

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

## **Implementation Report December 2019**



**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. **Acronyms:** BOCES= Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES; CCE= Cornell Cooperative Extension; CEDA= Cayuga Economic Development Agency; CCHD= Cayuga County Health Dept.; CCOT= Cayuga County Office of Tourism; CCPED= Cayuga County Dept. of Planning & Economic Development; COC= County Chamber of Commerce; CCSWCD= Cayuga County Soil & Water Conservation District; HSC= Human Services Coalition of Cayuga County; FLCB= Finger Lakes Culinary Bounty

**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.	HSC	One food system assessment was completed by the Coalition.
		CCHD	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.	CCE	Worked with local egg producer to sell into stores and restaurants; and discussed process with protein producers for getting products USDA certified.
		CCHD	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.
		FLCB	<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.	CCPED	This action has not been started by CCPED staff.
		FLCB	<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.	COC	The Chamber and CEDA have started a shop local campaign on social media, but it is not agriculture specific.
		CCHD	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.	CCE	Rebecca Crawford, Nutrition Program Educator-Eat Smart NY has attempted to facilitate collaboration amongst the markets. Very little success in getting cooperation. Will continue as this is important to growth and lasting power of Farmers Markets.
1-2.2 (M)	Create a permanent, year-round public market in Auburn.	CCPED	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. While this project was not funded through the DRI, the City has not given up on the project which may be developed with future funding.

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.	CCPED	Staff has worked with several municipalities on updating their land use regulations to be more "farm-friendly" and will continue to do so.
		CCHD	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.	CCHD	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. This grant was not refunded by NYS for Cayuga County.
		CCE	CCE staff has made referrals, some of which have resulted in New Hope Mills products being retailed in additional locations in Cayuga County; and Ripley Family Farms in Moravia selling A2 milk and cheeses into grocery stores and coffee shops.
<b>Objective 1-3: Enhance existing support resources for agriculture-related business development and training.</b>			
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.	CEDA	CEDA staff have assisted numerous farms, farmers, and agribusinesses. This includes existing businesses, entrepreneurs, and business attraction projects. Derek Simmonds, who was hired as CEDA's Business Development Specialist in 2018, had previously worked on agricultural economic development for the Seneca County CCE. Bringing this experience onto the CEDA team has increased our ability to service agricultural businesses. In addition to working one on one with farms and agribusinesses to connect them with appropriate resources, Derek organized and held an Agricultural Economic Resources Summit to inform farms and agricultural businesses about additional funding and informational resources.
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.	CEDA	CEDA's website includes an agriculture page that was the target of a business attraction campaign in 2018 and 2019. Data will soon be updated with the 2017 Agricultural Census, and an additional resource guide with a full list of resources will be uploaded when it is complete.
		CCE	CCE website will be undergoing a re-construction. Emphasis has been production agriculture resources. Will include more information on dairy and livestock; corn, soybean and cereal grain production; farm business management; and Ag statistics.
		CCSWCD	This action has not been started by SWCD staff. SWCD's website and Facebook page does include news, events, and programs.
		CCPED	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.	CEDA	The Agricultural Economic Resources Summit was marketed to agricultural businesses of all kinds. CEDA held an agribusiness tour for SCORE mentors, who provide free confidential business counseling to entrepreneurs and small businesses. SCORE and CEDA launched a program called StartUP Connect that offers networking opportunities to entrepreneurs and small businesses. While this is not an ag specific program, there have been a number of agribusinesses to take advantage.

Action	Description	Agency Partners	Agency Contributions
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.	CEDA	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. In 2019, CEDA staff also assisted seven agribusinesses in applying for the new Grow NY business plan competition.
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>
		CCE	Collaborating with Farm Bureau to establish a "Young Farmer Under 35 Discussion Group" centered around a commodity or agriculture in general.
1-3.7 (M)	Continue supporting the development and use of renewable energy sources for individual farms and/or co-operative groups of farmers.	CCSWCD	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.	CCE	CCE provides a 4-H Tractor Safety course.
		BOCES	This action has not been started by BOCES staff.
<b>Objective 1-4: Work with state and federal policy-makers to address burdensome regulations.</b>			
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>
<b>Objective 1-5: Improve aggregation, processing and distribution infrastructure for local famers.</b>			
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.	CEDA	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.

Action	Description	Agency Partners	Agency Contributions
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.	CEDA	CEDA has provided assistance to existing food processing facilities and worked on a number of startup and attraction projects in this area, including examples of attracting Grober Nutrition and assisting DuMond with the establishment of their soy processing facility. The agency advertised to attract agribusinesses through a print ad in Area Development's 2016 Food Processing edition, and then in 2018 and 2019 ran a Google Ad campaign focused on agri-business attraction. 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. CEDA staff has also recently been working with a number of farmers that are considering expanding into value-added production.
		CCPED	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.

**Objective 1-6: Support agri-tourism businesses and growth in the agri-tourism sector.**

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.	CCPED	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.	CCPED	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.
		CCOT	The Tourism 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.	CCOT	The Tourism Office continues to be 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 Tourism 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; throughout 2019 the trail had 17 partners throughout Cayuga County. The Tourism hosted three events to promote the trail. 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.
		FLCB	<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.	CCOT	The Tourism 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.	CEDA	CEDA has assisted: Prison City, Aurora Ale & Lager, Summerhill Brewing, Good Shepherds Brewing, Next Chapter, and Colloca Estate Winery, along with other entrepreneurs that are not open yet or decided not to open. CEDA also held a meeting of a Craft Beverage Industry Peer Group for these businesses and support businesses (e.g. hop farmers) to explore industry challenges.
		CCOT	The Tourism 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.	CEDA	Assisted the Clarity Connect project through the Cayuga County Industrial Development Agency (CCIDA).
		CCPED	Assisted the County Legislature, the Cayuga County Public Utility Service Agency (CCPUSA), and CEDA with solicitations for expanded broadband services in the county.

## 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>
		CCSWCD	The implementation of this action is ongoing by SWCD staff.
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.	CCPED	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.	CCPED	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.	CCPED	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.	CCE	CCE collaborates with Farm Bureau to hold a Family Farm Day event.
		BOCES	This action has not been started by BOCES staff.
		Farm Bureau	<i>No information provided from this agency</i>

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.	CCE	Hired Erin Humphrey as 4-H Livestock Educator. All current livestock programs still ongoing. Taking applications for STEM 4-H Educator.
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.	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.	CCE	Master Gardeners did some outreach. Rebecca Crawford, Nutrition Program Educator, promoted building gardens at senior centers, etc.
		CCHD	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. This grant was not refunded by NYS for Cayuga County.
		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.	CCE	This action has not been started by CCE staff.
		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.	CCE	Rebecca Crawford and Peggy Lillie were leaders in this program along with Farm Bureau. Increased participation.
		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.	CCE	CCE collaborates with BOCES, Southern Cayuga AG Teacher and CCC Agricultural Initiatives Coordinator.
		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.	CCPED	For CCC, the City of Auburn has taken on this initiative. The City's recent NYS DRI grant award includes plans for a Culinary Arts Facility to accommodate the Cayuga Community College's new Culinary Arts Program to be located in a portion of the Plaza of the Arts building on Genesee St. This space will also provide a café and central space for community events. 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.	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.

### 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.	CCPED	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.	CCPED	To date, staff has assisted with the development and adoption of town agriculture & farmland protection plans for: Brutus, Cato, Ira, and Mentz. Staff is currently working with the Town of Victory 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.	CCPED	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.	CCPED	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.	CCPED	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.	CCSWCD	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.
		CCE	Notified dairy farmers with under 300 cows that a cost share program, Dairy Advancement Program, is available for nutrient management planning along with farm business management planning.
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.	CCPED	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.

Action	Description	Agency Partners	Agency Contributions
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.	CCPED	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.
<b>Objective 3-4: Facilitate farm transfers.</b>			
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.	CCE	All farms have been made aware of services provided by FarmNet.

### **Cayuga County Agriculture & Farmland Protection Board Priority Projects for 2019:**

The AFPB has identified the following High and Moderate 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.

- 1-3.6 - Increase collaboration and communication among new and young farmers, such as through regularly scheduled networking events. *[Farm Bureau & CCE]*
- 1-3.8 - 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. *[CCE & BOCES]*
- 1-4.1 - 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]*
- 1-4.2 - 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]*
- 2-1.1 - 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 & CCSWCD]*
- 3-1.3 - 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. *[CCPED]*

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

### Cayuga Economic Development Agency (CEDA)-

- On December 3, 2018 CEDA held a Cayuga County Agricultural Economic Resources Summit. This event included two panels. The first was a Funding Resources Panel including representatives from NYSERDA, Farm Credit East, USDA- Farm Service Agency, USDA-Rural Development, and the Central New York Regional Economic Development Council. This panel discussed some of the financial resources available to agricultural producers or processors. The second panel was an Export Update Panel. This panel included representatives from CNY International Business Alliance, The Andersons (formerly Lansing Trade Group), and Cornell University. This panel discussed agricultural exports, tariffs, trade agreements and pricing, focused mainly on milk products and grains.
- On March 21, 2019 CEDA partnered with BOCES and Cayuga Community College to organize a Student Career Fair intended to introduce high school students with local career opportunities and to give them the opportunity to speak with local employers. In addition to a traditional career fair meet and greet, the students also rotated through a series of presentations about career paths in specific industries, including agriculture. In this presentation, a representative from DuMond Farms spoke to students about the different types of jobs available in the agricultural industry so that students would understand that a career in farming goes beyond their preconceived notions.
- On July 19, 2019 CEDA staff organized a tour of multiple agricultural businesses to better inform SCORE mentors about the unique aspects and challenges of the agricultural industry. This tour covered a variety of types of agricultural businesses. SCORE is a program of the US SBA. The local chapter of volunteers provide free and confidential mentoring to entrepreneurs and small businesses.

### New York Agricultural Land Trust (NYALT)-

- On November 23, 2019 the land trust in collaboration with staff from the Cayuga County Dept. of Planning & Economic Development; Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cayuga and Seneca counties; and the Cayuga Economic Development Agency held a one day event at Cayuga Community College for retiring and new/beginning farmers. The event was titled “Planning for Transition: A Resource Fair” and included a keynote address from Chris Fesko of Fesko Farms about the importance of estate planning; a follow up workshop session that provided an overview of various mechanisms to transfer agricultural land; a workshop session that provided an overview of business planning, financing a land purchase, conducting a real estate transaction for establishing a new farm operation or taking over an existing farm operation, and how to successfully transition into an operation as the next generation; and a final session that reviewed tools for how to effectively communicate between generation, and included a panel discussion with farmers that shared their stories of working through a farm transfer or who have successfully started a new farm businesses.

## Cayuga County Agriculture in the News:

### Summerhill Brewing: With strong local support, Cayuga County brewery expands

David Wilcox david.wilcox@lee.net Mar 4, 2019

SUMMERHILL — Summerhill Brewing needed to expand before much of Cayuga County even knew it existed.

The brewery opened humbly in September 2016 in the southeastern corner of the county. It started with a 20-gallon system, or roughly half a barrel, and its Champlin Road tasting room has only been open one weekend a month. But by the following March, owners Megan and Kurt McDonald and Sallee and Jeff Ten Eyck were overwhelmed by demand. Beers like Paper Money IPA and Iron Plow Porter had earned Summerhill such a thirsty following that expanding became necessary. And the brewery earned that following almost entirely through word-of-mouth within its community.

This spring, Summerhill Brewing will open a new facility on Route 90, a quarter-mile away from the old brewery. The new 3,000-square-foot building will include a seven-barrel system, which will be able to produce 10 times as much beer. Its spacious tasting room and outdoor seating area will similarly multiply the number of people Summerhill can serve. Speaking Thursday at the freshly sanded bar of their new facility, Summerhill's owners said the expansion will allow them to become a regular stop for their old customers in the community and a destination for new ones outside of it.

"We've gotten a lot of community support, and we intend to support our community," Megan said.

Kurt, Summerhill's brewmaster, is husband to Megan and son to Sallee and Jeff. Each of the owners brings their own relevant background to running the business. Kurt studied chemistry at SUNY ESF and works as an operator at Cornell University's High-Energy Synchrotron Source facility. Megan has practiced culinary arts for 20 years and feeds about 1,000 mouths a night as a dinner cook at the university's North Star Dining Hall. Sallee retired in 2014 after working for the USDA Farm Service Agency for 39 years. And Jeff graduated with degrees in agricultural science from SUNY Morrisville and environmental biology at ESF before working for the

state Department of Agriculture & Markets and American Farmland Trust. He retired in September as Summerhill Brewing ramped up.

On the same property that would host both brewery sites, Kurt started making cider while he was growing up. Then, he and his parents started a small hop crop. Having those 80 plants led Kurt and Jeff to homebrewing. And once the McDonalds and Ten Eycks started hosting tastings with friends and family, the rave reviews encouraged the four to turn their hobby into a business.

Kurt said he likes applying his knowledge of chemistry to making beer with local ingredients. Summerhill still sources some hops from the Ten Eycks' property, such as the Nugget and Tettnanger in Paper Money. But as the brewery expands, those plants will constitute an ever-shrinking percentage of the ones Kurt uses. The rest don't come from far away, though, as Summerhill sources from hop farms in Skaneateles and Ledyard. Only popular IPA hops like Mosaic, El Dorado and Citra will come from outside New York, said Jeff, whose assistant brewing duties include ordering ingredients. And because Summerhill will have a farm brewery license, 60 percent of those hops, malts and other ingredients have to come from within the state — 90 percent by the beginning of 2024.

"We weren't sure how difficult it was going to be to source from New York," Jeff said. "It turns out it's not hard at all."

Megan, meanwhile, runs Summerhill's social media and oversees the tasting room. Her culinary experience also comes in handy at the brewery, like when she helps Kurt and Jeff calibrate the amount of peppers they use in their chili beer. Soon, too, Megan will oversee Summerhill's food options, which she said will complement the beer menu and make use of local ingredients that are in season. She also recently became certified to teach yoga, which could join lawn games and walking and snowshoe trails on the list of possible attractions the brewery will add to its vast, scenic property.

Sallee handles the brewery's finances and event bookings. In addition to its tasting room hours, Summerhill regularly takes part in community functions, often partnering with businesses like Chateau Dusseau and Grisamore Cider Works in Locke, and 10-10 BBQ in Moravia. Local craft beverage producers are no exception to the strong community support for Summerhill, Sallee said.

As customers go, 90 percent of that support comes from less than 15 minutes away: Locke, Groton, Homer, Sempronius. Though that area covers four counties, it shares one common need, Jeff said.

"The area has needed a community gathering place," he said. "Summerhill seems like the middle of nowhere, but we're 10 minutes away from everywhere."

With such a strong local following, Summerhill has set out to serve beer drinkers, Jeff said, not craft beer drinkers. That difference means making sure the brewery always has most, if not all of its seven or eight staple beers available, such as Millard's American Ale (named after Summerhill native and 13th President Millard Fillmore) and Naked Neighbor Amber Ale (named after the nudists who come to the area for the Northeast Naturist Festival). Customers always want to try what's new, Kurt said, but they tend to go back to their favorite beers afterward.

With a system that's 10 times bigger, Kurt will be able to introduce a lot of new beers to Summerhill. The brewery will keep serving seasonal specials like Sugar Shack Stout, which is made with locally harvested maple sap, and its Irish red for St. Patrick's Day. But the brewmaster is keeping his options open for further experimentation — likely with his old, smaller system. Once his new system has the tasting room stocked, too, Summerhill may look at selling kegs to area accounts as a way of marketing itself outside the community, Jeff said.

That is, if word-of-mouth about Summerhill Brewing doesn't continue to do all the marketing it needs.

Article available at: [https://auburnpub.com/lifestyles/summerhill-brewing-with-strong-local-support-cayuga-county-brewery-expands/article\\_df588c80-fb57-5744-80a1-f511f2c18867.html#1](https://auburnpub.com/lifestyles/summerhill-brewing-with-strong-local-support-cayuga-county-brewery-expands/article_df588c80-fb57-5744-80a1-f511f2c18867.html#1)

## **New Cayuga County soy processing plant offers a leg up for farmers**

Ryan Franklin ryan.franklin@lee.net Sep 21, 2019

FLEMING — "The goal is to strengthen New York agriculture," Todd DuMond said.

DuMond, owner and operator of DuMond Ag, was speaking at the official unveiling of a new \$3.27 million soybean extrusion facility Thursday, a project he hopes can benefit all of New York's farmers.

"This plant is something we're really excited about" he said.

A longtime Cayuga County farmer, DuMond has been processing soy and corn for several years, but the new 6,000-square-foot facility's extruder equipment allows for the beans' oil and solids to be separated into distinct end products.

Both the oil and the soybean meal can be used as feed for a variety of livestock animals, and the entire process is designed to help Cayuga County's farmers succeed in a difficult global market, DuMond said.

Having a local processing facility not only saves Cayuga County soy farmers from paying costly transportation costs for their crops, it also increases the demand for soy, and prices along with it, DuMond said.

Conversely, the oil and meal the facility produces serves as a cheaper source of feed for local farmers, especially dairy farmers, helping them save costs in an industry with razor-thin profit margins.

Ideally, DuMond said, the facility will help raise the prices New York farmers can get for a bushel of soy for by 10 to 20 cents while dropping the price of animal feed \$5 to \$10.

Building the facility has been a goal of DuMond's for about 10 years, he said, but the project was too capital-intensive, until they were able to get help from the Cayuga Economic Development Agency.

"Everybody kind of helped bring this in and get the applications in," DuMond said.

Crystina Brooks, solutions manager at the facility, came to CEDA for assistance developing a business plan and a

grant application to the state's Empire State Development Corporation, CEDA Executive Director Tracy Verrier said.

After working together to develop the materials, the facility successfully applied for \$655,000 in grants and \$224,000 in tax credits from the state for the project, which has helped create about 30 jobs so far.

The facility has just been getting going, DuMond said, but it has the capacity to one day handle half of New York's entire output of soybeans.

Article available at: [https://auburnpub.com/news/local/new-cayuga-county-soy-processing-plant-offers-a-leg-up/article\\_69cfe972-69f5-52d8-ad37-bbde2f374232.html](https://auburnpub.com/news/local/new-cayuga-county-soy-processing-plant-offers-a-leg-up/article_69cfe972-69f5-52d8-ad37-bbde2f374232.html)

## **What's next: Farm succession fair in Auburn tackles communication issues**

Kelly Rocheleau kelly.rocheleau@lee.net Nov 23, 2019 Updated Nov 25, 2019

AUBURN — Farm owner Donald Bowden will turn 90 next year, and he isn't sure of the next step to take with his farm.

Bowden has lived on Bowden Farms, a mile south of Weedsport, his entire life, and currently rents the land. So he decided to attend a farm transition planning fair at Cayuga Community College in Auburn Saturday. The event was for farmers and landowners seeking to pass on their farm, with subjects such as communication and business planning.

After spending a few hours at the fair, Bowden said he feels he should speak to a lawyer. He said he wants "to find out what to do with the farm. I can't keep going."

The New York Agricultural Land Trust held the event along with the college, the Cayuga County Department of Planning and Economic Development, Cayuga County Economic Development Agency and the Cornell Cooperative Extensions of Cayuga County and Seneca County. Amy Olney, executive director of the land trust, said 90% of retirement-age farmers in New York don't have a successor set.

"We know that when that land is transitioning within a family or outside of the family that is the time when it's most likely to be converted to non-agriculture uses, to

be developed for other uses," she said. Olney said the trust's mission is to make sure that land continues to be used for agriculture.

Erica Leubner, a farm family consultant with New York FarmNet, which handles services ranging from working with farmers on financial planning to helping them manage emotional issues, spoke about the importance of communication when planning succession. She said communication problems within farm businesses are the "number one" reason why plans stop or slow down.

Parties in meetings can get wrapped up in personal issues and decades-old conflicts, Leubner said, because attorneys, tax professionals or financial advisers are not there to untangle personal and relational conflicts. Before professionals are brought in, people should look for a neutral third party, she said.

"I did have one farm client at one time, it came up in a talk where they said one person always got a bigger pile of mashed potatoes on their plate," Leubner said. "That came out in a meeting but they've been harboring that their whole life as an adult. So you don't want to necessarily be paying an adviser to hear about the pile of mashed potatoes."

These planning conversations need to be "intentional and responsible," she said, adding that a meeting should be planned far in advance along with an agenda that all of the parties have seen and added to and that a meeting schedule that works for everyone should be established. Leubner added that active listening is critical for effective communication.

Article available at: [https://auburnpub.com/news/local/what-s-next-farm-succession-fair-in-auburn-tackles-communication/article\\_98582c1e-85c2-5c28-a3c0-1ea11523d6c98.html#tracking-source=home-top-story-1](https://auburnpub.com/news/local/what-s-next-farm-succession-fair-in-auburn-tackles-communication/article_98582c1e-85c2-5c28-a3c0-1ea11523d6c98.html#tracking-source=home-top-story-1)

## **Farm Girl Greens: Indoor hydroponic farm to begin growing in Sennett**

Kelly Rocheleau kelly.rocheleau@lee.net Dec 6, 2019

Abby and Mark Lepak were searching for a location to open an indoor hydroponic farm when they found a property for sale at 3554 Depot Road in Sennett — right next door to them.

There, the Lepaks are in the process of opening that business, Farm Girl Greens. The husband and wife will start growing leafy greens and herbs in about a week, Abby said, and will have produce available for businesses in about six weeks, Mark added. They plan on selling different kinds of lettuce, lemongrass, basil, arugula and more to local restaurants and farmers markets.

Abby said she will oversee the day-to-day operations of the farm itself, while Mark will focus on accounting, logistics and other business matters.

The 3,600-square-foot indoor farm has 300 towers to grow produce vertically. Construction of the facility began in the summer. Primary work ended in November, Mark said, and smaller work is all that's left. Abby said the vertical setup will allow for greater output, and being indoors will allow the business to grow during the winter months. Mark said they can control the environment in the facility, including humidity, temperature and the amount of CO2 in the air, in order to keep the environment optimized for plant growth.

The Lepaks said that when they conducted interviews with chefs and others to gauge interest in Farm Girl Greens, the couple was told that the products they plan to grow were only available shipped from as far as California. Abby said they plan to cut, harvest and deliver the produce they grow all in the same day, so they wouldn't want to deliver anywhere farther than 30-40 miles away. She added that for every mile food is taken from where it was harvested, its nutritional value decreases.

"It's in everyone's interests to buy and eat local," Abby said.

The name "Farm Girl Greens" came from the fact that Abby will be running the farm on a day-to-day basis, she said, and she likes the alliteration. She and Mark, who have two children, originally knew each other at Herman Avenue Elementary School in Auburn before Mark began attending the Union Springs Central School District. The two reconnected later in life. Mark came up with the idea of running a hydroponic farm in 2015, after their second child was born. They started the company in 2016, but it wasn't until this year that they began to fully pursue it.

Abby was previously involved in corporate wellness, running centers for different businesses for 20 years. Mark's background is in information technology, and he will continue working for insurance agency AXA Equitable in Syracuse while being involved with the farm. Abby said their new ventures combine her interest in health and Mark's interest in "the tech side."

Mark said farm work has made him think of his late grandfather, Ray Burtless, who ran a farm in Aurelius.

"I always saw how hard he worked even when he was in his 70s, and I really respected that and now it feels great," he said. "Although it's not the same type of farming, it's still providing fresh food."

Abby said she is excited about what the future will bring with Farm Girl Greens.

"It's definitely challenging because I'm learning something new, and I like the idea of owning your own business and having our children understand the hard work that goes into owning your own business," she said.

For more information about Farm Girl Greens, visit [farmgirlgreens.com](http://farmgirlgreens.com) or [facebook.com/farmgirlgreens](https://www.facebook.com/farmgirlgreens).

Article available at: [https://auburnpub.com/lifestyles/farm-girl-greens-indoor-hydroponic-farm-to-begin-growing-in/article\\_c957852a-300c-5e77-87d9-0d6462938e13.html#tracking-source=home-top-story-1](https://auburnpub.com/lifestyles/farm-girl-greens-indoor-hydroponic-farm-to-begin-growing-in/article_c957852a-300c-5e77-87d9-0d6462938e13.html#tracking-source=home-top-story-1)