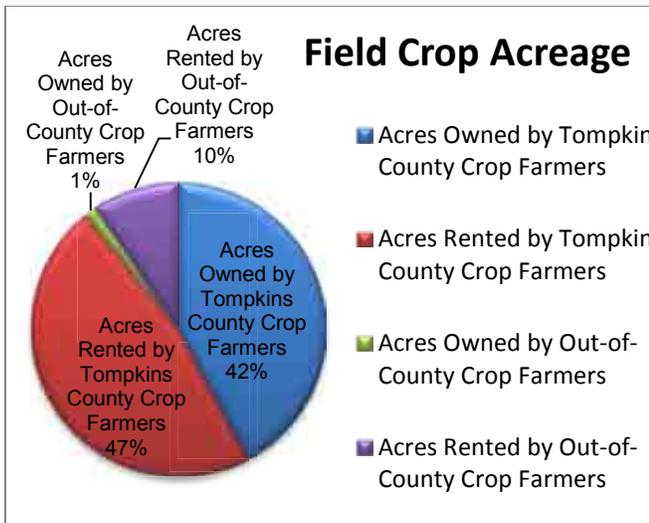
External issues of concern to dairy farmers include animal rights activists and environmentalists opposed to large farms whose views are often based on misconceptions. Dairy farms with over 300 cows are very heavily regulated, the details of which are often not well known by the public. Farmers need to find ways to be more visible and accessible to answer public questions about their operations. Conventional producers are concerned that labels like "organic" and "BST free" creates consumer perceptions that some products are "better" or "worse" than others.

### **Industry Needs: Services and Support**

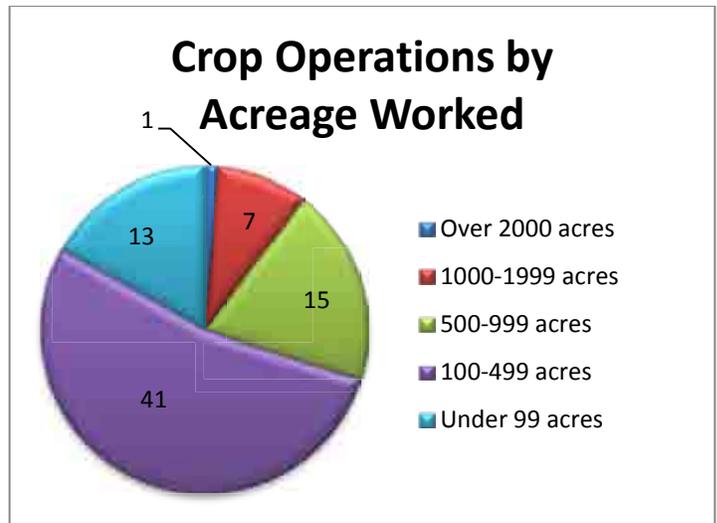
- CCE should strive to keep the regional Dairy Team positions filled; frequent and prolonged vacancies leave a big hole in services.
- There needs to be a more proactive linking between retiring farmers without an heir and young farmers, integrating them into the operation to transition into an ownership role.
- Competition for land in some areas is too stiff for even the "big guys". Also, some of farms that are being sold have been operating on the fringes for years and the facilities have been neglected beyond repair. Property price tags are bigger than the value of land and buildings but high selling prices have pushed assessed values up increasing the tax burden of land ownership.
- There are many issues with non-farm neighbors; farmer's need help telling their stories (video series, farm tours, farmer profiles in local media, etc.). Also, helping the general public understand what they need to know when they live near farms, i.e. slow-moving vehicles, dangerous driving around farm equipment (the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of April is rural road safety). Is this covered in Drivers' Ed programs? Can more information be included in the Real Estate Disclosure document to further explain safety issues related to rural roads and farm equipment?
- There is a need to work with law enforcement and municipal officials to help them understand what are normal, accepted agricultural practices and to-be-expected occurrences when complaints arise, i.e. late night field work or livestock escaping fences.
- Municipalities need more interaction with their farm community through agricultural advisory boards and regular meetings with farmers.
- For smaller producers, a system for collective purchasing and a centralized hub for feed and other supplies would be helpful.

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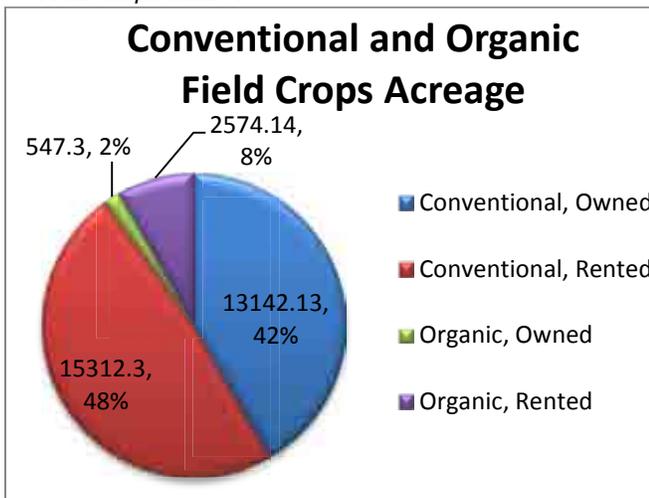
## 2. Field Crops



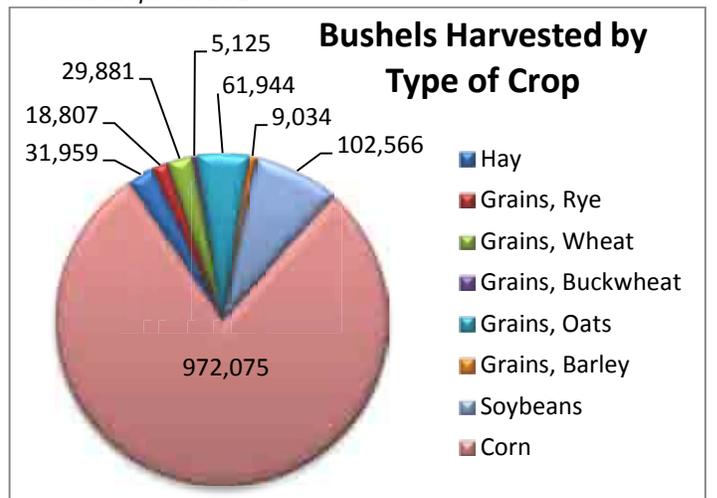
Field Crops Chart 1



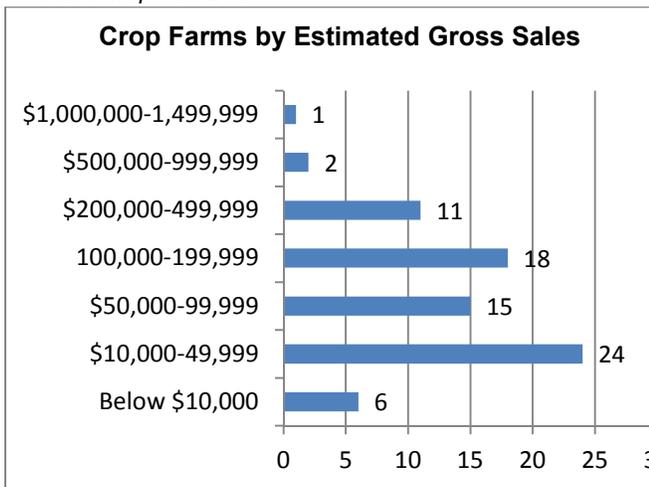
Field Crops Chart 2



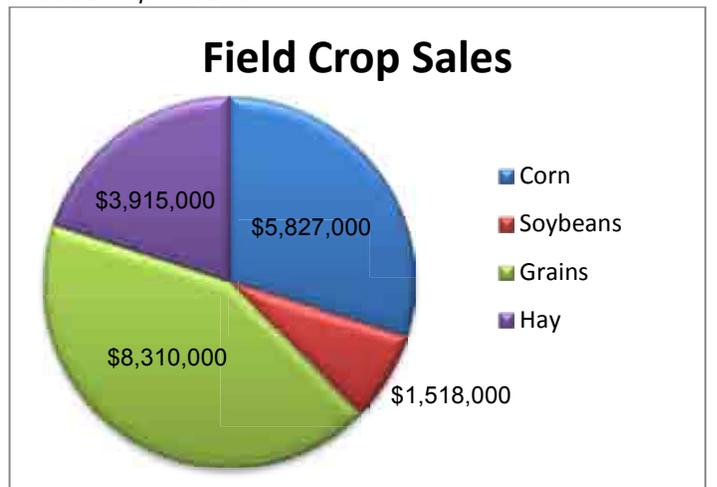
Field Crops Chart 3



Field Crops Chart 4



Field Crops Chart 5



Field Crops Chart 6

Field Crops Charts 1-3 Source: 2014 Tompkins County Agricultural Data Base compiled by CCE Tompkins

Field Crops Chart 4 & 5 Source: USDA Census of Agriculture 2012

Field Crops Chart 5 Source: Tompkins County Agricultural District Surveys and CCE staff estimates based on type & size of operation

# **Tompkins County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan**

## **Field Crops Sector Overview**

Field crop production is the second largest agricultural economic contributor in the county. Field crops and dairy are related sectors, in that much of the harvest from crop farms is utilized by local and regional dairy farms, and dairy farms often produce more crops than they can use and sell the surplus on the commodities market.

Crops are grown throughout the county, although farms that grow crops exclusively tend to be on the west side of the county in Ulysses, Enfield, and Newfield. Producers predominantly use conventional methods, although many use no-till, GPS/precision tillage, and other new technologies to reduce erosion and input use. They also tend to rent more land than they own, in contrast to dairy farms. There are field crop growers who own little or no farmland themselves, and work land around a home base of equipment storage facilities.

Nearly half of the crop farmers working in Tompkins County are full-time, working from 500 to over 2000 acres. Field crops raised in the area include corn, soybeans, small grains, alfalfa, and grass hay. These operations have also grown in size significantly in recent years, adding to the competition for land.

Crop farming is highly mechanized, so a small number of people can handle most of the tasks. The larger operators tend to hire a few people seasonally, and may have one employee year around. They also tend to have integrated operations, i.e. trucking, grain, equipment, etc., and work in multiple counties.

Smaller scale crop farms often produce hay, with a rotation of corn when they need to replant fields. Hay is a crop that requires fewer inputs, can be handled with older equipment on a part-time basis, and has a ready market with large and small livestock producers throughout the county. Depending on the quality of the hay, someone with 100+ tillable acres would meet the requirements for agricultural property tax assessment.

## **Outlook, Trends, and Future Opportunities**

Throughout Tompkins County the soil types, rainfall, and growing days support successful production of a wide range of crops and crop varieties. There are strong and diverse marketing opportunities to sell the product grown locally.

Many grain farms are multigenerational, which provides a history of what works as well as an opportunity for future generations to move into leadership and ownership roles with more flexible options. Lower overhead costs allow for flexibility and part-time operations.

There is a growing trend for small-scale farms to work with larger-scale neighbors, such as borrowing equipment or having a larger neighbor harvest crops for a share of the harvest.

Climate change may present new positive opportunities for farmers, such as the potential for double cropping, i.e. follow wheat with soybeans, or the ability to plant longer-season hybrids which are more likely to have higher production. However, the possibility of more frequent heavy downpours increase the risk of erosion and crop washouts, failure to germinate, or reduced rate of growth.

With the increasing value of, and demand for agricultural land in the county – including previously fallow land – it is likely viable agricultural land will be purchased or rented by another farmer. As smaller farms are absorbed into other operations, the future may be very large farms interspersed with small niche operations and part-timers.

## **Marketing Strategies**

Field crops grown in Tompkins County are sold locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally. Generally, the Chicago commodities exchange prices are used to determine prices. Field crops leaving Tompkins County

### **Farm Profile: Carpenter Farm** **Russ and Sarah Carpenter**

Russ and Sarah Carpenter are third generation farmers, working about 500 acres in the Towns of Enfield and Ulysses. Russ grew up helping his father on the farm, attended SUNY Cobleskill and then returned to the farm in the early 1980's.

Russ grows approximately 150 acres each of soybeans, corn, and hay, and 50 acres of wheat. They have a grain dryer on the farm, which means Russ can process grains so they are a more readily useable commodity.

Most of the soybeans are sold on contract before harvest, and shipped either to Canada or the Newark, NJ port for shipment overseas. Most of the corn is brokered through ethanol plants; a lot goes to Fulton to make NASCAR Fuel. Russ explains that ethanol production has helped increase the corn base price in New York State; the price is often as good as or better than the price set by the Chicago Mercantile Exchange (CME). Also, both Dried Distiller's Grains (DDG's), a by-product of ethanol production, and the meal by-product of Bio-diesel production are high protein feeds that return to the market as livestock feed.

The Carpenter's use dried corn at home to heat their large farm home. They use a self-feeding furnace and it takes 6-10 tons of corn, which has a \$2000 value, a year. That's a 50% savings over their previous heating bills.



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are marketed through Perdue Agricultural Commodities Marketing Association (PACMA), Lakeview, Oswego Ethanol Plant, also Lansing Grain (Michigan) and are typically transported by rail car to eastern sea ports.

Crops that remain local are often bought and sold through an informal network of farms with institutional awareness of needs and availability from year to year. There are also regional grain storage facilities that buy and sell crops.

There is some added value production, such as custom feed blending, grain roasting, and/or storage operations. Some field crops are grown for human consumption, most notably sweet corn, but also a variety of beans and grains. Some local barley is finding its way to malt for beer making. Tompkins County is also home to Farmer Ground Flour, which is an operation that adds value to locally produced organic grains by grinding them into flour that is sold locally and regionally. Another niche operation is Cayuga Pure Organics, specializing in small grains and dry beans; in addition to bean cleaning equipment they have recently installed oat rolling equipment.

### **Challenges**

Crop farming is a speculative business. Farmers make the best, educated decisions about what to grow, when to plant, etc., and given enough rain and sunshine at the right times, they will be successful. However, in an international market place, weather-caused shortages in a large region may not result in higher prices because crops are likely available elsewhere. At the same time, a world-wide abundance of a crop will depress prices unexpectedly.

Crop farming is a seasonal occupation, and full-time farmers must produce enough each season to meet year-around expenses. At certain times in the growing season additional help is needed, but it is often difficult to find reliable, experienced temporary help.

The increasing costs of production, especially fuel, are challenging for all farmers; additionally, taxes, equipment, and equipment maintenance account for larger share of producer's expense.

Access to land is a growing problem. Farmers report increasing competition, and are especially frustrated when they lose rented land after they've made improvements. Parcels are also getting sold out from under current renters for use by neighboring operations, and there is an increasing amount of land being purchased or rented by farmers from bordering counties. Adding to this problem is new non-farm land owners having unrealistic expectations of rental rates; although rents are as high as \$75+ an acre in some areas, lack of competition and/or poorer soil types do not justify high rental rates. Sometimes these new owners have no intention of continuing to rent their land, or farm it themselves, removing it from the available land base.

### **Industry Needs: Services and Support**

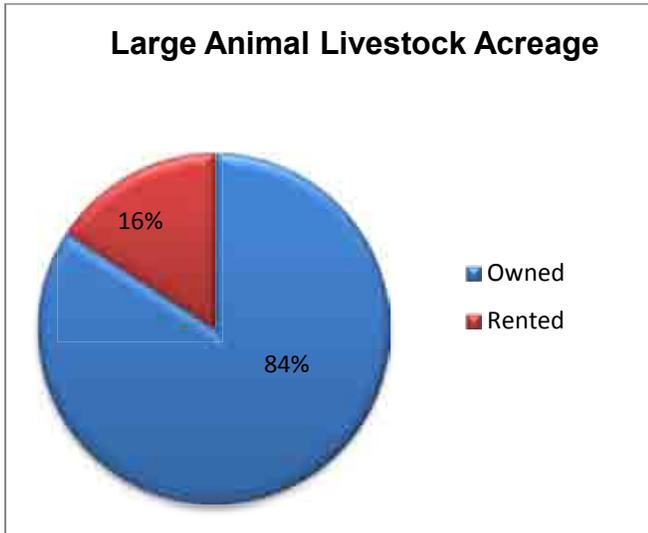
- Access to equipment dealers is a problem throughout the County. Smaller equipment dealers may not be able to get parts so farmers must wait for a part to arrive by mail or go to Cortland for parts. For small-scale farmers, this delay often means they miss a weather-related window of opportunity.
- For new farmers, it can be hard to get into the "network" – existing farmers know who might be looking for crops, or who might want to buy something, or who has what equipment they might be willing to loan, etc. These networks are based on familiarity and trust, and it can be difficult for new-comers to find acceptance.

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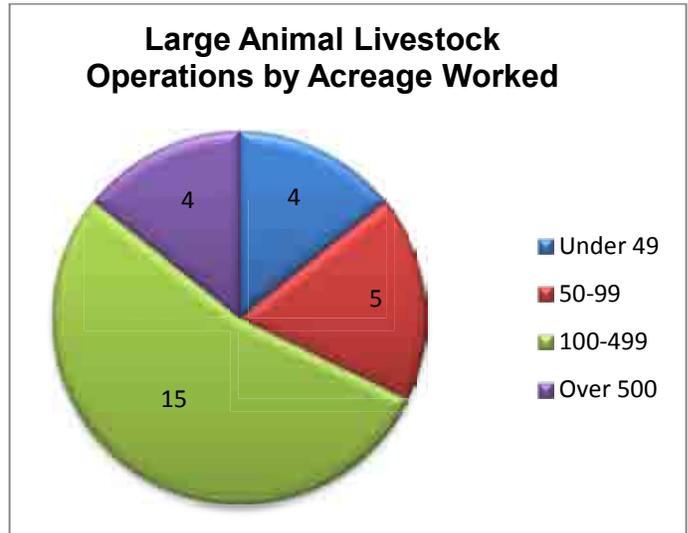
## **3. Livestock with Pasture and Hay**

These operations include former dairy farms that continue to harvest hay and raise livestock, most often beef cattle, in the existing pastures. There is also an increase in production of pork, lamb, goat, meat rabbit and small scale poultry production including chickens, turkeys and ducks due to the growing interest in locally raised meat. Most of these are part-time operations with total sales below \$40,000. Most are not certified organic but use very few synthetic chemical inputs other than fertilizer. Most livestock are raised on pasture without growth hormones, and antibiotics are only used if needed for animal health.

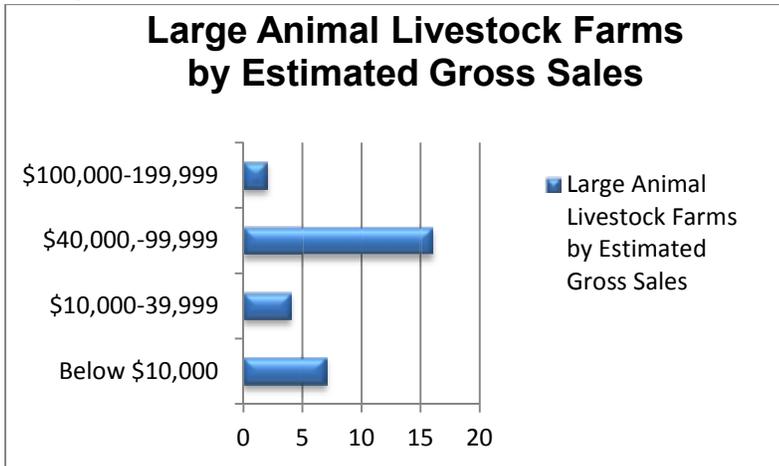
### **3a. Large Animal Livestock (Beef)**



Large Animal Livestock Chart 1



Large Animal Livestock Chart 2



Large Animal Livestock Chart 3

*Dairy Charts 1 & 2 Source: 2014 Tompkins County Agricultural Data Base compiled by CCE Tompkins*

*Dairy Chart 3 Source: Tompkins County Agricultural District Surveys and CCE staff estimates based on type & size of operation*

### **Large Livestock Sector Overview**

There is an expanding customer base for locally-raised, direct-to-consumer meats, and local farms with enough pasture and crop land interested in raising beef. For those with the land base and livestock husbandry knowledge, overhead for getting started is relatively low: beef calves are affordable at livestock markets, and a workable fence can be easily installed. Rotational grazing provides an excellent system for pasture management.

Most beef producers are part time, selling an average ten head per year on pasture and hay they produce to reduce feed costs and provide more revenue. These farmers produce grass-fed livestock for the most part, although many producers supplement the herd's diet with grain on some basis to improve meat marbling.

The only farms offering certified organic beef in Tompkins County are organic dairy farms who select cows from their herd to offer beef for sale as an additional income stream. In general pasture land and hay crops

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require limited chemical inputs if animals are grazing and manure is spread so the majority of local beef is naturally raised.

There are two larger specialized livestock farm operations in the county including Genex Breeders bull farm in Enfield with international sales of bull semen and Glenwood Farms Bison (70 head) that focuses on local sales.

### **Outlook, Trends, and Future Opportunities**

There are many small, multigenerational family farms that are well-suited to move into livestock production, as at one time they were likely dairy farms and have existing barns, pasture, and fencing infrastructure. They tend to be single owner or single family operations. Raising beef livestock is a good choice for a part-time farmer as it is far less labor-intensive than dairying. With a good fence, access to water, and plenty of pasture, beef cattle will generally take care of themselves, allowing the farmers to concentrate on cropping.

With the increasing demand for local products, there is increasing demand for USDA-certified, and NYS custom slaughter facilities. Farmers report that wait lists at current facilities require them to schedule a slaughter date well in advance (sometimes a year), or they may need to travel several hours to find a facility. There is an opportunity for new, custom-butcher facilities to help meet seasonal demand.

Tompkins County soils, topography and pasture resources provide an excellent base for beef production, especially in the southern half of the county, however, increasing taxes and assessed values may put pressure on these farmers to sell. There is a slim margin of profit in raising beef with some farmers just able to cover their property taxes. Some of the land that is or could be utilized for beef production is more vulnerable to development and could be targeted for conservation easements.

### **Marketing Strategies**

Many beef producers sell live animals, by the half or quarter animal, and then arrange for butchering at a NYS Custom licensed plant. Buyers have some decision-making ability on certain cuts, sizes, and packaging. Consumers save money by buying in bulk, and also have some ability to customize the product to best suit their needs.

Producers that sell at retail outlets must utilize USDA slaughter facilities to process their animals. Generally they have invested in freezer space to store meat once they get it from the processor and can then sell it by the cut, either directly at the farm, at farmers markets, to restaurants and stores, or through Community Supported Agriculture shares. This allows the customer to buy only the cuts they want and provides the producer with the higher retail price per cut.

Beef and dairy farms of all sizes sell live animals at local and regional livestock markets. Sometimes the price at the auction is high enough to offset the additional work involved in wholesaling or retailing their product.

### **Challenges**

The price of livestock feeds (hay, grain) has doubled in recent years; farmers need to develop an understanding the global markets involved in growing crops and animals here.

This region is blessed with an abundance of water, but it may not be in right place to access it on livestock farm. There are State and Federal programs to assist with water development and fencing to keep livestock out of streams, but funding is competitive and smaller farms applicants do not rank highly.

Farmland has become fragmented in many areas of the county, with residential housing interspersed. This often results in complaints from or disagreements with non-farm neighbors about escaped or noisy livestock, the smell of manure, etc. There is also a problem with runoff being diverted to farmland from nearby non-farm development, resulting in new wet areas in fields.

Increasing taxes and unreasonably restrictive municipal laws take their toll on farm finances and farmer's ability to work efficiently. It can take a lot of time and money to resolve a conflict with or adhere to certain local laws. Some farmers report feeling intimidated by the potential negative interaction with municipal officials: when they are leaving you alone, you don't want to speak up about a problem or make waves, so problems are not addressed.

Agriculture is typically left out of emergency planning, but has the potential to be impacted by the consequences of unexpected catastrophes. Farms may have generators that need to be refueled after a few days, and livestock feed supplies may be exhausted.

Finding farm land to buy is challenging; there may be willing sellers, but they are complacent about holding on to their land. In some parts of the county, the competition for farmland is so strong that a start-up farm can't compete. In some locations, farmers can't find land for pasture to rent or buy; if they can't expand, they may go out of business.

# Tompkins County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan

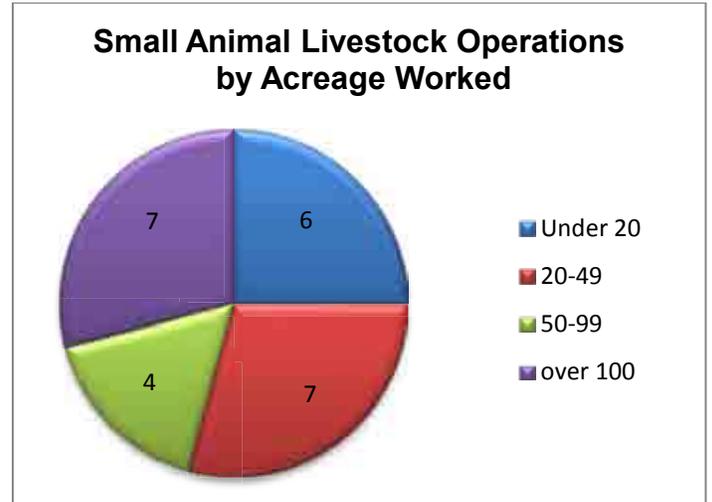
## Industry Needs: Services and Support

- Some farms have land that is bisected by roads; livestock farmers that straddle busy State and County roads need large culverts to cross livestock under roads.
- Livestock farms that buy-in all or part of their feed would benefit from a Local Feed Exchange to facilitate information exchange (post prices paid, suppliers of available feed, quantities and price, et.) and to facilitate bulk purchases.

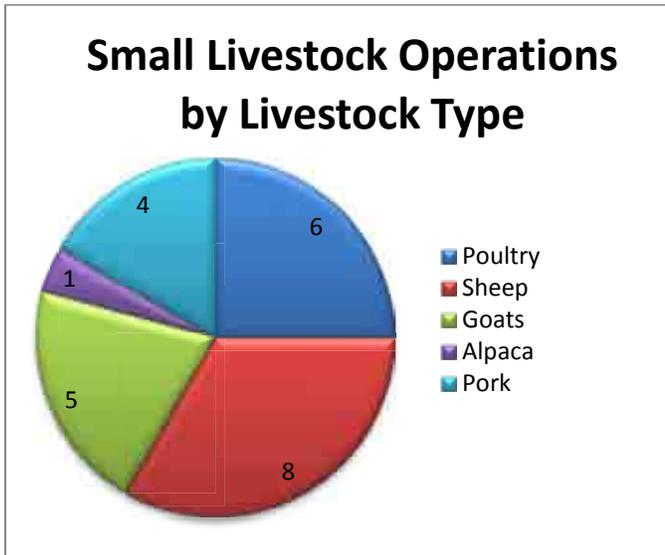
### 3b. Small Animal Livestock



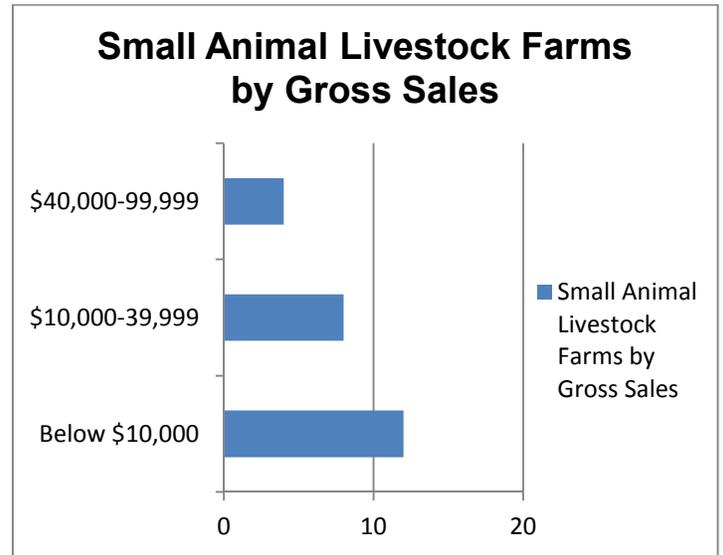
Small Animal Livestock Chart 1



Small Animal Livestock Chart 2



Small Animal Livestock Chart 3



Small Animal Livestock Chart 4

Small Animal Livestock Charts 1-3 Source: 2014 Tompkins County Agricultural Data Base compiled by CCE Tompkins

Small Animal Livestock 4 Source: Tompkins County Agricultural District Surveys and CCE staff estimates based on type & size of operation

### Small Animal Livestock Sector Overview

Small livestock producers including sheep, goats, pigs, poultry, and fiber animals, often work with heritage or uncommon breeds, chosen for unique characteristics that the farmers believe are the best fit for their operations. The animal's uniqueness helps create a niche market for the products, such as heritage pork, blue and green-shelled eggs, and Angora goat fiber. Many livestock in this category are sources of meat and other products such as chicks and eggs, sheep and wool, etc. In the case of sheep, goats, and alpaca, fiber can be sold as a fleece,

## **Tompkins County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan**

felted, or spun into yarn that are further increased in value through knitting, crocheting, or weaving though this takes additional time and talents and must be factored into overall profit.

Most small livestock producers are part-time, with proceeds from the operation covering cost and perhaps providing a small supplemental income. They tend to be family operations, and sometimes children have major responsibilities in caring for the livestock.

The smaller the livestock and size of herd or flock, the less farm land is needed. Many rely on pasture land for grazing and buy in some supplemental grains. They may not own equipment for crop production or hay making so they rely on other local producers of hay and grains and as such provide a growing market for local producers of hay, primarily, as well as some grains. The cost of purchasing feed has become a major consideration.

### **Outlook, Trends, and Future Opportunities**

Given demand for local food and farm products, there is a growing market for locally raised poultry, pigs, lamb, sheep and goat milk cheese or yogurt, and fiber. Small animals are a less expensive and space intensive way for new farmers to get involved in animal agriculture. There is also a strong network of area producers and homesteaders that provide mentoring, informal cooperation and support. The trend toward direct marketing is likely to continue and grow, offering part-time farmers the opportunity to expand to full-time. There is also room for more producers, providing there is affordable land available.

There are producers who began as 4-H members and have grown their 4-H project into a viable business. Small animals offer opportunities for youth interested in a career in agriculture to gain experience and build a small flock or herd, which can direct college and career interests. There is another segment of small animal livestock producers who are retired or near retirement age, and have the time to explore and develop markets and find their niche. As they retire from this enterprise, their existing operations or markets can transition to another producer.

### **Marketing Strategies**

Most small livestock producers are using a variety of direct marketing methods to sell their products including direct sales via their farms, sales via area farmers markets, partnerships with CSA's to offer their products to CSA customers, and other such schemes. Value-added production is an important component of small livestock production, including cheese, fleeces, wool, etc. Fiber products may be sold on line or at area craft shops and festivals.

There is increasing interest in locally-raised meat and poultry. Lamb and kids offer smaller and more manageable freezer cuts than beef or bison.

Many of the heritage or unusual breeds raised on local farms are marketed to other producers starting to grow their flock/herd thus providing an outlet for surplus animals.

### **Challenges**

Meat goat producers find a more limited market for meat than lamb.

Theft, trespass, and vandalism are reported on many farms, as well as uninformed neighbor complaints causing undue stress and time and money loss. Some farmers also mentioned concerns about animal rights activist activities.

Small-scale producers lack the income to afford hay-making equipment, so they can't produce their own feed even if they have the land available.

Droughts will make it difficult keeping up with pasture rotation and climate change makes planning for forage and feed more challenging.

### **Farm Profile: Laughing Goat Fiber Farm**

*Lisa Ferguson*

Lisa Ferguson and her husband, Gary, moved to Ithaca from Ohio in 2000, purchasing just under 50 acres in the Town of Ithaca. She had grown organic vegetables in Ohio, but wanted to try something with a longer shelf life here. That, and her interest in fibers and knitting, put her on the path to raising fiber goats and other fiber livestock. Early on, she sold natural yarns from her animals, then began to dye and work with it (knitting, weaving) to meet market demand. Before long she was working a manufacturer to process the dyed yarn for her, producing knit products much faster than she could manage independently. The knit goods are then sold out of the farm, at various festivals and craft shows, and online. In addition to knit goods, livestock for breeding and consumption are also sold.

Currently the farm herd runs between 75 and 100 animals, which are primarily angora and cashmere goats along with a handful of alpaca. Lisa manages the operation with the help of her husband, a few volunteers, and college interns.

In the future, Lisa plans to expand into sheep, as well as build a new barn and some guest cottages. She and Gary would like the farm to an agritourism destination for people wanting to learn about fiber craft and how to knit and weave.



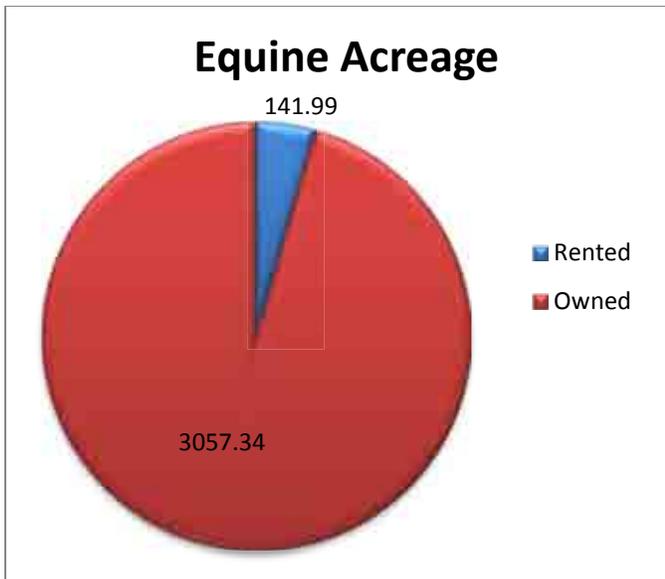
## **Tompkins County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan**

### **Industry Needs: Services and Support**

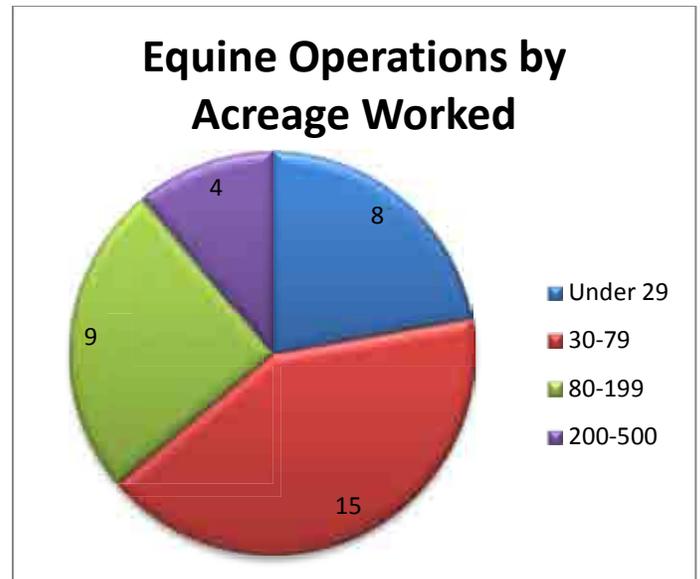
- There is a need for more veterinarians knowledgeable about small ruminants. This could be exacerbated by possible legislation limiting access to farmer-administered animal antibiotics.
- The feed supply infrastructure is challenging: farmers report being able to get only hay, corn, and soybeans nearby and have to travel for the rest. There is a need for more options for local and/or organic grain feed rations. During hay shortages, small livestock producers seem to come up short and needing to go out-of-county or region to find what they need.
- There is a shortage of slaughter facilities and limited access to those that exist. Higher fuel prices make travel to processors more expensive.
- There is a need for identification of farms, perhaps through a county farm signage program, to raise awareness of agriculture and its contributions.

# Tompkins County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan

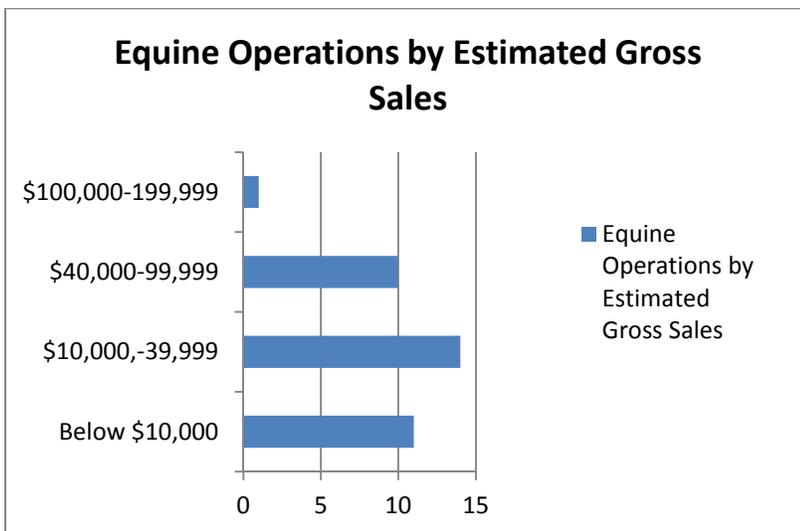
## 4. Equine



Equine Chart 1



Equine Chart 2



Equine Chart 3

*Equine Charts 1-2 Source: 2014 Tompkins County Agricultural Data Base compiled by CCE Tompkins*

*Equine Chart 3 Source: Tompkins County Agricultural District Surveys and CCE staff estimates based on type & size of operation*

### **Equine Sector Overview**

Equine is growing agricultural sector with about two thirds of the operations being eligible for agricultural assessment (sales over \$10,000 per year), most with without a secondary enterprise. About a third of the equine operations are stables offering boarding, training, and riding lessons. The rest of the sector members are breeders, polo enthusiasts, and equine rescue and rehabilitation. A majority of the equine operations are owned by women.

About half of the equine operations provide a full-time income, and most, if not all, of the stables provide part-time to full-time employment for several people other than the owner.

Many poorer soil types which do not support crop production are suitable for pasture as long as it is well drained. Equine operations can find suitable land throughout the county that is less attractive to crop and dairy producers. However, they do depend on other producers in the county to supply quality horse hay resulting in an attractive market for smaller part time landowners with access to hay land and equipment.

# **Tompkins County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan**

## **Outlook, Trends, and Future Opportunities**

Many equine operations are small and use off farm income to acquire and grow their farm operations to avoid debt. Some have investors, to build needed facilities, (stables, riding barns, pastures, rinks, etc.). These are the larger facilities in the county which offer boarding, training, and riding lessons.

There is good pasture land available in this county and support services nearby (Cornell large animal clinic), so equine operations have a good base for starting a business.

The equine industry has several related sectors, such as custom, high-end saddle and tack and manufacturers, tack repairers, and farriers that can be found in the county. County equine operations also purchase a lot of the hay produced in the county, providing a relatively new and growing market for hay producers.

Boarding, training and riding facilities are dependent on a population with disposable income as equestrian pursuits are an expensive hobby.

## **Marketing Strategies**

Much of the marketing in the equine sector involves the sale of services: the boarding of horse for owners without sufficient land for keeping a horse, riding boarded horses when the owner can't do so consistently, and training horses for owners. Equine operations also train horses that they subsequently sell to recreational and competitive-riding owners.

There is a strong youth component to training for competitive riding, again, mostly female. These girls and young women own or rent a horse stable at a training facility, and are often part of a stable team that competes regionally.

With the growing interest in equestrian pursuits, support businesses have come to the county. There are several high-end tack and saddle makers, as well as feed businesses that specialize in horse feed.

## **Challenges**

Some equine operations do not raise crops or sell enough livestock or services to meet the criteria for agricultural property tax assessment, yet they often own substantial acreage. This means they have a heavy property tax burden.

Stock is expensive, and stud fees are high; this sometimes leads to indiscriminate breeding.

NY trailer fees are extremely high compared with neighboring states; many livestock haulers often register their trailers in Maine which is far cheaper.

Another concern is unreasonably restrictive local laws and/or ill-informed application thereof which can add to the overall cost of barn construction.

## **Industry Needs: Services and Support**

- facilities for humane disposal of old horses and rendering
- supply lists for hay and other feeds
- reasonable trailer costs

### **Farm Profile: Ivy League Farm**

*Patricia and Chris Purdy*

Ivy League Farm breeds thoroughbred horses.

Patricia and Chris Purdy met in college, although they were both from the Ithaca area. Patricia was already an active equestrian, and owned two jumping horses. As time passed, they acquired a brood mare that produced a filly that raced successfully the first time out. At that point they realized they needed a mare with a real pedigree, so they went to the sales, held in Saratoga New York and Kentucky, and found one. They also realized they needed some farmland, and were lucky enough to find about 60 acres in Ellis Hollow, where Chris grew up. They built barns and installed horse fencing for paddocks, and the business continued to grow.

Today, they welcome about 10-12 new foals a year to the farm. Because the horse raising industry requires Live Cover breeding, four times a year they send mares to Lexington, Kentucky to spend several weeks for breeding. Thoroughbreds have a tremendous value, and while some of the mares and foals on the farm are owned by the Purdys, others are owned as partnerships, and still others are owned by others entirely and just boarded at Ivy League Farm.

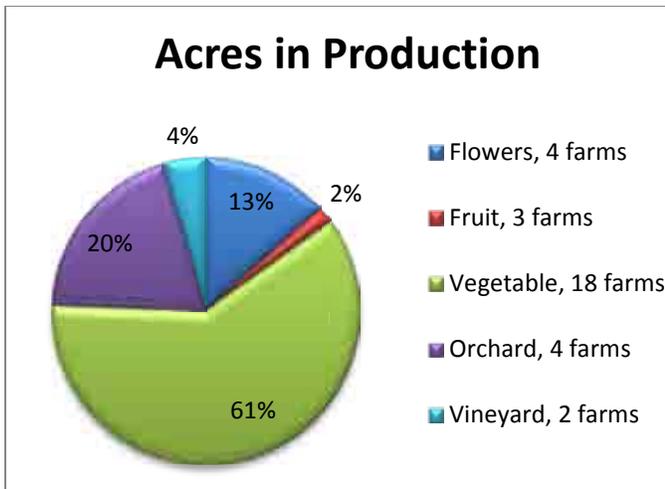
The Purdy's sell foals each year at the November sales as either weanlings, or the next year as yearlings. Their market is the racing industry, which has an international draw.

The Purdys buy in all their feed, purchasing 20 tons of alfalfa from local and regional hay farmers as well as a lot of horse feed from Agway. They do business with DairyOne to analyze the hay they feed and also work with an animal nutritionist. They also provide employment for several people.

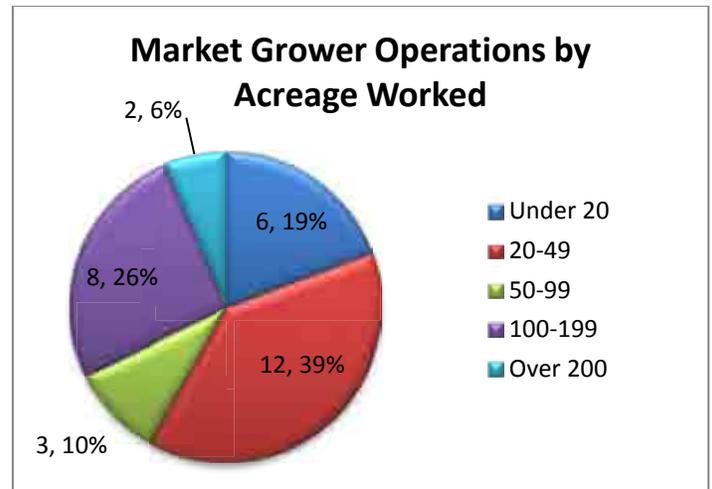


# Tompkins County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan

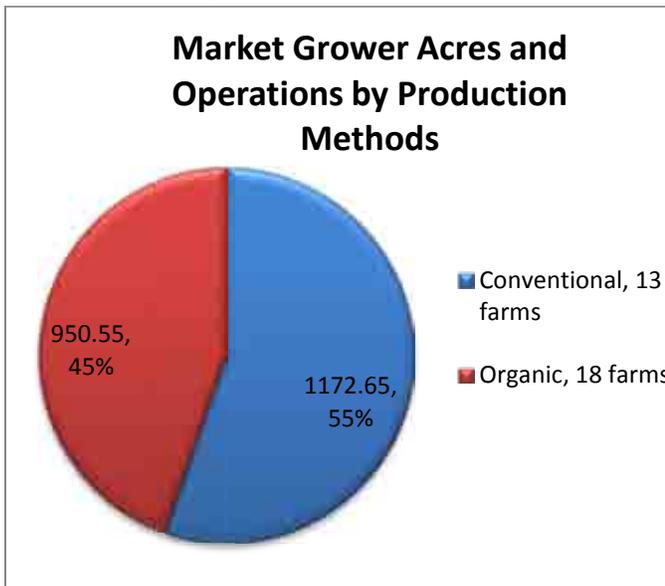
## 5. Market Growers



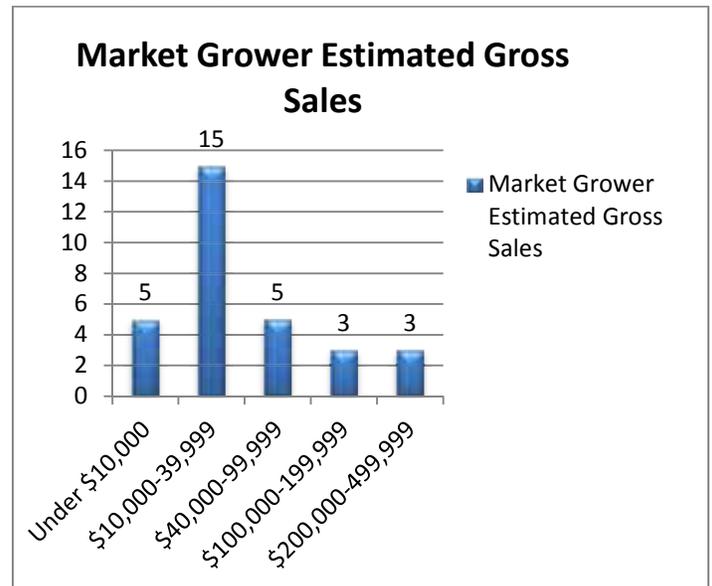
Market Grower Chart 1



Market Grower Chart 2



Market Grower Chart 3



Market Grower Chart 4

Market Grower Charts 1-3 Source: 2014 Tompkins County Agricultural Data Base compiled by CCE Tompkins. Market Grower Chart 4 Source: Tompkins County Agricultural District Surveys and CCE staff estimates based on type & size of operation

### Market Grower Sector Overview

For the purpose of this profile, Market Growers are defined as those producing berries, tree fruit, and vegetables that are primarily marketed direct to consumers and local buyers. Market growers vary in size from a few acres to several hundred acres. Vegetable growers require additional land for cover crops and crop rotation to maintain soil fertility and reduce pest problems.

Berry crops grown include: strawberries, brambles, and blueberries. Grapes are a minor crop associated with wine production (4 farms). Apples are the dominant tree fruit; however pears, cherries, apricots, peaches, and plums are being grown with variable annual yields depending on spring temperatures that may impact blossom and pollination. A full variety of vegetable crops are being grown to exploit the growing season. Some growers may produce over 30 different varieties of crops on their farms starting in spring with greens, a variety of summer produce, ending with root and storage crops. High tunnels are being used for year round production of greens. Storage crops including root crops, onions, garlic, squash and apples are sold year round. Market growers are expanding into new crops and niches like ginger and uncommon fruits.

# **Tompkins County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan**

There are 31 County farms that sell to local consumers, and at least another 50 beyond our borders but within a 30-mile radius of Ithaca (required for selling at the Ithaca Market) that depend on Tompkins County outlets and consumers for product sales.

This sector includes a mix of experienced growers and new producers. Most experienced growers are generating a full-time living from farming and use a variety of marketing channels. Newer producers need to be innovative to find niches that are not filled. The marketing environment for market growers is becoming increasingly competitive. The sector is largely successful because there is access to a receptive community of consumers that shop at farmers markets, join CSA's, visit farm stands and pick your own farms. In addition, local retailers and restaurants buy from local farmers and feature local products in stores and menus.

Based on sales data gathered by Cooperative Extension, the estimated value of local foods (produce, meats and specialty products) sold to and consumed by area residents is at \$20 million; this is 10% of all food sold at retail (\$200 million). 20% of fruits and vegetables consumed by county residents come from area farms. These numbers are considerably higher than national averages reported in the USDA Agriculture Census data where only 2% of agriculture sales are categorized as being sold for human consumption.

## **Outlook, Trends, and Future Opportunities**

Expansion of this sector has been steady for over 40 years starting with the establishment and evolution of the Ithaca Farmers Market in 1973, the emergence of CSA's as a marketing strategy in the 1990's, and the growth of the local foods movement that has gained significant momentum since 2000. Ithaca and Tompkins County has gained a foodie town reputation, hence making it attractive to new market farm startups. Increasingly, new farmers are finding marketing to be a challenge. Some have succeeded by specializing in what they grow or how they market. Others are foundering generating minimal returns for their efforts, and when coupled with production challenges and other time demands, many will not succeed. Support for new farmers is being provided by Cooperative Extension and Groundswell Center for Local Food and Farming, by offering business planning training and marketing guidance.

Opportunities exist to grow the local food system, but it will require more consumers to buy local, more buyers to buy local, and farmers will need to be more strategic in their business and marketing efforts. Areas for expansion include: pick your own, increased year round production and storage capacity, added value processed fruits and vegetables, a wholesale farmers market, culinary and agritourism expansion, cooperative marketing and shipping to regional outlets.

## **Marketing Strategies**

Nearly all of the market growers in the county are engaged in direct marketing. Channels being used include a network of ten farmers' markets throughout the county, over 30 CSA farms, five Pick Your Own (PYO) farms, sales to 28 area restaurants, and sales to four area retailers (Greenstar, Wegman's, P&C Fresh, Trumansburg ShurSave). Farm stands include one that features solely their own farm grown produce, and six others that grow some products and buy the balance from the produce auction in Penn Yan or the Syracuse Regional Market. Institutional sales are limited primarily because prices farmers receive in other channels are higher. However, some institutions (Cayuga Medical Center, Cornell Dining) do buy some local or regional products via distributors including Regional Access, Cortland Produce and Maines. Regional Access is a key player in the local food scene, providing shipping services for farmers to local outlets and to NYC stores used by a few area farmers.

### **Farm Profile: Stick and Stone Farm**

*Lucy Garrison and Chaw Chang*

Lucy Garrison and Chaw Chang moved their organic produce operation from Newfield to Trumansburg in 2000 and began expanding; they now work about 72 acres and produce a wide variety of produce as well as eggs. The farm has five full-time, year-round employees, and they add two more full-time workers and eight part-time workers over the summer months.

Stick and Stone sells produce to restaurants, through a U-Pick, at farmers markets, and through 450 Full Plate Collective CSA (community Supported Agriculture) shares. Full Plate Collective is Stick and Stone Farm, Remembrance Farm and Three Swallow Farm.

Lucy and Chaw attribute their success to adapting to market needs and expanding slowly. For example, when green beans became popular among local restaurants, they invested in a green bean harvester to meet the demand. They have expanded into fruit trees to meet the demands of CSA members.

Although they are young, Lucy and Chaw's children are engaged in the farm operation and have shown interest in learning more and having more responsibility. Lucy and Chaw hope to pass the business on to their children one day.

Lucy and Chaw work to find new ways to expand production and create an ever-growing market. Their goal is for the farm to be sustainable and for the people farming here to be happy.



## **Tompkins County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan**

Most farmers use a mix of marketing channels to spread their risk. All are time and resource challenged making it hard to explore new marketing options. Cooperative Extension has been hosting annual farmer-buyer networking meetings where producers can meet buyers and learn about their needs. Additionally, CCE has been conducting market channel assessments for producers that allows them to evaluate returns by channel. This has helped growers be more strategic in deciding whether to stay with a particular channel or not.

### **Challenges**

A key challenge is to identify a mix of crops and a marketing channel that is not fully saturated. Many market growers start farming with little planning, capital, land and equipment, so the easiest approach is to start small and sell direct. Infrastructure investments essential on direct market farms include: fencing for deer, woodchucks, etc., irrigation, high tunnels, produce washing facilities, and cold storage. Changing Federal food safety regulations are another major concern for smaller producers.

#### Direct marketing

- Market saturation, need to grow the market and get more customers to buy local
- Customer education: varieties/crops, production methods, where/why buy local
- Prices at markets is too high for some consumers; there is a need to balance prices consumers can pay while covering production costs
- Ithaca Farmers Market (IFM) is doing well, but smaller markets are struggling and need help with advertising and promotion
- Need to identify good locations for small, community markets, in proximity to other attractions; encourage CSA pick-ups at small farmers markets
- Pick your own customer used to come to pick for food preservation, now come to pick for fun – promote agritourism
- CSA deliveries to offices or as a wellness promotion strategy could grow more local food consumers
- Farmers lack of understanding of what makes good customer service

#### Wholesale

- Small size of local farms relative to wholesale buyer volume needs
- Consistent supply and quality
- Pricing at wholesale to cover costs
- GAPs (Good Ag Practices) certification required by wholesalers
- Lack of facilities and equipment for proper post-harvest handling: washing, grading, packing and distribution
- Lack of labor or equipment for large scale field harvest

### **Industry Needs: Services and Support**

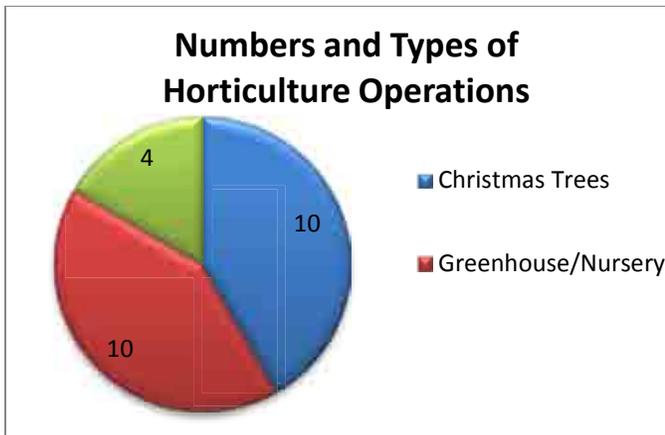
- Consumer education about where/what/how to buy local and how to cook with fresh produce
- Business analysis and strategic planning
- Farmer education: production, packing, professional business practices and marketing
- Farmer buyer connections
- Infrastructure: storage facility for fall harvest
- Infrastructure: freezer facility
- Infrastructure: canning/processing facility
- High tunnels for extended season production
- On farm cold storage options: root cellars, coolers, barns
- Produce washing/packing that meets GAPs certification and other food safety requirements
- Labor

### **Specialty Enterprises**

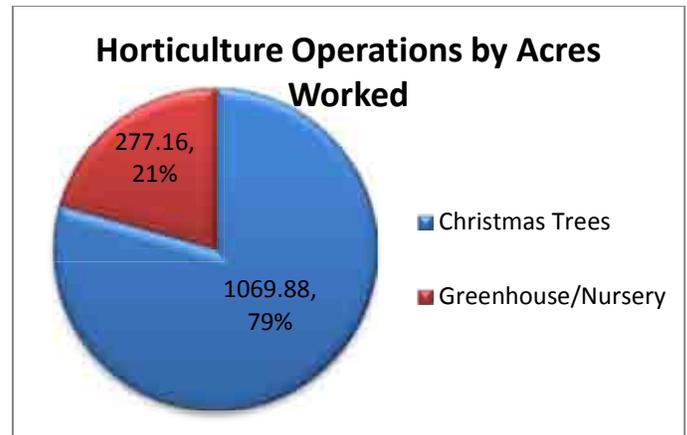
There is an ever-expanding array of agricultural products that are being offered for local sales. Traditional specialty products include maple syrup and honey. Newly available products include mushrooms, herbal edibles and medicinals, greenhouse grown tropical crops like ginger, figs, and berries, aquaponic fish, hydroponically grown greens, local grains, and local hops. These products may provide expansion opportunities for market growers but each crop has its particular requirements for production and marketing that needs to be fully explored and understood and breakeven costs need to be researched.

# Tompkins County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan

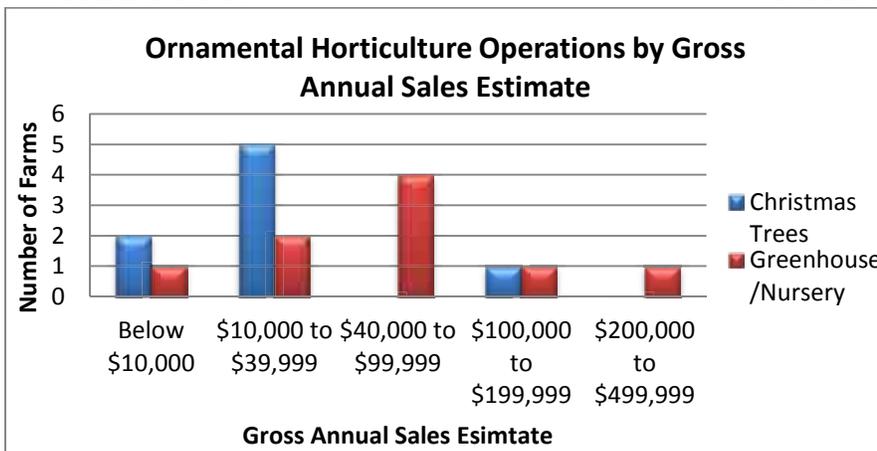
## 6. Ornamental Horticulture



Horticulture Chart 1



Horticulture Chart 2



Horticulture Chart 2

*Horticulture Charts 1 & 2 Source: 2014 Tompkins County Agricultural Data Base compiled by CCE Tompkins*

*Horticulture Chart 3 Source: Tompkins County Agricultural District Surveys and CCE staff estimates based on type & size of operation*

### Ornamental Horticulture Sector Overview

The Ornamental Horticulture sector in Tompkins County includes retail garden centers, nursery/greenhouse producers, and small vegetable growers that include production and/or sales of ornamental plants as part of their vegetable farm operation. Nursery/greenhouse crops produced include annuals, perennials, ornamental trees and shrubs, native plants, and fruit trees. There are ten Christmas tree farms, most of who sell locally but at least three ship trees out of the area. Another unique sector of horticultural crop production is field-grown cut flowers. There is one large grower (seven acres) that sells flowers from May to November at the Ithaca Farmer’s Market and to area retail florists. Another not quite as large (two acres) specializes in weddings and parties along with sales at the Ithaca Farmers Market. Many vegetable growers also add cut flowers to the mix of what they grow as the fit nicely into market displays or as a bonus in a CSA share.

There are ten greenhouse and nursery growers (census numbers also include vegetables grown in greenhouses) who retail plants they grow and plants the buy in. Some of the nursery/ greenhouse operations also offer landscape design and installation services. There are four locally owned full service nursery, retail design, and installation services. [Note: corporate or chain retailers, such as Home Depot or Lowes, are not included in these data, as none of their products are grown locally.] Another segment of the horticulture industry is lawn and landscape services and gardeners. These include small one person firms and larger multi-staff businesses. Landscape gardeners often purchase plants from local nurseries hence adding to the customer base of the growers and retailers. Most horticultural crops are sold locally at greenhouse/nursery retail locations.

Retail garden centers and nurseries in Tompkins County employ approximately 150 year-round employees with an additional 100 seasonal employees. The number of people employed by landscapers, arborists and lawn maintenance is harder to capture as many of these services are one person operations that advertise solely by word-of-mouth. There are approximately 30 of these services that advertise in the locally and likely an equal number of smaller services that are most often found by word of mouth.

# **Tompkins County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan**

The size of operations ranges from small growers with a greenhouse or two on their home property to large garden centers with a shop, display greenhouses, outdoor display areas, production areas and other customer amenities such as gardening tools, books and garden-related gifts. One of the long-established garden centers attracts out-of-town visitors and bus tours to visit their display gardens, and has facilities to host weddings.

This sector is largely successful thanks to the high level of consumer interest in ornamental gardening in Tompkins County, in part because some residents have disposable income to spend on ornamental plants, and also because gardening education opportunities provided through Cornell Plantations and CCE-Tompkins have empowered home gardeners to try new plants and gardening techniques on their properties.

## **Outlook, Trends, and Future Opportunities**

This sector has experienced growth in the last few decades, with the 3 oldest horticulture businesses established over 30 years ago and a number of new businesses starting up in the last 5-20 years. However many of these businesses reported a decrease in business over the last 5 years due to increased competition from big box stores with garden centers. The larger retailers have name recognition, large advertising budgets and additionally are located centrally in Ithaca, whereas most of the small locally-owned horticulture businesses are located in the rural parts of the county and may be hard to find. However, many local businesses reported that after the initial downturn in business following the opening of the big box garden centers, they experienced a return of some customers who preferred the higher level of expertise and customer service offered by the knowledgeable staff and owners of the local horticulture businesses.

Additionally, many county growers and gardeners have a higher-than-average knowledge of plants and gardening styles, and some of the local nurseries have carved out specialty niches, such as native plants, edible landscaping and heirloom roses. Some offer additional services and products such as landscape design and installation, floral design, tools and gardening supplies, garden-related gifts and visitor attractions. Two businesses market their plants only through mail order – one is a fruit tree nursery that supplies tens of thousands of grafted trees to orchards across the country and the other is a perennial nursery that sells mail order plants through their website.

Current trends among Do It Yourself (DIY) gardeners include more use of perennials, trees and shrubs rather than bedding annuals, and an increased interest in incorporating edibles, such as fruit trees, vegetables and herbs in the home landscape. Some of the local garden centers that previously only carried ornamental plants have recently increased their selection of edible plants for sale, including less common species such as paw-paw, elderberry and nut trees. There is also strong demand for native plants and the creation of more sustainable permaculture oriented landscapes.

Opportunities for future growth of this sector will require increased outreach to educate new customers as many of the older patrons of local horticulture businesses are downsizing to smaller properties without gardens. It is easy to see properties that have transitioned from a manicured landscape to a state of neglect. It is essential to continue to reach younger customers, including new homeowners, apartment dwellers and even renters, using updated marketing strategies. Areas of expansion include more businesses having online ordering and mail order options, facilities to attract tourists such as display gardens and cafes, and special events to draw customers at slower times of the year.

## **Marketing Strategies**

Horticulture businesses in Tompkins County use a diverse array of marketing strategies. All are engaged in direct marketing through garden centers and greenhouses, mail order, at farmer's markets, and gardening events such as the Spring Garden Fair and Plant Sale, which features over 30 plant growers and attracts approximately 3,000 customers at the 5 hour event. Marketing channels include traditional methods such as newspaper advertising and customer newsletters while newer methods include websites featuring updated plant lists and growing information, use of social media, and e-newsletters and direct mailings via email.

Group marketing has been a recent innovation for this sector, with a several horticulture businesses located on the east shore of Cayuga Lake participating in the Cayuga's East Shore marketing promotion, which has a website and printed brochures that also includes accommodation, dining and wineries in the area. Another group marketing effort is a joint brochure that lists 13 locally-owned horticulture businesses with descriptions of products and services offered, directions to each business, website links and contact information.

## **Challenges**

- Increased competition from big box store nurseries
- Need to reach new customers as older customers age out of gardening activities
- Retaining experienced staff, especially seasonal staff

## **Tompkins County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan**

- Seasonal nature of the business
- Challenges to ornamental gardening (deer, drought, new insect pests)
- Poor weather during busiest months (April-June)
- Updating marketing strategies to reach younger customers

### **Industry Needs: Services and Support**

- Consumer education about where/what/why to buy locally-produced plants
- Marketing support to promote locally-owned businesses
- Strengthened connections between local plant/soil producers and local wholesale buyers
- Knowledgeable seasonal labor force
- Infrastructure: hoop houses and sales facilities
- Training on current means of reaching customers, including social media

# Tompkins County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan

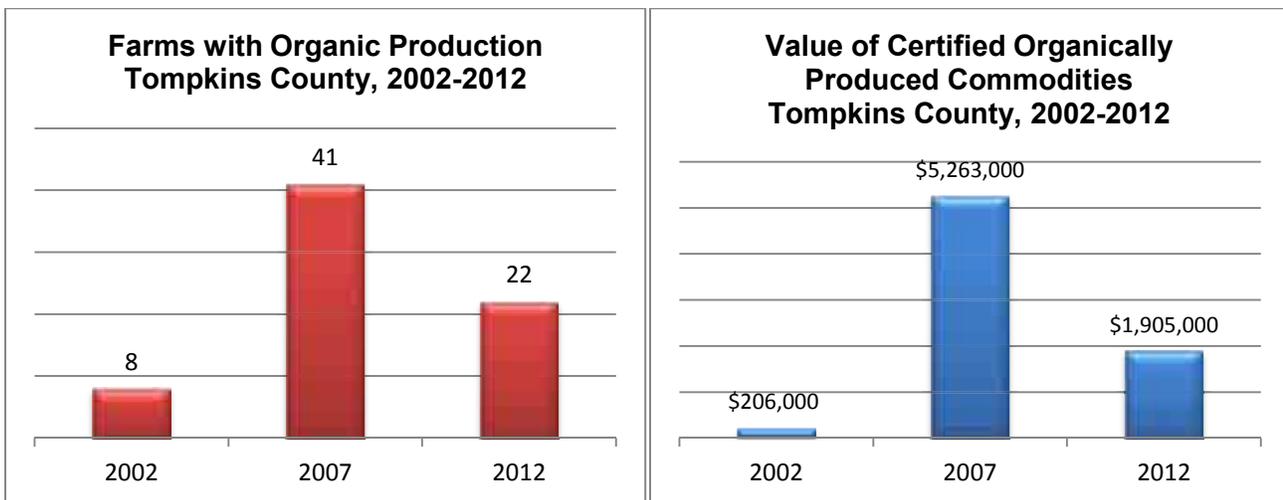
## 7. Organic Agriculture

Organic agriculture has a long tradition in Tompkins County, starting with small farms involved in the back to the land movement of the early 1970's. Many of these farms were involved in starting the Ithaca Farmers Market in 1973. This is around the time that the organic movement began and the NY Organic Farming and Gardening Association was founded. For many years, organic farming was mostly practiced by vegetable farmers growing for the local market.

Today, most of the farmers raising produce for local sales are farming using organic methods, though not all are certified, in part due to the cost and records required and because their customers do not require certification. Approximately 1500 acres of produce is organically raised in Tompkins County.

Since 2000 there has been a significant increase in organic field crops and dairy farms. In Tompkins County, these farms operate nearly 15,000 acres of certified organic cropland. These farms have benefitted from higher prices and growing demand. In the case of the dairy farms, all were conventional farms that converted to organic production. The field crop producers include mostly new startups. The growth of organic dairies has resulted in demand for organic crop production and in facilities able to raise heifers using organic practices.

### Organic Production (Data from the Agriculture Census)



As happens with the Agriculture Census from time to time, the way and type of data collected has changed for Organic Production. In 2002, only acreage of certified organic crops was collected (not livestock or poultry or livestock or poultry products). In 2007, data collection expanded to include to the new National Organic Production standards (NOP) and included crops, nursery and greenhouse crops, livestock, poultry, livestock and poultry products; however, the USDA did not check for organic certification, and commodities were combined into one question. Then in 2012, the USDA's NOP standards were used. Crops, livestock and poultry products were reported individually. Data was also collected about USDA NOP certification, exempt organically produced commodities, and farms transitioning to NOP certification.

We know that organic production expanded overall in Tompkins County from 2002 to 2007. Based on the data, we added 24 crop farms, and started counting 11 organic livestock and poultry products (11 farms). Some of the 24 new organic crops farms likely existed in 2002, but were not certified. Perhaps close to 20 of these farms remained NOP uncertified, as an explanation for why the USDA numbers suggest Tompkins County lost 22 organic farms from 2007 to 2012. From farm data collected by CCE-Tompkins, we know that there are over 30 organic farms in the county, most of them certified. Additionally there are dozens of livestock farms using organic practices with incomes under the \$5000 minimum required for NOP certification or who chose not to be certified. This data more accurately reflects the state of organic agriculture in the county, which we know continues to increase.

# **Tompkins County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan**

## **8. Beginning Farmers**

While the Agriculture Census suggests the farm community is aging, Cooperative Extension and the Groundswell Center for Local Food and Farming, receive weekly contacts from individuals interested in farming. Though some established older farmers have no heir apparent, many farms have younger generations in place working towards ownership.

There has been increasing interest in farming in response to the demand for local foods. There is a mix of individuals who are seeking to farm, mostly with little or no farming experience. Some are seeking to homestead (grow their own food) on land they own, while others are serious about establishing a farm business. Cooperative Extension has a long history of advising beginning farmers and, since 2009 Groundswell Center has been offering a variety of new farm business training classes. In the past three years there have been 36 farm business training graduates that have gone on to start farm businesses.

Key challenges for beginning farmers are identifying profitable niches that are not already filled by other producers and acquiring farming equipment and suitable land. Very few seek financial services to get started; many start out with very limited resources, which is a good risk management strategy during the startup years as they gain experience with production and marketing. Business development from the point of getting started to generating income is seven years on average. This transition requires financial assets to start with (savings, family support, off-farm job), acquisition of land, infrastructure and equipment, and production and marketing knowledge. Tenacity, hard work, and good management are essential traits for success.

Beginning farmers associated with family farming operations have added, distinct challenges. While these individuals have more experience in farming, their key challenges are the cost of transitioning an established farm business to the next generation. The younger generation in a family farm operation must slowly acquire the business assets in order to make it financially feasible to transition the business. Farm transition and estate planning are critical to assisting with these conversions.

# **Tompkins County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan**

## **Part III Land Use Development and Policies**

### **A. Land Use Development**

#### **1. Development patterns and implications for agriculture**

The pattern of development in Tompkins County still shows signs of traditional development including that within neighborhoods of the City of Ithaca, and in most village and hamlets. Suburban development patterns along with low-density, scattered development became much more common in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The development of formerly open lands, including agricultural lands has degraded water resources and influenced transportation choices. Between 1995 and 2012, the amount of developed land in Tompkins County increase by 25 percent, or 6,000 acres, while population increased by 5 percent. Nearly 90 percent of the newly developed lands were outside established centers. The agricultural community is quick to note that this style of development complicates how and where agricultural land is worked, and also drives up the competition for and cost of land. This tension is particularly obvious in the northern portion of the county, including the Town of Lansing.

Though there has been substantial loss of active agricultural land across the county since 1969, the majority of land removed from agriculture has been marginal in nature. This land has been allowed to return to brush or forest or, in some cases, developed for residential or commercial uses. Generally, this has not had much of a negative impact on agriculture, as the best lands have remained part of the agricultural base of the County. However, certain areas of the County, particularly the North Lansing-West Groton ARFA, the eastern edge of the Northwest ARFA, and the southern reaches of the Northeast ARFA closest to the Village of Dryden are under growing development pressure and are susceptible to loss of farmland and conflicting land uses. Farmland located on State highway frontage (State Routes 13, 79, and 96) has high visibility and access, making it inherently vulnerable to development pressure.

#### **2. Farmland Demand: implications on sectors and farm size**

As mentioned earlier in this document, in 2013 agricultural land owners throughout the County saw assessed value increases of 100+%. This is the result of larger agricultural parcels (100-200 acres and more) selling to farmers at prices that are competitive with development prices; agricultural acreage has sold for \$300 to over \$500 per acre. This demand for land is driven primarily by larger dairy and crop farmers who have increasing income as a result of continuing strong markets and a need to acquire additional land to expand. At the same time, the increase in organic dairy and crop production has led to a return to production of previously fallow land.

As less land is available for new and expanding operations, farmers have begun to out-compete each other for available land, both for land purchases and land rentals. This makes it difficult for a new operation to find an affordable parcel of even 30 acres or less, and for smaller operations to hold on to rented land bases without a significant increasing in rental rates.

Overall, it will be difficult for new market growers to find a foothold in the County without a significant financial investment in land. Small farms (owning 150-250 acres) will be able to continue as long as they don't need much, or any, rental land. Dairy and field crop farmers will mostly continue to get larger, and will continue to cross County borders (in both directions) to find the land they need. Mid-size dairy and crops farmers (250-500 acres) will be the group most likely struggling to hold onto the land they rent, as larger operations offer more in rent and purchase the land they currently work.

### **B. Local Policy: Implications for Agriculture**

Tompkins County municipalities are increasingly turning to formal planning mechanisms and official policies to advance farmland protection. It is safe to say that every municipality in Tompkins County is supportive of agriculture; however the ways in which this support is manifested does vary based on municipality size, location, planning support, and regulatory philosophy. This section will

# **Tompkins County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan**

briefly summarize the activity that has occurred at both the County and local government level. This work includes planning along with specific projects and also regulation.

## **1. County Wide Planning Efforts**

As framed by New York State Law, land use authority resides at the local level, so Tompkins County government's role in farmland protection remains at the planning and project levels. Building from the 1996 Tompkins County Agriculture & Farmland Protection Plan, the County has led a number of agricultural planning initiatives. Those efforts include, but are not limited to, the following.

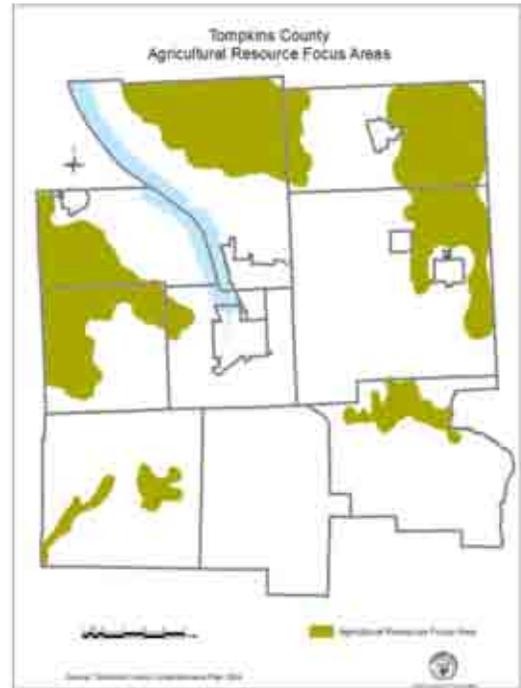
### *Comprehensive Plan and Agricultural Feature Focus Areas*

The basis for this planning work was established in the Tompkins County Comprehensive Plan (2004) which has recently been updated (2015). Among other things, the County Comprehensive Plan recognized the Agricultural Resources Focus Areas (ARFAs) as key areas for protection. These areas were further examined as a part of the development of the County Conservation Plan which identified the need for countywide agricultural actions. This led to a formal Conservation Strategy adopted by the County Legislature that included the following key strategies:

- Prepare a long-range Purchase of Development Rights Implementation Plan to actively market the program to farmers in the ARFAs and identify farms that are suitable for the program
- Conduct a feasibility study for a Transfer of Development Rights Program with interested municipalities
- Promote specific land use tools that protect important lands
- Develop an Agricultural Planning Referral Program to help farmers and municipal planning boards conduct agricultural land planning
- Create a pilot program to connect farmers with landowners of agricultural properties that are for lease or sale
- Proactively engage owners of land that is located in priority protection areas to participate in long-term conservation programs
- Promote stream corridor protection efforts
- Create a long-range conservation funding strategy to support land acquisition, purchase conservation easements, and manage and monitor conserved land resources

### *The County Hazard Mitigation Plan*

A further County Planning effort was the update of the County Hazard Mitigation Plan. This update examined 22 natural and technological hazards affecting Tompkins County including the impact of climate change on these hazards. Tompkins County agriculture was one of the major industries that received a hazard impact analysis. Potential impacts ranged from the increase in invasive species, extreme temperatures, and drought. Farmers are already responding to warmer temperatures of the past few seasons by raising longer season crops, more hay cuttings per season, and growing longer season varieties. Drought and excess rain will prove to be more of a challenge. Some farmers lack adequate pond resources for irrigation and there are many crops in the area that are not normally irrigated. Additionally many farmers report that old tile drains installed many years ago are no longer functioning properly.



# Tompkins County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan

## 2. Regional Sustainability Plan

In 2013, Tompkins County, in partnership with the counties of the Southern Tier, developed the Cleaner Greener Southern Tier Regional Sustainability Plan (<http://www.nyserda.ny.gov/All-Programs/Programs/Cleaner-Greener-Communities/Regional-Sustainability-Plans/Southern-Tier>). The Plan established 18 goals and outlines a detailed strategy for a future that is economically prosperous, environmentally sound and socially responsible. Those goals connected with *Working Lands and Open Space* include protecting best management of fields, forests and farmland, as well as, preserving and connecting natural resources and open spaces. It further notes 65 actions that together have the potential to reduce regional greenhouse gas emissions by over 32 percent within 20 years. Two of the high priority actions related to agriculture include “supporting the development of processing and distribution facilities (Food Hubs) for local and value-added products” and “develop a regional program to promote sustainable forestry and wood products.” These actions are intended to help the region meet greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals, but also help reinvigorate the rural economy where natural systems are protected and quality of life is enhanced

## 3. Tompkins County Economic Development Plan

The Tompkins County Economic Development Strategy includes a focus to:

- Connect agriculture to value-added food production to increase financial returns to farmers
- Ensure succession of farms to new farmer ownership
- Develop financing models to support agriculture and food production
- Encourage shared infrastructure for agriculture and farm commodities storage, processing, and distribution

## 4. Town-Level Land Use Planning

Local municipalities have a broad range of tools available to them, including local land use regulations. Many of these planning mechanisms, and municipal involvement, are summarized at right:

Planning Mechanisms for Tompkins County Jurisdictions*										
Plans	Jurisdiction									
	Town of Caroline	Town of Danby	Town of Dryden	Town of Enfield	Town of Groton	Town of Ithaca	Town of Lansing	Town of Newfield	Town of Ulysses	Tompkins County
Comprehensive Plan	'06	'03	'05	'02*	'05	'93*	'06*	'13	'09	'04*
Local Ag Plan	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes*	No	Yes	Yes
Agricultural Zoning	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No
Cluster Zoning	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Important Ag Areas Identified in Plan	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Open Space Plan	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
<b>Policies/Ordinances</b>										
Zoning/Land Use Codes/Restriction	No	'05	'95*	No	'11	'03	'04	No	'07	No
Subdivision Regulations	'00	'07	'12*	'06	'70	'96	'04	No	'07	No
Property Set-back Ordinance	No	No	Yes	No	No	*	No	No	Yes	No
Right-to-Farm Law	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Site Plan Review Requirements	No	'05	'96	'96*	'97	'00	'04	No	'07	No
Active with NYS PDR	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
Local PDR Program	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No

\*Due to a lack of farmland the City and Villages are not included in this analysis.

## **Tompkins County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan**

A cursory review of the Local Comprehensive Plans throughout Tompkins County reveals a mix of different strategies and actions. Most discuss broad support for enhancing agricultural viability, though few provide specific actions to implement this viability. Some plans like the Towns of Groton and Danby call for the further definition of land use regulations to help support agricultural operations. Most local comprehensive plans, including the Towns of Caroline, Danby, Ithaca, Newfield and Ulysses, identify and map key areas for protecting farmland. Those communities that have undertaken Town level agricultural plans (Ithaca, Ulysses, and Lansing) have prioritized actions for advancing local agricultural protection and enhancement.

Right-to-Farm laws have been enacted in every Town in Tompkins County, though in reviewing town planning documents most jurisdictions indicate an interest in making these laws more impactful. One of the ways Towns have achieved this is by integrating the right to farm law directly into the Town's rural agriculture zoning district language. For communities without zoning, other strategies such as integration of the right-to-farm law into planning documents, site plan review or subdivision regulations might serve as an added avenue to promote the law and importance of agriculture in the Town.

### **Land Use Regulations**

For those communities with zoning (Ulysses, Ithaca, Danby, Groton, Lansing, and Dryden) more tools are available for farmland protection. When designed properly, zoning can be advantageous to protecting agriculture. Examples of key provisions in agricultural zoning districts include broad definitions of farming to help support the diverse nature of farming in Tompkins County now and into the future; a very clear "purpose" of the zoning district which outlines the intended permitted uses and those that are not compatible with agriculture; allowance for direct market farm businesses, such as farm stands, within these zones, etc..

### **Municipal Comprehensive Plans & Agriculture**

Throughout the County, municipalities are planning for agriculture in diverse ways. As examples, the Town of Dryden's comprehensive plan includes an appendix on developing strategies for supporting agriculture; specifically, PDR, TDR, tax benefits for current use, and agricultural exemptions.

The Town of Groton's comprehensive plan identified the goal of enhancing agricultural economic viability through land use (farm-based agricultural allowance, cluster, smart subdivision), protecting key agricultural land uses, and better integration of agriculture into local government policy making. They also expressed an interest in developing new crops and markets.

The Town of Lansing is actively developing its own town-specific agriculture and farmland protection plan, which includes specific farmland protection and enhancement strategies. Prior to that effort, the Town comprehensive plan which is currently being updated, included goals and objectives to protect farmland, businesses that are compatible with agriculture, and establishing a rural zoning district that is supportive of agriculture.

The Town of Ulysses has adopted a town-specific agriculture and farmland protection plan that recommends establishing an agriculture committee, further identifying critical agricultural lands to protect, and supporting expansion of direct marketing opportunities including agri-tourism.

The Town of Newfield finalized its comprehensive plan, which won an Upstate New York American Planning Association planning award, in 2013. The plan recognized the importance of agricultural and forestry resources in the ARFAs within the Town. They further identified an interest in increasing the viability of agriculture, CSA farm development and pickup locations, a directory of agricultural enterprises, value-added operations, preservation of large sections of farmland, a farmer advisory committee, and improved farmland access through leasing.

The Town of Enfield's comprehensive plan identifies the importance of preserving swaths of farmland and promotion of a diversity of farming operations. Enfield is predominantly agricultural, and has not felt significant development pressure yet, but is seeing an increase in new construction of homes and businesses along the Town of Ithaca border given the lack of zoning compared to the neighboring towns of Ithaca and Ulysses.

The Town of Ithaca developed an agriculture and farmland protection plan in 2011 and includes a host of prioritized actions for supporting the town's remaining agriculture. One of the plan's

## **Tompkins County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan**

suggestions was having a dedicated staff person to facilitate questions from the agricultural community. The Town's comprehensive plan includes recommendations affecting agriculture, including active implementation of PDR, enlarged setbacks between agriculture and non-agricultural uses, requiring space for community gardens in new developments and promoting household food production. An active Town Agriculture committee has been moving forward with implementation of many of the actions recommended in the Town's Ag plan.

The Town of Caroline's comprehensive plan supports farming and forestry through the identification of key protection areas and broad goals of promoting the best agricultural lands, enhancing healthy woodlands, and developing strong lumber markets.

The Town of Danby comprehensive plan recommends greater involvement of agriculture in municipal planning, investigating added agricultural tax relief, conservation easement options, farmland access through lease support, developing an open space protection plan, and reviewing current zoning to identify its impact on farmland.

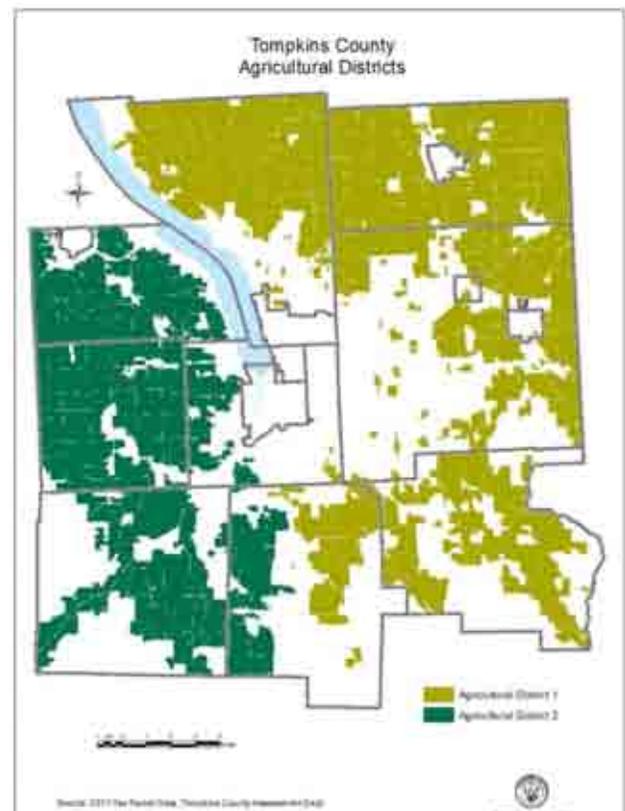
### **C. State Policies and Local Agriculture**

#### **1. Agricultural Districts**

Other County planning efforts that support agriculture have included the coordination of the County Agricultural Districts which include over 169,000 acres in two separate districts. New York State Agricultural District law (Article 25-AA of the Agriculture and Markets Law) recognizes that agricultural lands are an important and irreplaceable natural resource that is being lost to development, high costs of doing business, and some regulatory constraints, and that certain actions can be taken to retain lands in agriculture. It authorizes the creation of local agricultural districts pursuant to landowner initiative, preliminary county review, State certification, and County adoption. The purpose of agricultural districts is to encourage the continued use of farmland for agricultural production. The law provides a combination of landowner incentives and protections, all of which are designed to forestall the conversion of farmland to non-agricultural uses. Benefits include: preferential real property tax treatment (agricultural assessment and special benefit assessment), protection against overly restrictive local laws and government funded acquisition or construction projects, and private nuisance suits involving agricultural practices.

The State Department of Agriculture & Markets Division of Farmland Protection manages the certification of new districts and the review and recertification of existing districts. State certification confirms that a district meets the purposes and intent of the Agricultural District Law and all eligibility criteria described therein. Districts are reviewed for recertification every 8 years at which time the County recommends properties for removal or inclusion (the State certifies all changes for district continuation). Properties can be added to districts annually but removed only during the 8-year review.

The Tompkins County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board, along with the full County Legislature, are responsible for conducting reviews of agriculture districts in Tompkins County. A locally-added step in the review process is to meet with Town Boards to ensure that local land use plans and agriculture district boundaries remain compatible and to inform local officials about the provisions of the Agriculture District Law as it relates to local laws.



## **Tompkins County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan**

### **Provisions of the NYS Agriculture & Markets Law, Section 305a - Agriculture Districts**

#### **Agricultural Assessment**

One of the most important benefits of the NYS Agricultural Districts Program is the opportunity for farmland owners to receive real property assessments based on the value of their land for agricultural production rather than its development value. The Department of Agriculture and Markets uses a Land Classification System based on soil productivity to calculate agricultural assessments for individual farms. Farmers qualify for Agricultural Assessment if they operate seven acres or more that has been farmed for two years, and they generate \$10,000 in agricultural product sales. Landowners may qualify for agricultural assessment if they have a written five-year lease with a farmer who qualifies for agricultural assessment. To receive the exemption, farmers and landowners renting land to farmers fill out a soils worksheet to classify their soil and then apply each year by April 1st with County Assessment.

#### **Notice of Intent**

Another important provision of the NYS Agricultural District Law is the mandate it places on state agencies, local governments, and public benefit corporations to avoid or minimize adverse impacts to farm operations when pursuing projects within an agricultural district that involve either the acquisition of farmland or the advance of public funds for certain construction activities. Agriculture & Markets staff conducts detailed reviews of Notice of Intent documents provided by project sponsors and recommend mitigating action where necessary. Such projects cannot proceed until the Notice of Intent process is completed.

#### **Restrictive Local Laws**

NYS Agricultural District Law protects farm within an agricultural district against local laws which unreasonably restrict operations. Agriculture & Markets staff, together with Department legal staff, reviews existing and proposed laws to determine if they are compatible with farm operations. In cases where a local law is determined to be unreasonable, staff works with local government to develop mutually acceptable modifications. If local government is unwilling to modify a restrictive law or agree to not enforce it on a plaintive farmer, the Department is authorized to take legal action to compel compliance with NYS Agricultural District Law.

#### **Sound Agricultural Practices**

The NYS Agricultural District Law also authorizes the NYS Agriculture Commissioner to issue opinions, upon request, concerning the soundness of specific agricultural practices. If the Commissioner determines that a practice is sound, it shall not constitute a private nuisance. In order for a practice to be considered sound, it must be legal, not harmful, necessary, and supported by expert guidance or opinion. Cornell Cooperative Extension educators or Soil and Water District staff may be called upon to issue an opinion regarding sound practices.

#### **Agricultural Enterprise Determinations**

Under Section 308(4), the NYS Agriculture Commissioner is authorized to issue an opinion on whether particular land uses are agricultural in nature.

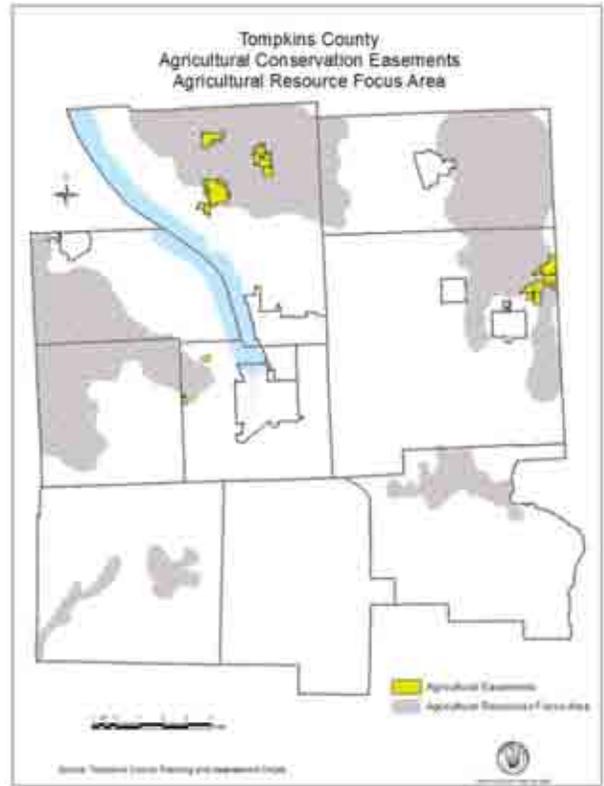
# **Tompkins County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan**

## **2. Farmland Protection**

The County Agriculture & Farmland Protection Board (AFPB) has been active in educating farmers about the NYS Farmland Protection Program funding for the Purchase of Development Rights (PDR). AFPB has a process by which farmers can submit a pre-application to the AFPB for review. Then when state funding is available, the board will contract farmers, review and prioritize applications based on how closely they meet the state program criteria.

The County program, which utilizes state funding, has worked with seven farms in the Towns of Lansing, Dryden, and Ithaca to permanently protect over 2,200 acres of important farmland in the ARFAs. The Town of Ithaca has also coordinated the implementation of its own local PDR program in the protection of an additional farm. Other municipalities and farm families are considering this for its function of protecting and reinvesting in their farmland.

Given the increased competition for State funds, the strongest candidate farms, those with high development pressure, high quality soils, and strong agricultural operations should be proactively engaged to increase the likelihood for continued PDR funding in Tompkins County. A summary of those farms protected through the state program is noted below.



### **Summary of Farms Protected Through New York State Purchase of Development Rights Program**

<b>Farm Name</b>	<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Acreage</b>
Howser Farm	Town of Lansing	439 acres
Bensvue Farm	Town of Lansing	951 acres
Lew-Lin Farm	Town of Dryden	432 acres
Jerry Dell Farm	Town of Dryden	375 acres
Ithaca Organics	Town of Dryden	45 acres
Indian Creek Farm	Town of Ithaca	42 acres

# Tompkins County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan

## Part IV Priority Goals, Strategies, and Actions

### A. Priority Areas for Farmland Protection

#### 1. Location of Areas Proposed for Protection

Tompkins County has important, high quality farmland worthy of protection. Some of those lands provide a wider range of benefits than others. The lands of highest value, and locations proposed for agricultural protection, are those of highest quality soils and contiguous active, working farmland. The maps of highest priority lands for protection are noted on to the right.

At the core of these lands are the Agricultural Resource Focus Areas (ARFAs). These six agricultural areas were identified in a 2002 countywide study, and detailed in Part II of the County Conservation Plan<sup>1</sup>, which captured the highest concentrations of quality agricultural soils and contiguous, actively-farmed land. Although this study is over a decade old, these areas, which extend into almost every municipality and include 63 percent of all farm operations in the county, still remain the core basis for local agricultural operations. Of these areas, the North Lansing-West Groton ARFA remains the highest quality and is also at most risk from development.

Combined with the ARFAs are the *Locally Important Agricultural Areas* which are locations designated by municipal comprehensive or farmland protection plans as areas of highest agricultural worth by local communities. The County Agricultural Farmland Protection Plan recognizes the importance of these locally designated areas. Special care should be taken to preserve the land that supports agriculture in those areas. Actions should include proactive efforts include support for acquiring agricultural easements in these areas, very careful scrutiny for any non-farm development proposed in these areas, and support for agricultural uses in these areas. Together the *Locally Important Agricultural Areas* and ARFAs constitute a total of 89,960 acres and represent the *Tompkins County High Priority Farmland Protection Areas*.

There remain lands outside the *High Priority Farmland Protection Areas* where farmland protection efforts should also be supported, though perhaps not focused. These areas include lands that fall within Agricultural Districts 1 and 2 and farmland either owned or rented that is assessed for agriculture. Rental lands continue to be of particular concern for long term protection as very few are under long term leases despite the fact that they provide critical land that supports agricultural operations.

#### 2. Value to Agricultural Economy of the County

The vast majority of the 90,774 acres of farm base noted in the 2012 USDA Census of Agriculture is located within the 89,960 acre *High Priority Farmland Protection Area*. This base of 558 farms is noted as producing \$67,391,000 in total agricultural sales. The total value of those agricultural properties within the protection areas is \$191,525,409. Conversion of these lands to non-agricultural



<sup>1</sup> For more information on the Agricultural Resource Focus Areas (ARFA) visit the Tompkins County Planning Department Webpage at <http://www.tompkinscountyny.gov/planning/rural-resources> and the appendix which summarizes ARFA actions.

## **Tompkins County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan**

use effectively eliminates that portion of the agricultural economy, perhaps forever. Protecting working landscapes not only protects the economic contribution agriculture makes to the rural economy and rural jobs, but also provides open space and natural areas found on or near farms.

### **3. Open Space Value**

Tompkins County's agricultural lands form the backbone of the local rural economy and provide quality of life amenities, such as scenic viewsheds, rural character, and open space. Agricultural lands make up a significant portion of the Finger Lakes region. Much of the county's tourism industry, which in 2013 generated \$2.15 million in room tax revenues, is reliant on the landscape; those scenic resources framed by active farmland. On top to this, farms play a vital role in connecting natural areas that assist in creating wildlife corridors, stream buffers which filter water and stabilize soil to increase water quality. All of these functions are difficult to quantify, but farmland's open space value is core to the identity and economy of Tompkins County.

### **4. Consequences of Possible Conversion**

With large parcels (100+ acres) continuing to be bought up quickly by farmers, the land most vulnerable to development is that which is in parcels of less than 50 acres, especially if it is partly wooded, divided up by hedge rows, difficult to access, and/or isolated from likely purchasers. These parcels are often found within or in proximity to existing agricultural land, and although it will take time for them to be fully developed into residential properties, when and as that is happening farmers will experience more neighbor and community complaints. Farmer will also have more difficulty accessing available land, as farmland becomes more fragmented.

### **5. Level of Conversion Pressure**

Farmland road frontage in Tompkins County is slowly being converted to non-agricultural uses, with most of this activity occurring predominately in the Towns of Lansing and Dryden. Development in communities that are largely agricultural, such as Enfield and the western half of Ulysses, may be less noticeable, as one or two houses a year seeming to have little impact in those agricultural areas. However, as zoning restrictions in other communities further restrict what and where people can build, people will more frequently look a little further out for a place to build their home.

# **Tompkins County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan**

## **B. Vision, Goals, and Actions for Strengthening Tompkins County Agriculture**

### **1. Vision and Purpose**

The Vision for Tompkins County Agriculture is a diverse (small and large, variety of enterprise types) and viable farming sector that contributes local food and agricultural product sales resulting in employment and economic activity. Established farmers plan for the future and new farmers can access land and other resources to grow their businesses. Farmers follow sound agriculture practices that protect the environment and contribute to the rural quality of life and scenic landscapes. Consumers and local policy makers value the contributions that agriculture makes and support policies that allow for the continuation and expansion of farming enterprises.

The purpose of the Tompkins County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan is protect, preserve, and provide support for farmers to sustainably manage agricultural resources; to maintain and enhance their contribution to food and other agricultural production in Tompkins County; and to support current and future farmers in maintaining economically successful farm operations. This can be accomplished by prioritizing and guiding the actions of county and town governments, agricultural agencies, businesses, farmers, and the community at large in responding appropriately to the needs, conditions and opportunities that will maintain a viable agricultural economy in Tompkins County.

The Mission of the Tompkins County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board is to encourage farming in the County through local initiatives which create favorable conditions that allow farmers to operate economically viable enterprises.

### **2. Goals, Objectives and Priority Actions**

#### **Agriculture Economic Development**

*Goal: Support a diversity of viable farm businesses.*

- Objective 1: Link farmers to business and marketing opportunities that enable them to expand, diversify, increase the value of their products, and contribute to the viability of the local and regional farm economy.
- Objective 2: Assist interested producers with securing funding for infrastructure and other improvements to address high priority economic development needs.
- Objective 3: Assist interested farmers in evaluating their capacity for agri-tourism and provide necessary training, collaborative packaging and promotion assistance. In addition, expand and promote culinary and agri-toursim opportunities and support the implementation of the County Agri-Culinary tourism strategy plan.
- Objective 4: Create a comprehensive central access point for information that will help farmers locate services, supplies, facilities, regulatory requirements, grants and other funding sources, and other programs that will improve farming operations and reduce costs.

#### **Short Term Priority Actions**

- Action 1: Conduct agritourism assessments on interested farms (USDA AMS grant submitted for this purpose).
- Action 2: Establish a dedicated website clearinghouse of resources identified by farmers during focus group meetings (refer to chart in appendix).
- Action 3: Pursue funding via state and federal sources to address the High Priority Agriculture Economic Development needs (see appendix A for details).

# **Tompkins County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan**

## **Local Foods**

*Goal: A vibrant local food system based on local food production supported by local purchasing that enables producers to grow and thrive.*

- Objective 1: Expand local and regional marketing opportunities by identifying products in demand and linking producers with buyers.
- Objective 2: Work with area distributors and food hubs to build relationships and capacity to serve area farmers.
- Objective 3: Help secure funding for on-farm and common infrastructure needed by farmers to increase the market season, add value to products, and reduce costs (as per High Priority Agriculture Economic Development needs – Appendix A).
- Objective 4: Promote local food purchasing options to consumers and address barriers to local food consumption.

### **Short Term Priority Actions**

- Action 1: Facilitate farmer-buyer connections to increase local product presence in area stores, restaurants, and at other retail and wholesale outlets.
- Action 2: Provide Good Ag Practices (GAPS) and food safety training for farmers selling to outlets where this assurance is required.
- Action 3: Pursue innovative direct marketing opportunities such as workplace wellness programs for CSA distribution.
- Action 4: Evaluate and strengthen the role farmers' markets play in local foods marketing and their contribution to farm income (USDA SARE Grant submitted).
- Action 5: Increase use of SNAP and FMNP benefits at farmers markets through additional outreach.
- Action 6: Initiate a Buy Local Campaign (including an online searchable database, promotion, and farm events) to raise consumer awareness of where and how to buy local foods (Grant submitted to Park Foundation). Prepare a local foods exhibit in conjunction with the Sustainability Center (Fall 2015).

## **Farmland Protection, Land Use Policy and Regulations**

*Goal: Farming is supported through local land use policies and actions that protect farmland, allow the development of diverse farming enterprises, avoid increased costs of doing business, and ensure access to quality farmland for future farming.*

- Objective 1: Work with municipal officials to ensure state and local regulations, including NYS Agriculture District Law provisions, are clear as to their role in protecting farmland and working farms.
- Objective 2: Ensure that there is active involvement and input from the agriculture community on matters pertaining to local land use policy and long range planning.
- Objective 3: Facilitate protection of farmland through the use of permanent easements and prepare a long-range Purchase of Development Rights Implementation Plan in high priority farmland protection areas.

### **Short Term Priority Actions**

- Action 1: Offer training and tours of local farms for local municipal officials that satisfies state municipal training requirements and improves their understanding of farming activities, farmland protection tools, and the NYS Ag District Law.
- Action 2: Advocate that towns establish agricultural advisory committees and encourage their involvement in review of municipal decisions that impact agriculture.

## **Tompkins County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan**

- Action 3: Encourage municipalities to develop comprehensive plans with strong agricultural sections or town based agricultural plans.
- Action 4: Reach out to farms in the high priority protection areas to explain the protection options afforded by agricultural easements through the State Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) Program in addition to easement development outside of the PDR program.
- Action 5: Explore options for building a County conservation funding strategy that addresses the need for key conservation and farmland acquisitions.
- Action 6: Conduct the 8 year review of Agriculture District #2 as per the required 300 day review period (to be completed by June 7, 2016).

### **Agriculture Awareness**

*Goal: A high level of community awareness and appreciation of sustainable farming practices and agriculture's contribution to the economy, rural life, scenic landscapes, natural resource preservation, agritourism and local foods.*

- Objective 1: Involve the farm community in active outreach via media, tours, events, classroom visits, town meetings, neighbor networks, meetings with elected officials, etc. to raise awareness of agriculture's impact and needs; provide training as needed to improve farmer communication skills.
- Objective 2: Focus on educating youth about farming and where food comes from - encourage development of FFA, Agriculture Education, and 4-H agriculture clubs in schools; support hands-on learning through initiatives like school gardens, the Youth Farm Project, farm internships, etc.; provide teacher training.

### **Short Term Priority Actions**

- Action 1: Provide farmers with tools and information on how to improve neighbor understanding of farming activities.
- Action 2: Update the Living in the Country brochure for distribution to realtors and rural residents in Ag Districts.
- Action 3: Meet with the Tompkins County Sheriff's Office to gain a better understanding about farm complaints they receive; identify ways to resolve them.
- Action 4: Identify a core group of farmers who are willing to be part of a "Speakers Bureau"; provide training and reach out to groups to inform them about the opportunity to have a farmer speak at group meetings.
- Action 5: Utilize a variety of outreach strategies to educate the public about road safety and farm equipment e.g. farm safety week ads, PSA's, exhibits at community fairs, etc.
- Action 6: Identify strategies for more effective teacher and school-based programming that help educators and students gain a better understanding of local and national agriculture issues.
- Action 7: Sponsor annual events such as Farm City Day, farm tours, Agstravaganza, and other such activities that provide opportunities for community families and youth to learn about farming.

### **Environmental Conservation**

*Goal: Farmers follow sustainable farming practices that protect natural resources and mitigate negative environmental impacts on soil, water, ecology, wildlife, and people while increasing resilience to address climate change and environmental challenges over the long term.*

- Objective 1: Promote sustainable farming and forest management practices that protect the environment and contribute to carbon sequestration. Work should include the increased

## **Tompkins County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan**

adoption and funding of Best Management Practices on farms as well as stream corridor protection efforts.

- Objective 2: Provide farmers with research based information to help them prepare for emerging invasive species and impacts of climate change.
- Objective 3: Link farmers to funding and programs that improve farm energy conservation and maximize farm-based renewable energy production opportunities.
- Objective 4: Coordinate Tompkins agriculture plan efforts with regional plans related to forest resources, conservation and farmland land protection.

### **Short Term Priority Actions**

- Action 1: Ensure that farmers are aware of NRCS and other programs that provide funding for implementation of conservation practices. Raise awareness and increase participation in these programs by county farmers.
- Action 2: Work with municipalities, the farm community and rural landowners to advance projects that reduce property risk from stormwater while not contributing to flooding on surrounding land uses.
- Action 3: Identify and share key strategies for addressing changes in climate as it pertains to farm operations
- Action 4: Work with rural landowners and farmers on effective eradication methods for addressing invasive species
- Action 5: Encourage farmers to sign up for energy audits and direct them to funding sources for improvements.
- Action 6: Identify farmers interested in investing in renewable energy, biofuel crop production, vegetable oil extruders, pellet production, etc. and if appropriate host a workshop to explain appropriate funding opportunities.
- Action 7: Include information on conservation practices and funding sources, land leases, hunting leases, forest management resources and methods of determining appropriate land rental rates on the website of farming resources to be created.
- Action 8: Conduct a benchmark study of farming practices that reduce pesticide use, improve fertility management, and other practices that minimize environmental impacts of farming.

### **Future Farmers/Workforce**

*Goal: People interested in farming will become successful future farmers or farm employees.*

- Objective 1: Promote farm transfer options to farmers and encourage them to plan for future transfer of their farm to family members or non-family farmers.
- Objective 2: Help beginning farmers gain access to training and mentoring programs (such as Groundswell and TC3's Sustainable Farming program), farming experience and expertise, land, markets, and other services that help them successfully establish and build a viable farming enterprise,
- Objective 3: Educate area youth interested in farming about career opportunities by connecting them with agriculture clubs and programs and on farm experiences.
- Objective 4: Provide training on a variety of labor management and regulatory topics (webinars for self-directed study) that helps farms become more effective employers.
- Objective 5: Identify resources/training tools for all farmers to utilize in providing safety training for farm workers.

### **Short Term Priority Actions**

- Action 1: Host a workshop focused on the integration of the next generation, related or non-related, into farm operation and ownership.

## **Tompkins County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan**

- Action 2: Provide in-depth business training for newer farmers and provide one-on-one consulting as needed (Groundswell & Cooperative Extension partnership)
- Action 3: Conduct outreach to school guidance counselors to help connect youth with an interest in agriculture to area programs that provide training (4-H clubs, FFA, BOCES New Visions, Youth Farm, Ithaca Children's Garden – Teen Urban Farmers, etc.)
- Action 5: Work with NYCAM and local farmers to identify farm safety training tools and share these with farmers via newsletters and meetings.
- Action 6: Ensure farmers are aware of OSHA rules and understand what an inspection entails.

*Note: the above list of actions has been synthesized from a much larger list of specifics steps suggested by farmers and that can be found in the appendix as reference to inform the annual work plan of the AFPB in implementation of this plan.*

### **C. Implementation Recommendations**

The Tompkins County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board will take leadership for the implementation of this Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan by taking the following steps to ensure that priority recommendations are pursued in a timely manner.

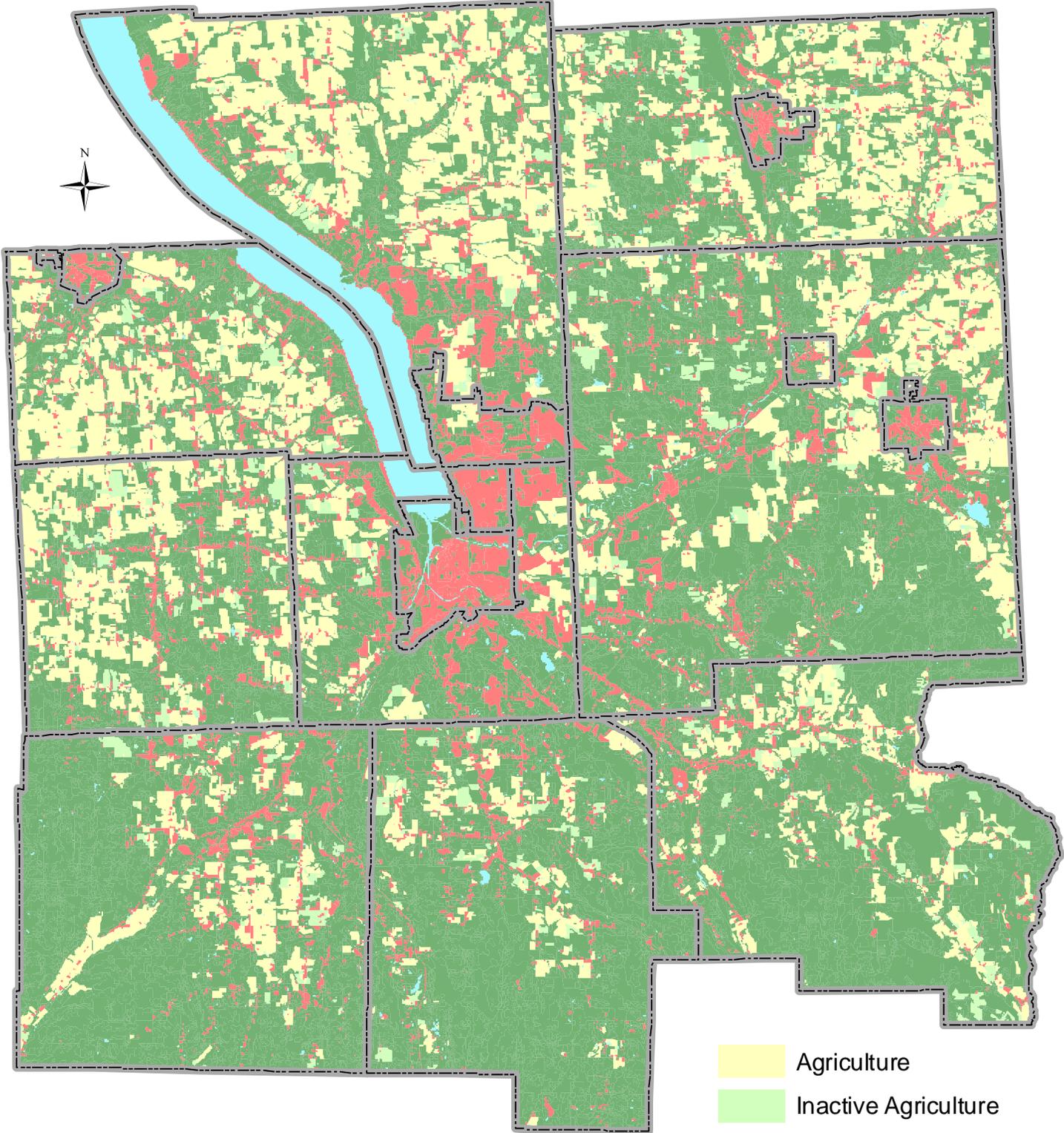
- Develop and implement an annual work plan that addresses issues the farm community has identified in this plan.
- Compile an annual report that summarizes the advancement of actions identified in this plan to be shared with the community.
- Identify those key organizations capable and willing to undertake actions with existing resources including but not limited to the Tompkins County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board itself, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County, Tompkins County Planning Department, town officials, and town agricultural committees, County Soil and Water Conservation District, Federal and State agency partners (NRCS, FSA, Rural Development, NY Department of Agriculture & Markets, DEC, NYS Economic Development), Farm Bureau, Groundswell Center for Local Food & Farming, TCAD, Cornell, TC3, and others.
- Evaluate plan progress.

Monitor emerging issues and adjust the annual work plan accordingly as needed.

## **Part V Tompkins County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan Maps**

1. Tompkins County Land Cover
2. Tompkins County Agricultural Assessed Land: Owned and Leased
3. Tompkins County Agricultural Districts
4. Tompkins County Agricultural Conservation Easements and Agricultural Resource Focus Areas
5. Tompkins County Land Use and Land Cover 2012
6. Tompkins County Agricultural Soils and Priority Protection Areas
7. Tompkins County High Priority Farmland Protection Areas

# Tompkins County Land Cover

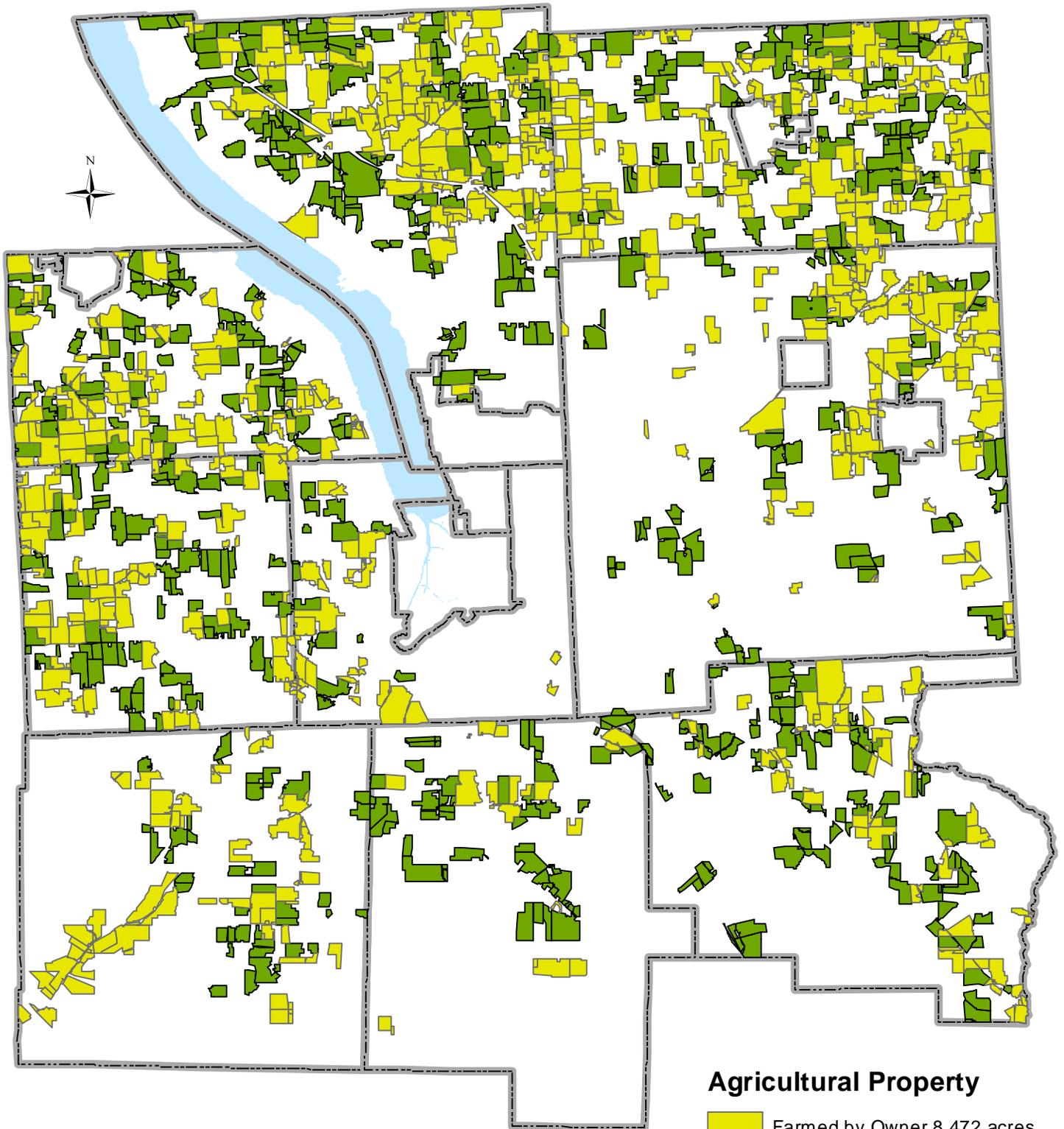


-  Agriculture
-  Inactive Agriculture
-  Developed
-  Natural
-  Water

1 0.5 0 1 2 3 4  
Miles



# Tompkins County Agriculturally Assessed Land



## Agricultural Property

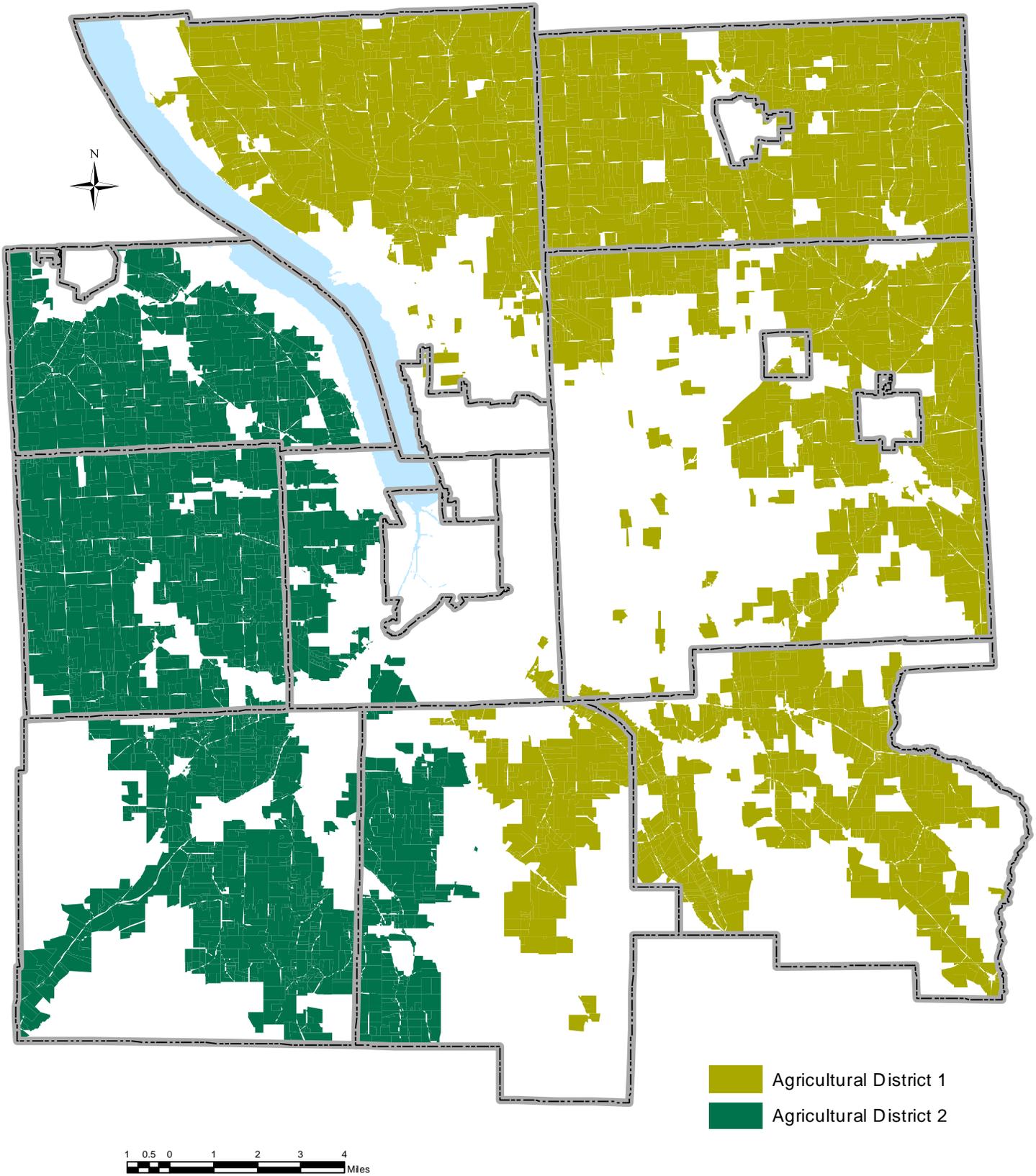
-  Farmed by Owner 8,472 acres
-  Leased Farmland 8,570 acres

Source: 2013 Tax Parcel Data, Tompkins County Assessment Dept.



Tompkins County Planning Dept

# Tompkins County Agricultural Districts

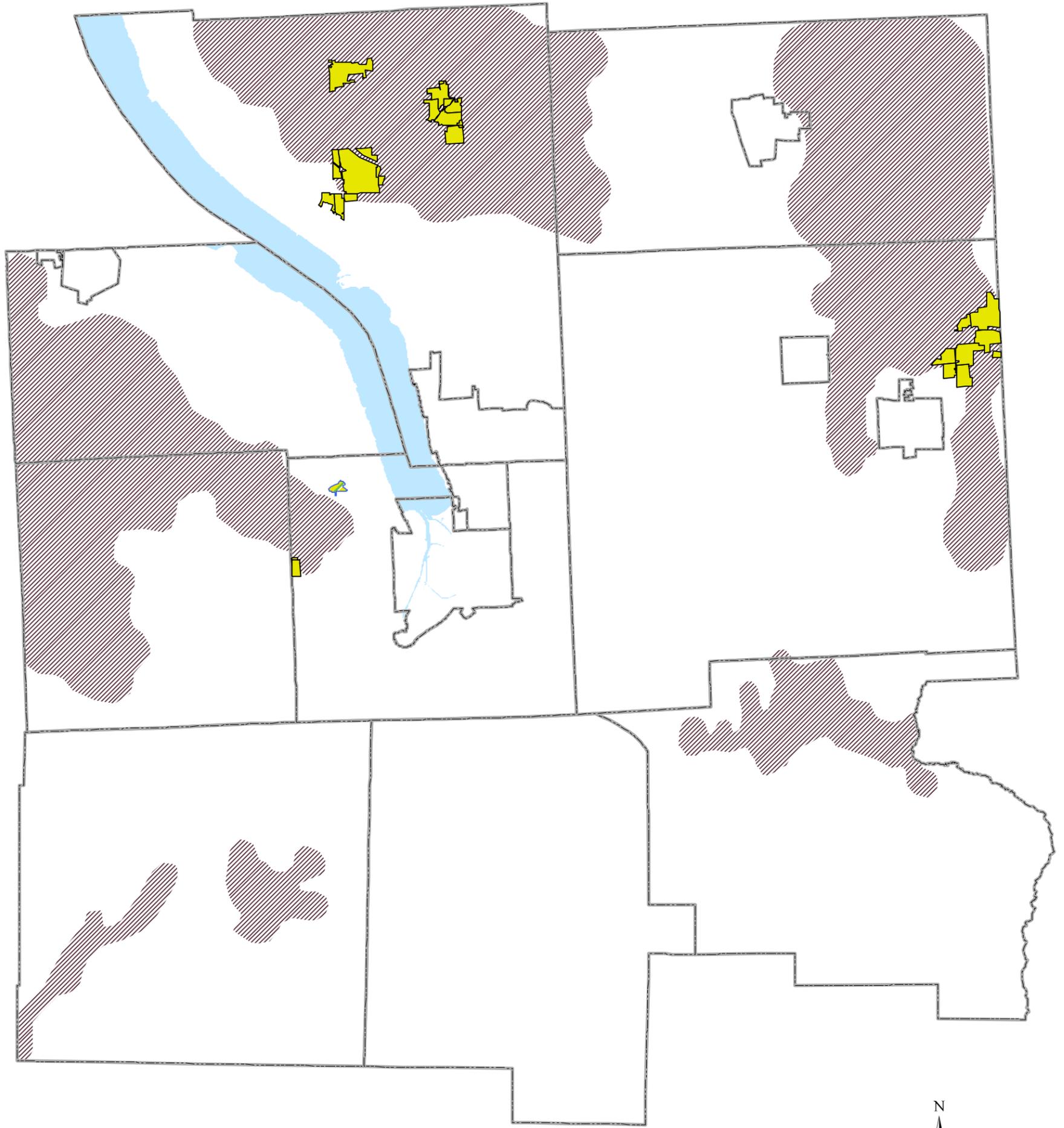


Source: 2013 Tax Parcel Data, Tompkins County Assessment Dept.



Tompkins County Planning Dept

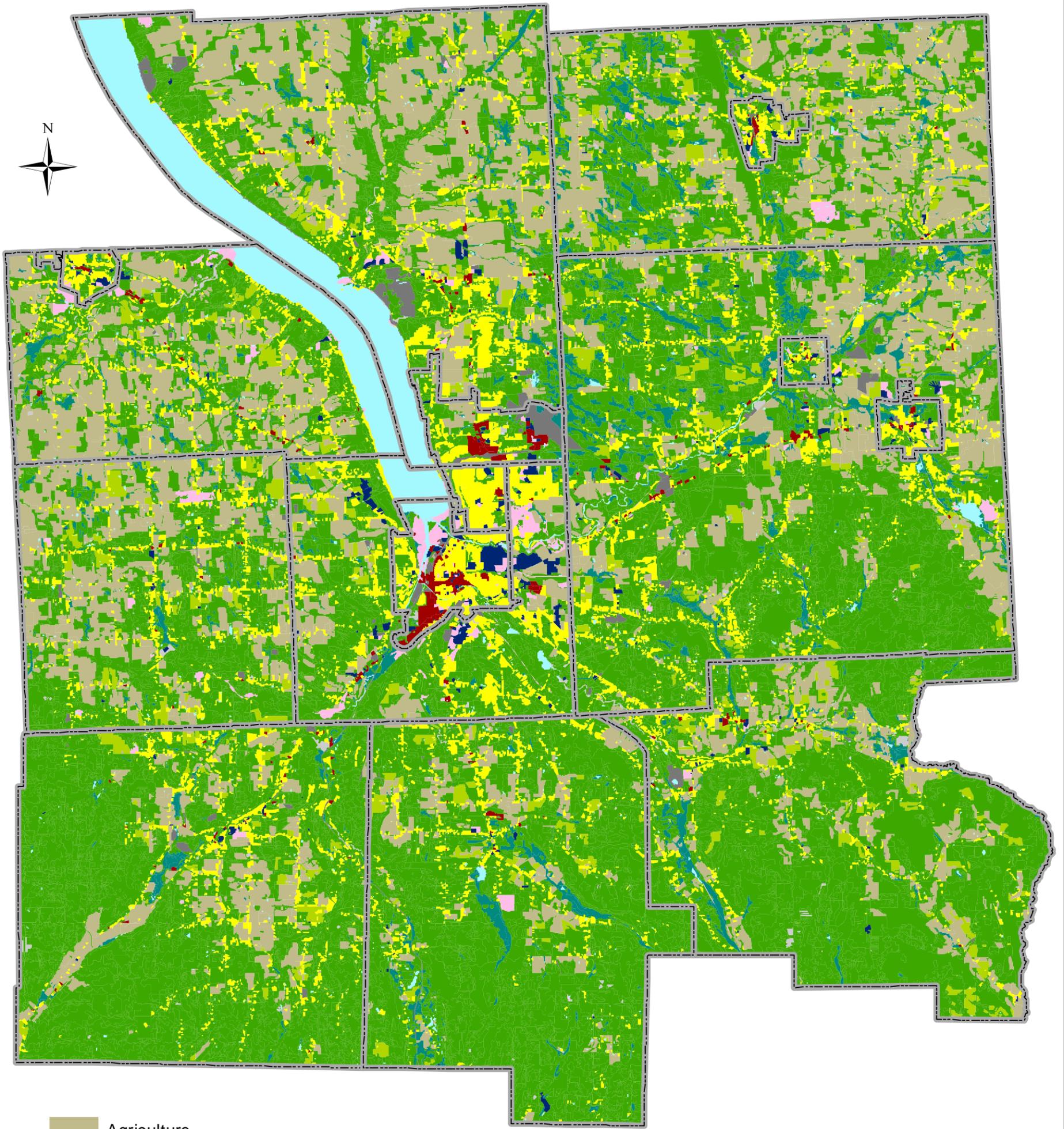
# Tompkins County Agricultural Conservation Easements Agricultural Resource Focus Area



-  Agricultural Easements
-  Pending Agricultural Easement
-  Agricultural Resources Focus Area



# Tompkins County Land Use and Land Cover 2012



- Agriculture
- Inactive Agriculture
- Residential
- Commercial
- Public/Institutional
- Industrial, Transportation, Transmission
- Recreation
- Barren or Disturbed
- Vegetative Cover
- Wetlands 6,079 acres
- Water 6,079 acres

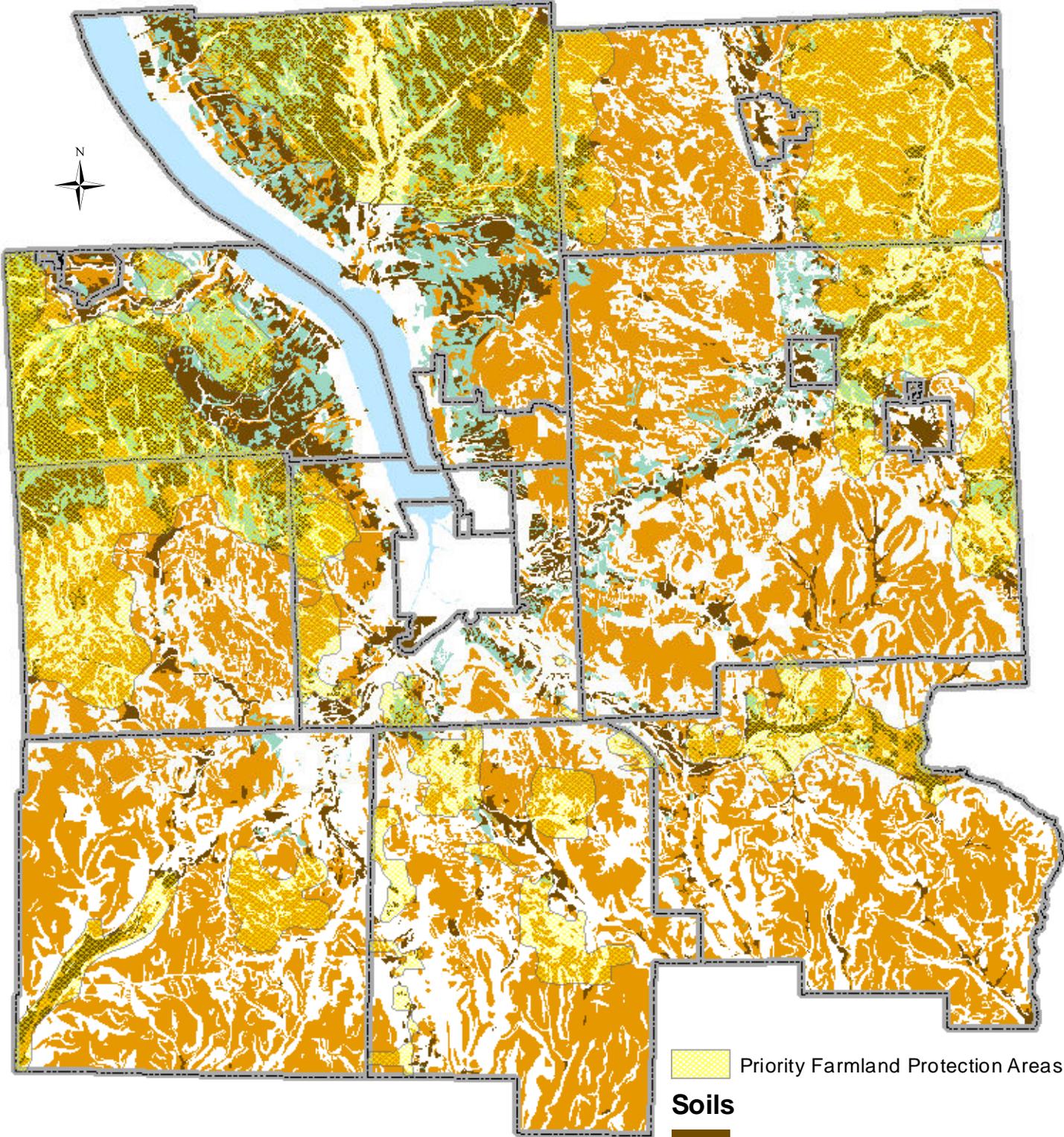
General	1995 Acres	Percent 1995	2007 acres	Percent 2007	Percent Change	2012 acres	Percent 2012	Percent Change
Agriculture	14632	32.70%	13711	30.64%	-6.29%	14728	32.92%	7.42%
Barren or Disturbed	217	0.48%	118	0.26%	-45.52%	164	0.37%	38.92%
Commercial	330	0.74%	423	0.95%	28.28%	441	0.98%	4.07%
Inactive Agriculture	3282	7.33%	1866	4.17%	-43.14%	980	2.19%	-47.48%
Industrial, Transportation, Transmission	1087	2.43%	1094	2.44%	0.67%	1157	2.59%	5.81%
Public/Institutional	190	0.42%	210	0.47%	10.81%	223	0.50%	5.98%
Recreation	215	0.48%	238	0.53%	10.81%	228	0.51%	-4.11%
Residential	3144	7.03%	3995	8.93%	27.05%	4145	9.26%	3.77%
Vegetative Cover	14632	32.70%	16078	35.93%	9.89%	15632	34.94%	-2.78%
Water	6016	13.45%	6059	13.54%	0.70%	6079	13.59%	0.33%
Wetlands	1001	2.24%	952	2.13%	-4.90%	968	2.16%	1.70%



Source: Tompkins County Planning Dept, 2012 Ortho Imagery



# Tompkins County Agricultural Soils



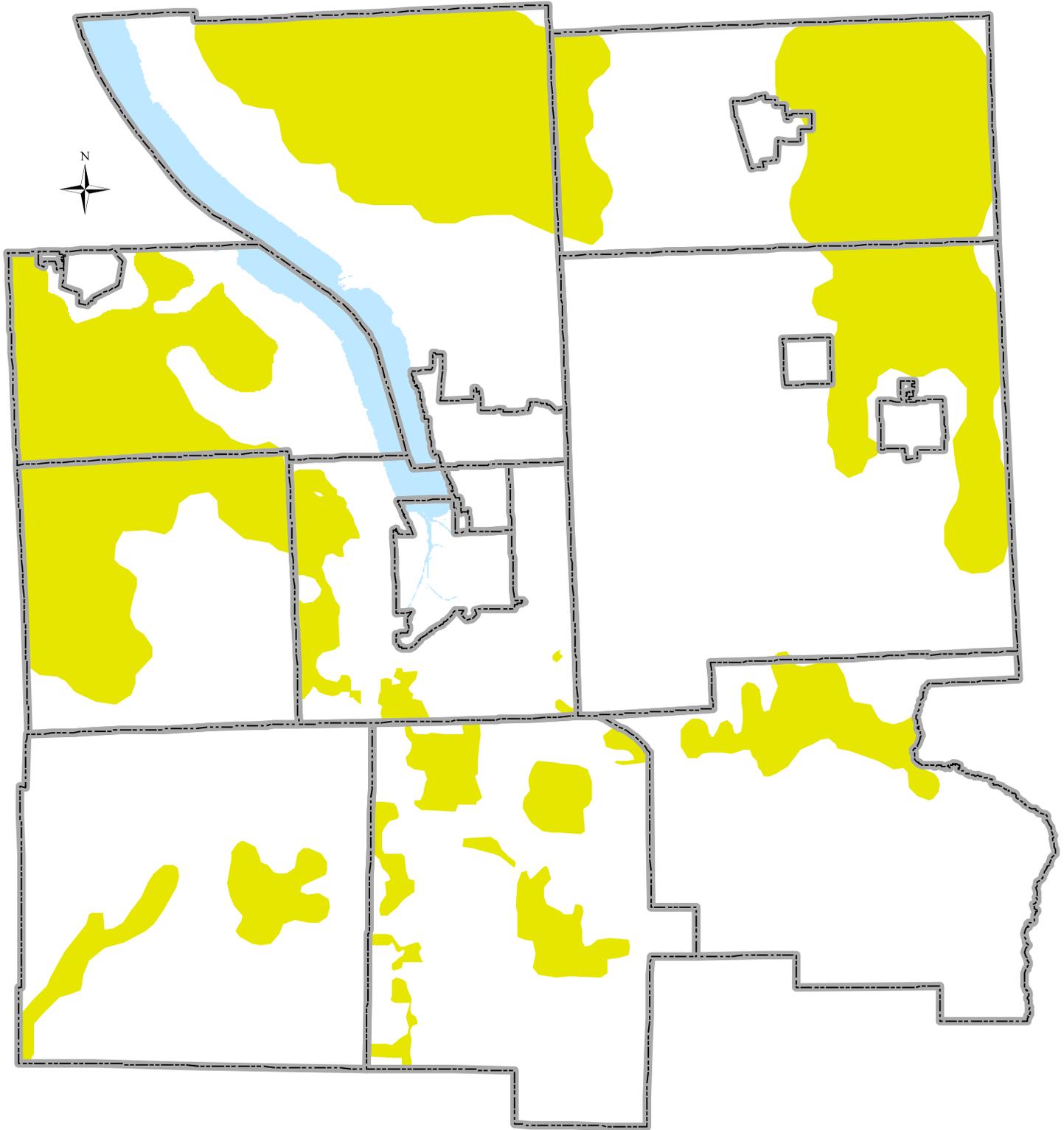
1 0.5 0 1 2 3 4 Miles

-  Priority Farmland Protection Areas
- Soils**
-  All Areas Prime Farmland
-  Farmland of Statewide Importance
-  Prime Farmland if Drained

Source: Tompkins County Soil Survey 1965



# Tompkins County High Priority Farmland Protection Areas



1 0.5 0 1 2 3 4 Miles

 High Priority Farmland Protection Areas



# Appendix

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A.  
Tompkins County Agriculture Economic  
Development Initiatives

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TOMPKINS COUNTY  
AGRICULTURE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES  
to prioritize for Grant Funding as it is available for such purposes

SMALL FARM INVESTMENTS TO STRENGTHEN THE LOCAL FOOD ECONOMY

The following is a specific list of investments that could benefit smaller farm operations oriented at marketing agriculture products directly to consumers.

ON-FARM INVESTMENTS

- 1) High tunnels – USDA NRCS has funding for high tunnels that many area farmers have applied for; more funding would enable an acceleration of tunnel construction on farms providing an extended season of production and increased income. (approx. \$10,000 per farm)
- 2) Proper on-farm wash stations for safe produce handling - a covered shed with wash tables, a water tank and clean water source is minimal in order to ensure safe produce handling. (approx. \$5000 per farm)
- 3) On-farm short term cold storage – Cool Bot technology (air conditioning unit) can be installed in an insulated trailer or shed to create a low cost way to cool and store the harvested crop improving quality prior to market. (approx. \$5000 per farm)
- 4) Fencing to exclude deer – deer fencing is a must for any fruit and vegetable production. (approx. \$10,000 to fence an acre of land)

A grant program that provides funding for these on farm investments would help farmers extend the growing season and result in increased income.

SHARED INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS

**Shared infrastructure is another way to meet farm infrastructure needs required to grow the local food system.** Following is a list of shared infrastructure needed by Tompkins County farmers and others in the region.

- 1) A survey of farmers in Tompkins County revealed that none have sufficient on farm storage for fall season crops. More storage space would enable farmers to expand the season and increase year round income. **Need: A common long term cold storage facility** shared by multiple producers constructed with rooms to meet specific crop humidity and temperature needs for fruits and vegetables.
- 2) Experience with the Local Meats Freezer Locker in Tompkins County built for consumers showed there is a demand among farmers for freezer space. **Need: A common shared freezer for meat producers** would enable producers to store frozen meat in a safe and secure freezer storage facility until the product is sold.
- 3) There is sufficient consumer demand for local meats that a second **Freezer Locker for local meat storage by consumers could be constructed in Tompkins County.** The meat locker in Ithaca is full (70 bins) after being open only 8 months and we now have a waiting list.
- 4) **Flash Freeze Equipment** for freezing fruits and vegetables in excess supply during the growing season is another way for growers to add value to their product and market year round.
- 5) A **processing kitchen** equipped with steam jacketed kettles and a packing line used for making tomato sauce, salsa, pickles, etc. provides an additional opportunity for farmers to add value to products, extend the season, and increase returns.

- 6) Small **organic feed grain mill** for animal feed – many organic meat producers (poultry, hogs) obtain their feed from a mill in Penn Yan. Locally produced and milled grain could be made available to small farmers and homesteaders at a competitive price.

**All of the above shared items could be co-located in one facility.** Small farmers do not individually have the resources to invest in this infrastructure, nor does it make sense for them to do so. In order to stimulate the local food economy, it makes sense to develop a shared facility that provides the above services to farmers that will enable them to grow. An opportunity exists to work with the Challenge Industries Food Hub in Groton and Regional Access in Trumansburg to locate the following infrastructure/equipment.

Estimated Cost:

Shared Storage \$50,000  
Shared Freezer \$50,000  
Freezer Lockers \$20,000 (for one 10x10)  
Flash Freeze Equipment \$100,000  
Processing kitchen \$135,000  
Grain Mill \$40,000

#### IMPROVED MARKETING CAPACITY

**Another key need of small diversified farmers is for more strategic marketing.** Many rely on farmers markets as their first place of sale. However, **most farmers markets are underperforming.** Farmer sales at many markets do not warrant the time they spend. However, for newer farmers, farmers markets may be their only option. Most farmers markets lack resources for proper **promotion.** Additionally there are many reasons why markets may or may not be flourishing, these should **be evaluated and strategies developed** to increase their potential to serve farmers and customers.

Many farmers lack product volumes and marketing skills to meet the needs of larger scale wholesale buyers in our region. A concerted effort is needed to work with farmers to **improve their ability to meet the needs of buyers beyond farmers markets.** This can be accomplished through **farmer buyer networking and farmer training in meeting buyer expectations.**

Cornell Cooperative Extension is well positioned to work with farmers in the region to improve their marketing skills and help link them to buyers. Additionally, Cooperative Extension can play a major role in working with farmers markets to evaluate and improve their effectiveness. Marketing and promotion support is needed in general to raise awareness, educate and inform consumers about local food purchasing options and opportunities.

Estimated Cost:

Farmers Market Evaluation - \$15,000  
Buy Local Food Promotion Campaign - \$25,000  
Farmer Buyer Linkages - \$15,000

#### ADDITIONAL INVESTMENTS TO BENEFIT TOMPKINS COUNTY AND THE REGION

- 1) **Agri-culinary Tourism** – a key focus of the Tompkins County Agri-culinary tourism initiative will be to build farmer capacity to host visitors. This may involve on farm physical improvements to create a safe and welcoming environment as well as training

for farmers on hosting visitors. An overarching promotion effort will help drive consumers to the farms.

Estimated cost: \$50,000

- 2) **Ithaca Farmers Market Re-Development** – The Ithaca Farmers Market is one of the region’s premier farmers markets with 120 members that come from 7 surrounding counties within a 30 mile radius of Ithaca. The market attracts 3000-5000 customers per weekend, 30% of those being visitors to the area. As a result, the market is one of the higher grossing markets in the State with about \$5 million in annual combined sales (5 markets per week at various locations).

The market operates year round from April to December at Steamboat Landing, then moving indoors for the winter to a rented space. **A goal of the market is to build a year round structure at the Steamboat Landing (Third St) Ithaca site.** The current structure is now 30 years old. When built, it was not constructed so to be easily converted to a year round structure. The structure is showing its age and the Fire Department is requiring installation of a sprinkler system which is not feasible in the current structure. Thus, the IFM Board has decided to move forward with **plans for design and engineering for building a new structure on the site.** The goal is to obtain design and engineering specifications for a year round structure by the end of 2015 so that cost estimates for construction can be obtained in 2016 and a capital campaign can be launched.

Estimated cost for Design & Engineering: \$60,000

Estimated construction cost: \$600,000

#### INVESTMENTS ON LARGER FARMS

The needs of larger farms are primarily based on infrastructure improvements to improve efficiency, strategies to reduce costs, and ways to protect the environment. Funding from NYS and USDA has been available for farm improvements that protect water quality.

Infrastructure to improve efficiency - the needs vary by farm so it is hard to generalize one specific need that cuts across all farms. An assessment program to identify ways to improve efficiency may be helpful, in particular where equipment or infrastructure investments might help address the problem.

Strategies to reduce costs – another farm specific issue, though cooperative purchasing of feed, fuel and other supplies is one way in which farms have collaborated to save on input costs. Farm energy audits are a high priority need so that farmers can begin to address inefficiencies and conserve where they can. Linking farms with NYSERDA would be one place to start.

Protecting the environment - most farms are aware of and participate in programs offered by NYS or USDA NRCS that are aimed at water quality protection. Funding has been made available for farms to make a variety of infrastructure improvements.

Expansion of larger farms – expansion has generally meant that farm buy more cattle, build new dairy buildings, or buy more land, and some associated equipment to operate larger facilities and fields. Most farms utilize traditional agricultural lenders when making these investments. A few have tapped into NYSERDA or other such economic development opportunities. Packaging private and public investments to benefit one farm operation has not been a typical approach in agriculture but there may be some operations where this might be an appropriate way to secure investment capital.

B.  
1998 Agriculture & Farmland  
Protection Plan  
Actions & Accomplishments

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# **Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan Progress Through May, 2015**

## **Economic Development**

### **Finance/Credit: Improve access to finance and credit for agricultural enterprises**

- Create loan fund
- Directory of lending programs
  - Compiled and publicized list of grants available to farmers
- Publish bulletin on lending programs and terms
- Advisory panel to lenders

### **Food System Linkage: Build closer links between producers, area consumers, and institutions**

- Improve access to institutional buyers
  - Continue to work with Cornell students on Cornell food service outlets
  - Assisted Cornell Dining with Harvest Week farmer contacts and planning
  - Cornell Local Meats Project
- Strengthen regional food system
  - Held 6 meetings for local restaurant owners/chefs and farmers to discuss needs, began development of farmer restaurant network
  - Strengthened existing and created new links between farmers and restaurants for Finger Lakes Harvest Tasting
  - Ithaca Fork – worked with the TC CVB to develop website of restaurants the feature local products
  - Farmer – Restaurant Directory – list of farms who want to sell to restaurants and restaurants who want to buy from local farmers
  - Farmer – Buyer Networking – linking farmers to wholesale buyers (winter networking meeting held 6 times)
  - Assisted with development of farmer markets in Groton, Newfield, Lansing, Dryden, Danby, Trumansburg
  - Providing on-going advice to IFM for various projects; new Ithaca Market at East Hill Plaza
  - Developed and continue to host annual CSA Open House; created CSA display for use during community events
- Directory of producers and markets
  - Developed set of 6 regional guides to local food producers & updated them annually
  - Evolved local foods guides into one comprehensive resource
- Support school purchases from local farmers

### **Agri-Forest Products: Develop and support production and market access for woodland products**

- Educate farmers about forestry opportunities
  - Held workshop for dairy farmers on timber sales
  - Held workshops for woodlot/rural landowners; annual regional forest owner workshop addresses various topics from pests to management, harvest and taxes
- Reduce woodland assessments
- Feasibility of regional wood processing facility

### **Agri-Tourism: Establish farm income generating activities by linking tourists, activities, and agricultural sites**

- Inventory and create tourism attraction to farms
  - Provided CVB with inventory of farm, market and plant businesses for annual tourism booklets
- Create and distribute marketing brochures
  - Local Foods brochures (see above), & also a Local Foods exhibit for use at local & regional events

- Link farm trails to wine trails
  - Hosted conference on ag tourism - farm trails (3/01)
  - Hosted conference on regional cuisine
- Bus tours to farms and other attractions
- Market farm visits to specialized tourism segments, county farm brochures
- Continue to support farmer – culinary – tourism connections via Finger Lakes Culinary Bounty
- Created the Finger Lakes Cheese Trail/Cheese Festival – farmers quadrupled income at farm open houses

**Expanded and New Opportunities:** Evaluate effective strategies in use elsewhere

- Seek grants for targeted projects
- Coordination of ag support resources
  - Forming ag economic development work group
  - Conduct annual hort employee training program
  - Created a hort business network and hort business guide
  - Hold Intro to Farming Workshops
  - Working with Groundswell on Beginning Farmer Business Course
- Value added processing
  - Grants for farmers – USDA Value Added Producer Grants
- Direct-to-consumer marketing
  - Updated Local Foods Brochures
  - Held Local Foods Tasting in collaboration with Ithaca Downtown Partnership and County CVB during Apple Harvest weekend on Commons
  - Participated in direct marketing conferences and workshops
  - Studied farmers markets, provided recommendations for improvement as means of strengthening them to provide more sales options for farmers
  - Host annual Spring Garden Fair and Plant Sale 45 participants with over \$60,000 in sales, over 3000 attendees
  - Coordinated Herb Festival with 20 participants, 300 attendees (99 & 00)
- Waste conversion and recycling
- Pilot projects and commercialization of ag research
- Use of commodity futures
- Bulk energy purchases

**Education**

**Farm City Day: Farm "open house"; major 1-day event**

- Organize a committee; recruit participants and donors; train participants; organize auction; plan media tie-in
  - Annual event for past 17 years, 1000's of people learning about area agriculture through 40-50 interactive exhibits and activities
  - Established base of support from farmers and ag industry for financial support, event volunteers and future farm hosts

**Farmer Non-Farmer Exchange Day: Job swap for a day; media event**

- Organize a Committee; select participants; plan the activities; plan promotion and media events
  - Farmers not interested, liability issues

**Ag in the Classroom**

- Raise funds from auction and solicitations; organize mentors; recognition, promotion and media events
  - Raise money yearly from FCD auction
  - Received \$2900 in grant funding to create Lending Kit Library & another \$2000 grant to expand it
  - Quarterly newsletter for Elementary Educators

- Participation in the NYS annual Be Aware of Agriculture Contest
- Hiring and supervision of work study students to oversee resources and programming
- Day long visit to dairy farms for Dryden & Trumansburg 1<sup>st</sup> graders and Boynton & DeWitt 7<sup>th</sup> graders with SWCD & Dairy Princess as collaborators; can serve as pilot for other schools
- Event planning and coordination for Fall Harvest for Kids, AgStravaganza!
- Activities at FCD, EAD, Fall Harvest for Kids, AgStravaganza!
- AITC articles written for Farm Bureau Newsletter, submissions to NY AITC e-newsletter
- Coordinate County-wide implementation of the annual state-wide Ag Literacy Week program

### **Other Outreach**

- Miscellaneous Educational Outreach
  - Reviewed Ag Census data, prepared TC Agri-Facts, brochure
  - Presenting ag-themed lesson during EAD, Created Lansing Family Farms exhibit and brochure for Lansing School event
  - Annual Fall Harvest Fest for Kids, providing ag ed & nutrition info to urban residents in a festival setting
  - Local Foods articles for Ithaca Child (quarterly paper plus 4 supplements)
  - Monthly Local Foods column in the Ithaca Journal, quarterly in the Ithaca Child
  - Developed & distributed "Living in the Country" brochure to educate rural residents
  - Coordinate annual Dairy of Distinction update
  - Assisted Little Tree Orchards in implementing an annual Mother's Day Blossom Festival
  - Participation on Danby Academy for Ag /Env Studies Steering Committee

### **Government Policies**

#### **Ag District Law**

- Educate town officials on Ag District Law
  - Completed Ag District 1 &2 reviews; presentation to town boards or planning boards
  - Worked with towns that do not have ag assessment for Fire Tax
- Urge supportive policy decisions
  - Advised TCAD staff in preparation of ag sections of TCED Strategy
  - Annual Ag District Additions period implemented
  - Developed and Instituted an Annual Ag Summit

#### **Farmland assessment at "current use"**

- Work with Director of Assessment
  - Worked with County Planning and Assessment on recent revaluation process

#### **Land Use:** Advocate for farmland owners in land use discussion and decisions

- Articulate impacts of land use decisions on farming
  - Provided input into Cayuga Lake Watershed plan
  - Advised Town government officials and boards on issues pertaining to agriculture and land use planning
- Encourage public policy incentives for farming
  - Held PDR workshops, PDR discussion with County Planning Federation, Planning Advisory Board
  - Assisted Towns with NYS PDR grant applications
  - Assisted with development PDR feasibility study RFP
  - Advised Dryden, Lansing, Ulysses on PDR programs
- Recognized "farm friendly" municipalities
- Educate public officials on "prime cropland" protection
  - Prepared and updated Town Ag Profiles with Ag District Review Data
- Urge Town of Ithaca incentives for ongoing farming on "preserved farmland"
  - Advised Town of Ithaca on PDR program
  - Worked with the Towns of Ithaca, Lansing, Ulysses, & Dryden to develop Town Ag & Farmland Protection Plans

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C.  
Tompkins County  
Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board  
Meeting Minutes

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# TOMPKINS COUNTY AGRICULTURE & FARMLAND PROTECTION BOARD

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615 Willow Avenue Ithaca, New York 14850  
Telephone (607) 272-2292 Fax (607) 272-7088

## Tompkins County Agriculture & Farmland Protection Board

### Minutes

February 25, 2015

**Present:** Dan Carey, Lin Davidson, John Fleming, Irene Kehoe, Bob Mazourek, Dave McKenna, Monika Roth, Ed Scheffler  
**Excused:** Scott Doyle, Don Specker  
**Associates:** Nancy Munkenbeck  
**Staff:** Debbie Teeter

**Call to Order:** 11:30 a.m.

**Welcome and Introductions:** The members welcomed Dave McKenna, our new representative from the legislature, and introduced themselves.

**Additions to the Agenda:** none

**Approval of Minutes:** Motion to approve by Kehoe, second by Davidson, approved without dissent.

### Announcements

1. Teeter circulated a memo from Ag and Markets about new changes to Ag District Law. Specifically, and perhaps of interest to some in this county, there are new land eligibility rules for Silvopasturing. Other changes are a decrease by half of the number acres required to form an Ag District and a clarification about land that can be added to existing Ag Districts: "Viable Farmland" is the qualification, and there are no minimum parcel size requirements or financial thresholds.
2. Teeter also circulated the Enfield Wind Farm SEQR document, so members have time to peruse it before discussion under new Business.
3. Teeter provided the postcard invites to the upcoming farmer/ag-land owner meetings for the Ag Plan, coming up in early March.
4. Davidson reported the Safety meeting will be March 4<sup>th</sup> at the Cortland Grange, during the day.

### Old Business

1. 2015 Officers and Membership: Teeter reported a press release recruiting for a farmer and a farm business representative was sent out to all local papers, including the weeklies, but she received no inquiries as a result. She did have a discussion with Russ Carpenter, a crop farmer in Enfield and Ulysses, and a longtime member of the International Soybean Board, and he is considering applying. Mazourek is the only application for the board to act on today. Other suggestions: Paul Thorp and Phil Switzer. Motion by Davidson to approve Mazourek be recommended for reappointment to the farm business representative seat, seconded by Fleming, approved without dissent.

2. Ag Plan Work: Teeter reported she's been working through the document, which now has a cover, an acknowledgements page, and an Executive Summary. She has been editing down (severely) the Farm Profiles and adding them to the document as side bars, and adding text boxes where additional profiles can be added.
  - Roth and Teeter did not meet with the PAB this morning; they planned to share and review the Goals, Strategies, and Action Steps, but PAB was interested in reviewing the entire document for discussion. They will attend next month, and will also be presenting to PEEQ (Planning, Energy, and Environmental Quality).
  - Executive Summary: there was discussion about including staff funding as a request in the document; currently, as a result of the last plan, county funding is provided for a half time staff person. CCE has worked well as the recipient of these funds, as there are existing networks, commitment to the ag industry, and CCE is well-regarded within the ag community. Currently, the funding is added to the CCE budget. Motion by Mazourek that the Plan include a request to the County Legislature to continue to fund a half time staff support position through CCE to support the AFPB and support plan implementation, seconded by Davidson, approved without dissent.
  - Carey asked if CCE ever uses student interns or work study students, yes we do.
  - Roth said we should add a summary of the ag data section, and also an over-arching vision statement.
  - There is the AFPB mission, and the Lansing Ag Plan Vision is good – Roth read this for the board. It should support the priority actions and support our strengths and uniqueness.
  - Scheffler asked why the chart on page 29, Chart of Field Crops/chart 4, shows hay in bushels?
  - Davidson suggested we add hosting a farm tour for elected officials, under Ag Awareness.
3. Farmer, Ag Land Owner Meetings: As a reminder, these have been scheduled for Wednesday, March 4<sup>th</sup> at the Ulysses Town Hall and Tuesday, March 10<sup>th</sup> at the Lansing Town Hall. Both meetings start at 7:00 p.m. The format will include an overview of the plan and the process, an opportunity to prioritize action steps, and small group work if attendance is large enough. We will include maps and some Census data. Roth and Teeter will attend both meetings, Kehoe and Doyle will attend Ulysses and Fleming, Scheffler, and Carey will attend Lansing.
4. Ag Leader Meeting: The meeting for ag leaders in the county has been scheduled for Tuesday, March 31<sup>st</sup>, here at Extension, in the evening.

Purpose: To bring people who work in support of agriculture together to provide overviews of their organizations, work focus, and job responsibilities

Goals:

- To provide a better understanding of who is doing what on behalf of agriculture
- To identify efforts that might overlap or dovetail
- To identify potential opportunities for collaborate
- To identify weaknesses or problem areas and work collectively to find solutions
- To develop a method for on-going interagency/organization sharing

**New Business**

1. Enfield Wind Farm SEQR: Members had a chance to look through the document; there were no comments.
2. Risk Management: Teeter reported on the ERME grant, CRDR training, and the Syracuse conference.

Adjourn 12:45 p.m.

**Next Meeting**: April 22, 2015, 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. ***Back to evening meetings!***

# TOMPKINS COUNTY

## AGRICULTURE & FARMLAND PROTECTION BOARD

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615 Willow Avenue Ithaca, New York 14850  
Telephone (607) 272-2292 Fax (607) 272-7088

### Tompkins County Agriculture & Farmland Protection Board

#### Minutes

January 28, 2014

**Present:** Dan Carey, Lin Davidson, Scott Doyle, Irene Kehoe, Bob Mazourek, Monika Roth, Mike Sigler  
**Excused:** Ed Scheffler, Don Specker  
**Associates:** Nancy Munkenbeck  
**Staff:** Debbie Teeter

**Call to Order:** 11:45 a.m.

**Welcome and Introductions:** The board welcomed Dan Carey, the Chair of the Tompkins County Soil and Water Conservation District Board – there is a seat for this position specified in the enabling legislation. The District Manager, Jon Negley, has been filling this seat, but Dan is willing to take on the responsibilities to lighten Jon's workload. There was discussion about what the board is currently working on, especially the County Ag Plan update.

**Additions to the Agenda:** none

**Approval of Minutes:** The minutes said November rather than December; motion to approve with this correction by Kehoe, second by Davidson, approved without dissent.

#### Announcements

1. Davidson announced Farm Bureau is planning a DOT and Farm Safety training in the next month and a half. This will likely include a lunch and have a small charge to cover that.
2. Kehoe reminded members the ag renewal applications have gone out and are due by April 1<sup>st</sup>. Mazourek wondered if there isn't a way to avoid having to do this every year; Kehoe said they have been able make changes that reduce the required paperwork, but it's a State requirement that this is a yearly process.
3. Carey asked if the new Ag plan will become a law; only if rolled into Comprehensive Plans, but it will be a guidance document.
4. Roth reported she and Teeter have begun meeting with the Town of Dryden to develop an Ag Plan for the Town; there will be a farmer meeting on March 11<sup>th</sup> at the Dryden Fire Station. There is also forward movement on the Lansing Ag Plan, and the Town is also working on the Comprehensive Plan.
5. Roth reported there have been meetings in Lansing regarding sale of all or part of the Kingdom Farm land, although nothing formal has been heard. Hoping for PDR funding is problematic, due to the funding cycle and much-reduced difference between ag and development value.

#### Old Business

1. 2015 Officers and Membership: Mazourek's term as Agribusiness Representative ended; he is interested in continuing and has submitted an application. We will send out press releases and other publicity and call for applications for the next meeting. For officers, the board agreed to continue with Scheffler as chair and Mazourek as vice chair.

*The mission of the Tompkins County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board shall be to encourage farming in the County through local initiatives which create favorable conditions that allow farmers to operate economically viable enterprises.*

2. Ag Plan Work: Goals, Strategies, and Action Steps: The board reviewed an updated matrix, which has been amended these items by removing a few action steps that seemed incongruent with the document, and editing several others for clarity.
3. Farmer, Ag Land Owner Meetings: These have been scheduled for Wednesday, March 4<sup>th</sup> at the Ulysses Town Hall and Tuesday, March 10<sup>th</sup> at the Lansing Town Hall. Both meeting start at 7:00 p.m.
4. Ag Leader Meeting: The meeting for ag leaders in the county has been scheduled for Tuesday, March 31<sup>st</sup>, here at Extension, in the evening.

Adjourn 1:35 p.m.

**Next Meeting:** February 25, 2015, 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

# TOMPKINS COUNTY

## AGRICULTURE & FARMLAND PROTECTION BOARD

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615 Willow Avenue Ithaca, New York 14850  
Telephone (607) 272-2292 Fax (607) 272-7088

### Tompkins County Agriculture & Farmland Protection Board

#### Minutes

December 19, 2014

**Present:** Lin Davidson, Scott Doyle, John Fleming, Irene Kehoe, Jon Negley, Bob Mazourek, Ed Scheffler, Don Specker  
**Excused:** Monika Roth  
**Absent:** Mike Sigler  
**Staff:** Debbie Teeter

**Call to Order:** 11:38 a.m.

**Additions to the Agenda:** Ulysses farmer-town issue.

**Approval of Minutes:** Motion to approve by Davidson, second by Kehoe, approved without dissent.

#### Announcements

1. Teeter provided the board with copies of a section of the Town of Ulysses ZBA minutes covering an upcoming re-hearing of a matter concerning a farm in Ag District #2, as well as a clarifying e-mail from Bob Somers of Ag and Markets. This is follow-up to the Board's earlier review of the Ag and Markets letter to Ulysses identifying the Town zoning as being unreasonably restrictive. Davidson added that he visited the farm this morning, and they have about 20 sheep on the home farm, the rest are on the Grassroots land. The manure pile is well-managed. Scheffler said that his understanding is that a judge will determine what "adequate" means for fencing – it usually means electrified. Negley said this situation is a reminder that some sort of outreach is needed for Planning Boards, Zoning boards, etc. about Ag District Law, Programs like AEM, etc.
2. Doyle asked what other members know about the Owasco Lake watershed and potential regulations to prevent the spreading of manure on frozen ground. Federally-approved nutrient management plans actually allow this, as long as it's not on highly erodible land. Fleming said up in that area some farmers, and one in particular, spread on several feet of snow, then there's a thaw and some runs into the lake. Some states have specific ban dates for the spreading of manure, and put money into storage for farms.
3. Kehoe reported ag renewal applications are going in the mail now.

#### Old Business

1. Ag Plan Work: Goals, Strategies, and Action Steps: The board reviewed each goal and identified those actions each member considered of highest importance. A notation was made by each action mentioned, and the following actions ranked the highest in each goal category:
  - Ag Economic Development
    - Provide mentorship for producers seeking value-added processing assistance
    - Compile and make available financial resources for producers, including loans, grants, buying clubs, etc.
    - Compile a regional list of USDA slaughter and processing facilities, explore funding for mobile processing unit
    - Develop a regional website to list wanted and needed conventional and organic feeds, hay, custom work, etc. to include prices and descriptions

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- Local Foods
  - Identify and help producers access existing local, diverse venues
  - Host on-going producer workshops about good agricultural practices
  - Facilitate farmer/producer-retailer networks as a way to increase local product presence in local stores
  - Coordinate Farm Tour weekends for local food producing farms
- Landuse Policy & Regulations
  - Host regular workshops for municipal officials and employees about local laws that exceed state requirements and/or are unreasonably restrictive for agriculture
  - Encourage towns to appoint ag advisory committees
  - Educate municipalities about the cumulative and increasing impact of development on ag land: roads, drainage, culvert maintenance
  - Host workshop for landowners to learn about assessment policies and practices and reducing taxes through Farmers School Tax, ag assessment, combining parcels, etc.
- Ag Awareness
  - Provide seasonal education about the potential dangers of unsafe driving near farm equipment
  - Address concept of "industrial ag" with understanding that Ag IS business and industry, and economies of scale apply
  - Seek supporting documentation from schools with AgEd/FFA programs, engage local ag supporters to push for these programs in all schools
  - Support school food growing programs
  - Provide positive/factual/informative media reports and explain how highly regulated farms are to counter animal rightists' and others misinformation
- Environmental Quality
  - Provide cover crops, not-till, composting workshops
  - Provide public outreach education about how farms protect water quality
  - Encourage a decreased deer population by an increase in quotas and season, and no fee for land owners.
  - Educate municipalities about the need to adhere to storm water regulations and not allow storm/surface water to be diverted onto farm land
- Future Farmers/Workforce
  - Identify and promote alternative models to family succession, i.e multi-family enterprises, partnerships, etc.
  - Develop mentorship programs for young people interested in production agriculture
  - Work to address chronic problem of finding reliable temporary help: availability, attraction and retention are problems
  - Offer training for farms in the use of technology: websites, social media, etc.

## **New Business**

1. Town of Ulysses/Spot Hollow Farm Issue: The board discussed the matter, and decided to draft a letter for Scheffler to sign and Teeter to deliver to the BZA at tonight's meeting. Moved by Kehoe, seconded by Fleming, approved without dissent.
2. Joint Ag Meeting: Teeter provided information on a concept she and Roth have discussed, to bring people who work in support of agriculture together annually to provide overviews of their organizations, work focus, and job responsibilities. Goals for this type of event would include:
  - To provide a better understanding of who is doing what on behalf of agriculture
  - To identify efforts that might overlap or dovetail
  - To identify potential opportunities for collaborate
  - To identify weaknesses or problem areas and work collectively to find solutions
  - To develop a method for on-going interagency/organization sharing
 Organizations/people to include: CCE-Tompkins Ag and 4-H staff, CCE Dairy & Field Crops staff, TC SWCD, TC Dairy Princess, TC AFPB, TC FB, FSA, NRCS, FLLT, Town Ag Committees. Members liked this idea, and would like Teeter to move forward with it, with an AFPB sponsorship, for an early March meeting.

Adjourn 1:13 p.m.

**Next Meeting:** January 28, 2015, 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

# TOMPKINS COUNTY

## AGRICULTURE & FARMLAND PROTECTION BOARD

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615 Willow Avenue Ithaca, New York 14850  
Telephone (607) 272-2292 Fax (607) 272-7088

### Tompkins County Agriculture & Farmland Protection Board

#### Minutes November 19, 2014

**Present:** Lin Davidson, Scott Doyle, Irene Kehoe, Jon Negley, Ed Scheffler, Don Specker  
**Excused:** John Fleming, Bob Mazourek, Monika Roth  
**Absent:** Mike Sigler  
**Staff:** Debbie Teeter

**Call to Order:** 11:38 a.m.

**Additions to the Agenda:** none

**Approval of Minutes:** Motion to approve by Kehoe, second by Specker, approved without dissent.

#### Announcements

1. Teeter reported the Board received a copy of an Ag and Markets letter confirming Glenwood Farm was not selected for a PDR award this round. This was the only Tompkins County application. Increased farmland values have impacted our farmer interest. Scheffler said he'd like to see something more universal.
2. SWCD board is looking for a new at-large member, if anyone has any suggestions, please let him know.

#### Old Business

1. Ag Plan Work:
  - a. *Review of Draft Document:* Members reviewed the document together, page by page, offering changes and edits:
    - o Should the order be background and actions? Is there too much? Should the strategies and actions be first?
    - o Formatting needs to make it easier to read, and it needs page numbers on table of contents.
    - o Make charts as simple as possible – eliminate decimal places.
    - o Page 11: why the drop in organic production? Is 2007 when USDA took over certification? Have organic farmers moved to Farmers Pledge?
    - o Part 4: Do we need to have the spreadsheet and a narrative of goals, strategies and action steps?
    - o Appendices: Should we include PDR criteria, right to farm and other model ordinances? Groton and Dryden include the town's right to farm ordinance on the building permit.
    - o Reference documentation about climate change and agriculture?
    - o Include water and natural resources in the narrative sections – the complex nature of agriculture and its intersection with water and natural resources – maybe in Part 2 or 3? Doyle and Negley will put something together.
    - o Add reference to AEM with SWCD.
    - o Sector Profiles, or elsewhere: basic summary of outreach for the plan.
    - o Need to include non-farmer ag land owners. Do we need a separate meeting for these folks?

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- Should we include DEC modelling efforts for southern end of Cayuga Lake, and potential TMDL requirements? Acknowledge in some way?
  - Perhaps an environmental profile in Part 2 to include some of these items?
  - Need to work with larger dairies to keep soil in place, don't leave ground bare in the winter. There is a new cover crop program available through Pat Barry. Issue can be the farmers are still applying liquid manure, although they could inject it into a cover crop. Crop guys have some residue, but it is an issue on those farms, too. Needs to be practical. Cover crops can be turned under to build soil.
  - Young people returning to the family farm and trying to fit in can be very difficult, parents don't want to let go of the farms – how many farmers are in the fifty's and mom still owns the farm?
  - There is now a \$5 million estate tax exemption in NYS.
  - Dry milk solids for export are also contributing to the current milk price stability.
  - Farm concerns with invasives: emerald ash borer, hemlock woolly adelgid, Ragusa rose, deer and deer ticks are very big. Farmers can get permits, but that's one more thing to do, and what to do with the carcass.
  - Beaver are the next deer.
- b. *Strategies and Goals matrix review*: Teeter distributed copies of the revised Strategies and Goals matrix, which now has a weighted ranking and strategies and items re-written as actions. Members will review for next time for editing, further consolidation of action items, and top 3-5 action items for each goal. Next steps will be taking another look at time frames and partners.

### **New Business**

1. 2015 Officers: Members recommended Scheffler continue. Teeter will check with Mazourek if he would like to continue. The board will vote on officers at the January meeting. There continues to be a vacancy on the board, but an application is expected. The board talked about engaging young farmers and the problems getting them involved.

Adjourn 1:13 p.m.

**Next Meeting:** December 17, 2014, 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. – *one week early*

# TOMPKINS COUNTY

## AGRICULTURE & FARMLAND PROTECTION BOARD

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615 Willow Avenue Ithaca, New York 14850  
Telephone (607) 272-2292 Fax (607) 272-7088

### Tompkins County Agriculture & Farmland Protection Board Minutes October 24, 2014

**Present:** Lin Davidson, Scott Doyle, Irene Kehoe, Monika Roth, Ed Scheffler, Don Specker  
**Excused:** Bob Mazourek, Jon Negley  
**Absent:** John Fleming, Mike Sigler  
**Staff:** Debbie Teeter  
**Guests:** LeGrace Benson, Pete Larson, Keith Thompson, John Wertis (all Ag & Hort Committee),  
Fay Benson (Farm Bureau)

#### Call to Order & Introductions 7:00 p.m.

**Additions to the Agenda:** none

**Approval of Minutes:** Corrections: Kehoe was not at the last meeting, moved with corrections by Kehoe, second by Specker, approved without dissent.

#### Announcements

1. Teeter reported the Board received a copy of an Ag and Markets reply to the Town of Ulysses concerning restrictions in the Town's zoning that have been applied to a farm operation in one of the county's NYS-certified agricultural District. She circulated it for member review.
2. Roth will email a link to the county for the strategic tourism plan; there is an Agriculture and Culinary Task Force to develop a section of the plan. There will be a community forum on November 10<sup>th</sup>, 6-8 p.m. at the Greenstar Space to gather input about agri/culinary tourism.
3. Doyle reported that earlier this week there was a press release from NYS Ag and Markets listing the PDR award recipients. The only Tompkins application was Reynolds farm in Ulysses. Mazourek decided not to go forward.

#### **Presentation:** Tompkins County Comprehensive Plan Report, *Scott Doyle, County Planning*

Doyle provided an overview of the draft plan and policies. The process began with a survey in September and October of 2013, followed by a summary of survey results in November. In June of this year broader meetings were held for the public to review and comment on the 100-page draft document – which can be found on the County Planning web site. Feedback is still being sought through the end of this month (October), then the final document will go to the County Legislature in early 2015.

There are nine chapters with three overarching themes: Sustainability, Regional Cooperation, and Fiscal Responsibility. The chapters are:

1. The Economy: stresses economic prosperity should be accessible to all
2. Housing: stresses should be affordable, safe, and appealing
3. Transportation: stresses should be efficient, safe, and affordable
4. Natural Resources: stresses importance of natural and working landscapes
5. Water Resources: stresses should be clean, safe, and protected
6. Energy and Greenhouse Gas Emissions: striving for energy system that is climate neutral
7. Adaptation: entire community should be prepared for economic, environmental, and social impacts of climate change
8. Healthy Communities: promote healthy, safe, and active lifestyles
9. Development Patterns: encourage development in compact, walkable, mixed-use communities

*The mission of the Tompkins County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board shall be to encourage farming in the County through local initiatives which create favorable conditions that allow farmers to operate economically viable enterprises.*

There are several remaining workshops this month, and written comments are also welcomed. F. Benson said he has reviewed the draft document, and noted that especially the Natural Resources chapter lists just generalities, not a lot of specifics. Doyle responded that the actual strategies are more detailed. Davidson mentioned the need for funding to achieve actions. Wertis wondered if it was actually up to municipalities to determine actions. Specker asked how often this plan is updated; Doyle responded every ten years, but this is actually the first update of this document. Doyle asked Davidson for clarification on funding – Davidson said the plan calls for more trails, more transportation, smaller footprints; where will the required funding come from? Teeter reported a farmer from Dryden thinks the “piece of the economic pie” attributed to agriculture seems very small. Roth said there are probably some things missing, but agriculture is not the number one industry, it’s actually the finance industry; agriculture is number two. When you add in “food” the number gets much larger. It’s important to consider the sum total of agriculture’s impacts, not just farm-gate dollars. Davidson said it’s important to state agriculture pays its way. Roth asked when a final draft is anticipated; Doyle said late November, early December. She asked if there will be a general plan, and then strategies developed; Doyle said strategies are in place now.

## **Old Business**

### **1. Ag Plan Work:**

- *Strategies and Goals matrix review:* Teeter distributed a compilation of the responses received for rankings and time frame estimates. Roth said as she read through she noticed some items are statements, others are actions, etc. There may also be a need to stream-line some of the action steps. There was discussion about items scoring 6 or more “high” ranking. Perhaps we need action categories: action, research, policy, funding, education, statements: can these be turned into actions? It was suggested we now weight each item. Doyle said it would be great if at the end of this process we could list 10-15 specific top items. Roth said we have six areas; if we could come up with a couple key recommendations for each one, we’d have some specifics to focus on. L. Benson asked if there could be some analysis done and then that information shared again – yes, that is the plan.
- *Schedule of meetings:* Audiences, locations, dates: it was suggested we hold two meetings, one on each side of the lake (Dryden Fire Department, Enfield Community Building), in February.

## **New Business**

1. Kingdom Farm Update: Roth reported Kingdom Farm is officially listed for sale at \$3.1 million. It is approximately 525 acres, some good soils, some not so good soils. The Town of Lansing Board and the Town and the community are interested in being proactive to keep this land in agriculture. Ag and Markets has become aware of this, and are also interested in seeing this land stay in agriculture. They have discussed it with Roth and suggested a potential Lease of Development Rights process; unfortunately, the next opportunity is a year away. Kehoe reported her office has heard there is an offer. There is interest in a group forming to think through and research the options. Roth said this situation highlights the need for a means of quick funding to step in and buy valuable agricultural land, put it under easement, and then re-sell it to a farmer.
2. 2015 AFPM Membership: There are no terms ending this year, the only vacancy is Roy Trask’s seat.

Adjourn 9:00 p.m.

**Next Meeting:** November 19, 2014, 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. – **one week early, back to daytime**

# TOMPKINS COUNTY AGRICULTURE & FARMLAND PROTECTION BOARD

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615 Willow Avenue Ithaca, New York 14850  
Telephone (607) 272-2292 Fax (607) 272-7088

## Tompkins County Agriculture & Farmland Protection Board

### Minutes

August 27, 2014

**Present:** Lin Davidson, Scott Doyle, John Fleming, Monika Roth, Ed Scheffler, Mike Sigler, Don Specker  
**Excused:** Irene Kehoe, Bob Mazourek, Jon Negley  
**Liaisons:** Mike Ashdown/Dryden Grange  
**Staff:** Debbie Teeter  
**Guests:** Aaron Ristow, TC-SWCD

**Call to Order 7:05 p.m.**

**Additions to the Agenda:** Davidson has a template for the board to review about the EPA's over-reach.

**Approval of Minutes:** Corrections: Doyle, Sigler, and Teeter were all present at the July meeting. PAB member name is Mina, and it's Don Barber, not Dan Barber; and define, not defile a ranking system. Moved with corrections by Fleming, second by Doyle, approved without dissent.

#### Announcements:

1. Roth: provided LandLink postcards and Small Farms Quarterly. LandLink sign-ups continue to increase, several each week. Based on the land list and owner goals, some real "matching" will be needed. She talked to Specker about the need to provide a presentation for the Land Trust.
2. Fleming reminded folks of the birthing center at the State Fair; their cows were up there earlier this week. The Fair folks plan to have three births a day. There was a C-section, but it was handled really well, in front of a crowd of 600, and it was a very positive experience. People returned later in the day to see how the "mom" was doing.

#### New Business

1. Non-Farm Neighbor Issue: Teeter shared with the Board a call she received from a farm neighbor; she was aware of this individual prior to the call, as he has been making various complaints to various sources for some time. She suggested he write to the board with his concerns, and that the board would review the matter and respond. She expected something before the meeting but received nothing. Aaron Ristow shared that staff have been working with this farmer, and although there are some minor issues, it's clear the real concern is the neighbor bought a house surrounded by crop land that now supports livestock. Teeter said she knows the farmer has made multiple attempts to appease the neighbor, but nothing seems to make a difference. The board concurred nothing was likely to make this neighbor happy until all livestock were removed, and it might be a case of Ag Mediation. Ristow will follow-up with the farmer on SWCD recommendations, and also suggest Ag Mediation.

**Old Business:**

1. Farm City Day Review: Teeter reported the turnout was good, although not as large as anticipated; there were a lot of other family-friendly events going on nearby, and many people reported just coming from or heading to something else. Folks really enjoyed the event, especially the wagon ride farm tour. During the ride, the wagon stopped at the hoof trimmer, something we've never had before. Also, just past the hoof trimmer were the close heifers, and one of them was giving birth for most of the afternoon, so that was very exciting. Thank you notes are 90% finished. Davidson mentioned a Schoharie County Family Farm Day brochure he sent to Teeter, which was a promotional item that included lots of information about different farms and was all over the place well in advance of the event. This led to a discussion about confusion over our event's name – a lot of people still don't understand what the event is about based on the name. We could easily change it to something like Family Farm Day, Visit the Farm Day, Fun on the Farm Day, etc. and keep the FCD logo with a small notation "a Farm City Day Event"
2. Ag Plan Work: Roth reviewed the plan's format and sections; much of the work is done, with just some revisions needed, and everything is now being inserted in the proper place in the draft document. Teeter has drafts of the sector profiles, and she will be working on farm interviews and profiles over the new couple of weeks. Draft sector profiles were distributed. Aaron Ristow mentioned SWCD's TMDL work, and suggested it should be mentioned in some way in the plan. A timeline extension request has been submitted and will take us into late spring. Members broke into pairs and reviewed specific Sector Profiles, then submitted suggested changes and additions. Davidson and Specker will add more if they can get their Sector by e-mail; Teeter will send it to them.

Adjourn 8:40 p.m.

**Next Meeting:** September 24, 2014, 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

# TOMPKINS COUNTY

## AGRICULTURE & FARMLAND PROTECTION BOARD

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615 Willow Avenue Ithaca, New York 14850  
Telephone (607) 272-2292 Fax (607) 272-7088

### Tompkins County Agriculture & Farmland Protection Board

#### Minutes

July 23, 2014

**Present:** Jon Negley; Lin Davidson, Ed Scheffler, Monika Roth, John Fleming,  
**Excused:** Scott Doyle, Mike Sigler, Don Specker, Debbie Teeter  
**Absent:** Irene Kehoe, Bob Mazourek  
**Liaisons:** Mike Ashdown/Dryden Grange

**Call to Order 7:05 p.m.**

**Additions to the Agenda:** none

**Approval of Minutes:** Moved by Davidson, second by Negley, approved without dissent.

#### **Announcements:**

1. Doyle: PDR Applications due the end of next week. Town of Ulysses will be applicant for Reynolds, if everything comes together. The County will submit the Mazourek application.
2. Scheffler: Circulated the program from *Grasstravaganza!* and reported it was a good program.

#### **New Business**

1. Ag Plan Grant Extension Timeline: Roth provided copies of the work that remains to be done; data-gathering work is pretty much finished and is being compiled and interpreted. Remaining is a lot of the writing and the identification of lands to be protected. At the next meeting there will be a substantial draft for the board to review. We will begin shopping it around in September. Should we do a road show to all the towns? It will take two months, October and November – this would be a short informational presentation (15 minutes). Also, a presentation to the County Board as a precursor to the need for a Public Hearing and a vote – perhaps in November, with a Public Hearing in January. We will need to hold farmer/ag land holder meetings, probably in November, maybe two meetings - one on each side of the lake. Doyle explained our contract is up at the end of August, but outreach really needs to be done, so an extension has been applied for. The AFPB's approval is required to apply for an extension. Davidson moved the AFPB approve a request for a timeline extension for Ag Plan Funding use, seconded by Fleming, approved without dissent.
2. Farm City Day: Volunteers are needed for the event, especially for Saturday morning set-up (putting up signs, signing and directing volunteers, etc.) at 9:00 a.m. and in the Welcome Area from 10:30 until 4:00 p.m. The event has come together well, with a full complement of farm service folks making donations and/or offering exhibits/demonstrations for the event. Scheffler, maybe some others. Will make it
3. Planning Advisory Board Meeting Update: After last month's meeting, three members (Nina Amundsen, Todd Bittner, and Dave Herrick) volunteered to help review plan drafts and provide feedback.

**Old Business:**

1. EPA Clean Water Act Proposed Changes: Members received links to recent clarification from NYFB; Davidson asked Sigler if he would bring Farm Bureau's resolution forward to the County Legislature; he said he would. Negley provided some additional information from the proposal, specifically the definition section – which is very tricky, and in some cases can be open to interpretation. It would be left up to the Army Corps of Engineers to make final decisions. Fleming wondered how they would be able to handle the anticipated extra work. Negley said there are two staff members in our region, and permits go through Buffalo. Davidson asked if Town Highway Departments will have to get permits to clean ditches; Negley said there is a definition for maintenance, but it is open to interpretation. Teeter will email the resolution from 2012, the Caroline Town supervisor Dan Barber's response to the AFPB. The Town remains committed to adding an additional level regulation of CAFO's, should any ever exist in the Town.
2. PDR Letters of Support: Members received draft letters by e-mail – thanks for those that responded with comments and corrections. An updated letter was reviewed by members and some additional edits were suggested. Motion by Davidson to authorize Chairman Scheffler to sign the letter of support, second by Sigler, approved without dissent.
3. Ag Plan Progress, Map Plan Review: Doyle provided an updated map showing the Ag Resource Focus Areas, current PDR land, Ag Assessed Land (owned and rented), the Ag Districts, and municipality-identified ag land for protection. The overlaps are very interesting; do they make a case for re-drawing any of the lines that identify ag land as high priority for protection? We need to identify those areas and define what it would mean to loss some of that land. Generally, the identified areas could be somewhat small, depending on the area. We will need to think about priorities, i.e. in the ARFA is priority 1, outside of the ARFA but in the Ag District is 2, Land in proximity to already preserved land; operations outside of the ARFA that work a lot land in one are other criteria to consider. We can take a look at re-drawing the lines and also defiling a ranking system.

Adjourn 8:40 p.m.

**Next Meeting:** August 23, 2014, 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

# TOMPKINS COUNTY

## AGRICULTURE & FARMLAND PROTECTION BOARD

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615 Willow Avenue Ithaca, New York 14850  
Telephone (607) 272-2292 Fax (607) 272-7088

### Tompkins County Agriculture & Farmland Protection Board

#### Minutes

June 25, 2014

**Present:** Jon Negley; Lin Davidson, Irene Kehoe, Ed Scheffler, Monika Roth, John Fleming  
**Excused:** Scott Doyle, Don Specker, Debbie Teeter  
**Absent:** Bob Mazourek, Mike Sigler  
**Liaisons:** Mike Ashdown/Dryden Grange

**Call to Order 7:00 p.m.**

**Additions to the Agenda:** none

**Approval of Minutes:** Moved by Kehoe, second by Fleming, approved without dissent.

#### Announcements:

1. Roth:
  - Distributed information cards about Land Link to help with promoting the program.
  - Farm City Day will be Saturday, August 9<sup>th</sup>, 11-4, more information at the next meeting.
2. Negley: The District is applying for a Soil Health Mini-grant for cover cropping; it will provide seed – looking for farmer cooperators. Grants would start January of 2015, \$25,000 per county. .

#### New Business – None

#### Old Business:

1. Town of Caroline Site Plan Law: In Ag & Markets hands; board members would like a copy of the letter they sent; Teeter will forward and check to see how it is being handled.
2. EPA Clean Water Act Proposed Changes: No updates.
3. PDR – Motion by Davidson to support PDR applications and authorize drafting support letters as needed by the state for Mazourek and Reynolds farm applications, second Kehoe, approved.
4. Ag Plan Progress:
  - Teeter had shared themes, strategies, action steps for review; EVERYONE please email her any feedback you have. Davidson asked a question about strategies...who will do all of the work?? Roth said that some actions will be assigned to AFPB, other maybe CCE or SWCD, or another entity. Some actions might be recommendations to NYS/Farm Bureau or Feds. In the last plan for each strategy/action step, we indicated who the likely entity would be to act on the recommendation.
  - Need an implementation plan: Last time we recommended that the County provide funding for a half time staff support position at CCE. We are now only getting funding for about 1/3 of a position because the amount has not been increased in the past 15 years. We should request funding to cover the position at half time, or we might want to ask for a full time position. In some counties they have funded an ag development position to move the plan forward. Davidson commented that there are other funding sources to explore—Regional Economic Development funds, for example.

- Land to protect: The board reviewed maps from County Planning:
  - LULC: Shows a lot of residential road front development...not quite as much in Lansing or Groton as compared to other towns
  - Ag District: Should be considered the base map for farmland protection. Map the parcels within the district receiving ag assessment (owned/rented).
  - Ag Assessed land owned & rented: Owned land might have a higher priority for protection than rented land.
  - ARFA with town ag lands identified: Are there other towns where the comp plans or zoning references ag lands – for example, Lansing has an RA zone, what about Dryden, Groton, Newfield—anything we could look at from those towns?
  - ARFA: Can we map ag lands outside of ARFA; superimpose Ag Assessed parcels map?
  - Soils: Should be a criteria for farmland protection.
  - New Map: Generate a map based on properties with Ag classification code: by enterprise, type, etc.
- Other Comments:
  - Protected ag land might make it more attractive for non-farm development to occur.
  - Who is farming and not getting ag assessment; we may want to reach out to these folks.
  - Debt for Nature is a loan forgiveness program; 50 year easement that is available from USDA FSA. The former Feeney Farm has enrolled woodland; there may be some others interested in this.
  - We may want to review regional economic development plans as they pertain to agriculture (also Greener Cleaner NY): what are the goals of these plans? We should make sure to have some complimentary goals.
  - Share draft goals, etc. with NRCS staff, FSA, regional dairy team for their input -or invite them to a meeting?
- Roth reviewed the plan timeline:
  - July-August: WRITING big time!
  - September: start circulating the draft report to the county.
  - AFB approval?
  - End of October, early November: Host farmer/landowner meetings around the county: maybe 3.
  - November or December: Public hearing?
  - December grant done, report to state for approval.

Adjourn 8:30 p.m.

**Next Meeting:** July 23, 2014, 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

# TOMPKINS COUNTY

## AGRICULTURE & FARMLAND PROTECTION BOARD

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615 Willow Avenue Ithaca, New York 14850  
Telephone (607) 272-2292 Fax (607) 272-7088

### Tompkins County Agriculture & Farmland Protection Board Minutes May 28, 2014

**Present:** Scott Doyle, John Fleming, Irene Kehoe, Monika Roth, Ed Scheffler, Mike Sigler, Don Specker  
**Excused:** Lin Davidson, Bob Mazourek, Jon Negley  
**Associates:** Nancy Munkenbeck  
**Liaisons:** Mike Ashdown/Dryden Grange  
**Staff:** Debbie Teeter

**Call to Order 7:00 p.m.**

**Additions to the Agenda:** none

**Approval of Minutes:** Moved by Sigler, second by Kehoe, approved without dissent.

#### **Announcements:**

1. Doyle: Received an e-mail today regarding the REAP program, and he circulated it and said we should probably get up to speed on this and really encourage participation.
2. Ashdown: reminded everyone Dryden Dairy Day is Saturday, June 14<sup>th</sup>. Teeter mentioned Farm Bureau will have an exhibit this year.
3. Scheffler and Specker: there was a brief conversation about the status of corn planting.

#### **New Business**

1. Proposed Changes to the Clean Water Act: Teeter reported that although the information from the EPA, NRCS, etc. says there are no worries for farmers from the proposed changes, Farm Bureau is still saying it will add to the oversight of items like ditches, seasonal waterways, wet areas, etc. TCFB approved a resolution against the changes at last week's meeting, which will be forwarded to the County Legislature and added to others in the state. Ashdown said even if the EPA sheet is correct, there will likely be farms that don't currently meet other standards which will be impacted by these changes. Doyle said he was sorry Negley could not be here, and was sorry to miss the presentation. He was uncomfortable with this board taking any action without having a better understanding. How long is there to respond? Not sure, although the timeline might be short as Farm Bureau indicated there was not enough time to look for collaborators. Other members agreed they were not prepared to provide a response. Doyle referred to the summary document of what would and would not be covered, and it sounded pretty good, although we don't know the other side. Motion to table by Kehoe, second by Fleming, approved without dissent.
2. Town of Caroline Site Plan Law: Teeter provided an overview of the issue: Ag and Markets and the County Commissioner have provided comments that urge changes to bring the plan into compliance with Ag District Law; a response letter from the Town Supervisor indicate none of these recommendations will be implemented. CAFO's seem to be the point of contention. Caroline is not likely to have a regulated CAFO, but this might set a precedent. Sigler asked for clarification; his understanding is that Ag District Law trumps local law – only if a farmer asks for Ag and Markets' intervention. Scheffler asked for the board's recommendation. Motion by Kehoe to send a letter to the Town urging it to comply with Ag and Markets and County recommendations, seconded by Specker, approved without dissent.

*The mission of the Tompkins County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board shall be to encourage farming in the County through local initiatives which create favorable conditions that allow farmers to operate economically viable enterprises.*

3. PDR Request for proposals: Doyle has looked at the material extensively along with the review criteria and developed a spread sheet with all the information, which he distributed and reviewed. Teeter mentioned that historically the State has looked for successful, solid operations and that isn't even mentioned in the criteria. Doyle concurred, and said there also seems to be far less emphasis on important soils. He thought the new criteria seem to reflect the state's negative experiences with ill-prepared municipalities. He suggests we consider prioritizing the list, and then contact the State for feedback. The County can probably commit to only one or possibly two. There was discussion about the increasing value of ag land reducing the gap to development value. Scheffler asked for clarification on the funding and match – a town is not obligated, but Dryden has made up the difference in the past, but that's very rare. When a Town is involved, it's mostly in-kind. Towns have expressed support in all cases, but most likely only the towns of Dryden and possibly Ulysses could apply on their own; all other towns would need support from the County. Scheffler asked what the board's role is; Doyle explained we have to provide recommendation letters for any applications submitted. Roth asked if urgency should play a role, i.e. impending development. Teeter wondered if protecting a large farm as a way of stabilizing agriculture in an area would make a good application. Roth reminded the board that larger farms can have their easements written with up to three subdivisions to allow for flexibility in the future. There was discussion as to whether a lack of an heir would be a positive or a negative – either, although a lack of heir could be used to clarify the need for protection. There are also small farms with very good soil resources and locations. All applications we discussed and compared in detail and at length. Mazourek rose to the top for everyone, with urging for subdivisions. There was additional discussion for the next two priorities, Brown was recommended for next year, Reynolds was suggested as number two providing Ulysses is on board with handling the application with county help. Brown as third, for next year if Groton is supportive. The Caroline parcels are in a number four position, or a lot could change with Cayuga Pure. The two Dryden farms will be recommended to work with their town.

**Old Business:**

1. Ag Plan Update: Members received in advance of the meeting an updated document with draft goals and summary statements as well as a first draft of moving the goals into a matrix. Roth suggested we take a look at the themes and summary points to determine if anything is missing. For example, under Ag Economic Development, is financing and access to money an issue? Munkenbeck suggested stream buffers be added to the Environment section. Teeter will send a reminder e-mail to members to think about additions early next week. Also, the new census data is out, so hopefully we can start updating our data. Roth will send the data to members electronically. This will go to PAB and June.

Adjourn 8:55 p.m.

**Next Meeting:** June 25, 2014, 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

# TOMPKINS COUNTY AGRICULTURE & FARMLAND PROTECTION BOARD

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615 Willow Avenue Ithaca, New York 14850  
Telephone (607) 272-2292 Fax (607) 272-7088

## Tompkins County Agriculture & Farmland Protection Board

### Minutes

April 23, 2014

**Present:** Lin Davidson, Scott Doyle, Irene Kehoe, Bob Mazourek, Jon Negley, Monika Roth, Ed Scheffler, Don Specker  
**Excused:** John Fleming, Mike Sigler  
**Liaisons:** Mike Ashdown/Dryden Grange  
**Staff:** Debbie Teeter

**Call to Order 7:00 p.m.**

**Additions to the Agenda:** none

**Approval of Minutes:** Davidson had change for item 3; moved by Kehoe, second by Davidson, approved without dissent.

#### **Announcements:**

1. Davidson: EPA has again proposed changes which will expand their authority, which are believed would cause problems for municipalities and farmers. Scheffler and Mazourek agreed that this seems to be the way of other regulatory agencies.
2. Doyle: Has heard a PDR announcement from the state is imminent, perhaps within the next two weeks. He suggests we first consider those who have expressed interest and/or submitted application in the past be prioritized first, and also urge the state to release these funds on a more regular basis, as we have on-going interest in this county. We should probably review the applications on hand at the next meeting. This is something we need to make sure we cover in the ag plan update. Davidson wondered how the ranking process works, so divisiveness is avoided.
3. Teeter:
  - Roy Trask has submitted his resignation, regretfully. He is over-committed with work and Newfield town board business, and doesn't think he can contribute here as needed. So, we have a farmer vacancy. Roy is a field crop grower from Newfield; we currently have two farmers in Lansing and one in Groton, and we have, in the past, been mindful to try to keep the board diverse in terms of operations and geography. Suggestions were Dave Buck, Russ Carpenter, Ray VandeBogart, Switzers, Greg Reynolds, Tor Oeshner, Chaw or Lucy, Amara or Athena Steinkraus, Steve Eddy, Josh Markley. We can put out a press release. It would be great if we could find a younger person.
  - AgStravaganza! was April 12<sup>th</sup>, and very successful. There was lots of farm equipment this year, which was a big hit, The Dairy Princess gave out Organic Valley Cheese sticks and Chobani yogurt, also very popular. We once again had a corn pit, which had five or more toddlers in it throughout the day. At the end of the day, children actually helped fill the bags back up with the corn – very cool!
4. Specker: reported he lost a lot of his honey bee hives, and Duane Waid said he's lost 70% of his hives, due the severe winter this year. It doesn't bode well for honey production this year, or even people continuing in keeping bees.

## **Old Business:**

1. Ag Plan Updates: Teeter provided copies of the six themes with comments organized under each summary topic, which were also e-mailed to members. We broke into three groups and each group worked on two themes to develop draft goal statements. This is what the groups proposed:
  - Ag Economic Development: To encourage business development, expansions, and diversification, promote collaboration and networking, and improve access to support services and markets necessary for viable farm businesses.
  - Future Farmers & Workforce: Create an environment that connects young people interesting in farming with farming experiences and opportunities that result in future farmers and successful farm employees.
  - Ag Awareness: Develop policies and programs that improve understanding of agriculture and its relationship to the community and agricultural practices among farmers.
  - Local Foods: Pursue a policy which encourages local production, educates farmers and consumers, and promotes consumption at every level (personal, institutional, etc.).
  - Environment: Promote farming practices which protect and manage Tompkins County's *agricultural lands and associated natural features*, supports the health of our community, and builds resilience in anticipation of changes in climate and environmental challenges in the region over the long term.
  - Land Use Policy & Regulations: Provide a supportive climate for the continuation of diverse farming through public policies and actions on land use that encourage farming. Such practices across governments should improve access to farmland for a variety of operations.
    - Scheffler raised the issue of ongoing, unresolvable disputes between producers around GMO's, which exist in crops including corn, soybeans, alfalfa, wheat, grasses, etc. This is not something we will fix, although he provided an example of how communication between producers can avoid potential conflicts on a local level. This might belong under a different topic – perhaps under Ag Awareness, neighbor relations?

Doyle also shared samples of some of the maps we might want to incorporate in the final plan, which included agricultural lands identified for protection, soil types, land use/land cover, ag districts, and current PDR programs.

Adjourn 8:50 p.m.

**Next Meeting:** May 28, 2014, 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

**Addendum:** Doyle offered this alternative Goal Statements following the meeting:

### Environment

Model and promote sustainable agricultural practices that encourage the protection and management of Tompkins County's natural features. Such practices assist our region in building resilience with realities of climate change and environmental challenges over the long term.

### Land Use Policy and Regulation

Support diverse farming opportunities through land use public policies and actions that protect farmland. Such practices, implemented across jurisdictions, should improve access to farmland and support operations that do not have adverse impacts to other farm operations or the environment.

# TOMPKINS COUNTY

## AGRICULTURE & FARMLAND PROTECTION BOARD

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615 Willow Avenue Ithaca, New York 14850  
Telephone (607) 272-2292 Fax (607) 272-7088

### Tompkins County Agriculture & Farmland Protection Board

#### Minutes

March 26, 2014

**Present:** Lin Davidson, Scott Doyle, John Fleming, Irene Kehoe, Monika Roth, Ed Scheffler, Mike Sigler, Don Specker  
**Excused:** Bob Mazourek, Jon Negley, Roy Trask  
**Staff:** Debbie Teeter

#### Call to Order 11:45 p.m.

**Introductions:** the Board welcomed new members Don Specker and John Fleming, and new County Legislature representative, Mike Sigler.

**Additions to the Agenda:** none

**Approval of Minutes:** Moved by Roth, second by Kehoe, approved without dissent.

#### Announcements:

1. Doyle: Has heard there is a political battle going on in Albany about releasing the PDR funds, the RFP may be delayed another year. If that turns out to be the case, we need to get this info out to at least those who have expressed an interest in the program.
2. Sigler: a farmer asked him if they need to apply for ag assessment every year? Kehoe said yes, this is state law. Because our county has county-wide assessment, farmers have until April 1<sup>st</sup> to apply; in other counties farmers need to apply by March 1<sup>st</sup>. Kehoe covered the basic requirements for eligibility.
3. Davidson: State has new initiative for new farms, deals with loans, for land, equipment, etc. Good news for passing down the farm.
4. Teeter:
  - The board's vacancy recommendations, Don Specker and John Fleming, have been approved by the Legislature.
  - Shared the label from Ithaca Milk, which was a donation for the Ag Summit. This product is available at smaller groceries in the county.
  - There is a new Farm Bureau Facebook page; if you have Facebook, please check it out, like it and share it.
  - AgStravaganza! is set for April 12<sup>th</sup>, response so far has been very positive.
5. Roth:
  - Had her ag committee meeting last night: Mike Griggs shared a bobcat picture he took locally, also discussion of the devastation of honey bees from winter.
  - There is a new Dairy Specialist for our five-county region.

## **Old Business:**

### **1. Ag Summit Evaluation:**

- About 70 people attended, fully half were farmers.
- Good, but sometimes meandering, conversations during the breakout sessions.
- Doyle reported a call from an ag land owner wondering how/when people like him would have a chance to weigh in on the plan.
- The Young Farmer panel was well-received; it's interesting that Albany may be addressing some of the concerns expressed. It was good mix of people, some with clear access to land and others without.
- Timing seemed to really work; morning, with breakfast. Might want to look at other locations for future meetings, as we do get a heavier attendance from the east side of the lake, especially Dryden. There might also be fewer, larger operators on the west-side of the lake. Ithaca might be a good idea.
- This is a good opportunity for farmers to talk and also get some pertinent information. Do we need to do it annually? There is a lot of information that comes to farmers in other ways, i.e. newsletters, - are there enough topics? We've been changing themes each year. The point of a "summit" is it is all-encompassing: all enterprises as well as local representatives. Post ag plan update, could be a tool for implementation.

### **2. Ag Plan Updates: Doyle: need to also analyze ag land and businesses: what is it and where is it? Is it important, is it at risk? Forestland info is important. Relationship between ARFAs and land mapping. There are some town maps as well. CCE is working with a grad student to work on maps. There has been a real tightening up of land availability around the county; a lot of land is rented. When we ask land owners their future plans, it's mostly they will stay in farming. Issue may now be smaller farms getting squeezed out of the rental market due to increasing rental rates. The following are specific comments about the Ag Plan Update:**

- We need a Goals Statement for each theme.
- We have a lot of the census data for analyses.
- Will need to prioritize, what's most important, but also what's easier.
- Need something understandable for the public to react to.
- There is some historic information, maps that discussed where farming in the future would go, and it was pretty accurate. This might be interesting to include.
- Lease of development rights is of interest; if we want to get into this, we need to have a plan or program. Massachusetts may have a program we could review.
- Infrastructure: Salvage yards stay in place, how likely will we get equipment dealers in the county?
- Internet, roads and bridges, fencing, power, culverts under roads for livestock crossing.
- Understanding Farm Bill and existing programs. Are farmers forward-looking enough to plan for potential problems, i.e. reducing the CAFO number requirements, fuel tanks, etc. Strategic planning for the future. Funded programs seem to be over-engineered-more costly, but if you do it yourself you are liable if it fails.
- DEC: has been more responsive, but with larger fields it's easy to miss damage until it's too late. Can't raise fruits or vegetables without a fence. Can get more deer out of season than in season, because when the hunting pressure is on they know where to go.

### **3. Farmer Data Base: copies of the data base were circulated for members to review and help fill in the blanks.**

Adjourn 1:00 p.m.

**Next Meeting:** April 23, 2014, 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

# TOMPKINS COUNTY

## AGRICULTURE & FARMLAND PROTECTION BOARD

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615 Willow Avenue Ithaca, New York 14850  
Telephone (607) 272-2292 Fax (607) 272-7088

### Tompkins County Agriculture & Farmland Protection Board Minutes

January 22, 2014

**Present:** Lin Davidson, Jon Negley, Monika Roth, Roy Trask, Ed Scheffler  
**Excused:** Scott Doyle, Irene Kehoe, Bob Mazourek  
**Associates:** Nancy Munkenbeck  
**Staff:** Debbie Teeter

**Call to Order 11:45 p.m.**

**Approval of Minutes:** Moved by Trask, second by Davidson, approved without dissent.

**Additions to the Agenda:** none

#### **Announcements:**

1. Negley:
  - Provided the board with a letter from the SWCD chair authorizing him to fill the SWCD seat. Also, Dan Carey is the new chair of the SWCD board.
  - Governor has announced funding for BMPs, water quality.
  - Some discussion about DEC TMDL's investigation: looking at phosphorus in south end of Cayuga Lake, goal seems to be to having swimming at the south end of the lake restored. Ag needs to be involved in these conversations. Roth added that in Tompkins County there are not a lot of row crops in general, especially close to steams. Munkenbeck reminded us that the ecosystem uses things that are in the stream as water travels. Roth said there is a lot that comes out of leaves, and we have a lot of them and there is no leaf pick up program.
2. Davidson:
  - AgStravaganza! date is Saturday, April 12<sup>th</sup>. Tent cost is quite high due to the need to secure it with water barrels rather than stakes.
3. Teeter:
  - Circulated notice from NYS of \$500,000 available for towns to amend laws that might be unreasonably restrictive for agriculture. Scheffler mentioned hearing some grumbling about zoning in Lansing; Davidson provided an historical overview. Roth said there is another meeting for the Lansing Ag Plan on the 28<sup>th</sup>. There is some confusion on what the plan is, i.e. a guidance document, not a set of laws.
  - Farm Show tickets are available on the front counter if anyone would like them.
4. Roth:
  - Farm Business Management Conference series for Farm Women: Annie's Project.
  - Regional Small Farm conference brochures distributed.

## **Old Business:**

### **1. Board Vacancies:**

- Land Preservation Seat: Debbie reported Andy Zepp, Director of the Land Trust, suggested one of their board members, Don Specker, fill this seat. Roth endorsed this recommendation, pending receipt of application, and this recommendation be forwarded to the County Legislature, Davidson seconded approved without dissent.
  - There are three applicants for the farmer vacancy: John Fleming and Keith Chapin from Walnut Ridge and Karl Stauderman from Deep Water Farm. All are dairy, but we did not have applicants from other sectors. We currently do not have any representation from large dairy; Roth suggested John Flemming as he seems to rise to the top in terms of his completion of the Lead NY, and track record of participation in local meetings; he has a reputation for following through on commitments. In the past we've prioritized and can do this again; Davidson moved John be recommended, Negley seconded. Approved without dissent. Teeter will forward to legislature and notify other applicants and invite them to be associate members.
  - We need to follow-up on a county legislator appointment and PEEQ representative.
  - Letter to Ulysses: Munkenbeck said Town Boards are happy to act on things that are easy, so perhaps include a list of farmers willing to serve. We can ask who might be interested from the original committee and/or offer to facilitate a meeting to identify potential members. Add to the letter a suggestion to ask original members if willing to serve. Davidson moved letter be sent as amended, Roth seconded, approved without dissent. Teeter will update letter and e-mail it to Scheffler for final approval.
2. Ag Plan Updates: Next step is Ag Summit. Data analysis has been done to the extent possible, waiting for new census data in March or April. WE have been working on sector descriptions in preparation for writing Ag profiles.
3. Ag Summit Planning: We are hopeful the breakfast format will work for farmers. The topic areas we'd like to cover are: Economic Development, Local Foods, Land Use Policy, Ag Awareness, Resources, Environmental Quality, and the Next Generation of farmers. Table break outs with note taker, panel of young farmers (1 hr), break out (1 hr). Focus of panel was intended to be on young farmers. Speaker possibilities: Lindsay Wickam/Farm Bill. What would young farmers like to see here to keep them here rather than going somewhere else – what impediments do they see. Keith Chapin, Space's vet's, Kenny Quick/FFA; Devon, Melissa, Karl or Mark Stauderman, Josh Markley, Jason Carpenter. Is this your future vs what is your future?

## **New Business**

1. Farm City Day: Teeter announced this year's host is the Fouts' Farm on Rt 222 in Groton. The farm actually straddles the border with Cortland, so she is working with Heather Birdsall from CCE-Cortland to plan and coordinate the event. There has been one meeting at the farm and lots of ideas generated. The tentative date is Saturday, August 9<sup>th</sup>; this date will be confirmed at the next meeting with the farm. Nancy livestock league, ask about other animals.

Adjourn 1:38 p.m.

**Next Meeting:** Ag Summit at the VFW in Dryden: February 26, 2014, 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

# TOMPKINS COUNTY

## AGRICULTURE & FARMLAND PROTECTION BOARD

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615 Willow Avenue Ithaca, New York 14850  
Telephone (607) 272-2292 Fax (607) 272-7088

### Tompkins County Agriculture & Farmland Protection Board Minutes

December 11, 2013

**Present:** Scott Doyle, Irene Kehoe, Bob Mazourek, Frank Proto, Monika Roth, Ed Scheffler  
**Excused:** Lin Davidson, Jon Negley, Roy Trask  
**Staff:** Debbie Teeter  
**Guests:** John Fleming, Karl Stauderman

**Call to Order 12:00 p.m.**

#### Introductions

Members and guests introduced themselves.

**Approval of Minutes:** Moved by Doyle, second by Mazourek, approved without dissent.

**Additions to the Agenda:** none

#### Announcements:

1. Doyle:
  - Had a good PDR discussion at the recent meeting, although still no news from the State; he received correspondence for the Town of Caroline committing their support for interested farms in that town, and also several people spoke to him after the meeting. They are very close to closing on the Sherman/Jerry Dell farm; the Town of Dryden committed some funds towards the project, at the urging of the Town Ag Committee.
2. Teeter:
  - Circulated several correspondences from NYS Ag and Markets: one a copy of a letter from Ron Mead providing information to the Town of Ulysses to help them address a neighbor complaint about a farming operations; another a copy of a letter of approval for the Town of Ulysses Ag Plan; and the final one a letter approving the continuation of Ag District #1. Proto asked for clarification on the Ulysses matter; Teeter explained a sheep farm had some moveable electric fence around a pasture in front of their house and a couple times sheep had gotten out of that enclosure and bothered the neighbors. The farm has agreed not to use that pasture until the fence is upgraded, but they may still need to appear in front of the Zoning Board of Appeals.
  - She also has the DEIS for the Black Oak Wind Farm on CD, if anyone would like to borrow it.
3. Proto:
  - This is a slow month for the Legislature, but there is discussion about what committees will continue for next year; there may be a change in the committee this board reports to. The County budget was approved since we last met. The State Blue Ribbon committee he serves on will meet again in February, and he will come back and provide an update.
4. Roth:
  - Announced the beginning of the Land Link program and described it – how to link land with farmers. A web site is being designed; it will be a web-based program. Extension hears from people looking for land to farm and also people with land wondering what to do with it, and this will hopefully help.

## Old Business:

### 1. Board Vacancies:

- Jon Negley will be filling the Soil and Water Conservation District Chair's seat, pending a letter of approval from the Director [ex-officio seat].
- Pryor was the liaison from the Planning committee, one of the committees that may change; it will be important to advocate for a replacement. Sometimes committee seats go unfilled because legislators aren't interested, can't make meetings, or are over-committed. The Board asked Doyle to let them know which committee we will report to so we can request a liaison.
- We have an application from Zack Odell from the Finger Lakes Land Trust to fill the Land Preservation organization seat, but he doesn't live in the county. We will defer action until the January meeting for clarification on residency requirements.
- We have three to four people interested in filling the farmer seat vacancy. Applications are still coming in, so we will consider all applications at the January meeting.
- Two applicants were at this meeting and were offered the opportunity to ask questions. John Fleming asked what sort of things the Board does – review Notice of Intent (proposed infrastructure through an ag district), ag district reviews, farmer-neighbor/town conflicts, public issues, Ag Data Statements (for development in an ag district) [which led to discussion about what the board should be reviewing in relation to subdivision and site plan reviews], PDR application review and prioritizing. John also asked who members get up to speed; there are some documents that will help.

### 2. 2014 Officers: Scheffler was nominated for chair by Roth, second by Kehoe; Mazourek was nominated for vice chair by Doyle, second Kehoe. Proto moved the nominations be closed and that the secretary cast one vote for those nominated. Approved without dissent.

### 3. Ag Plan Updates:

- A summary from the recent PDR/Ag Plan meeting were distributed. Roth explained comments were made using the major themes that have been distilled from earlier farmer input. These are: Policy, Ag Awareness and Education, Local Food, Ag Development and Marketing, and Environment. Input has been gathered from numerous focus groups and we are ready to categorize specific suggestions under the appropriate themes. These suggestions/comments can then be used to develop goals under each theme, and then goals can be prioritized (high, medium, low) and action steps identified. There will be things that the board or county will not be able to address. We will have this ready for the Ag Summit.
- Roth said the State wants to see concrete action for ag economic development.
- One of the comments that resonated was that we need to lower the average age of farmers, i.e. look for new paths to farm ownership for young people. Roth suggested this could be a panel during the Summit, focusing on how young people get into operation, how to find young farmers –are they out there? This question may be more engaging for the general public, as well.
- Teeter provided two spreadsheets on ag land data for board members to review, one of farmland she's still working to identify who works it, the other an abbreviation of the master list. She's looking for help with the shorter list, and if members notice errors on the larger one, please let her know. Kehoe suggested she work Barbara Just in the Assessment Office, as she is the person who works with ag assessment.

### 4. Ag Summit Planning: We will pick topics from Ag Plan, provide an overview of each and follow with breakout sessions. One suggestion is a panel discussion of outside factors that impact the ability to pass down the farm (i.e. estate planning). The date will be our regular February meeting, the 26<sup>th</sup>. We will have a breakfast meeting at the Dryden VFW, with the breakfast at 9:00 a.m. followed by the meeting from 9:30 to 12:30. The will be a planning meeting in early January; Roth, Teeter, Kehoe, and Scheffler volunteered. Proto suggested we include an update on the county comprehensive plan update. We need to think about people who can speak to economic development, future of farming.

### 5. Attendance: With two vacancies and new legislative members coming on board in January, it is really important that members attend meetings. We barely made quorum this month, and we have lots of important work ahead of us. Scheffler will help remind member of meetings.

### 6. Town Ag Plan Follow-up: Roth reported there is concern among Ulysses farmers that although the Town Ag Plan was adopted a year or so ago, an Ag Committee has not yet been appointed. She suggested the Board send a letter to the Town Supervisor urging she move forward on this. Teeter will prepare a draft for the board to review at the January meeting.

Adjourn 1:38 p.m.

**Next Meeting:** January 22, 2014, 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

# TOMPKINS COUNTY

## AGRICULTURE & FARMLAND PROTECTION BOARD

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615 Willow Avenue Ithaca, New York 14850  
Telephone (607) 272-2292 Fax (607) 272-7088

### Tompkins County Agriculture & Farmland Protection Board Minutes October 23, 2013

**Present:** Scott Doyle, Bob Mazourek, Zack Odell, Monika Roth, Ed Scheffler, Roy Trask  
**Excused:** Lin Davidson, Irene Kehoe, Jon Negley, Frank Proto  
**Staff:** Debbie Teeter  
**Guests:** Adam Buck, Dave Buck

**Call to Order** 7:11 p.m.

**Approval of Minutes:** Moved by Mazourek, second by Trask, approved without dissent.

**Additions to the Agenda:** none

#### **Announcements:**

1. Kehoe (by e-mail):
  - NYS Ag Assessment Bill: limiting the amount of annual ag assessment value change (set by NYS) to 2% down from current 10% has passed the Senate and the Assembly and was delivered to the Governor on October 9th. Her office hasn't heard anything yet. Members heard the governor did sign it.
2. Doyle:
  - Nothing new officially from Ag and Markets on PDR, working to finishing the annual monitoring of existing easements.
3. Roth:
  - County Assessment provided update on where county fire taxes are and are not receiving the fire tax exemption, Danby resident are talking to fire commissioners there to approve the exemption.
4. Teeter:
  - Introduced Adam Buck, the new vice president of Tompkins County Farm Bureau.

#### **Old Business:**

1. Board Vacancies:
  - Jon Negley will be filling the Soil and Water Conservation District Chair's seat, pending a letter of approval from the Director. [ex-officio seat]
  - Zack Odell is the Land Trust staff member who replaced David Diaz; he would like to fill the Land Preservation Organization seat on the Board left vacant when Diaz left. [term ends 12/16]
  - Teeter reported Crispell contacted her to say she couldn't make the last or this meeting, and really needs to step back. Her husband is requiring more care, and she thinks it's time to fill her seat with another farmer. [term ends 12/16] Doyle suggested we review past applications, ask Nancy Munkenback, Chaw or Lucy Chang was suggested, Trevor or Monika Sherman, Russ Beck, Walnut Ridge, Pete Larsen, Carl Stauderman, Cal Snow.
  - There are no other terms expiring at the end of 2013
2. 2014 Officers: The Board needs to nominate and vote on officers at the last meeting of the year, which should be December meeting.
3. Ag Plan Updates:
  - Data Gathering: Roth showed several of the charts that have been developed from Ag Census data. The 2012 data is not yet available, but is very important to this process – we will probably not go much further until that is released. However, even in 2007, it's clear agriculture in Tompkins County is growing – more farms and bigger farms. Trask noted soybeans appear to be absent from data, may have been missed, or may have gotten bigger since 2007. Some numbers seem out of whack and need a closer look, but generally this is a solid start. Now shifting gears to start compiling Sector Profiles, with the following sectors identified:

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- Dairy: two subsets, organic and conventional (may split conventional by size...sm, med, lg)
- Field Crops: two subsets, organic and conventional
- Vegetables & fruit (tree fruits & berries)
- Small Livestock: three subsets: sheep & goats, pigs, and poultry
- Large Livestock: beef
- Nursery/greenhouse
- Equine
- Honey
- Forestry (inc maple)
- Specialty items: mushrooms? Other?
- Roth asked members what should we be including in the sector profiles: most recent activity, regional comparisons, size of farms, conversations we've already had around farming, interest in 2012 data – think there are big changes to be reflected in that data, data by town would also be very helpful – we should be able to provide this data at least in some ways.
- She has been talking to Sharon Heller in County Planning about map making and what we are likely to need in support of the plan. One map shows the amount of land rented is about equal to land owned; farmers may not be able to or want to buy? Trask said it's hard to find a lender to work with; Farm Credit East has a lot of hoops to jump through. Scheffler said a lot of the land being sold is going to the really big operations. We are trying to get a Land Link program started so landowners can find farmers and vice versa. Roth wondered about a letter to the editor about considering the local farmer rather than someone out-of-county. Scheffler said when you are considering selling your farm you want it to stay in farming, you don't necessarily want to take a risk on someone who might sell out in a few years. Trask said he's had land he rented sold for development, but farmers have everything tied up in their land and that's their resource when they need to cash out and retire.
- **Focus Group Comments Summary:** Teeter provided the latest summary, which included Board comments from the last meeting and has been summarized and grouped by category.
  - Kehoe, who could not be here, sent by e-mail the following:
    - How do we get people to apply for agricultural exemptions? There are still farmers who do not apply.
    - The Dept of Assessment constantly gets questioned on who wants to rent land (especially if a property owner has had an increase in their assessment) - right now we tell them to call you (CCE) is there some way we could coordinate CCE with our ag person (Barb Just) so there can be some kind of list share??
    - There needs to be more education for large land owners that rent land - not just farmers working their own land - on ag assessments/exemptions. It is confusing to folks whose income is looked at for eligibility of the exemptions.
  - Roth: policy section might be good – pull out of “Regulatory” – cross sector; taxes – what can we do on the tax front? Neighbor/Town relations come up frequently – rural communities need farmers in town government positions. Are there concerns about energy, interest in alternative energy? Scheffler said Organic Valley has a full-time person helping farms with this – writing grants, etc. Are there emerging pest problems, maybe due to weather changes?
  - Trask: marketing is one of the biggest challenges across the board, regardless of operation type, time-consuming, watching markets constantly, markets disappear, people don't pay for what you sold them, etc. Land use and the change in land use is a big challenge
  - Doyle: resilience also comes up frequently: climate shift, for example – consider by sector, projections?
  - Scheffler: each sector is treated in isolation, but many farms are diversified

### **New Business:**

1. **November meeting:** Ag Plan Farmer meeting, 11/20, 7-9, at 4-H Acres; will also cover PDR update – this will take the place of the regular November meeting
2. **December meeting date:** 12/11, 11:30-1:00, if it works
3. **Ag Summit planning:**
  - Adam mentioned the re-fit of AES, and the potential impacts to agriculture of pipeline installation
  - Highlight the Ag Plan, with one or two other topics, and burning issues or speakers? Need to start crafting some key recommendations for the plan, which could be reviewed; also, there will be maps and charts, graphs, etc.
  - Date: late February, early March? Weekday, maybe Friday?
  - Trask said that's prime maple syrup season - maybe a pancake lunch? Bacon, sausage?

Adjourn 8:47 p.m.; **Next Meeting:** November 20, 2013, 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

# TOMPKINS COUNTY

## AGRICULTURE & FARMLAND PROTECTION BOARD

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615 Willow Avenue Ithaca, New York 14850  
Telephone (607) 272-2292 Fax (607) 272-7088

### Tompkins County Agriculture & Farmland Protection Board Minutes

September 25, 2013

**Present:** Rachel Crispell, Lin Davidson, Scott Doyle, Irene Kehoe, Bob Mazourek,  
Jon Negley, Frank Proto, Monika Roth, Ed Scheffler  
**Excused:** Rachel Crispell, Roy Trask  
**Guests:** Nancy Munkenbeck

**Call to Order 7:05 p.m.**

**Additions to the Agenda:** none

**Approval of Minutes:** Moved by Proto, second by Kehoe, approved without dissent.

#### **Announcements:**

- 1) Proto:
  - a) The County budget process has started. Two budget meetings have been held; the public budget forum is October 17 and the final budget hearing is November 12. Roth will send information on funding for the AFPB to board members.
  - b) Introduced Jon Negley, the new Soil & Water District Manager, who will be filling the SWCD Board chair seat, which is a voting member seat. We need a letter from SWCD Board Chair to make this official.
- 2) Doyle:
  - a) The County is updating the Comprehensive Plan; they are seeking input through a community-wide survey.
  - b) NYS has indicated there will be funding for PDR available soon; we may want to host an informational meeting on this topic. Roth also mentioned there will be funding for implementing ag plan strategies – we will want to announce this; TC-COG was suggested.
- 3) Davidson:
  - a) The Farm Bureau Annual Meeting is Friday, October 18 at 6:30, at the Dryden VFW. Make reservation with Debbie Teeter, [dlt22@cornell.edu](mailto:dlt22@cornell.edu). The guest speaker is Dawn George, ag teacher at George Junior, and a couple of her FFA members.
- 4) Roth:
  - a) The Dryden Ag Committee has been inquiring about submitting a grant to develop a town Ag Plan. Alos, work on the Lansing Ag Plan is nearing completion, she expects it to be finished by the end of the year.

#### **New Business**

- 1) Board Vacancy: Sice Daiz left, the Land Preservation Specialist seat has been vacant. We need to follow-up with FLLT. Doyle will follow up with FLLT about a recommendation for the board.

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**Old Business:**

- 1) Focus Group Summary: Reviewed input from Focus Group meetings. There was very low attendance so the information may not be reflective of farmers within the particular ag sector we were targeting. Board members reviewed the summary and provided comments (see updated Focus Group notes).

**General AFPB comments:**

- Marketing opportunities need attention across sectors
- Infrastructure needs attention
- Organic dairy and organic crop are different from Conventional dairy & crops so we should get separate input
- Need for general information and education about programs, services, etc.
- Animal health seems like an important topic to address
- Need to develop industry profiles that characterize the sector, size, etc.
- Farm succession as an important issue
- Look for themes across each area and compile
- And get more input on unique industry needs from more producers
- ARFA meeting feedback – are any of the actions recommended in the ARFA process...that might be included in Ag Plan. – Go thru the document and look for common themes that came up in each ARFA.
- Under county wide action – design guidelines: Munkenbeck mentioned the Dryden design guidelines might be a good think to look at.
- Water resources – Proto mentioned that Aquifer studies are still lacking in some areas.
- General observations about information that needs to be shared: buffers, Ag Assessment and Leasing land (sample leases), finding land to rent (Land Link)

**For the Agenda next time:**

Review terms expiring and vacancies

Next Meeting – Oct. 23, 2013

Adjourn 9:00 p.m.

**Next Meeting:** Wednesday, October 23<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 p.m.

# TOMPKINS COUNTY AGRICULTURE & FARMLAND PROTECTION BOARD

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615 Willow Avenue Ithaca, New York 14850  
Telephone (607) 272-2292 Fax (607) 272-7088

## Tompkins County Agriculture & Farmland Protection Board Minutes

June 26, 2013

**Present:** Rachel Crispell, Lin Davidson Scott Doyle, Irene Kehoe, Frank Proto,  
Ed Scheffler  
**Excused:** Bob Mazourek, Monika Roth, Roy Trask  
**Staff:** Debbie Teeter

**Call to Order 7:00 p.m.**

**Additions to the Agenda:** none

**Approval of Minutes:** Moved by Kehoe, second by Crispell, approved without dissent.

### Announcements:

1. Teeter:
  - a. All five Farm City stops are confirmed (one tentatively) and publicity has begun: Glenwood Farms, Indian Creek Fruit Farm, Laughing Goat Fiber Farm, Farmer Ground Flour, and Wideawake Bakery (tentative). She will call a planning meeting soon to start working on overall and site specific logistics.
  - b. Circulated great thank you letters from Trumansburg first graders who visited the Gunning family's Spring Weather farm in Enfield. This was the first visit to that farm, and it went really well. This farm milks Jerseys, which are smaller and therefore less intimidating than Holsteins. The farm also had chickens, goats, a piglet, a pony, and two draft horses, all of which the children could see and most they could touch. Also tried two new activities, both from the Food, Land and People curriculum: one taught about pollination, with some of the children representing apple trees in bloom and others representing bees, and the other taught about soil percolation, with the children representing different types of soil molecules (sand, silt, or clay) and the teachers representing water molecules trying to move through the soil.
2. Doyle:
  1. AEEP, NYSERDA fund, foa ag properties, circulated..
  2. A 2% annual tax cap on ag assessment values has been approved by State Assembly and Senate and is now waiting for the Governor to sign it.
3. Proto:
  - a. Eric Smith's (Cayuga Pure Organics) barn burned; replacement cost is over \$238,000. There is an on-line fundraising campaign through indiegogo ([www.igg.me/at/cpo](http://www.igg.me/at/cpo)). He wondered if CEE can help get the word out about this - Teeter thought they already have, but will double check.
  - b. Craig Schutt has retired as District Manager of Tompkins County Soil and Water Conservation District; Les Travis from Yates County is serving as interim District Manager. Other staff remains in place. A Search is to begin shortly.

**Old Business:**

1. Focus Group Summary: Teeter distributed a document of all comments collected so far, by Ag Sector. There is a wide margin on the right side for member comment, and any comments they might get from other ag folks they run into. She encouraged members to read through the comments and think about them, and then over the summer take note of anything helpful from conversations they might have with farmers.
2. Ag Plan: Several, weeks ago, members received summaries of the original Ag Plan and the work done in 2006. Since the 2006 work was done based on the original document and work completed since that time, Proto and Doyle suggested going through the 2006 document. Doyle led the discussion while Teeter typed comments into the 2006 document. This new document with comments will accompany the minutes of this meeting.

Adjourn 9:00 p.m.

**Next Meeting:** Wednesday, September 25<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 p.m.

# TOMPKINS COUNTY AGRICULTURE & FARMLAND PROTECTION BOARD

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615 Willow Avenue Ithaca, New York 14850  
Telephone (607) 272-2292 Fax (607) 272-7088

## **Tompkins County Agriculture & Farmland Protection Board Minutes**

**May 5, 2013**

**Present:** Rachel Crispell, Scott Doyle, Irene Kehoe, Frank Proto, Monika Roth,  
Ed Scheffler  
**Liaisons:** Mike Ashdown/Dryden Grange, Pat Pryor/County Legislature  
**Excused:** Bob Mazourek, Roy Trask, Lin Davidson  
**Staff:** Debbie Teeter

**Call to Order 7:06 p.m.**

**Additions to the Agenda:** none

**Approval of Minutes:** Moved by Proto, second by Doyle, approved without dissent.

### **Announcements:**

1. Teeter:
  - Attended a very good workshop about hosting farm visits. She got a few new ideas, as well as some resources – including the lawn signs on display at the meeting.
  - Spoke with Glenwood farms, the bison farm, about being a host site for Farm City Day and they would love to be included.
  - Spoke with Les Travis, Interim SWCD Manager, and is now sending him meeting minutes and agendas. They will be appointing someone to attend these meetings as soon as possible.
2. Doyle:
  - They have a new staff person, Megan McDonald, who we will likely interact with at some point.
3. Roth:
  - There is a meeting tomorrow night for municipalities to share what they are doing related to agriculture.
4. Proto:
  - The Legislature passed resolutions at last night's meeting to departmental heads re: budget expectations; 4% increase, which will mean departments need to cut about .5% to achieve a \$200,000 savings. There is some flexibility from department and department. There was discussion about TCAT bus service and the possibilities of raising fares.
  - Clean Water Act follow-up: as of now, this issue is not being pursued.
  - As of January 1<sup>st</sup> everyone will need to have health insurance; farmers need to be aware of opportunities available to them.
5. Pryor:
  - If anyone would like high speed internet and have not contacted Clarity Connect, they should do so at once. The areas with most interest shown will be the first served. Cost will be \$35-\$45 depending on package.

### **Old Business:**

1. Committee Reporting: The following are the responsibilities of the two committees that used to be PDEQ:  
**Planning, Energy and Environmental Quality Committee** responsibilities: Planning Department, MPO, TCAT, SWCD, Flood Control/Water Quality, EMC, WRC, AFPB, Land Management  
**Economic Development Committee** responsibilities: Workforce Development, Tompkins County Area Development (EDC Collaborative), Industrial Development Agency, TC3 workforce programs, Chamber of commerce, Tourism Program, CVB, Strategic Tourism Planning Board, Ithaca Downtown Partnership, Community Celebrations and Arts, County Historian.  
PEEQ is probably correct for most AFPB business, but we should also report to EDC on matters pertaining to Economic Development or Business and Industry. (Karen Fuller would be the contact)
2. Focus Group Summary: A summary of the notes for meetings was distributed and reviewed. There was a question about planning for ag in emergencies. Roth mentioned Jim Octerski's work on this issue. Teeter mentioned the issues faced by farmers during the recent floods
3. Ag Plan: there is a 3-page summary of the 2006 work which can be e-mailed or mailed to members along with the original plan information; members will review this for discussion at the next (June) meeting. Most likely we will not meet in July and August and instead interested members can attend Farm City Day planning meetings. In September we will continue work on the ag plan update.

### **New Business**

1. Doyle reported both Teeter and he attended a meeting last week in Auburn to talk about town and county ag plans: what folks are doing, problems encountered, plans of work, etc. John Brennan, from NYS Ag and Markets, was a featured speaker. There was good discussion of the approaches people are taking. They were reminded of the diversity of ag in our county, and the need to ask the question "What is ag?" There is a need to continue to identify and be aware of the different types of ag operations in our county.

Adjourn 8:10 p.m.

**Next Meeting:** Wednesday, June 26<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 p.m.

# TOMPKINS COUNTY

## AGRICULTURE & FARMLAND PROTECTION BOARD

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615 Willow Avenue Ithaca, New York 14850  
Telephone (607) 272-2292 Fax (607) 272-7088

### Tompkins County Agriculture & Farmland Protection Board Minutes April 24, 2013

**Present:** Rachel Crispell, Lin Davidson, Scott Doyle, Irene Kehoe, Frank Proto, Monika Roth, Ed Scheffler, Craig Schutt  
**Liaisons:** Pat Pryor/County Legislature  
**Excused:** David Diaz, Bob Mazourek, Roy Trask  
**Staff:** Debbie Teeter  
**Guest:** Marguerite Wells, Black Oak Wind Farm, LLC

**Call to Order 7:00 p.m.**

**Presentation:** Marguerite Wells, Black Oak Wind Farm, LLC

Marguerite was introduced; she mentioned she is also a farmer –she has a nursery in Enfield. She is here to review the project, as is required. They have not yet submitted their draft GEIS to the Enfield town board, but will do this shortly. At that point the official review process will begin. She wanted to come this evening to talk about potential agricultural impact. The AFPB is an “interested” agency vs. an “involved” agency. The project began eight years ago, and she got involved six years ago; there have been many revisions, and the final plan is for seven turbines. The turbines are also smaller than the original plan, but not noticeably. The project will provide the equivalent of the power needs of 4000 households. They are talking to large local and regional entities to buy the power. This project is unique in that wind farms are typically owned by large corporations. This is a community-owned project with 84 local investors.

Ag Land impacts: four turbines will be on active farmland. Siting is directed not just by wind but land owner preferences. Turbines and access lanes are sited in cooperation with the landowners. There is only one place where collection lines do not follow laneways (referenced map). Collection lines are buried four feet down and can be farmed right over. The same with turbine bases, which are back-filled. Proto asked about security and emergency response. These issues are covered in the SEQR; they are working with the Enfield Fire Department on protocols. The Town law is well-written to make sure the Town is not left holding the financial bag. The turbines’ access doors are secure; there have been no appreciable vandalism to turbines elsewhere. There are occasional turbine failures, but the biggest danger is lightning strikes causing grass fires. For this reason, they have chosen turbines with the highest lightning protection. They also chose the quietest. If there are any additional questions, please contact Marguerite at [EnfieldEnergy@gmail.com](mailto:EnfieldEnergy@gmail.com).

**Additions:** Clean Water Act, Ethics Policy

**Approval of Minutes:** Month should read “March”; Moved by Proto, second by Kehoe, approved without dissent.

#### **Announcements:**

1. Teeter:
  - Circulated a letter from Bob Somers, Ag and Markets regarding the Danby Water District.
  - She received confirmation that Davidson was approved to fill the board vacancy by the County Legislature.
2. Roth:
  - A group of local folks have come together to talk about food with the intention of highlighting community-level activities around local food and agriculture. The hope is to get different community groups with the same or similar purpose working together. The group has been meeting since last November, and is largely driven by non-farmers.

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2. Kehoe:
  - Ulysses recently approved the use of ag exemption ceiling when determining fire and ambulance district tax on land eligible for ag assessment.

#### **Old Business:**

1. Farm City Day Planning: A small group met this afternoon to review and discuss the list of Tompkins County farms and identify potential hosts. The focus was on the west side of the lake, with the bison farm being a real draw. There is another interesting new ag operation in the area: Farmer Ground Flour's new mill. Also, Regional Access is nearby and may offer the opportunity to showcase local foods. The trail could be rounded out by one of several vegetable farms in the area. An alternative route could be developed in Caroline, if this one doesn't work out. There was also a discussion about how to recruit new members to the committee. Several names were suggested, and also possibly putting out a press release.
2. Lansing Ag Committee: Roth reported the committee is considering creating a new Ag Zone and moving some land from the Rural Ag (RA) into it. This is a major change, and would be a recommendation to the town. Also, there is a concern that some large farms are buying up land in the RA and in some places bumping up against residential property (some owned by absentee landlords). Residents are not even sure who to talk to when there's a concern, and smaller farmers are worried they are getting squeezed out. Teeter wondered if the project Sharon Heller, from County Planning, is working on could identify potential land for farming. Doyle added some ag landowners are actually making choices to sell for less to a smaller farm. Crispell said smaller farms are beginning to think the big guys are just getting too big. The hope is to wrap up and have the draft plan ready to present soon. Davidson agrees; there are problems, but there don't seem to be any easy answers. Roth said we are moving into a different time in agriculture, which probably started ten years ago but the impact is being seen now. Crispell said the increasing demand of the larger farms for feed has kept her son in business, growing crops to supply them. Schutt mentioned the 100-year study of dairying in Dryden might provide some insight on trends.

#### **New Business:**

1. Ethics Policy: Proto reported the County is starting to review a draft revision of the current Ethics Policy Standard of Conduct for County Employees. There is a section of that which would impact the AFPB: all advisory board volunteers will need to provide information about potential conflicts of interest and other information they might consider personal. He urges members to go to the County web site and review the draft revisions. Pryor said staff have not yet had a chance to review and provide input. The reason for the revision is the Standards of Conduct section of the existing policy is not in compliance with State regulations. Pryor will forward information to Teeter and she will forward.
2. Clean Water Act: Proto reported that concerns in the last couple years about onerous changes to the Clean Water Act may be proposed again. This board made a recommendation to the legislature on this issue last year and should be prepared to act again if necessary.
3. Assessment Update: The Informal Review Process has been completed. The majority of farmers who came in understood it once they saw the computations. The people with real issues were ag land owners who have never applied for the ag exemption. The Final Role will be compiled shortly and towns will be holding grievance sessions with local boards of review.
4. Ag Plan Update: Roth said we need to figure out how to make sure this board is involved in this process. She has a student for the summer to work on the data. There are many other plans that have been completed since this plan was written which need to be reviewed for inclusion. She referred to the work the AFPB did in 2006, which resulted in some very good strategies. Some have been accomplished and some have changed. These need to be reviewed, but should the board review these before or after focus groups? There were three major goals initially: Ag Economic Development, Ag Awareness, Supportive Govt/Land Use Policies. In 2006 we added Environmental Stewardship. She would like to add "growing the local food sector" as a separate goal, and the "energy area" – should these be focuses or not? What are the major themes we want to see in the update? Proto suggested keeping the three and expanding as Roth suggested. There was discussion about the growth and dimensions of local food production and purchase. It was suggested this be the focus of the next meeting.

Focus Group questions: what makes your operation successful, what are impediments and challenges, what do you see as future impediments, how keep their farm and sector viable, what can local govt do to support their sector. We know the timing is not ideal, but we are doing the best we can. In addition to direct contact with farmers we have done media outreach. Ag support industry operations were also suggested for inclusion.

Adjourn 8:55 p.m.

**Next Meeting:** Wednesday, May 22<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 p.m.

# TOMPKINS COUNTY

## AGRICULTURE & FARMLAND PROTECTION BOARD

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615 Willow Avenue Ithaca, New York 14850  
Telephone (607) 272-2292 Fax (607) 272-7088

### Tompkins County Agriculture & Farmland Protection Board Minutes March 27, 2013

**Present:** Rachel Crispell, Lin Davidson, David Diaz, Irene Kehoe, Bob Mazourek,  
Frank Proto, Monika Roth, Ed Scheffler  
**Excused:** Scott Doyle, Roy Trask, Craig Schutt  
**Staff:** Debbie Teeter

**Call to Order 11:40 p.m.**

**Additions:** Ag Land Revaluation, PEEQ vs. Economic Development, both under new business

**Approval of Minutes:** Moved by Kehoe, second by Mazourek, approved without dissent.

#### **Announcements:**

1. Teeter:
  - Sharon Heller from County Planning contacted Roth and her to say she's re-doing the Land Use/Land Cover maps and it looks like there is more land being farmed than the last time this was done in 2007. She's about 75% done, so we might have specific information for the next meeting. She also said this information will help identify land potentially available for farming. Davidson said Rob Gallinger, NRCS, has some very detailed maps of crops grown.
  - She has been approached by Monica Sherman (Ithaca Organics/Jerry Dell Farm) about coordinating a visit to JerryDell for 180 Dewitt middle school students. Assuming Boynton continues with this program, all ICSD 7<sup>th</sup> graders will have a dairy farm visit experience.
2. Davidson:
  - AgStravaganza! will be Saturday April 6<sup>th</sup>, 10-4, mostly inside but there will be big equipment outside. He has some posters if anyone can help distribute them.
  - Tomorrow he's going to Albany for an Ag and Markets farmland protection program update; everyone is hoping for another round of funding.
3. Roth: reported she participated in the Lansing Ag meeting last night, main issue discussed was the development of an Ag Zone from a subset of land currently in the RA (rural ag) zone. This was a preliminary discussion. There was good turnout and good participation.
4. Proto:
  - Hydrilla Update: Task force is ready to go again, planning another treatment in the lake. People still being pulled together, but there is a new program manager, James Balyszak. Research is being done on several area creeks entering the lake which appear to dispel the suggestion that agriculture is responsible for lake problems. There are concerns that dredging may bring up problems, including hydrilla, which is almost eradicated. Looking at the phosphorus in the lake, which type it is and where it may be coming from. We might want to invite the researcher, Steve Penningroth of the Community Science Institute, to speak at one of our meetings.
  - Asked whatever happened to Farm Bureau's Food Check Out Week. Davidson explained there has not been the buy-in needed from local grocers, and money is actually more needed by the Food Bank of the Southern Tier than food donations. TC Farm Bureau has been making cash donations more recently. Proto mentioned the lines at the food pantries are longer than ever.

5. Diaz: His last day with the Land Trust will be May 10<sup>th</sup>; he is perusing an education and career in viticulture. This seat is the land preservation expert, and the Land Trust staff has done a good job in on the board. The Land Trust is conducting a search to fill the position right now.

#### **Old Business:**

1. Ag Summit: A summary of evaluation comments were distributed and discussed. There is an Open House at the Snow Farm on April 6<sup>th</sup>, may be invitation only. Teeter mentioned the comment about not using compostable materials; often these materials are used at events and wind up in the regular waste stream. Davidson wondered about the comment "Individual farm planning that's realistic & supports community goals", not sure what this means. Assessment presentation was most popular. Scheffler mentioned the Ag Tourism Summit, better signage supported and allowed. This information will be useful for planning next year. Attendance was good, had a good turnout from municipal officials, but not the county legislature. Next year we will try to plan around standing and special committees, and also provide a special invite. We will get on this earlier next year.
2. Farm City Day Planning: Teeter explained the purpose of Farm City Day. Members brain-stormed possible hosts: Mazourek farms is a feed mill, Bucky VanPelt, Farmer Ground Flour Mill, Beck's Farm, Brian Magee, Ratbag Farm, Hardie's, Scheffler's, Snow's cheese plant, Veg operations, Ithaca Organics, Stick and Stone, West Haven, Thompson farm, Purdy's, Suwinski, Matt Dedrick (sunflowers, pellets, farm stand), Jeff Cook, Six Mile Creek, Jackson's Vineyard. Scheffler suggested bringing other producers/direct markers to the host sites. Mazourek asked about a date.
3. Ag Focus Groups: Teeter reported this is on track, she's working on an overall agricultural operation database. Market Growers turnout was dismal, but Roth expects we can gather information from this groups in other ways.

#### **New Business:**

1. Training for AFPB's: Information on this upcoming workshop was distributed, Kehoe and Teeter expressed interest.
2. Ag Land Revaluation: Proto reported that since the revaluation notices have gone out, representatives have been getting a lot of phone calls from constituents. He wondered what kind of calls others have been receiving. He finds people have a completely erroneous idea of why this increase occurred. Kehoe said they sent out about 5000 changes, which also included new constructions and other increases. This preliminary mailing allows time for Assessment to sit down with landowners who have questions. Only 612 people have responded in one way or the other. They are doing presentations: tonight in Ulysses, tomorrow morning in Lansing and on April 4<sup>th</sup> in Caroline. Most people have been courteous. She shared some of the worksheets they've done for people to help them understand and evaluate what happened. She's had many conversations with Pat Conlon of Lansing, a former farm appraiser, and he thinks Assessment is pretty much on target. Davidson said people seem to be understanding it, Crispell wondered if people are just becoming numb to this sort of thing, thinking what can they do about it. Jay Franklin will be talking about how fire taxes are determined. There was discussion about the Ag Ceiling set by the State and how it's been climbing and the need to update the formula. Roth said we need to remind farmers about the NYS farmers tax credit. Kehoe said they are seeing farmers with residual land that is not part of the farm operation. There is also a question, following Bob Somer's presentation at the Ag Summit, about under which circumstances, if any, woodlands on rented land might be eligible for ag assessment. Teeter reported she's been taking calls from people looking for farmers for vacant land. Diaz is also getting calls from folks looking to reduce their tax liability, and wondering about conservation easements. Proto said he is taking questions about the STAR exemption and an upcoming need to reapply, which may happen with the State in 2014.
3. PEEQ vs. Economic Development: The county legislature's former Planning, Development, and Environmental Quality committee is now two separate committees: Planning, Environment, & Environmental Quality and Economic Development. The AFPB currently reports to PEEQ, but is that the best fit? Diaz asking if are there committee charters; there are and we can look at copies at the next meeting, and Proto will also look into this further.

Adjourn 1:30 p.m.

**Next Meeting:** Wednesday, April 24<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 p.m.

# TOMPKINS COUNTY

## AGRICULTURE & FARMLAND PROTECTION BOARD

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615 Willow Avenue Ithaca, New York 14850  
Telephone (607) 272-2292 Fax (607) 272-7088

### Tompkins County Agriculture & Farmland Protection Board Minutes February 27, 2013

**Present:** Rachel Crispell, Scott Doyle, Irene Kehoe, Bob Mazourek, Frank Proto,  
Monika Roth, Ed Scheffler, Craig Schutt  
**Excused:** David Diaz, Roy Trask  
**Liaisons:** Lin Davidson/Farm Bureau, Pat Pryor/PDEQ  
**Staff:** Debbie Teeter

**Call to Order 11:45 p.m.**

**Additions:** none

**Approval of Minutes:** Doyle corrected the information about the flood maps – conversations are occurring but not being updated. Moved by Kehoe, second by Crispell, approved without dissent.

#### **Announcements:**

1. Teeter:
  - Last year's Ag Summit was given a Sign of Sustainability Award by Sustainable Tompkins.
2. Doyle:
  - American Farmland Trust started a series of webinars for ag professionals, Roth and Teeter also participated, possibly Diaz as well; focus seems to be on farm transfer. Roth mentioned the land link concept. She has a Cornell grad student interested in working on this concept and is looking for funding. Doyle would be happy to help.
  - Tomorrow he's going to Albany for an Ag and Markets farmland protection program update; everyone is hoping for another round of funding.
3. Pryor:
  - Just came from a meeting in Lansing with DEC representatives regarding a 500 acre parcel in the northwest of the town for a state forest. This is a preliminary discussion, one issue is that part of the land is currently leased for farming; there is a way for this to stay available for agriculture. The land is owned by the NYSDEG parent company. Davidson mentioned a letter of support from the AFPB board might be helpful at some point.
4. Proto:
  - Some years ago there was an effort to create the Danby Academy for Ag, Hort, and Env. Teeter and Roth were also involved. The intent was to work through BOCES, and some programming did occur. Some funding was secured, and programming evolved into the New Visions programs through BOCES. A couple weeks ago he met with Ron Accera and some others, and there may be interest in resurrecting this program on some sort of basis around job training. He's been making some contacts about this, to find interest and funds. Roth said there is a youth garden group in Danby that is searching for a home. Also, see if Workforce development could get involved. Davidson urged this group to make sure they are aware of existing similar programs.

### **Old Business:**

1. Member Vacancies: Crispell and Baker's terms have ended; Crispell is willing to serve again, and the members support this. Two other applications were submitted. Members reviewed and discussed the merits of each candidate, one of which currently serves as a liaison from Farm Bureau. Motion by Proto to nominate Crispell and Davidson to fill the vacancies, and offer the 3<sup>rd</sup> candidate an associate membership. Second by Mazourek, seven ayes, one abstention. These applications will be forward to the legislature.
2. Ulysses Ag Plan: Members have reviewed the plan changes. Roth read some e-mails from Town government and a farmer updating the status of the plan and outlining what is needed from the AFPB. Proto asked if there had been any objections from Town Board members to any of the edits. There is no indication of that. Doyle said the specific concerns were removed. Teeter read the motion the members wrote in support of the Town of Ithaca Ag Plan. Motion to approve the proposed plan and include the following recommendations and be communicated as appropriate, 2<sup>nd</sup> Schutt, approved without dissent.
  - A goal to establish an Agricultural Advisory Committee to oversee plan implementation and provide input to the Town on matters pertaining to agriculture land in the Town;
  - Specific Goals, Actions Steps and Timeline for plan implementation;
  - General areas of the Town where agriculture is active and should be protected;
  - A thorough review of the Town Zoning Ordinance with recommendations for the
  - Town to consider when updating it Zoning Laws; and
  - Many current and potential tools for use in farmland protection are referenced in the plan.
3. Ag Summit: Teeter provided a draft of the agenda, menu and sponsors solicited. Many of the lunch ingredients will be locally sourced, and RSVP's are coming in. The Dairy Princess will be there and serve milk punch.
4. By Laws: Members were provided with the sections of the by laws dealing with term limits (we have them but can override them), and the attendance policy.

### **New Business:**

1. Day Time Meetings Time: Teeter inquired if members would like to eat and work to stay on schedule for day time meetings – yes. The meetings move to evening in April; there was discussion about starting evening meetings at 7:00 rather than 7:30 and all were in agreement.
2. Town of Danby Water District: Ag and Markets has requested comment of the Danby water district which the board reviewed last year. Motion by Doyle to send to the State the comments previously provided directly to the Town of Danby, second by Proto. All in favor.
3. Ag Focus Groups: Teeter reviewed the ag sectors and farms identified so far. Members reviewed list to help identify farms by sector. Roth and she developed a monthly schedule of when to bring each sector together. Reserving rooms at CCE is proving problematic. The Health Department meeting rooms up by airport were suggested as an alternative.
4. Farm City Day Host Farm: There was discussion about changing the format to a "trails" event, which was meet with enthusiasm. Several members (Bob, Irene & colleague, Lin, Ed) volunteered to help identify potential hosts and start planning.

Adjourn 1:35 p.m.

**Next Meeting:** Wednesday, March 27<sup>th</sup>, 11:30 a.m.

# TOMPKINS COUNTY AGRICULTURE & FARMLAND PROTECTION BOARD

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615 Willow Avenue Ithaca, New York 14850  
Telephone (607) 272-2292 Fax (607) 272-7088

## Tompkins County Agriculture & Farmland Protection Board Minutes

January 23, 2013

**Present:** Rachel Crispell, David Diaz, Irene Kehoe, Frank Proto, Monika Roth,  
Ed Scheffler  
**Excused:** Scott Doyle, Bob Mazourek, Craig Schutt, Roy Trask  
**Liaisons:** Lin Davidson/Farm Bureau, Pat Pryor/PDEQ  
**Guests:** Phil Munson, Jay Franklin

**Call to Order 12:00 p.m.**

### Introductions of board and guests

**Presentation by Jay Franklin, County Assessor:** Franklin presented information about the review of Agricultural Properties and resulting data on Ag taxable values. He provided a handout summarizing data collected. It has been several years since the county has specifically reviewed farmland sales. Because of cropland demand by both dairy and crop farmers, there has been an increase in farmer-to-farmer land sale prices. 965 parcels were reviewed for the 2013 assessment roll; they used 2012 aerial maps as part of the revaluation process as well as sales transaction data. While the assessed value of land will increase, farmers will still receive an exemption if they apply for ag land assessment by due April 1. **Tax notices will be mailed on March 8; informal reviews can be scheduled between March 18 and April 5. The Tentative Roll will be posted on May 1.**

A key concern of farmers is that taxes are a huge burden and while they receive ag exemptions, it is not on the full property they own. Also, the State Ag Ceiling values have increased 10% per year for several years now so the exemption is diminished. There is state legislation to cap the increase in ag values from year-to-year at 2%. It may be time to use a new formula for determining ag ceiling values.

It is important for farmers with concerns about their assessment to schedule a review meeting.

**Approval of Minutes:** Moved by Kehoe, second by Proto, approved without dissent.

### Announcements:

1. Proto:
  - a. The Town of Enfield will be contracting with the County to conduct an Aquifer study. The motivation is coming from concern over fracking and the need for baseline data.
  - b. The county PDEQ committee is splitting into two committees: Economic Development and Planning and Environmental Quality. AFPB is scheduled to continue under PDEQ, however, he is concerned about ensuring that Ag's economic impact is also recognized and valued. It may be important to report to Economic Committee annually to give them an ag update.
  - c. The 1981 Flood maps are being updated.

### **Old Business:**

1. Town of Ulysses Ag Plan: Roth attended a town public meeting on 1/16 – it was well attended by the Town's farmers. A key concern was over a statement regarding minimum lot size in ag areas as being 25 acres. There was the feeling that this would just accelerate farmland loss and that lots should be kept small so as to conserve larger fields. The deadline for comments on plan is Feb. 1, then it will go to the full town board for consideration in February. There seemed to be some suspicion that there were major changes made to the plan since it was approved by the Ag committee but those that have reviewed it indicate that is not the case.
2. Board Vacancies: There are two farmer vacancies at present: Crispell and Baker. Roth mentioned that AFPB operating guidelines do not include term limitations though it might be considered. Crispell indicated an interest in continuing on the board but not as chair. Lin Davidson has also submitted an application. At this time there were no other applications, but Phil Munson was in attendance to learn more about the board (Roth will follow up with him); also Dave Buck, a Lansing farmer, has expressed interest. Roth will check with Baker to see if he intends to stay involved. If not, the board can review applications at the February meeting, and Crispell's and the board's recommendation for the other vacancy can be submitted to PDEQ in March.
3. Future Agenda Item: Review operating guidelines and discuss attendance policy and term limits.
4. Officers for 2012: Crispell indicated she did not want to continue as chair and she nominated Scheffler, who accepted the nomination. Motion by Crispell to appoint Scheffler as Chair, second by Proto, all in favor. Motion by Monika to appoint Crispell as Vice Chair, second by Scheffler, all in favor. Congrats to our new officers.
5. Ag Summit draft agenda: Roth circulated the draft program. Questions were asked about the program format...full day with lunch or half day. There was more board interest in a full day but the logistics are more challenging given limited time. Proposed date is Feb. 27 but we could go a week later. Topics include estate planning, local laws & ag district law, farmland tax review, and Ag plan update. Diaz also volunteered to talk about easements. Roth will continue working on this and hopes to finalize it soon
6. County Ag Plan Grant Work Plan: Roth circulated a draft work plan; the next step is to plan focus group meetings for industry specific input. She asked about which industry sectors could be grouped and which should be held as stand-alone. Scheffler expressed interest in an organic industry group. She also asked if board members wanted to be part of a working group but the consensus at this time is to have staff provide leadership and the Board provide input at monthly meetings. Roth will work with County Planning to finalize the draft work plan.

### **New Business:**

1. Town of Lansing Sewer District: The town has received funding from the NYS Economic Development Corp, Southern Tier district. There is renewed interest in running the sewer up to Kingdom Farm. It would be good to have the Lansing Ag Committee meet and weigh in on plans; Roth will contact them.
2. Towns of Enfield and Newfield Comprehensive Plans: Newfield is developing a Comprehensive Plan and Enfield is updated their Plan. Both towns are reaching out to CCETC for assistance/info. Roth will keep everyone informed as to relevant progress.

Adjourn 2:00 p.m.

**Next Meeting:** Wednesday, February 27<sup>th</sup>, 11:30 a.m.

D.  
2013 Agriculture Sector Focus Groups  
Meeting Notes  
&  
November 2013 Farm Meeting Notes

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## Tompkins County Ag Plan Update Focus Groups Summary of Comments

### Market Growers

**Contributors:** Dennis Hartley

*What makes your operation successful?*

- Super-Cider Sundays - education: hand-pressing more intimate
- Adaptable marketing, re: RA's
- More customers, multiple visits
- Good ag practices
- Diversity in population

*Challenges?*

- Customer education: varieties/crops, production methods
- Pricing – too high for some people
- Rental rates for farmers market stalls
- Change in characteristics of customer: used to come to pick for storage, now come to pick for fun
- Lack of understanding of what makes good customer service
- Jump in ag land values

*Future of the industry?*

- More and more wholesale production going to G.A.P.S. gaps

Any market saturation? Suggestions for new operations:

- Do your homework
- Find your niche

### Equine

**Contributors:** Al Becker

*What makes your operation successful?*

- Not having a mortgage
- Being able to acquire fencing & other building materials inexpensively
- Having investors
- Being able to have horse in different locations
- Uses top-rated studs
- Stick to what they know: thoroughbred breeders, not trainers
- Mares foal in a space attached to the house with surveillance
- Don't crowd the space they have
- Buys grain for specialized dealer, high-protein
- They race the foals
- Stock is very expensive, can't afford stud fees, so he breeds for a 3<sup>rd</sup> party; he's the breeder, gets breeder fees
- Solid partnership with owners, they respect his opinions
- Horses know and trust him

*Challenges?*

- People breed indiscriminately; just because you have a horse doesn't mean you are a breeder
- NY Fees are outrageous; many livestock hauls register in Maine, far cheaper.
- Heavy-handed approach to things like the ag census
- Taxes
- Municipal regulations that exceed state requirements

*Future of the industry?*

- Not sure, but overall in general this society is not (shrinking middle class) going to have the disposable income to support the industry
- Find a way to get around problems, change your idea so it fits town requirements

## **Large Livestock**

**Contributors:** Reynolds family, Teeter family

*What makes your operation successful?*

- Resilience – ability to prepare for the unexpected
- Diversity of marketing opportunities

*Challenges?*

- Can't find enough pasture and crop land to support operation – to rent or buy
- Need more direct market customers
- Need for culverts under busy roads for crossing livestock
- Ag laws, zoning good but seem to be encroaching, municipalities don't seem to know about ag and related laws.
- Tax the heck of people who feed us.
- More land, better equipment, better access.
- Local Feed Exchange: for farmers to post prices they've paid and who they've bought from; need mechanism for bulk purchases
- Getting into USDA slaughter facilities
- Feeds have doubled (hay, grain)
- Unexpected catastrophes (bison let out, disease outbreak, etc.)
- Understanding the global markets involved in growing crops and animals here.
- Ag often left out of emergency planning
- Water – where it is, how to use it, difficult to do big picture planning when programs approach is piece-meal. Also problem with diverted water from development. Need to haul water some times of the year.
- Hard to find farm land to buy – there may be willing sellers, but they are complacent holding on to it.
- Neighbor relations, complaints
- Bullying from municipalities, etc when they are leaving u alone, u don't want to speak up about a problem and make waves.
- PDR: a current downside is that the ag value has increased significantly in the county, closing the gap to the development value. Consolidation of ag land is occurring and planned to occur.

*Future of the industry?*

- Opportunities for job training and creation
- Need for municipal ag advisory committees

## **Small Livestock**

**Contributors:** Lisa Ferguson, Erica Frenay, John Wertis

*What makes your operation successful?*

- Have explored everything, if were younger would market in NYC
- Also selling hay
- Loose-knit cooperation btwn producers
- Being retired has provided the opportunity to peddle to restaurants/provide chefs with samples; restaurants are ever-changing market, partly due to competition
- Have to be creative
- Keeps land attractive to renters by keeping good quality seed on the ground
- Not where want to be yet
- Rotationally grazing at much higher rate
- Angoras were a good choice: very docile, easy to contain, but cashmeres jumpy, also more prone to twins and triplets, so herd grows (too) quickly.

- Lots of support from local community; interest in buying our products; great access to mentors and ag support network
- Incredible demand for local foods, and many different venues providing connections between consumers and farmers
- Diversification (sell hay in addition to raise goats)
- Loose-knit cooperation btwn producers
- Has time to peddle to restaurants
- Keeps good seed on fields he rents for hay to keep them attractive to renters

### *Challenges?*

- Deer, deer, deer; specifically the parasites they have in common with small ruminants, DEC doesn't recognize PIO US Worm (parasite) as justification for a nuisance permit
- Need vets knowledgeable about small ruminants
- Possible/pending legislation limiting access to farmer-administered animal antibiotics
- Feed supply – infrastructure is contracting – goes to Dryden for Blueseal feed (can get corn and soybeans nearby)
- Paying \$4 a bale for hay [might be low?]
- When you're small, who can afford hay-making equipment?
- Do some towns have restrictive laws:
- Animal Rights activists, causing problems over guard dogs; there are some restrictive housing regs
- Limited market for meat goats, better for sheep
- Lack of slaughter facilities
- Climate: droughts have a big influence on production
- Registered farm as an LLC, started getting stuff from people offering to help advertise new status, apparently there is a law requiring this, but there is no consequences for not doing this.
- Too many animals right now, some for sale, not too hard to find buyers – fiber goats
- Cashmere goats produce far less fiber than the Angoras, time to re-think their place in the herd.
- Disconnect btwn bank and current farm land values: appraised at \$1000 and assessed at \$3200
- Needs a shop and a sign – people want a connection to a farm, goats are right-sized for farm visits, but town regs make a bldg. and sign hard
- Keeping up with pasture rotation during a drought
- Considered cottages for visitors, but really moving away from that
- Needs time, resources to do what they'd like
- Really nice signs are stolen
- Service trucks park way off the road, right in the pasture
- Had to go to auction to buy hay last year, couldn't find elsewhere; the old guys have strong networks to get what they need – how do you find/build a network?
- Lower overhead costs, less predation pressure
- More processing infrastructure, more options for local and/or organic grain feed rations
- Access to processing facilities, high feed prices (esp. organic)
- Higher fuel prices will make travel to processors even more expensive, higher electricity prices will make freezer storage more expensive, climate change makes planning for forage and feed more challenging
- Limited market for meat goats; better for sheep
- Deer have parasites that are dangerous to small ruminants
- Need vets knowledgeable of small ruminants
- May soon be legislation limiting access to animal antibiotics
- Feed supply infrastructure is contracting – have to travel to get what is needed
- If you're small scale, tough to afford hay-making equipment
- Fed govt – tracking, bio-security, chips in ear tags
- Overly restrictive municipal laws
- Animal rights activists

### *Future of the industry?*

- Feds tracking livestock, bio-security, chips in ear tags
- Need some sort of recognition for farmers – like sign program recognizing farms so people recognize farms and the stewardship farmers provide
- Farmers need to understand they are competitors – how much room is there for more producers?
- Trying to decide – in full time, or out and part time
- Trend toward direct marketing
- Hear from a lot of folks who plan to have a goat farm
- There is good, professional help available in this county
- Value-added is required - can't make on just flees and pelts, working with NYC designer/weaver
- Adopt local food laws to support small farmers (like what's been spreading among Maine towns: <http://www.beginningfarmers.org/another-town-passes-ordinance-against-state-and-federal-inspection-of-local-food-in-maine/>) - a bit radical, but if Maine can do it, why not Ithaca?

## **Field Crops**

**Contributors:** Lin Davidson, Alan Teeter

*What makes your operations/industry successful?*

- Enjoyment, nice to be able to be educated to figure out how to grow the crops
- Grain industry: can be successful because there are family or multifamily corporations with institutional memory – know what to do/not do
- Growing up on the farm, learn it from parents/ grandparents; then inheriting land, equipment, etc. so there's low overhead - allows for part-time operations/would be hard to do full time
- Rule for farmers used to be “marry a school teacher”
- Diversity of crops that can be grown and places/ways to sell them
- Flexibility/Ingenuity: Growing crops is not a year-around job; successful crop farmers figure out how to fill in the gaps; i.e. Jason Turek markets produce year around
- Cooperation with larger nearby farm.

*What are the challenges for your operation/industry, now and in the future?*

- Finding reliable, temporary help.
- Being flexible
- Finding a market for your products
- For the small guys: price of fuel, taxes, equipment maintenance
- Land access, across the board
- No longer have income-averaging to provide a cushion for lean years
- Potential move to raise capital gains taxes
- Getting parts for equipment/equipment fixed: takes half a day to a day and half or more to get something needed
- Keeping up with everybody else
- Getting into the “network”
- Poorly timed Farmers Markets; should be 4-7 in the evening for folks after work

*Impact of Climate Issues?*

- Potential for double cropping – follow wheat with soybeans
- Plant longer-season hybrids, which more likely to have higher production
- Potential for heavy downpours/deluges

*What do you see 50 Years down the Road?*

- Monster farms and small niche operations and part-timers

*Rental land Issues – rates? Availability? Secure (leases? Rates? People get ag assessment? Impact on operation if rented land went away?*

- Increasing competition, especially after you've made inputs
- Lots getting sold out from under them for use by bigger operations
- New non-farm owners have unrealistic expectations of rents

- Rents reaching as high as \$75/acre, although have heard as high as \$150 in Cayuga Co.; also, now seeing “shares” in the crop produced, i.e. a 60/40 split
- Some leases are being written for 10 years w/option to buy
- Farmers from over the county line coming in – need a better handle on this

*What is the future of the land if you stop farming? What motivates you? Is this something that could expand in this county? Why or why not?*

- Land’s worth twice what it was last year
- Not sure, it’s likely to go to someone else to farm it
- Hope children will take over
- Relationships with those on and around the land are part of what holds you to the land, if there is a disconnect, there can be a loss of the next generation

*Help us understand field crops marketing: Where do your crops go? How do you make your connections? Who buys your products?*

- Prices are up now, especially on corn
- A lot of old family/old farmer connections
- Some farmers work six counties: integrated operations, i.e. trucking, grain, equipment, etc.
- The Board (Chicago) that the prices come off of; have been around for 100 years, difference now is the international market, but Chicago is still setting the price
- New operations setting up in the Ukraine, where land is under-utilized
- International lack of infrastructure, no-frills equipment
- Pacma (Perdue ag marketing association), Lakeview, Oswego, also Lansing Grain (in Michigan)
- Product is sold nationally and internationally, through rail cars to eastern sea ports

### **Forest Owners**

**Contributors:** Tom Seeley, Tim Levatich, Lew Ward

*What are the successes/opportunities for forest owners?*

- Forest owner education groups and support are important - I count on the New York Forest Owners Association, CCE, and NYSDEC.

*What are the problems/treats facing forest owners?*

- Paying the taxes on their forest land.
- Property taxes are eating us alive. Value growth of top quality, fully stocked, hardwood timber, managed well, cannot even pay the taxes on the tree farm acreage.
- Insects and disease vectors driven by climate change.
- The “Emerald Necklace Syndrome”; some people think my forest management decisions should be influenced by the public.
- Human-transported diseases and pests will continue to present a major catastrophic threat to our regional forests.
- The loss of forest land, particularly well managed and sustainable forests.

*What do you see for the future of local/regional forests, both positive and negative?*

- Natural gas development will seriously degrade our regional forests.
- Property taxes will continue to promote subdivision of real estate, taking more forest land out of active management.
- Variable climate will continue to stress our trees, reducing overall quality and yield of forest products.

*How can the County, by itself and/or in partnership with existing agencies and organizations (Cooperative Extension, DEC, SWCD, etc.) do to support and assist forest owners?*

- Provide tax relief: forest land that is under a conservation easement should be taxed at its actual market value, not the value that it would have if it could still be developed
- Keep up the good work with forest management education. New programs aimed at the public and children will support forest landowners in making better choices for their forests over the long term.

- Make sure the concept of land preservation is not the ONLY option being praised as ideal land management (this is another aspect of the Emerald Necklace Syndrome).

*What else would you like to tell us?*

- I'm very impressed with the quality of CCE personnel and programs. You all deserve a big Thank You! Keep your dedication strong - you are doing good work.

*\*\*More info to come after Forest Owners 10/1 meeting*

## **BIG Ideas for Ag Plan Update – Nov. 20 Ag Meeting**

### Future of Farming

- Land for Farming
- Conserve Land
- Viable Farms
  - What Should Be Preserved or Not
- What is Appropriate Development
- Conservation of Resources
  - Environmental Protection
- Handle Land Taxes
- Grant Outreach → Info

### Ag Ed

- Non-Farm Education & Schools
- Disclosure Notice
- Town Education
- Farming Is Good Healthy Land Use
- Cost of Community Services
  - Education on Real Cost

### Farm Estate Planning

- Age Lower – Hort, Animals...
- Non-Family Succession
  - Timing
  - PDR
- Transfer Issues
- Why Punished for Not Selling
  - Assessment
- Opt In Spec Ag Info Distribution
- Money
- Young Engagement
  - Land
  - Funds
  - Older/Younger TTC
  - Internships

### Policy

- Allowed Farm Enterprises on Adjacent Lands
- Support & Protect
  - PDR
  - Guidance
- Buffer Zones
  - Timber increase Awareness
  - Wood Lands
- Property Rights

### Marketing

- Co-Op Marketing/Processing/Storage
  - Pride of NY
- Farms of Distinction (like Dairy of Distinction)
  - Agri-Tourism Important
- Experimental Tourism
- Slaughter Facilities

## Individual Ideas from farmers present at Nov. 20 Ag Meeting

### Policy

- Reduce tax burden
- More education of Town & Planning Board.
  - Advise townships on ag districts, and their purpose.
  - Advise on Right to Farm Laws.
- Encourage development rights Purchases
- Establish Agriculture Advisory Board at town level- city level mtg tax
- Disclosure Notices- Require purchasers in Ag District to view a video that addresses issues that arise living next to a farm- smells, loose livestock, manure spreading, farm operations at night/early morning during planting and harvesting.
- Tax policies that discourage conversion of Farmland.
- Communities should be compensated for loss of farmland – real cost.
- Tax policy that focuses on local ownership.
- Support and develop succession planning for non-family successors
- Ag Zoning: Let small business thrive.
- Site planning that considers ag use
- Land Link
- Property Rights- buffer zones around Ag
- Identify potential Ag Land
- County level action

### Ag Awareness and Education

- Educate public about farm equipment on roads, i.e. SMV's are not driveway markers
- Ag in the Schools
- Young Farmers Club.
- Education of non-farm community
- Continue schoolchildren
- Educate population on the rules and reg farms are required to adhere to. Keep up on rules and regulations.

### Local Food

- Local Food Trail
- Bike to Farms
- Sunday Open House.
- Farmer's Market

### Ag Economic Development/Marketing

- Dryden Farmers Market
- Cooperative Marketing for smaller farms, i.e. Lamb Marketing; pool a large number of animals for big sale to large markets, for example New York City.
- Support for shared process/storage centers.
- Promote small slaughterhouses (USDA or otherwise). Meat pre-hung for customers. Processing of animals for consumers
- Dissemination of farming grants and programs available for farmers
- Encourage good drive-by farm appearance

E.  
2014 Ag Summit  
Notes

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## 2014 Tompkins County Ag Summit Ag Plan Update Strategy Discussion Notes

### Agriculture Economic Development

- new products in demand – what are they and how to get started
- business development/expansion/diversification – what are the opportunities
- ways to stay afloat when costs keep going up
- infrastructure needs on farms
- funding for ag projects including infrastructure -- construction
- marketing—finding markets, exploring opportunities – fostering connections
- support service needs: slaughter facilities; commercial kitchen; biofuel processing; equipment parts; tack shops; hay suppliers, etc.
- collective purchasing/marketing as a way to save money/increase returns
- risk management – pests, parasites, weather/climate change
- farm generated energy: biomass, methane, wind, solar, etc.
- Solar development (group 1)

### Ideas for addressing the above needs?

#### *Group 1*

- Dairy, organic dairy- Byrne building a new plant in Cortland
- Diverse (Groton Food Hub) marketing outlets from Community to direct
- Cold storage
- Value- added processing- yogurt, hard cider, wine, distilling, malting, beer
- BuyLocal –completing the local diet
- Energy – solar development and other NYSERDA
- Coop buying to cut costs- seeds, solar (Solar Tompkins\_, plastics, etc...

#### *Group 2*

- Hay market for export
- Agritourism- we are a destination – farmstand/u-picks
- Silropasture – forest development
- Buy Local 7 CSA's
- Forestry industry- underdeveloped
- Diversification and small scale
- Maple industry development – profit?
- Alternative Energy development-wind, biomass (---- , pellets), solar
- Value added – hops & malting
- Green Building – straw bale, timber, old barn
- Works against us
  - Code enforcement & policy/laws zoning
  - Work force training needed

### **Local Foods** - rank the issues above as to importance: H= high; M=medium; L=low

- products in demand **M, L, H, H, M, H, M**
- quality production for successful marketing **H, H, H, M, L, H**
- GAPS – food safety requirements **H, H, M, M, H, H, H**
- marketing—multiple strategies, finding markets, exploring opportunities – fostering connections **H,H, H, H, H, H, M, H, M, 1**
- lots of local food producers – competition **H, M, M, L, M, L, M**
- viability of small food producers **H, M, H, H, H, M**
- consumer data – targeted marketing **M, M, M, M, M, H, H, 2**

- local food prices – can customer afford local foods *yes, household priorities* H, M, M, H, H, M, H, H
- value added products and services M, M, L, H, H, H, M
- agritourism H, M, M, H, L, M

What topics are missing?

- Offering of Local Foods at local supermarkets – prominent placement. Wegman’s does some of this I think. Tops not so much.
- Markets/Local Co-ops/grocery stores need more
- Consumer education (why local is better)
- Consumer education; increase the customer base
- Education to kids; targeting the young generation,
- consumer education,
- convenience foods vs. health cost
- Consumer education: local is better!
- Direct education
- Taxes must come down!!!

Ideas for addressing the above needs?

- More networking opportunities for farmers and producers with retail business
- Agri-tainment
- sense of community
- education of young people
- Farm tour weekend
- farmers making connections with consumers
- education- seasonal cooking
- kid specials – education target kids
- Rural community lost – food- community could build on each other
- Middle class prioritized spending away from food, but could afford
- Eat local for health vs. taste
- Tompkins is relatively educated
- Farm tours- weekends
- Food as a sense of community
- Consumer education – CSA you will live longer
- Marketing –delivering of crops to the consumer

### Land Use Policy & Regulations

- changing federal/state regs – food safety, labor, trucking, etc.
- local regs: zoning requirements
- development impacts: roads, drainage, culvert maintenance
- value of farm land – assessment practices; taxes are a challenge
- land access for farming; rental rates

**Environment** Rank the issues above as to importance: H= high; M=medium; L=low

- sustainable farming practices to protect the environment, *Nutrient guide* H, 4, H, H, H, H, H, H, M, H, H, H, H, H
- climate change (risk management), *react or effect, diversity* L, 1, M, M, H, H, M, H, L, L, M, L, M-L, M, M
- protecting water quality, *storm water regulation* H,2, H, H, H, H, H, M, H, H, H, M, H, H, H
- wildlife issues, *deer on forest land/raise quotas/ length of season* L, 3, M, M, M, M, L, M, L, M, H, M, M, H, H

- development impacts, *storm water regs, pesticides for lawns* H, 5, M, M, H, M, M, M, H, M, M, H, M, M, M
- energy from farms, *windmills, more grants for farmers (2 people)* M,6, MM, L, M, H, H, L,L, M, M, M, M, M

What topics are missing?

- Invasive species (7 people)
- Wetlands (4 People)
- Air quality (4 people)
- Household chemical use
- Resilience
- Regeneration practices
- Industry pollution
- Household, urban chemicals use and pollution (3people)

Ideas for addressing the above needs?

- Ithaca fork
- Soil building
- Decentralization of food production
- Reduce deer herd (allow harvesting in suburban area) No fee for landowners, longer season
- Soil arrays
- Energy for farms
- More - larger grants for wind-solar-etc
- Education re: bio fuels
- Education of local residents re: water quality
- Sustainable- not just organic: cover crops, no-till, composting
- Risk management = diversity of crops
- Wildlife – increase quotas, longer season, fee-free hunting for landowners
- Emphasize energy alternatives
- Water quality – continue on-farm programs to clean up cow barn yards
- Urban education; lawn spraying, salt spreading , household chemical pollution

**Ag Awareness/Ag Education** Rank the issues above as to importance: H= high; M=medium; L=low

- neighbor relations H, H, H, M, M, M **local, H let me know when you are fertilizing**
- farm safety issues: trespass, slow moving vehicles, animals, transmitting pests, etc. L, M, H, H, M-**local**,
- educating public about farms and farming practices M, M-fb, L, H, H
- youth education M, H-school, H, Public, H- **Public relations, H, outdated resources**
- farmer recognition L, M-FB, M, L, M, M
- how we communicate about agriculture – dealing with negative perceptions M, M, L, M, M
- media stories L, M, L, **NOT Neg** , M-H, M
- agritourism H, M **County, school, M, M, M**
- **Many overlaps all are high-priority**

What topics are missing?

- Farming with disabilities
- Wildlife management (deer, rabbits)
- Aged
- Access to workable land
- 4-H should be in every school!

Ideas for addressing the above needs?

- Intergrated curriculum –ag ed
- Connect with / TC3
- What resources already exist the could be implemented
- What are target audiences
- Food growing programs – summer oversight- resilience
- Dawn – No Ag Ed/FFA programs other then
- LeGrace- Kid’s get extended cheese and don’t recognize “cow” “cheese”
- Farm to Table/consumer education
- Teacher training opportunities

**Future Farmers/Workforce** Rank the issues above as to importance: H= high; M=medium; L=low

- farm transfer to family or non-family members (estate planning) **H, H**
- beginning farmers **H, M**
- farming mentors to help beginning farmers **M, L**
- finding reliable help **L, H**
- training programs **L, H**
- immigration reform bill **L**
- labor law restrictions and crackdowns **M, M**

What topics are missing?

- Financing
- Marketing products and lifestyle
- Laddor movement
- Financing
- Marketing FB

**Focus Group: Future Farmers/Workforce** - Rank in importance: H=high, M=medium, L=low

H farm transfer to family or non-family members (estate planning)

H/M beginning farmers

H framing mentors to help beginning farmers

H/M finding reliable help

H/M training programs

\*M/L immigration reform bill

\*M/L labor law restrictions and crackdowns

*\*level of importance was split between the large farm and the small farm*

What topics are missing:

- Financing
- Agri-tourism
- Technology & Social Media (webpages/facebook, etc)
- Bookkeeping
- Follow up from youth farm programs
- Marketing (“how to” for products & future/young farmers)
- Leap from employee to manager
- Educate older farmers in regards to financing or supporting young farmers
- farming for people with disabilities
- farming for veterans/veterans with disabilities
- how/where to start kids with farming interests and move them through to a TC3 or Cornell program

Ideas for addressing the above needs

- getting help (financial & emotional) from family for new farmers
- use of websites to help farmers

- youth farm program
- TC3 new program
- Agricultural Justice Program
- Farmers Veterans Coalition
- reaching out to older farmers to mentor/assist young farmers
- mentorship programs

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F.  
May 2015 Farmer & Agricultural Land  
Owner Meetings Notes

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## May 2015 Farmer and Agricultural Land Owners Meetings

Each meeting began with an introduction to the plan and overview of the process. Attendees were provided with Post-it notes and asked to list their issues and concerns, one per Post-It. They were then asked to place their notes on sheets of paper, each listing one of the draft plan's major goal themes. Once this was finished, we moved these notes onto newsprint of each major theme that included strategies and action steps, noting those issues generated by the group which were already included in the strategies and action steps. Each person was then provided with 18 "sticky dots" and asked to use them to identify what they considered to be the most important action steps.

The following are the comments provided at both meetings:

### Agricultural Economic Development

Facilitate on-Farm/Farm Support Infrastructure

- Lack of capital for infrastructure and repairs

Develop a Comprehensive Marketing Strategy

- Advertising class classes? How to effectively
- Lack of promotion of product
- Ag Economic Development –
  - monitor enhancement
  - volume added

Develop a Regional Website

- Need butchers – (USDA or not)

### Local Foods

- Organic food more expensive
- Easier access or more times to get food lockers
- Small flocks
- Address seasonality
  - Hoop houses
  - Preservation to develop year supply
- Developing Direct-to-Consumer Markets
- Community Kitchen
- Modernizing Ag & Markets Processing Regs for small to mid-sized livestock producers
- Organic/conventional compatibility, ie: GMO, spray drift

### Land Use Policy and Regulations

- Preserve and promote farmland
- Land use laws that restricts sale of farmland zoning
- Taxation assessment
- Animal numbers cow is not comparable to a 90lb sheep (in Ulysses)
- Taxes
- Housing encroachment
- Finding a way to reduce cost for large land holder
- Regulation State/Federal
- Increasing amount of regulations
- Government Regulations Local level, noise ordinance "Comprehensive Plans, Z word
- Government regulation state level
- DEC DOT
- Tompkins NY Taxation and labor cost. When your competition is global
- Even income over good and bad years
- We do not need any more contracts on our farms
- Regulation

- Farm size/ completion for land/resources
- Large industrial farms are forcing the price of farmland too high
- Land taxes
- Overall taxes are too high, it is ridiculous that woodland is assessed at 2500 per land
- High tax price of Ag land in Ulysses
- Federal programs favor big farms
- Big farming favored
- Policy and regulations consistence of large-small organic-other
- Land availability
- Land Grab Techniques
- Protection for future farmlands
- Understanding cons easements
- Comp. plans and impacts down Towns' Ag

### **Agricultural Awareness**

- Population expansion around Ithaca
- County-wide tours of elected/appointed officials
- Misconception by non-agriculture public
- Non-farmer resident compliant about necessary farm operations
- Traffic/development
- Education and outreach
- Industry public perception that conventional food is unsafe and mistreats their livestock

### **Environmental Quality**

- Manure spreading pollution?
- Industry funds
- Seed for cover crops
- Misunderstanding of farm practices that may or not be environmentally damaging
- Science educator GMO what it means
- Ag awareness
- More info about NYSERDA programs
- Poor condition of a number of county highways
- For Ag Energy and cost source
- Energy- looking at renewables
- 

### **Future Farmers/Workforce**

- Grants for small farmers fencing etc.
- Labor
- Seasonal help
- Labor availability
- Lack of mechanical knowledge or nearby repair facilities
- Encourage young farmers (fix regulations)
- Cost of land and inaccessibility to beginning farmers
- Work on immigration policy
- Rising minimum wage
- Rural internet
- Farmer age
- Train more certified butchers
- State and Federal Labor Laws
- Making land available to new farmers
- New owners for Finger Lakes Woolen Mill?

G.  
Goals, Strategies, and Actions:  
complete list

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## Goals, Strategies, and Actions

Below is a summary of the six main goals of the Tompkins County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan. It includes background of the plan goal, a goal statement, a list of objectives and potential actions as generated in the planning process with the farmers and agricultural land owners in the County.

### 1. **Agricultural Economic Development**

A healthy agricultural economy depends on farmers' ability to meet changing consumer demand for existing and new products. This can create a need for marketing and business development assistance and consideration of expansion and/or diversification. Agricultural operations also need on and off farm infrastructure necessary for optimum operation.

Farmers are often challenged by the increasing costs of doing business while dealing with variable product demand and price. Smaller operations are hindered by the lack of quality farm land at affordable prices, the high cost of equipment and the inability to purchase feed and supplies at bulk rates.

Farmers are seeking to become established or expand and diversify by growing larger – acquiring more land and livestock, by seeking specialized product and marketing niches, and by adding value to commodities.

Goal: To encourage business development, expansion, and diversification, promote collaboration and networking, and improve access to support services and markets necessary for viable farm businesses.

1. Support opportunities for business development, expansion, and diversification
  - Provide direction for producers seeking value-added processing assistance
  - Compile and make available financial resources for producers, including loans, grants, buying clubs, etc.
  - Identify and promote existing models of collaboration between large and small farms
  - Assist producers in evaluating their operations for size, niche, and integration opportunities based on markets, cultural practices, available resources, etc.
2. Facilitate On-Farm/Farm Support Infrastructure
  - Work with other agencies to secure funding for farm construction and improvements
  - Create a regional hub for feed and other supplies
  - Promote shared equipment among smaller producers
  - Investigate options for shared processing equipment and shared cooler and freezer space
3. Develop a Comprehensive Marketing Strategy
  - Work with producers to identify new product demands and market to a diverse customer base
  - Help producers become proficient in the global commodities marketing system
4. Develop a Regional Website to Meet/Support industry Needs
  - Compile a list of wanted and needed conventional and organic feeds, hay, custom work, etc. to include prices and descriptions
  - Compile a regional list of USDA/NYS slaughter and processing facilities, explore funding for mobile processing unit
  - Compile a regional resource of farriers, tack shops, hay suppliers, etc.
  - Help identify sources for equipment, parts, and repair
5. Identify and publicize vets knowledgeable about small livestock
6. Address Risk Management Issues
  - Host a series of discussion meetings for producers to discuss what's in place and what is needed for farms in the event of an emergency; create and share an action plan from that information to share with municipalities
  - Encourage DEC to recognize deer parasites' harm to small ruminants as justification for a Nuisance permit

## **2. Local Foods**

Meeting an increasing demand for locally-produced products creates opportunities for smaller-scale and niche farmers. However, changing consumer interest and demand can threaten farm viability.

Consumers shopping for local foods typically have higher expectations for freshness and taste as well as concerns about production methods and food safety. There is a need to better understand who is the local product consumer, and also who is not buying local products and why.

Marketing is often a challenge, and farmers typically lack a background in sales. Linking producers with new buyers and promoting local foods to consumers will help to grow the sector.

Goal: Pursue a policy which encourages local production, educates farmers and consumers, and promotes consumption at every level (personal, institutional, etc.).

1. Assist Producers in Meeting the Demand for Products
  - Help producers access existing and new marketing outlets
  - Work with diverse ethnic groups to identify potential demand for new products
  - Assist producers in identifying new products to meet customer interest
  - Facilitate farmer-retailer networks to Increase local product presence in local stores
  - Identify opportunities for added value processing of local agriculture products
2. Promote Quality Production and Food Safety
  - Host producer workshops about good agricultural practices (GAPS)
3. Assist in the Development of Marketing Strategies
  - Help farmers become more effective marketers regardless of which channel they use
  - Identify new marketing strategies to access more local and regional consumers (i.e. agritourism is one way to attract new customers to the area)
  - Provide instruction on effective producer-consumer/buyer communications
  - Educate consumers about buying local foods and how to use them
  - Coordinate Farm Tour weekends promote local foods to consumers
4. Support Farm Viability
  - Consult with small, local struggling farmers' markets to identify and resolve problem
  - Help farmers become more proficient at analyzing crop profitability and returns by market channels so they are more strategic in what they grow and where they sell their products.
5. Local food consumer profiles
  - Conduct a consumer survey to determine why they choose local, where and when they shop local, sales trends, etc.
  - Similarly identify barriers to local food purchasing (price, convenience, etc.)

## **3. Land Use Policy and Regulations**

State and Federal policies are constantly changing and farmers have a hard time weighing in on their potential impact before they are implemented. Many policies are driven by people who have very little understanding of agriculture and implications of proposed policies on both large and small farms.

At the local level, municipal officials seeking ways to grow their communities may promote development in areas detrimental to the continuation of farming. Many are unfamiliar with agriculture in their community and the benefits it provides in terms of jobs, taxes, and open land. The NYS Agriculture District Law provides some protection for farming operations, however, municipal officials are unfamiliar with how this state law relates to local laws and their enactment.

Goal: Support diverse farming opportunities through land use public policies and actions that protect farmland. Such practices, implemented across jurisdictions, should improve access to farmland and support operations that do not have adverse impacts to other farm operations or the environment.

1. Educate about negative impacts of some local regulations and zoning requirements on agriculture
  - Encourage Towns to appoint Ag advisory committees
  - Host regular workshops for municipal officials and employees about local laws that exceed state requirements and/or are unreasonably restrictive for agriculture
  - Educate municipal officials about the cumulative and increasing impact of development on ag land: roads, drainage, culvert maintenance
  - Encourage farmers to stay informed on municipal issues and organize to respond when topics will impact agriculture
  - Tours for government officials to farms in their town/county
2. Provide Accurate Farmland Valuation Information
  - Host workshop for landowners to learn about assessment policies and practices and reducing taxes through Farmers School Tax, ag assessment, combining parcels, etc.
  - Provide information on ways to reduce taxes on forested lands
  - Develop model lease of development rights program, in light of diminished PDR interest
  - Develop informational flyer for lenders to fix the disconnect between banks and current land values
3. Alleviate Land Access Issues
  - Promote LandLink as a tool to link land seekers with landowners looking to rent or sell rural properties
  - Develop an educational flyer for landowners to determine realistic land rental rates
  - Educate landowners about the importance of maintaining farm facilities and keeping fallow fields mowed for future use and improved farm value
  - Provide workshops about Purchase of Development Rights and Conservation Easements

#### **4. Agriculture Awareness**

With less than 2% of the population living on farms, and most people being four or more generations removed from the farm, the gap between farming today and most people's concept of that activity is quite large. Ignorance and misunderstandings lead to conflict with neighbors and threats to farm and farmer safety.

A multi-dimensional approach to agricultural education, understanding, and appreciation is needed. Farmers need to be able to tell their own stories be recognized for their important contributions to their communities, the environment, and the economy.

Goal: Develop programs that improve understanding of farming practices and the contributions farmers make to our community.

1. Improve Farmer-Neighbor Relations
  - Work with farmers to find ways to defuse neighbor complaints and threats about farm activity, and provide liaison services for farmers needing to use the last-resort of Ag and Markets intervention
  - Educate the public that forest and farmland is privately owned and should not be entered, or items removed from it, without owner permission
2. Protect Farms from Non-Farm Safety Threats
  - Provide seasonal education about the potential dangers of unsafe driving near farm equipment (for example, the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of April is Road Safety Week)
  - Educate the public about the threats to farms from human transported diseases and pests
  - Distribute information about local Animal Rights Activist activities to the farm community
3. Provide Public Education Outreach
  - Address concept of "industrial ag" with understanding that Agriculture is business and industry, and economies of scale apply
  - Provide positive/factual/informative media reports and explain how farms are regulated farms to counter misinformation

- Provide research-based education about farm production methods
  - Provide Farm to Table/consumer education
  - Help farmers understand how to communicate effectively without negative comparisons about other farms
  - Arrange for opportunities for farmers to be in grocery stores next to and talking about their products
  - Develop and implement a farm recognition sign program
  - Create and distribute videos of successful farming
4. Provide Youth Education Outreach
- Seek supporting documentation from schools with AgEd/FFA programs, engage local ag supporters to push for these programs in all schools
  - Support school food growing programs
  - Support and encourage 4-H in all communities
  - Offer teacher training opportunities to educate them about local agriculture and the local food system
  - Coordinate farm tours for teachers and youth

## 5. Environmental Quality

Agriculture serves an important role in maintaining environmental quality. Sustainable agricultural practices, required by regulation on our larger farms, protect water quality and provide wildlife habitat. Unfortunately, some wildlife has negative impacts on farm crops, livestock, and forest land.

Farmers are adept at dealing with some climatic changes and emerging pests, however, excessive rain and drought and high temperatures will present seasonal challenges. Emerging pests pose new problems and require timely research into control options.

Agriculture offers opportunities for alternative energy sources, some of which are compatible with farm land and others that can be produced from farm byproducts.

Goal: Model and promote sustainable agricultural practices that encourage the protection and conservation of Tompkins County's agricultural and natural resources.

1. Promote Sustainable Farming Practices
  - Encourage use of cover crops, no-till, composting, and other such practices that improve soil health
2. Identify and Address Climate Change Implications
  - Seek research grants to help producers assess the potential for double cropping, longer season/higher yield hybrids; and ways mitigate production impact from too much or too little rain
  - Monitor emerging pests of importance to farmers and provide information on their management/mitigation
3. Promote Water Quality
  - Provide public education about how farms protect water quality
  - Identify and publicize programs to assist farms in meeting storm water regulations
  - Identify and publicize programs for barnyard cleanup and manure management to reduce water pollution
  - Educate farmers about wetlands identification and protection; encourage farmers to enhance vegetative buffers
4. Address Wildlife, Invasives, and Insect Damage
  - Encourage an increase in quotas and season for deer management; no fee for land owners
  - Provide model hunting lease to agricultural land owners
  - Educate producers and landowners about potential herd damage from predators (dogs, coyotes, wildcats) and ways to eliminate threats
  - Seek funding sources to aid producers in fencing high value vegetable and fruit crops

- Provide landowners with education and eradication methods for Invasive species
5. Mitigate Impacts of Development
    - Educate municipalities about the need to adhere to storm water regulations and not allow storm/surface water to be diverted onto farm land
    - Educate municipalities about the impacts of loss of forest land
  6. Promote and Support Energy from and on Farms
    - Help producers learn about NYSERDA energy conservation and renewable energy funding opportunities
    - Assist producers in evaluating production of biofuel crops
    - Work with interested producers to develop a local, grassroots farm group working on extruders for vegetable oils, pellet making, etc.

## 6. Future Farmers/Workforce

The traditional model of passing down the farm still exists, but new models for farm transfer, ownership, and preparation are needed.

For farm and many rural children choosing a career in agriculture, the path is clear: work on a farm or with farm animals, attend an Ag school. For other high schools aged youth, information is needed about the many possible ways one might work in agriculture. There need to be systems for to train and educate students so they can transition into the workforce or select an appropriate college major.

Interest in farming is being fueled by the local foods movement. There are many individuals seeking to start small scale direct market farms in our area. Many start by working on established farms, gaining experience. Some have farm mentors, and others seek assistance from Cooperative Extension or have attended farm business classes offered by Groundswell Center for Local Food and Farming. All are challenged to find land, acquire resources, or secure markets.

Labor regulations pose several challenges: dairy farmers utilizing contract labor are concerned about the stability of their workforce in light of immigration laws; new farmers are unfamiliar with labor laws in general and labor laws prevent farm children from helping on the farm.

Goal: Create an environment that connects young people and others interested in farming with farming experiences and opportunities that result in future farmers and successful farm employees.

1. Facilitate Farm Transfer: to family or non-family
  - Identify and promote alternative models to family succession, i.e. multi-family enterprises, partnerships, etc.
  - Host workshops on the integration of the next generation into farm operation and ownership
  - Provide estate planning assistance to farms that will help the next generation start out with lower overhead
  - Provide land planning services for transitioning farms
  - Develop mechanism for proactive linking between retiring and young farmers
  - Seek and publicize financing opportunities
2. Facilitate Farm mentorship
  - Develop mentorship opportunities by recruiting older farmers to assist new farmers
  - Identify and publicize existing opportunities, i.e. Groundswell's CRAFT program, Cornell, TC3, TST BOCES
4. Promote Education and Training
  - Educate students about skills that are associated with agriculture, i.e. bookkeeping, product development and marketing, etc.
  - Educate students about pathways to knowledge: preparing for secondary education
  - Support the development and continuation of Youth Farms
  - Provide new farmer training programs for adult learners seeking to start a farm (Groundswell Center for Local Food & Farming and Cooperative Extension offer a Farm Business Training class)

5. Facilitate Workforce Development
  - Identify ways to find reliable temporary help; address availability, attraction and retention
  - Offer training for farms in the use of technology: websites, social media, etc.
  - Provide opportunities for job training and creation; help farmers identify opportunities for advancement for their employees
6. Raise Awareness about Immigration and Labor law Issues
  - Coordinate organized farmer pressure on federal representatives to reform immigration law
  - Provide workshops to teach farmers what children can do on specific types of farms
  - Help farmers prepare for labor crackdowns and labor shortages

H.

Goals, Strategies, and Actions:  
Matrix with priorities and timeline

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<b>Chart Key</b>	<u>Source</u> AS: Ag Summit DA: Dairy EQ: Equine FC: Field Crop FM: Farmer Mtg	<u>Time Line</u> MG: Market Grower FO: Forest Owner LL: Large Animal Livestock SL: Small Animal Livestock	<u>Who</u> S: Short M: Medium L: Long	<u>Who</u> AFPB: Ag & Farmland Board CCE: Extension SWCD: Soil & Water Cons Dist FSA: Farm Service Agency FB: Farm Bureau	<u>Who</u> Assess: TC Assessment Plan: TC Planning AFM: American Farmland Trust Ag Mkts: NYS Ag & Markets TCAD: TC Area Development
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Goal Statement <i>5-27-15 draft</i>	Strategy	Action Step	Source	Priority Rank	Time Line	Web Site	Who
Ag Economic Development	Support opportunities for business development, expansion, & diversification	Provide direction for producers seeking value-added processing assistance	AS	*****	S		AFPB CCE
		Compile and make available financial resources for producers, including loans, grants, buying clubs, etc	FC, MG, LL, SL	*****	S	x	AFPB CCE
		Identify and promote existing models of collaboration between large and small farms	FC, SL, DA, AS	*	S		AFPB CCE
		Assist producers in evaluating their operations for size, niche, and integration opportunities based on markets, cultural practices, available resources, etc.	SL, FC, AS, EQ, DA		M		AFPB CCE
	Facilitate On-Farm/Farm Support Infrastructure	Work with other agencies to identify funding for farm construction, improvements		*****	S	x	AFPB, CCE, FSA SWCD TCAD
		Create a regional Hub for feed and other supplies	DA, LL, EQ	*	L		AFPB CCE
		Promote shared equipment for small producers	SL, LL	*****	M		AFPB CCE
		Investigate options for shared processing equipment, cooler & freezer space			M		AFPB CCE
	Develop a Comprehensive Marketing Strategy	Work with producers to identify new product demands and to market to a diverse customer base	FC, SL, LL	****	M		AFPB CCE
		Help producers become proficient in the global commodities marketing system	LL, FC		M	x	AFPB CCE
	Develop a Regional Website to Meet/Support Industry Needs	Compile a list of wanted and needed conventional and organic feeds, hay, custom work, etc, to include prices and descriptions	SL, DA, LL	*****	S	x	AFPB CCE
		Compile a regional list of USDA/NYS slaughter and processing facilities, explore funding for mobile processing unit	SL, LL	*****	S	x	AFPB, CCE USDA
		Compile a regional resource of farriers, tack shops, hay suppliers, etc	EQ		S	x	AFPB CCE
		Help identify sources for equipment, parts, repair	FC, LL	*	S	x	AFPB CCE

Goal Statement 5-27-15 draft	Strategy	Action Step	Source	Priority Rank	Time Line	Web Site	Who
	Address Risk Management Issues	Host a series of discussion meetings for producers to discuss what's in place and what is needed for farms in the event of an emergency; create and share an action plan from that information to share with municipalities	FC, SL, DA, LL	*****	M		AFPB, CCE Plan
		Encourage DEC to recognize deer parasites' harm to small ruminants as justification for a Nuisance permit	SL	***	M		AFPB CCE, FB
Local Foods	Assist producers in meeting the demand for products	Help producers access existing and new marketing outlets	SL	****	M		AFPB CCE
		Work with diverse ethnic groups to identify potential demand for new products	MG, DA	**	M		AFPB CCE
		Assist producers in identifying new products to meet customer interest	MG	*****	M		AFPB CCE
		Facilitate farmer/producer-retailer networks as a way to increase local product presence in local stores	AS	*****	M		AFPB CCE
		Identify opportunities for added value processing of local agricultural products	MG	*	L		AFPB CCE
	Promote Quality Production & Food Safety	Host on-going producer workshops about good ag practices	MG	*****	S		AFPB CCE
		Provide instruction on effective producer-consumer communications	MG	***	S		AFPB CCE
		Assist producers in identifying well-suited crop varieties to meet customer interest	MG	*	M		AFPB CCE
		Promote the usefulness of GAPS for producers and offer GAPS workshops	MG	*	M		AFPB CCE
		Promote existing community kitchens, work to add more	FM		M		AFPB CCE
		Identify and seek solutions to issues between convention and organic neighbors, i.e. GMO, spray drift	FM		L		AFPB CCE
	Assist in the Development of Marketing Strategies	Help farmers become more effective marketers regardless of which channel they use	AS	*****	M		AFPB CCE
		Identify new marketing strategies to access more local and regional consumers (i.e. agritourism is one way to attract new customers to the area)	SL, LL, DA, AS	***	L		AFPB CCE
		Provide instruction on effective producer-consumer/buyer communications	AS	***	S		AFPB CCE
		Educate consumers buying local foods and how to use them	AS		M		AFPB CCE
		Coordinate Farm Tour weekends for local food producing farms	AS	*****	S		AFPB CCE
	Support Farm Viability	Consult with small, struggling farmers' markets to identify and resolve problems	AS, DA	****	M		AFPB CCE

Goal Statement 5-27-15 draft	Strategy	Action Step	Source	Priority Rank	Time Line	Web Site	Who
		Help farmers become more proficient at analyzing crop profitability and returns by market channels so they are more strategic in what they grow and where they sell their products.	MG	*	L		AFPB CCE
	Build Consumer & Non-Consumer Profiles	Conduct a consumer survey to determine why they choose local, where & when they shop local, sales trends, etc	MG	*	S		AFPB CCE
		Similarly identify barriers to local food purchasing (price, convenience, etc.)	MG, AS	***	M		AFPB CCE
Land Use Policy & Regulations	Educate Local Officials about Local Regulations, Zoning Requirements that conflict with Ag Dsitrcit Law	Encourage towns to appoint ag advisory committees	DA, SL, LL	***** *****	M		AFPB CCE
		Host regular workshops for municipal officials and employees about local laws that exceed state requirements and/or are unreasonably restrictive for agriculture	EQ, DA, SL, AS	***** *****	M		AFPB, CCE Ag Mkts
		Educate municipal officials about the cumulative and increasing impact of development on ag land: roads, drainage, culvert maintenance	AS	***** ****	M		AFPB CCE
		Encourage farmers to stay informed on municipal issues and organize to respond when topics will impact agriculture	LL, DA	*****	L		AFPB, CCE FB
		Provide first-hand knowledge about agriculture by organizing tours for government officials to farms in their town/county	FM		S		AFPB CCE
	Provide Accurate Farmland Valuation Information	Host workshop for landowners to learn about assessment policies and practices and reducing taxes through Farmers School Tax, ag assessment, combining parcels, etc.	EQ, LL, FC, FO, AS	***** *****	S		AFPB, CCE Assess
		Provide information on ways to reduce taxes on forested land	FO	*	L		AFPB, CCE Assess
		Develop model lease of development rights program, in light of deminished PDR value	LL	**	M		AFPB, CCE, AFT Plan
		Develop informational flyer for lenders to fix the disconnect between banks & current land values	SL		M		AFPB, CCE Asses
	Alleviate Land Access Issues	Promote LandLink as a tool to link land seekers with landowners looking to rent or sell rural properties	FC, LL, DA, EQ	*****	M		AFPB CCE
		Develop an educational flyer for landowners to determine realistic land rental rates	FC	*	S		AFPB CCE
		Educate landowners about the importance of maintaining farm facilities and keeping fallow fields mowed for future use and improved farm value	DA, LL, EQ	*	M		AFPB CCE

Goal Statement 5-27-15 draft	Strategy	Action Step	Source	Priority Rank	Time Line	Web Site	Who
		Provide workshops about Purchase of Development Rights and Conservation Easements	FM		S		AFPB, CCE Plan, AFT
Ag Awareness	Improve Farmer-Neighbor Relations	Work with farmers to find ways to defuse neighbor complaints & threats about farm activity, and provide liaison services for farmers needing to use the last-resort of Ag and Markets intervention	LL, SL, DA	*****	L		AFPB CCE
		Educate the public that forest and farmland is privately owned and should not be entered, or items removed from it, without owner permission	FO, LL, SL, DA	****	L		AFPB CCE, FB
	Protect Farms from Non-Farm Safety Threats	Provide seasonal education about the potential dangers of unsafe driving near farm equipment: 3rd Week of April is Road Safety Week	DA, AS	*****	S		AFPB CCE, FB
		Educate the public about the threats to farms from human transported diseases & pests	FO		L		AFPB CCE
		Distribute information about local Animal Rights Activist activities to the farm community	LL, SL, DA		L	x	AFPB, CCE FB
	Provide Public Education Outreach	Address concept of "industrial ag" with understanding that Ag IS business and industry, and economies of scale apply	DA, AS	*****	L		AFPB CCE
		Provide positive/factual/informative media reports and explain how highly regulated farms are to counter misinformation	DA	*****	M		AFPB, CCE SWCD, FSA, FB
		Provide research-based education about products and production methods	DA	**	L		AFPB CCE
		Provide Farm to Table/consumer education	AS	*	M		AFPB CCE
		Help farmers understand how to communicate effectively without negative comparisons about other farms	DA	**	M		AFPB CCE
		Arrange for opportunities for farmers to be in grocery stores next to and talking about their products	DA	***	S		AFPB CCE
		Develop and implement a farm recognition sign program	SL	**	M		AFPB CCE
		Create and distribute videos of successful farming	DA	**	M		AFPB, CCE, FB
	Provide Youth Education Outreach	Seek supporting documentation from schools with AgEd/FFA programs, engage local ag supporters to push for these programs in all schools	AS	*****	L		AFPB, CCE, FB, FFA
		Support school food growing programs	AS	*****	M		AFPB CCE
		Support and encourage 4-H in all communities	AS	****	M		AFPB CCE

Goal Statement 5-27-15 draft	Strategy	Action Step	Source	Priority Rank	Time Line	Web Site	Who
		Offer teacher training opportunities to educate them about local agriculture and the local food system	AS	*	S		AFPB CCE
		Coordinate farm tours for teachers and youth	FM		S		AFPB CCE
Environmental Quality	Promote Sustainable Farming Practices	Encourage use of cover crops, no-till, composting, and other such practices that improve soil health		***** ***	M		AFPB, CCE, FSA SWCD
	Identify and Address Climate Change Implications	Seek research grants to help local producers assess the potential for double cropping, longer season/higher yield hybrids	FC	**	L		AFPB CCE
		Monitor emerging pests of importance to farmers and provide information on their management/mitigation	FO	*****	M		AFPB CCE
	Promote Water Quality	Provide public education about the relationship between Best Management Practices improved water quality		*****	M		AFPB, CCE, FSA SWCD
		Identify and publicize programs to assist farms in meeting storm water regulations		***	S		AFPB, CCE, FSA SWCD
		Identify and publicize programs for barnyard cleanup & manure management to reduce water pollution		**	S		AFPB, CCE, FSA SWCD
		Educate farmers about wetlands identification and protection; encourage farmers to enhance vegetative buffers	ARFA, AS	*****	M		AFPB, CCE, FSA SWCD
	Address Wildlife, Invasives, & Insects Challenges	Encourage an increase in quotas and season for deer management, no fee for land owners		***** *****	M		AFPB, CCE DEC
		Provide model hunting lease for ag land owners			S		AFPB CCE
		Educate producers and landowners about potential herd damage from predators (dogs, coyotes, wildcats) and ways to eliminate threats	SL	**	M	x	AFPB CCE
		Seek funding sources to aid producers in fencing high value vegetable and fruit crops	MG, FC, AS	*	M		AFPB CCE
		Provide landowners with education and eradication methods for Invasive species	AS	*	M	x	AFPB, CCE, FSA SWCD
	Mitigate Impacts of Development	Educate municipalities about the need to adhere to storm water regulations and not allow ground water to be diverted onto farm land	AS	***** ****	M		AFPB, CCE, FSA SWCD
		Educate municipalities about the impacts of loss of forest land	FO	**	M		AFPB CCE
	Promote & Support Energy from & on Farms	Help producers learn about NYSERDA energy conservation and renewable energy funding opportunities	AS	*****	S		AFPB, CCE NYSERDA

Goal Statement 5-27-15 draft	Strategy	Action Step	Source	Priority Rank	Time Line	Web Site	Who
		Assist producers in evaluating production of biofuel crops	AS	**	M		AFPB CCE
		Work with interested producers to develop a local, grassroots group working on extruders for vegetable oils, pellet making, etc	DA	***	L		AFPB CCE
Future Farmers Workforce	Facilitate Farm Transfer: to family or non-family	Identify and promote alternative models to family succession, i.e multi-family enterprises, partnerships, etc.	ARFA	***** *****	M		AFPB, CCE FarmNet
		Host workshops on the integration of the next generation into farm operation & ownership	DA	****	S		AFPB, CCE FarmNet
		Provide estate planning assistance to farms that will help the next generation start out with lower overhead	SL, FC	*	M		AFPB, CCE FarmNet
		Provide land planning services for transitioning farms	ARFA	**	M		AFPB CCE
		Develop mechanism for proactive linking between retiring and young farmers	DA	***	L		AFPB CCE
		Seek and publicize farm financing opportunities	AS		S		AFPB CCE
	Facilitate Farm Mentorship	Develop mentorship opportunities by recruiting older farmers to assist new farmers	AS	***** ***	M		AFPB, CCE TCFB
		Identify and publicize existing opportunities, i.e. Groundswell's CRAFT program, Cornell, TC3, TST BOCES	FC, DA, AS, LL, SL	*	S	x	AFPB, CCE TCFB
	Promote Education & Training	Educate students about skills that are associated with agriculture, i.e. bookkeeping, product development and marketing, etc.	AS	****	M	x	AFPB, CCE TCFB
		Educate students about pathways to knowledge: preparing for secondary education	AS		M		AFPB, CCE TCFB
		Support the development and continuation of Youth Farms	AS		M		AFPB CCE
		Provide new farmer training programs for adult learners seeking to start a farm (Groundswell Center for Local Food & Farming and Cooperative Extension offer a Farm Business Training class)			S		AFPB CCE
	Facilitate Workforce Development	Identify ways to find reliable temporary help; address availability, attraction and retention	FC, DA, AS, LL, SL	*****	L		AFPB CCE
		Offer training for farms in the use of technology: websites, social media, etc.	AS	****	S		AFPB CCE

Goal Statement <i>5-27-15 draft</i>	Strategy	Action Step	Source	Priority Rank	Time Line	Web Site	Who
		Provide opportunities for job training and creation; help farmers identify opportunities for advancement for their employees	FC, DA, AS, LL, SL, AS	*	M		AFPB CCE
	Raise Awareness about Immigration & Labor Law Issues	Coordinate organized farmer pressure on federal representatives to reform immigration law	DA	*****	L		AFPB TCFB
		Provide workshops to teach farmers what children can do on specific types of farms	DA, MG, FC	***	S		AFPB CCE
		Help farmers prepare for labor crackdowns and labor shortages	DA, FC	*	M		AFPB, CCE TCFB

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I.

# Agriculture & Farmland Protection Board Purchase of Development Rights Criteria

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**Criteria to Identify Strategic Farmland for Protection**  
***From Tompkins County PDR Feasibility Study, Frantz, et.al. - Nov. 2001***

1. Soil Quality: target only the better quality soils for protection.
2. Farm Size and percent used for crop or livestock production: target larger parcels with a higher percentage of land available for production.
3. Proximity to other viable farm operations and farmland: protect larger tracts of contiguous active farmland and blocks of farms.
4. Conformance with local municipal land-use plans: land chosen for protection should be located outside areas selected by local government for development through zoning or infrastructure investments.
5. Density of rural sprawl: area for protection should have a demonstrated loss of farmland due to creation of frontage lots and nonfarm residential development to reduce the further loss of valuable farmland.
6. Land is within an ag district or outside the district but receiving ag assessment: indicates a commitment on the part of the owners to ag.
7. Proximity to environmentally sensitive areas: protect natural resources and open space.
8. Stewardship of the land: participation in federal conservation programs and best management practices.

**State PDR Program Criteria**

*Highest Priority Given to the following:*

1. will preserve viable ag land (land highly suitable for ag production which will continue to be economically feasible for such use if property taxes, farm use restrictions, and speculative activities are limited to levels approximating those in commercial ag areas not influenced by non farm development)
2. located in areas facing significant development pressures
3. serve as a buffer for a significant natural public resource containing important ecosystem or habitat characteristics

*Consideration is also given to:*

1. number of acres to be protected
2. quality of the soil resources involved
3. percentage of total farm acreage available for production
4. the extent to which the proposed property is bordered by or proximate to other farms already protected by conservation easement or which might be expected to enter into a farmland preservation agreement in the future
5. the level of farm management demonstrated by current owner
6. the likelihood of property succession as a farm if present ownership changes
7. the cost of the proposal in terms of achieving the best value for the funds requested
8. the reasonableness and feasibility of the proposal

**Federal Farmland Protection program**

- land must contain at least 50% prime, unique, state or locally important soil or listed historic or archaeological sites
- land must be subject to a pending offer from an eligible entity for the purpose of limiting conversion to non-ag uses
- eligible land includes cropland, rangeland, grassland, pasture land and forest land that is part of an ag operation
- demonstrate a commitment to long term conservation of ag land
- capability to acquire, manage and enforce easement
- staff capacity to monitor easement
- availability of funds for 50% of the appraised market value of the easement or funds at least 25% of the value if the landowner donates up to 25%

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# H.

## ClimAid Report Information

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# Climate Change in New York State

## Refined and Updated Projections



The New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) has been studying, documenting, and modeling the impacts of climate change in New York State for several years. As public awareness of the impacts of climate change has grown, so have NYSERDA's efforts to better understand and forecast both gradual changes and extreme events. In 2011, NYSERDA released *Responding to Climate Change in New York State* (ClimAID), which provides climate projections for the state, as well as detailed information on New York's adaptation strategies and vulnerability to climate change. Working with the original ClimAID researchers and using the most up-to-date datasets, improved baseline scenarios, and the latest generation of climate models and emissions projections, NYSERDA has released *Climate Change in New York State: Updating the 2011 ClimAID Climate Risk Information* (the 2014 Update).

## Climate Change Is Happening in New York State

Across the Empire State, temperatures are increasing; along the coastline, the sea level is rising. These changes are projected to accelerate because of increased concentrations of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases (GHGs) in the atmosphere. Throughout the Northeast, heavy rain events have become more frequent, and cold events have become more rare. These and other climate changes are projected to lead to increasing impacts across New York State's economy and natural systems. Not all of these changes will necessarily be gradual; when certain tipping points are crossed, impacts can increase dramatically. Impacts from climate change are already affecting every part of New York State—water, energy, agriculture, ecosystems, and other social and economic systems—and all its 20 million inhabitants.



# CLIMATE PROJECTIONS

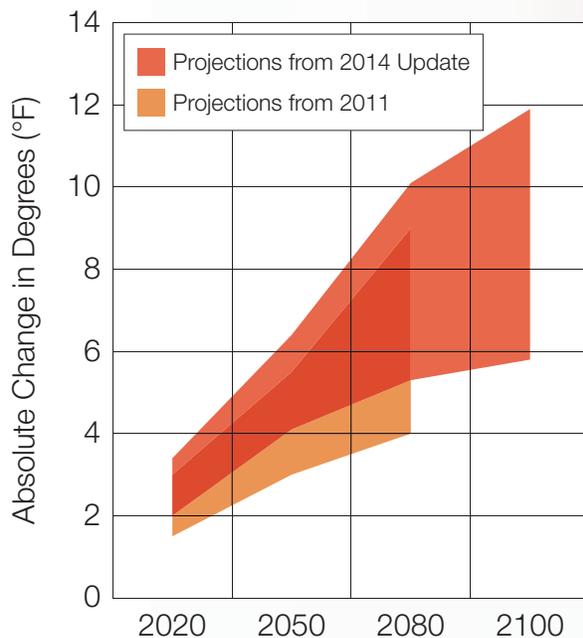
## Projections for New York State

Updated climate models and methods have helped scientists refine their previous projections for higher average temperatures, changing precipitation patterns, and sea level rise in New York State. Scientists also project an increase in the frequency of extreme events, such as heat waves, heavy downpours, and coastal flooding.

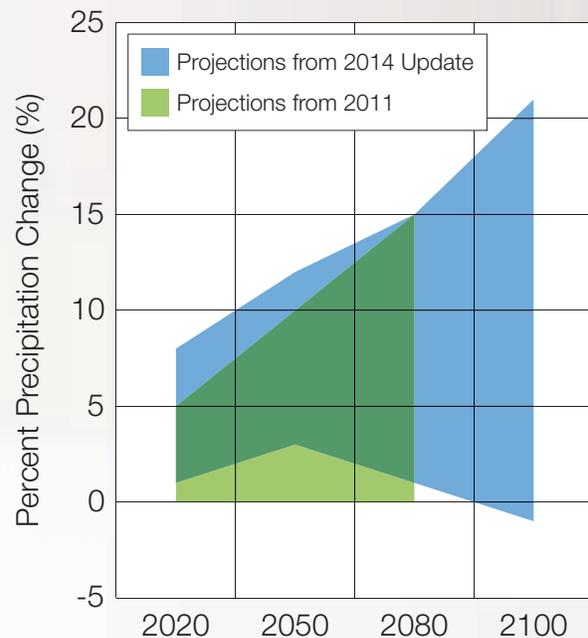
The 2014 Update highlights trends and projections for each of the seven regions in New York State for several climate variables: temperature, precipitation, extreme events, and sea level rise. Generally consistent with the 2011 ClimAID projections, these new projections represent a refinement based on updated science.



### Comparison of 2011 and 2014 Temperature Projections



### Comparison of 2011 and 2014 Precipitation Projections



*Statewide values are computed as the lowest and highest value from the lower and upper bounds, respectively, of the middle-range of projections from across all seven regions. The middle-range of projections in 2014 are bounded at top and bottom by the 25th and 75th percentiles of data from all modeled projections. 2014 temperature ranges are rounded to the nearest half-degree and 2014 precipitation change percentages rounded to the nearest 1%. The middle-range of the 2011 data is computed as the middle 67% of values from model-based probabilities. 2011 temperature ranges are rounded to the nearest half-degree and 2011 precipitation change percentages to the nearest 5%.*



## Sea Level Rise

Researchers developed projections of sea level rise in the 2014 Update using a new method that combines climate model outputs with researchers' expertise and other literature, including the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's Fifth Assessment Report. This method allows for analysis of variables that climate models cannot simulate at this time, such as changes in ice sheet dynamics.

Since 1900, sea level rise has averaged 1.2 inches per decade in the region. Much of that rise has been due to ocean water warming and expanding (known as thermal expansion). Recently, melting of land ice has become a comparable contributor to sea level rise. Because melting of land ice is expected to continue to accelerate, and the rate of acceleration is uncertain, the high-end sea level rise projections of 6 feet by 2100 cannot be ruled out.



### Middle-Range Projected Sea Level Rise in New York City and Coastal Long Island

*Incremental rise above 2000–2004 average baseline level*



## What Has Changed Since the 2011 ClimAID Report Was Released?

The 2014 Update uses the Coupled Model Intercomparison Project, Phase 5 (CMIP5) climate models, featured in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's Fifth Assessment Report (AR5). Many of these higher-resolution models include new features, such as how vegetation may respond to temperature and precipitation change, as well as overall improvements in the climate simulations themselves. Additionally, 35 climate model projections are used, rather than the 16 used in the 2011 ClimAID Report.

Much like the climate models, emissions scenarios have also evolved. The 2014 Update uses Representative Concentration Pathways (RCPs) from the AR5. The RCPs correspond to possible paths of greenhouse gas levels into the future. Previous emissions scenarios relied on specific assumptions about potential policies and economic situations in the future (e.g., high economic growth, growing use of low-carbon fuels) to create GHG estimates. In contrast, the RCPs do not depend on these assumptions and are therefore more flexible in terms of how both society and GHG levels might change over time. The 2014 Update uses two RCPs (known as RCP 4.5 and RCP 8.5), which are defined respectively as the low/mid and high ranges of expected GHG levels in the coming century.

The combination of the updated models, the use of the RCPs, and slight changes in methods yielded some changes in the results from the original ClimAID work. However, the changes are small compared to the inherent uncertainties in any long-term projections. The 2014 Update can be considered a refinement of the previous projections, and it amplifies many of the messages of the 2011 ClimAID report.

## Additional Information

Visit [nyserdera.ny.gov/ClimAID](http://nyserdera.ny.gov/ClimAID) for more information and the full suite of updated projections:

- ▶ Horton, R., D. Bader, C. Rosenzweig, A. DeGaetano, and W. Solecki. 2014. *Climate Change in New York State: Updating the 2011 ClimAID Climate Risk Information*. New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), Albany, New York.
- ▶ Rosenzweig, C., W. Solecki, A. DeGaetano, M. O'Grady, S. Hassol, P. Grabhorn (Eds.). 2011. *Responding to Climate Change in New York State: The ClimAID Integrated Assessment for Effective Climate Change Adaptation*. Technical Report. New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), Albany, New York.
- ▶ Rosenzweig, C., W. Solecki, A. DeGaetano, M. O'Grady, S. Hassol, P. Grabhorn (Eds.). 2011. *Responding to Climate Change in New York State: The ClimAID Integrated Assessment for Effective Climate Change Adaptation*. Synthesis Report. New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), Albany, New York.

