



# **Cayuga County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan 2014**

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# Executive Summary

Cayuga County is the second largest producer of agricultural commodities in New York State, producing goods with a market value of \$293.4 million and providing nearly 2,900 jobs in 2012. Our community is fortunate to have good weather, fertile soils and abundant water resources as well as excellent technical services to support this major economic sector. Many of our farmers have years of experience while new and young farmers are eager to start their own agricultural businesses or take over the family farm.

Farms must be able to respond to changing economic pressures in order to survive. While these pressures are leading many farms to consolidate into larger and larger operations, many small farms are thriving and exhibit a tremendous diversity in what they produce. Farmers are optimistic about new opportunities that are opening up through the surging interest in locally produced foods, niche crops such as hops, and value-added products such as wines, cheeses, and wool yarn.

This Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan seeks to assess current conditions that affect Cayuga County's agricultural economy and farmland protection efforts, and propose policies and laws to strengthen its agricultural base. In 2012, Cayuga County was awarded an Agricultural and Farmland Protection Planning Grant from the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets and allocated matching funds to update the original County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan, adopted in 1996. Expanding on the original document, this plan largely bases its recommendations and implementation strategy on input from county farmers, support businesses, service providers and the general public. Its scope is expanded from the original plan's focus on farmland protection to also address trends in the local agricultural economy and the ways in which our communities, farmers, support businesses and service providers can bolster this vital economic sector.

The Cayuga County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board (AFPB) established a steering committee made up of the AFPB and additional farmers, agriculture-related business representatives and agricultural service providers to focus the plan and guide outreach efforts. The Cayuga County Department of Planning and Economic Development managed the public participation process and drafted the plan.

There were a number of meaningful opportunities for public input during the 18-month planning process, as well as an extensive public

outreach campaign. A project website was launched where meeting dates, public input notes and the draft plan were posted as they became available. Three public discussion meetings were held throughout the county, followed by seven focus group meetings and interviews with farmers and others involved in the local agricultural economy. Two public hearings were held, one by AFPB and one by the County Legislature.

## **Components of the plan include:**

- a summary of the strengths, opportunities, needs and challenges of the major agricultural economic sectors found within the county as well as an overview of existing natural resources and support programs;
- an overview of sound farm-friendly land use policies that local municipalities can incorporate into their zoning, subdivision, and site plan review laws;
- an analysis of development pressures on farmland and an improved suitability index for prioritizing farmland protection at the county level;
- and an implementation plan with a list of 49 actions to strengthen the county's agricultural economy and protect farmland for future farmers.

## **Implementation**

The AFPB, after collecting and reviewing participant input from public discussion meetings, focus group meetings and one-on-one interviews, developed a plan of action to support the county's agricultural economy and protect farmland in the next ten years, from 2015 to 2025. This implementation plan centers around three priority goals:

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

**Goal 2: Achieve widespread awareness and appreciation in the county of the economic, health and cultural importance of local food and local agriculture;**

**Goal 3: Ensure a vibrant future for farming in Cayuga County.**

# Key Actions

The AFPB and its partners should begin implementing this plan as soon as it is approved by the County Legislature and the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets by focusing on five key high priority actions. These actions were chosen based on a number of factors, including the long-term impact of the action on the community, the ease of accomplishment, and their influence as first steps to build off of as other implementation actions are taken.

- 1. Action 1-1.4: Launch a “buy local” campaign that will focus on the economic and health benefits of supporting local agriculture. Raising local consumer awareness of the opportunities to purchase local foods and the benefits of doing so can spur local demand for farmers’ goods.**

**Potential Partners:** County Chamber of Commerce, CCHD

**Funding Resources:** NYSDAM Regional “Buy Local” Campaign Development Grant

**Priority:** HIGH

**Estimated Time to Complete Once Action Begins:** 1-3 years

Well-executed “buy local” campaigns have a proven track record of boosting sales of small businesses, including agriculturally-based ones. There is growing interest on the local, regional and national levels about local food production. However, there is still much work to be done in Cayuga County to spread the word that buying locally produced foods would benefit not only our local economy but could benefit our health, as well. A successful “buy local” campaign may have a multitude of benefits that can help meet several objectives in the implementation plan; it can raise awareness and appreciation of the local agricultural economy by the general public, boost farmers’ local sales of their products, and generate consumer demand for restaurants and schools to serve meals with more locally-sourced ingredients.

The budget for this action would primarily consist of partner staff labor to design the campaign, recruit and coordinate meetings of participating businesses, and manage the campaign once it is launched. Marketing materials such as flyers, posters, window decals, newspaper ads and a website would also likely require dedicated funds. At least one funding source has been identified to help defray these costs, the NYSDAM Regional “Buy Local” Campaign Development Grant.

- 2. Action 1-3.1: 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. Staff should coordinate with other entities such as CCE, NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets Division of Agricultural Development and Farm Credit East.**

**Potential Partners:** CEDA

**Funding Resources:** CEDA staff time, CEDA and CCPED loan programs, USDA Rural Business Enterprise Grant Program, USDA-FSA loan programs, Finger Lakes Grants Information Center

**Priority:** HIGH

**Estimated Time to Complete Once Action Begins:** 1-3 years

A common refrain from farmers during public meetings and focus groups was the frustration with working with the many entities that provide assistance to farmers and the need for access to local, coordinated business support. Integrating the needs of the agricultural business community with the one-stop model at the Cayuga Economic Development Agency (CEDA) will provide much-needed business support to agricultural operations of all sizes as they work to grow and sustain their businesses. This action compliments CEDA's 2011 strategic plan, which calls for improving service delivery to small farmers.

The budget for this action would likely primarily consist of partner staff time to coordinate existing business support efforts and continue outreach to agricultural businesses to identify their needs and how best to serve them. CEDA has identified existing staff capacity to address this action without the need of creating a new position.

**3. Action 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.**

**Potential Partners:** Farm Bureau, CCE, School Districts, BOCES  
**Funding Resources:** Farm Bureau, USDA Farm to School Grant Program

**Priority:** HIGH

**Estimated Time to Complete Once Action Begins:** 1-3 years

Organizing fun farm events for children and their families will increase the agricultural literacy and appreciation by our communities for local agriculture as a major economic engine and a source of healthy foods. This increased awareness and appreciation is essential to the long-term viability of our farms, and over time may help maintain a diversity of farm sizes and production types by developing and sustaining a robust local market for locally produced foods. These events also have the potential of introducing children to farming who may not otherwise have an opportunity to discover a career in agriculture.

The budget for this action would likely primarily consist of staff and volunteer time to recruit participating farms, schools and other organizations, and plan the events. Other budget expenses may include transportation costs for school trips and marketing materials to publicize the events.

**4. Action 2-1.2: 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.**

**Potential Partners:** CCPED

**Funding Resources:** CCPED staff time

**Priority:** HIGH

**Estimated Time to Complete Once Action Begins:** on-going

Cumbersome or restrictive land use regulations can significantly impact farm business growth and viability. Addressing existing issues and working with towns and villages to prevent the creation of future impacts is essential to the diversity and long-term viability of our agricultural economy, especially for niche producers, small-scale retail outlets such as farm markets, and value-added activities that some may not view as “traditional” agricultural activities. CCPED already provides technical support to town and village governments for all their planning and zoning needs, including those related to agriculture, and will continue to prioritize trainings and informational outreach on this topic. Specific outreach efforts and training topics, such as farm-friendly land use policies, Cost of Community Services Studies and other farmland protection tools like PDR can initially be based on the needs and challenges identified as the County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan was developed.

The budget for this action would likely primarily consist of CCPED staff time.

- 5. Action 3-2.1: 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.**

**Potential Partners:** SWCD, CCE

**Funding Resources:** partner staff time

**Priority:** HIGH

**Estimated Time to Complete Once Action Begins:** on-going

A sound farm plan and its effective implementation is essential to sound stewardship of natural resources. There already exists strong technical support in the county to address farm management needs, but particular attention should be paid to ensuring that the quality of farm plans remain high and that all farmers know how to effectively implement their plans. SWCD and CCE will continue to prioritize addressing these priorities by engaging with farmers, farm planners and other agencies as needed.

The budget for this action would likely primarily consist of partner staff time.

The AFPB, with assistance from the Cayuga County Department of Planning and Economic Development (CCPED), will work closely with interested partners to progress with plan implementation in a timely manner. The AFPB is also responsible for reviewing the implementation plan annually to determine the level of progress completed, to reevaluate priorities and to make necessary revisions.

# Vision Statement and Defined Terms



## Vision Statement

This Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan seeks to assess current conditions that affect Cayuga County's agricultural economy and farmland protection efforts, and propose policies and laws to strengthen its agricultural base. However, before we can identify goals and a strategy to achieve them, it is essential to first identify what the desired outcomes are of existing and future efforts. These outcomes are expressed as the vision statement that serves as the overarching goal of the plan. The vision statement below was developed over several months by the steering committee and draws heavily from the ideas and values expressed in the public discussion meetings held for this plan in November, 2013.

### **Our vision of the future of agriculture in Cayuga County:**

*Viable and sustainable farms and agriculture-related businesses are the major economic drivers of our local economy. Agriculture is understood and celebrated by our local communities as a significant contributor of jobs, open space and beautiful rural character, and as a healthy source for fresh, local foods. Our farms, businesses, institutions and governments strengthen our agriculture's economic viability through: improved farm management and technology; generation of on-farm energy; increased access to quality agricultural education and training for farmers, farmworkers and the general public; enhanced support of new and young farmers; outreach to increase the awareness that agriculture is vital to our communities; implementation of sound environmental stewardship practices and encouragement of agriculture-friendly land use policies. Our farmland supports a diverse array of farm sizes and farming methods that produce a wide variety of food, fiber and energy products. Our local communities have ready access to fresh, locally grown foods and value-added agricultural products that also serve to enhance our agri-tourism industry. Our farms access all available market channels for niche and traditional products and have growth opportunities for value-added processing, packaging, and marketing.*

## **Agricultural Practices**

Farming is more than raising animals and crops. Agricultural enterprises, by their nature, often comprise a variety of land uses. Given the narrow profit margin of many agricultural operations, farms often include accessory commercial operations intended to supplement the primary sources of farm income. These may include timber production, feed manufacturing, food processing and manufacturing facilities, slaughterhouses, wineries, farm stands, tourism features and more. These accessory activities help stabilize farm incomes and maintain farming as a sustainable and viable way to support local families by allowing farmers to take advantage of their existing land assets, add value to farm products and direct market their products for additional income.

With these considerations in mind, the following definition of an agricultural practice was developed by the steering committee and is based on New York State definitions of agricultural practices:

***Agricultural practice:** Any activity connected with the raising or sale of crops, livestock or production of livestock products, including but not limited to field crops, fruits, vegetables, horticultural specialties, livestock and livestock products, furs, apiary products, maple sap, Christmas trees, aquaculture products and woody bio-mass. This shall encompass any activity or use now permitted by law, engaged in by or on behalf of a farmer in connection with farming including, but not limited to: housing for farm workers; stables and other tourist activities; the collection, transportation, distribution and storage of animal and poultry waste; storage, transportation and use of equipment for tillage, planting, harvesting and marketing; transportation, storage and use of fertilizers, limes, and legally permitted insecticides, herbicides, and fungicides; construction of farm structures and facilities including farm wineries and other on-farm food processing; construction and maintenance of fences and other enclosures; use of roadside stands, farm stands or farm markets for wholesale or retail sales provided that a substantial portion of the annual gross sales of such wholesale or retail facilities are from agricultural outputs grown on said farm; and the use and/or maintenance of related pastures, idle or fallow land, woodland, wetland, farm ponds, farm roads and certain farm buildings and other structures related to agricultural practices. Agricultural practices may take place on one or more parcels of owned or rented land, which may be contiguous or noncontiguous to each other.*

Farmers are also the stewards of their soil and water resources, which are vital to farming and to the community as a whole. Therefore all agricultural practices should be implemented according to the most current sound environmental management principles in order to minimize negative environmental impacts on water, soil and air quality. This plan seeks to support and encourage environmentally responsible agricultural practices, particularly with regards to the implementation of USDA - Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Best Management Practices (BMPs).

## **Farmland Protection**

There are many ways to protect farmland. For the purposes of this plan, farmland protection is defined as a collection of laws, policies and programs that foster a vibrant agricultural economy and seek to limit the conversion of land from agricultural uses to non-agricultural uses caused by development pressures and use conflicts. Various types of farmland protection strategies are already employed in Cayuga County, at the federal, state, county and local levels. Examples of these tools include the Cayuga County Consolidated Agricultural District No. 5, agricultural value assessments, local and state right-to-farm laws, infrastructure support, economic development, conservation easements and land use planning that is sensitive to the needs of farms and agriculturally based businesses. One of the purposes of this plan is to evaluate existing farmland protection policies and laws, and propose ways to strengthen or add to them (see Part II of this plan). It is important to keep in mind that not every tool is right for every community, and that often one must employ a combination of these methods to be successful.

# Part I: Survey and Analysis



## Introduction

Part I of this plan surveys the major agricultural sectors found within Cayuga County as well as major attributes of the county that impact agriculture such as natural resources and existing land use policies. Part I also analyzes available information with the intent to provide a context and framework for county, town and village decision makers. The Implementation Plan in Part II is heavily based on the information in Part I, which in turn was developed based on information gathered through the plan's steering committee, multiple public meetings and focus groups, and one-on-one interviews with farmers and agricultural business owners.

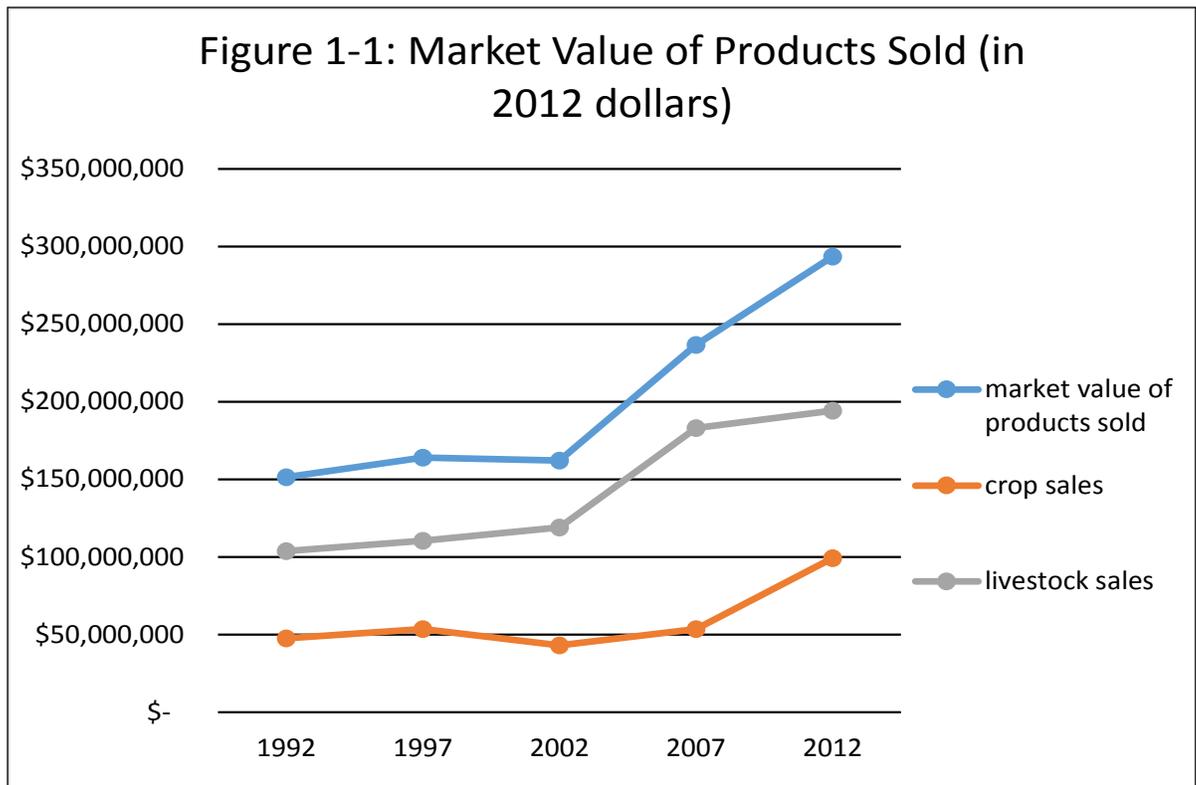
## I. Agricultural Activity

This section focuses on the major agricultural sectors found within the county. The analysis begins with a general overview of agricultural activity, including the strengths, opportunities, needs and challenges that can be applied or attributed to all agricultural sectors found within the county. A survey and analysis for each major agricultural sector – specialty crops, dairy and field crops, livestock and agricultural support businesses – are then addressed in more detail, with sector-specific strengths, opportunities, needs and challenges identified for each.

### Cayuga County's Agricultural Activity: An Overview

According to the 2012 US Census of Agriculture, Cayuga County ranked second in New York State for the market value of agricultural commodities, valued at over \$293.4 million (Figure 1-1). \$99.2 million was generated from crop sales and \$194.3 million from livestock sales, including milk and other dairy products from cows. 705 farms in Cayuga County harvested 169,969 acres of cropland, amounting to 54% of the county's total land area.

Major agricultural production sectors include field crops and dairy. Combined, these two sectors accounted for nearly \$227 million in 2012, or 77% of total agricultural sales. Overall, Cayuga County ranked first in New York State in the production of grains and soybeans and second in the production of milk and other dairy products. Nationally,



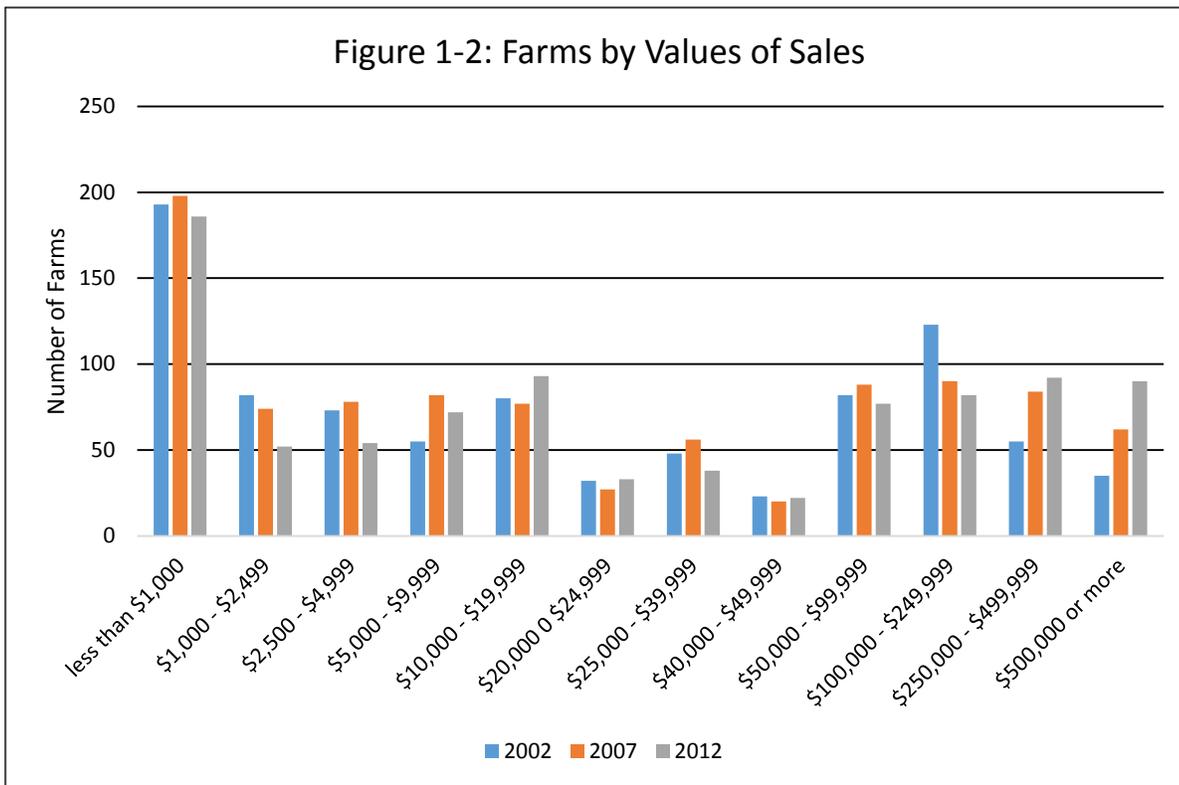
Cayuga County ranked 39<sup>th</sup> in the production of milk and other dairy products in 2012.

Other agricultural sectors include livestock production such as cattle and calves, poultry and eggs, and hogs and pigs; and specialty crop production such as vegetables, fruits, horticulture and floriculture products, honey and maple syrup.

Reflecting a nation-wide trend, Cayuga County is seeing many farms<sup>1</sup> expand to achieve economies of scale while also experiencing a proliferation of smaller farm operations. The number of farms with sales of \$250,000 or more increased from 90 farms in 2002 to 182 farms in 2012. Also between 2002 and 2012, the number of farms with sales between \$100,000 and \$249,999 decreased by 41, from 123 to 82. The number of farms with sales between \$5,000 and \$9,999 increased from 55 to 72 in the same time period (Figure 1-2), perhaps reflecting a trend of new farmers and part-time farmers responding to the increased consumer demand for locally grown food. Overall, the total number of farms in the county has increased slightly since the early 1990's, from 873 in 1992 to 891 in 2012, but has fluctuated over time.

Total farm production expenses rose faster than total net cash farm income from 2007 to 2012; expenses increased 38% while income increased only 25%. The average net income per farm increased 31% in the same time period, from \$62,251 per farm to \$81,572 (Table 1-1). The estimated market value of land and buildings increased by over 50% between 2007 and 2012, from \$2,125 to \$3,215 per acre. Increasing competition for quality farmland throughout the county has squeezed all farmers looking to expand or even to just hold on to leased farmland.

1. As of 1974 the US Census of Agriculture has defined a farm as any place from which \$1,000 or more of agricultural products were produced and sold, or normally would have been sold, during the census year.



	2007	2012	% Change
total farm production expenses (\$1,000)	\$165,802	\$229,446	38%
average per farm (\$)	\$177,139	\$257,516	45%
net cash farm income of operation (\$1,000)	\$58,267	\$72,680	25%
average per farm (\$)	\$62,251	\$81,572	31%

There were 1,415 farm operators running the 891 farms present in Cayuga County in 2012. In the same year 251 farms, or 28%, employed a total of 1,448 farm laborers with a payroll of \$27.15 million. Combined, county farms employed 2,863 people in 2012.

Ninety-one percent of the principal farm operators lived on their farms in 2012, yet only 67% of farms had internet access. Inadequate high speed internet has been cited by several farmers as an obstacle for efficient access to information and resources, making it more difficult to effectively sustain or grow their farm businesses and presenting challenges in the development of effective marketing and branding strategies.

### **Strengths and Opportunities**

Agriculture in Cayuga County has many opportunities and exhibits many strengths. Among the strengths cited in each of the three November, 2013 public meetings that were held for this plan are the presence and growth of agri-tourism in the county; good land, soil and water resources; and farmers' proximity to services, suppliers, and support institutions. Farmers working together to create opportunities, the growth of small and diverse farms, and increased production of niche and value-added products were seen as opportunities for county farmers by participants in all three meetings.

The close proximity to major regional markets such as Syracuse, Rochester, and the New York City metropolitan area also present great opportunities, especially for specialty crop and livestock producers that seek to tap into those retail and wholesale markets. The diversity of agricultural production in the county was widely seen as a strength by public meeting and focus group participants, as was the diversity of approaches to farming.

Cayuga County farmers have a history of creating opportunities for themselves, for example, by creating pooling purchasing systems to save money by buying inputs in bulk. There is continued farmer interest to create new collaborations and cooperatives.

### **Needs and Challenges**

Many farmers today face the same or similar challenges regardless of the size or production method of their farms. The cost of land, labor, fuel, and taxes were universally cited as challenges in all three public meetings. Onerous regulatory obligations at the federal, state and local levels were also commonly listed as challenges. These included federal milk pricing, compliance with environmental regulations such as the Clean Water Act, required state permitting procedures such as for digging ditches, local building permitting requirements, confusing state requirements on how processed foods such as cheeses, eggs, raw poultry and meats can be processed and sold, and the need for federal immigration reform to improve access to reliable labor. Participants identified development pressure, access to new markets and local markets, accessing or maintaining capital and financing, and accessing high-quality service providers as challenges, as well as relations between farmers and non-farmers. The lack of accessible educational and training programs for farm management and new technologies were also needs that were identified at each public meeting.

Farmers have reported vandalism of farm equipment, trespassing, dumping, and crop damage by non-farming community members. Overall, there is a common sense among farmers that the general public does not understand agricultural practices nor appreciate the importance of all types of farms to the local economy and our communities' quality of life. This is in contrast to the strong recognition and support that many farmers perceive from local institutions such as the Farm Bureau and Farm Credit East, and government agencies such as the County Department of Planning and Economic Development, County Office of Tourism, County Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) and County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD). The need for adequate public education and outreach was a common refrain in public meetings and focus groups, as was the need to improve access to agricultural education in most of the school districts that serve the county.

There has been and continues to be a concern by members of both the general public and the farming community regarding some agricultural practices that harm the environment – especially water quality – if they are poorly managed. The three most significant issues identified were nonpoint source pollution caused by improper manure spreading, erosion of agricultural soils into waterbodies and pesticide contamination of water resources.

## Inventory of Contributors to Cayuga County's Agricultural Economy

In 2013, the Cayuga County Department of Planning and Economic Development conducted an inventory of contributors to the county's agricultural economy. This inventory identified contributors both within the county and also those outside the county that provide goods or services to county farms. Planning staff referred to county-wide land use and parcel data, searched internet resources, worked with local town assessors and other town officials and consulted with the Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan steering committee and other resources to identify individual farm operations and agricultural goods and service providers. In total, 972 contributors were identified, including:

- 122 dairies (Map 1-1);
- 272 field crop producers (Map 1-1);
- 228 livestock farms (Map 1-2);
- 242 specialty crop producers (Map 1-3);
- 12 operations that harvest timber (Map 1-3);
- 121 goods and services providers (Map 1-4);
- 43 processors or value-added operations (Map 1-4);
- 6 restaurants that source ingredients from Cayuga County producers (Map 1-5);
- 43 retail outlets of local agricultural products (Map 1-5);
- 6 in-county government or non-government organizations that assist farmers (Map 1-5);
- 54 farms of an unknown type (Map 1-5).

Due to the diverse nature of agricultural production and to the data collection methods employed, it is likely that this inventory underestimates the numbers of contributors in each category. Nonetheless, this inventory reveals the rich variety of agricultural production types and support businesses that make up our local agricultural economy. Farms that have diversified their operations were counted in each category that they fall into.

### Cayuga County's Agricultural Activity: Specialty Crops

Specialty crops are defined by New York State as "fruits and vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture, and nursery crops (including floriculture)." Honey, maple syrup, Christmas trees, herbs and spices also fall within this definition. In 2012, Cayuga County farms generated \$23.2 million in sales, or 23% of total crop sales, from specialty crops such as vegetables, fruits, bedding plants, and cut Christmas trees. The 2013 inventory of contributors to our agricultural economy identified 242 specialty crop producers, distributed throughout the county with clusters in the northern and south eastern towns, and in the central towns surrounding Auburn (Map 1-3). Twenty-four apiaries were identified, as were fourteen maple syrup producers, thirty-three Christmas tree producers, and three hops growers. Fourteen were identified as certified organic.

Many of these producers tend to use a local and regional direct-to-consumer retail business model by selling through roadside stands, farmers' markets, or u-pick systems. Many also engage in tourism-



related activities such as hosting farm tours, setting up seasonal attractions such as hayrides or pumpkin patches, providing event space for festivals or private parties, or participating in the Finger Lakes Sweet Treat Trail or the Cayuga Lake Wine Trail. Several produce enough volume to sell wholesale, while others have formed relationships with local or regional restaurants and grocery stores.

In addition and often complimentary to agri-tourism accessory activities are value-added processes that many specialty crop producers engage in to boost sales. Many farm operations also develop their own lines of jams, jellies, baked goods, and specialty products such as honey elixirs and lavender scrubs. These types of products can significantly boost farm sales, but can also require additional marketing and branding efforts to be successful. One sector of value-added processing that is quickly expanding throughout the Finger Lakes Region is winemaking. Wines are produced in Cayuga County by both farmers and vintners who purchase grapes from local or regional producers.

### **Strengths and Opportunities**

The diversity of agricultural production in the county was widely seen as a strength by public meeting participants, as was the diversity of approaches to farming throughout the county. This diversity is certainly evident in farms that grow specialty crops. Cayuga County is home to a variety of specialty crop operations including large wholesale crop producers with their own processing facilities such as Turek Farms and Martens Farms, very small vegetable farms, wineries with bustling tasting rooms, Christmas tree farms that direct market through a u-cut system or ship downstate and many, many others.

Small niche producers of specialty crops are seeing opportunities in the increasing demand for locally grown and organic produce. Public participants perceived that there would be increasing local interest for these types of food, and there is interest by some local specialty producers to increase sales to local and regional households either through farmers' markets or farm stands, or by selling in bulk to grocery stores and other higher-volume outlets. The new Finger Lakes Fresh Food Hub - located just south of Cayuga County in the Town of Groton - presents many new opportunities for fruit and vegetable growers who can provide quality and volume of products sufficient for processing and wholesale.

### **Needs and Challenges**

Smaller-scale producers find it challenging to effectively market and brand their farm products and accessory uses, such as event spaces and farm tours. Specialty crop producers that engage in tourism-related activities to sustain their farm operations sometimes come up against restrictive town and village sign regulations that limit farm visibility to potential customers. Also, while the local interest in locally produced foods does seem to be increasing, local producers still have to compete with "big box" retailers for customers who might not understand the value of locally grown food, or be able to pay what local farmers need to charge for their goods.

## Cayuga County's Agricultural Activity: Livestock and Poultry

Excluding milk and other dairy products from cows, livestock and poultry farms generated \$35.47 million in sales in 2012. The 2013 inventory of contributors to our agricultural economy (Map 1-2) identified 228 livestock and poultry producers distributed throughout the county, including 64 producers that raised poultry or eggs, 5 that raised hogs and pigs, 29 that raised cattle or calves, 9 that raised alpaca, 5 that raised goats, and 9 that raised sheep. Seventy-two operations were identified that board or own horses. Forty-five additional livestock operations were identified but their production type is unknown. In 2012, Cayuga County ranked second in New York State in cattle and calf inventory and sales and third in sales for sheep, goats and their products.

A notable trend in this group of farmers is the level of production diversification that is occurring or has occurred. While there are cattle feedlots and larger-scale operations in the county that primarily raise one type of meat animal, many livestock raisers have diversified to raise more than one type, such as beef and hogs, while others have diversified to produce specialty crops such as fruits, vegetables, honey or maple syrup, or value-added products such as cheeses, baked goods and wool yarn in addition to meats.

Likewise, marketing strategies used by this group of farmers vary a great deal. Several beef and hog producers sell freezer meat to the local and regional consumer market, while others process their meats into cuts that are shipped to more lucrative big city markets or sold to restaurants, or sell through cooperative farm labels. Egg producers both sell directly to consumers at road stands and farmers' markets, and to local groceries and restaurants.

### Strengths and Opportunities

Many livestock producers also grow field crops such as soybeans and corn, or specialty crops such vegetables and honey. These diverse business models help buffer incomes from fluctuating meat prices and help increase the viability of small or medium-sized farms. Livestock and poultry producers enjoy strong local interest in local meats, poultry, and eggs, and have access to larger regional markets such as Syracuse, Rochester, and the New York City metropolitan area.

A privately-owned mobile poultry slaughtering facility is an available service that farmers can rent to process their birds in preparation for sale. Overall, meeting participants reported that they were able to access adequate poultry meat processing facilities.

### Needs and Challenges

Fluctuations in beef pricing was cited as one challenge that beef producers face. Some are addressing this uncertainty by diversifying their operations. Feed and land prices have also increased in recent years, which cuts into profits and makes it more difficult to earn a living.



One significant limitation that beef, hog and other meat producers are currently experiencing is the inadequate availability of USDA-certified slaughtering facilities that would allow them to sell higher-value cuts of meat, rather than just freezer meat. State-certified facilities are more readily available, but meats processed in these facilities can be sold only as half or whole animal, shutting out many livestock farmers from being able to sell the more lucrative cuts of meat. Cayuga County livestock farmers are interested in 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, similar to the reciprocal certification model in Vermont. Without better access to facilities that would enable farmers to sell cuts of meat, livestock farmers will continue to have limited access to larger, more lucrative markets, which in turn limits their business growth potential.

There is a lot of interest from the local community for locally produced meats, but producers have found that locals are not willing to pay as much for local meats as regional markets such as the New York City metropolitan area, which can have higher transportation and marketing costs.



Similar to dairy farms, livestock farms must manage their manure wastes to minimize costs, address the health and safety of their herds, and practice sound environmental stewardship. The ability to safely dispose of nutrient wastes can be a major limiting factor for farmers as it often requires a lot of land for spreading or costly infrastructure such as manure digesters. Fortunately, technical support services and resources are available to farmers to address these needs (see Section II: Agricultural Support Services and Resources).

## **Cayuga County's Agricultural Activity: Dairy and Field Crops**

In 2012, Cayuga County was home to 128 dairy farms that generated \$158.8 million in sales. Many dairy farmers in Cayuga County sell their milk to Dairlea or Byrne Dairy.

Most dairies also grow field crops such as corn, soy and wheat to feed their herds, and also require tracts of land that can be used to spread manure, an unavoidable by-product of dairy production.

Field crops include corn for grain, corn for silage, soybeans, small grains such as wheat and barley, and hay for greenchop or silage. Field crop farmers sell their commodities to firms in upstate New York, the mid-west or Canada. In 2012, 202 farms in Cayuga County had the capacity to store 8.27 million bushels of grain.

The 2013 inventory of contributors to the agricultural economy identified 122 dairy farms (Map 1-1), a handful of which also produced agricultural products other than milk such as beef, poultry and eggs, or vegetables. Some dairy operations also provided services to other farming operations, such as trucking. Even so, Cayuga County dairy farms are moving towards vertical integration of their operations, rather than a diversification of production. For example, instead of hiring someone to spread fertilizer on their fields, some dairy farmers are investing in the equipment to do that work themselves. Dairy farmers look to investments in technology and more sophisticated equipment to cut costs and stay competitive.



## **Strengths and Opportunities**

Cayuga County enjoys very strong, highly productive dairy and field crop sectors. The road and rail systems as well as the county's close proximity to the Port of Oswego are seen as advantages for accessing interstate and international markets, especially for field crop producers. Field crop farmers also have access to large-scale local and regional processors and brokers such as the Genoa Commodities, the Sunoco ethanol plant, Blue Seal, Cargill and Bunge.

Cayuga County dairy farmers have a proud history of collaboration and cooperation to improve their farm businesses. The most notable example of this phenomenon is Cayuga Marketing, LLC, which was initially founded by a group of farmers to get better prices for bulk inputs and has recently launched Cayuga Milk Ingredients, a processing plant in the Town of Aurelius that will take locally produced milk and process it into value-added dry milk products.

## **Needs and Challenges**

Similar to livestock farms, dairy farms must manage their manure wastes to minimize costs, address the health and safety of their herds, and act as sound environmental stewards. The ability to safely dispose of nutrient wastes can be a major limiting factor for farmers as it often requires a lot of land for spreading or costly infrastructure such as manure digesters. Fortunately, support services and resources are available to farmers to address these needs and many farmers take advantage of them.

## **Cayuga County's Agricultural Activity: Agriculture-Related Support Businesses**

Cayuga County is home to a diverse array of agricultural service and goods providers. These support businesses include trucking; private consulting services; equipment sales and repair; veterinary services; slaughtering and butchering facilities; auctioneers; grain mills; grain brokers; seed, fertilizer, and pesticide suppliers; and others. The 2013 inventory of contributors to the county agricultural economy identified 121 support businesses both within and near the county that conduct business with county farms (Map 1-4). Farmers have observed a decline in the number of support businesses in the county over the past several decades. This is possibly due to the changing economics of agricultural production.

## **Strengths and Opportunities**

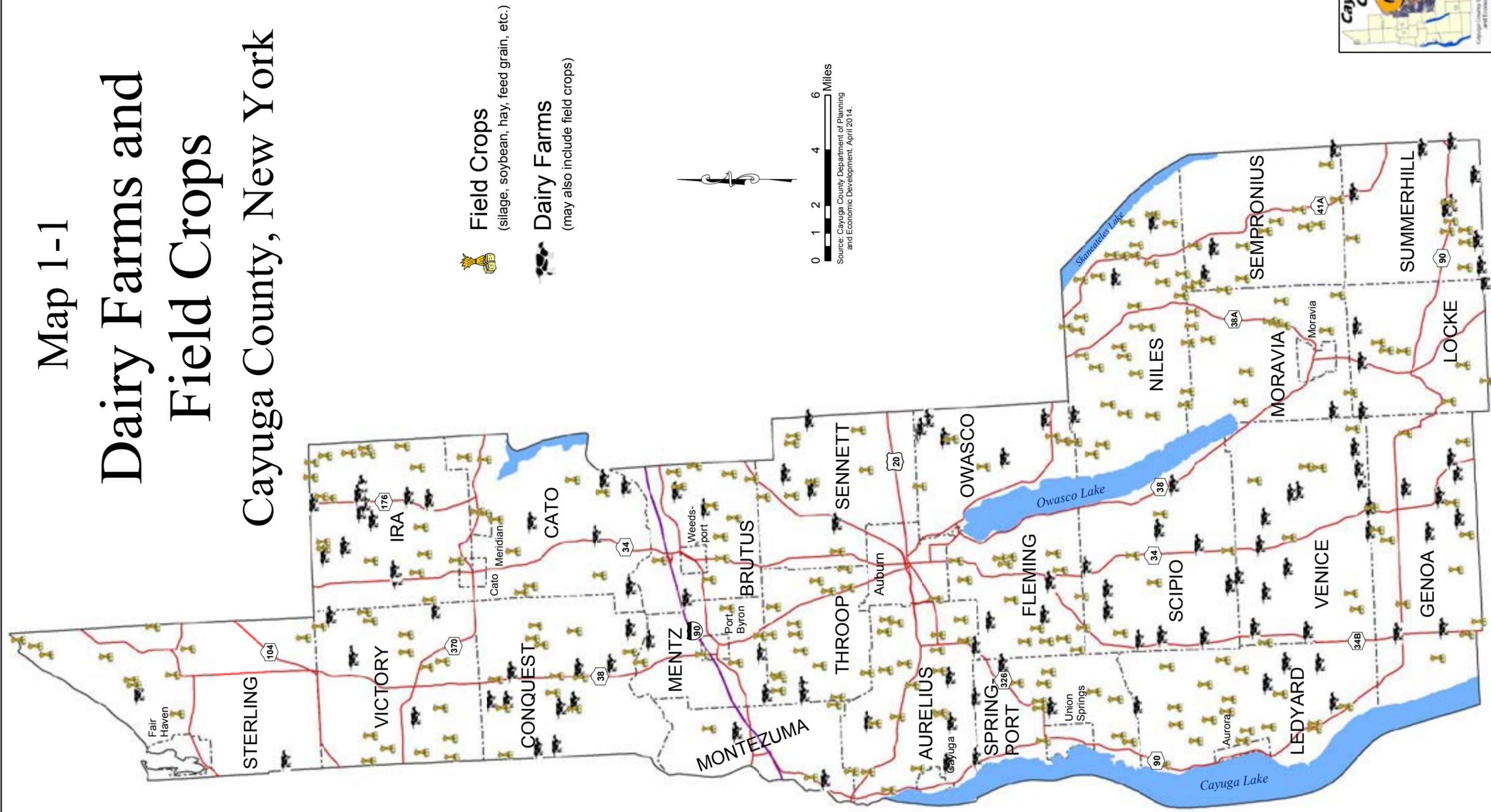
The County's strong agricultural sector means that area farmers continue to enjoy a variety of support services that cater to their needs. Even so, there are opportunities for additional service and goods providers to establish in Cayuga County. The Cayuga Economic Development Agency (CEDA) can help additional support businesses locate facilities, identify loans and grants for which they are eligible, and develop business plans.



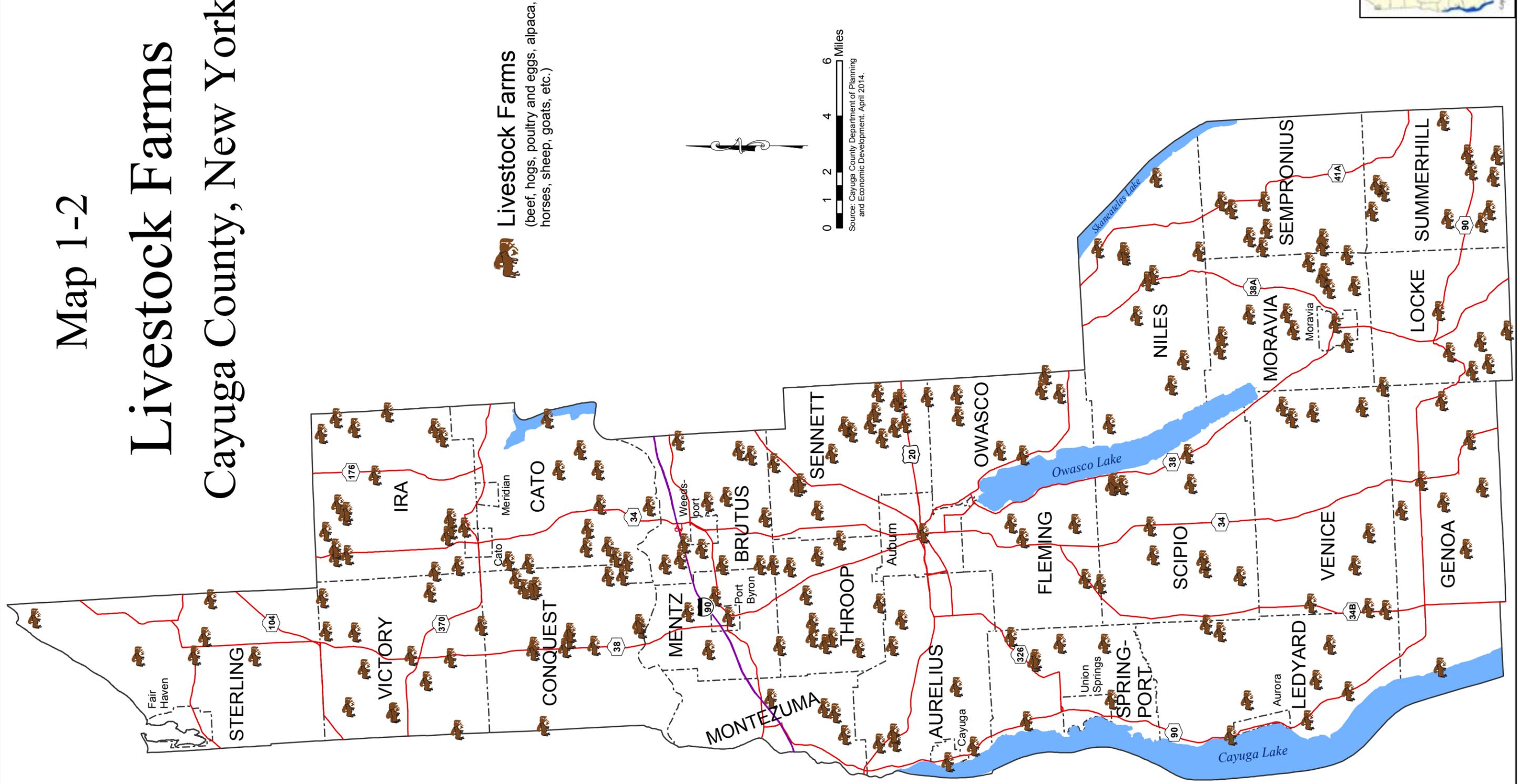
### **Needs and Challenges**

Modern farm equipment can be quite sophisticated, requiring complicated set-ups and troubleshooting when problems arise. It can be challenging at times for farmers to access adequate support for these sophisticated machines, primarily due to a shortage of workers with the requisite specialized skill set. Rising gas prices can make it increasingly difficult to operate trucking services, especially since milk pricing is fixed and grain is a fungible commodity. Some public participants also mentioned that the availability of veterinary services was limited for livestock.

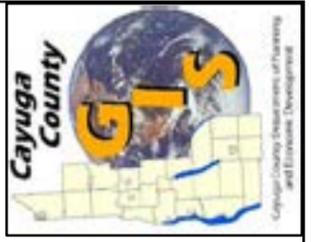
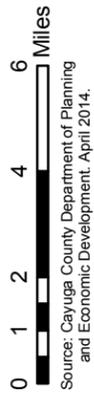
# Map 1-1 Dairy Farms and Field Crops Cayuga County, New York



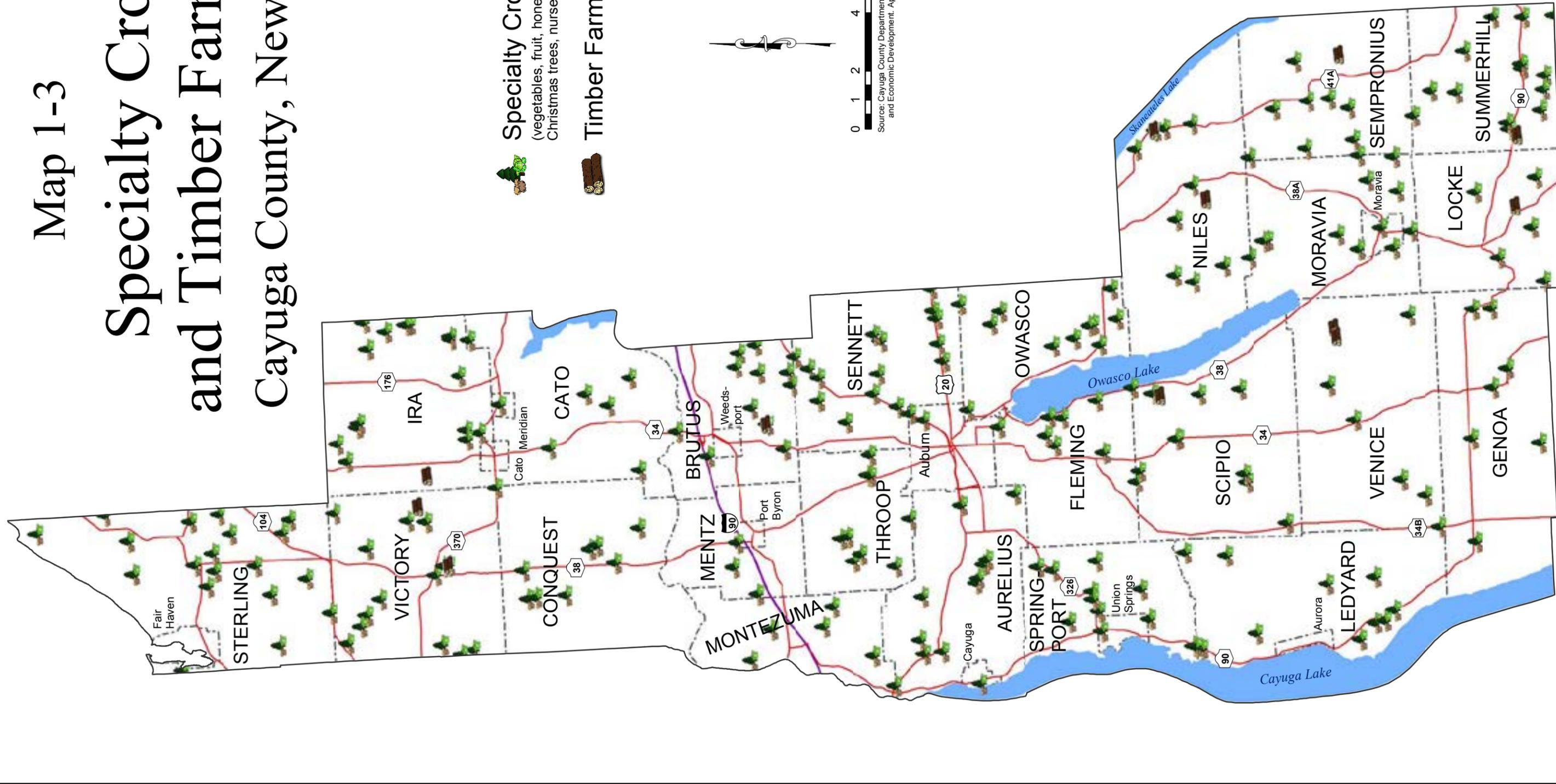
# Map 1-2 Livestock Farms Cayuga County, New York



**Livestock Farms**  
(beef, hogs, poultry and eggs, alpaca, horses, sheep, goats, etc.)

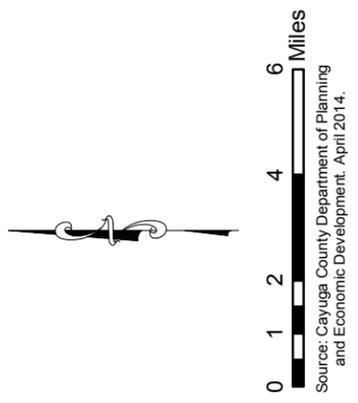


# Map 1-3 Specialty Crop and Timber Farming Cayuga County, New York

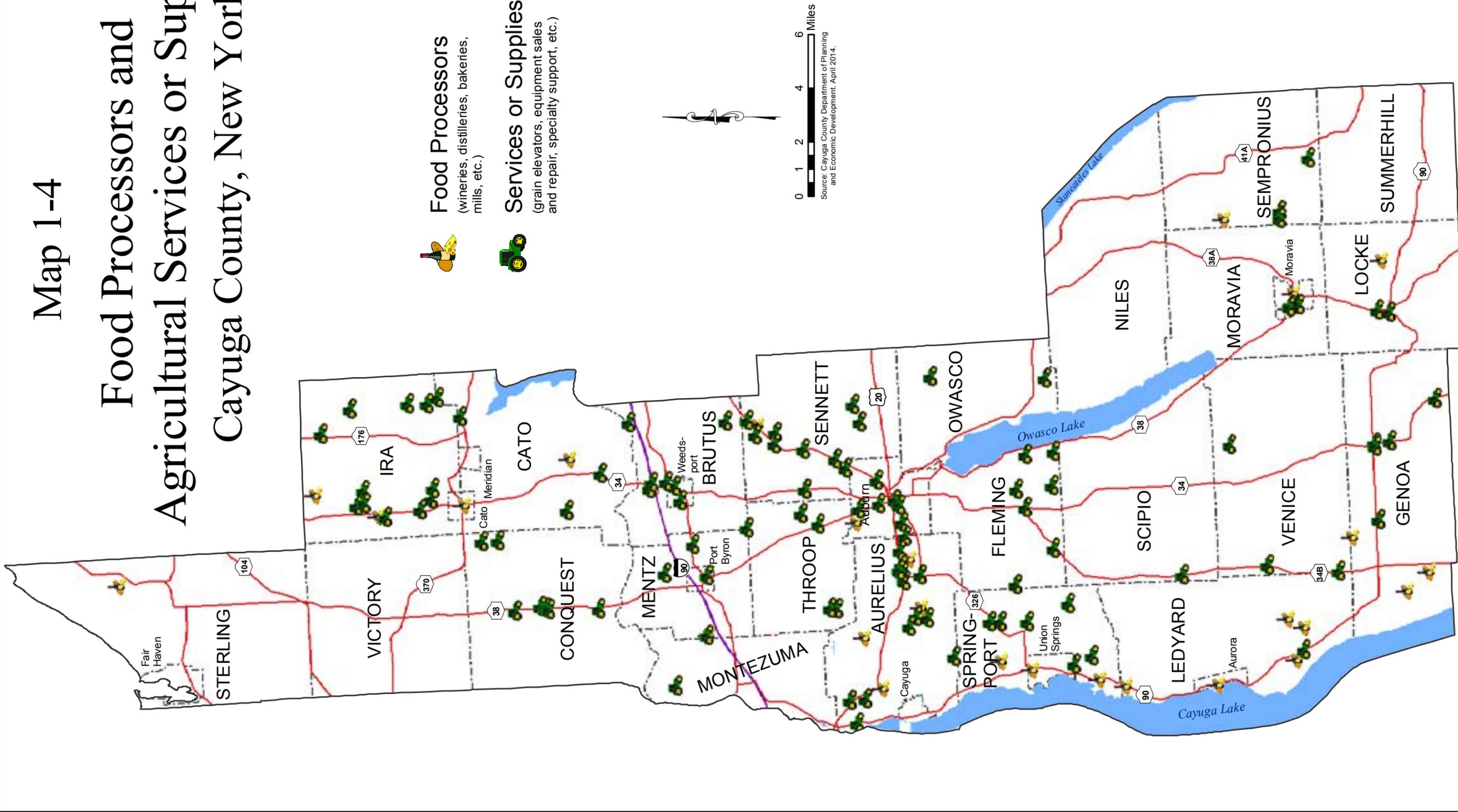


 **Specialty Crop Farming**  
(vegetables, fruit, honey, maple syrup, Christmas trees, nurseries, etc.)

 **Timber Farming**



# Map 1-4 Food Processors and Agricultural Services or Supplies Cayuga County, New York



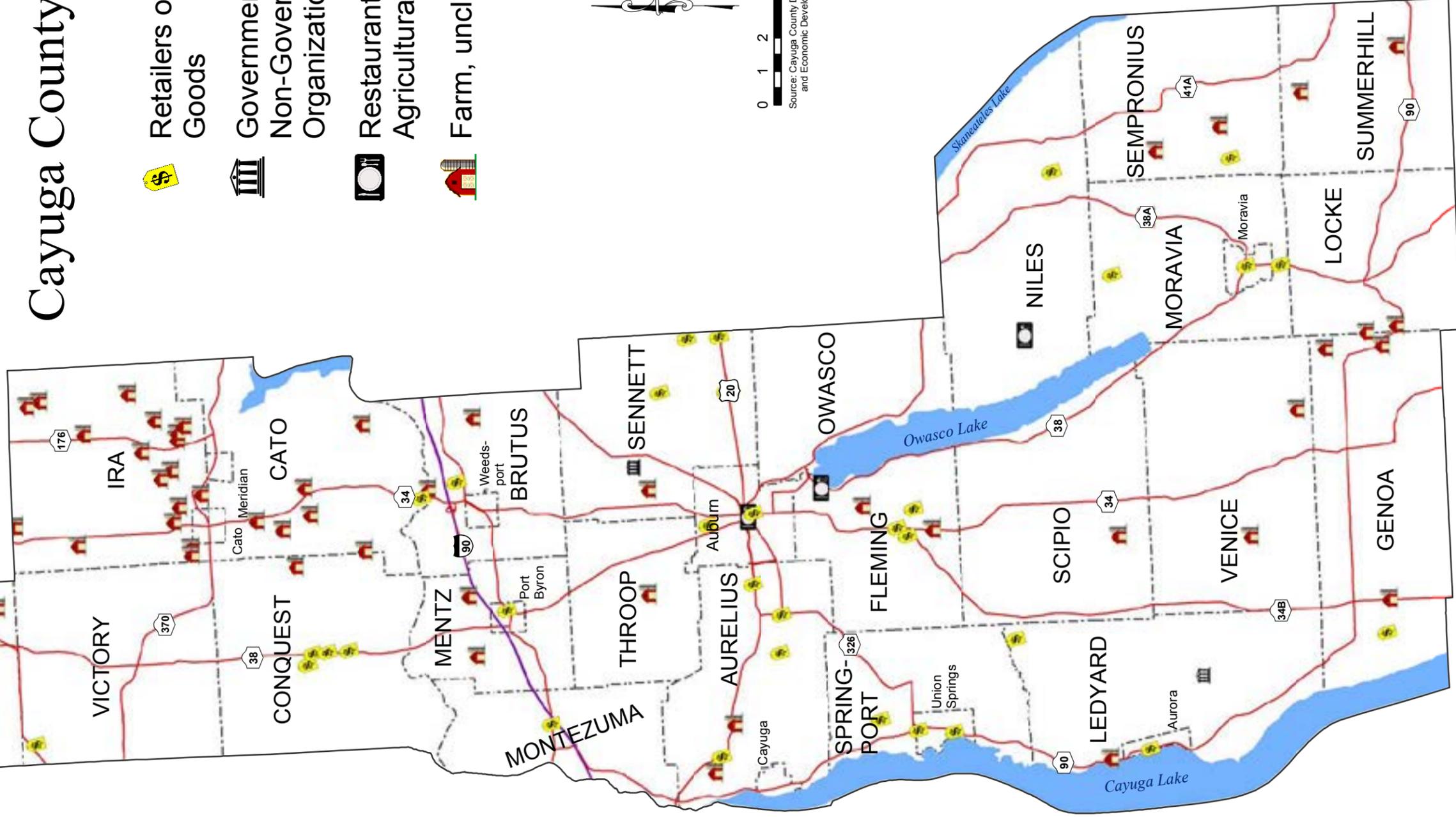
-  **Food Processors**  
(wineries, distilleries, bakeries, mills, etc.)
-  **Services or Supplies**  
(grain elevators, equipment sales and repair, specialty support, etc.)



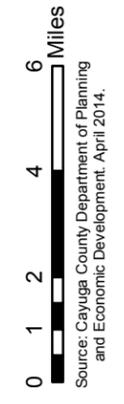
# Map 1-5

## Restaurants, Retailers, Governmental Organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations, and Unclassified Farms

### Cayuga County, New York



-  Retailers of Local Agricultural Goods
-  Governmental and Non-Governmental Organizations
-  Restaurants that Serve Local Agricultural Goods
-  Farm, unclassified



## II. Agricultural Support Programs and Resources

### Market Access and Branding

How Cayuga County farmers access markets depends a lot on their type and scale of production. Field crops grown by dairy and livestock farms are mostly consumed on-farm, while field crop-only farms often sell to large-scale processors or commodities firms throughout upstate New York, the Midwest and Canada, such as Genoa Commodities, Sunoco and Bunge. Many small farms are diversified, producing a combination of livestock products, specialty crops, and value-added products. For farms with this business model, marketing and branding their diverse offerings may become more challenging or complicated, requiring an even greater time commitment. Specialty crop and livestock producers have many avenues in which to market their products, each with their own limitations and opportunities. Livestock farmers sell freezer meat to the local and regional consumer markets or cuts of meat to the local, regional and national retail markets, depending on their access to USDA-certified slaughtering facilities. Some specialty crop and livestock producers depend on seasonal farmers' markets such as those in Auburn, Skaneateles and Syracuse for their income, while others pre-sell shares of their products to local consumers through a community supported agriculture (CSA) arrangement. Still others set up road side stands, on-farm stands, u-pick systems, or sell their goods at farm stores such as Vitale's Farm Market, Morgan's Half Acre Produce, or Owen Orchards. For those farmers that produce enough volume, they may look to sell wholesale to a variety of regional or national buyers.

### Strengths and Opportunities

The local food movement is continuing to gain momentum and increase consumer demand for local specialty, livestock and value-added products. This trend has resulted in an uptick in the number of restaurants, schools and other institutions interested in sourcing ingredients locally and regionally. The interest in locally produced food has also led to increased government support and funding for farm-to-school programs at the federal and state levels that are intended to increase consumption of fresh, wholesome, locally produced foods in school meals.

Food hubs have gained a lot of support from both farmers and state policymakers, and can be a great tool for specialty crop growers in particular to help access new markets. In their most basic form, food hubs are aggregation and distribution facilities (warehouses) that act as drop-off points for local produce where it is aggregated and sold at wholesale prices to local and regional buyers. Food hubs often also provide value-added processing such as chopping, dehydrating, packaging, freezing, and labeling. Several food hubs exist in upstate New York, including the Finger Lakes Fresh Food Hub in Groton, just south of Cayuga County, which was built in 2013.

The increasing interest by visitors and locals alike to feel a connection to where and how their food is grown has led to the rapid growth of agri-tourism in the Finger Lakes region. Public participants viewed

agri-tourism as a great opportunity to increase and diversify farm sales, improve small farm viability and strengthen the overall local agricultural economy. Some Cayuga County farmers are capitalizing on this trend by hosting farm tours, teaching classes about sustainable agriculture, providing gathering spaces for private parties and community events, and other agri-tourism opportunities such as winery tasting rooms and farm restaurants.

The Cayuga County Office of Tourism, Department of Planning and Economic Development and others are working to develop a way-finding signage system for the entire county, so that main attractions such as wineries and historic sites are easier for visitors to navigate to.

County farmers can take advantage of marketing assistance from the Cayuga County Office of Tourism, which features farms, wineries, and farm-to-fork venues on its website and in videos and other promotional materials. Many agricultural operations in Cayuga County participate in the Finger Lakes Cheese Trail, Finger Lakes Sweet Treat Trail, or the Cayuga Lake Wine Trail that attract thousands of visitors each year. Finger Lakes Culinary Bounty promotes agriculture in the Finger Lakes region by organizing an annual harvest dinner, workshops and networking events to foster farmer-chef connections, while the monthly magazine *Edible Finger Lakes* features local farms, foods, events and recipes to attract and inspire.

### **Needs and Challenges**

Although agri-tourism activities can increase the sustainability and viability of a farm business, they can also require specialized skills and large financial and time investments for effective marketing, branding and business planning.

Agricultural producers that seek to attract passers-by and tourists to their farms are sometimes limited by restrictions to off-site and on-site sign usage along town, village, and state roads. While some local municipalities have few or no restrictions on signs or other land uses, others heavily restrict signs and agriculture-related accessory uses such as farm stands, tasting rooms, or use of on-farm event spaces for private parties (for more information about farm-friendly land use policies, please see Part I Section V: Municipal Land Use Policies and Appendix C).

Public meeting and focus group participants discussed the limitations they have experienced in accessing new or bigger markets. Specialty crop and livestock producers in particular expressed interest in selling to local and regional institutions and restaurants, and accessing wholesale markets, but successes in accessing these markets have been mixed and are constricted by a number of factors. First, accessing such markets often means complying with additional regulatory oversight such as Good Agricultural Practices (GAP), which requires increased financial and time investments. Several producers also expressed frustration in connecting with restaurant chefs, who often have very limited time, or inclination, to seek out local food producers. As mentioned previously, some livestock farmers have limited market access due to the shortage of USDA-certified slaughterhouse facilities.

## **Business Planning and Financial Assistance**

In order to establish, grow and maintain a business, access to capital and financial assistance in the form of grants and loans is often essential, as is sound business planning. There are several non-profit organizations and government agencies, both within and near Cayuga County, that provide business and financial support to farmers and agriculture-related businesses. A few are discussed below.

### **Strengths and Opportunities**

The Cayuga Economic Development Agency (CEDA), partially funded by Cayuga County, is a business development service provider that serves all new, existing and potential businesses in Cayuga County, by providing financial and technical business assistance. CEDA also serves to connect businesses with other existing resources in the area. Its 2011 strategic plan identified agriculture as a priority industry group and listed several action items to help support and strengthen this sector, including exploring the feasibility of establishing a fund to protect farmland using a set aside fee from property transfers; establishing an Agricultural Economic Development Working Group to support local farms; and working to support and establish farmers' markets throughout the county.

The Farm Viability Institute based in Syracuse assists with farm business planning and offers grants to help farms grow into sustainable enterprises. Groundswell, a non-profit organization in Ithaca that helps small and sustainable farmers launch farm businesses, offers a business planning course for beginning farmers. Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) runs the Small Farms Program which offers classes, workshops, trainings and resource materials to help farmers. Finger Lakes Culinary Bounty serves as a sort of regional chamber of commerce for farmers and agri-tourism businesses, raising awareness in the general public about locally produced foods and holding networking events and workshops for agricultural producers and processors.

There are opportunities in the county to further streamline existing services and create a target marketing strategy to reach out to the agricultural community so that agricultural businesses can take full advantage of them. A closer collaboration between these service providers and agricultural businesses may be able to identify ways to accomplish this, and could lead to the creation of more specialized or targeted programs that better meet the needs of this unique group of businesses.

### **Needs and Challenges**

While there are many federal and state financial support opportunities available to county farmers, public participants expressed frustration with the difficulty in obtaining assistance through these avenues. Public participants also perceived limitations in seeking loans through private banks, which sometimes try to make farms fit into a more conventional business model that requires assurances in future revenue streams, an impossible feat for farmers.

Public participants shared that while there are many resources available to them, it is challenging to find someone to meet with face-to-face who can help them navigate the many grants and other available resources.

While there are several entities that provide business planning support, networking and leadership growth opportunities, marketing assistance, business loans and grant assistance to the general Cayuga County business community there seems to be a disconnect between these more mainstream resource options and existing agricultural businesses.

## **New and Young Farmers**

The Cayuga County Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers Program has about two dozen members between the ages of 18 and 35 years, but as there is no universal definition of “young farmers” it is impossible to determine the actual number of them operating or working on farms in the county. Similarly, the term “new farmer” can have different meanings to different people, but generally operators with less than 10 years of experience are commonly described as “new.” Whatever these terms mean to each individual, public participants identified multiple challenges and difficulties that hit “new and young farmers” particularly hard, such as the struggle to compete with more established farmers for farmland, acquiring capital and financing to establish or grow their farm businesses, the need for experienced mentors and the lack of local educational and training opportunities.

Despite these challenges and the increasing average age of principal farm operators in the county (the average age increased from 50.2 years in 1992 to 56.5 years in 2012), young and new Cayuga County farmers are indeed taking over family farms, entering the work force as farm workers, or starting their own farms or agriculture-related businesses. The county’s strong agricultural base means that new and young farmers will likely continue to play an important role on farms into the future.

### **Strengths and Opportunities**

Experienced farmers in Cayuga County are often willing to assist their newer farmer neighbors and colleagues in gaining the experience needed to farm successfully. This support and cooperation among farmers is a great asset to the community, but there are many opportunities for these mentoring relationships to be cultivated and expanded upon to help bring new farmers into the county and ensure their success.

Public participants who self-described as a new or young farmer expressed interest in additional local networking opportunities. The Farm Bureau and Cornell Cooperative Extension could assist in facilitating these connections. There are also opportunities for new and young farmers to get more involved in other business networking and development organizations such as the Cayuga County Chamber of Commerce’s Ignite Program for professionals under 40.

Public participants discussed the increasingly important role of sophisticated technology and computer systems in agricultural production, which may be an effective way to interest some young people in agriculture-related careers.

Agricultural education programs at BOCES, the Southern Cayuga School District and the Moravia Central School District and their Future Farmers of America (FFA) chapters provide valuable education and

training to high school students. After declining for several decades, the number of FFA chapters and members have enjoyed a record-breaking national resurgence of popularity. FFA has an important role to play, both in terms of teaching all young people about the importance of agriculture and in terms of educating new generations of farmers. Increasing agricultural educational opportunities for all school age children and increasing FFA membership in the county is a great opportunity to reach young people who may not otherwise have an opportunity to discover an interest in an agricultural career.

The CCE Beginning Farmers Program and the Northeast Beginning Farmers Project offers webinars, videos, and other resources geared towards beginning farmers.

### **Needs and Challenges**

As mentioned above, public participants identified several needs and challenges that new and young farmers face, such as the struggle to compete with more established farmers for farmland, acquiring capital and financing to establish or grow their farm businesses, the need for experienced mentors and the lack of local educational and training opportunities.

There is a lack of agricultural programs for high school graduates available locally. Graduating high school students interested in pursuing agriculture-related studies must leave the county to do so. This was identified as a limiting factor for some students who are interested in pursuing agricultural careers but who are not ready to leave home right after high school. The availability of college-level coursework in local higher education institutions would address this need and also serve as an opportunity to expose new students to potential careers in agriculture.

Local high school and college students who are interested in careers in agriculture need more internship and work opportunities on farms and in agriculture-related businesses. While it is no secret that farming is hard work, many students also recognize that it is possible to have a rewarding and satisfying career in agriculture. Providing the right work experiences for interested students can make a big difference as they make choices that affect their futures.

The inverse of this struggle to provide mentorship and internship resources to those interested in becoming farmers is the sense that young people in general lack an interest in farm work or careers in agriculture-related disciplines. This disinterest is compounded by a lack of understanding and appreciation of agriculture by the general public, including some local officials, parents and school leaders. This agricultural illiteracy prevents many young people from getting exposed to agriculture-related careers, and the next generation from gaining agricultural literacy, even in a place with a large agricultural presence like Cayuga County.

While state and federal grant, loan and support programs exist for farmers in the early stages of launching their agricultural careers, some public participants reported that some programs such as the USDA Farm Service Agency's Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Program are cumbersome or poorly supported so that they are not as effective as they could be in providing assistance to those who may qualify.

## **Environmental Stewardship and Technical Assistance**

Farm operators in Cayuga County take their role as stewards of the natural resources that their farms depend on seriously. They understand the importance of maintaining healthy soil, air, and water, which are vital not only to farming but also to the community as a whole. Farmers often implement Best Management Practices (BMPs), techniques that have consistently shown to be an effective and practical means of preventing or reducing the amount of pollution generated by nonpoint sources<sup>2</sup> to a level compatible with water quality goals and other environmental stewardship goals. The proper selection of BMPs is a critical component to protecting local resources and is a main focal point during the farm planning process. Farms are assisted in this process by the Cayuga County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), which strongly encourages farms to follow the USDA - Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) BMPs. The Cayuga County Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) and the USDA - NRCS are also valuable resources for county farmers in improving their farm management practices.

There is on-going concern throughout the county, both within the farming community and the general public, regarding the environmental impacts of some agricultural practices, primarily on water quality. These practices include manure spreading - especially during winter months when the ground is frozen - that can lead to the runoff of manure into the lakes and their tributaries; erosion of agricultural soils and associated sedimentation of the lakes and their tributaries due to tilling before heavy rains or on steep slopes; and pesticide applications that can contaminate ground and surface water. Unfortunately, while many farm operations develop farm plans to successfully carry out BMPs that address these concerns and others, not all do.

### **Strengths and Opportunities**

Cayuga County farmers enjoy access to dedicated technical advisors in several agencies that provide assistance critical to the creation and maintenance of successful, well-managed and environmentally responsible farms. Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cayuga County currently has two dairy and field crops resource educators on staff. Cayuga County SWCD support staff includes a nutrient management specialist and a grazing specialist. In addition, the SWCD administers the Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) Program and a prescribed grazing program (the GRAZE Program), conducts agricultural land assessments and reviews nutrient management plans. It also regularly seeks grant funding opportunities that enables farms to participate in cost share programs that provide funding for the

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2. Definitions of terms from the US Environmental Protection Agency: Nonpoint source pollution generally results from land runoff, precipitation, atmospheric deposition, drainage, seepage or hydrologic modification. The term "nonpoint source" is defined to mean any source of water pollution that does not meet the legal definition of "point source" in section 502(14) of the Clean Water Act, which defines "point source" as any discernible, confined or discrete conveyance, including but not limited to any pipe, ditch, channel, tunnel, conduit, well, discrete fissure, container, rolling stock, concentrated animal feeding operation, or vessel or other floating crafts, from which pollutants are or may be discharged. This term does not include agricultural storm water discharges and return flows from irrigated agriculture.

implementation of BMPs. The Cayuga Regional Digester plant, managed by SWCD, helps county dairy farms manage their waste by accepting manure and processing it into electricity and heat.

Many of the grants available for implementation of farm management plans require compliance with the NRCS BMPs. Crop insurance and government subsidies may also require that certain BMPs are followed. Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) are required to follow nutrient management plans. However, unless a farmer chooses to participate in certain government programs or qualifies as a CAFO, there is no requirement compelling him or her to follow BMPs or create a farm plan.

### **Needs and Challenges**

The county enjoys good water quality overall, but regular monitoring and management must continue to ensure that quality is maintained. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's (DEC) Priority Waterbodies List includes waterbodies and segments of waterbodies in the county with well documented, potentially resolvable, high priority problems and issues. These waterbodies and segments include those considered "impaired waters," "waters with minor impacts" and "threatened waterbodies." Cayuga County has 22 segments or waterbodies listed. Causes of water quality issues in the county include nutrient loading due to agricultural, municipal, or urban/storm water runoff; algal or weed growth; siltation and sedimentation; pathogen contamination from septic tanks and agriculture; pesticides; and historic industrial contaminants.

Nonpoint source pollutants are regulated by the DEC but those regulations can be difficult to enforce due to state budget restrictions and the struggle of proving the source of a pollutant. A challenge for the DEC is to better enforce regulations on those who violate the regulations without creating a stifling regulatory atmosphere for the majority of farmers who strive to follow BMPs and implement sound farm plans.

While there are grant opportunities to assist farms with the planning and implementation of BMPs, these funding programs are very competitive and rarely have enough money to assist all interested farmers. At times, some farmers may delay the implementation of some BMPs that are prohibitively expensive.

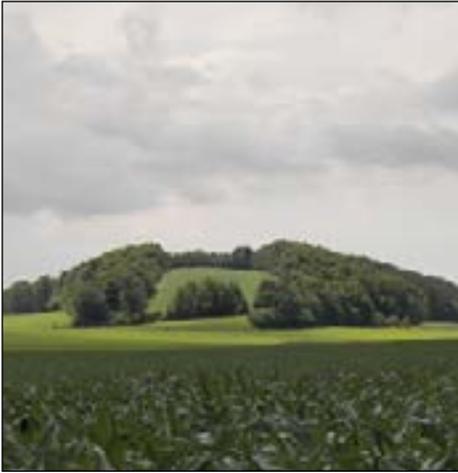
Farm plans vary in terms of their quality and thoroughness. Farm planners are trained and credentialed, but the quality of a plan depends a great deal on the level of detail and care that goes into developing it. There is also no guarantee that farm managers will follow the farm plan once it is in place.



### III. Natural Resources

#### Soils and Topography

Cayuga County is endowed with a rich diversity of soil types suitable for a wide array of agricultural production activities. Prime farmland and farmland of statewide importance can be found in every town in the county (Map 3-1). Soils consisting primarily of silt loam can be found in the south west and central portions of the county, encompassing the towns between Cayuga and Owasco Lakes from Genoa to the south to Aurelius and Sennett to the north (Map 3-2). These USDA-designated prime farmland soils can also be found east of Owasco Lake in the Towns of Owasco and Niles. Coupled with the open topography of low rolling hills and flat uplands (Map 3-3), these soils are highly productive and particularly suitable for larger-scale field crop production and accompanying dairy and livestock farms. The major crops produced in these areas of the county are corn, soybeans and hay, but small grains such as wheat are also grown in smaller quantities, as are specialty crops such as vegetables and fruits. The towns in the south eastern corner of the county – Moravia, Sempronius, Locke, Summerhill and Niles – have some of the highest elevations and the most rugged terrain in the county. Despite these challenges, specialty and field crops are grown in this region of the county, mostly on silt loam soils, classified as farmland of statewide importance.



*Crop fields on a drumlin hill*



*Crop fields in the Town of Throop*

North of the City of Auburn, the soil types change along with the topography. Non-prime farmland soils with gravel, sand and clay are interspersed among highly productive agricultural soils in portions of the Towns of Aurelius, Throop, Sennett, Montezuma, Mentz, Brutus and Cato. The terrain becomes more hilly and is characterized by drumlin formations, steep-sided mounded hills that rise up out of the glacial lake plain and continue north all the way into the Town of Sterling. A wide variety of agricultural production is present north of Auburn, with relatively smaller-acreage field crop, dairy, livestock and poultry farms along with nurseries and greenhouses; and vegetable, orchard, honey and maple syrup production. Muck soils in the Towns of Mentz, Conquest, Victory and Ira provide a rich substrate for growing root vegetables and a wide variety of other crops. Soil characteristics help determine the relative abilities of these soils to support agricultural production and are factored into the USDA calculations of the agricultural value of soils (Map 3-4).

#### Land Cover

The most common type of land cover in the county is cultivated crops, followed by pastures and hay fields. There are several hundred acres of forested land, particularly in the southeastern and northern towns, although it is less common than farmland. The county also contains hundreds of acres of wetlands including the flat lands south of the Owasco Lake inlet, the Montezuma wetlands complex and areas along the Seneca River. There are additional wetlands scattered throughout the county, particularly in the towns north of Throop and Sennett. Low intensity development can be found in and around the villages and the city, as well as in some areas along Cayuga, Owasco, and Skaneateles Lakes. Residential and commercial uses are clustered in hamlets found



*Forested area in the Town of Victory*

throughout the county and along major transportation corridors. Medium and high density development is primarily located within the City of Auburn and its immediate vicinity. Patches of shrub and scrub land can be found mostly along the lakes and in the towns of Sterling and Victory (Map 3-5).

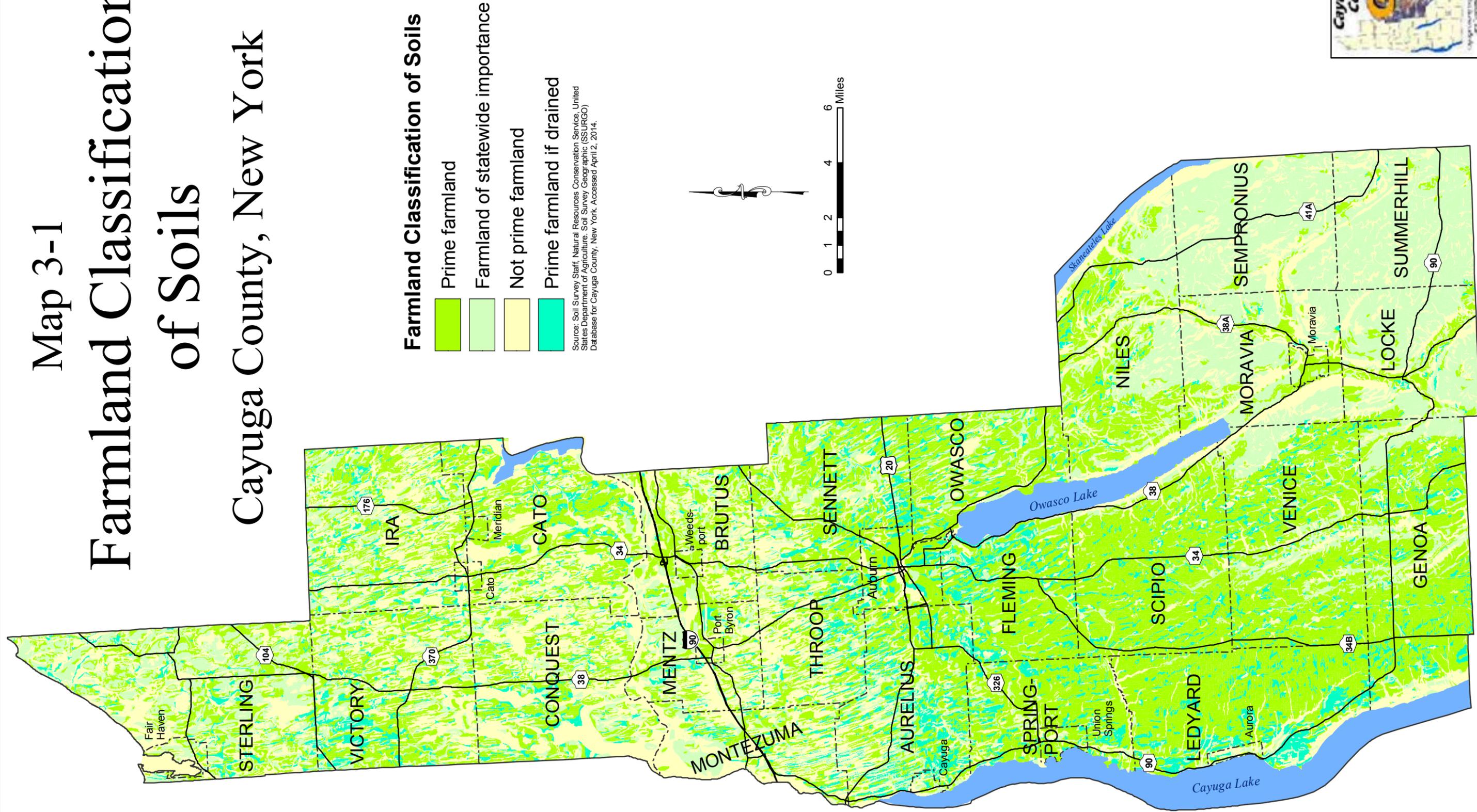
## Water Resources

Cayuga County has abundant water resources including hundreds of miles of streams and rivers, and over a hundred square miles of lakes and ponds including Owasco Lake, portions of Skaneateles and Cayuga Lakes, and the shore of Lake Ontario. Wetlands can also be found throughout the county, as can high-quality aquifers that are accessed for both residential and agricultural uses. Despite this abundant quantity of water, certain areas of the county have been known to experience drought. Big Salmon Creek experienced several droughts, most recently in the 1990's, which alternated from year to year with flood events. Several agricultural operations in Venice and Genoa including large dairy farms depend on Big Salmon Creek for their water. If farms continue to expand in the southern areas of the county, some farmers may eventually be challenged by the availability of a reliable and abundant water source. The land on and around the drumlin hills in the northern area of the county also experience some water limitations. Wetlands have tended to form between the drumlins, while the sides and tops of the drumlins themselves tend to be more arid. These conditions can limit farm size and the availability of suitable land for agricultural uses.



*Wetlands in the Town of Sterling*

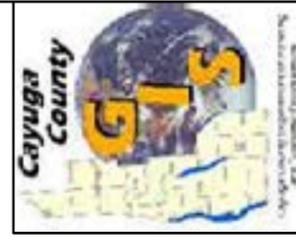
# Map 3-1 Farmland Classification of Soils Cayuga County, New York



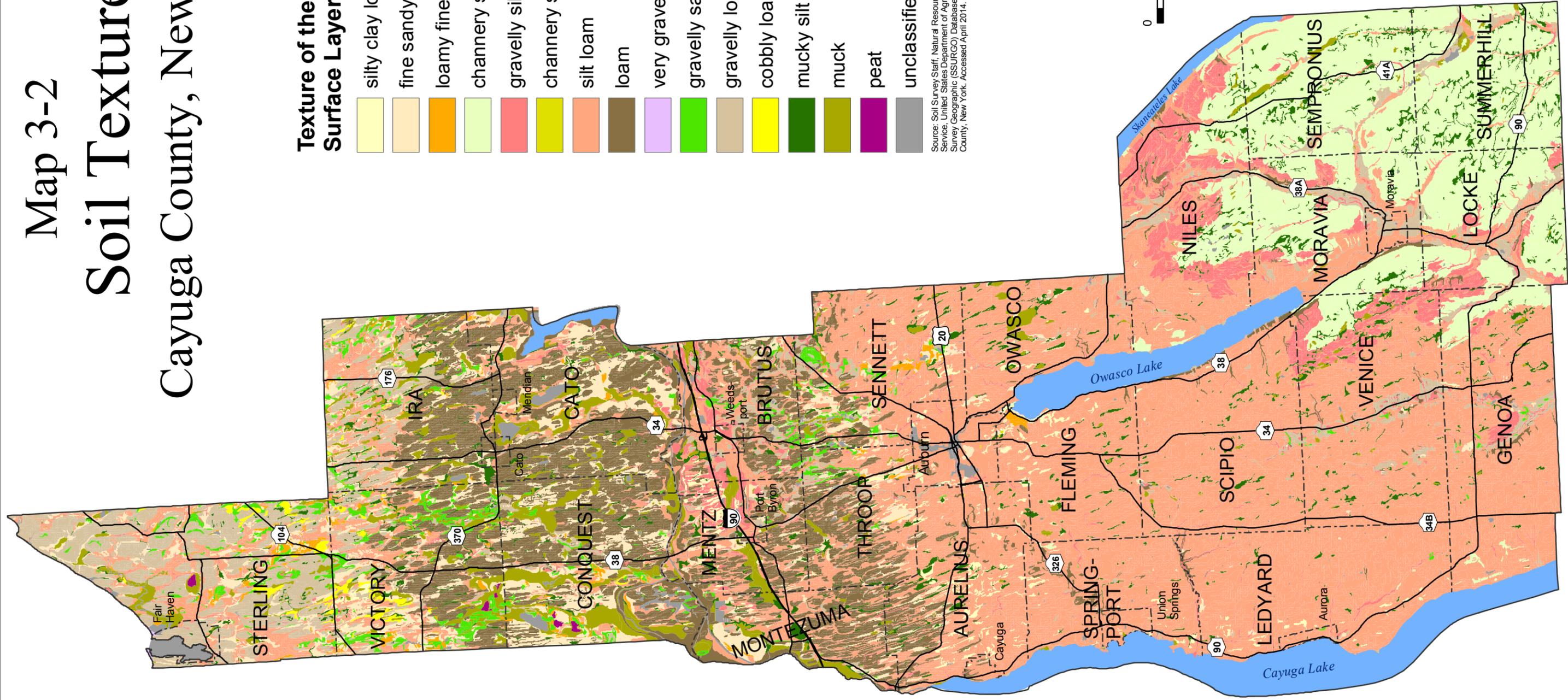
**Farmland Classification of Soils**

- Prime farmland
- Farmland of statewide importance
- Not prime farmland
- Prime farmland if drained

Source: Soil Survey Staff, Natural Resources Conservation Service, United States Department of Agriculture. Soil Survey Geographic (SSURGO) Database for Cayuga County, New York. Accessed April 2, 2014.



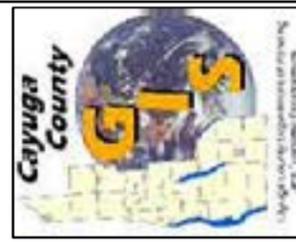
# Map 3-2 Soil Texture Cayuga County, New York



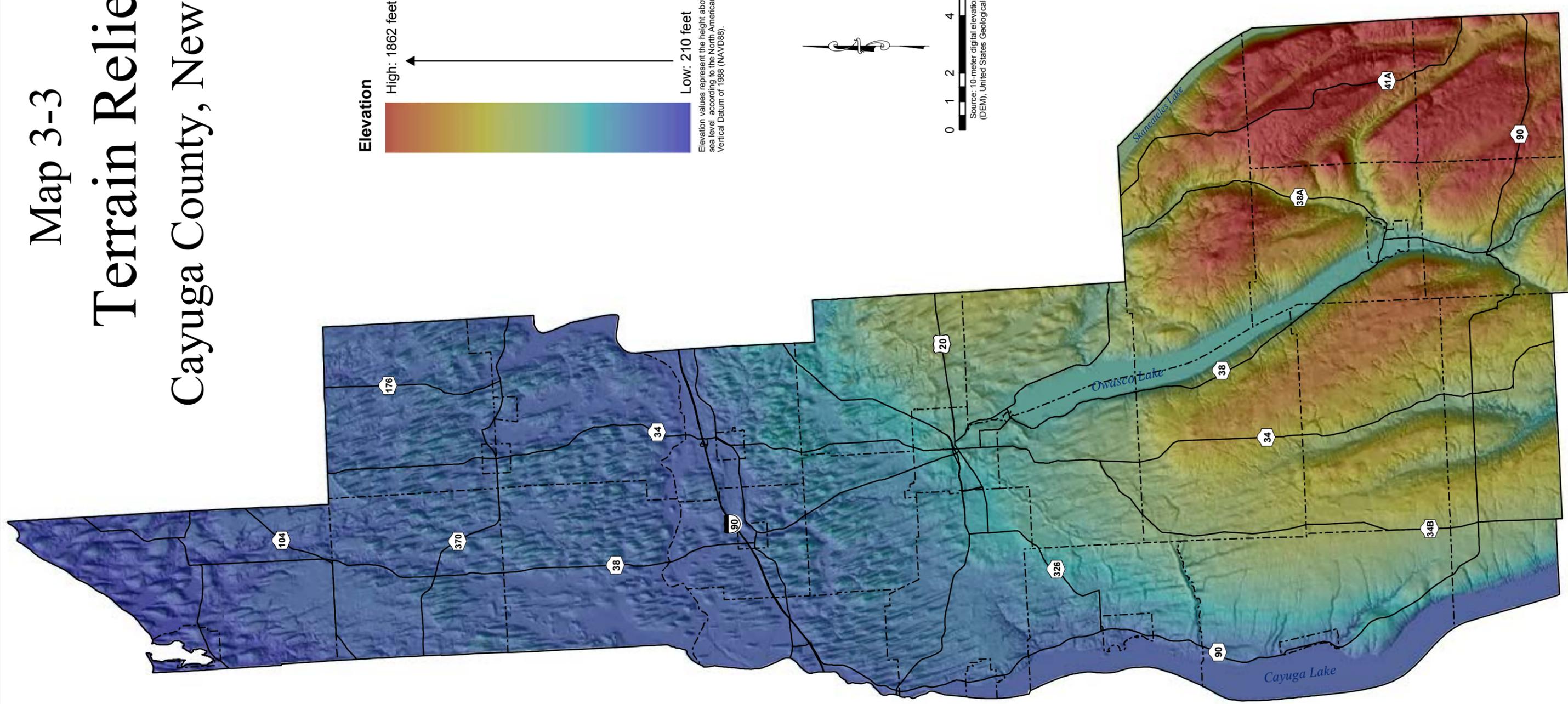
**Texture of the Surface Layer**

[Light Yellow]	silty clay loam
[Light Orange]	fine sandy loam
[Orange]	loamy fine sand
[Light Green]	channery silt loam
[Pink]	gravelly silt loam
[Yellow-Green]	channery sandy loam
[Light Orange]	silt loam
[Brown]	loam
[Purple]	very gravelly sand
[Green]	gravelly sandy loam
[Tan]	gravelly loam
[Yellow]	cobbly loam
[Dark Green]	mucky silt loam
[Olive]	muck
[Purple]	peat
[Grey]	unclassified

Source: Soil Survey Staff, Natural Resources Conservation Service, United States Department of Agriculture, Soil Survey Geographic (SSURGO) Database for Cayuga County, New York, Accessed April 2014.



# Map 3-3 Terrain Relief Cayuga County, New York

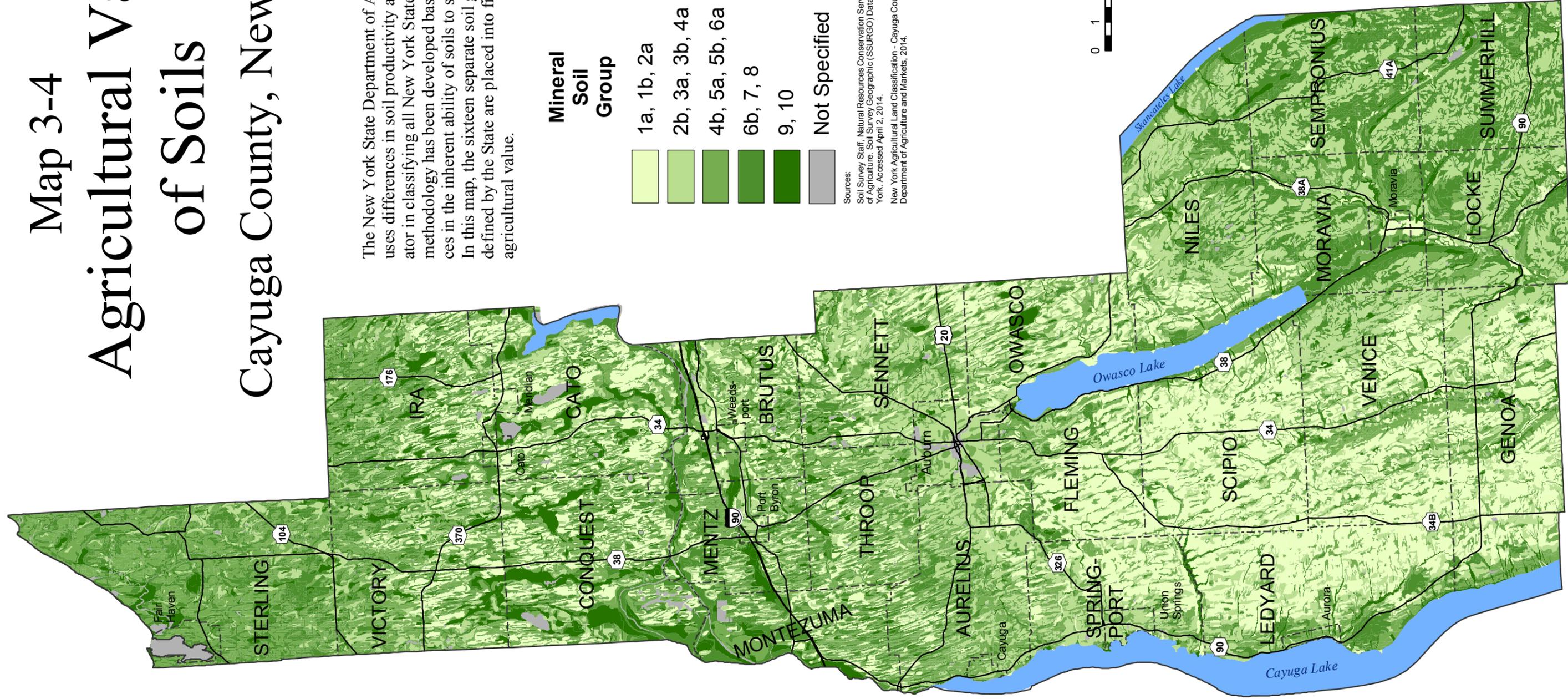
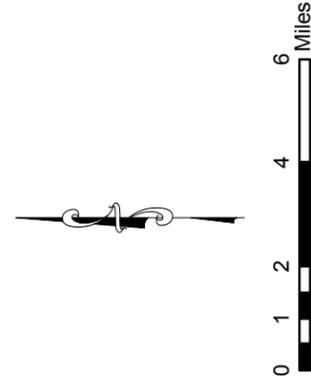


# Map 3-4 Agricultural Value of Soils Cayuga County, New York

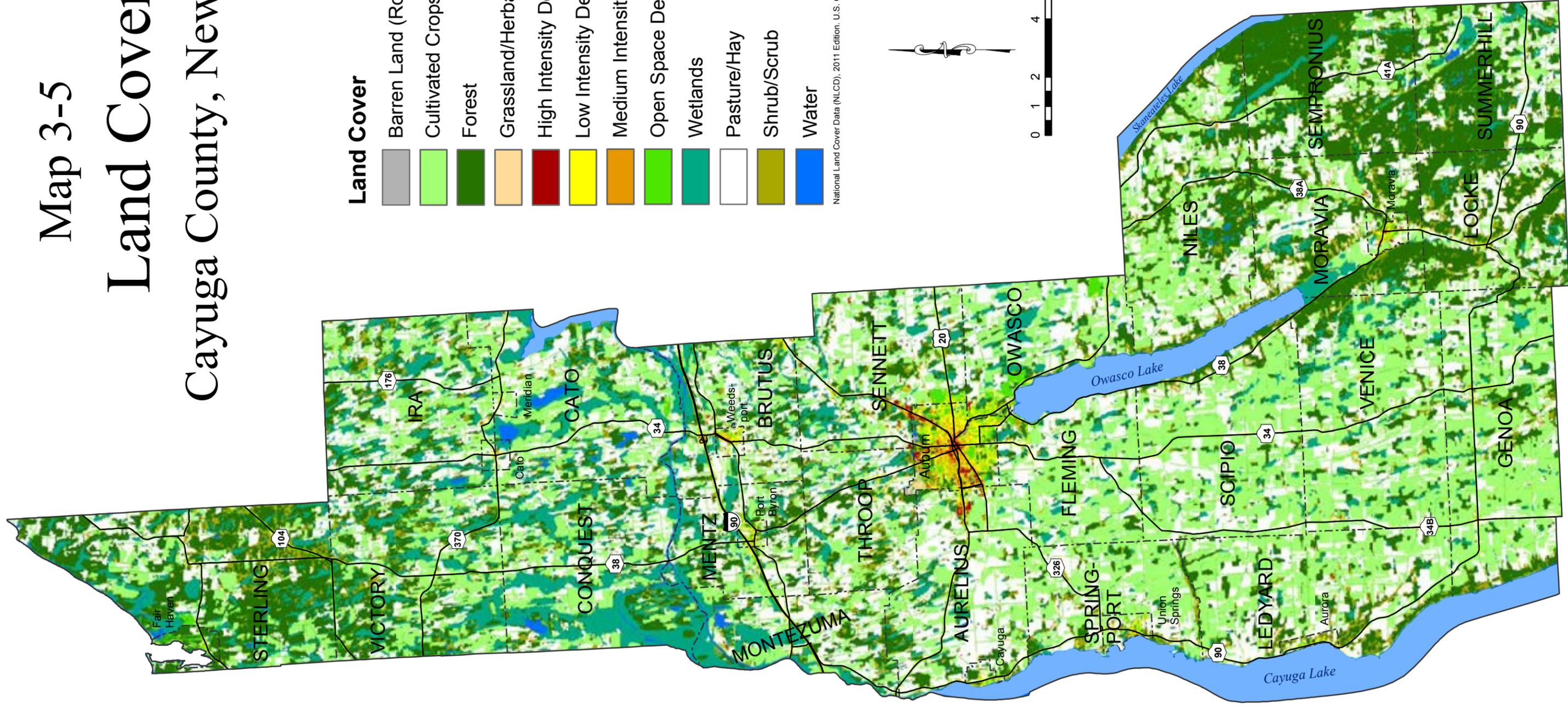
The New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets uses differences in soil productivity as the common denominator in classifying all New York State Farmland. A soil rating methodology has been developed based primarily on differences in the inherent ability of soils to support crop production. In this map, the sixteen separate soil groups and subgroups defined by the State are placed into five categories of potential agricultural value.

Mineral Soil Group	Value per Acre (in dollars)
1a, 1b, 2a	907 - 1019
2b, 3a, 3b, 4a	693 - 805
4b, 5a, 5b, 6a	479 - 591
6b, 7, 8	265 - 377
9, 10	51 - 163
Not Specified	--

Sources:  
Soil Survey Staff, Natural Resources Conservation Service, United States Department of Agriculture, Soil Survey Geographic (SSURGO) Database for Cayuga County, New York. Accessed April 2, 2014.  
New York Agricultural Land Classification - Cayuga County, New York. State Department of Agriculture and Markets, 2014.

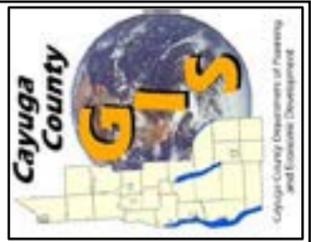


# Map 3-5 Land Cover Cayuga County, New York



- Land Cover**
- Barren Land (Rock, Sand, Clay)
  - Cultivated Crops
  - Forest
  - Grassland/Herbaceous
  - High Intensity Developed
  - Low Intensity Developed
  - Medium Intensity Developed
  - Open Space Developed
  - Wetlands
  - Pasture/Hay
  - Shrub/Scrub
  - Water

National Land Cover Data (NLCD), 2011 Edition. U.S. Geological Survey, 2014.



## **IV. County Land Use Policies and Programs**

This section summarizes existing land use policies and programs at the county level, and how they can be employed to protect and conserve viable agricultural lands and businesses. Below is a description of the Cayuga County Consolidated Agricultural District No. 5 and the protections it offers farmers. A discussion of the County Farmland Protection Program and its components, including the suitability index tool used to help determine which farmland is most in need of protection and a discussion of the preservation method known as the Purchase of Development Rights (PDR), is also included. The last section summarizes the 1996 Cayuga County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan, which this plan was built from.

### **Cayuga County Consolidated Agricultural District No. 5**

In 1973, Cayuga County became one of the first in the state to create an agricultural district under Article 25AA of New York State Agriculture and Markets Law. Five additional districts were later created. In 2013, due to cumbersome overlapping review processes for the six districts, they were consolidated into a single district, Cayuga County Consolidated Agricultural District No. 5 (Map 4-1).

The consolidated Agricultural District contains 15,283 parcels and 361,588 acres, 64% of which is active viable agricultural land. Approximately 82% of the total land area in the county is within the Agricultural District. Land owners can choose to add their property to the District during the annual inclusion period, which confers certain benefits and protections to farmland. For example, the Agricultural Districts Law requires that state agencies, municipal governments and public benefit agencies avoid or minimize adverse impacts to farm operations in the agricultural district when pursuing projects that involve the acquisition of farmland or that advance public funds for certain construction activities. Under the New York State Right-to-Farm Law, agricultural activities on parcels within the District are protected from unreasonably restrictive local laws and from private nuisance lawsuits involving agricultural practices. Landowners can choose to remove their property from the District during the review process that takes place once every eight years.

### **County Farmland Protection Program**

Since its inception in 2001, the Cayuga County Farmland Protection Program has secured funding to protect a total of 7,232 acres of active farmland in the Towns of Fleming, Scipio, Springport, and Aurelius through the purchase of development rights. Also, a PDR project in Onondaga County succeeded in protecting acreage in the Town of Cato (Map 4-2). PDR places a deed restriction, known as a conservation easement, on productive farmland after the property owner voluntarily sells his or her right to develop that land for non-agricultural uses. Farmers who choose to participate in this type of program are financially compensated for their development rights and help ensure that their land will be available to future generations of farmers regardless of future ownership.

When land owners choose to sell or donate their development rights they retain all other rights of ownership and can continue to farm their land or lease it to others. Farmland that is protected in this way can be passed on to family members or sold, but subsequent owners are required to follow the terms of the agreement just like any other deed restriction.

Funding for the County Farmland Protection Program has come from the NYSDAM Farmland Protection Implementation Grant (FPIG) program through the state's Environmental Protection Fund. The FPIG program assesses the relative suitability of agricultural parcels for protection by identifying and ranking parcels based on a list of criteria, which address three main priorities: 1) the viability of the agricultural land, 2) the degree of development pressure on the land, and 3) the potential of the land to act as a buffer to significant natural public resources. In 2014, the county developed its own evaluation criteria to maximize county program efforts in protecting the highest quality farmland that is most at risk of conversion to other land uses (see below for more information).

In 2014, after not funding any new applications for six years due to a backlog of projects, NYSDAM issued a request for applications for PDR projects under a redesigned FPIG program. The new program requires that the applicant, such as a town, county, soil and water conservation district or land trust, also act as the conservation easement holder and limits the number of farms that can be assisted by each applicant to four. This new structure, in combination with past limitations of the program that have not been addressed at the state level, creates challenges that must be considered in the context of Cayuga County's Farmland Protection Program. First, farmers and county officials have expressed the need for capacity building support for area land trusts, such as the New York Agricultural Land Trust (NYALT), in managing the complex PDR project transactions. Second, there are considerations that must be addressed in determining how local governments, whether it be a town or the county, can hold an easement in perpetuity and be responsible for monitoring property owner compliance. These considerations include the political difficulty of challenging a landowner who may be violating an easement and the logistical and financial challenge of committing staff support to monitor the easements in perpetuity. Last, the FPIG program currently accepts applications for properties without requiring an appraisal of their development value. This has created frustration in the community over inaccurate estimates of grant awards and can slow the process down or even derail projects.

### **Cayuga County's 2008 Farmland Protection Suitability Rankings**

Figure 4-1 visualizes agricultural parcels ranked according to their suitability for protection based on the FPIG program funding criteria used from 2001 to 2008 (Table 4-1). This analysis somewhat mirrors the agricultural value of soils (Map 3-4) but took an overly simplistic view of the diversity of quality agricultural soils found throughout the county and failed to capture a great deal of the most vulnerable farmland in Cayuga County. The result of the 2008 analysis is that the parcels deemed most suitable for protection almost exclusively reside in the southwestern portion of the county, with a small cluster of parcels in the Towns of Owasco and Niles. This analysis failed to

Table 4-1: Criteria used to determine farmland most suitable for protection

2008 Criteria	2014 Criteria
Agricultural Value of Soils	Agricultural Value of Soils
Parcel size	Parcel size
Percent of parcel in agricultural production	Percent of parcel in agricultural production
Linear feet of road frontage per acre	Linear feet of road frontage per acre
Proximity to public water lines	<b>Proximity to public water district</b>
Proximity to public sewer district	Proximity to public sewer district
Within watershed of Cayuga, Owasco or Skaneateles Lakes	Within watershed of Cayuga, Owasco or Skaneateles Lakes
Linear feet of lake and stream frontage	<b>Linear feet of lake and stream frontage per acre</b>
Proximity to wetlands	Proximity to wetlands
Proximity to public park lands	<b>Proximity to all protected natural and park lands</b>
Proximity to protected farmland	Proximity to protected farmland
Proximity to other farmland	Proximity to other farmland
Within the Agricultural District	Within the Agricultural District
	<b>Proximity to major population centers</b>
	<b>Proximity to Interstate 90 access points</b>
	<b>Parcel density</b>
	<b>Subdivision density</b>

Note: Differences between the two criteria are indicated with bold text in the right column.

recognize the somewhat greater development pressures that some agricultural lands face in the central and northern areas of the county due to changing land use patterns such as the increased commercial and residential development near Auburn and Interstate 90, and increased pressures that may be felt by agricultural lands near villages and in water districts.

### **Cayuga County’s 2014 Farmland Protection Suitability Rankings**

There are two primary reasons why the criteria used to rank the suitability of agricultural parcels were revised. First, the 2008 criteria heavily weighted the agricultural value of soils. However, viable farmland is found throughout the variations in soils present in the county; this one measurement does not necessarily predict the viability of agricultural production on a given parcel of land. The county’s variable topography and wide variety of soil types – and the large variation in viable agricultural practices that can be employed on those different soil types – created a situation where viable profitable farms on soils that were valued lower were compared unfavorably to viable profitable farms on soils that were valued higher. This inequity in the criteria was recognized by the county’s farming community, the County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board and the County Department of Planning and Economic Development alike. The revised criteria addresses this issue by identifying five generalized soil zones with similar characteristics that exist within the county (Figure 4-2). All parcels within each zone were then ranked relative to each other, rather than creating a single ranking for the entire county where viable farmland with drastically different soil characteristics are judged side by side.

Second, the 2008 criteria inadequately accounted for development pressures. There are low but steady development pressures near the

Figure 4-1

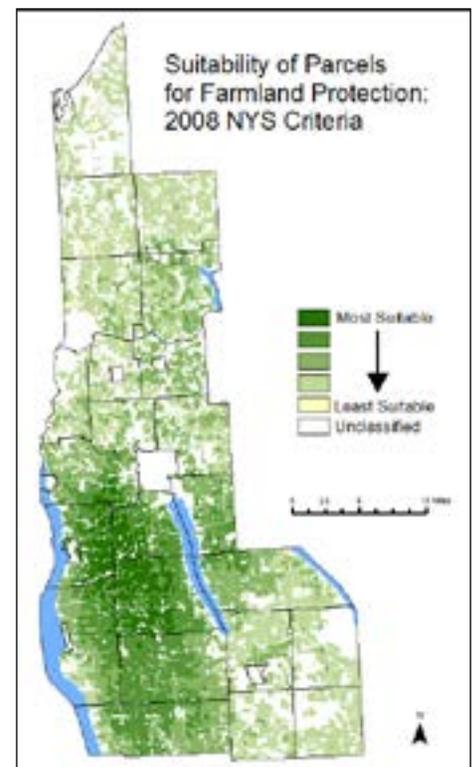
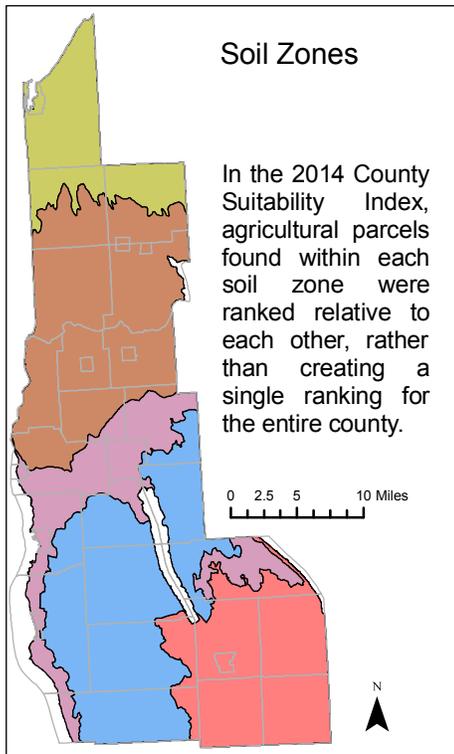


Figure 4-2

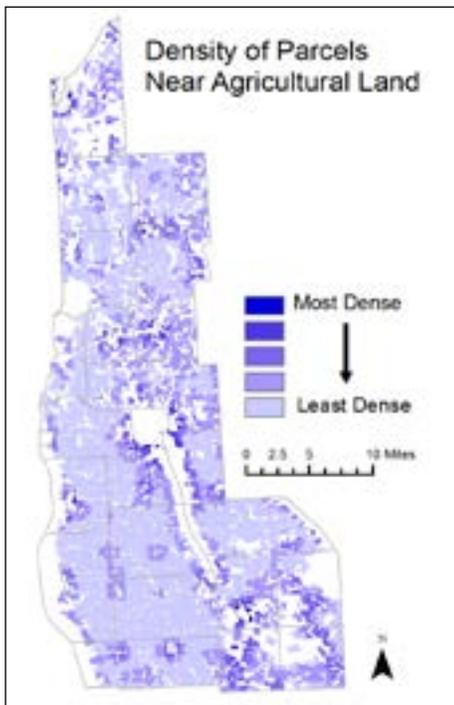


villages, the City of Auburn and along major transportation corridors, which can be seen in the densities of parcels throughout the county (Figure 4-3) and distribution of subdivisions between 2003 and 2013 (Figure 4-4). Figure 4-4 shows that subdivision activity was most concentrated in or near the Villages of Fair Haven, Weedsport and Moravia, and in or near the City of Auburn. Other “hot spots” include the State Route 38 corridor north and south of Moravia, the Town of Sennett, and the area surrounding the Villages of Cato and Meridian. The availability of water and sewer infrastructure has increased dramatically in the past few decades and continues to rise, creating a potential market for residential development (Figure 4-5 and Figure 4-6, respectively) and placing agricultural lands in and near those districts at greater risk of conversion.

These elements - and others - were given a weighted ranking (Table 4-2), which were then applied to each parcel and combined to produce the final suitability index for the county, visualized in Map 4-3. For details on how the data were analyzed to create the new Farmland Protection Suitability Map please see Appendix B.

It is important to note that this suitability index is designed to identify parcels that are the most agriculturally productive, the most at risk of conversion to non-agricultural uses, and that can also serve as protective buffers for important natural resources. *A low ranking in this index does not necessarily mean that a parcel is unsuitable for farming or that it is suitable for development; it merely means that there may be other agricultural parcels that are more at risk of conversion and/or are more suitable as buffers to natural resources.*

Figure 4-3



The analysis should be updated periodically, as needed. Cayuga County farms interested in participating in future FPIG funding rounds should reference the latest version of the suitability index.

**Benefits of Agricultural Land Protection**

Table 4-2: Calculated weights for each variable in the 2014 Suitability Analysis

Weight	Variable
1.00	Proximity to protected natural lands
1.06	Proximity to farmland that is protected through PDR or in the process of being protected
1.09	Within the watershed of a surface public drinking water source
1.47	Within the Cayuga County Consolidated Ag. District No. 5
2.21	Agricultural value of soils
2.51	Percent of parcel available for agriculture
3.62	Size of the parcel
3.72	Linear feet of road frontage per acre
3.77	Proximity to public sewer districts
3.90	Percentage of surrounding land that is also farmland
3.95	Density of parcels
4.69	Linear feet of stream and lake frontage per acre
4.77	Proximity to wetlands
4.85	Proximity to public water districts
6.31	Density of subdivisions between 2003 and 2013
6.88	Proximity to US Interstate 90 access points
8.38	Proximity to major economic centers

The parcels identified as most suitable for protection in the 2014 Suitability Index, colored dark green in Map 4-3, make up 8.7% of the county's total land area and 12.7% of the total acreage of agricultural land included in the analysis. These parcels contribute to supporting local families and farm businesses by generating income through production activities and by providing a solid customer base for the county's agricultural support industries. If these highest priority parcels were lost to conversion, the economic viability of agriculture in the county would be significantly weakened by not only eroding family incomes and shrinking the number of farm jobs but also by weakening the support industries that require a strong farming base to stay in business (see Section I for more information about farm employment and support businesses).

The suitability analysis necessarily accounts for conversion pressures felt by agricultural parcels from residential and commercial development. This bears out in the locations of the parcels identified as the highest priorities for protection, which are largely found surrounding the City of Auburn and the Villages of Port Byron, Weedsport, Moravia and Fair Haven, and in close proximity to water districts, sewer districts, major population centers and Thruway access; recent parcel subdivision activity; and areas of highest parcel density. Protecting these parcels would slow the rate of conversion in these areas and help keep development from spreading even farther from the population centers while redirecting development into areas where it is more appropriate, such as within village and city limits. Gradually, growth boundaries would form promoting the establishment of a development pattern that is supportive of the goals and objectives of most local town and village comprehensive plans and master plans, which emphasize the preservation of rural character and open spaces. These policy documents typically address this goal by placing a high priority on the preservation of agricultural lands. Failing to protect the highest ranking parcels from conversion would leave development pressures unconstrained so that development would likely continue to consume farmland in these areas, albeit at a slow rate, and contribute to sprawl by generating conversion pressure further and further away from the city and villages.

The parcels identified as being most suitable for protection also tend to be most suitable for maximizing the collective enjoyment and appreciation of agricultural open spaces. Because of their close proximity to the most densely populated areas of the county, these open spaces are readily accessible to the many county residents living in and near the city and villages.

**Modified PDR, Leasing Development Rights (LDR) and Transferring Development Rights (TDR)**

In certain circumstances there are limitations to how effective PDR can be in preserving farmland. One major limitation of PDR in its most basic form is that it does not require that protected farmland be actively farmed. Instead, a farmer could “cash out” by selling his or her development rights on the land, then take the land out of production or sell the land to a new owner who does not keep the land in production. While this is not known to have occurred in Cayuga County, it is a concern that was voiced several times in public meetings. Other New

Figure 4-4

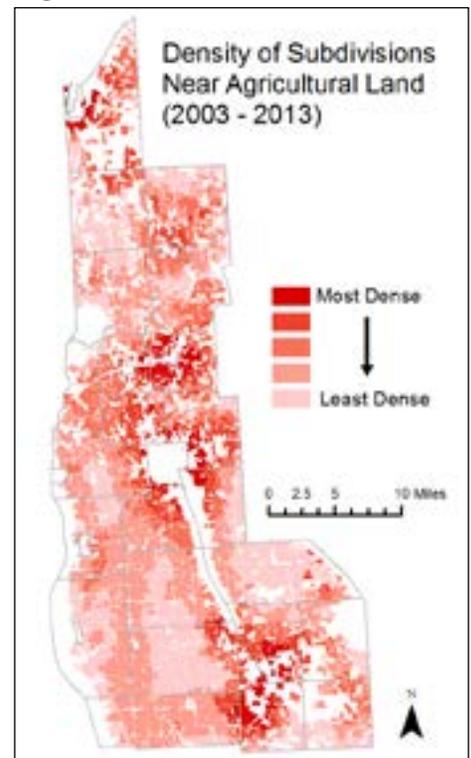


Figure 4-5

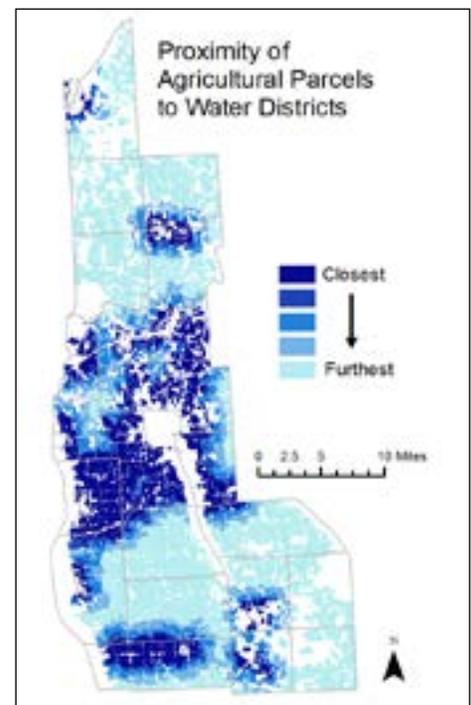
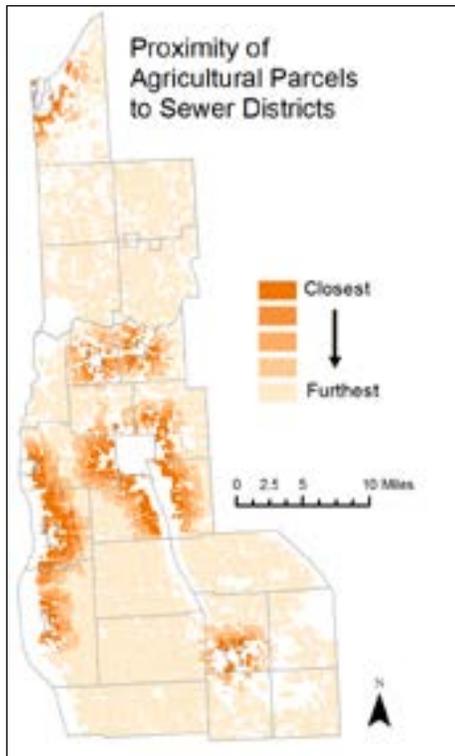


Figure 4-6



York communities have experienced this problem and have addressed it by inserting provisions into PDR transactions that require that lands protected under PDR continue to be actively farmed.

The Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) and the Lease of Development Rights (LDR) are other direct farmland protection strategies employed in other communities in New York State. In TDR programs, communities can direct intensive development away from designated areas where it is deemed inappropriate (such as an agricultural area), and to other designated areas where it is more desirable (such as a city or village). In essence, TDR allows agricultural landowners in certain areas to sell the development rights of their land to an urban landowner, who can then use those development rights to build more densely than would otherwise be permitted.

LDR programs reduce property tax assessments on farmland in exchange for term deed restrictions that prohibit development. These programs may appeal to part-time and small-acreage farmers that may not be able to benefit from other existing tax reduction strategies. While LDR does not permanently protect farmland, it can help stabilize a community experiencing rapid change and give the local municipality time to develop more permanent protection strategies. In some New York State communities LDR is used to retain farmland and open spaces that serve as buffers between farms and nearby residences, particularly in communities experiencing sudden and severe development pressures.

While certain areas of Cayuga County do experience some development pressure, based on CCPED analysis these pressures are not high enough at this time to support a successful TDR or LDR program at either the county-wide or local levels. CCPED will, however, continue to take the lead role in providing training and educational opportunities to local municipalities on all available farmland protection tools - from zoning to conservation subdivision regulations to TDR, LDR and PDR programs - that are appropriate for each local community. Both TDR and LDR were discussed briefly by participants in public meetings, with a mix of approval and disapproval.

## 1996 County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan

The 1996 Cayuga County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan was the second plan of its kind adopted in New York State. The document focused primarily on farmland preservation and included an analysis of development pressures characterized by population shifts from urban to rural areas, rates of out-commuting, new lot formations, and declines in acreage in production and in numbers of farms in the county. The plan's policy recommendations distinguished between the degree of non-farm development pressures that may impact just an individual farm or two, and pressures that may impact an entire town or area of the county.

The plan very generally outlined three regions of the county containing farmland that warrants protection from non-farm development on an area-wide basis, namely, the southwest including the Towns of Aurelius, Springport, Ledyard, Scipio, Venice, and Genoa; the eastern

portion of the Town of Owasco and the northern half of the Town of Niles; and the northwestern portion of the county contained within the Towns of Conquest and Victory. In these designated critical areas, the plan advised in general terms that localities may want to consider strong pro-agriculture land use regulations and severe limitations on the expansion of public infrastructure such as water and sewer systems and expanded road networks. The plan also advised that county industrial development agencies avoid new development in these areas unless associated with agriculture. The plan went on to summarize ten open-ended policy recommendations ranging from employing State Agriculture and Markets Law in order to protect individual farms or important areas, to encouraging farmers to develop "Whole Farm Plans," to tracking subdivision rates in Agricultural Districts.

Expanding on the original document, this Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan largely bases its substantive and more detailed recommendations and implementation strategy on input from county farmers, support businesses and service providers. Its scope is expanded from the original plan's focus on farmland protection to also address trends in the local agricultural economy and the ways in which our communities, farmers, support businesses and service providers can bolster this vital economic sector.

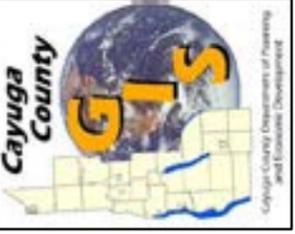
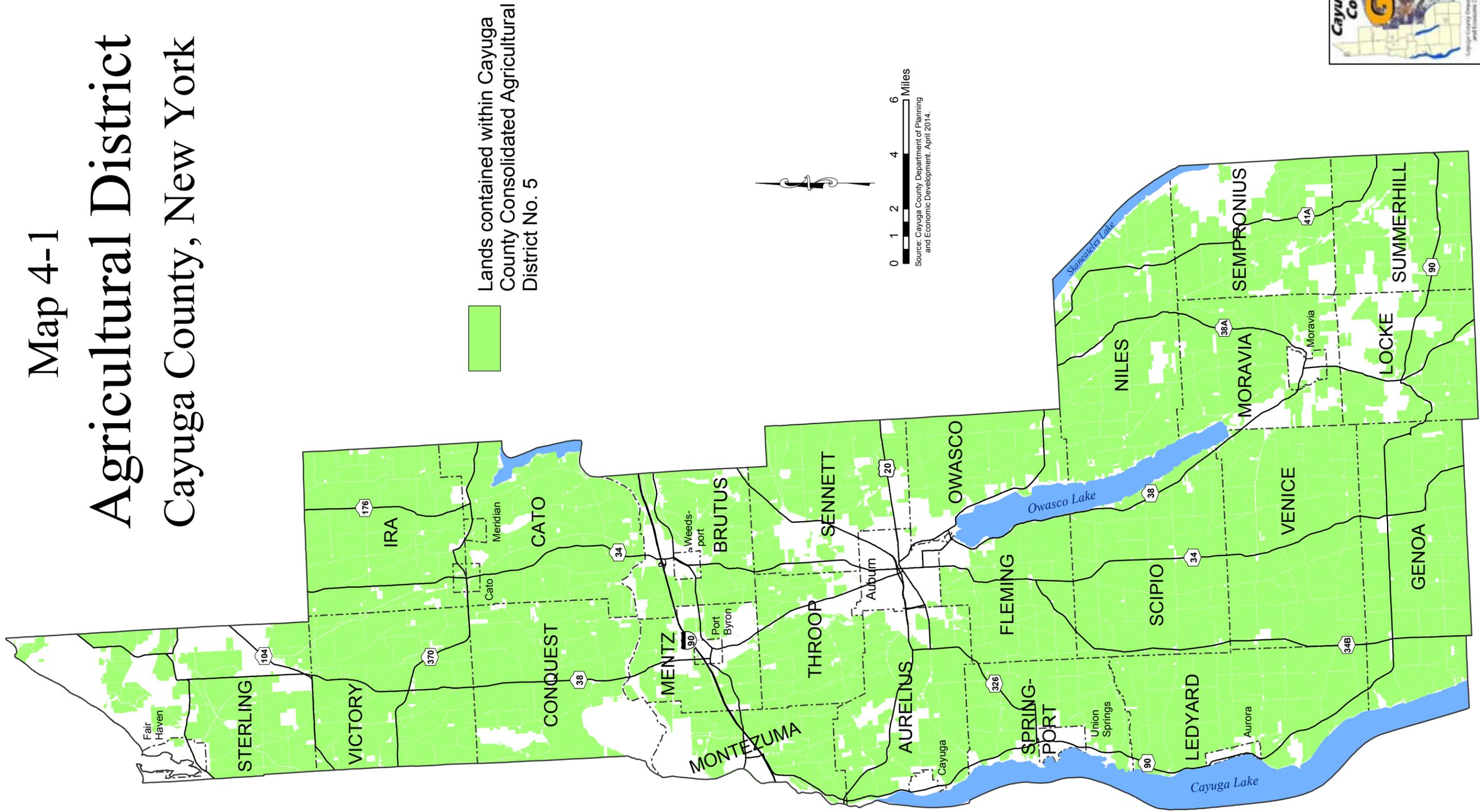


*Cayuga Milk Ingredients Milk Plant in the Town of Aurelius*

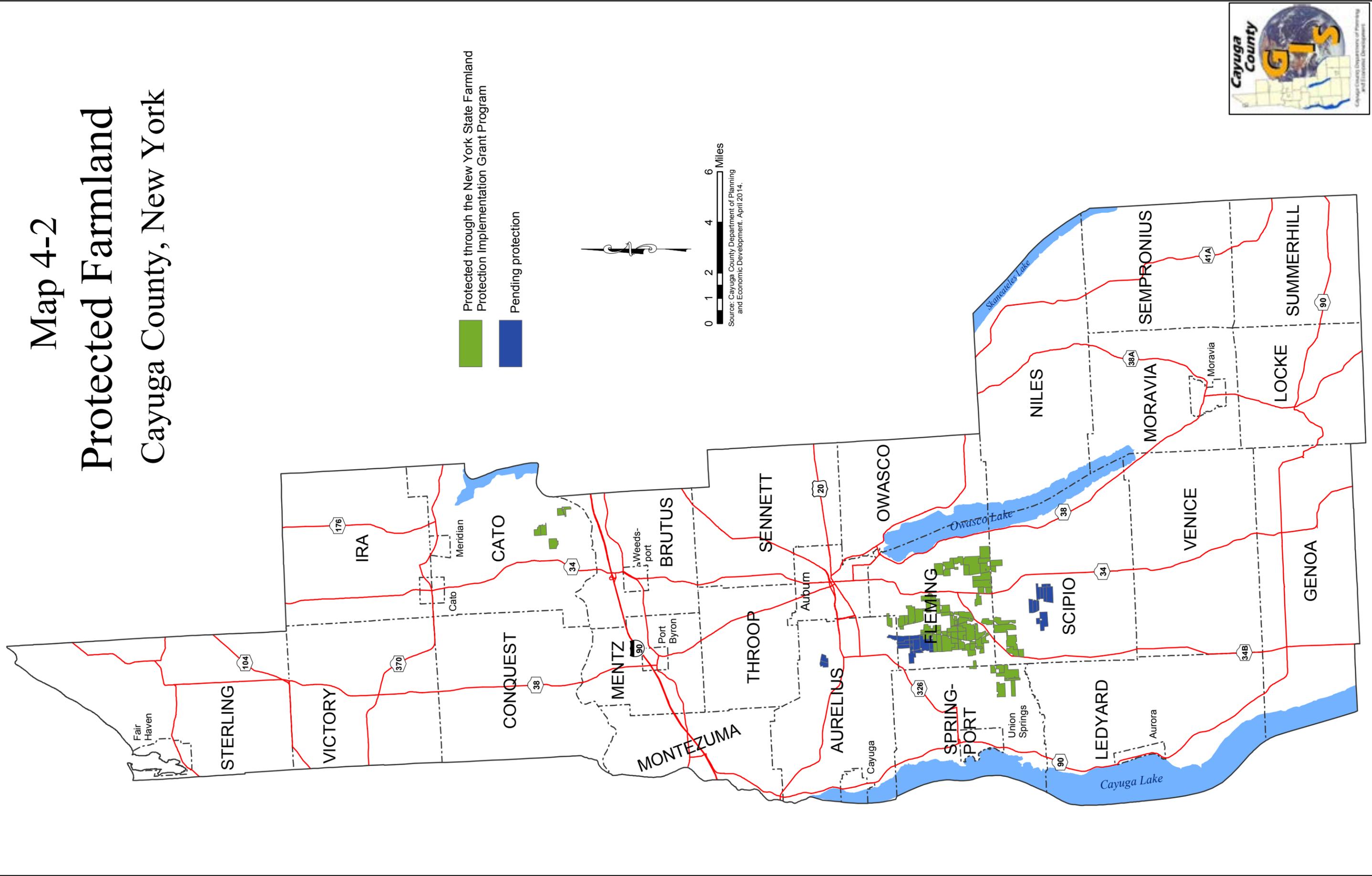


*Horning's Produce in the Town of Victory*

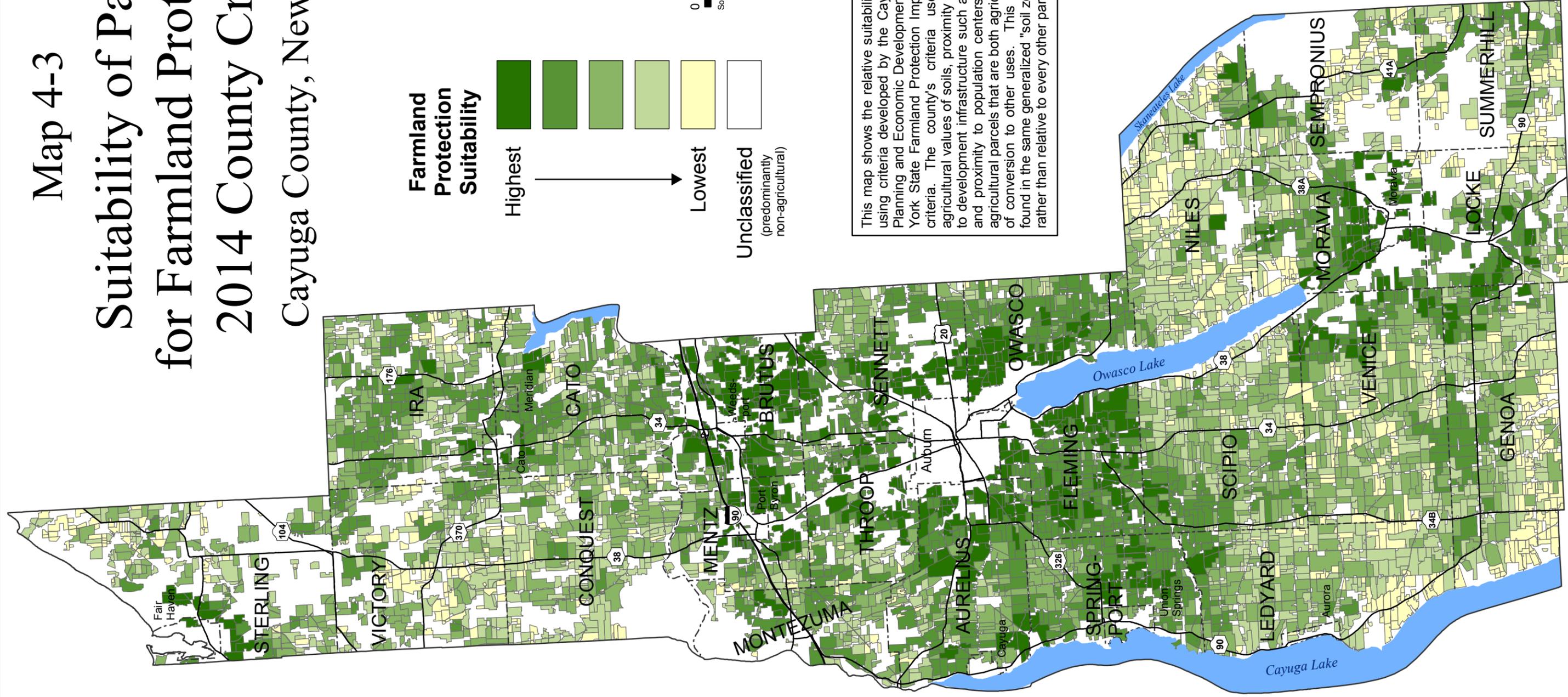
# Map 4-1 Agricultural District Cayuga County, New York



# Map 4-2 Protected Farmland Cayuga County, New York



# Map 4-3 Suitability of Parcels for Farmland Protection: 2014 County Criteria Cayuga County, New York



This map shows the relative suitability of farmland for protection using criteria developed by the Cayuga County Department of Planning and Economic Development, based in part on the New York State Farmland Protection Implementation Grant Program criteria. The county's criteria uses a combination of the agricultural values of soils, proximity to protected lands, proximity to development infrastructure such as roads and water districts, and proximity to population centers, among others, to identify agricultural parcels that are both agriculturally valuable and at risk of conversion to other uses. This analysis also ranks parcels found in the same generalized "soil zones" relative to one another rather than relative to every other parcel in the county.



## V. Municipal Land Use Policies

Each of the twenty-three towns, seven of the nine villages (excluding the Villages of Cayuga and Union Springs), and the City of Auburn contain active farmland within the Cayuga County Consolidated Agricultural District No. 5. However, how agriculture-related uses are treated within these municipalities varies greatly. As of the adoption of this agriculture plan, 20 out of the 23 towns in the county have adopted a comprehensive plan; all but one contain language that indicates that the community values and actively supports agriculture, either with public education and outreach or through protective land use policies. Four of the towns - Aurelius, Brutus, Cato and Ira - have created stand-alone agriculture and farmland protection plans that lay out their own town-specific implementation strategies on how to protect their active farmland from detrimental land use patterns, and maintain and develop a vibrant production-based economy by supporting their existing agriculture-related businesses and allowing new ones to flourish (see Appendix C for a list of policy documents, regulations, and ordinances pertinent to agriculture for each town and Appendix E for more on how your town can support farmers.).

This section summarizes components of zoning, site plan and subdivision ordinances that can help towns to both avoid creating negative impacts on farms and provide effective protection from harmful land use patterns. Three county transects were selected to illustrate how land use policy considerations may change depending on existing and anticipated future land use patterns.

### Farm-Friendly Land Use Policies

While there are still many farms that focus on one type of production such as milk production or field crops, the diversification of farm business models is a national as well as local trend. Many Cayuga County farmers seek to create business models that combine the primary agricultural production use of their farms with accessory uses such as small-scale processing facilities to create value-added products, direct-to-consumer retail components and agri-tourism activities. Recognizing that these associated activities are integral components to successful agricultural operations and ensuring that these activities are accommodated in the same manner as any other customary agricultural activity, is essential to sustaining a healthy agricultural economy.

Although local land use regulations may appear at first glance to have little or no negative impacts on farming, they can easily result in unintentionally burdensome restrictions on farmers or in development patterns that threaten the viability of agriculture in the long term. It is important to consider both the positive and negative impacts that land use decisions can have on the full range of agricultural practices. If applied, the “farm-friendly” provisions below can do a lot to maintain and bolster a healthy local agricultural economy for all types of farm-related activities.

### **Components of Farm-Friendly Zoning Regulations**

- Designate one or more zoning districts where agriculture is the stated primary use and restrict non-compatible uses such as multiple-family dwelling structures, medium or high residential densities and planned development districts.
- In low density residential and agriculture-residential zoning districts where agriculture is not the primary use (but is present and appropriate) allow agricultural activities to take place. Require that buffer zones or landscape screenings between new uses and existing farmland be employed to minimize conflicts between incompatible uses.
- Allow a wide variety of accessory uses that are related to the farm operation such as road side stands, tasting rooms, u-picks, CSA's, corn mazes, pumpkin patches, seasonal events, school programs, weddings and parties, farm stores (as an on-farm accessory operation), bakeries, farm restaurants and farm stays (bed and breakfast operations on an active farm).
- Allow a wide variety of agriculture-related support businesses such as permanent or seasonal farm markets (as a stand-alone operation), slaughterhouses and food processing facilities, equipment sales and maintenance services in agricultural zones.
- Allow for both permanent and temporary off-site signs to attract and direct customers to farms.
- Allow farm stands and farm stores, etc. to sell products grown, raised or processed by other operations in addition to those produced on-site.
- Allow home-occupation businesses that are compatible with agriculture such as equipment repair.

### **Components of Farm-Friendly Site Plan Regulations**

- Standards should be flexible to allow for an appropriate amount of oversight and review for a wide variety of uses, depending on the level of impact. For example, while a farm stand and a grocery store are both food retail outlets, they have different levels of impact and therefore should have different review requirements.
- Ensure that new development is sited on each parcel in a way that minimizes the loss of prime farmland. For example, discourage building a house in the middle of an agricultural parcel and instead encourage that it be built in a corner.
- Allow for on-street parking in low-traffic areas and expanded business hours for seasonal and low-impact agricultural businesses such as u-picks and Christmas tree farms.

### **Components of Farm-Friendly Subdivision Regulations**

- Ensure that newly configured agricultural land has adequate road access.
- Ensure that the most valuable or productive agricultural lands are kept intact to the extent possible.
- Employ clustered subdivision patterns to ensure as much open space as possible will be preserved, and allow agricultural uses on that open space.

## **Components of Other Farm-Friendly Policies**

- Limit expansion of public infrastructure such as water and sewer districts and roads into prime farmland areas.
- Impose lateral restrictions on public water pipes in agricultural areas to limit development pressure on farmland.
- Coordinate road, ditch, and culvert work with farmers to ensure proper drainage of farm fields is maintained and tile damage is avoided.
- Encourage in-fill development in villages, hamlets and the city of Auburn rather than building new development on agricultural or natural lands outside of more densely populated areas.

## **Farm-Friendly Audits**

Many public participants perceived a lack of adequate farmer representation on many local government boards and committees. With a smaller number of farm families in the county now than in the past, it may become more challenging to maintain farmer representation on town boards, planning boards, and zoning boards of appeals. This struggle to maintain farmer leadership at the local level can eventually lead to municipal policies (such as a comprehensive plan) and laws (such as zoning, site plan and subdivision ordinances) that are unintentionally problematic for farmers. While towns and villages are not required to enact land use laws at all, for those that choose to do so, it is in the interest of the entire community to ensure that they do not unnecessarily burden farmers.

A detailed analysis of the impacts of land use laws on agricultural practices is called a “farm-friendly audit.” A typical farm-friendly audit analyzes a local municipality’s zoning, site plan and subdivision ordinances to determine the degree that the laws assist or deter a wide variety of farm-related uses. This type of analysis can also provide suggested improvements to better protect agricultural activities and valuable farmland from incompatible land uses. Included in Appendix C are farm-friendly audits of four towns in Cayuga County: Fleming, Owasco, Moravia and Victory. For more information about farm-friendly audits, please see Appendix C.

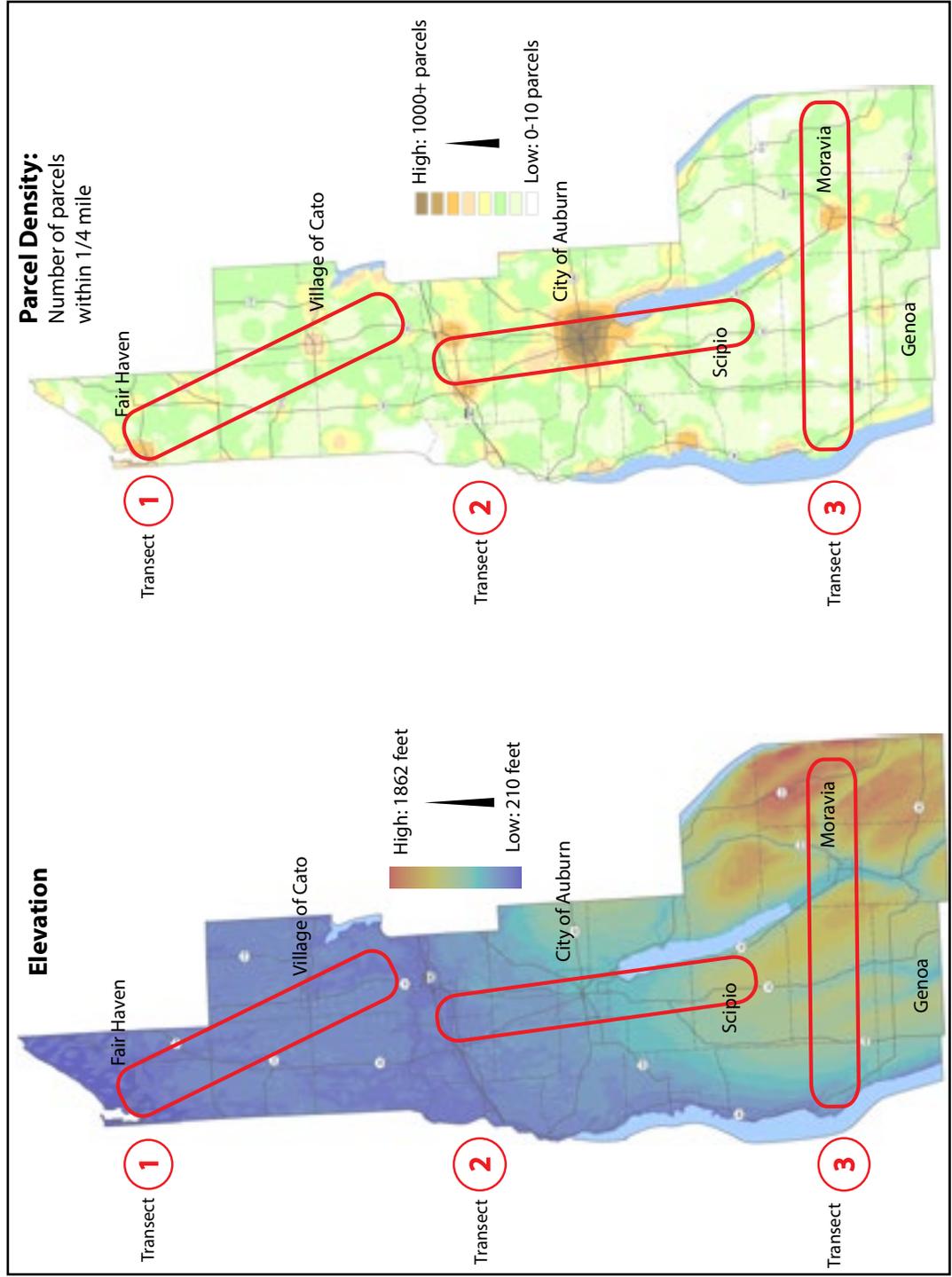
## **Cost of Community Services Studies**

While it is true that an acre of land with a house on it generates more total revenue than an acre of cropland, it tells us little about the cost of providing services to each of those parcels and whether the tax revenue generated by each of those land types actually covers the costs incurred. A Cost of Community Services (COCS) study takes a snapshot in time of the costs required to support the various existing land uses within a community -- such as residential, commercial, industrial and agricultural -- and calculates whether each type of land use generates more, less, or the same amount of revenue than what is required to support that land use through infrastructure and services such as roads, water and sewer lines, schools, and fire departments. These studies often show that, contrary to commonly held beliefs, residential development is a net fiscal loss to communities, while agricultural lands and open spaces can lead to a net fiscal benefit to the municipality (see Appendix E).

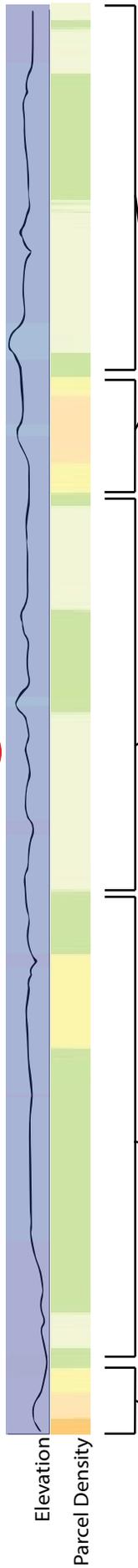
## Agricultural Transects: A Planning Tool

Cayuga County's environmental diversity in terms of topography and soils has led to a diversity of viable agricultural and non-agricultural uses. When developing land use policies, it is important to consider these variations and to create policies and laws that are appropriate. Transects, or cross sections, are a useful tool to conceptualize the diversity of land uses throughout the county and how the various land uses gradually, or abruptly, change from one to another.

Several cross sections of the county were chosen to conceptualize the various land uses found throughout the county and how land use policies and development patterns may impact agriculture over time. Each cross section schematic includes a summary and visual example of the major land uses found in the segments along that transect, and highlights land use policy considerations pertinent to each. These transects can be used by communities to conceptualize their local land use policies and development patterns, and how they may impact agriculture.



# Transect 1



## Village of Fair Haven & Surroundings



### Dominant Landscape

Medium density residential, commercial, civic development surrounded by forest, wetland and agricultural land. Active agricultural lands within Village limits.

### Dominant Agriculture-Related Activities

Restaurants that use local ingredients, retail outlets that sell locally produced foods. Cash crops and specialty crops, winery.

### Limitations

Wetlands and variable soils make large-scale agriculture difficult.

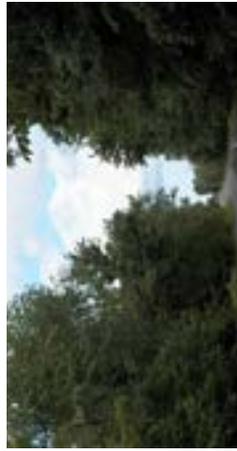
### Potential Impacts of Development on Agriculture

Water district expansion, new residential development and development pressure from tourist activities may result in parcels that are inefficient to farm and may create neighbor conflicts.

### Land Use Policy Considerations

- The potential negative impact of sign ordinances on farm accessory activities such as roadside stands, u-picks and farm markets.
- The benefits of allowing a wide array of accessory uses and off-site support businesses on the viability of farm operations.

## Dominated by Natural Lands



### Dominant Landscape

Forest and other natural lands with few relatively small agricultural areas. Low density residential with areas of moderate density residential.

### Dominant Agriculture-Related Activities

Cash crops, dairy and livestock.

### Limitations

Wetlands and variable soils make large-scale agriculture difficult.

### Potential Impacts of Development on Agriculture

Subdivisions and new residential development may result in parcels that are inefficient to farm and may create neighbor conflicts.

### Land Use Policy Considerations

- The benefits of allowing a wide array of accessory uses on the viability of farm operations.

## Drumlin Cropland & Forest



### Dominant Landscape

Cropland and forest with drumlin hills. Pockets of medium density residential.

### Dominant Agriculture-Related Activities

Diverse agricultural production: fruits, vegetables, nurseries, honey, cash crops, dairy and livestock.

### Limitations

Drumlins and narrow valleys alternate to create areas that can be either too dry or too wet for crops. Hilly terrain can also make larger scale production difficult.

### Potential Impacts of Development on Agriculture

Subdivisions and new residential development may result in parcels that are inefficient to farm and may create neighbor conflicts.

### Land Use Policy Considerations

- The potential negative impact of sign ordinances on farm accessory activities such as roadside stands, u-picks and farm markets.
- The benefits of allowing a wide array of accessory uses on the viability of farm operations.

## Village of Cato & Surroundings



### Dominant Landscape

Medium density residential, commercial and civic development. Active agricultural lands within Village limits.

### Dominant Agriculture-Related Activities

Specialty crops, roadside stands and cash crops.

### Limitations

Competition for space with other Village land uses such as homes and businesses.

### Potential Impacts of Development on Agriculture

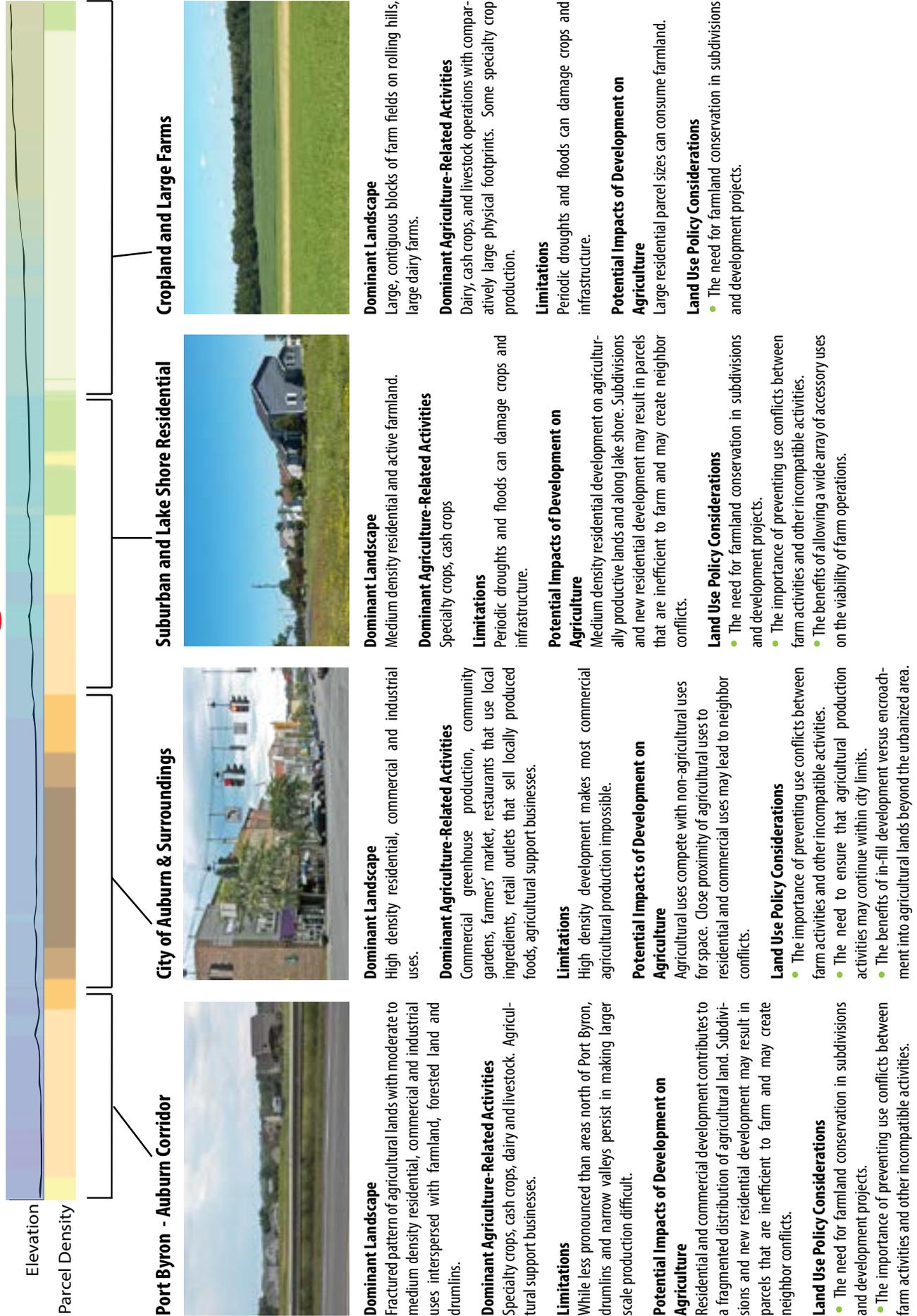
Local comprehensive plan and agriculture and farmland protection plan call for increased development within the Village to protect agricultural lands in the towns of Cato and Ira.

### Land Use Policy Considerations

- The potential negative impact of sign ordinances on farm accessory activities such as roadside stands, u-picks and farm markets.

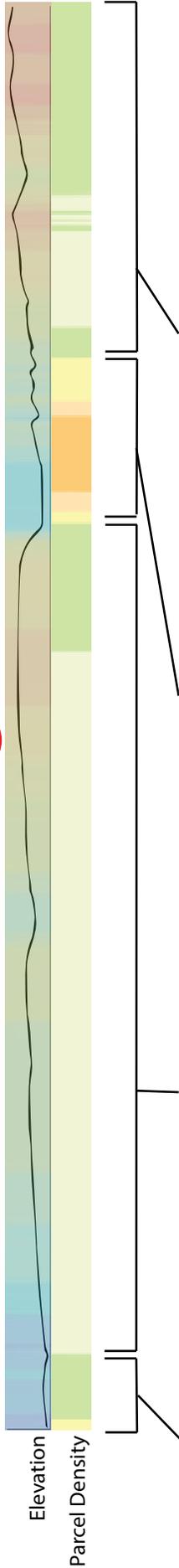
# Transect

2



# Transect

3



## Lake Shore Residential and Tourism



**Dominant Landscape**  
Low to moderate residential densities with lake access or lake views, tourism businesses, cash crops, forested land.

**Dominant Agriculture-Related Activities**  
Wineries and other agri-tourism businesses, cash crops.

**Limitations**  
Steeper slopes near lakeshore may make cultivation more challenging.

**Potential Impacts of Development on Agriculture**  
Development pressures from tourism industry, residential uses.

- Land Use Policy Considerations**
- The need for farmland conservation in subdivisions and development projects.
  - The importance of preventing use conflicts between farm activities and other incompatible activities.
  - The benefits of allowing a wide array of accessory uses on the viability of farm operations.

## Cropland and Large Farms



**Dominant Landscape**  
Large, contiguous blocks of farm fields on rolling hills, punctuated by large dairy farms and hamlets.

**Dominant Agriculture-Related Activities**  
Cash crops, dairy, livestock, specialty crops.

**Limitations**  
Periodic droughts and floods can damage crops and infrastructure.

**Potential Impacts of Development on Agriculture**  
Large residential parcel sizes can consume farmland.

- Land Use Policy Considerations**
- The need for farmland conservation in subdivisions and development projects.

## Village of Moravia & Surroundings



**Dominant Landscape**  
Medium density residential, commercial, industrial uses.

**Dominant Agriculture-Related Activities**  
Farmers' market, agricultural support businesses.

**Limitations**  
Medium density development limits the areas suitable for commercial agricultural production within Village limits.

**Potential Impacts of Development on Agriculture**  
Slow encroachment of moderate to medium density residential and commercial development to the south and east of the Village may lead to parcels that are inefficient to farm and may create neighbor conflicts.

- Land Use Policy Considerations**
- The potential negative impact of sign ordinances on farm accessory activities such as roadside stands, u-picks and farm markets.
  - The need for farmland conservation in subdivisions and development projects.
  - The benefits of in-fill development versus encroachment into agricultural lands beyond urbanized areas.

## Variable Terrain, Forested Land



**Dominant Landscape**  
Steep slopes and higher elevations. Forested land, timber and Christmas tree stands, with some cropland.

**Dominant Agriculture-Related Activities**  
Timber, Christmas trees, cash crops.

**Limitations**  
Steep, variable terrain limits larger scale production.

**Potential Impacts of Development on Agriculture**  
Slow encroachment of moderate density residential and commercial development may lead to parcels that are inefficient to farm and may create neighbor conflicts.

- Land Use Policy Considerations**
- The need for farmland conservation in subdivisions and development projects.
  - Forest and steep slope preservation to protect natural resources.



*Big 6 Picnic advertisement in the Town of Aurelius*

# Part II: Implementation Plan



## Introduction

The Cayuga County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board (AFPB), after collecting and reviewing participant input from public discussion meetings, focus group meetings and one-on-one interviews, developed a plan of action to support the county's agricultural economy and protect farmland in the next ten years, from 2015 to 2025. This implementation plan centers around three priority goals:

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

**Goal 2: Achieve widespread awareness and appreciation in the county of the economic, health and cultural importance of local food and local agriculture;**

**Goal 3: Ensure a vibrant future for farming in Cayuga County.**

The AFPB, with assistance from the Cayuga County Department of Planning and Economic Development (CCPED), will work closely with interested partners to progress with plan implementation in a timely manner. The AFPB is also responsible for reviewing the implementation plan annually to determine the level of progress completed, to reevaluate priorities and to make necessary revisions.

Below, each goal is broken down into a list of objectives, or targets to meet, that together can accomplish the goal. Objectives are further broken down into specific actions, or concrete tasks, that together can meet each objective. This extensive list of actions will require the involvement of many partners working together. To assist in carrying out each action, a list of potential partners and funding sources were identified. No partner listed is required to assist in the plan's implementation but all will hopefully choose to support the process of improving and protecting Cayuga County's agriculture in ways that fit their organization's mission and abilities.

A priority level was also assigned to each action to help organize implementation efforts. Recommended priorities include HIGH, MODERATE and LOW. High priority actions are suggested to be taken up and initiated as soon as possible with whatever time and resources the partners have available. Moderate and low priority actions are still important and should not be neglected, so AFPB and partners should use whatever remaining time and resources that have not already been devoted to high priority actions on these ones.

**List of Potential Partners Involved in Plan Implementation:**

**BOCES:** Cayuga – Onondaga BOCES

**CCE:** Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cayuga County

**CCHD:** Cayuga County Health Department

**CCPED:** Cayuga County Department of Planning and Economic Development

**CEDA:** Cayuga Economic Development Agency

**Chamber of Commerce:** Cayuga County Chamber of Commerce

**County Office of Tourism**

**Healthy Schools New York at OCM BOCES**

**HSC:** Human Services Coalition of Cayuga County

**Farm Bureau:** Cayuga County Farm Bureau

**Farmers’ Markets**

**FFA Chapters:** FFA chapters in local BOCES or school districts that serve Cayuga County

**Finger Lakes Culinary Bounty**

**School Districts**

**Town and Village Governments**

Each action includes an estimated amount of time that it may take for the task to be accomplished, once efforts have begun to implement it. For example, *Action 1-1.1: Conduct a food system assessment*, may take between one to three years to accomplish but the action does not necessarily need to be started immediately as it is also listed as a low priority. This means that the AFPB and potential partners should focus on higher priority tasks (even if they may take longer to accomplish) before devoting resources to this one.

The section below highlights 5 key actions that the AFPB and its partners should begin implementing as soon as the plan is approved. That section is followed by a breakdown of all goals, objectives and actions, with a summary table of all actions organized from HIGH to LOW priority.

## Key Actions

The AFPB and its partners should begin implementing this plan as soon as it is approved by the County Legislature and the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets by focusing on five key high priority actions. These actions were chosen based on a number of factors, including the long-term impact of the action on the community, the ease of accomplishment, and their influence as first steps to build off of as other implementation actions are taken.

- 1. Action 1-1.4: Launch a “buy local” campaign that will focus on the economic and health benefits of supporting local agriculture. Raising local consumer awareness of the opportunities to purchase local foods and the benefits of doing so can spur local demand for farmers’ goods.**

**Potential Partners:** County Chamber of Commerce, CCHD  
**Funding Resources:** NYSDAM Regional “Buy Local” Campaign Development Grant  
**Priority:** HIGH  
**Estimated Time to Complete Once Action Begins:** 1-3 years

Well-executed “buy local” campaigns have a proven track record of boosting sales of small businesses, including agriculturally-based ones. There is growing interest on the local, regional and national levels about local food production. However, there is still much work to be done in Cayuga County to spread the word that buying locally produced foods would benefit not only our local economy but could benefit our health, as well. A successful “buy local” campaign may have a multitude of benefits that can help meet several objectives in the implementation plan; it can raise awareness and appreciation of the local agricultural economy by the general public, boost farmers’ local sales of their products, and generate consumer demand for restaurants and schools to serve meals with more locally-sourced ingredients.

The budget for this action would primarily consist of partner staff labor to design the campaign, recruit and coordinate meetings of participating businesses, and manage the campaign once it is launched. Marketing materials such as flyers, posters, window decals, newspaper ads and a website would also likely require dedicated funds. At least one funding source has been identified

to help defray these costs, the NYSDAM Regional “Buy Local” Campaign Development Grant.

2. **Action 1-3.1: 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. Staff should coordinate with other entities such as CCE, NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets Division of Agricultural Development and Farm Credit East.**

**Potential Partners:** CEDA

**Funding Resources:** CEDA staff time, CEDA and CCPED loan programs, USDA Rural Business Enterprise Grant Program, USDA-FSA loan programs, Finger Lakes Grants Information Center

**Priority:** HIGH

**Estimated Time to Complete Once Action Begins:** 1-3 years

A common refrain from farmers during public meetings and focus groups was the frustration with working with the many entities that provide assistance to farmers and the need for access to local, coordinated business support. Integrating the needs of the agricultural business community with the one-stop model at the Cayuga Economic Development Agency (CEDA) will provide much-needed business support to agricultural operations of all sizes as they work to grow and sustain their businesses. This action compliments CEDA’s 2011 strategic plan, which calls for improving service delivery to small farmers.

The budget for this action would likely primarily consist of partner staff time to coordinate existing business support efforts and continue outreach to agricultural businesses to identify their needs and how best to serve them. CEDA has identified existing staff capacity to address this action without the need of creating a new position.

3. **Action 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.**

**Potential Partners:** Farm Bureau, CCE, School Districts, BOCES

**Funding Resources:** Farm Bureau, USDA Farm to School Grant Program

**Priority:** HIGH

**Estimated Time to Complete Once Action Begins:** 1-3 years

Organizing fun farm events for children and their families will increase the agricultural literacy and appreciation by our communities for local agriculture as a major economic engine and a source of healthy foods. This increased awareness and appreciation is essential to the long-term viability of our farms, and over time may help maintain a diversity of farm sizes and production types by developing and sustaining a robust local market for locally produced foods. These events also have the potential of introducing children to farming who may not otherwise have an opportunity to discover a career in agriculture.

The budget for this action would likely primarily consist of staff and volunteer time to recruit participating farms, schools and other organizations, and plan the events. Other budget expenses may include transportation costs for school trips and marketing materials to publicize the events.

4. **Action 2-1.2: 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.**

**Potential Partners:** CCPED

**Funding Resources:** CCPED staff time

**Priority:** HIGH

**Estimated Time to Complete Once Action Begins:** on-going

Cumbersome or restrictive land use regulations can significantly impact farm business growth and viability. Addressing existing issues and working with towns and villages to prevent the creation of future impacts is essential to the diversity and long-term viability of our agricultural economy, especially for niche producers, small-scale retail outlets such as farm markets, and value-added activities that some may not view as “traditional” agricultural activities. CCPED already provides technical support to town and village governments for all their planning and zoning needs, including those related to agriculture, and will continue to prioritize trainings and informational outreach on this topic. Specific outreach efforts and training topics, such as farm-friendly land use policies, Cost of Community Services Studies and other farmland protection tools like PDR can initially be based on the needs and challenges identified as the County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan was developed.

The budget for this action would likely primarily consist of CCPED staff time.

5. **Action 3-2.1: 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.**

**Potential Partners:** SWCD, CCE

**Funding Resources:** partner staff time

**Priority:** HIGH

**Estimated Time to Complete Once Action Begins:** on-going

A sound farm plan and its effective implementation is essential to sound stewardship of natural resources. There already exists strong technical support in the county to address farm management needs, but particular attention should be paid to ensuring that the quality of farm plans remain high and that all farmers know how to effectively implement their plans. SWCD and CCE will continue to prioritize addressing these priorities by engaging with farmers, farm planners and other agencies as needed.

The budget for this action would likely primarily consist of partner staff time.

# Goals, Objectives and Actions

## 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 1-1.1:** Conduct a food system assessment. By identifying the opportunities and weaknesses within the local food system, the county can help identify ways to strengthen ties between local agricultural production and local food consumption.

**Potential Partners:** Human Services Coalition of Cayuga County, CCHD

**Funding Resources:** USDA Community Food Projects Competitive Grant Program

**Priority:** LOW

**Estimated Time to Complete Once Action Begins:** 1-3 years

**Action 1-1.2:** 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. Facilitation and assistance in navigating regulations, programs and funding opportunities can help farmers and commercial or institutional end users form strong, lasting connections and increase local consumption of local foods.

**Potential Partners:** CCE, CCHD, Finger Lakes Culinary Bounty

**Funding Resources:** NYSDAM Fresh Connect Program, NYSDAM Specialty Crop Block Grant Program, USDA Farm to School Grant Program, USDA Rural Business Enterprise Grant Program, USDA Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program, USDA WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program, USDA Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

**Priority:** MODERATE

**Estimated Time to Complete Once Action Begins:** on-going

**Action 1-1.3:** 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. Proudly advertising meals made with locally sourced ingredients raises the public's awareness and appreciation of local farms.

**Potential Partners:** CCPED, Finger Lakes Culinary Bounty

**Funding Resources:** CCPED Staff time

**Priority:** LOW

**Estimated Time to Complete Once Action Begins:** on-going

**Action 1-1.4:** Launch a “buy local” campaign that will focus on the economic and health benefits of supporting local agriculture. Raising local consumer awareness of the opportunities to purchase local foods and the benefits of doing so can spur local demand for farmers’ goods.

**Potential Partners:** County Chamber of Commerce, CCHD

**Funding Resources:** NYSDAM Regional “Buy Local” Campaign Development Grant

**Priority:** HIGH

**Estimated Time to Complete Once Action Begins:** 1-3 years

### ***Objective 1-2: Improve local consumer access to locally produced foods***

**Action 1-2.1:** 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.

**Potential Partners:** CCE, Farmers’ Markets

**Funding Resources:** CCE staff time

**Priority:** MODERATE

**Estimated Time to Complete Once Action Begins:** 4-6 years

**Action 1-2.2:** Create a permanent, year-round public market in Auburn.

**Potential Partners:** CCPED, Auburn Cooperative Farmers’ Market

**Funding Resources:** New York State Fresh Connect Program, USDA Farmers’ Market Promotion Program Grant, USDA Community Facilities Program

**Priority:** MODERATE

**Estimated Time to Complete Once Action Begins:** 7-10 years

**Action 1-2.3:** 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.

**Potential Partners:** CCPED, Town and Village Governments, CCHD

**Funding Resources:** NYSDAM Amendments to Municipal Law Affecting Agricultural Lands, Farm Operations or Farmland Protection Grant; Partner staff time

**Priority:** HIGH

**Estimated Time to Complete Once Action Begins:** on-going

**Action 1-2.4:** Increase sales of local foods in conventional retail outlets such as convenience stores and supermarkets, especially in community food deserts.

**Potential Partners:** CCHD, CCE

**Funding Resources:** USDA Rural Business Enterprise Grants, USDA Business and Industry Guaranteed Loans

**Priority:** LOW

**Estimated Time to Complete Once Action Begins:** 1-3 years

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

**Action 1-3.1:** 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. Staff should coordinate with other entities such as CCE, NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets Division of Agricultural Development and Farm Credit East.

**Potential Partners:** CEDA

**Funding Resources:** CEDA staff time, CEDA and CCPED loan programs, USDA Rural Business Enterprise Grant Program, USDA-FSA loan programs, Finger Lakes Grants Information Center

**Priority:** HIGH

**Estimated Time to Complete Once Action Begins:** 1-3 years

**Action 1-3.2:** 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. This website could serve as an educational tool for the local non-farm public, as a promotional tool for tourists and visitors, and as an economic development tool to attract new farmers and agriculture-related businesses to the county.

**Potential Partners:** CEDA, CCE, SWCD, CCPED

**Funding Resources:** Partner staff time

**Priority:** MODERATE

**Estimated Time to Complete Once Action Begins:** 1-3 years

**Action 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.

**Potential Partners:** CEDA

**Funding Resources:** CEDA staff time

**Priority:** HIGH

**Estimated Time to Complete Once Action Begins:** 1-3 years

**Action 1-3.4:** 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.

**Potential Partners:** CEDA

**Funding Resources:** CEDA staff time, USDA Rural Development Loan Programs

**Priority:** MODERATE

**Estimated Time to Complete Once Action Begins:** 1-3 years

**Action 1-3.5:** Create collaborative and cost-sharing partnerships among farmers to increase efficiencies and create new economic opportunities.

**Potential Partners:** Farmers

**Funding Resources:** USDA Rural Cooperative Development Grant Program

**Priority:** LOW

**Estimated Time to Complete Once Action Begins:** 7-10 years

**Action 1-3.6:** Increase collaboration and communication among new and young farmers, such as through regularly scheduled networking events.

**Potential Partners:** Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers Program, CCE

**Funding Resources:** Partner staff time

**Priority:** MODERATE

**Estimated Time to Complete Once Action Begins:** 4-6 years

**Action 1-3.7:** Continue supporting the development and use of renewable energy sources for individual farms and/or co-operative groups of farmers.

**Potential Partners:** SWCD

**Funding Resources:** SWCD, NYSERDA Innovation in Agriculture Grants

**Priority:** MODERATE

**Estimated Time to Complete Once Action Begins:** on-going

**Action 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.

**Potential Partners:** CCE, BOCES

**Funding Resources:** Partner staff time

**Priority:** MODERATE

**Estimated Time to Complete Once Action Begins:** on-going

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

**Action 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. Inadequate access to nearby processing facilities is a significant limitation for county livestock farmers.

**Potential Partners:** Farm Bureau

**Funding Resources:** Partner staff time

**Priority:** MODERATE

**Estimated Time to Complete Once Action Begins:** 7-10 years

**Action 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.

**Potential Partners:** Farm Bureau

**Funding Resources:** Partner staff time

**Priority:** LOW

**Estimated Time to Complete Once Action Begins:** 7-10 years

### ***Objective 1-5: Improve aggregation, processing and distribution infrastructure for local farmers***

**Action 1-5.1:** Explore and promote opportunities for a regional food aggregation and distribution hub in Cayuga County.

**Potential Partners:** CEDA

**Funding Resources:** USDA Rural Development Grants, CEDA staff time

**Priority:** MODERATE

**Estimated Time to Complete Once Action Begins:** on-going

**Action 1-5.2:** 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.

**Potential Partners:** CEDA, Town and Village Governments, CCPED

**Funding Resources:** USDA Rural Business Enterprise Grant Program, CEDA Micro-Loan Program, CCPED Loan Program

**Priority:** MODERATE

**Estimated Time to Complete Once Action Begins:** on-going

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

**Action 1-6.1:** 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.

**Potential Partners:** CCPED, Town and Village Governments

**Funding Resources:** NYSDAM Amendments to Municipal Law Affecting Agricultural Lands, Farm Operations or Farmland Protection Grant; NYSDAM Municipal Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan Development Grant; Partner staff time

**Priority:** HIGH

**Estimated Time to Complete Once Action Begins:** on-going

**Action 1-6.2:** Implement the county-wide way-finding system for agri-tourism venues and other tourist attractions that is currently in development.

**Potential Partners:** CCPED, County Office of Tourism

**Funding Resources:** New York State Consolidated Funding Application

**Priority:** LOW

**Estimated Time to Complete Once Action Begins:** 1-3 years

**Action 1-6.3:** 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.

**Potential Partners:** County Office of Tourism, Finger Lakes Culinary Bounty

**Funding Resources:** Partner staff time

**Priority:** LOW

**Estimated Time to Complete Once Action Begins:** on-going

**Action 1-6.4:** Market the Cayuga County Office of Tourism toolkit for tourism-related businesses to farmers and agri-tourism enterprises.

**Potential Partners:** County Office of Tourism

**Funding Resources:** Partner staff time

**Priority:** MODERATE

**Estimated Time to Complete Once Action Begins:** on-going

**Action 1-6.5:** 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.

**Potential Partners:** CEDA, County Office of Tourism

**Funding Resources:** USDA Rural Business Enterprise Grant Program, CEDA Micro-Loan Program, CCPED Loan Program, Partner staff time

**Priority:** LOW

**Estimated Time to Complete Once Action Begins:** on-going

### ***Objective 1-7: Expand affordable high-speed internet access throughout the county***

**Action 1-7.1:** Work with service providers and the state to develop the county's rural broadband infrastructure. The lack of reliable, broadband internet access limits farmers' ability to access resources to sustain and grow their businesses.

**Potential Partners:** CEDA, CCPED

**Funding Resources:** Connect NY Broadband Grant, New York State Consolidated Funding Application (CFA), USDA Farm Bill Broadband Program

**Priority:** HIGH

**Estimated Time to Complete Once Action Begins:** 4-6 years

## **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 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.

**Potential Partners:** Farm Bureau, SWCD

**Funding Resources:** Partner staff time

**Priority:** HIGH

**Estimated Time to Complete Once Action Begins:** 1-3 years

**Action 2-1.2:** 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.

**Potential Partners:** CCPED

**Funding Resources:** CCPED staff time

**Priority:** HIGH

**Estimated Time to Complete Once Action Begins:** on-going

**Action 2-1.3:** Make periodic presentations to County Legislators and other community leaders about agriculture-related issues and the importance of agriculture.

**Potential Partners:** CCPED

**Funding Resources:** CCPED staff time

**Priority:** HIGH

**Estimated Time to Complete Once Action Begins:** on-going

### ***Objective 2-2: Educate the general public about the economic, health and cultural importance of local food and local agriculture***

**Action 2-2.1:** 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.

**Potential Partners:** CCPED

**Funding Resources:** CCPED staff time

**Priority:** LOW

**Estimated Time to Complete Once Action Begins:** 1-3 years

**Action 2-2.2:** 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.

**Potential Partners:** Farmers, Farm Bureau

**Funding Resources:** Farm Bureau

**Priority:** LOW

**Estimated Time to Complete Once Action Begins:** 1-3 years

**Action 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.

**Potential Partners:** Farm Bureau, CCE, School Districts, BOCES

**Funding Resources:** Farm Bureau, USDA Farm to School Grant Program

**Priority:** HIGH

**Estimated Time to Complete Once Action Begins:** 1-3 years

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

**Action 2-3.1:** 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.

**Potential Partners:** CCE

**Funding Resources:** CCE

**Priority:** MODERATE

**Estimated Time to Complete Once Action Begins:** on-going

**Action 2-3.2:** 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.

**Potential Partners:** BOCES, School Districts

**Funding Resources:** Partner staff time

**Priority:** HIGH

**Estimated Time to Complete Once Action Begins:** 7-10 years

**Action 2-3.3:** 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.

**Potential Partners:** School Districts, CCE, CCHD, Healthy Schools New York at OCM BOCES

**Funding Resources:** USDA Farm to School Grant Program, NY Agriculture in the Classroom Kids Growing Food Mini Grant and High Tunnels in Schools Grant, National Gardening Association Grants, NY Farm Bureau Foundation for Agricultural Education Grants, Healthy Schools New York Grant Program through the NYS Department of Health

**Priority:** MODERATE

**Estimated Time to Complete Once Action Begins:** 7-10 years

**Action 2-3.4:** 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.

**Potential Partners:** CCE, Healthy Schools New York at OCM BOCES

**Funding Resources:** USDA Farm to School Grant Program, Healthy Schools New York Grant Program through the NYS Department of Health

**Priority:** MODERATE

**Estimated Time to Complete Once Action Begins:** 7-10 years

**Action 2-3.5:** Increase and sustain participation in the New York Agriculture-in-the-Classroom (AITC) program. NYAITC aims to increase agricultural literacy while creating opportunities for hands-on learning and meeting state educational standards. Programs include Agriculture Literacy Week, art and writing contests, educator workshops, school gardens and high tunnels, and interactive classroom lessons.

**Potential Partners:** CCE, School Districts, Farm Bureau

**Funding Resources:** Farm Bureau, USDA Farm to School Grant Program

**Priority:** HIGH

**Estimated Time to Complete Once Action Begins:** 4-6 years

**Action 2-3.6:** 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.

**Potential Partners:** CCE, School Districts, Farm Bureau

**Funding Resources:** Partner staff time

**Priority:** MODERATE

**Estimated Time to Complete Once Action Begins:** 1-3 years

**Action 2-3.7:** Work with local colleges, CCC and Wells College, to develop and offer introductory agriculture and food systems courses.

**Potential Partners:** CCPED

**Funding Resources:** CCPED staff time

**Priority:** LOW

**Estimated Time to Complete Once Action Begins:** 7-10 years

**Action 2-3.8:** Develop a student internship program that partners with area farms and agriculture-related businesses.

**Potential Partners:** BOCES, FFA Chapters

**Funding Resources:** Partner staff time

**Priority:** MODERATE

**Estimated Time to Complete Once Action Begins:** 4-6 years

## 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 3-1.1:** 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 (see Appendix C for more information).

**Potential Partners:** CCPED, Town and Village Governments

**Funding Resources:** NYSDAM Amendments to Municipal Law Affecting Agricultural Lands, Farm Operations or Farmland Protection Grant; Partner staff time

**Priority:** HIGH

**Estimated Time to Complete Once Action Begins:** on-going

**Action 3-1.2:** 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.

**Potential Partners:** CCPED

**Funding Resources:** NYSDAM Municipal Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan Development Grant, CCPED staff time

**Priority:** MODERATE

**Estimated Time to Complete Once Action Begins:** 1-3 years

**Action 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 (see Appendix E for more information).

**Potential Partners:** CCPED, Town Governments

**Funding Resources:** Partner staff time

**Priority:** MODERATE

**Estimated Time to Complete Once Action Begins:** 1-3 years

**Action 3-1.4:** Provide agriculture-related land use trainings for town and village planning and zoning board members.

**Potential Partners:** CCPED

**Funding Resources:** CCPED staff time

**Priority:** MODERATE

**Estimated Time to Complete Once Action Begins:** on-going

**Action 3-1.5:** Adopt a county-wide right-to-farm law.

**Potential Partners:** CCPED

**Funding Resources:** CCPED staff time

**Priority:** LOW

**Estimated Time to Complete Once Action Begins:** 7-10 years

***Objective 3-2: Encourage farmers to access existing resources to address farm management and environmental stewardship needs***

**Action 3-2.1:** 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.

**Potential Partners:** SWCD, CCE

**Funding Resources:** Partner staff time

**Priority:** HIGH

**Estimated Time to Complete Once Action Begins:** on-going

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

**Action 3-3.1:** Make informed zoning and planning decisions by using the resources in this plan to identify agricultural lands experiencing development pressures or other conflicts.

**Potential Partners:** CCPED, Town and Village Governments

**Funding Resources:** Partner staff time

**Priority:** HIGH

**Estimated Time to Complete Once Action Begins:** on-going

**Action 3-3.2:** Establish local purchase of development rights (PDR) programs where appropriate and include provisions requiring that protected agricultural lands remain in active agricultural use.

**Potential Partners:** CCPED, Town Governments

**Funding Resources:** Partner staff time

**Priority:** MODERATE

**Estimated Time to Complete Once Action Begins:** 7-10 years

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

**Action 3-4.1:** 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.

**Potential Partners:** CCE

**Funding Resources:** CCE staff time

**Priority:** MODERATE

**Estimated Time to Complete Once Action Begins:** on-going



*Mary's Barn Market in the Town of Brutus*



*Student garden at Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES in the Town of Aurelius*

# Implementation Matrix

Objective	Action Summary	Priority	Potential Partners	Funding Sources	Estimated Time to Complete Once Action Begins				
					1-3 years	4-6 years	7-10 years	on-going	
Objective 1-1: Integrate existing and emerging local food production into the local food system	Action 1-1.4	Launch a “buy local” campaign that will focus on the economic and health benefits of supporting local agriculture.	HIGH	County Chamber of Commerce, CCHD	NYSDAM Regional “Buy Local” Campaign Development Grant				
Objective 1-3: Enhance existing support resources for agriculture-related business development and training	Action 1-3.1	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.	HIGH	CEDA	CEDA staff time, CEDA and CCPED loan programs, USDA Rural Business Enterprise Grant Program, USDA-FSA loan programs, Finger Lakes Grants Information Center				
Objective 1-3: Enhance existing support resources for agriculture-related business development and training	Action 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.	HIGH	CEDA	CEDA staff time				
Objective 2-1: Educate local, county and state officials about the economic, health, and cultural importance of local food and local agriculture	Action 2-1.1	Organize annual information and outreach events for county, state, and local officials.	HIGH	Farm Bureau, SWCD	Farm Bureau, Partner staff time				
Objective 2-2: Educate the general public about the economic, health and cultural importance of local food and local agriculture	Action 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.	HIGH	Farm Bureau, CCE, School Districts, BOCES	Farm Bureau, USDA Farm to School Grant Program				
Objective 1-7: Expand affordable high-speed internet access throughout the county	Action 1-7.1	Work with service providers and the state to develop the county's rural broadband infrastructure.	HIGH	CEDA, CCPED	Connect NY Broadband Grant, New York State Consolidated Funding Application (CFA), USDA Farm Bill Broadband Program				
Objective 2-3: Enhance educational and enrichment opportunities for young people related to local food and local agriculture	Action 2-3.5	Increase and sustain participation in the New York Agriculture-in-the-Classroom (AITC) program.	HIGH	CCE, School Districts, Farm Bureau	Farm Bureau, USDA Farm to School Grant Program				
Objective 2-3: Enhance educational and enrichment opportunities for young people related to local food and local agriculture	Action 2-3.2	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.	HIGH	BOCES, School Districts	Partner staff time				
Objective 1-2: Improve local consumer access to locally produced foods	Action 1-2.3	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.	HIGH	CCPED, Town and Village Governments, CCHD	NYSDAM Amendments to Municipal Law Affecting Agricultural Lands, Farm Operations or Farmland Protection Grant; CCPED, Partner staff time				
Objective 1-6: Support agri-tourism businesses and growth in the agri-tourism sector	Action 1-6.1	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.	HIGH	CCPED, Town and Village Governments	NYSDAM Amendments to Municipal Law Affecting Agricultural Lands, Farm Operations or Farmland Protection Grant; NYSDAM Municipal Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan Development Grant; Partner staff time				
Objective 2-1: Educate local, county and state officials about the economic, health, and cultural importance of local food and local agriculture	Action 2-1.2	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.	HIGH	CCPED	CCPED staff time				
Objective 2-1: Educate local, county and state officials about the economic, health, and cultural importance of local food and local agriculture	Action 2-1.3	Make periodic presentations to County Legislators and other community leaders about agriculture-related issues and the importance of agriculture.	HIGH	CCPED	CCPED staff time				
Objective 3-1: Enact and maintain farm-friendly land use policies, as appropriate for each community's needs and preferences	Action 3-1.1	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.	HIGH	CCPED, Town and Village Governments	NYSDAM Amendments to Municipal Law Affecting Agricultural Lands, Farm Operations or Farmland Protection Grant; Partner staff time				
Objective 3-2: Encourage farmers to access existing resources to address farm management and environmental stewardship needs	Action 3-2.1	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.	HIGH	SWCD, CCE	Partner staff time				
Objective 3-3: Protect viable agricultural land from non-agricultural uses and development pressures	Action 3-3.1	Make informed zoning and planning decisions by using the resources in this plan to identify agricultural lands experiencing development pressures or other conflicts.	HIGH	CCPED, Town and Village Governments	Partner staff time				
Objective 1-3: Enhance existing support resources for agriculture-related business development and training	Action 1-3.2	Create a website clearinghouse for all agriculture-related information and resources available in the county and region.	MODERATE	CEDA, CCE, SWCD, CCPED	Partner staff time				

Objective	Action Summary	Priority	Potential Partners	Funding Sources	Estimated Time to Complete Once Action Begins				
					1-3 years	4-6 years	7-10 years	on-going	
Objective 1-3: Enhance existing support resources for agriculture-related business development and training	Action 1-3.4	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.	MODERATE	CEDA	CEDA staff time, USDA Rural Development Loan Programs				
Objective 2-3: Enhance educational and enrichment opportunities for young people related to local food and local agriculture	Action 2-3.6	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.	MODERATE	CCE, School Districts, Farm Bureau	Partner staff time				
Objective 3-1: Enact and maintain farm-friendly land use policies, as appropriate for each community's needs and preferences	Action 3-1.2	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.	MODERATE	CCPED	NYS DAM Municipal Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan Development Grant, CCPED staff time				
Objective 3-1: Enact and maintain farm-friendly land use policies, as appropriate for each community's needs and preferences	Action 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.	MODERATE	CCPED, Town Governments	Partner staff time				
Objective 1-2: Improve local consumer access to locally produced foods	Action 1-2.1	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.	MODERATE	CCE, Farmers' Markets	Partner staff time				
Objective 1-3: Enhance existing support resources for agriculture-related business development and training	Action 1-3.6	Increase collaboration and communication among new and young farmers, such as through regularly scheduled networking events.	MODERATE	Farm Bureau Young Farmers and Ranchers Program, CCE	Partner staff time				
Objective 2-3: Enhance educational and enrichment opportunities for young people related to local food and local agriculture	Action 2-3.8	Develop a student internship program that partners with area farms and agriculture-related businesses.	MODERATE	BOCES, FFA Chapters	Partner staff time				
Objective 1-2: Improve local consumer access to locally produced foods	Action 1-2.2	Create a permanent, year-round public market in Auburn.	MODERATE	CCPED, Auburn Cooperative Farmers' Market	New York State Fresh Connect Program, USDA Farmers' Market Promotion Program Grant, USDA Community Facilities Program				
Objective 1-4: Work with state and federal policy-makers to address burdensome regulations	Action 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.	MODERATE	Farm Bureau	Partner staff time				
Objective 2-3: Enhance educational and enrichment opportunities for young people related to local food and local agriculture	Action 2-3.3	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.	MODERATE	School Districts, CCE, CCHD, Healthy Schools New York at OCM BOCES	USDA Farm to School Grant Program, NY Agriculture in the Classroom Kids Growing Food Mini Grant and High Tunnels in Schools Grant, National Gardening Association Grants, NY Farm Bureau Foundation for Agricultural Education Grants, Healthy Schools New York Grant Program through the NYS Department of Health				
Objective 2-3: Enhance educational and enrichment opportunities for young people related to local food and local agriculture	Action 2-3.4	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.	MODERATE	CCE, Healthy Schools New York at OCM BOCES	USDA Farm to School Grant Program, Healthy Schools New York Grant Program through the NYS Department of Health				
Objective 3-3: Protect viable agricultural land from non-agricultural uses and development pressures	Action 3-3.2	Establish local purchase of development rights (PDR) programs where appropriate and include provisions requiring that protected agricultural lands remain in active agricultural use.	MODERATE	CCPED, Town Governments	Partner staff time				
Objective 1-1: Integrate existing and emerging local food production into the local food system	Action 1-1.2	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.	MODERATE	CCE, CCHD, Finger Lakes Culinary Bounty	NYS DAM Fresh Connect Program, NYSDAM Specialty Crop Block Grant Program, USDA Farm to School Grant Program, USDA Rural Business Enterprise Grant Program, USDA Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program, USDA WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program, USDA Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)				
Objective 1-3: Enhance existing support resources for agriculture-related business development and training	Action 1-3.7	Continue supporting the development and use of renewable energy sources for individual farms and/or co-operative groups of farmers.	MODERATE	SWCD	SWCD, NYSDAM Innovation in Agriculture Grants				
Objective 1-3: Enhance existing support resources for agriculture-related business development and training	Action 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.	MODERATE	CCE, BOCES	Partner staff time				

Objective	Action Summary	Priority	Potential Partners	Funding Sources	Estimated Time to Complete Once Action Begins				
					1-3 years	4-6 years	7-10 years	on-going	
Objective 1-5: Improve aggregation, processing and distribution infrastructure for local farmers	Action 1-5.1	Explore and promote opportunities for a regional food aggregation and distribution hub in Cayuga County.	MODERATE	CEDA	USDA Rural Development Grants, CEDA staff time				
Objective 1-5: Improve aggregation, processing and distribution infrastructure for local farmers	Action 1-5.2	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.	MODERATE	CEDA, Town and Village Governments, CCPED	USDA Rural Business Enterprise Grant Program, CEDA Micro-Loan Program, CCPED Loan Program				
Objective 1-6: Support agri-tourism businesses and growth in the agri-tourism sector	Action 1-6.4	Market the Cayuga County Office of Tourism toolkit for tourism-related businesses to farmers and agri-tourism enterprises.	MODERATE	County Office of Tourism	Partner staff time				
Objective 2-3: Enhance educational and enrichment opportunities for young people related to local food and local agriculture	Action 2-3.1	Continue support for existing 4-H programs through Cayuga County Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE).	MODERATE	CCE	CCE				
Objective 3-1: Enact and maintain farm-friendly land use policies, as appropriate for each community's needs and preferences	Action 3-1.4	Provide agriculture-related land use trainings for town and village planning and zoning board members.	MODERATE	CCPED	CCPED staff time				
Objective 3-4: Facilitate farm transfers	Action 3-4.1	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.	MODERATE	CCE	Partner staff time				
Objective 1-1: Integrate existing and emerging local food production into the local food system	Action 1-1.1	Conduct a food system assessment.	LOW	HSC, CCHD	USDA Community Food Projects Competitive Grant Program				
Objective 1-2: Improve local consumer access to locally produced foods	Action 1-2.4	Increase sales of local foods in conventional retail outlets such as convenience stores and supermarkets, especially in community food deserts.	LOW	CCHD, CCE	USDA Rural Business Enterprise Grants, USDA Business and Industry Guaranteed Loans				
Objective 1-6: Support agri-tourism businesses and growth in the agri-tourism sector	Action 1-6.2	Implement the county-wide way-finding system for agri-tourism venues and other tourist attractions that is currently in development.	LOW	CCPED, County Office of Tourism	New York State Consolidated Funding Application				
Objective 2-2: Educate the general public about the economic, health and cultural importance of local food and local agriculture	Action 2-2.1	Work with event organizers to enhance annual festivals and events that celebrate local food and agriculture, and their importance to local communities.	LOW	CCPED	CCPED staff time				
Objective 2-2: Educate the general public about the economic, health and cultural importance of local food and local agriculture	Action 2-2.2	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.	LOW	Farmers, Farm Bureau	Farm Bureau				
Objective 1-6: Support agri-tourism businesses and growth in the agri-tourism sector	Action 1-6.5	Support growth in the wine and distillery industries and the establishment of artisanal wineries, breweries, cideries, and distilleries.	LOW	CEDA, County Office of Tourism	USDA Rural Business Enterprise Grant Program, CEDA Micro-Loan Program, CCPED Loan Program, Partner staff time				
Objective 1-3: Enhance existing support resources for agriculture-related business development and training	Action 1-3.5	Create collaborative and cost-sharing partnerships among farmers to increase efficiencies and create new economic opportunities.	LOW	Farmers	USDA Rural Cooperative Development Grant Program				
Objective 1-4: Work with state and federal policy-makers to address burdensome regulations	Action 1-4.2	Lobby federal government representatives to enact immigration reform.	LOW	Farm Bureau	Partner staff time				
Objective 2-3: Enhance educational and enrichment opportunities for young people related to local food and local agriculture	Action 2-3.7	Work with local colleges, CCC and Wells College, to develop and offer introductory agriculture and food systems courses.	LOW	CCPED	CCPED staff time				
Objective 3-1: Enact and maintain farm-friendly land use policies, as appropriate for each community's needs and preferences	Action 3-1.5	Adopt a county-wide right-to-farm law.	LOW	CCPED	CCPED staff time				
Objective 1-1: Integrate existing and emerging local food production into the local food system	Action 1-1.3	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.	LOW	CCPED, Finger Lakes Culinary Bounty	CCPED staff time				
Objective 1-6: Support agri-tourism businesses and growth in the agri-tourism sector	Action 1-6.3	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.	LOW	County Office of Tourism, Finger Lakes Culinary Bounty	Partner staff time				

## **Appendix A**

### **Summary of Public Participation**

## Project Timeline, Public Participation and Outreach

July 25, 2013	First Steering Committee meeting at the County Office Building
October 31, 2013	Second Steering Committee meeting at the SWCD
November 13, 2013	First public input meeting at BOCES
November 14, 2013	Second public input meeting at Moravia Central School
November 19, 2013	Third public input meeting at Cato-Meridian Central School

### ***Public Outreach for November meetings:***

*Meeting was publicized through legal notices published in local newspapers, notice posted on project website and County website calendar, over 2,000 postcards mailed to county residential addresses, notice in the Cornell Cooperative Extension's Ag Alerts! newsletter, notice sent to project email list, a letter was sent to each town government, notice given to the County Planning Board, notice given to County Legislators and State legislative officials, steering committee outreach to general public.*

### ***Other information:***

*86 individuals attended the three November public input meetings.*

December 12, 2013	Third Steering Committee meeting at the SWCD
February 4 – 19, 2014	Series of seven focus groups, pre-registration required

### ***Public Outreach for February Focus Groups:***

*Notice given at November public input meetings, notice posted on project website, notice sent to project email list, potential participants invited by steering committee members.*

### ***Other information:***

*44 Individuals attended the focus groups.*

March 13, 2014	Fourth Steering Committee meeting at the SWCD
May 14, 2014	First draft of plan released for public review
May 29, 2014	Public meeting to present first draft of plan, and a public hearing for public feedback on the plan held by the County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board at BOCES

### ***Public outreach for draft plan comments, May public meeting and May public hearing:***

*Draft release, meeting and hearing were publicized through legal notices published in local newspapers; draft and meeting date were posted on project website along with instructions on how to submit comments in writing and in person; over 2,000 postcards were mailed to County addresses; hardcopies were made available to the public at the county planning office and at each town government office; notice was sent to the project email list; notice was given to each town government; notice was given to the County Planning Board; notice was given to County Legislators.*

### ***Other information:***

*Four members of the public and three steering committee members attended the presentation and public hearing, in addition to a quorum of AFPB members. Two members of the public and two steering committee members gave comments at the hearing. Seven additional individuals submitted comments about the plan outside the hearing.*

July 22, 2014	Second draft released for review
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### ***Public notifications for second draft plan and August County Legislature public hearing:***

*Draft release and County Legislature public hearing were publicized through legal notices published in local newspapers; a hardcopy of the draft was made available to the public at the county planning office; notice was sent to the project email list; notice was given to each town government; notice was given to the County Planning Board; notice was given to County Legislators.*

July 24, 2014	County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board meeting at the County Office Building
August 26, 2014	County Legislature meeting and public hearing, Chambers of the County Legislatures
November 7, 2014	Plan approved by New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets

### **Other Timeline Notes**

All meetings listed above, unless otherwise noted, were open to the public. The project website, [www.cayugacounty.us/agplan](http://www.cayugacounty.us/agplan), was launched in July, 2013 and was updated throughout the project timeline as meetings were scheduled and new information became available. Detailed information on what was discussed at the public meetings, public hearings, and focus groups is available on the project website and from the county planning department.

### **Participating stakeholder groups**

1. Dairy farmers (certified organic and conventional)
2. Field crop farmers (certified organic and conventional)
3. Specialty crop farmers (vegetables, fruits, maple syrup, honey, wine, value-added products, certified organic and conventional)
4. Livestock farmers (beef, hogs, goats, chickens, certified organic and conventional)
5. Farmers' market managers
6. Owners of retail stores that sell agricultural products grown or raised in Cayuga County
7. Food processors
8. Other agriculture-related business owners
9. New and young farmers
10. Agencies and institutions that provide support or assistance to agricultural producers and business owners
11. Agricultural educators
12. Institutional food service directors
13. County, town and village government officials

## Appendix B

### Farmland Protection Suitability Analysis - 2014 County Criteria Full Methodology

Throughout New York State and the nation, farmland is being lost to other uses. This trend is also true in Cayuga County, but the rate, extent and reasons for this conversion varies a great deal from town to town. Many farmland protection suitability indices in New York State are based primarily on the criteria used by the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets Farmland Protection Implementation Grant Program (FPIG), which prioritizes the protection of the most agriculturally valuable lands in a given geographic area that can also act as buffers for natural resources such as wetlands. Some development pressures, such as proximity to water districts and how much road frontage a parcel has, are also taken into account. In Cayuga County, previous analyses have accounted for the agricultural value of soils very well, but failed to adequately consider the development pressures and changes to land use patterns that are seen on the ground. The result of the FPIG-based suitability index is that the parcels deemed most suitable for protection almost exclusively reside in the southwestern portion of the county, with a small cluster of parcels deemed most suitable in the Towns of Owasco and Niles. It fails to recognize the somewhat greater development pressures that some agricultural lands face in the central and northern areas of the county due to changing land use patterns such as the increased commercial and residential development near Auburn and Interstate 90, and increased pressures that may be felt by agricultural lands near villages.

The 2014 suitability index accounts for Cayuga County-specific conditions such as the wide variety of viable agricultural soils present in the county and the localized land use changes that have been seen over the past ten years.

The 2014 Farmland Protection Suitability Index examines certain attributes of agricultural parcels in Cayuga County in order to assess their relative suitability for protection. It was designed to identify parcels that are agriculturally productive, at risk of conversion to non-agricultural uses, and that can also serve as protective buffers for important natural resources. *A low ranking in this index does not necessarily mean that the*

*parcel is unsuitable for farming; it merely means that there may be other agricultural parcels that are more at risk of conversion and/or are more suitable as buffers to natural resources.*

This new suitability index has a variety of practical uses for local and county officials, and for the development of local and county policies and programs. For example, the index may be used to inform towns on how to design their zoning districts to better protect their farmland that is both the most productive and the most vulnerable to conversion. The index may also be used to identify appropriate parcels to prioritize under the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets Farmland Protection Implementation Grant (FPIG) program, which provides grants to compensate landowners who choose to sell the development rights to their agricultural lands.

The index was developed using data that are publicly available. ArcGIS and OpenOffice software were used for the analysis.

### **Step 1: Identify Agricultural Parcels**

Not all land in Cayuga County is farmland, so the first step in developing a farmland protection suitability index is to identify those parcels that are used for agriculture. All parcels with a property class code in the 100's (all agricultural land uses) were included, as well as any parcel coded as 241 (defined as primarily residential, but used in agricultural production). For various reasons, some parcels without an agriculture-related property class code are nevertheless at least partially under agricultural use. To account for this, land cover data was assessed for all parcels with property class codes in the 200's, 300's, and 400's (all residential, vacant land and commercial land uses, respectively) to identify additional parcels with at least 7 acres of agricultural land cover. Land cover data for a subset of parcels were compared to aerial imagery to verify its accuracy. Finally, parcels owned by municipalities, government agencies or land trusts under any property class code were removed. A total of 4,730 agricultural parcels were identified.

**Possible values: Not applicable**

### **Step 2: Delineate Agricultural Soil Zones**

Once the agricultural parcels used in this analysis were identified, they were loosely grouped into five agricultural soil zones using New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets soil ratings that are based primarily on differences in the inherent ability of soils to support crop production. In previous farmland protection suitability analyses, every agricultural parcel in the county was ranked against every other agricultural parcel in the county. Such analyses are not reliable, however, in a county such as Cayuga County where there is such wide variation in soil characteristics from one area to another. This step groups parcels that are similar to each other based on soil characteristics important to agriculture, allowing us to compare "apples to apples" and "oranges to oranges."

**Possible values: Not applicable**

### **Step 3: Determine the agricultural value of soils on each agricultural parcel**

The total value of each soil type for each parcel was calculated by multiplying the per-acre agricultural assessment value of the soil type by the number of acres of that soil type for each parcel. These values were then added together for each parcel to get the total soil value, then divided by the total number of acres of each parcel to get the combined agricultural value per acre of the soils for each parcel. For each of the five soil zones, parcels were ranked between 1 and 5 relative to each other, depending on the total value of soils on each parcel.

**Possible values: a range of 1-5, where 1= the parcel with the lowest agricultural value and 5= the parcel with the highest agricultural value**

### **Step 4: Determine the percent of each parcel available for agriculture**

Large parcels are not necessarily more suitable for agriculture; they may contain wetlands, woodlands, steep terrain or other features that render portions of the parcels unsuitable for farming. To account for

this, the percent of each parcel available for agricultural production was calculated using agricultural land cover data. For each of the five soil zones, parcels were ranked between 1 and 5 relative to each other, depending on the percent of each parcel available for agriculture.

**Possible values: a range of 1-5, where 1= no portion of the parcel is available for agriculture and 5= the parcel with the highest portion of its acreage available for agricultural use**

#### **Step 5: Determine the linear feet of road frontage per acre**

Some parcels are completely “landlocked” without any direct road access, while others have hundreds or thousands of feet of road frontage. Landlocked parcels are less likely to be converted to non-agricultural uses, such as residential or commercial uses, due to the challenge of securing adjacent property with road frontage and of securing a right-of-way. Conversely, properties with extensive road frontage may be at greater risk of conversion due to the relative ease of subdividing multiple parcels with adequate road access. Therefore, when assessing the degree to which agricultural parcels are at risk of conversion, it is important to not only identify parcels with road frontage versus those that are landlocked, but to also determine how much road frontage is available per acre for each parcel. For each of the five soil zones, parcels were ranked between 1 and 5 relative to each other, depending on the feet of linear road frontage per acre for each parcel.

**Possible values: a range of 1-5, where 1= parcels with no linear feet of road frontage and 5= the parcel with the most linear feet per acre of road frontage**

#### **Step 6: Determine the proximity to public water districts**

Ready access to public water can create pressure for non-agricultural development, such as housing, on or near agricultural lands. The distance from water districts was calculated using ArcGIS and assigned values, ranging from 1 for a parcel that is more than 1.5 miles from a water district, to 5 for a parcel that is inside or within a quarter mile of a water district.

**Possible values: 1= more than 1.5 miles, 2= 1 to 1.5 miles, 3= 0.5 to 1 mile, 4= 0.25 to 0.5 mile, 5= 0 to 0.25 mile**

#### **Step 7: Determine the proximity to public sewer districts**

Ready access to public sewer can create pressure for non-agricultural development, such as housing, on or near agricultural lands. The distance from sewer districts was calculated using ArcGIS and assigned values, ranging from 1 for a parcel that is more than 1.5 miles from a sewer district, to 5 for a parcel that is inside or within a quarter mile of a sewer district.

**Possible values: 1= more than 1.5 miles, 2= 1 to 1.5 miles, 3= 0.5 to 1 mile, 4= 0.25 to 0.5 mile, 5= 0 to 0.25 mile**

#### **Step 8: Determine which parcels fall within the watershed of a surface public drinking water source (the Cayuga, Owasco, and Skaneateles Lakes watersheds)**

Agricultural operations, especially those that employ sound environmental stewardship practices, are a preferable land use in protected watersheds than more intensive residential, commercial or industrial land uses. Maintaining open space in watersheds, whether under agricultural production or as natural lands, allows the water supply to be replenished easily and minimizes contamination of pollutants such as heavy metals, household and industrial chemicals, and some pathogens. Parcel data were compared to watershed delineation data to identify agricultural parcels that fall within the Cayuga Lake, Owasco Lake, and Skaneateles Lake watersheds.

**Possible values: 1= is not in a protected watershed, 5= is in a protected watershed**

#### **Step 9: Determine the linear feet of stream and lake frontage per acre**

Agricultural operations, especially those that employ sound environmental stewardship practices, serve as a better buffer to water resources such as streams and lakes than more intensive residential, commercial

or industrial land uses. All parcels within 50 feet of a stream or lake were identified and the length of water frontage was calculated. To account for relatively small parcels with a lot of water frontage versus a large parcel with relatively small amount of water frontage, the total length of water frontage for each parcel was divided by the parcel's acreage to get the total water frontage per acre. For each of the five soil zones, parcels were ranked between 1 and 5 relative to each other, depending on the length of water frontage per acre per parcel.

**Possible values: a range of 1-5, where 1= no water frontage within 50 feet and 5= the parcel with the most water frontage relative to all other agricultural parcels within the agricultural soil zone**

#### **Step 10: Determine the proximity to wetlands**

Agricultural operations, especially those that employ sound environmental stewardship practices, serve as a better buffer to water resources such as wetlands than more intensive residential, commercial or industrial land uses. All parcels within 200 feet of a wetland of 5 acres or more were identified and assigned values, ranging from 1 for a parcel that is more than 200 feet away from a 5-acre wetland to 5 for a parcel that contains a 5-acre wetland or is within 50 feet of one.

**Possible values: 1= more than 200 feet, 2= 150-200 feet, 3= 100-150 feet, 4= 50-100 feet, 5= 0-50 feet**

#### **Step 11: Determine the proximity to farmland that is already protected or in process of being protected through the NYS Farmland Protection Implementation Grant (FPIG) Program**

Farmland protection is most effective when large areas of land can be preserved. The higher the density of protected parcels in a given area, the stronger and more effective the protection efforts will be, whether parcels are protected or not. Agricultural parcels within 5 miles of a protected parcel or a parcel that is in the process of becoming protected through the FPIG program were identified and assigned values, ranging from 1 for a parcel that is 5 miles or more away to 5 for a parcel that is directly adjacent to or within 0.25 miles of one.

**Possible values: 1= 5 or more miles, 2= 2-5 miles, 3= 1-2 miles, 4= 0.25-1 mile, 5= 0-0.25 mile**

#### **Step 12: Determine the percentage of surrounding land that is also farmland**

Farmland is more likely to continue in active production if it is surrounded by other agricultural land, and becomes increasingly vulnerable to conversion as its neighbors are converted to other uses. For this step the density of agricultural lands within two miles of each agricultural parcel was calculated. For each of the five soil zones, parcels were ranked between 1 and 5 relative to each other.

**Possible values: a range of 1-5, where 1= a parcel with no agricultural lands within 2 miles and 5= the parcel with the most number of agricultural parcels within 2 miles**

#### **Step 13: Identify parcels that are within the agricultural district**

82% of the County's land area is within the Cayuga County Consolidated Agricultural District No. 5. Even so, not all parcels in active production or that are suitable for production are in the agricultural district. The FPIG Program favors parcels that are included in an agricultural district as it shows that the landowner is serious about protecting his/her land from outside pressures and has taken active steps to protect it. Parcel data was compared to agricultural district data to identify the handful of parcels that are not in the agricultural district. Parcels within the district were ranked a 5 while parcels that were not in the district were ranked a 1.

**Possible values: 1= is not in the Cayuga County Agricultural District No. 5, 5= is in the Cayuga County Agricultural District No. 5**

#### **Step 14: Determine the size of each parcel**

For many types of agricultural production, bigger blocks of farmland are more efficient to work with than smaller parcels. For each of the five soil zones, parcels were ranked between 1 and 5 relative to each

other, based on their size. Using the soil zones helps account for the variation of parcel sizes throughout the county; what may be considered a large parcel due to terrain and soil limitations in one part of the county may be considered a moderately sized parcel in a different part of the county.

**Possible values: 1 to 5, parcels are grouped into quintiles so that the smallest 20% of the parcels within a soil zone are ranked a 1, and the largest 20% of the parcels within a soil zone are ranked a 5.**

#### **Step 15: Determine the proximity to protected natural lands including conservation and DEC lands, nature reserves and public parks**

Agricultural operations, especially those that employ sound environmental stewardship practices, serve as a better buffer to natural resources such as forest stands than more intensive residential, commercial or industrial land uses. Parcels were assigned a rank from 1 to 5 depending on how close they are to natural conservation land such as state reserves and parks, county parks and natural lands conserved through land trusts.

**Possible values: 1= 5+ miles from natural conservation lands, 2= 2-5 miles, 3= 1-2 miles, 4= 0.25-1 miles, 5=0-0.25 miles**

#### **Step 16: Determine proximity to major economic centers**

Auburn is located in the approximate center of the county and is conveniently located near Rochester, Syracuse, Ithaca and Cortland. Like most other American cities today, these population centers are also where many employment opportunities can be found, but are not necessarily where workers choose to live. Many people opt to commute some distance to work, which can lead to sprawl and farmland conversions to residential uses especially along major transportation corridors. Parcels were ranked from 1 to 5 depending on how close they are to the nearest economic centers of Auburn, Syracuse, Ithaca, Cortland and Rochester. For each of the five soil zones, parcels were ranked between 1 and 5 relative to each other, depending on the proximity of the parcel to major economic centers.

**Possible values: a range of 1-5, where 1= the parcel that is farthest from major economic centers and 5= the parcel closest to the most major economic centers**

#### **Step 17: Determine proximity to US Interstate 90 access points**

Due to the convenience of accessing a major transportation corridor with ease, highway exits often trigger demand for housing and convenient amenities nearby. This step identifies parcels that are within 20 miles of the US Interstate 90 exit ramp, with a rank of 1 assigned to parcels that are over 20 miles from the exit ramp, and a rank of 5 assigned to parcels that are less than 5 miles from the exit ramp.

**Possible values: 1= 20 miles or more, 2= 15-20 miles, 3= 10-15 miles, 4= 5-10 miles, 5= 5 miles or less**

#### **Step 18: Determine parcel density**

There is no data available for the county that is at a detailed enough resolution to reveal variations in population density in a meaningful way. A reasonable approximation can be achieved by looking at parcel density, since residential parcels tend to be much smaller than parcels used for agriculture or even commercial purposes. This step counted the number of neighbor parcels of all types per square mile, going out to a 0.25 mile radius from each agricultural parcel. For each of the five soil zones, parcels were ranked between 1 and 5 relative to each other.

**Possible values: a range of 1-5, where 1= the parcel with the lowest parcel density and 5= the parcel with the highest parcel density**

#### **Step 19: Determine density of subdivisions between 2003 and 2013**

Subdivisions throughout the county can reveal changes in land use patterns over time. Clusters of subdivision activity may indicate development pressures and loss of farmland to other land uses, particularly housing. This step counted the number of subdivisions of all types per square mile that were

created between 2003 and 2013, going out to a 2 mile radius from each agricultural parcel. For each of the five soil zones, parcels were ranked between 1 and 5 relative to each other.

**Possible values: a range of 1-5, where 1= the parcel with the lowest subdivision density and 5= the parcel with the highest subdivision density**

**Step 20: Create a Farmland Protection Suitability Index using an Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP)**

The Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP) was used to rank the relative importance of the conditions above. AHP is a quantitative method for numerically ranking decision alternatives (in this case, each of the conditions described above) based on how well each alternative works to address the decision maker’s criteria, which for this analysis is to create a farmland protection suitability model that accounts for an appropriate balance between agricultural production value, conversion pressures, and natural resource protection.

Each condition was compared to every other condition, and using a simple mathematical solution, weights describing the relative importance of each condition were calculated (Table B-1). The weights were then used to calculate the farmland protection suitability rankings for the parcels in each of the agricultural soil zones identified earlier. The results for each soil zone were then combined to create a final county-wide farmland protection suitability map (Map 4-3, page 43).

**Table B-1: Calculated weights for each variable**

Step	Variable	Weight
15	Proximity to protected natural lands	1.00
11	Proximity to farmland that is protected through PDR or in the process of being protected	1.06
8	Within the watershed of a surface public drinking water source	1.09
13	Within the Cayuga County Consolidated Ag. District No. 5	1.47
3	Agricultural value of soils	2.21
4	Percent of parcel available for agriculture	2.51
14	Size of the parcel	3.62
5	Linear feet of road frontage per acre	3.72
7	Proximity to public sewer districts	3.77
12	Percentage of surrounding land that is also farmland	3.90
18	Density of parcels	3.95
9	Linear feet of stream and lake frontage per acre	4.69
10	Proximity to wetlands	4.77
6	Proximity to public water districts	4.85
19	Density of subdivisions between 2003 and 2013	6.31
17	Proximity to US Interstate 90 access points	6.88
16	Proximity to major economic centers	8.38

## **Appendix C**

### **Town Land Use Policy Documents Summary**

#### **Farm-Friendly Audits of the Towns of Fleming, Moravia, Owasco and Victory**

A detailed analysis of the impacts of land use laws on agricultural practices is called a “farm-friendly audit.” A typical farm-friendly audit is an analysis of a local municipality’s zoning, site plan and subdivision ordinances to determine the degree that the laws assist or deter a wide variety of farm-related uses. This type of analysis can also provide suggested improvements to better protect agricultural activities and valuable farmland from incompatible land uses. Included in this Appendix are farm-friendly audits of four towns in Cayuga County.

Because of the time required to complete an audit, the County Department of Planning and Economic Development was unable to evaluate all towns within the county. Instead, the towns of Fleming, Owasco, Moravia, and Victory were chosen to demonstrate the usefulness of such an evaluation. These towns were chosen because their locations within the county cover a wide range of land uses and development pressures; each had a comprehensive plan, a zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations; and based on the 2014 farmland protection suitability index, each has clusters of farmland that are highly suitable for protection. These evaluations are simply intended to demonstrate the content and usefulness of a farm-friendly audit, and are not intended as an endorsement or a condemnation of specific town land use laws.

# Town Land Use Policy Documents

Town	Comprehensive Plan	Comprehensive Plan's Agriculture-Related Content	Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan	Local Right-to-Farm Law	Zoning	Setback and Lot	Site Plan	Subdivision Law
Aurelius	2006	See town adopted agriculture and farmland protection plan.	2011		2008	None	1993 in Zoning; 2007 Draft	None
Brutus	2014 (Joint with Weedsport)	See town adopted agriculture and farmland protection plan. One goal of plan is to proactively support agriculture, with multiple implementation strategies. Entire chapter dedicated to agriculture and farmland protection.	2010	2011	2013	None	1992 in Zoning	2008
Cato	2007 (Joint with Ira)	See town adopted agriculture and farmland protection plan.	2010		1991	None	None	1991
Conquest	None	None			No	2000	None	None
Fleming	2001, Addendum in 2008	Vision Statement includes the protection of agricultural businesses from the negative impacts of development.			2007 Map; 2012	None	2005 in Zoning	2007
Genoa	2013	Includes recommendations related to two ag-related goals: 1) preserve the rural-agrarian character of the Town, 2) Support future viability of local agricultural practices			None	1988	None	None
Ira	2007 (Joint with Cato)	See town adopted agriculture and farmland protection plan.	2014		1997	None	1997 in Zoning	2001
Ledyard	2012	Chapter 8: Agriculture in the Town of Ledyard, but no ag-related implementation strategies included			2001	1971 (Superseded)	None	None
Locke	2010	Includes a background section on agriculture and several strategies to protect agriculture			None	2000 Draft	None	2001
Mentz	2012 Draft (Joint with Port Byron)	Identifies loss of farms as a concern. Several recommendations are included, such as a town agriculture and farmland protection plan, and specific changes to the town zoning ordinance to address subdivisions and changing agricultural uses.			2008 Zoning Map	None	None	1966
Montezuma	1989	None			1991	None	None	2011
Moravia	1987	Copy unavailable			1992	1992 in Zoning	None	1991
Niles	2010	Farmland protection included in vision statement. Includes recommendations related to two ag-related goals: 1) preserve the rural-agrarian character of the Town, and 2) support future viability of local agricultural practices.			None	1987	1995; 2000	1995
Owasco	2002	A stated goal is to encourage the continuation of agriculture in the Town. Includes tools and techniques to protect agriculture and recommended actions.			1988; 2002 Supplements; 2004 Map	None	1990 in Zoning	1977; 1990
Scipio	2011	Protecting its agricultural resources is included in the vision statement. Includes recommendations related to two ag-related goals: 1) preserve the rural-agrarian character of the Town, and 2) support future viability of local agricultural practices.			1990	None	None	None
Sempronius	None	None			None	1993	None	None
Sennett	2009	The vision statement describes the town as a residential community that supports agriculture. Four agriculture-related goals are outlined with implementation measures for each.			1997; 2009 Map	None	1990 in Zoning	1958
Springport	2013 draft	Vision Statement recognizes the town's strong agricultural sector as a part of its identity, and the need for growth that balances agricultural and waterfront needs. Identifies three goals specific to agriculture, including ensuring the viability of farms and improving linkages between farmers and non-farmers, and a comprehensive list of recommendations to reach those goals.			1991	None	1991 in Zoning	None
Sterling	2010 (Joint with Fair Haven); 1995	Includes a summary of the current state of agriculture in the town, and one recommendation to support agriculturally-oriented business retention and development and support county/town development of PDR programs.			1997; 2004 Map	None	1997	1999
Summerhill	2010	Includes several objectives and strategies related to agriculture, such as ensuring that agriculture remains a strong component of the town, create an explicit Right-to-Farm policy, and adopt clear policies and regulations that recognize the nature of agriculture and enhance the economic viability of agricultural enterprises.			None	1991	1991	None
Throop	2008	Chapter 7: Agriculture in the Town of Throop summarizes the current state of agriculture in the town, and includes 5 action items related to protecting agriculture, such as strengthening the agriculture zoning district, enacting a subdivision laws that would reduce impacts on agricultural uses, and proactively siting public infrastructure away from the Ag Zoning District.			2012	None	1996 in Zoning	None
Venice	None	None			None	None	None	None
Victory	1989; 2011 Draft	Vision states that Town values its diverse farming industry, and seeks to maintain its rural character by preserving agricultural land. Includes recommendations related to two ag-related goals: 1) preserve the rural-agrarian character of the Town (farm fields, woodlands, and historic landscapes), and 2) support future viability and growth of local agricultural practices.			1997 Map; 2001	None	None	1993

# Review of the Town of Fleming Zoning Regulations with Respect to Their Impacts on Farms

Local Regulations Reviewed:

Town of Fleming Comprehensive Plan, January 2001

Town of Fleming Comprehensive Plan Addendum, May 2008

Town of Fleming Zoning Law, as amended through May 2013

## Existing Farm-Friendly Provisions

Overall, the land use regulations in the Town of Fleming show a great deal of thought and consideration for the needs of agriculture. The Vision Statement in the Town's Comprehensive Plan (2001 and 2008 addendum) includes as the key focus area: "the protection of agricultural businesses... from the negative impacts of development." Some of the specific land use recommendations of the 2001 Comprehensive Plan appear to have been implemented in the Town's current zoning law. That land use plan called for one dwelling per 20 acres in the Agricultural zoning district, which appears to be achieved with the minimum lot size (§6-1.D. and A-1) and area allocation (§6-1.H.) provisions of the Zoning Law. This large acreage may minimize the incremental loss of farmland over time due to subdivision of larger lots for residential uses.

Another one of the most farm-friendly aspects of the Town of Fleming Zoning Law is the designated Agricultural (A) district, established with specific intent to preserve prime farmland, support agriculture, and avoid conflicts between agricultural and non-agricultural uses. The particular regulations for the A district do a good job of upholding this intent. The area allocation method (§6-1.H.), for example, is a well-considered balance between the need to preserve farmland and the desire of farmers to provide housing for family members or to raise capital by selling developable lots. Elsewhere in the Zoning Law, the regulation of signs appears to be sensitive to the needs of agricultural operations. The law explicitly allows several types of signs regularly used by farm and agricultural operations, including signs "advertising the sale of farm products, nursery products or livestock produced and raised on the premises" (§12-5.G.), signs indicating specialized crops (§12-5.H.), and off-premises signs directing visitors to a particular use (§12-7.B.). This last provision applies to all types of uses in the town, but is particularly needed for farm stands, farm markets, u-pick farms, or agri-tourism activities which depend on customers being able to find them but are often located off the main roads.

## Potentially Cumbersome Provisions, and Recommendations

Despite the evident farm-friendly provisions, there is one aspect of the Zoning Law that is particularly cumbersome for farmers: agricultural operations and farming operations are not permitted in the Residential Transition (R-1) and Residential (R-2) districts. These districts comprise a significant portion of the town's land area, both of which appear to contain actively farmed parcels. These uses are presumably treated as legally non-conforming, a precarious status for fields and seasonal operations that might not be able to reasonably meet continuous use thresholds in the course of normal agricultural activity. Although the main purpose of these districts is not agriculture, the existing agricultural uses in these areas are likely to continue well into the future. Prohibiting these operations could result in pushing viable farm businesses out of the town.

Meanwhile, the Commercial (C) and Hamlet (H) districts allow farms stands (by right in both districts) and agricultural based businesses (by right in C, by special permit in H) but do not allow other agricultural uses. Allowing other agricultural uses, in particular allowing agricultural operations and farm operations, would enable existing and future farm businesses to maximize their viability by allowing them all means to generate revenue, especially since the H district seems to include existing crop fields.

It may be helpful to evaluate the Zoning Law with respect to the recommendations in the 2001 land use plan, which contained strong language in support of agricultural businesses: "An increasingly common component of economically viable farm businesses is diversification. This may include on-farm processing or sales of farm materials, agri-tourism, or other related activities. Such activities are expected to be *accommodated on farm properties throughout the town*, subject only to reasonable restrictions designed to minimize adverse impacts such as traffic safety" (emphasis added).

There are a number of uses allowed in the A district that potentially conflict with agriculture, either because they result in an intensive use or because they promote residential growth. These include schools, places of worship, and daycare. It may be helpful for the town to reconsider these uses in the A district and their potential impacts on agricultural activity.

## **Exemption from Performance Standards**

§7-23.C. states that “agricultural uses within state-certified, county-managed Agricultural Districts *may* not be subject to the performance standards” (emphasis added) for noise, air pollution, waste, stormwater, etc. The choice of the word “may” can be interpreted as meaning that the town is able to choose whether or not agricultural uses are subject to these performance standards. Instead, the town could clarify under which circumstances farms would be subject to these standards, which would help ensure that the standards are not applied arbitrarily. Additionally, removing the words “within state-certified, county-managed Agricultural Districts” would extend this exemption to all agricultural uses and be more supportive of agriculture.

## **Review of the Town of Moravia Zoning and Subdivision Regulations with Respect to Their Impacts on Farms**

### **Local Regulations Reviewed:**

Town of Moravia Subdivision Law, 1991

Town of Moravia Zoning Law, 1992

Town of Moravia Zoning Maps, 1992

### **Zoning Law**

The Town of Moravia Zoning Law was adopted in 1992. It created two districts, the General Occupancy District and the High Density District. This law is chiefly used to set minimum lot sizes, road frontage, front setbacks and adjacent lot setbacks. It does not require site plan review by the Planning Board but does require that a Codes Enforcement Officer enforce the law.

It is often useful for zoning regulations to include purpose statements for each district it designates, to explain in general terms the primary and secondary uses allowed in each and the intent of creating the district. This law does not include purpose statements for its districts, but it does include Section 1.03 Authority and Purpose, which states that the law was enacted “... in order to promote the health, safety, and general welfare of the inhabitants of the Town of Moravia; to secure safety from fire; to insure adequate spacing of septic systems; to insure the purity of ground water and drinking water supplies; to provide adequate light and clean air; and to avoid excessive concentration of population.” Protecting farmland is not a stated purpose of this law.

The General Occupancy District requires a minimum lot size of one acre, road frontage of 125 feet, front setbacks of 50 feet from the right of way and setbacks of 15 feet from adjacent lot lines. The High Density District requires a minimum lot size of half an acre, road frontage of 75 feet, front setbacks of 50 feet from the right of way and setbacks of 15 feet from adjacent lot lines.

The law does not restrict uses anywhere in the town. In some respects, this is advantageous for farmers in that they do not have to be concerned about restrictions on signs, farm stands or accessory uses. However, there are ways that the law can enable conflicts between agricultural and non-agricultural uses, for example, by allowing multiple-family dwellings, schools and strip malls in areas that are predominantly agricultural in nature.

The zoning law does not address the possibility for conflicts between uses and how to limit or avoid the impacts of adjacent non-compatible uses on farmland. One effective way that zoning laws can help prevent conflicts between different uses is to require buffer areas or landscape screenings between non-compatible uses.

### **Subdivision Law**

The subdivision law does not allow for clustering of major subdivisions. This type of subdivision configuration would allow for smaller parcel sizes than what is allowed in the zoning ordinance, provided that those parcels are clustered together leaving most of the parcel as viable farmland. This would enable a property owner to capture the development value of the land while also allowing continued agricultural production activities on the most productive portions of the parent parcel.

The combination of a minimum lot size of one acre and a subdivision law that contains no provisions for clustered subdivisions can lead to conventional residential subdivision configurations that divide entire farmland parcels into one-acre lots rather than clustering new lots and reserving the remaining portion for continued agricultural use. This can result in the loss of productive farmland, especially since areas that tend to be attractive for development (for example,

land that is flat and that drains well) tend to also be good farmland.

Article 8.00 Design Standards in the subdivision law includes environmental considerations such as, “Areas with steep slopes, rock formations and similar features...” and requires that lot design with these features be approved by the Planning Board and certified by a licensed engineer as, “safe for occupation and not injurious to the environment by erosion, channeling of storm waters, creating risk of rock or soil slides or similar causes.” No consideration of soil quality for agricultural production is required in lot design. This opens up the possibility that property owners can subdivide in ways that unnecessarily removes prime agricultural land from production, either by creating building sites over prime farmland or by creating lots that are too inefficient to farm, either due to their size or configuration.

Similarly, section 8.01 of the subdivision law encourages applicants to offer designs that address peculiar problems with the site with respect to, “safety, smooth traffic flow, reduction of traffic and building congestion, safe highway access and driving, protection from fire, curtailment and control of water runoff and drainage and reduction of environmental damage.” Prime agricultural soils, soils of statewide importance, or farmland in active production are not included as a peculiar problem that warrants consideration.

### **Recommendations**

Create purpose statements for each zoning district and state clearly which districts support agriculture as a primary use. Modify Section 1.03 to include a statement that protecting farmland is a purpose of the law. Consider prohibiting uses in primarily agricultural districts that are incompatible with agricultural activities, or incorporating site requirements such as buffering and screening techniques to minimize conflicts. Create a site plan review process that minimizes the loss of prime farmland; for example, by discouraging building a house in the middle of an agricultural parcel. Site plans should also take into account agricultural soils when considering the placement of new development on a parcel.

Incorporate agricultural considerations into the subdivision review process under the Design Standards section. Specifically, consider subdivision impacts on adequate road access to farm fields and how to ensure that the most productive farmland is kept intact and efficiently configured for farming.

## **Review of the Town of Owasco Zoning and Subdivision Regulations with Respect to Their Impacts on Farms**

### **Local Regulations Reviewed:**

Town of Owasco Comprehensive Plan, 2002

Town of Owasco Zoning Map, 2004

Town of Owasco Subdivision Law, 2004

Town of Owasco Zoning Law, May 2013

### **Chapter 150. Zoning**

The Town of Owasco Zoning Law was adopted in 1988, and has been amended various times since then. It establishes three districts, the Residential District, the Agricultural/ Residential District, and the Lakeshore District. Purpose Statements for these districts are not provided. It also contains Environmental Protection Overlay Districts and provides for the creation of Planned Development Districts.

Very few agricultural primary uses are listed in Section 150-20. These include tilling of soil; keeping or raising livestock, small animals or poultry on farms, except that household pets shall be permitted in all districts; and greenhouses, provided that any retail sale of commodities associated with a greenhouse in the AR District shall be produced on the premises. These uses are only permitted in the AR District, except for tilling of soil, which is permitted in all three districts. Riding academies and boarding stables are also allowed as a primary use by special permit in the AR District. Only a single accessory agricultural use is listed, namely, drive-in stands not exceeding 40 square feet of gross floor area for the sale of farm, nursery or greenhouse products produced on the premises where offered for sale. The term, “drive-in stand” is not defined in Section 150-5 so it is unclear how it may differ from a “farm produce stand or seasonal roadside stand,” which is defined as, “Retail outlet, consisting of nonpermanent structure (movable and temporary), for the sale of agricultural products grown principally by the operator during the harvest season. (See also ‘farm market.’)”.

As stated in Section 150-19, “Any uses not expressly stated and permitted in Section 150-20 are prohibited in the Town of Owasco;” all other primary and accessory agricultural uses are prohibited. A simple interpretation of this ordinance

excludes many uses that would fall within the definition of agriculture stated in Section 150-5, such as: cultivating crops (tilling of soil is permitted, but tilling does not involve planting or plant cultivation); pasture; nurseries (greenhouses are included but nurseries are noticeably absent); apiculture; storage of farm equipment and feed; packing, storing, and processing agricultural products; and retail sale of agricultural products produced on the farm. The law also appears to restrict common accessory uses that are secondary to principal agricultural production activities, such as hosting public or private events and other agri-tourism activities such as u-picks, pumpkin patches, hay rides, tasting rooms, farm stays and farm tours, as well as educational programming.

It appears that the only option available to a farmer wishing to operate outside the narrow confines of the permitted uses table – for example, by processing a harvest to prepare it for market – would be to undertake the onerous and cumbersome process of establishing a PDD for his/her farm operation.

### **Recommendations**

Rather than narrowly specifying the agricultural activities allowed and thereby putting farmers at a particular disadvantage by restricting many common and low-impact agricultural practices, consider defining the primary agricultural use more broadly by basing permitted uses, both primary and accessory, on the definition of agriculture given in Section 150-5, which is, “The use of land for agricultural production purposes, including tilling of the soils, dairying, pasture, animal and poultry husbandry, apiculture, arboriculture, horticulture, floriculture, viticulture, and accessory uses for packing, storing, processing and retail sale of products, provided that the operation of any such accessory uses shall be secondary to that of the principal agricultural production activities.”

Consider permitting farm produce stands or seasonal roadside stands that allow farmers to combine their products with neighboring farmers to offer a wider variety of products for sale. This would enhance the viability of farm enterprises in the community and provide a more efficient access by the buying public to a wider variety of offerings.

### **Chapter 126. Subdivision of Land**

The potential of clustering subdivisions, or density averaging, was recognized by the 2002 Town of Owasco Comprehensive Plan, which states as a recommended action: “Encourage ‘density averaging’ in subdivision designs to minimize the impacts of new residential development on farmland (page 70).” However, while the various purpose statements and objectives in this chapter identify the preservation of the natural beauty and topography of the town and ensure appropriate development with regard especially to environmentally sensitive areas, they fail to mention the role that well-designed subdivisions and especially clustered subdivisions can play in protecting farmland. Further, “clustered development” is defined as, “A subdivision plat or plats approved pursuant to Section 278 of the Town Law of New York State whereby the Town Planning Board is authorized to modify certain provisions of Chapter 150, Zoning, of the Code of the Town of Owasco to provide an alternative method for the layout, configuration and design of lots, buildings and structures, roads, utility lines and other infrastructure, parks and landscaping *in order to preserve the natural and scenic qualities of open land* (emphasis added).” There is no mention of the importance of preserving agriculture and the role that clustered subdivisions can play in addressing that priority. This is generally the case throughout the chapter.

### **Recommendations**

Consider incorporating language throughout this chapter that indicates the town’s priority of protecting viable agricultural land through well-designed subdivisions and particularly clustered subdivisions, as stated in the comprehensive plan. In particular, include language in the purpose statements and objectives that identifies the preservation of productive farmland as a priority. Also include a subsection in *Section 126-17. Specific required improvements* that requires the preservation of existing farms, prime agricultural soils and soils of statewide importance for all subdivisions. Section 126-17 should also provide for adequate field drainage to roadside ditches or culverts when land is subdivided, which is a problem that farmers are facing that was identified in the comprehensive plan (page 65).

Finally, there is no requirement stipulating compliance with New York Town Law Section 283-a: Coordination with agricultural districts program, which requires that an Agricultural Data Statement be submitted as part of a site plan review, special use permit, use variance or subdivision that would occur on a property within an agricultural district containing a farm operation or on a property with boundaries within five hundred feet of a farm operation located in an agricultural district. According to state law, the Agricultural Data Statement must be evaluated and considered in these reviews in terms of the possible impacts of the proposed project upon the functioning of farm operations within the agricultural district.

# **Review of the Town of Victory Zoning and Subdivision Regulations with Respect to Their Impacts on Farms**

Local Regulation Reviewed:

Town of Victory Subdivision Regulations, December 1993

Town of Victory Zoning Map, December 1997

Town of Victory Zoning Law, as amended through December 2001

Town of Victory Comprehensive Plan, December 2011

## **Consideration for Agriculture in the Comprehensive Plan**

The Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Victory contains language that is strongly supportive of agriculture. In the plan's Community Vision Statement (page 7), Victory is identified as a "rural community" that "values its diverse farming industry" and seeks to "maintain rural character by preserving agricultural land..." In the goals of the plan, there are two goals and a total of thirteen recommended actions devoted to preserving farmland and supporting the viability of agriculture.

Also in the goals of the plan, there are two recommended actions that address the farm-friendliness of the Town's land use regulations. Action 3.a. is to "review and rework existing land use regulations... for the protection of the community's farmland..." More specifically, action 3.d. calls for the Town to establish "easements and overlay districts to assure the preservation of... prime agricultural lands..."

It appears that the Town's Zoning Law, Zoning Map, and Subdivision Regulations have not been revised and reworked since adoption of the Comprehensive Plan. In other words, actions 3.a. and 3.d. have not yet been implemented. Revising the Town's land use regulations to implement these actions and achieve the community vision outlined in the Comprehensive Plan would be an important step in support of agriculture in Victory.

## **"Agricultural" Zoning District**

Overall, the Town of Victory's Zoning Law is characteristic of a rural community and reflects a local landscape where farming and agriculture are dominant uses. For one, nearly all of the town is within the Agricultural/Residential (AR) zoning district. There are also some specific provisions of the law that address the particular needs of agriculture, including §604.M. which provides an exception to the law's one-dwelling-per-lot limit by allowing one or more farm worker dwellings to be located on a working farm.

§1100.A.(2) allows signs to advertise "sale of products grown or produced on the premises." This is an overly restrictive standard, as it is often necessary for agriculture-related retail activities to offer a mix of products from a number of farms to be profitable.

Despite these farm-friendly provisions, there are a number of areas where the Zoning Law could be revised to be more supportive of agriculture. First of all, the regulation lacks a zoning district that is established for and devoted to farming and agricultural uses. While the AR district does provide a zone for agricultural uses, by also allowing the full range of residential uses it can also lead to conflict between incompatible uses, such as intensive animal agriculture and estate homes, which could end up restricting the agricultural use. In addition, it is possible to establish a Planned Development District (PDD), subject to approval by the Town Board, anywhere in what is now the AR district, even on prime farmland.

Related to this problem, the districts in the existing Zoning Law do not include purpose statements. Instead, the purpose of a district must be guessed at from its name. Providing a purpose statement that defines the uses and characteristics for each district in the Zoning Law can help ensure that the purpose is maintained and the community's goals are achieved.

Creating an Agricultural District that clearly states agriculture and associated uses as its primary purpose and restricting non-compatible uses that may trigger intense development or conflicting uses is the most effective way to protect agriculture through zoning. Limiting incompatible uses would include restricting where a PDD could be located. Compatible residential uses could be permitted in the agricultural district, but a separate district should be established to provide a zone for residential uses. In this way, the purpose of the agricultural district can remain devoted to agriculture.

## **Definition of Agriculture**

The Zoning Law contains no definition of farm- or agriculture-related terms. In fact, none of the uses listed in the use table have definitions. Without a definition, it is possible for someone to construe the meaning of these uses in ways that

are contrary to the intent of the law. For example, someone could construe “customary farm operations” (§504 table row 4) narrowly and argue that food processing or marketing of agricultural products, for example, are not permitted in the AR district. Likewise, someone could broadly construe “production, processing... of materials, goods or products” (§504 table row 53) and argue that farm-related food processing uses are only permitted in an Industrial PDD. Uses that should be defined to make sure that they include a broad range of agricultural uses and agricultural business uses include all of the agriculturally related uses in §504 table rows 1-8. Other uses that should be defined to make sure that they are not improperly applied to agricultural uses, such as farm markets or food distribution hubs, include “retail and commercial business” (§504 table row 37), “production, processing.. of materials, goods or products” (§504 table row 53), “research, experimental and testing laboratory” (§504 table row 54), “wholesale, storage, warehouse” (§504 table row 57), and “delivery and distribution center” (§504 table row 58).

### **Consideration for Agriculture in the Review Process**

Article IX of the Zoning Law establishes the procedure for the Town Board to review proposed PDDs, while the Subdivision Regulations establish similar procedures for the Planning Board to review subdivisions, including cluster subdivisions. While addressing the preservation of natural and aesthetic elements, these procedures do not mention impacts on agricultural lands or uses as a consideration.

The purpose of PDDs (§900), the objectives of the PDD permitting process (§901), and the list of PDD plan requirements (§903.C) do not include consideration for the preservation of prime farmland or supporting the viability of agriculture. Specifically, proposals could be required to preserve viable farmland and prime soils, prevent incompatible uses, and require buffers around potentially conflicting uses such as residences.

Similarly for subdivision review, the review guidelines contain no explicit consideration of the impact on agriculture. The required elements of a preliminary plat (§6(a)) and final plat (§6(b)) can be expanded to include agricultural uses and soil potential on the site and surrounding areas. In particular, NYS Agriculture and Markets Law §305-a requires that an Agricultural Data Statement be provided for all subdivision applications located within 500 feet of a farm operation in an Agricultural District. The Agricultural Data Statement is essentially a list of farm operations in the surrounding area. Adding the Agricultural Data Statement to the list of plat requirements would also maintain consistency with state law. Consideration of the impact on agriculture could also be added to §7(e) which addresses detailed requirements that subdivision proposals preserve natural and aesthetic elements.

There is one provision of the Subdivision Regulations which gives direct consideration for agriculture, but this provision could be strengthened. One of the requirements for a simplified review of a subdivision proposal is that the “proposal presents no apparent impediments to the continuation of viable agricultural activity” within the state-certified Agricultural District (§3(b)4.a.). This could be improved by adding more specific standards for what is an impediment to viable agriculture. For example, proposals could be required to preserve viable farmland and prime soils, prevent incompatible uses, and require buffers around potentially conflicting uses, as mentioned above for PDD review. This provision could also be expanded to include impacts on agriculture even outside the state-certified Agricultural District.

Cluster subdivisions can be an effective way to allow for appropriate residential development while protecting prime farmland and ensuring uninterrupted farm operations. Unfortunately, §8 of the Subdivision Regulations lists no purpose or objectives for cluster subdivisions. Without a stated purpose and objectives, it may not be possible to adequately evaluate whether a proposed cluster subdivision meets the purpose of this provision in the regulations. These regulations should include a purpose statement that contains preserving viable farmland and prime soils, and then require that cluster subdivision proposals be shown to effectively advance this stated purpose.

## **Appendix D**

### **Model Laws: Town and County Right-to-Farm Laws, Lateral Restrictions Law, Model Zoning for Roadside Stands and Farm Markets**

These laws are included here as a model and a reference for Cayuga County and its local municipalities to consider in developing their own laws. They may be used as a starting point but should be modified and tailored to the specific needs of each community prior to adoption. The inclusion of these materials in this appendix does not imply that the Cayuga County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board, the Cayuga County Legislature or any county departments endorse or support any specific language provided here.

# *Model Town Right-to-Farm Law from Yates County, New York*

## **Model Right to Farm Law**

Be it enacted by the Town Board of the Town of \_\_\_\_\_ as follows:

### **Section 1. Legislative Intent and Purpose**

The Town Board recognizes farming is an essential enterprise and an important industry which enhances the economic base, natural environment and quality of life in the Town of \_\_\_\_\_. The Town Board further declares that it shall be the policy of this Town to encourage agriculture and foster understanding by all residents of the necessary day to day operations involved in farming so as to encourage cooperation with those practices.

It is the general purpose and intent of this law to maintain and preserve the rural traditions and character of the Town, to permit the continuation of agricultural practices, to protect the existence and operation of farms, to encourage the initiation and expansion of farms and agri-businesses, and to promote new ways to resolve disputes concerning agricultural practices and farm operations. In order to maintain a viable farming economy in the Town of \_\_\_\_\_, it is necessary to limit the circumstances under which farming may be deemed to be nuisance and to allow agricultural practices inherent to and necessary for the business of farming to proceed and be undertaken free of unreasonable and unwarranted interference or restriction.

### **Section 2. Definitions**

1. "Farmland" shall mean land used in agricultural production, as defined in subdivision four of section 301 of Article 25AA of the State Agriculture and Markets Law.
2. "Farmer" shall mean any person, organization, entity, association, partnership, limited liability company, or corporation engaged in the business of agriculture, whether for profit or otherwise, including the cultivation of land, the raising of crops, or the raising of livestock.
3. "Agricultural products" shall mean those products as defined in section 301(2) of Article 25AA of the State Agriculture and Markets Law, including but not limited to:
  - a. Field crops, including corn, wheat, rye, barley, hay, potatoes and dry beans.
  - b. Fruits, including apples, peaches, grapes, cherries and berries.
  - c. Vegetables, including tomatoes, snap beans, cabbage, carrots, beets and onions.
  - d. Horticultural specialties, including nursery stock, ornamental shrubs, ornamental trees and flowers.
  - e. Livestock and livestock products, including cattle, sheep, hogs, goats, horses, poultry, llamas, ratites, such as ostriches, emus, rheas and kiwis, farmed deer, farmed buffalo, fur bearing animals, milk and milk products, eggs, furs, and poultry products.
  - f. Maple sap and sugar products.
  - g. Christmas trees derived from a managed Christmas tree operation whether dug for transplanting or cut from the stump.
  - h. Aquaculture products, including fish, fish products, water plants and shellfish.
  - i. Short rotation woody crops raised for bioenergy.
  - j. Production and sale of woodland products, including but not limited to logs, lumber, posts and firewood.
  - k. Apiary products, including honey, beeswax, royal jelly, bee pollen, propolis, package bees, nucs and

queens. For the purposes of this paragraph, "nucs" shall mean small honey bee colonies created from larger colonies including the nuc box, which is a smaller version of a beehive, designed to hold up to five frames from an existing colony.

4. "Agricultural practices" shall mean those practices necessary for the on-farm production, preparation and marketing of agricultural commodities. Examples of such practices include, but are not limited to, operation of farm equipment, proper use of agricultural chemicals and other crop production methods, and construction and use of farm structures.
5. "Farm operation" shall be defined in section 301 (11) in the State Agriculture and Markets Law.

### **Section 3. Right-to-Farm Declaration**

Farmers, as well as those employed, retained, or otherwise authorized to act on behalf of farmers, may lawfully engage in agricultural practices within this Town at all times and all such locations as are reasonably necessary to conduct the business of agriculture. For any agricultural practice, in determining the reasonableness of the time, place, and methodology of such practice, due weight and consideration shall be given to both traditional customs and procedures in the farming industry as well as to advances resulting from increased knowledge, research and improved technologies.

Agricultural practices conducted on farmland shall not be found to be a public or private nuisance if such agricultural practices are:

1. Reasonable and necessary to the particular farm or farm operation,
2. Conducted in a manner which is not negligent or reckless,
3. Conducted in conformity with generally accepted and sound agricultural practices,
4. Conducted in conformity with all local state, and federal laws and regulations including watershed regulations,
5. Conducted in a manner which does not constitute a threat to public health and safety or cause injury to health or safety of any person, and
6. Conducted in a manner which does not reasonably obstruct the free passage or use of navigable waters or public roadways.

Nothing in this local law shall be construed to prohibit an aggrieved party from recovering from damages for bodily injury or wrongful death due to a failure to follow sound agricultural practice, as outlined in this section.

### **Section 4. Notification of Real Estate Buyers**

In order to promote harmony between farmers and their neighbors, the Town requires land holders and/or their agents and assigns to comply with Section 310 of Article 25-AA of the State Agriculture and Markets Law and provide notice to prospective purchasers and occupants as follows: "It is the policy of this state and this community to conserve, protect and encourage the development and improvement of agricultural land for the production of food, and other products and also for its natural and ecological value. This notice is to inform prospective residents that the property they are about to acquire lies partially or wholly within an agricultural district and that farming activities occur within the district. Such farming activities may include, but not be limited to, activities that cause noise, dust and odors." This notice shall be provided to prospective purchase of property within an agricultural district or on property with boundaries within 500 feet of a farm operation located in an agricultural district.

A copy of this notice shall be included by the seller or seller's agent as an addendum to the purchase and sale contract at the time an offer to purchase is made.

## **Section 5. Resolution of Disputes**

1. Should any controversy arise regarding any inconveniences or discomfort occasioned by agricultural operations which cannot be settled by direct negotiation between the parties involved, either party may submit the controversy to a dispute resolution committee as set forth below in an attempt to resolve the matter prior to the filing of any court action and prior to a request for a determination by the Commission or Agriculture and Markets about whether the practice in question is sound pursuant to Section 308 of Article 25AA of the State Agriculture and Markets Law.
2. Any controversy between the parties shall be submitted to the committee within thirty (30) days of the last date of occurrence of the particular activity giving rise to the controversy or the date the party became aware of the occurrence.
3. The committee shall be composed of three (3) members from the Town selected by the Town Board, as the need arises, including one representative from the farm community, one person from Town government and one person mutually agreed upon by both parties involved in the dispute.
4. The effectiveness of the committee as a forum for the resolution of disputes is dependent upon full discussion and complete presentation of all pertinent facts concerning the dispute in order to eliminate any misunderstandings. The parties are encouraged to cooperate in the exchange of pertinent information concerning the controversy.
5. The controversy shall be presented to the committee by written request of one of the parties within the time limits specified. Therefore after, the committee may investigate the facts of the controversy but must, within twenty-five (25) days, hold a meeting at a mutually agreed place and time to consider the merits of the matter and within five (5) days of the meeting render a written decision to the parties. At the time of the meeting, both parties shall have an opportunity to present what each consider to be pertinent facts. No party bringing a complaint to the committee for settlement or resolution may be represented by counsel unless the opposing party is also represented by counsel. The time limits provided in this subsection for action by the committee may be extended upon the written stipulation of all parties in the dispute.
6. Any reasonable costs associated with the function of the committee process shall be borne by the participants.

## **Section 6. Severability Clause**

If any part of this local law is for any reason held to be unconstitutional or invalid, such decision shall not affect the remainder of this Local Law. The Town hereby declares that it would have passed this local law and each section and subsection thereof, irrespective of the fact that any one or more of these sections, subsections, sentences, clauses or phrases may be declared unconstitutional or invalid.

## **Section 7. Precedence**

This Local Law and its provisions are in addition to all other applicable laws, rules and regulations.

## **Section 8. Effective Date**

This Local Law shall be effective immediately upon filing with the New York Secretary of State.

# *Steuben County, New York Right-to-Farm Law*

## COUNTY OF STEUBEN LOCAL LAW NO. THREE FOR THE YEAR 2001

A Local Law establishing the Right-to-Farm Law of Steuben County.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the County of Steuben as follows:

### **RIGHT-TO-FARM LAW OF STEUBEN COUNTY**

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#### **Section 1:**                      **Title**

This Local Law shall be known as the “Right to Farm Law of Steuben County.”

#### **Section 2:**                      **Declaration of Policy and Purpose**

It is hereby found and declared by the Legislature of the County of Steuben that agricultural lands are irreplaceable assets and that farming is an essential activity. Farming, as defined in this Right to Farm Law and by the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, reinforces the special quality of life enjoyed by citizens, provides the visual benefits of open space and generates economic benefits and social well being within the community. Therefore, Steuben County encourages sound agricultural practices and adopts this Law with the goal of promoting understanding and acceptance of the necessary day-to-day activities connected with agriculture.

It is the general purpose and intent of this local law to maintain and preserve the rural tradition and character of Steuben County, to permit the continuation of agricultural practices and the business of farming and initiation, and expansion of farms, and agricultural businesses. In recognition of the fact that there are many practices and activities which are inherent to and

necessary for the business of farming, it is the specific purpose and intent of this Local Law to attain the aforementioned goals and objectives by providing that such practices and activities may proceed and be undertaken free of unreasonable and unwarranted interference or restrictions.

The Legislature, in an effort to promote and foster a harmonious relationship between the residents of Steuben County, and to conserve, protect and encourage the development and improvement of agricultural land for the production of food and other products, hereby also declares that it shall be the policy of Steuben County to provide reasonable notice to prospective landowners that farming activities may occur on neighboring lands.

**Section 3:**                    **Definitions**

Unless specifically defined below, words or phrases used in this Local Law shall be interpreted so as to give them the meaning they have in common usage and to give this Local Law its most reasonable and effective application.

As used in this Local Law, the following terms shall have the meaning indicated.

**Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board** - Shall mean a board formally appointed by the County Legislature according to Article 25AA §302 of New York State Agriculture and Markets Law

**Agricultural Advisory Committee** – Shall mean a committee, formally appointed by the Town Board of any town in Steuben County, for the purpose of resolving right to farm disputes as provided hereunder. Such a committee shall be appointed on either an annual or ad hoc basis (or an existing committee can be designated to serve in that capacity) with such number of members as the Town Board shall determine, provided there are no less than three with at least one representative each from the farm and non-farm communities. All members, however, shall be knowledgeable regarding agricultural practices common to the Town. The decision to form such a committee shall be at the sole discretion of the Town Board.

**Agricultural Land** - Shall mean any single or multiple, contiguous or non-contiguous parcel or parcels that, together, represent all that real property within the boundaries of Steuben County currently used for agricultural farm operations or upon which agricultural practices are being utilized or upon which agricultural farm operations or agricultural practices may in the future be established or utilized.

**Agricultural Farm Operations** - Shall mean any person, organization, entity, association, partnership or corporation engaged in the business of agriculture or farming or agricultural practices, whether for profit or otherwise.

**Agricultural Practices** - Shall mean any activity connected with the raising of crops, livestock or livestock products as defined in Agriculture and Markets Law §301, subdivision 2, including but not limited to the following:

- a. Field crops, including corn, wheat, oats, rye, barley, hay, potatoes and dry beans.
- b. Fruits, including apples, peaches, grapes, cherries and berries.
- c. Vegetables, including tomatoes, snap beans, cabbage, carrots, beets and onions.
- d. Horticultural specialties, including nursery stock, ornamental shrubs, ornamental trees and flowers.

- e. Livestock and livestock products, including cattle, sheep, hogs, goats, horses, poultry, ratites, such as ostriches, emus, rheas and kiwis, farmed deer, farmed buffalo, fur bearing animals, milk, eggs and furs.
- f. Maple sap
- g. Christmas trees derived from a managed Christmas tree operation whether dug for transplanting or cut from the stump.
- h. Aquaculture products, including fish, fish products, water plants and shellfish.
- i. Woody biomass, which means short rotation woody crops raised for bio-energy.

Should there be a conflict between the definitions employed by New York State and those contained herein, such conflict shall be resolved in favor of the agricultural producer so as to include the enterprise as an agricultural practice.

Further, agricultural practices shall include any activity now permitted by law, engaged in by or on behalf of a farmer in connection with and furtherance of the business of agriculture or farming and shall include without limitation, the collection, transportation, distribution, composting and storage of animal and poultry waste; storage, transportation and use of equipment for tillage, planting, harvesting and marketing; transportation, storage and use of legally permitted fertilizers and limes, and insecticides, herbicides, and fungicides, all in accordance with local, State and Federal law and in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and warnings; construction of farm structures and facilities, including farm wineries and other on-farm food processing, as permitted by local and State building code regulation; construction and maintenance of fences and other enclosure; and the use and/or maintenance of related pastures, idle or fallow land, woodland, wetland, farm ponds, farm roads and certain farm buildings and other structures related to the agricultural practices.

The following examples are intended to be illustrative of common agricultural practices covered within this definition, but are not inclusive:

1. Providing for the processing, wholesale and retail marketing, including U-pick marketing, and sales of the agricultural output of the farm and related products that contribute to farm income, including the sale at the owner's farm stand/market of agricultural products so long as at least fifty- percent (50%) of the annual gross sales of the farm stand/market have been grown on said farm.
2. Replenishing soil nutrients, including but not limited to the spreading of manure, compost, and applying approved chemical and organic fertilizers.
3. Using Federally approved products, in accordance with label instructions, as recommended by the New York Agricultural Experiment Station and the United States and New York Environmental Protection Agencies for the control of pests, predators, varmints, diseases affecting plants and livestock, and for the control of weed infestation.
4. Transporting large, slow-moving equipment over roads within the County, in accordance with local, State and Federal law and regulations.
5. Clearing of woods using accepted techniques, installing and maintaining vegetative and terrain alterations, and other physical facilities for water and soil conservation and surface water control.

The foregoing uses, activities and rights when reasonable and necessary for agricultural or horticultural production and when conducted in accordance with generally accepted agricultural practices, may occur on holidays, Sundays and weekends, by day or night.

**Farmer** - Shall mean any person, organization, entity, association, partnership or corporation engaged in the agricultural farm operation or agricultural practices as defined herein.

**Farming** - Shall mean the act of engaging in an agricultural farm operation and/or agricultural practices as defined herein.

**Section 4:**                    **Right to Farm**

Farmers, as well as those employed or otherwise authorized to act on behalf of farmers, may lawfully engage in agricultural practices on any agricultural farm operation within Steuben County at any and all such times and at all such locations as are reasonably necessary to carry on an agricultural farm operation or agricultural practice. In determining the reasonableness of the time, place, and methodology of such operation, due weight and consideration shall be given to traditional customs and procedures in the agricultural industry, advances resulting from increased knowledge or improved technologies, and whether or not the practice is legal and not causing off-site property damage or bodily harm.

**Section 5:**                    **Nuisance**

No agricultural practice or associated activity, conducted or maintained on a sound basis, in a manner consistent with management practices, such as those recommended by State and Federal agencies in conjunction with educational programs for farmers, or other agricultural practice, herein and hereafter referred to as the accepted custom and standard in the agricultural industry, shall be considered a public or private nuisance.

**Section 6:**                    **Interference Prohibited**

No person, group, entity, association, partnership, or corporation shall engage in any conduct or act in any manner so as to unreasonably, intentionally, knowingly, and/or deliberately interfere with, prevent, or in any way deter the practice of farming within Steuben County. No persons shall maintain a frivolous lawsuit for the within purposes.

**Section 7:**                    **Penalties**

An action to restrain or enjoin any violation of this Local Law may be brought in a court of competent jurisdiction by any aggrieved entity and/or Steuben County.

**Section 8:**                    **Local Government Advice and Dispute Resolution**

In offering local government advice and dispute resolution, the Steuben County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board is available to provide support for or work with local Agricultural Advisory Committees in such way, as the local committee shall deem appropriate. In the event a municipality does not have an Agricultural Advisory Committee, that municipality may call on the Steuben County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board for agriculturally related advice and/or assistance in the resolution of disputes.

In this capacity, the Steuben County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board may temporarily expand its composition to acquire the expertise necessary to address the issues or concerns presented.

**Section 8-a:**                    **Resolution of Disputes**

Should any controversy arise regarding any inconveniences or discomfort occasioned by any agricultural operations or agricultural practices, as defined in **Section 3** of this Local Law, the parties may submit the controversy to the Town’s Agricultural Advisory Committee or, in the absence of a local committee, the Steuben County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board, as set forth below in an attempt to resolve the matter prior to the filing of any court action or submission to the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets pursuant to §308 of the Agriculture and Markets Law.

Any controversy between the parties may be submitted to the Town Agricultural Advisory Committee, or in the absence of a local committee, the Steuben County Agricultural and Farmland Board, whose decision shall be advisory only, within sixty (60) days of the date of the occurrence of the particular activity giving rise to the controversy or of the date a party writes to formally request a review.

The effectiveness of the Town Agricultural Advisory Committee and the Steuben County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board as a forum for the resolution of disputes is dependent upon full discussion and complete presentation of all pertinent facts concerning the dispute in order to eliminate any misunderstandings. The parties are encouraged to cooperate in the exchange of pertinent information concerning the controversy.

The controversy shall be presented to the Town Agricultural Advisory Committee or, in the absence of a local committee, the Steuben County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board, by written consent of one of the parties within the time specified herein. Thereafter, the Committee or Board may investigate the facts of the controversy, but must, within thirty (30) days, hold a public meeting pursuant to public notice to consider the merits of the matter and within twenty (20) days of the meeting render a written decision to the parties. At the time of the meeting both parties shall have an opportunity to present what each considers being pertinent facts.

The decision of the Town Agricultural Advisory Committee or the Steuben County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board shall not be binding.

**Section 8-b:**                    **Local Government Advisory Support**

In the absence of a Town Agricultural Advisory committee, the Steuben County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board is available to review local laws and advise town or village governments regarding potential negative impacts on the agricultural industry. Comments from the Steuben County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board could be used by local governments to prevent ordinances from conflicting with normal farming practices as prescribed by Agriculture and Markets Law Article 25AA §305-a.

**Section 9:**                    **Notice to Prospective Neighbors/Notice of Farm Use**

**Agricultural Data Statement:** Steuben County will encourage and support local adoption of the agricultural data statement requirements as prescribed in NYS Agriculture and Markets Law Article §305-a subdivisions 2-4.

**Agricultural Disclosure New Residential Development:** For the purpose of giving due notice of nearby farming uses to proposed new residential areas adjacent to unimproved land being farmed or suitable therefor, Steuben County will encourage and support a local Planning Board requirement that any applicant for an adjacent major or minor subdivision, as a condition of approval of such application, to include a provision in each and every deed conveying all or any portion of the lands thereby subdivided, as well as on filed final subdivision maps, the following record notice to and waiver by grantees of such present or future proximate farming uses, which provision shall be made to run with the land.

“The grantee hereby acknowledges notice that agricultural operations exist throughout the town and that there are presently or may in the future be farm uses adjacent or in close proximity to the within described premises. The grantee acknowledges that farmers have the right to undertake farm practices which may generate dust, odor, fumes, noise, and vibrations associated with agricultural practices, and that these practices are permitted under the town or in the absence of a local right to farm law, Steuben County’s Right to Farm Law, and, by acceptance of this conveyance, the grantee does hereby waive objection to such activities.

The risk of any impact of these agricultural uses on the purchase of property is specifically to be borne by the purchaser of that property.

**Agricultural Disclosure at Time of Property Transfer:** Steuben County will implement and encourage local implementation of the agriculture disclosure requirement as prescribed in NYS Agriculture and Markets Law Article 25AA §310.

**Section 10:**                    **Conflict Clause**

Insofar as the provisions of this Local Law are inconsistent with the provisions of any other local law, rule or ordinance, the provisions of this Local Law shall supersede those found inconsistent and prevail.

**Section 11:**                    **Severability**

If any part of this Local Law is for any reason held to be unconstitutional or invalid, such decision shall not affect the remainder of this Local Law.

**Section 12:**                    **Effective Date**

This Local Law shall take effect immediately upon filing with the Secretary of State.

# *Model Lateral Restriction Law from New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets*

## **New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets**

### **Model Lateral Restriction Law**

#### **MODEL LATERAL RESTRICTIONS RESOLUTION**

WHEREAS, the *[governing body of municipality]* has created the *[name of water district]* pursuant to Town Law for the express purpose of providing public water supply to residents along *[geographic extent of water district]*; and

WHEREAS, part of the land area within *[name of water district]* is also within *[name of Agricultural District]* and

WHEREAS, the Town Board has filed a Notice of Intent to Undertake an Action Within an Agricultural District to evaluate the impact of providing a source of public water supply within this area on lands within *[name of Agricultural District]*; and

WHEREAS, the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets (“Department”) has expressed concern about the potential adverse impact that said public water supply is likely to have on agriculture within the Agricultural District,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Town Board, in recognition of the concerns that have been raised, hereby resolves to adopt the “Lateral Restriction - Conditions on Future Service” specified by the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets as follows:

#### **MODEL Lateral Restriction - Conditions on Future Service Law**

The *[municipality]* imposes the following conditions, as warranted or recommended on the management of water/sewer lines located along *[location]* within an agricultural district:

1) The only land and/or structures which will be allowed to connect to the proposed waterline or sewer within an agricultural district will be existing structures at the time of construction, further agricultural structures, and land and structures that have already been approved for development by the *[municipality]* prior to the filing of the Final Notice of Intent by the *[municipality]*.

Land and structures that have been approved for development refer to those properties/structures that have been brought before the *[municipality]* where approval (e.g., subdivision, site plan, and special permit) is needed to move forward with project plans and the *[municipality]* has approved the action. If no local approval is required for the subdivision of land and/or the construction of structures, the *[municipality]* accepts the limitation under Public Health Law §1115 that defines a “subdivision,” in part, as “any tract of land which is divided into five or more parcels.” Water and/or sewer service will not be extended to the fifth and subsequent parcels where no local approval is required and the land is located within a county adopted, State certified agricultural district.

- 2) If a significant hardship can be shown by an existing resident, the lateral restriction to the resident's property may be removed by the *[municipality]* upon approval by the Department. It is the responsibility of the resident landowner to demonstrate that a hardship exists relative to his or her existing water supply or septic system and clearly demonstrate the need for public water or sewer service. The *[municipality]* shall develop a hardship application to be filed with the *[municipality]*, approved by the County Department of Health, and agreed to by the Department.
- 3) If it can be demonstrated to the Department's satisfaction that the landowner requested the county to remove his or her land from an agricultural district at the time of district review and the county legislative body refused to do so, lateral restrictions may be removed by the *[municipality]* if the Department determines that the removal of the restriction for the subject parcel(s) would not have an unreasonably adverse effect on the agricultural district.
- 4) If land is removed from a county adopted, State certified agricultural district and the district has been reviewed by the county legislative body and certified by the Commissioner for modification, lateral restrictions imposed by the *[municipality]* are no longer in effect for the parcels of land that have been removed from the agricultural district.
- 5) Hydrants and valve boxes must not be placed directly in agricultural fields.

The restriction on hookups would apply to non-agricultural structures for as long as the property is located within an Agricultural District.

# *Model Zoning for Roadside Stands and Farm Markets*

## **New York Direct Marketing Association Model Zoning for Roadside Stands and Farm Markets**

### **Permitted Uses**

The following sections contain proposed language that would incorporate into a zoning ordinance, as permitted uses, roadside stands and farm markets. The language should be inserted into the district regulations for each zoning district within the community where roadside stands or farm markets exist, or are being considered as allowed uses.

Included in the proposed language are statements of purpose for each of the two types of markets. These statements provide the community's rationale for allowing the uses within the framework of their zoning regulations.

### **Roadside Stand**

The purpose of a roadside stand is to allow farmers, who are actively farming, low cost entrance into direct marketing their farm products. It is characterized as a direct marketing operation without a permanent structure and only offering outdoor shopping. Such an operation is seasonal in nature and features on-farm produced as well as locally produced agricultural products, enhanced agricultural products and handmade crafts. Permitted activities include: the marketing of agricultural products, products that are agriculture-related, including specialty foods, gift items, mass produced items that reflect the history and culture of agriculture and rural America; crafts; pick-your-own fruits, vegetables and nuts; community supported agriculture (CSA)

### **Farm Market**

The purpose of a farm market is to provide opportunities for actively producing farms to retail their products directly to consumers and enhance income through value-added products, services and activities. Permitted activities include: the marketing of agricultural products, products that are agriculture-related, including specialty foods, gift items, mass produced items that reflect the history and culture of agriculture and rural America; crafts; agricultural commerce, agricultural tourism, pick-your-own operation; community supported agriculture; bed & breakfast inn; farm vacations.

The following are allowed as accessory uses to the farm market operation: Petting zoo and animal attractions; children's games and activities; crop mazes; holiday-oriented activities; miniature golf course, incorporating farm themes; food service if growing any portion of the food served, such as vegetables with a deli, fruit in desserts, etc; horseback riding arenas

### **Definitions**

Definitions are critical to ensuring clarity and uniformity in the interpretation of zoning regulations. Clear definitions can inoculate the community from legal actions related to their zoning regulations. At the same time they can protect the individual property owner by ensuring consistent and uniform application of the regulations. For this purpose the following definitions should be incorporated into the zoning ordinance when it is amended to allow roadside stands or farm markets.

**Actively Producing Farm:** Pursuant to Section 301, Sub. 4 of the Agriculture and Markets Law, the farm must has a minimum of 7 acres in production with \$10,000 in sales, or \$50,000 in sales if under 7 acres of land are in production. In addition, a predominance of the agricultural products being sold at the farm be New York State produced. This would be on an annual basis and would be determined by volume of product.

**Agricultural Commerce:** Additional enterprises permitted at farm markets to attract customers and promote the sale of agricultural products. These include, but are not limited to gift shops, on-farm brewery, Community Supported Agriculture, bakery, florist shop, garden center, nursery, ice cream shop, food processing where the predominant ingredient is grown by the market operator, cider mills, on-site artistry and pick-your-own operations.

**Agricultural Products:** Pursuant to Section 301, Sub. 2 of the Agriculture and Markets Law: Crops, livestock and livestock products, including, but not limited to the following:

- a) Field crops, including corn, wheat, oats, rye, barley, hay, potatoes and dry beans.
- b) Fruits, including apples, peaches, grapes, cherries and berries.
- c) Vegetables, including tomatoes, snap beans, cabbage, carrots, beets and onions.
- d) Horticultural specialties, including nursery stock, ornamental shrubs, ornamental trees and flowers.
- e) Livestock and livestock products, including cattle, sheep, hogs, goats, horses, poultry, ratites, such as ostriches, emus, rheas and kiwis, farmed deer, farmed buffalo, fur bearing animals, milk, eggs, and furs.
- f) Maple sap
- g) Christmas trees derived from a managed Christmas tree operation whether dug for transplanting or cut from the stump.
- h) Aquaculture products, including fish, fish products, water plants and shellfish.
- i) Woody biomass, which means short rotation woody crops raised for bioenergy, and shall not include farm woodland.

**Agriculture-related products:** items sold at a farm market to attract customers and promote the sale of agricultural products. Such items include, but are not limited to all agricultural and horticultural products, animal feed, baked goods, ice cream and ice cream based desserts and beverages, clothing and other items promoting the farm enterprise operating the farm market and agriculture in New York, value-added agricultural products, Christmas trees and related products and on-farm wineries.

**Agricultural Tourism:** Agricultural related tours, events and activities, as well as non-agricultural related activities used to attract people and promote the sales of farm produce and agricultural products. These tours, events and activities include, but are not limited to petting zoos, school tours, outdoor trails, corn mazes, hayrides, pony rides, group picnics, on- and off-site food catering services, musical events, craft shows, outdoor recreation. To be a permitted use, the farm must be actively producing agricultural products for sale. Farm markets where the seller is not actively producing agricultural products for retail sales will require a special use permit for agricultural tourism activities.

**All-Weather Surface.** Any roadway, driveway, alley or parking lot surface paved with crushed stone, asphalt, concrete or other pervious or impervious material in a manner that will support the weight of anticipated vehicular traffic in all weather conditions and minimize the potential for ruts, potholes or pooling of water.

**Community Supported Agriculture:** The retail sale of agricultural products to customers through a subscription paid in cash or labor, or a combination thereof

**Enhanced Agricultural Products:** An agricultural product that has been altered or processed in a way to increase its value to consumers and increase the profitability of the product to the farmer.

**Farm Brewery:** Facility for the production of malt liquors operated as a subordinate enterprise to a farm by the owner or owners of the farm on which it is located.

**Farm Market:** A permanent structure, operated on a seasonal or year-round basis, that allows for agricultural producers to retail their products and agriculture-related items directly to consumers and

enhance income through value-added products, services and activities.

**Farm Vacation:** Temporary residency on the premises by paying transient guests for the purpose of observing or participating in the ongoing activities of an agricultural operation and learning about agricultural life.

**Farm Winery:** any place or premises, located on a farm in New York State, in which wine is manufactured and sold, and is licensed by the State Liquor Authority as a farm or commercial winery.

**Glare:** Light emitting from a luminaire with intensity great enough to reduce a viewer's ability to see, and in extreme cases causing momentary blindness.

**Handcrafted Item:** An object that requires use of the hands, hand tools and human craft skills in its production, and which is usually not adaptable to mass production by mechanical means.

**Pick Your Own Enterprise:** A fruit or vegetable growing farm which provides the opportunity for customers to pick their own fruits or vegetables directly from the plant. Also referred to as a PYO.

**Roadside Stand:** A direct marketing operation without a permanent structure and only offering outdoor shopping. Such an operation is seasonal in nature and features on-farm produced as well as locally produced agricultural products, enhanced agricultural products and handmade crafts.

**Seasonal Sign:** any sign that is removed for three consecutive months. These signs must be removed whenever business is closed for seven or more consecutive days. Because seasonal signs will be removed for a minimum of three months at a time, size and quantity restrictions do not apply.

## **Design and Operations Standards**

In addition to clear definition of what would constitute the permitted activities associated with a roadside stand or farm market, specific design and use standards governing the design and operations of such enterprises should also be incorporated into the zoning ordinance. Recommended standards include:

There shall be no sales of fuel and related products, tobacco products, alcoholic beverages except those listed under permitted uses, lottery tickets, vehicles or related products.

Food franchises are prohibited in any roadside stand or farm market operation.

To ensure public safety, roadside stands will be required to have off-street parking with an all weather surface and adequate ingress and egress with an area for turn-around.

There shall be one 10 x 20 parking area per 200 sq. ft. of selling and display area, with a minimum of 2 spaces. Parking spaces are exclusive of driveways and turnarounds. For the purpose of calculating the required number of parking spaces, production facilities, garden plots, planting beds and outdoor storage area opened to the public are excluded. Pick-your-own operations will require a greater number of off road parking spaces based on expected number of cars per day.

**Parking:** To ensure public safety, farm markets will be required to have off-street parking with adequate ingress and egress with an area for turn-around. A minimum of one 10 x 20 parking area per 200 sq. ft. of selling and display area, with a minimum of two spaces, shall be required. For the purpose of calculating the required number of parking spaces,

production facilities, garden plots, planting beds and outdoor storage area opened to the public are excluded. The above notwithstanding, adequate off street parking shall be provided. Parking spaces are exclusive of driveways and turnarounds. Entrances and exits onto roadways must have an all-weather surface. PYO operations will require a greater number of off- road parking spaces based on the expected number of cars per day. Overflow parking should be, minimally, grass covered.

Setbacks: Frontyard - 20 feet from the right of way line to front of sales area, excluding production facilities, garden plots, planting beds and outdoor storage areas open to the public. No parking is allowed within frontyard setback or within 20 feet of the edge of roadway, whichever distance is less.  
Sideyard - 20 foot setback from property line.  
Rear - 40 foot setback from property line.

Where a roadside stand or farm market is located on a separate parcel of land, maximum lot coverage by buildings shall be 30%. Total coverage, including parking areas, shall not exceed 70%.

Signs: Seasonal signs are allowed, but cannot be placed anywhere it would create a traffic hazard. All other town signage regulations may apply.

Lighting: No outdoor lighting shall produce glare beyond the boundary of the property. No rotating or flashing lights on advertising signage *shall be permitted*.

Buffers: Buffers shall be a minimum of 15 feet in width, and planted with plant materials reaching a minimum of 6' within 5 years and producing a continuous visual barrier, or alternately, include a solid fence or wall with a minimum height of 6'.

(Buffers are recommended in addition to any required setbacks if next door use is substantially different.)

Water: Potable water on site is required.

**These rights and privileges extend to any active farm in any zoning district.**

## **Appendix E**

**Reference Materials: Cost of Community Services Studies Factsheet; Is Your TOWN Planning a Future for Farms? A Checklist for Supporting Farms at the Town Level in New York**

*This information factsheet is accessible through the Farmland Information Center*

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#### DESCRIPTION

Cost of Community Services (COCS) studies are a case study approach used to determine the fiscal contribution of existing local land uses. A subset of the much larger field of fiscal analysis, COCS studies have emerged as an inexpensive and reliable tool to measure direct fiscal relationships. Their particular niche is to evaluate working and open lands on equal ground with residential, commercial and industrial land uses.

COCS studies are a snapshot in time of costs versus revenues for each type of land use. They do not predict future costs or revenues or the impact of future growth. They do provide a baseline of current information to help local officials and citizens make informed land use and policy decisions.

#### METHODOLOGY

In a COCS study, researchers organize financial records to assign the cost of municipal services to working and open lands, as well as to residential, commercial and industrial development. Researchers meet with local sponsors to define the scope of the project and identify land use categories to study. For example, working lands may include farm, forest and/or ranch lands. Residential development includes all housing, including rentals, but if there is a migrant agricultural work force, temporary housing for these workers would be considered part of agricultural land use. Often in rural communities, commercial and industrial land uses are combined. COCS studies findings are displayed as a set of ratios that compare annual revenues to annual expenditures for a community's unique mix of land uses.

COCS studies involve three basic steps:

1. Collect data on local revenues and expenditures.
2. Group revenues and expenditures and allocate them to the community's major land use categories.
3. Analyze the data and calculate revenue-to-expenditure ratios for each land use category.

The process is straightforward, but ensuring reliable figures requires local oversight. The most complicated task is interpreting existing records to reflect COCS land use categories. Allocating revenues and expenses requires a significant amount of research, including extensive interviews with financial officers and public administrators.

#### HISTORY

Communities often evaluate the impact of growth on local budgets by conducting or commissioning fiscal impact analyses. Fiscal impact studies project public costs and revenues from different land development patterns. They generally show that residential development is a net fiscal loss for communities and recommend commercial and industrial development as a strategy to balance local budgets.

Rural towns and counties that would benefit from fiscal impact analysis may not have the expertise or resources to conduct a study. Also, fiscal impact analyses rarely consider the contribution of working and other open lands, which is very important to rural economies.

American Farmland Trust (AFT) developed COCS studies in the mid-1980s to provide communities with a straightforward and inexpensive way to measure the contribution of agricultural lands to the local tax base. Since then, COCS studies have been conducted in at least 151 communities in the United States.

#### FUNCTIONS & PURPOSES

Communities pay a high price for unplanned growth. Scattered development frequently causes traffic congestion, air and water pollution, loss of open space and increased demand for costly public services. This is why it is important for citizens and local leaders to understand the relationships between residential and commercial growth, agricultural land use, conservation and their community's bottom line.

COCS studies help address three misperceptions that are commonly made in rural or suburban communities facing growth pressures:

1. Open lands—including productive farms and forests—are an interim land use that should be developed to their "highest and best use."
2. Agricultural land gets an unfair tax break when it is assessed at its current use value for farming or ranching instead of at its potential use value for residential or commercial development.
3. Residential development will lower property taxes by increasing the tax base.

While it is true that an acre of land with a new house generates more total revenue than an acre of hay or corn, this tells us little about

SUMMARY OF COST OF COMMUNITY SERVICES STUDIES, REVENUE-TO-EXPENDITURE RATIOS IN DOLLARS

Community	Residential including farm houses	Commercial & Industrial	Working & Open Land	Source
<b>Colorado</b>				
Custer County	1 : 1.16	1 : 0.71	1 : 0.54	Haggerty, 2000
Sagauche County	1 : 1.17	1 : 0.53	1 : 0.35	Dirt, Inc., 2001
<b>Connecticut</b>				
Bolton	1 : 1.05	1 : 0.23	1 : 0.50	Geisler, 1998
Brooklyn	1 : 1.09	1 : 0.17	1 : 0.30	Green Valley Institute, 2002
Durham	1 : 1.07	1 : 0.27	1 : 0.23	Southern New England Forest Consortium, 1995
Farmington	1 : 1.33	1 : 0.32	1 : 0.31	Southern New England Forest Consortium, 1995
Hebron	1 : 1.06	1 : 0.47	1 : 0.43	American Farmland Trust, 1986
Lebanon	1 : 1.12	1 : 0.16	1 : 0.17	Green Valley Institute, 2007
Litchfield	1 : 1.11	1 : 0.34	1 : 0.34	Southern New England Forest Consortium, 1995
Pomfret	1 : 1.06	1 : 0.27	1 : 0.86	Southern New England Forest Consortium, 1995
Windham	1 : 1.15	1 : 0.24	1 : 0.19	Green Valley Institute, 2002
<b>Florida</b>				
Leon County	1 : 1.39	1 : 0.36	1 : 0.42	Dorfman, 2004
<b>Georgia</b>				
Appling County	1 : 2.27	1 : 0.17	1 : 0.35	Dorfman, 2004
Athens-Clarke County	1 : 1.39	1 : 0.41	1 : 2.04	Dorfman, 2004
Brooks County	1 : 1.56	1 : 0.42	1 : 0.39	Dorfman, 2004
Carroll County	1 : 1.29	1 : 0.37	1 : 0.55	Dorfman and Black, 2002
Cherokee County	1 : 1.59	1 : 0.12	1 : 0.20	Dorfman, 2004
Colquitt County	1 : 1.28	1 : 0.45	1 : 0.80	Dorfman, 2004
Columbia County	1 : 1.16	1 : 0.48	1 : 0.52	Dorfman, 2006
Dooly County	1 : 2.04	1 : 0.50	1 : 0.27	Dorfman, 2004
Grady County	1 : 1.72	1 : 0.10	1 : 0.38	Dorfman, 2003
Hall County	1 : 1.25	1 : 0.66	1 : 0.22	Dorfman, 2004
Jackson County	1 : 1.28	1 : 0.58	1 : 0.15	Dorfman, 2008
Jones County	1 : 1.23	1 : 0.65	1 : 0.35	Dorfman, 2004
Miller County	1 : 1.54	1 : 0.52	1 : 0.53	Dorfman, 2004
Mitchell County	1 : 1.39	1 : 0.46	1 : 0.60	Dorfman, 2004
Morgan County	1 : 1.42	1 : 0.25	1 : 0.38	Dorfman, 2008
Thomas County	1 : 1.64	1 : 0.38	1 : 0.67	Dorfman, 2003
Union County	1 : 1.13	1 : 0.43	1 : 0.72	Dorfman and Lavigno, 2006
<b>Idaho</b>				
Booneville County	1 : 1.06	1 : 0.84	1 : 0.23	Hartmans and Meyer, 1997
Canyon County	1 : 1.08	1 : 0.79	1 : 0.54	Hartmans and Meyer, 1997
Cassia County	1 : 1.19	1 : 0.87	1 : 0.41	Hartmans and Meyer, 1997
Kootenai County	1 : 1.09	1 : 0.86	1 : 0.28	Hartmans and Meyer, 1997
<b>Kentucky</b>				
Campbell County	1 : 1.21	1 : 0.30	1 : 0.38	American Farmland Trust, 2005
Kenton County	1 : 1.19	1 : 0.19	1 : 0.51	American Farmland Trust, 2005
Lexington-Fayette County	1 : 1.64	1 : 0.22	1 : 0.93	American Farmland Trust, 1999
Oldham County	1 : 1.05	1 : 0.29	1 : 0.44	American Farmland Trust, 2003
Shelby County	1 : 1.21	1 : 0.24	1 : 0.41	American Farmland Trust, 2005

SUMMARY OF COST OF COMMUNITY SERVICES STUDIES, REVENUE-TO-EXPENDITURE RATIOS IN DOLLARS

Community	Residential including farm houses	Commercial & Industrial	Working & Open Land	Source
<b>Maine</b>				
Bethel	1 : 1.29	1 : 0.59	1 : 0.06	Good, 1994
<b>Maryland</b>				
Carroll County	1 : 1.15	1 : 0.48	1 : 0.45	Carroll County Dept. of Management & Budget, 1994
Cecil County	1 : 1.17	1 : 0.34	1 : 0.66	American Farmland Trust, 2001
Cecil County	1 : 1.12	1 : 0.28	1 : 0.37	Cecil County Office of Economic Development, 1994
Frederick County	1 : 1.14	1 : 0.50	1 : 0.53	American Farmland Trust, 1997
Harford County	1 : 1.11	1 : 0.40	1 : 0.91	American Farmland Trust, 2003
Kent County	1 : 1.05	1 : 0.64	1 : 0.42	American Farmland Trust, 2002
Wicomico County	1 : 1.21	1 : 0.33	1 : 0.96	American Farmland Trust, 2001
<b>Massachusetts</b>				
Agawam	1 : 1.05	1 : 0.44	1 : 0.31	American Farmland Trust, 1992
Becket	1 : 1.02	1 : 0.83	1 : 0.72	Southern New England Forest Consortium, 1995
Dartmouth	1 : 1.14	1 : 0.51	1 : 0.26	American Farmland Trust, 2009
Deerfield	1 : 1.16	1 : 0.38	1 : 0.29	American Farmland Trust, 1992
Deerfield	1 : 1.14	1 : 0.51	1 : 0.33	American Farmland Trust, 2009
Franklin	1 : 1.02	1 : 0.58	1 : 0.40	Southern New England Forest Consortium, 1995
Gill	1 : 1.15	1 : 0.43	1 : 0.38	American Farmland Trust, 1992
Leverett	1 : 1.15	1 : 0.29	1 : 0.25	Southern New England Forest Consortium, 1995
Middleboro	1 : 1.08	1 : 0.47	1 : 0.70	American Farmland Trust, 2001
Southborough	1 : 1.03	1 : 0.26	1 : 0.45	Adams and Hines, 1997
Sterling	1 : 1.09	1 : 0.26	1 : 0.34	American Farmland Trust, 2009
Westford	1 : 1.15	1 : 0.53	1 : 0.39	Southern New England Forest Consortium, 1995
Williamstown	1 : 1.11	1 : 0.34	1 : 0.40	Hazler et al., 1992
<b>Michigan</b>				
Marshall Twp., Calhoun County	1 : 1.47	1 : 0.20	1 : 0.27	American Farmland Trust, 2001
Newton Twp., Calhoun County	1 : 1.20	1 : 0.25	1 : 0.24	American Farmland Trust, 2001
Scio Twp., Washtenaw County	1 : 1.40	1 : 0.28	1 : 0.62	University of Michigan, 1994
<b>Minnesota</b>				
Farmington	1 : 1.02	1 : 0.79	1 : 0.77	American Farmland Trust, 1994
Independence	1 : 1.03	1 : 0.19	1 : 0.47	American Farmland Trust, 1994
Lake Elmo	1 : 1.07	1 : 0.20	1 : 0.27	American Farmland Trust, 1994
<b>Montana</b>				
Carbon County	1 : 1.60	1 : 0.21	1 : 0.34	Prinzing, 1997
Flathead County	1 : 1.23	1 : 0.26	1 : 0.34	Citizens for a Better Flathead, 1999
Gallatin County	1 : 1.45	1 : 0.16	1 : 0.25	Haggerty, 1996
<b>New Hampshire</b>				
Brentwood	1 : 1:17	1 : 0.24	1 : 0.83	Brentwood Open Space Task Force, 2002
Deerfield	1 : 1.15	1 : 0.22	1 : 0.35	Auger, 1994
Dover	1 : 1.15	1 : 0.63	1 : 0.94	Kingsley, et al., 1993
Exeter	1 : 1.07	1 : 0.40	1 : 0.82	Niebling, 1997
Fremont	1 : 1.04	1 : 0.94	1 : 0.36	Auger, 1994
Groton	1 : 1.01	1 : 0.12	1 : 0.88	New Hampshire Wildlife Federation, 2001
Hookset	1 : 1.16	1 : 0.43	1 : 0.55	Innovative Natural Resource Solutions, 2008
Lyme	1 : 1.05	1 : 0.28	1 : 0.23	Pickard, 2000
Milton	1 : 1:30	1 : 0.35	1 : 0.72	Innovative Natural Resource Solutions, 2005

SUMMARY OF COST OF COMMUNITY SERVICES STUDIES, REVENUE-TO-EXPENDITURE RATIOS IN DOLLARS

Community	Residential including farm houses	Commercial & Industrial	Working & Open Land	Source
<b>New Hampshire (continued)</b>				
Mont Vernon	1 : 1.03	1 : 0.04	1 : 0.08	Innovative Natural Resource Solutions, 2002
Stratham	1 : 1.15	1 : 0.19	1 : 0.40	Auger, 1994
<b>New Jersey</b>				
Freehold Township	1 : 1.51	1 : 0.17	1 : 0.33	American Farmland Trust, 1998
Holmdel Township	1 : 1.38	1 : 0.21	1 : 0.66	American Farmland Trust, 1998
Middletown Township	1 : 1.14	1 : 0.34	1 : 0.36	American Farmland Trust, 1998
Upper Freehold Township	1 : 1.18	1 : 0.20	1 : 0.35	American Farmland Trust, 1998
Wall Township	1 : 1.28	1 : 0.30	1 : 0.54	American Farmland Trust, 1998
<b>New York</b>				
Amenia	1 : 1.23	1 : 0.25	1 : 0.17	Bucknall, 1989
Beekman	1 : 1.12	1 : 0.18	1 : 0.48	American Farmland Trust, 1989
Dix	1 : 1.51	1 : 0.27	1 : 0.31	Schuyler County League of Women Voters, 1993
Farmington	1 : 1.22	1 : 0.27	1 : 0.72	Kinsman et al., 1991
Fishkill	1 : 1.23	1 : 0.31	1 : 0.74	Bucknall, 1989
Hector	1 : 1.30	1 : 0.15	1 : 0.28	Schuyler County League of Women Voters, 1993
Kinderhook	1 : 1.05	1 : 0.21	1 : 0.17	Concerned Citizens of Kinderhook, 1996
Montour	1 : 1.50	1 : 0.28	1 : 0.29	Schuyler County League of Women Voters, 1992
North East	1 : 1.36	1 : 0.29	1 : 0.21	American Farmland Trust, 1989
Reading	1 : 1.88	1 : 0.26	1 : 0.32	Schuyler County League of Women Voters, 1992
Red Hook	1 : 1.11	1 : 0.20	1 : 0.22	Bucknall, 1989
Rochester	1 : 1.27	1 : 0.18	1 : 0.18	Bonner and Gray, 2005
<b>North Carolina</b>				
Alamance County	1 : 1.46	1 : 0.23	1 : 0.59	Renkow, 2006
Chatham County	1 : 1.14	1 : 0.33	1 : 0.58	Renkow, 2007
Henderson County	1 : 1.16	1 : 0.40	1 : 0.97	Renkow, 2008
Orange County	1 : 1.31	1 : 0.24	1 : 0.72	Renkow, 2006
Union County	1 : 1.30	1 : 0.41	1 : 0.24	Dorfman, 2004
Wake County	1 : 1.54	1 : 0.18	1 : 0.49	Renkow, 2001
<b>Ohio</b>				
Butler County	1 : 1.12	1 : 0.45	1 : 0.49	American Farmland Trust, 2003
Clark County	1 : 1.11	1 : 0.38	1 : 0.30	American Farmland Trust, 2003
Hocking Township	1 : 1.10	1 : 0.27	1 : 0.17	Prindle, 2002
Knox County	1 : 1.05	1 : 0.38	1 : 0.29	American Farmland Trust, 2003
Liberty Township	1 : 1.15	1 : 0.51	1 : 0.05	Prindle, 2002
Madison Village, Lake County	1 : 1.67	1 : 0.20	1 : 0.38	American Farmland Trust, 1993
Madison Twp., Lake County	1 : 1.40	1 : 0.25	1 : 0.30	American Farmland Trust, 1993
Madison Village, Lake County	1 : 1.16	1 : 0.32	1 : 0.37	American Farmland Trust, 2008
Madison Twp., Lake County	1 : 1.24	1 : 0.33	1 : .030	American Farmland Trust, 2008
Shalersville Township	1 : 1.58	1 : 0.17	1 : 0.31	Portage County Regional Planning Commission, 1997
<b>Pennsylvania</b>				
Allegheny Twp., Westmoreland County	1 : 1.06	1 : 0.14	1 : 0.13	Kelsey, 1997
Bedminster Twp., Bucks County	1 : 1.12	1 : 0.05	1 : 0.04	Kelsey, 1997
Bethel Twp., Lebanon County	1 : 1.08	1 : 0.17	1 : 0.06	Kelsey, 1992
Bingham Twp., Potter County	1 : 1.56	1 : 0.16	1 : 0.15	Kelsey, 1994
Buckingham Twp., Bucks County	1 : 1.04	1 : 0.15	1 : 0.08	Kelsey, 1996

SUMMARY OF COST OF COMMUNITY SERVICES STUDIES, REVENUE-TO-EXPENDITURE RATIOS IN DOLLARS

Community	Residential including farm houses	Commercial & Industrial	Working & Open Land	Source
<b>Pennsylvania (continued)</b>				
Carroll Twp., Perry County	1 : 1.03	1 : 0.06	1 : 0.02	Kelsey, 1992
Hopewell Twp., York County	1 : 1.27	1 : 0.32	1 : 0.59	The South Central Assembly for Effective Governance, 2002
Kelly Twp., Union County	1 : 1.48	1 : 0.07	1 : 0.07	Kelsey, 2006
Lehman Twp., Pike County	1 : 0.94	1 : 0.20	1 : 0.27	Kelsey, 2006
Maiden Creek Twp., Berks County	1 : 1.28	1 : 0.11	1 : 0.06	Kelsey, 1998
Richmond Twp., Berks County	1 : 1.24	1 : 0.09	1 : 0.04	Kelsey, 1998
Shrewsbury Twp., York County	1 : 1.22	1 : 0.15	1 : 0.17	The South Central Assembly for Effective Governance, 2002
Stewardson Twp., Potter County	1 : 2.11	1 : 0.23	1 : 0.31	Kelsey, 1994
Straban Twp., Adams County	1 : 1.10	1 : 0.16	1 : 0.06	Kelsey, 1992
Sweden Twp., Potter County	1 : 1.38	1 : 0.07	1 : 0.08	Kelsey, 1994
<b>Rhode Island</b>				
Hopkinton	1 : 1.08	1 : 0.31	1 : 0.31	Southern New England Forest Consortium, 1995
Little Compton	1 : 1.05	1 : 0.56	1 : 0.37	Southern New England Forest Consortium, 1995
West Greenwich	1 : 1.46	1 : 0.40	1 : 0.46	Southern New England Forest Consortium, 1995
<b>Tennessee</b>				
Blount County	1 : 1.23	1 : 0.25	1 : 0.41	American Farmland Trust, 2006
Robertson County	1 : 1.13	1 : 0.22	1 : 0.26	American Farmland Trust, 2006
Tipton County	1 : 1.07	1 : 0.32	1 : 0.57	American Farmland Trust, 2006
<b>Texas</b>				
Bandera County	1 : 1.10	1 : 0.26	1 : 0.26	American Farmland Trust, 2002
Bexar County	1 : 1.15	1 : 0.20	1 : 0.18	American Farmland Trust, 2004
Hays County	1 : 1.26	1 : 0.30	1 : 0.33	American Farmland Trust, 2000
<b>Utah</b>				
Cache County	1 : 1.27	1 : 0.25	1 : 0.57	Snyder and Ferguson, 1994
Sevier County	1 : 1.11	1 : 0.31	1 : 0.99	Snyder and Ferguson, 1994
Utah County	1 : 1.23	1 : 0.26	1 : 0.82	Snyder and Ferguson, 1994
<b>Virginia</b>				
Augusta County	1 : 1.22	1 : 0.20	1 : 0.80	Valley Conservation Council, 1997
Bedford County	1 : 1.07	1 : 0.40	1 : 0.25	American Farmland Trust, 2005
Clarke County	1 : 1.26	1 : 0.21	1 : 0.15	Piedmont Environmental Council, 1994
Culpepper County	1 : 1.22	1 : 0.41	1 : 0.32	American Farmland Trust, 2003
Frederick County	1 : 1.19	1 : 0.23	1 : 0.33	American Farmland Trust, 2003
Northampton County	1 : 1.13	1 : 0.97	1 : 0.23	American Farmland Trust, 1999
<b>Washington</b>				
Okanogan County	1 : 1.06	1 : 0.59	1 : 0.56	American Farmland Trust, 2007
Skagit County	1 : 1.25	1 : 0.30	1 : 0.51	American Farmland Trust, 1999
<b>Wisconsin</b>				
Dunn	1 : 1.06	1 : 0.29	1 : 0.18	Town of Dunn, 1994
Dunn	1 : 1.02	1 : 0.55	1 : 0.15	Wisconsin Land Use Research Program, 1999
Perry	1 : 1.20	1 : 1.04	1 : 0.41	Wisconsin Land Use Research Program, 1999
Westport	1 : 1.11	1 : 0.31	1 : 0.13	Wisconsin Land Use Research Program, 1999

Note: Some studies break out land uses into more than three distinct categories. For these studies, AFT requested data from the researcher and recalculated the final ratios for the land use categories listed in this table. The Okanogan County, Wash., study is unique in that it analyzed the fiscal contribution of tax-exempt state, federal and tribal lands.

American Farmland Trust's Farmland Information Center acts as a clearinghouse for information about Cost of Community Services studies. Inclusion in this table does not necessarily signify review or endorsement by American Farmland Trust.

# COST OF COMMUNITY SERVICES STUDIES

For additional information on farmland protection and stewardship contact the Farmland Information Center. The FIC offers a staffed answer service and online library with fact sheets, laws, sample documents and other educational materials.

www.farmlandinfo.org  
(800) 370-4879



AFT NATIONAL OFFICE  
1200 18th Street, NW, Suite 800  
Washington, DC 20036  
(202) 331-7300  
www.farmland.org



a community's bottom line. In areas where agriculture or forestry are major industries, it is especially important to consider the real property tax contribution of privately owned working lands. Working and other open lands may generate less revenue than residential, commercial or industrial properties, but they require little public infrastructure and few services.

COCS studies conducted over the last 20 years show working lands generate more public revenues than they receive back in public services. Their impact on community coffers is similar to that of other commercial and industrial land uses. On average, because residential land uses do not cover their costs, they must be subsidized by other community land uses. Converting agricultural land to residential land use should not be seen as a way to balance local budgets.

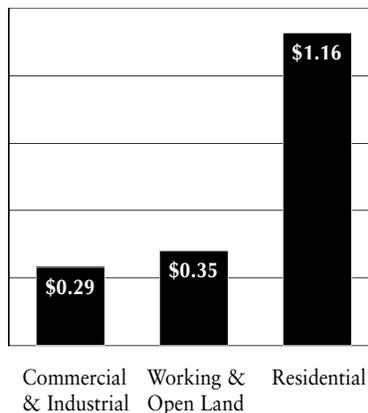
The findings of COCS studies are consistent with those of conventional fiscal impact analyses, which document the high cost of residential development and recommend commercial and industrial development to help balance local budgets. What is unique about COCS studies is that they show that agricultural land is similar to other commercial and industrial uses. In nearly every community studied, farmland has generated a fiscal surplus to help offset the shortfall created by residential demand for

public services. This is true even when the land is assessed at its current, agricultural use. However as more communities invest in agriculture this tendency may change. For example, if a community establishes a purchase of agricultural conservation easement program, working and open lands may generate a net negative.

Communities need reliable information to help them see the full picture of their land uses. COCS studies are an inexpensive way to evaluate the net contribution of working and open lands. They can help local leaders discard the notion that natural resources must be converted to other uses to ensure fiscal stability. They also dispel the myths that residential development leads to lower taxes, that differential assessment programs give landowners an "unfair" tax break and that farmland is an interim land use just waiting around for development.

One type of land use is not intrinsically better than another, and COCS studies are not meant to judge the overall public good or long-term merits of any land use or taxing structure. It is up to communities to balance goals such as maintaining affordable housing, creating jobs and conserving land. With good planning, these goals can complement rather than compete with each other. COCS studies give communities another tool to make decisions about their futures.

Median COCS Results



Median cost per dollar of revenue raised to provide public services to different land uses.

The FARMLAND INFORMATION CENTER (FIC) is a clearinghouse for information about farmland protection and stewardship. The FIC is a public/private partnership between the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and American Farmland Trust.

## Is Your TOWN Planning a Future for Farms?

### A Checklist for Supporting Farms at the Town Level in New York

#### Encourage Public Appreciation for Local Agriculture

*Does your town...*

YES  NO

**...have any visible demonstration of the value of local farms?** Does your town support a fair, an apple festival or other farm events? When agriculture is visible to the public, residents will better understand the benefit of having farms in town.

YES  NO

**...publicize where to go to get advice and assistance on farm questions?** Towns should help connect farmers with local, state and federal agricultural and conservation organizations that can serve as resources.

YES  NO

**...recognize the property tax benefits of farmland and support tax policies that are fair to farmland owners?** While farmland may provide less tax revenue per acre than other land uses, it also requires significantly less in local services. Cost of Community Services studies in more than 15 New York towns have demonstrated that farmland generally pays more in taxes than it receives in local services. By comparison, residences generally require more in local services than they pay in taxes. Has your town considered adopting agricultural assessment values for fire, library or other service districts as a means of demonstrating that farmland requires fewer public services?

#### Strengthen Economic Opportunities for Farms and Related Businesses

*Does your town...*

YES  NO

**...allow agricultural uses in more than one zoning district?** Agricultural businesses are not the same as other commercial development. Some towns confine agricultural businesses to the commercial zone only, while other towns prohibit such uses in the commercial zone. Farm enterprises often are hybrids of several different uses. Ordinances and regulations should allow farm business flexibility.

YES  NO

**...allow flexibility in regulations to accommodate the unusual needs of agricultural businesses?** Does your town have appropriate regulations for farm retailers such as expanded hours of business, temporary and off-site signs, parking near pick-your-own fields, or on street parking? The land use impact and off-site impact of a seasonal farm business can be much less than that of a full-time retail business. Pick-your-own operations or Christmas tree farms may have a hard time staying viable in a town that treats farms like all other retailers.

YES  NO

**...allow farm stands to sell produce purchased elsewhere?** Many towns have rules that require a certain percentage of farm stand produce to be grown on the farm. The basis for allowing a farm stand shouldn't be limited to how much is grown on the farm but should also consider what benefits the farm provides to the town in terms of open space, wildlife habitation, watershed purification and natural resource protection.

YES  NO

**...allow rural businesses compatible with agriculture in farming areas?** Home-based occupations such as farm machinery repair shops, sawmills and other rural businesses can help farm families make ends meet. They can also provide an economically viable alternative to selling farmland for development.

YES  NO

**...have business infrastructure that supports modern farms?** Modern farming operations require services, as do other businesses. To support farm businesses, towns should ensure that telephone, electric and other wires are high enough to prevent accidents with farm equipment. They also should make snowplowing on roads leading to dairy farms a priority so that milk trucks can collect milk easily and should maintain good culverts and drainage systems to help move water away from farm fields. Towns should also check their roads and bridges to determine whether they can handle tractor-trailers, which are commonly used to provide goods and services to farms.

YES  NO

**...act as a resource for information about property tax reduction programs aimed at farmers and other farmland owners?** Local governments and New York state have developed a number of programs aimed at reducing property taxes for farmers and other owners of farmland. Does your town encourage the use of New York's Agricultural Assessment and Farm Building Exemption programs and the Farmers' School Tax Credit?

## Encourage the Long-Term Viability of Farming and Food Production

*Does your town...*

YES  NO

**...have a detailed section on agriculture in the town's comprehensive plan?** The comprehensive or master plan is the big picture view for the future of the town. Does your town's comprehensive plan refer to "maintaining rural character" but overlook

agriculture as the primary component? Consider having a town-appointed committee profile local farms to demonstrate the economic, cultural and environmental benefits of agriculture. Agriculture shouldn't be an afterthought!

YES  NO

**...have policies aimed at limiting the impact of new development on productive farmland?**

Does your town have strategies for limiting the footprint of new development? Creative site planning can accommodate new development while limiting the loss of your town's best farmland.

YES  NO

**...require buffer zones between farmland and residential uses?**

The old saying "good fences make good neighbors" has a modern corollary that says, "good buffer zones make new neighbors into good neighbors." New development should not place the burden on existing farms to give up boundary land as a buffer zone between agricultural and residential areas. New residential development should provide for its own buffer zone and/or landscape plantings for screening when necessary.

YES  NO

**...have an "agricultural zone" that limits the impacts of new development on farms?**

Does your town have a strategy for managing new development in agricultural zones in a way that supports agriculture over the long term? Many towns in New York have zoning ordinances with "agricultural zones" that permit scattered development next to farms—a recipe for future conflict.

## Support Positive Relationships Between Farmers and Others in Your Community

*Does your town...*

YES  NO

**...have farmers serving on local planning boards, zoning boards or local economic development committees?** Having farmers serve on town committees is one of the most effective ways for

towns to incorporate agricultural concerns into local land use or economic development plans. Town Law Sect. 271(11) permits towns with state agricultural districts to allocate planning board seats to farmers. Agricultural advisory committees can also be established to provide guidance to a town.

YES  NO

**...have a consistent approach for local procedures that deal with agriculture?**

Town boards, planning boards and zoning boards have different responsibilities, but a common regulatory outlook is possible. Update your comprehensive plan to reflect the value that agriculture contributes to your town's quality of life through open space, wildlife habitation, watershed purification and natural resource preservation. Establish, as a policy, that agriculture is beneficial to your town and fairness will follow.

YES  NO

**...work to pro-actively address trespassing on farmland?**

When people trespass on farmland, crops, fields and infrastructure can be damaged. Communities can help protect public safety and prevent needless farm losses by pro-actively addressing trespassing problems.

YES  NO

**...properly assess specialized agricultural structures?**

Has your town assessor received training on assessing farmland and farm buildings? Specialized structures such as silos, milking parlors and permanent greenhouses depreciate in value over time. If your town frequently overvalues agricultural structures, this can have a chilling effect on all types of farm investment.

YES  NO

**...have planning tools that are supportive of New York State Agricultural Districts?**

The Agricultural Districts Law, which was enacted in 1971, is one of New York's oldest farmland protection tools. Agricultural districts provide important right-to-farm protections to farmers. Does your town incorporate the boundaries of agricultural districts into your zoning maps and other local land use policies?

YES  NO

**...have policies to mitigate conflicts between farmers and non-farm neighbors?** A local right-to-farm law expresses a community's support for

agriculture. It can also prevent unnecessary lawsuits between farmers and non-farm neighbors by referring conflicts to mediation before the courts are involved. Cornell Cooperative Extension, Soil and Water Conservation Districts, the New York State Agricultural Mediation Program and other groups can serve as partners in addressing conflicts before they grow into painful disputes or expensive lawsuits.

## Protect Agricultural Land and Keep It Actively Farmed

*Does your town...*

YES  NO

**...identify areas where it wants to support agriculture over the long term?**

Do you know where the best agricultural soils are located in your town? The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Soil and Water Conservation Districts can be important partners in identifying productive agricultural soils. Soil data combined with other information can help towns identify priority farming areas where they want to support agriculture over the long term.

YES  NO

**...have policies aimed at retaining large blocks of farmland that are able to support a variety of farm businesses?**

Farmers don't want to be an "island in a sea of development." Has your town developed policies to keep large blocks of land in agricultural use over the long term? Larger areas of farmland provide greater opportunities for farms to adapt to changing market conditions. Retaining such blocks helps to ensure a future for farming.

YES  NO

**...limit expansion of infrastructure in areas where it wants to support agriculture over the long term?**

Extending water and sewer lines through farmland should be done with caution. Providing these services without accompanying planning measures can accelerate the loss of farmland. Focusing water, sewer and other services in already developed areas can help limit the development of a town's best farmland.

YES  NO

**...have a strategy for protecting its best farmland?**

Once your town identifies its priority farming areas, complementary land use policies should be developed to encourage the retention of that land in continued agricultural use. General language about agriculture in a comprehensive plan isn't good enough. Work with farmers to turn the ideas expressed in your comprehensive plan into specific policies to retain your town's best farmland.

YES  NO

**...encourage the use of conservation easements on farmland?**

Does your town support applications to the state or federal government to purchase agricultural conservation easements on local farms? Have you considered providing funding for acquiring conservation easements on farmland? Agricultural conservation easements can be used to protect the natural resource base for agriculture. Once a conservation easement is recorded on farmland, the land will permanently be kept available as a resource for future generations of farmers.



AMERICAN FARMLAND TRUST'S *Planning for Agriculture in New York*

## *Total Your Score!*

### **Your results...**

#### **Yes on 20-24**

Your town is very active in supporting a future for farming!

#### **Yes on 15-19**

Your town knows that farmers are good neighbors who provide lots of benefits to your quality of life, but you may need help in pro-actively supporting them.

#### **Yes on 10-14**

Careful! Your town may be less supportive of farms than you think—even unfriendly, perhaps inadvertently.

#### **Yes on 5-9**

It's time to get to work on understanding farmers in your town and how you can help support their business and land use needs.

#### **Yes on 0-4**

Yours is not a farm friendly town, but there is still hope. Seek help immediately from farmers, farm groups and related organizations.

This questionnaire was developed based upon a section of *Preserving Rural Character through Agriculture*, written by Gary Matteson for the New Hampshire Coalition for Sustaining Agriculture.