

# **Cayuga County Agriculture & Farmland Protection Plan**

## **Implementation Report March 2018**



**Background:** The Cayuga County Agriculture & Farmland Protection Plan was prepared for the Cayuga County Agriculture & Farmland Protection Board (AFPB) by staff from the Cayuga County Department of Planning & Economic Development with grant funding from the New York State Department of Agriculture & Markets. The plan was adopted in August 2014.

The plan contains three goals that have been segmented into a total of fourteen objectives with a total of forty-nine distinct implementation actions. Each action has one or more designated partner agency assigned to work on the implementation of that action. The AFPB will work with these partner agencies as necessary to assist with the implementation of the plan in an effort to achieve the goals of the plan and to continue to support and grow the agricultural economy in Cayuga County.

Staff from the Cayuga County Department of Planning & Economic Development contacted each of the partner agencies, providing them with a list of the actions that they should be engaged in, and requested information on the status of the agency's implementation efforts for said actions. This report contains a series of tables that summarizes the information provided by each partner agency. The tables are organized by objective, include all action items related to that objective, and the contributions of each partner agency.

This report also contains a priority list of actions that are incomplete that the AFPB has selected to pursue in the coming year; as well as more detailed reports/materials from partner agencies located in the appendix.

This report will be updated annually.

**Implementation:** The following tables provide information on the current status of implementation of action in the County’s Agriculture & Farmland Protection Plan by the various partner agencies involved.

**GOAL 1: Improve economic opportunities for agriculture-related businesses in Cayuga County**

Objective 1-1: Integrate existing and emerging local food production into the local food system.			
Action	Description	Agency Partners	Agency Contributions
1-1.1 (L)	Conduct a food system assessment.	Human Services Coalition of Cayuga County	One food system assessment was completed by the Coalition.
		Cayuga County Health Department	The Health Department assisted with the assessment.
1-1.2 (M)	Facilitate connections between local food producers, regional food hubs and food processors; and end-users such as restaurants, schools, colleges, senior homes and other institutions.	Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cayuga County	This action has not been started by CCE staff.
		Cayuga County Health Department	The Health Department was the facilitator of this work under the Creating Healthy Places to Live, Work & Play grant, which was not refunded by NYS for Cayuga County.
		Finger Lakes Culinary Bounty	<i>No information provided from this agency</i>
1-1.3 (L)	Encourage restaurants, schools and others serving meals with locally produced ingredients to participate in the “Pride of New York” campaign or other “buy local” campaigns.	Cayuga County Department of Planning & Economic Development	This action has not been started by CCPED staff.
		Finger Lakes Culinary Bounty	<i>No information provided from this agency</i>
1-1.4 (H)	Launch a “buy local” campaign that will focus on the economic and health benefits of supporting local agriculture.	Cayuga County Chamber of Commerce	This action has not been started by Chamber staff.
		Cayuga County Health Department	The Health Department encourages residents to “buy local” by promoting local farmers’ markets and other food vendors.
Objective 1-2: Improve local consumer access to locally produced foods.			
Action	Description	Agency Partners	Agency Contributions
1-2.1 (M)	Create a Farmer’s Market Advisory program that will provide staff support to advise and facilitate collaboration among emerging farmers’ markets to maximize their growth potential and viability, especially in community food deserts.	Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cayuga County	This action has not been started by CCE due to lack of staff.
1-2.2 (M)	Create a permanent, year-round public market in Auburn.	Cayuga County Department of Planning & Economic Development	The City of Auburn has taken on this initiative. The City’s recent applications for the NYS DRI grant include plans for a year-round public market in downtown Auburn.

Action	Description	Agency Partners	Agency Contributions
1-2.3 (H)	Work with towns and villages to ensure that local farm-friendly land use policies allow for farm-related signage, roadside stands, farm stands or farm markets that will improve local access to farm fresh products in rural areas of the county.	Cayuga County Department of Planning & Economic Development	Staff has worked with several municipalities on updating their land use regulations to be more “farm-friendly” and will continue to do so.
		Cayuga County Health Department	Deferred to County Planning staff
1-2.4 (L)	Increase sales of local foods in conventional retail outlets such as convenience stores and supermarkets, especially in community food deserts.	Cayuga County Health Department	The Health Department under Creating Healthy Places to Live, Work & Play sought out local restaurants to modify recipes to be healthier, offer healthier items and support local farmers by purchasing from them.
		Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cayuga County	CCE staff has made referrals, some of which have resulted in New Hope Mills products being retailed in additional locations in Cayuga County.

**Objective 1-3: Enhance existing support resources for agriculture-related business development and training.**

Action	Description	Agency Partners	Agency Contributions
1-3.1 (H)	Provide agricultural economic development services through identified and trained staff by coordinating economic development efforts for all agricultural sectors and providing one-on-one assistance to farmers and agriculture-related business owners for start-up and existing growth opportunities.	Cayuga Economic Development Agency	CEDA staff have assisted numerous farms, farmers, and agribusinesses. This includes existing businesses, entrepreneurs, and business attraction projects. Examples: An entrepreneur looking to start a vineyard and winery was connected to CCE, USDA, and was assisted in locating land. Grober Nutrition was attracted and connected with appropriate resources and incentives. DuMond Ag was assisted in applying for state funding and connected to multiple state and local resources, as well as to a source for an innovative renewable energy solution.
1-3.2 (M)	Create a website clearinghouse for all agriculture-related information and resources available in the county and region such as county-wide agricultural statistics and trends, how to get assistance with developing a business plan or farm management plan, and grant opportunities.	Cayuga Economic Development Agency	CEDA has a webpage under the heading “Doing Business Here” for agriculture that provides links to county and regional agricultural agencies and programs.
		Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cayuga County	This action has not been started by CCE staff, however staff would work with CEDA staff on this action if invited to do so.
		Cayuga County Soil & Water Conservation District	This action has not been started by SWCD staff. SWCD’s website does include news, events, and programs.
		Cayuga County Department of Planning & Economic Development	This action has not been started by CCPED staff.
1-3.3 (H)	Create a targeted campaign to market existing local networking, business and financial assistance resources to agriculture-related business owners and farmers, especially new and young farmers.	Cayuga Economic Development Agency	This action has not been started by CEDA staff.
1-3.4 (M)	Investigate the feasibility of specialized county incentive programs, such as loans or grants, to target the particular needs of local farms and agriculture-related businesses.	Cayuga Economic Development Agency	CEDA supported the CNY Regional Planning & Development Board’s (CNYRPDB) application through the CNY Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) for the NY Grown and Certified program which is now available to Cayuga County farmers.

Action	Description	Agency Partners	Agency Contributions
1-3.5 (L)	Create collaborative and cost-sharing partnerships among farmers to increase efficiencies and create new economic opportunities.	Farmers	No information available at this time
1-3.6 (M)	Increase collaboration and communication among new and young farmers, such as through regularly scheduled networking events.	Farm Bureau	<i>No information provided from this agency</i>
		Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cayuga County	Young Farmer awards have been presented by the Cayuga County Farm Bureau.
1-3.7 (M)	Continue supporting the development and use of renewable energy sources for individual farms and/or co-operative groups of farmers.	Cayuga County Soil & Water Conservation District	The implementation of this action is ongoing by SWCD staff. Currently there are State & Federal grant funds available to perform this task.
1-3.8 (M)	Reach out to local colleges and training programs such as CCC, CayugaWorks! Career Center and BOCES to establish and/or continue providing educational programs and training for farm owners and farmworkers.	Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cayuga County	This action has not been started by CCE staff, however initial discussions have occurred.
		Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES	This action has not been started by BOCES staff.**

**Objective 1-4: Work with state and federal policy-makers to address burdensome regulations.**

Action	Description	Agency Partners	Agency Contributions
1-4.1 (M)	Work with the state to create a USDA-New York State reciprocal certification that would allow cuts of meat processed in a state-certified facility to be sold within New York State.	Farm Bureau	<i>No information provided from this agency</i>
1-4.2 (L)	Lobby federal government representatives to enact immigration reform. Immigration reform would allow for a more consistent, reliable workforce for both dairy and specialty crop farmers.	Farm Bureau	<i>No information provided from this agency</i>

**Objective 1-5: Improve aggregation, processing and distribution infrastructure for local famers.**

Action	Description	Agency Partners	Agency Contributions
1-5.1 (M)	Explore and promote opportunities for a regional food aggregation and distribution hub in Cayuga County.	Cayuga Economic Development Agency	CEDA staff reached out to and had several conversations with stakeholders regarding this initiative, however certain challenges were encountered, and at this time the initiative is on hold.
1-5.2 (M)	Support the creation and expansion of food processing facilities, commercial kitchens, butcher shops, etc. by providing loans and business technical assistance, and by ensuring that local zoning regulations allow for these types of agriculture-related uses, where appropriate.	Cayuga Economic Development Agency	CEDA has provided assistance to existing food processing facilities and worked on a number of startup and attraction projects in this area. The agency advertised to attract agri-businesses through a print ad in Area Development's 2016 Food Processing edition, and then used online strategies. The agency is actively working on and will soon launch a Google Ad campaign focused on agri-business. Staff has worked to connect entrepreneurs to existing commercial kitchens during startup phase; and with City of Auburn to ensure food processing would still be allowable the under new zoning code.

Action	Description	Agency Partners	Agency Contributions
	1-5.2 Continued	Cayuga County Department of Planning & Economic Development	The County Planning Department has a small business loan program that is open to farms and agri-businesses in the county. CEDA helps to administer this program.
<b>Objective 1-6: Support agri-tourism businesses and growth in the agri-tourism sector.</b>			
Action	Description	Agency Partners	Agency Contributions
1-6.1 (H)	Work with towns and villages to ensure that local farm-friendly land use policies allow for farm-related directional signage and accessory agricultural uses such as roadside stands, farm stores, processing facilities, event spaces and tasting rooms that will bolster agri-tourism activities.	Cayuga County Department of Planning & Economic Development	Staff has worked with several municipalities on updating their land use regulations to be more “farm-friendly” and will continue to do so.
1-6.2 (L)	Implement the county-wide way-finding system for agri-tourism venues and other tourist attractions that is currently in development.	Cayuga County Department of Planning & Economic Development	County Planning staff partnered with the Tourism Office to develop the county-wide wayfinding system. CCPED submitted a CFA grant application to the CNY REDC for funding to implement the wayfinding system in 2016, but the application was not successful.
		Cayuga County Office of Tourism	The Office funded the design of a county-wide wayfinding system, but have not been successful in implementing the system. The Office has shared the plan with other agencies hoping that it could be incorporated into a city, county or regional project, but to date the project had not moved forward. Without funding assistance and/or a partnership with another project, implementation of the wayfinding plan will remain difficult.
1-6.3 (L)	Continue to provide and expand collective branding and marketing support for agri-tourism businesses such as through Finger Lakes Culinary Bounty, the Cayuga Lake Wine Trail, Finger Lakes Cheese Trail, and Finger Lakes Sweet Treat Trail.	Cayuga County Office of Tourism	The Office is a member of and/or supporter of the Cayuga Lake Wine Trail, the Finger Lakes Culinary Bounty, the Lake Ontario Wine Trail, and the Finger Lakes Beer Trail. These programs are all promoted in the Visitors Guide, on tourcayuga.com, through public relations efforts, and in digital marketing campaigns. The Finger Lakes Sweet Treat Trail is a program of the Office that promotes locally grown and/or produced sweet items such as jams, jellies, honey, fruit, syrups and ice cream, baked goods and wines made with those ingredients; and has 19 partners throughout Cayuga County. The Finger Lakes Sweet Treat Trail won the NYS Tourism Industry Award and was named one of the Top 10 Food Trails by USA Today.
		Finger Lakes Culinary Bounty	<i>No information provided from this agency</i>

Action	Description	Agency Partners	Agency Contributions
1-6.4 (M)	Market the Cayuga County Office of Tourism toolkit for tourism-related businesses to farmers and agri-tourism enterprises.	Cayuga County Office of Tourism	The Office markets agri-tourism enterprises for visitors through marketing efforts including: the Cayuga County Travel Guide, the tourcayuga.com website, in print, digital and radio advertising promotions, and through public relations efforts and press tours. Agri-businesses are also promoted through regional programs including the Finger Lakes Regional Tourism Council, the Cayuga Lake Scenic Byway, and the Great Lakes Seaway Trail. Agri-business are popular with tours and are promoted through the Office's group sales efforts that include trade shows, collateral, familiarization tours, newsletters, lead generation and follow-up. Agri-businesses benefiting from these promotional efforts include farmers' markets, farm stands, and u-picks as well as producers of honey, syrup, wine, beer, and cider. Visitor research and marketing plans are made available to all tourism partners on tourcayuga.com under the "partners" tab.
1-6.5 (L)	Support growth in the wine and distillery industries and the establishment of artisanal wineries, breweries, cideries, and distilleries that can take advantage of the state farm winery, distillery, brewery and cidery laws and complement existing agri-tourism activities in the county.	Cayuga Economic Development Agency	CEDA has assisted: Prison City, Aurora Ale & Lager, Summerhill Brewing, Good Shepherds Brewing, Next Chapter (opening soon), and Colloca Estate Winery, along with other entrepreneurs that are not open or decided not to open. CEDA also recently started a Craft Beverage Industry Peer Group for these businesses and support businesses (e.g. hop farmers) to explore industry challenges.
		Cayuga County Office of Tourism	The Office promotes wineries, breweries and cideries in the visitor guide and tourcayuga.com as well as in digital, print and radio advertising and public relations efforts including press releases and familiarization tours. The Office also creates suggested itineraries including these businesses for both individuals and groups. Restaurants that feature locally produced beverages are given additional promotion, particularly through public relations efforts.
<b>Objective 1-7: Expand affordable high-speed internet access throughout the county.</b>			
Action	Description	Agency Partners	Agency Contributions
1-7.1 (H)	Work with service providers and the state to develop the county's rural broadband infrastructure.	Cayuga Economic Development Agency	Assisted the Clarity Connect project through the Cayuga County Industrial Development Agency (CCIDA).
		Cayuga County Department of Planning & Economic Development	Assisted the County Legislature, the Cayuga County Public Utility Service Agency (CCPUSA), and CEDA with solicitations for expanded broadband services in the county.

\*\* At the time that this report was prepared, staff and administration at Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES was unaware that actions in the County's plan had been assigned to BOCES for implementation. The AFPB and other partners will work with BOCES to help initiate actions or will re-assign them as necessary.

## GOAL 2: Achieve widespread awareness and appreciation in the county of the economic, health and cultural importance of local food and local agriculture

Objective 2-1: Educate local, county and state officials about the economic, health, and cultural importance of local food and local agriculture.			
Action	Description	Agency Partners	Agency Contributions
2-1.1 (H)	Organize annual information and outreach events for county, state, and local officials, such as a bus tour of county farms and agriculture-related businesses.	Farm Bureau	<i>No information provided from this agency</i>
		Cayuga County Soil & Water Conservation District	The implementation of this action is ongoing by SWCD staff. The District hosted a Best Management Practices (BMP) bus tour on 9/28/2017, and there were 30 people that attended.
2-1.2 (H)	Provide trainings, information and one-on-one technical assistance for local and county planning board, zoning board of appeals, town board, and village board members about agriculture-related land uses and impacts of local regulations on the viability of agriculture.	Cayuga County Department of Planning & Economic Development	Staff conducted a training in 2014 titled "Farm Stands, Tasting Rooms, and Agritourism: Where Agriculture and Commercial Uses Intersect". In 2015, NYS DOS staff at the request of County Planning staff provided a training on rural planning that included subdivision design and approval to protect farmland. Staff continually provides information and technical assistance to local municipalities, county boards, and agencies as requested.
2-1.3 (H)	Make periodic presentations to County Legislators and other community leaders about agriculture-related issues and the importance of agriculture.	Cayuga County Department of Planning & Economic Development	The Director of the Planning Department prepares monthly reports and makes regular presentations to the Legislature's Planning Committee, and to the full body when appropriate. These reports and presentations do include information about various agriculture-related issues throughout the county.
Objective 2-2: Educate the general public about the economic, health and cultural importance of local food and local agriculture.			
Action	Description	Agency Partners	Agency Contributions
2-2.1 (L)	Work with event organizers to enhance annual festivals and events that celebrate local food and agriculture, and their importance to local communities. Prominently feature local food and agriculture at existing events. Coordinate promotional programming throughout the county at existing county and local festivals, fairs and other events.	Cayuga County Department of Planning & Economic Development	Deferred to Cornell Cooperative Extension staff
2-2.2 (L)	Increase the awareness of agricultural activities by the general public through grassroots outreach efforts, such as with temporary seasonal signs along roads and fields that inform non-farmers of planting and harvesting activities as they occur.	Farm Bureau	<i>No information provided from this agency</i>
2-2.3 (H)	Organize fun, family-friendly annual informational and educational events for schools and the general public and/or organize Farm Day events on K-12 school campuses.	Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cayuga County	This action has not been started by CCE due to lack of staff. This action would be a priority for CCE if additional staff was available. CCE staff does participate in the annual Ag Literacy Week.
		Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES	This action has not been started by BOCES staff.**

**Objective 2-3: Enhance educational and enrichment opportunities for young people related to local food and local agriculture.**

Action	Description	Agency Partners	Agency Contributions
2-3.1 (M)	Continue support for existing 4-H programs through Cayuga County Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE). Add new 4-H program areas and staff as demand arises.	Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cayuga County	The CCE 4-H program has received a NYS Ag Society Foundation grant to provide an Ag Career Exploration program which is just getting underway.
2-3.2 (H)	Continue support for the existing FFA chapters and agricultural education programs in the county, located at BOCES and the Southern Cayuga and Moravia School Districts, and expand to new school districts that serve the county.	Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES	The Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES has supported and will continue to support this initiative.**
2-3.3 (M)	Build gardens and greenhouses on school campuses to extend the growing season into the school year in order to facilitate hands-on learning about science, agriculture and healthy eating habits.	Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cayuga County	CCE's Nutrition Educator, through the Finger Lakes Eat Smart New York Program for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients, has been working on this action; however, more funding is needed to implement and expand the action outside of the SNAP criteria.
		Cayuga County Health Department	The Health Department under Creating Healthy Places to Live, Work & Play worked to create five community gardens and offered food preservation workshops in the community.
		Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES	The Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES Plant, Animal, and Life Sciences program has constructed two greenhouses for student curriculum, as well as a food pantry garden. They do not have plans to build a high tunnel greenhouse at this time.**
2-3.4 (M)	Increase awareness of local food by students, teachers, and parents by developing seasonal menus, increasing the use of local foods in school meals and holding regular taste tests of locally grown foods.	Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cayuga County	This action has not been started by CCE staff. The Finger Lakes Eat Smart New York Program does currently work on this action; however, the work is constrained by program guidelines relating to income levels that limits which schools they can work in.
		Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES	Staff in the Plant, Animal, and Life Sciences program work with their students on this action, but there are currently no plans or funding available to launch a wide-ranging program that would include all of the items listed in the action description.**
2-3.5 (H)	Increase and sustain participation in the New York Agriculture-in-the-Classroom (AITC) program.	Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cayuga County	CCE's newly hired STEM 4-H Educator has received training on AITC and is working towards getting the program started.
		Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES	This action has not been started by BOCES staff.**
2-3.6 (M)	Incorporate agricultural education into the school curriculum, especially for middle school students, by developing and distributing an agricultural education toolkit for educators. Reach out to educators to inform them of the benefits of incorporating agricultural education into their curricula, and work with them to do so.	Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cayuga County	A CCE Advisory Committee Member has reported that some pilot work has begun in the in Southern Cayuga Schools.
		Farm Bureau	<i>No information provided from this agency</i>

2-3.7 (L)	Work with local colleges, CCC and Wells College, to develop and offer introductory agriculture and food systems courses.	Cayuga County Department of Planning & Economic Development	This action has not been started by CCPED staff.
2-3.8 (M)	Develop a student internship program that partners with area farms and agriculture-related businesses.	Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES	All Senior students in the Plant, Animal, and Life Sciences program intern one day a week for six months at a local farm or agricultural business.**

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### GOAL 3: Ensure a vibrant future for farming in Cayuga County.

Objective 3-1: Enact and maintain farm-friendly land use policies, as appropriate for each community's needs and preferences.			
Action	Description	Agency Partners	Agency Contributions
3-1.1 (H)	Encourage towns and villages to conduct a farm-friendly audit of their existing zoning, site plan and subdivision ordinances and other land use laws, and modify them as needed.	Cayuga County Department of Planning & Economic Development	Staff has conducted these audits for the towns that they have assisted with developing agriculture & farmland protection plans.
3-1.2 (M)	Encourage towns to adopt agriculture and farmland protection plans, and to establish town agriculture and farmland protection boards or agricultural advisory committees to implement the plans.	Cayuga County Department of Planning & Economic Development	To date, staff has assisted with the development of town agriculture & farmland protection plans for: Brutus, Cato, Ira, and Mentz. Staff is currently working with the Town of Victory to apply for funding to develop an agriculture & farmland protection plan.
3-1.3 (M)	Encourage towns to conduct a Cost of Community Services (COCS) analysis to help inform decision makers and the local community of the value of agricultural activities.	Cayuga County Department of Planning & Economic Development	This action has not been started by CCPED staff.
3-1.4 (M)	Provide agriculture-related land use trainings for town and village planning and zoning board members.	Cayuga County Department of Planning & Economic Development	Staff conducted a training in 2014 titled "Farm Stands, Tasting Rooms, and Agritourism: Where Agriculture and Commercial Uses Intersect". In 2015, NYS DOS staff at the request of County Planning staff provided a training on rural planning that included subdivision design and approval to protect farmland.
3-1.5 (L)	Adopt a county-wide right-to-farm law.	Cayuga County Department of Planning & Economic Development	This action has not been started by CCPED staff.
Objective 3-2: Encourage farmers to access existing resources to address farm management and environmental stewardship needs.			
Action	Description	Agency Partners	Agency Contributions
3-2.1 (H)	Provide one-on-one technical assistance to address farmers' nutrient, resource and farm management challenges, with a focus on improving the quality and implementation of farm plans. Assist farmers in identifying relevant state and federal loan and grant opportunities to help meet their needs.	Cayuga County Soil & Water Conservation District	The implementation of this action is ongoing by SWCD staff. One-on-one technical assistance is provided through the District's Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) Program. State and Federal funding grants are available annually to install BMP's.
		Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cayuga County	This action has not been started by CCE staff, however they do support the work by the Cayuga County Soil & Water Conservation District.

**Objective 3-3: Protect viable agricultural land from non-agricultural uses and development pressures.**

Action	Description	Agency Partners	Agency Contributions
3-3.1 (H)	Make informed zoning and planning decisions by using the resources in this plan to identify agricultural lands experiencing development pressures or other conflicts.	Cayuga County Department of Planning & Economic Development	Staff has, and will continue to incorporate the factors utilized in the county ag plan to identify development pressures and prime areas for agricultural land protection into the town ag plans that they assist with. Additionally, through trainings, resource materials, and technical assistance staff will continue to support land use development decisions that protect high priority agricultural lands throughout the county.
3-3.2 (M)	Establish local purchase of development rights (PDR) programs where appropriate and include provisions requiring that protected agricultural lands remain in active agricultural use.	Cayuga County Department of Planning & Economic Development	The Cayuga County Legislature does not support the development and funding of a local PDR program at this time. Currently, the state's PDR program requires the applicant (town, county, land trust, or SWCD) to hold and monitor each conservation easement which requires the dedication of staff time and resources that the county is not able to provide at this time. However; CCPED staff continues to work with regional land trusts to further the permanent protection of agricultural lands in the county. Staff assists the AFPB with a pre-application process (once every two years) to select priority farms for consideration by regional land trusts for the state's PDR program.

**Objective 3-4: Facilitate farm transfers.**

Action	Description	Agency Partners	Agency Contributions
3-4.1 (M)	Provide information to farmers about FarmNet and FarmLink, which provide estate planning information and connect retiring farmers with new farmers looking to purchase a farm. Provide estate planning assistance to farm owners of all ages.	Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cayuga County	CCE staff works with farmers on an as needed basis. CCE staff has conducted estate planning workshops in recent years.

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**Cayuga County Agriculture & Farmland Protection Board Priority Projects for 2018:**

The AFPB has identified the following High Priority action items from the plan that have not been initiated by a partner agency to date. The Board and staff will contact and work with the partner agencies to determine what resources are necessary to start the implementation of these actions, and assist with the implementation where possible.

- 1-1.4 - Launch a "buy local" campaign that will focus on the economic and health benefits of supporting local agriculture. *[Chamber of Commerce & Health Dept.]*
- 1-3.3 - Create a targeted campaign to market existing local networking, business and financial assistance resources to agriculture-related business owners and farmers, especially new and young farmers. *[CEDA]*
- 2-2.3 - Organize fun, family-friendly annual informational and educational events for schools and the general public and/or organize Farm Day events on K-12 school campuses. *[CCE & BOCES]*
- 2-3.5 - Increase and sustain participation in the New York Agriculture-in-the-Classroom (AITC) program. *[CCE & BOCES]*

## Other Events/Activities Supporting Agriculture in Cayuga County:

### Cayuga County USDA Farm Service Agency-

- On February 15, 2018 an Agricultural Agency Awareness Day and Open House was held at the Natural Resource Center on County House Road in Sennett. The event included representatives from the Cayuga County Soil & Water Conservation District, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cayuga County, the New York Farm Bureau, and other local agricultural agencies.

### Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cayuga County-

- On February 22, 2018 a meeting for new and second-generation farmers was held at the Cayuga County Education Center on Grant Avenue in Auburn. Topics covered at the meeting included: financial records associated with a new farm business, or a change of one; record-keeping and financial perspectives; and starting a business and growing it to be sustainable and profitable, or changing direction. Extension Field Crop Educator Keith Severson and Kim Manrow from Custom Business Services led the discussions.
- A youth tractor safety course was held on Monday evenings from March 5 to April 2, 2018, and on Saturday April 7, 2018.
- Beginning in April 2018, the Cayuga County 4-H will be offering a four-month Agricultural Career Exploration Program for youth in grades 10 through 12. The program will include workshops, weekend day trips and an overnight college trip, all to showcase career opportunities in agriculture. Evening workshops will be held on Thursdays and day trips will be on Saturdays, with an average of three events per month.

## Cayuga County Agriculture in the News:

### Progress 2018: With \$1.2 million from state, Cayuga County grower plans to add 100 jobs

Megan Ehrhart [megan.ehrhart@lee.net](mailto:megan.ehrhart@lee.net) Jan 29, 2018

Martens Cos., parent organization to the four-generation family-owned Martens Farms in Mentz, was awarded over \$1 million by the state for a project that will add 100 new jobs to Cayuga County.

Martens has been growing potatoes in central New York for over 90 years, according to the company website, and its next project will be creating a 150,000-square-foot commercial food processing, packaging and distribution center that will focus primarily on health conscious foods. The project also includes purchasing land and constructing and equipping the new facility.

The project was awarded a total of \$1.18 million from two programs under the Empire State Development Corp. The grants are part of the recently announced Regional Economic

Development Council program awards. A \$240,000 tax credit was awarded under the Excelsior Jobs Program, and a \$940,000 grant was awarded from the ESD Grant Fund.

These types of grants are awarded to industries and economic development projects intending to create or retain jobs, make significant capital investments, and increase business or economic activity in a region, according to ESD. Including the grants, Martens' total investment into the project is approximately \$4.7 million, ESD said.

The project is expected to have a positive impact on Cayuga County, said Tracy Verrier, the executive director of the Cayuga Economic Development Agency and a member of the Central New York Regional Economic Development Council.

"(Agriculture) is an important industry to be supported in the county and community," Verrier said.

Martens Cos., which declined to comment for this story about its project, packages potatoes year-round under its own Old Erie label, as well as through other private labels for customers serving the Northeast market, according to the company website. For example, Martens is a licensed shipper, packer and re-distributor of Idaho Potatoes.

Martens' website also states that "Martens Country Kitchen," established in 2001, directly supplies food service industries with potatoes pre-cut in popular varieties such as french fries, shredded, diced, etc. The same service is offered for onions, carrots, cabbage, zucchini, celery, peppers, and mushrooms, which are all also processed in the facility.

The impact of Martens' new jobs and expansion of its market will have a ripple effect, officials said. The project will allow local products to be sold in additional markets, expand their reach and multiplying the money that ultimately comes back to

the county, Verrier explained. Even on a state level, she believes the state will see a return on the investment in payroll and jobs.

The unemployment rate in the county (5.0 percent for December 2017) is in "pretty great shape", Verrier said, but with the addition of these jobs there may be people in the county who are underemployed, or perhaps are looking for a better job and have the specific skillset Martens is looking for. Included in the new positions will be a handful of management positions, but the jobs will primarily be trade focused, dealing with packaging and production, Verrier said. "This will be a good opportunity to get more people back in the workforce.

"We don't have a ton of employers who have 100 employees and to add another 100 is a big deal, a big impact," Verrier said. Martens is effectively doubling its workforce by also retaining 100 jobs. The creation of jobs could mean more residents for the county, Verrier said, and it is expected that the retail services in the county will grow as a result. "Workers will eat lunch here, maybe shop here, and those dollars get reinvested into our community."

Martens is planning to complete the construction of the new facility by the end of 2018, Verrier said, and all the hiring will take place over the next one or two years. "We're happy to help out in any way that we can because they're really contributing to the economic atmosphere," Verrier said.

Article available at: [http://auburnpub.com/news/local/progress-with-million-from-state-cayuga-county-grower-plans-to/article\\_f4496284-c92a-5a47-ac7b-4fccb8ce77bb.html](http://auburnpub.com/news/local/progress-with-million-from-state-cayuga-county-grower-plans-to/article_f4496284-c92a-5a47-ac7b-4fccb8ce77bb.html)

## **Cayuga County farms awarded over \$1.1M for manure storage**

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Three Cayuga County farms are getting some state aid to upgrade their manure storage, assistance greatly needed at a time when farms are dealing with new regulations and falling milk prices.

Sennett farm Peters Dairy, Scipio farm Van Ridge Dairy and Valley Mound Farm in Scipio Center are all concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs) benefiting from the latest round of funding in the CAFO Waste Storage and Transfer System Program. CAFOs typically are dairy farms with 300 or more cows. Five Onondaga County farms also received funding including William E. Richards & Sons LLC in Skaneateles, Gemini Farm in Elbridge, Scholten Dairy in Van Buren, Barbland Dairy in Fabius and Pastureland Dairy LLC in Pompey.

Brian Hall, a certified Agricultural Environmental Management planner and nutrient management specialist with the Cayuga County Soil and Water Conservation District, said the program gives farms more management options. It also helps them comply with new CAFO permits the state Department of Environmental Conservation released last year. Those permits have stricter guidelines on spreading manure in the winter. Spreading on snow or frozen ground can cause manure to run off the land and into ditches, streams or water bodies, impacting water quality. "We're dealing with much more different weather extremes," Hall said. "Having a longer-term storage is going to increase, again, their ability to manage around those weather extremes and be safer for everybody."

Third-generation Valley Mound Farm owner Mike Whitten said he's building an additional pit because of the new CAFO regulations. According to his program application, his farm produces about 336,000 gallons of waste each month. "I have about two months of storage in my current manure pit, so I don't have enough to get through the winter without

spreading," he said. "We basically are having to build this manure pit in order to keep in compliance."

With between 350 and 360 cows, Whitten hopes the new addition will increase his manure storage capacity to between six and seven months. The project will cost over \$460,000, about \$347,000 of which the state will pay. Though Whitten's cost share is still a difficult lift, he said it's a lot easier than paying the total.

"Especially with the way the price of milk is this year, I wouldn't be able to spend that kind of money," he said. "Without the funding, I wouldn't be able to do it period. ... It's really good to have these grants available. It helps to keep me going."

Don Peters of Peters Dairy is also feeling the pain of low milk prices. The 1,200-cow third-generation farm is down about \$1.5 million in income per year, he said. The additional pit he's building will store about seven million gallons taking the farm from about 2 1/2 months worth of storage to about 7 1/2.

According to application documents, the pit will cost near \$740,000 with the state covering about \$385,000. "It's expensive in dairy right now," Peters said. "Every little bit helps. It's something that the state says we have to do. There's really not a payback on it. It's definitely better for the environment."

The third Cayuga County farm, Vans Ridge Dairy, produces nearly 3 million gallons of waste per month, according to its application. It will build another manure lagoon costing about \$773,000 with the state contributing about \$385,000.

All three farms are expected to have their new storage complete by the fall of 2019, their applications show.

Article available at: [http://auburnpub.com/news/local/cayuga-county-farms-awarded-over-m-for-manure-storage/article\\_8ec4b50d-7ee6-5267-a025-c01f37fc60ad.html](http://auburnpub.com/news/local/cayuga-county-farms-awarded-over-m-for-manure-storage/article_8ec4b50d-7ee6-5267-a025-c01f37fc60ad.html)