

Schoharie County, New York

Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan



**Schoharie County Agricultural
and Farmland Protection Board**

**Shepstone Management Company
Schoharie County Planning and Development Agency
Cornell Cooperative Extension Service of Schoharie County**

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1.0 Why Farming Is Important to Schoharie County

Farming is too often viewed as simply a starting point on the development scale - a temporary use of land until growth brings something better along. Unfortunately, even some farmers see it this way, perceiving growth and development as the end of the line. The facts, though, present a much more appealing picture. Consider the following:

1.1 Farming is big business to Schoharie County.

Farming in Schoharie County involves some 518 business locations, both large and small, generating sales of \$26,973,000 million in 1997. The average value of land, buildings and equipment used in these businesses was \$271,375 for a total investment in the Schoharie County economy of approximately \$140,415,000, the equivalent of several major manufacturing facilities or Wal-Mart Distribution Centers.¹

1.2 Income from agriculture goes further than other sectors in helping the economy.

Agriculture produces much higher economic multipliers than any other sector of the Schoharie County economy. Dairy production, for example, enjoys a 2.29 income multiplier compared to 1.66 for construction, 1.48 for services, 1.41 for manufacturing and 1.40 for retail and wholesale trade. Applying these multipliers indicates agriculture represents a total contribution to the economy of over \$61,633,000, not including forestry enterprises, many of which take place on farms.² This compares very favorably with the 1997 total of approximately \$44,500,000 in multiplied general merchandise retail sales, for example.³

1.3 Agricultural opportunities can actually increase with growth of an area.

While development can, obviously, create conflicts for farmers, the leading agricultural county in New York is Suffolk County. It is home to 1.3 million people and one of the most highly developed suburban environments in the nation, suggesting not only that farming and urbanization can co-exist, but also that the local demand for agricultural

1 Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture, 1997. Farming is also integral to the support of SUNY Cobleskill which is an economic center onto itself. Market values of land and buildings averaged \$231,375 in 1997 and machinery and equipment was valued at an average of 39,696.

2 Source: "Economic Multipliers and the New York State Economy," Policy Issues in Rural Land Use, Cornell Cooperative Extension, December 1996.

3 Source: 1999 Rand McNally Commercial Atlas. Sales reported in the Census were multiplied by the factors cited above for their respective sectors.

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products increases with the latter and raises the value of farming as an economic enterprise.⁴ While Schoharie is facing relatively minimal development pressures at this time, it is only 45 minutes from Albany, and, farming will, for the same reasons, be ever more important to the County as it develops and grows in population. This is particularly true for the fruit and vegetable industry which depends so much on direct marketing.

1.5 Farms lower taxes.

Farms are tax winners despite preferential assessments afforded by the Ag District Law. A 1995 study of Tompkins County at the other end of the Southern Tier East region found "agricultural .. uses should be recognized as beneficial because they do not demand a large amount of services and provide other benefits such as employment." The data, in fact, indicate agriculture typically produces \$1.00 in tax revenue for every 15¢ to 40¢ of town and school expenditures it generates, whereas residential development costs \$1.09 to \$1.56 per \$1.00 of taxes gathered.⁵ This is consistent with results of a number of other similar studies done throughout the Northeast.⁶

1.4 Farms create rural character - a precious asset.

Farms make up our "rural" character and protect open spaces essential to the quality of life for both permanent and seasonal residents. Any number of surveys of rural residents and second-home dwellers indicate the primary reasons people live in such areas have to do with their appreciation of the natural resources and open spaces offered, but the anecdotal evidence is perhaps even stronger and local real estate brochures provide examples. They include references not only to the County's historic and natural sites but also its "aesthetic natural character" and "a quality of life unmatched in the region," facets which are directly created by working farm landscapes. There is a direct relationship between farming and the attractiveness of Schoharie County as a place to live.⁷

4 Source: Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County.

5 Source: Costs of Community Services Study, Tompkins County, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County and Tompkins County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan, August, 1995.

6 These include studies by American Farmland Trust, Cornell Cooperative Extension, and Commonwealth Research Group, Inc. of communities in Dutchess and Oneida Counties in New York and various other Connecticut and New England areas.

7 See "Schoharie Business Park - Gateway to the Historic Schoharie Valley" brochure.

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1.6 Successful farming is a defense against suburban sprawl.

Preserving farmland discourages expensive suburban sprawl, steering development toward hamlets and villages with existing services. "Gasoline taxes and other user fees only cover about 70% of the direct cash costs of building and maintaining the nation's road system," according to a recent article on sprawl. Hook-up fees for sewer systems within areas of sprawl often cover less than half the real costs of those extensions.⁸ These differences are attributable to the high costs of servicing development spread out along highways and the deficits must be made up by all taxpayers.

1.7 Farming attracts tourists.

Farms and agricultural enterprises are essential to the County's tourism industry. Visitors are attracted to the County not only by its caverns and natural beauty but also by the several local farm stands and the diverse working landscapes which Schoharie County farms offer. The Schoharie Chamber of Commerce recognizes the linkage between agriculture and tourism in its programs and brochures. The Schoharie County Picture Perfect pamphlet, for example, promotes the Schoharie Valley by speaking of the "rich soil (that) nurtured an infant nation," and an "agricultural heritage (that) still imbues almost every aspect of our daily lives." Perhaps the best illustration is the "Sc'ary County!" Fall '98 promotion which advertised attractions, events and farm stands in a unique play on the colloquial pronunciation of the County's name. These efforts make for an excellent foundation from which to sell the County to tourists but for the industry to grow that rich soil and agricultural heritage must be preserved and, more importantly, enhanced with continued agricultural development.

1.8 Farms and forests preserve natural environments.

Farms and forests provide working self-sustaining landscapes which preserve and enhance environmental quality. Use of New York City watershed lands in the West-of-Hudson region of New York State (including Schoharie County) for largely farm and forestry uses have, for example, allowed Federal water drinking quality criteria for filtration avoidance to be met. The suburbanized Croton and other East-of-Hudson area watersheds, by contrast, cannot meet these same standards and demand extraordinarily expensive filtering processes to produce potable drinking water. Forest land, which is a part of nearly every farm, "may reduce sediment, nutrient and other pollutant loadings by as much as 85% by minimizing soil erosion and filtering watershed runoff" according to a Watershed Agricultural Council

⁸ "Who Pays for Sprawl?" U.S. News and World Report, April 27, 1998.

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publication.⁹ A recent study of land use and water quality along 100 Wisconsin streams also found that "watershed with more than 20% of land in urban use had very poor biological diversity."¹⁰ This is particularly important to those portions of the County within the New York City watershed and increasingly so in the remainder of the County as environmental requirements tighten.

1.9 Farms and forests support wildlife and sport hunting.

Farms support wildlife such as deer, turkeys and small-game and thereby sustain hunting as a source of tourism to the area. The 1997 white-tail deer harvest was, in fact, some 2,901 deer with the largest takes being in Gilboa, Fulton, Summit, Middleburg and Jefferson respectively.¹¹ Assuming an average expenditure of \$500 per deer harvested (a commonly used figure) this equates to a \$1,450,000 sport hunting economy.

1.10 Farmland is a valuable resource for future generations.

Farmland is a valuable future resource for the County in providing for a healthy and plentiful local supply of food products and generating new sources of farm income. Many new residents of the County and of areas to the East (e.g. Albany), as well as visitors to the Schoharie Valley, are seeking locally grown fresh fruits, vegetables and flowers, both organic and non-organic. County farmers are already capitalizing on these opportunities in the promotion of its farm stands (e.g., the "Year Round Bounty from Schoharie County" brochure) but continuing to do so requires the protection of high-quality farmland, so such enterprises can develop and flourish. Likewise, the County's base of both small and mid-sized farms provides a foundation for exploring new dairy and non-dairy opportunities for added-value ventures and development of new niche businesses. These resources offer tremendous economic potential for the future and, once again, Suffolk County provides an illustration. Its agricultural economy has been reinvented several times with urbanization but today yields well over \$167,000,000 in annual sales and its lead as New York's most valuable agricultural producer is lengthening because of the shift to these higher valued products.¹²

9 Policy Recommendations for the Watersheds of New York City's Water Supply, Watershed Forest Ad Hoc Task Force, July 1996, p.8. Also, remarks by Watershed Agricultural Council Chairman Richard Coombe at "Promoting Partnerships" Conference, American Farmland Trust and others, Albany, New York, May 1998.

10 Source: Land Works Connection, October, 1998, American Farmland Trust.

11 Source: New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.

12 Source: Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County and U.S. Census of Agriculture, 1997.

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1.11 Farming provides a year-round business base for a wide spectrum of Schoharie County enterprises.

Agriculture is much more than farming. A substantial number of non-agricultural businesses supply the needs of farmers. These include processors, vehicle and equipment dealers and other enterprises. Schoharie County farmers, for example, own and must maintain and replace 755 trucks, 1,395 tractors and numerous other pieces of farm equipment and machinery. They also purchase over \$992,000 of petroleum products, \$4,734,000 of feed, \$1,716,000 of hired farm labor and approximately \$12,008,000 of other products and services from Schoharie County and other nearby enterprises, many of which would not be considered farm supply businesses. For these businesses to survive and prosper, a core critical mass of farmers must be preserved and vice-versa. Otherwise, competitiveness cannot be maintained.¹³

1.12 Farming is an inseparable part of Schoharie County's culture.

Schoharie County's farm families are operating businesses that go back as far as nine generations. The Bates Farm, for example, was recently recognized by New York State for 200 years of operation. While crops, livestock and practices may have changed, farming has been a common thread uniting all elements of the County's special cultural heritage. It is an essential ingredient in the quality of life Schoharie County residents enjoy. This heritage is, too, a marketable asset if used creatively by enterprising entrepreneurs.

¹³ Source: 1997 U.S. Census of Agriculture.

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2.0 Inventory of Schoharie County Agricultural Industry

The following represents an overview and inventory of the agricultural industry sector of the Schoharie County, New York economy.

2.1 Natural Resources for Agriculture

The total area of Schoharie County is 623 square miles (approximately 400,000 acres). Elevation ranges from an average of about 1,200 feet in the northern limestone plateau section of the County to approximately 2,000 feet in the higher plateaus that abound in the southern part of the County. Still higher elevations are found in those portions of the Catskill Mountains which extend north into the County. The growing season, as a result, varies widely. Early season corn and vegetable crops are a mainstay within the protected Schoharie Valley but just a few miles away, the "hill farm" areas of Gilboa and Blenheim, for example, experience the cooler climates more suited to growing grass.

The northern limestone plateau areas of the County are very well suited to agricultural crops but the best farmland in the County is found along the Schoharie Creek, from the Town of Blenheim north, where a combination of climate and ancient lake bottom sediments have yielded once of the most productive growing areas in the Northeast. It produces a wide variety of vegetable crops, corn and fruits. The remainder of the southern portion of the County, nevertheless, tends to be more heavily sloped, more stony and more difficult to cultivate. Much of it, therefore, is in forest use.

County soils as a whole have been classified by the U.S.D.A. Natural Resources Conservation Service according to their capabilities for agricultural use and the 1974 General Soil Map and Interpretations, Schoharie County indicates the highly productive Barbour-Basher and Tioga-Middlebury-Wayland soil associations represent some 16,510 acres or 4% of the County land mass.¹⁴ Other soil associations with only slight to moderate limitations for farm use account for another 199,170 acres, indicating over half the County may be considered generally good for agricultural use.

Although limestone geology and flooding are also important factors with respect to the quality of Schoharie soils, slope is the primary limitation with respect to most soils within the County. Several soils limited by this condition are, therefore, quite usable for farming, particularly for rotational grazing. Many forage crops in the County, in fact, are grown on

¹⁴ Authored by the Temporary State Commission to Study the Catskills and the U.S.D.A. Soil Conservation Service (NRCS predecessor).

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soils that fall into lower land capability classifications for farming. Table 2.1 below incorporates key data on soil associations making up Schoharie County. It is followed by an "Important Farmlands Map" from the Soil Survey of Schoharie County."¹⁵

Table 2.1 - Soil Associations by Suitability for Farming

Name of Association	Land Capability Classes for Farming	Acres
Barbour-Basher	II (70)	11,000
Tioga-Middlebury-Wayland	II (55%) & III (20%)	5,510
Oquaga-Arnot	II (45%) & III (20%)	5,070
Honeoye-Farmington	II (30%) & III (30%)	9,700
Honeoye-Lima	II (20%) & III (55%)	36,680
Burdett-Nunda	II (15%) & III (50%)	42,330
Schoharie-Odesa	III (65%)	13,860
Tunkhannock (gently sloping)	III (65%)	2,890
Lansing-Appleton	III (70%)	9,780
Mardin-Volusia (sloping)	III (70%)	35,470
Lordstown-Arnot	III (75%)	26,000
Wellsboro-Morris (sloping)	III (75%)	17,990
Sub-total (highly suited soils)	N/A	216,280
Kendaia-Lyons	III (50%) & IV (25%)	630
Oquaga-Arnot-Rock outcrop (sloping)	III (35%) & VI (45%)	10,290
Carlisle-Palms	III (45%) & VII (35%)	2,310
Lordstown	IV (60%)	27,490
Lakemont	IV (65%)	1,580
Tuller-Allis	IV (65%)	3,720
Bath-Mardin (mod. steep)	IV (70%)	5,880
Honeoye	IV (70%)	4,860
Tunkhannock (mod. steep)	IV (70%)	2,470
Lordstown-Arnot-Rock (gently sloping)	VI (80%)	16,400
Lordstown-Arnot-Rock (mod. steep)	VI (80%)	20,670
Schoharie (steep)	VII (60%)	11,180
Chippewa	VII (65%)	890
Bath-Mardin (ext. stony)	VII (70%)	1,940
Lackawanna	VII (70%)	5,240
Mardin-Volusia (stony)	VII (70%)	9,000
Norwich (ext. stony)	VII (70%)	630
Wellsboro-Morris (ext. stony)	VII (75%)	15,300
Arnot-Lordstown-Rock outcrop	VII (80%)	24,080
Farmington-Rock outcrop	VII (80%)	2,780
Oquaga-Arnot-Rock outcrop (steep)	VII (80%)	10,110
Arnot-Oquaga-Rock outcrop	VII (85%)	5,350
Water/Quarry	N/A	920
Sub-total (less suited soils)		183,720
Total (all soils)		400,000

15 U.S.D.A. Soil Conservation Service, 1969

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Insert "Important Farmlands" map

(to be added at a later date)

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2.2 Agricultural Land and Districts

The bulk of Schoharie County agricultural land is found in the six north-central towns of Carlisle, Middleburgh, Schoharie, Seward, Sharon and Fulton. Cobleskill and Wright also have a great deal of agricultural coded property but relatively little of it is under agricultural assessment, suggesting less intensive farm use. Table 2.2 below provides breakdowns of agriculturally classified tax parcels for 1994 and the Agricultural Districts Map which follows depicts the locations of currently active and significant farms in the County.¹⁶ A large-scale version of this map has also been produced as a separate document. Finally, see Section 2.4 for further information regarding amounts of farmland and trends for the County as a whole.

Table 2.2 - Agricultural Land by Town, 1994

<u>Town</u>	<u>Agricultural Assessed Land Parcels</u>	<u>Agricultural Assessed Land Value</u>	<u>Agricultural Coded Land Parcels</u>	<u>Agricultural Coded Land Value</u>
Seward	98	\$3,463,282	114	\$11,679,457
Middleburgh	71	\$1,898,400	85	\$7,331,718
Sharon	88	\$1,742,007	167	\$12,379,420
Schoharie	60	\$1,707,997	117	\$9,711,145
Carlisle	71	\$1,605,448	115	\$7,851,628
Fulton	34	\$1,560,840	65	\$7,015,750
Esperance	26	\$863,502	45	\$4,572,740
Wright	43	\$830,017	99	\$8,484,140
Blenheim	19	\$621,661	16	\$1,911,300
Cobleskill	27	\$518,987	120	\$10,425,900
Richmondville	11	\$305,393	85	\$5,700,950
Broome	9	\$295,473	33	\$3,051,050
Conesville	6	\$73,491	27	\$1,859,200
Summit	2	\$53,585	19	\$1,991,990
Jefferson	1	\$44,248	71	\$5,006,930
Gilboa	0	\$0	54	\$208,400
Totals	566	\$15,584,331	1,232	\$99,181,718

¹⁶ Agricultural coded parcels are those classified by Schoharie County Real Property Services on the 1994 Final Assessment Roll as "property used for the production of crops or livestock." Such parcels may or may not enjoy agricultural assessment.

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Interestingly, the Town of Middleburgh, only seventh when the value of agricultural coded property is tallied, comes in at second position among the County's 16 towns for value of property under the agricultural assessment program. This reflects the very high value of Schoharie Valley farmland and the fact very large portions of it are able to be cultivated. Significant portions of other farm communities are in woodland or similar low-intensity uses which don't necessarily qualify for agricultural assessment.

It is important to note Middleburgh, too, has a great deal of land of this nature and if one were to net it out of the equation, the value of the Town's active agriculture would be even more apparent. Nonetheless, it is the Towns of Seward and Sharon that constitute the standout farm areas of the County in terms of general agriculture. They represent the prime dairy farm areas of the County and, along with portions of Carlisle, the single largest block of agricultural district land in the County.

The first Agricultural District in New York State was formed in Schoharie County in 1972. It encompasses 8,095 acres of the valuable Schoharie Valley and is up for its fifth review in 2004. A total of 11 agricultural districts were created over the years and, currently, almost every commercial farm in Schoharie County is protected by an agricultural district and there is some portion of each of the County's 16 towns that falls within an Agricultural District. Altogether, as many as 114,600 acres (approximately 29% of the County) have been included in the districts.

The size and nature of the agricultural districts within the County varies greatly. Some districts have been formed around individual farms and others, such as District No. 3, have incorporated large blocks of land that have included not only farms but intervening parcels with a view toward protecting the farm character of an entire area. Still others, such as District No.1, have been at least partially defined by topographic lines delineating the boundaries of the high valued agricultural lands. District sizes have varied from 874 acres (District No. 7) to 70,625 acres (District No. 3) although the County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board is now in the process of attempting to consolidate the 11 districts into as few as 4 districts altogether. This will be highly beneficial in two respects; a) reducing the administrative overhead connected with maintaining the districts and b) establishing a more consistent philosophy with respect to districting.

The Board should work from the premise that there are four significant agricultural areas and these include; a) the Seward/Sharon dairy area, b) the Schoharie Valley, c) the farm area centered in the Town of Wright and d) the Catskill hill farm areas found in the southern portion of the County. These should be protected by designating major blocks of

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farmland as core agricultural districts and picking up other individual farms where appropriate as satellites. All animal agricultural activities should be covered. The core districts (present Districts No.'s 1, 3, 6 and 10) should include not just commercial agricultural land but also, where possible, adjacent and intervening buffer properties. This is because the primary purpose of agricultural district protection today is not agricultural assessment benefits (farmers outside districts can now get those) but protection of the industry itself from incompatible land use activities and complaints from non-farmers about what are no more than ordinary and sound farm practices. The agricultural district program is also an excellent tool to which zoned communities can link their land use planning and on which the County, if it desires, can build a lease or purchase of development rights program for interested farmers.

The Board also needs to rationalize its districts from the standpoint of using common delineations. Generally, it is not wise to use boundaries other than property lines and as districts are renewed and combined they should be redefined along these lines. Some smaller district parcels should also be considered for elimination from the program where they are isolated and of questionable agricultural value. Others might well better serve as satellites of larger districts. The County will benefit in the long term by refining its districts to protect true agricultural areas, including additional land where necessary for this purpose, and sloughing off isolated and less valid tracts that gain little or nothing from the designation anyway. The districts will enjoy far more credibility and usefulness if the County proceeds in this direction. The Agricultural Districts Maps that follow depict the locations of both existing Districts and proposed consolidated Districts.

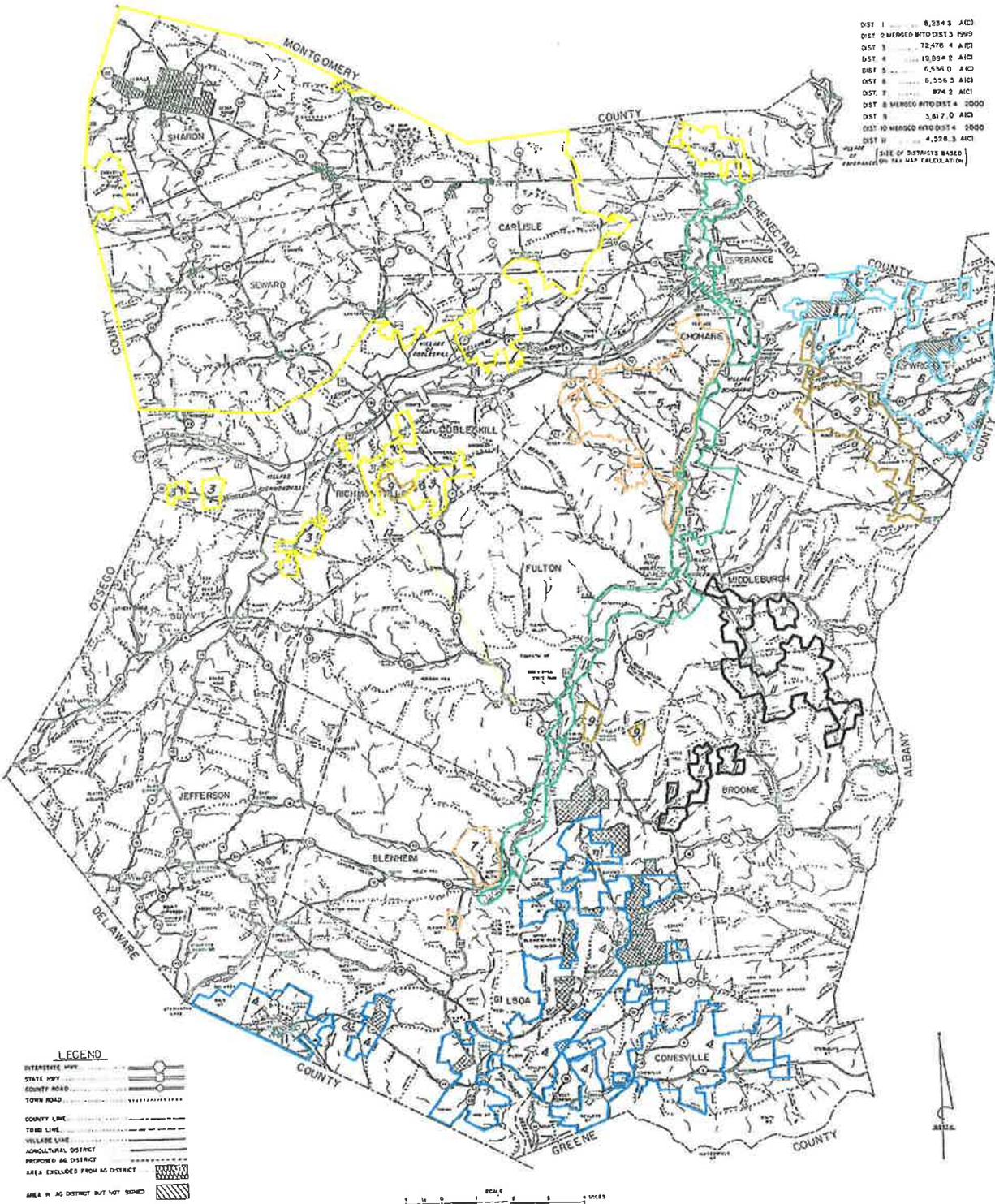
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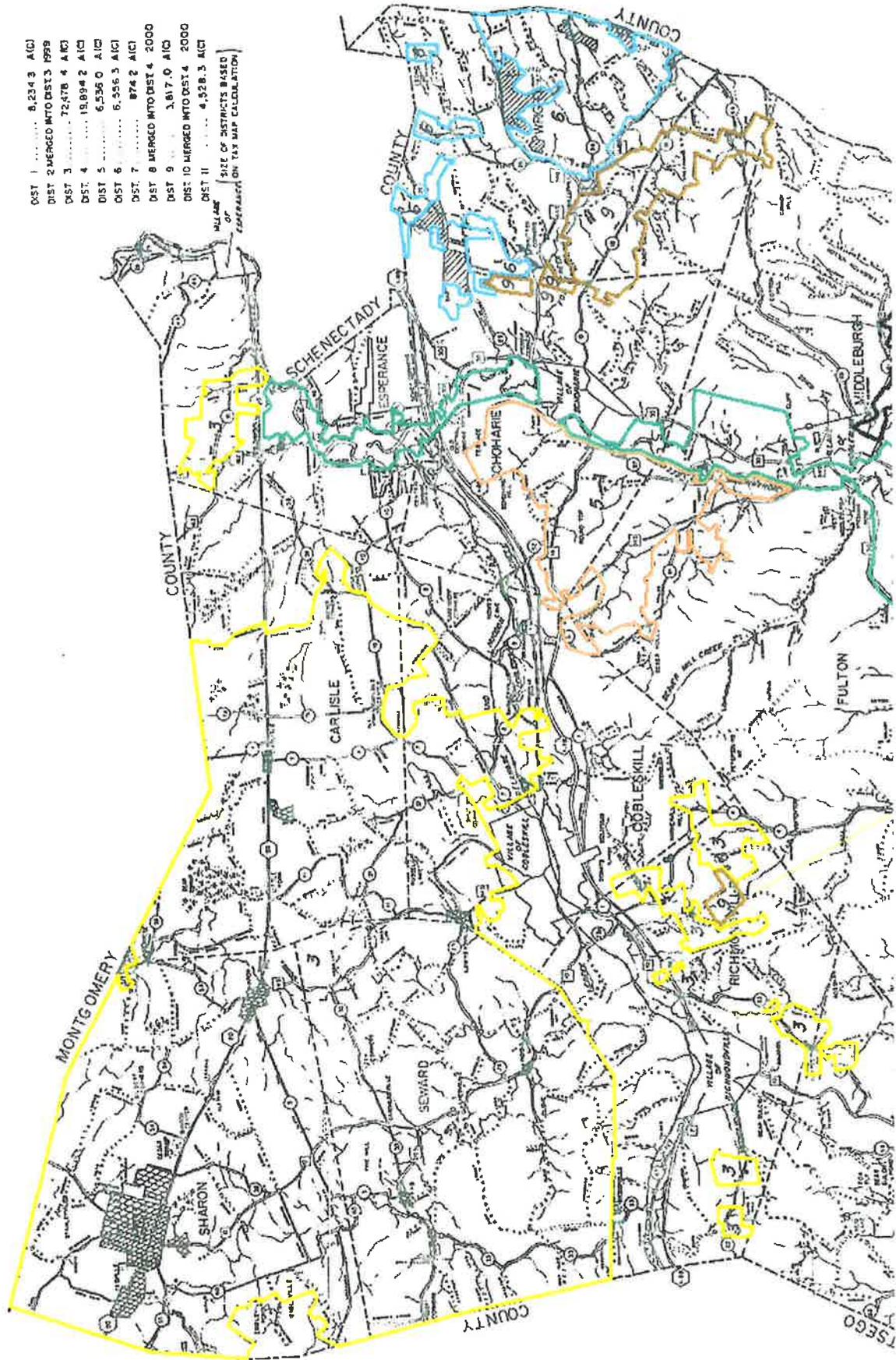
Agricultural Districts Maps

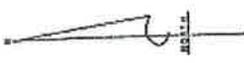
Existing districts and proposed district consolidation by 2004

SCHOHARE COUNTY AGRICULTURAL DISTRICTS



SCHOHARIE COUNTY AGRICULTURAL DISTRICTS





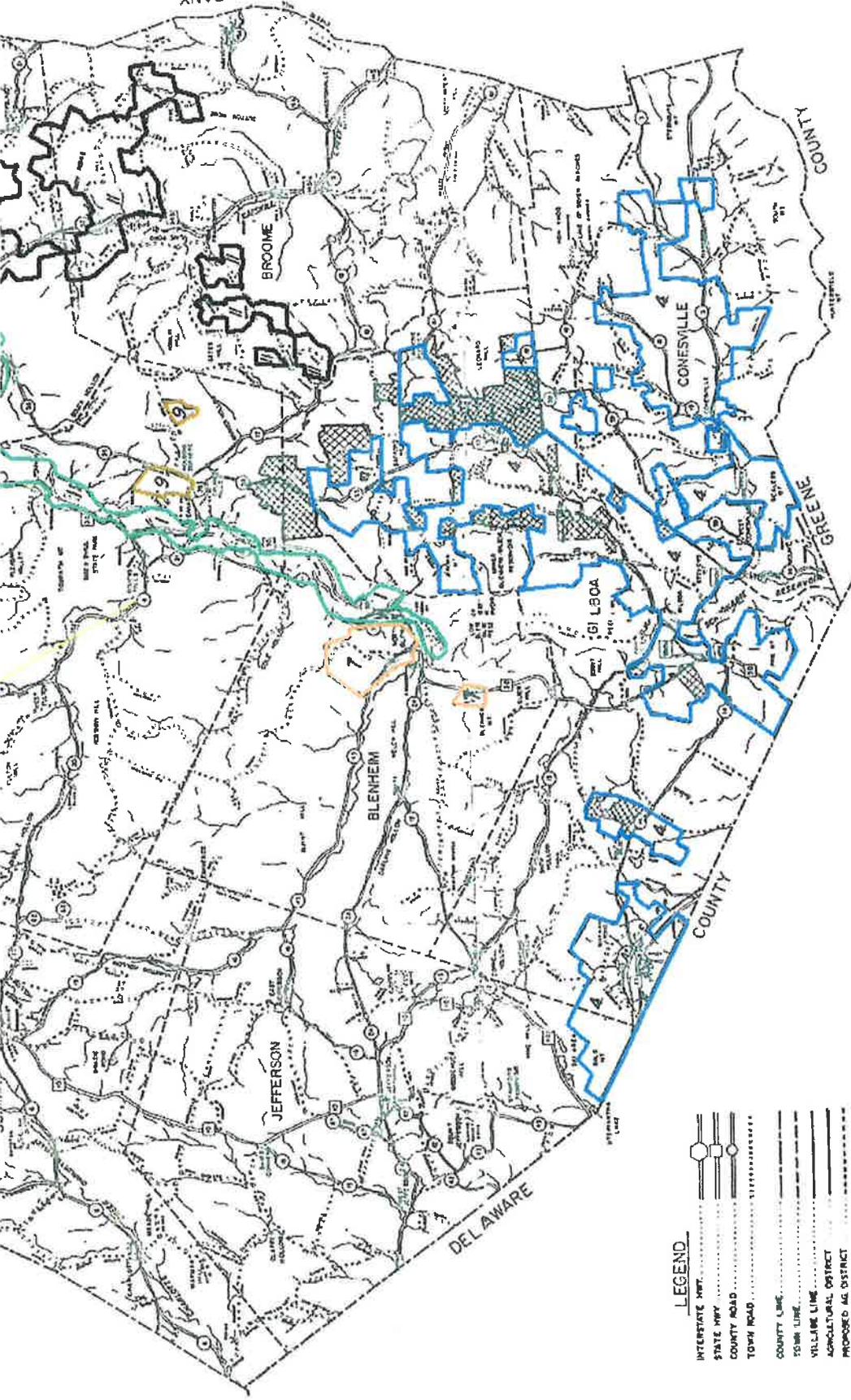
ALBANY

COUNTY

GRENE

COUNTY

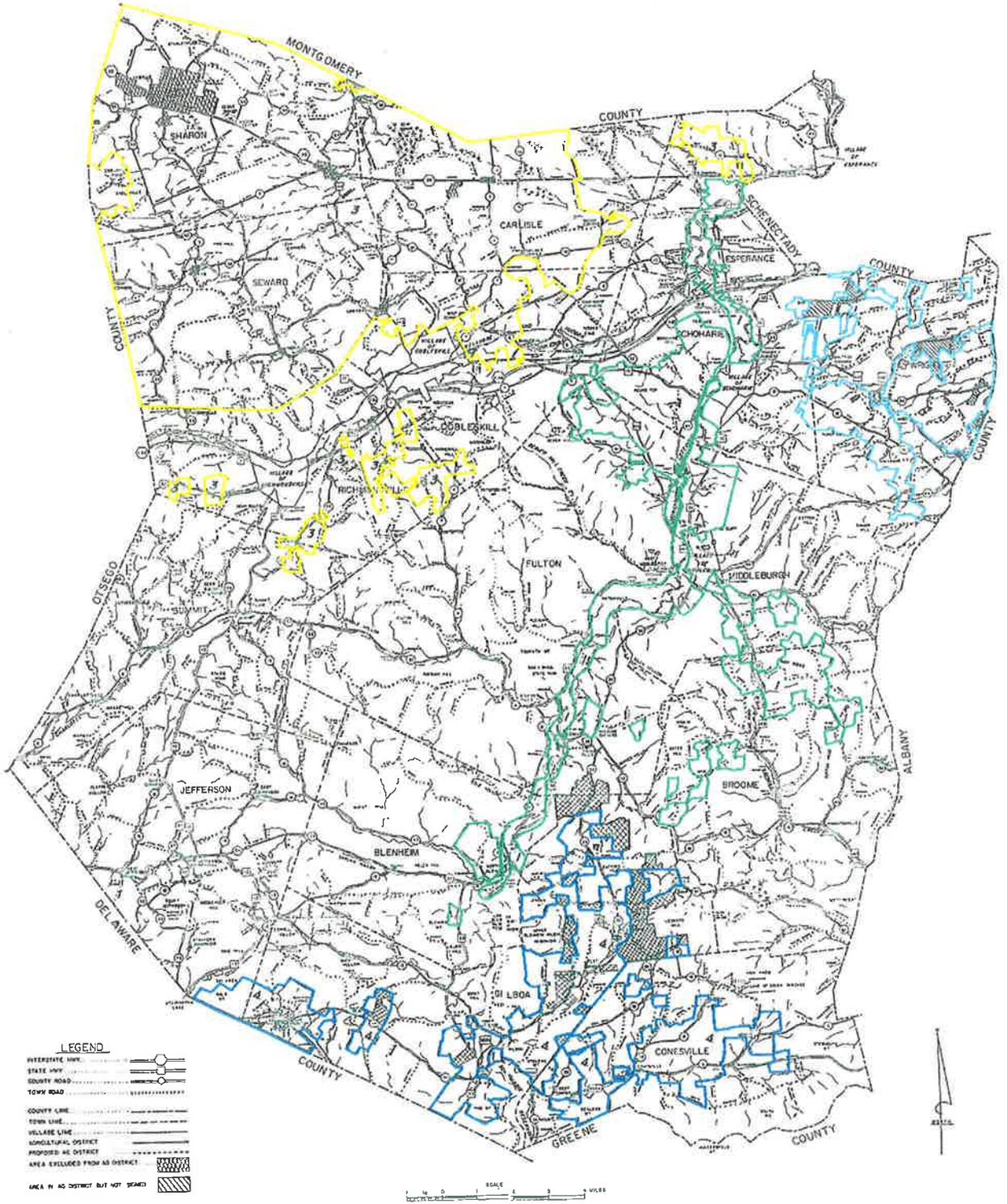
DELAWARE



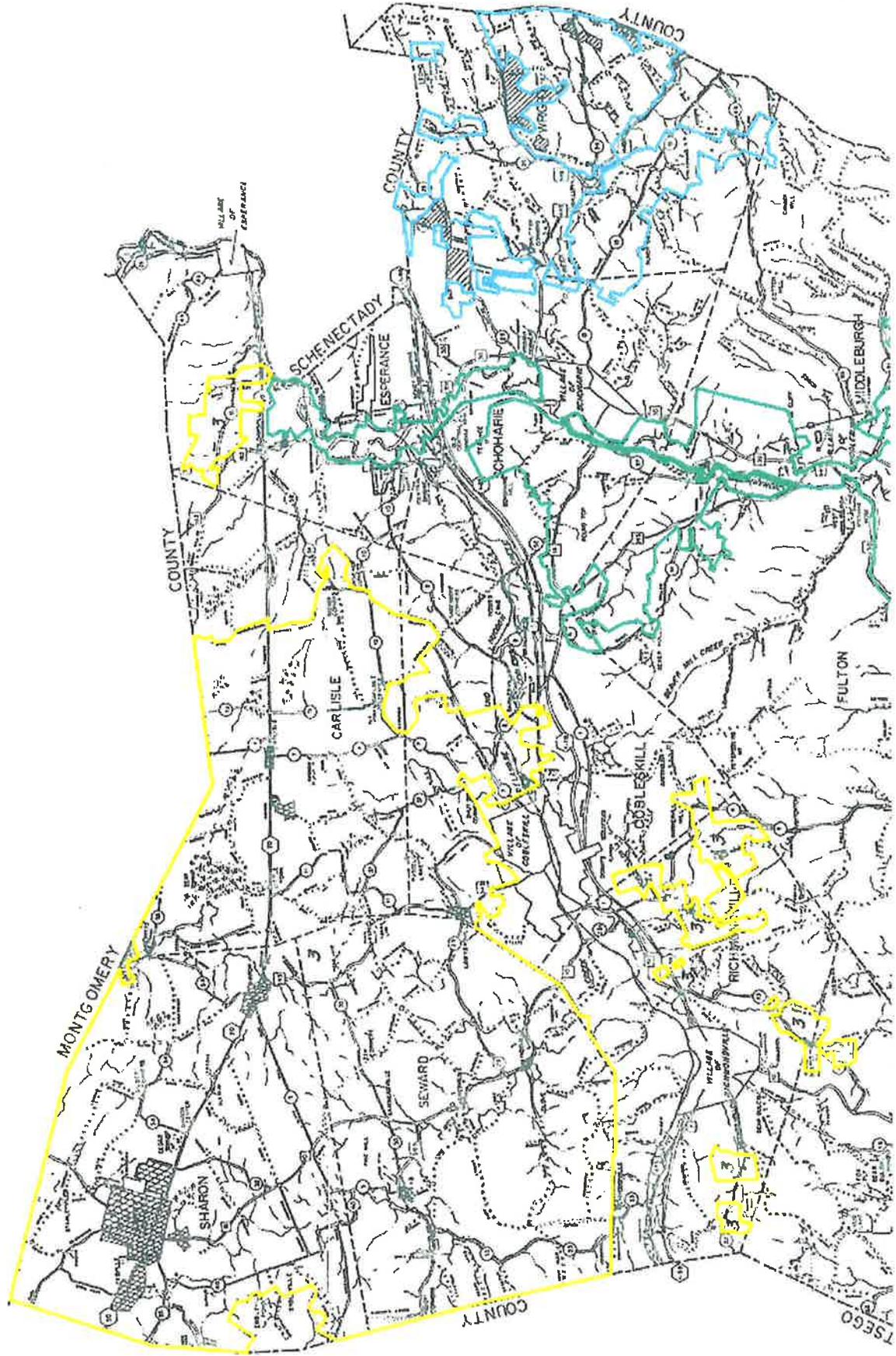
LEGEND

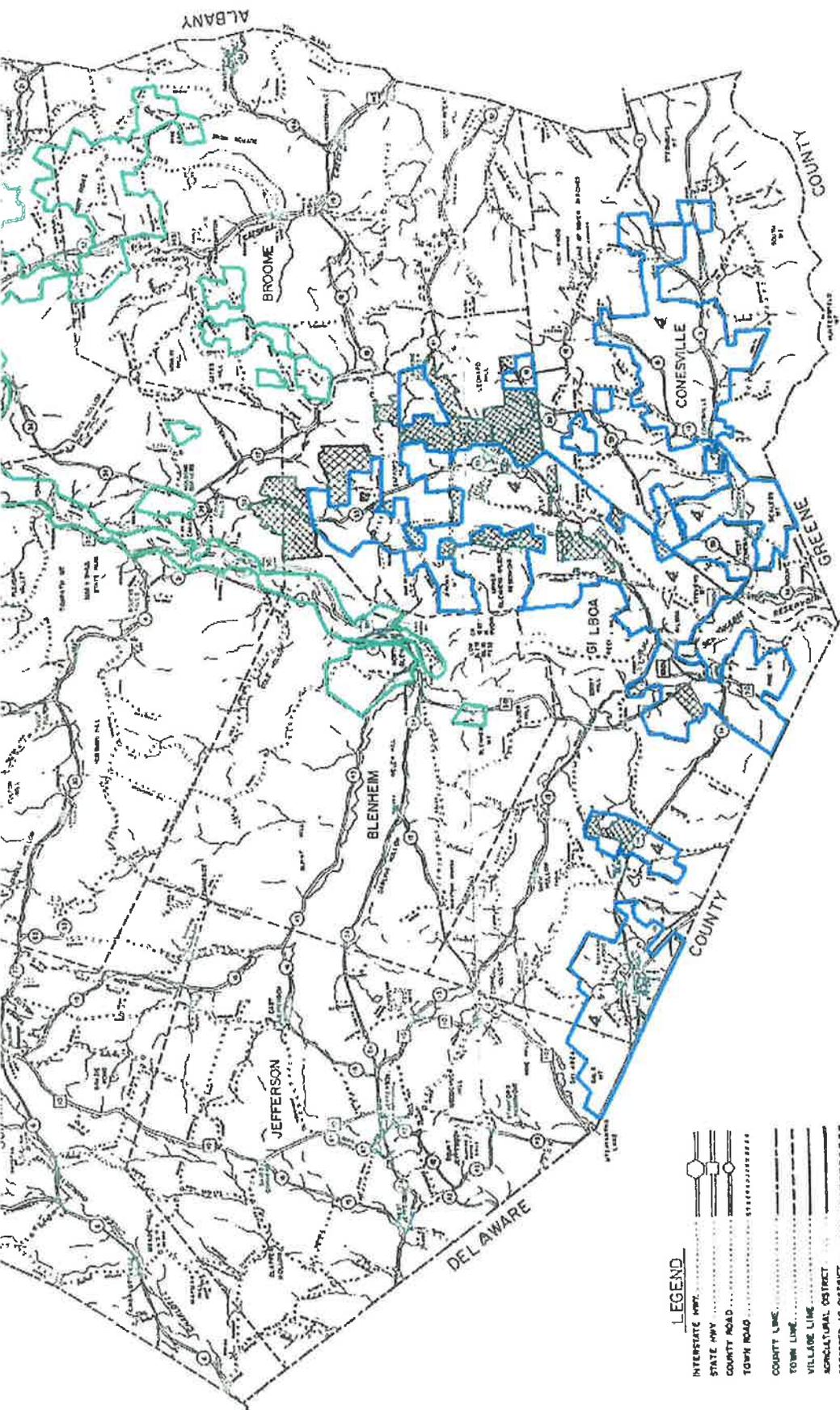
- INTERSTATE HWY. (thick line with double circles)
- STATE HWY. (line with single circles)
- COUNTY ROAD (dashed line)
- TOWN ROAD (dotted line)
- COUNTY LINE (long dashed line)
- TOWNSHIP LINE (short dashed line)
- VILLAGE LINE (dash-dot line)
- AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT (diagonal hatching)
- PROPOSED AG DISTRICT (cross-hatching)
- AREA EXCLUDED FROM AG DISTRICT (stippled pattern)
- AREA IN AG DISTRICT BUT NOT SEARCHED (diagonal hatching)

SCHOHARIE COUNTY AGRICULTURAL DISTRICTS CONSOLIDATED



SCHOHARIE COUNTY
AGRICULTURAL DISTRICTS
CONSOLIDATED





LEGEND

- INTERSTATE HWY. (thick solid line with double circles)
- STATE HWY. (solid line with circles)
- COUNTY ROAD (dashed line)
- TOWN ROAD (dotted line)
- COUNTY LINE (long dashed line)
- TOWN LINE (short dashed line)
- VILLAGE LINE (dash-dot line)
- AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT (diagonal hatching)
- PROPOSED AG DISTRICT (dotted line)
- AREA EXCLUDED FROM AG DISTRICT (cross-hatching)
- AREA IN AG DISTRICT BUT NOT SOWN (diagonal hatching)

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2.3 Land Use and Development Trends

Schoharie County has experienced slow but steady growth over several decades resulting in limited development pressures on certain parts of the County. These are accounted for proximity to the Albany and New York City urban areas, the lower cost of utilities as compared to adjoining regions, the influence of the I-88 highway and a number of other factors. There has, as a result, been a significant loss of farmland within the County, about 10.64 acres per day between 1982 and 1992. Nonetheless, the real estate recession of the 1990's clearly slowed conversions and farmland losses between 1992 and 1997 took place at a much reduced rate of approximately 3.85 acres per day.¹⁷

Growth patterns within the County are revealed in Tables 2.3 and 2.4, which indicate the least populated southern areas of the County are the fastest-growing. These communities (e.g., Summit, Conesville and Gilboa) also have higher numbers of second homes, real property transfers and new housing construction.

Table 2.3 - Population Growth, 1990-1998

<u>Town</u>	<u>1990 Population</u>	<u>1998 Estimate</u>	<u>Change</u>	<u>% Change</u>
Summit	973	1,088	115	11.8%
Blenheim	332	359	27	8.1%
Conesville	684	735	51	7.5%
Gilboa	1,207	1,283	76	6.3%
Carlisle	1,672	1,761	89	5.3%
Seward	1,651	1,732	81	4.9%
Jefferson	1,190	1,241	51	4.3%
Esperance	2,101	2,182	81	3.9%
Broome	926	961	35	3.8%
Fulton	1,514	1,571	57	3.8%
Richmondville	2,397	2,482	85	3.5%
Schoharie	3,369	3,482	113	3.4%
Sharon	1,892	1,953	61	3.2%
Middleburgh	3,296	3,391	95	2.9%
Cobleskill	7,270	7,406	136	1.9%
Wright	1,385	1,405	20	1.4%
Schoharie County	31,859	33,032	1,173	3.7%

The growth among the communities is generally coming north from the Catskills, influenced more by New York City second-home buyers than Albany commuters although

¹⁷ Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture

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the latter can be expected to be a factor in the future. Fortunately, these areas of the County are not where most of the farming takes place. Farmland conversion pressure, therefore, has been limited to selected areas and the general loss of farmland can probably be attributed more to other factors such as low profitability.

Table 2.4 - Housing and Real Estate Activity, 1989-1993

<u>Town</u>	1990 <u>Housing Units</u>	1990 <u>Second Homes</u>	1990 <u>% 2nd Homes</u>	1989-1993 <u>Single-Family Building Permits</u>	1989-1997 <u>Real Property Transfers</u>
Summit	777	348	44.8%	53	904
Conesville	558	247	44.3%	50	660
Broome	698	288	41.3%	17	656
Gilboa	854	341	39.9%	57	971
Jefferson	725	254	35.0%	0*	1,589
Blenheim	214	68	31.8%	21	333
Fulton	745	230	30.9%	0*	711
Sharon	838	117	14.0%	17	870
Middleburgh	1,505	157	10.4%	57	1,126
Richmondville	1,075	94	8.7%	52	847
Seward	662	44	6.6%	26	674
Carlisle	613	28	4.6%	29	675
Esperance	827	32	3.9%	35	653
Wright	538	20	3.7%	8	539
Schoharie	1,344	23	1.7%	58	996
Cobleskill	2,458	34	1.4%	46	1,287
Schoharie County	14,431	2,325	16.1%	526	13,491

* It appears that Fulton and Jefferson did not report building permit data.

Data Sources: U.S. Census for 1990 and Schoharie County Department of Real Property Services.

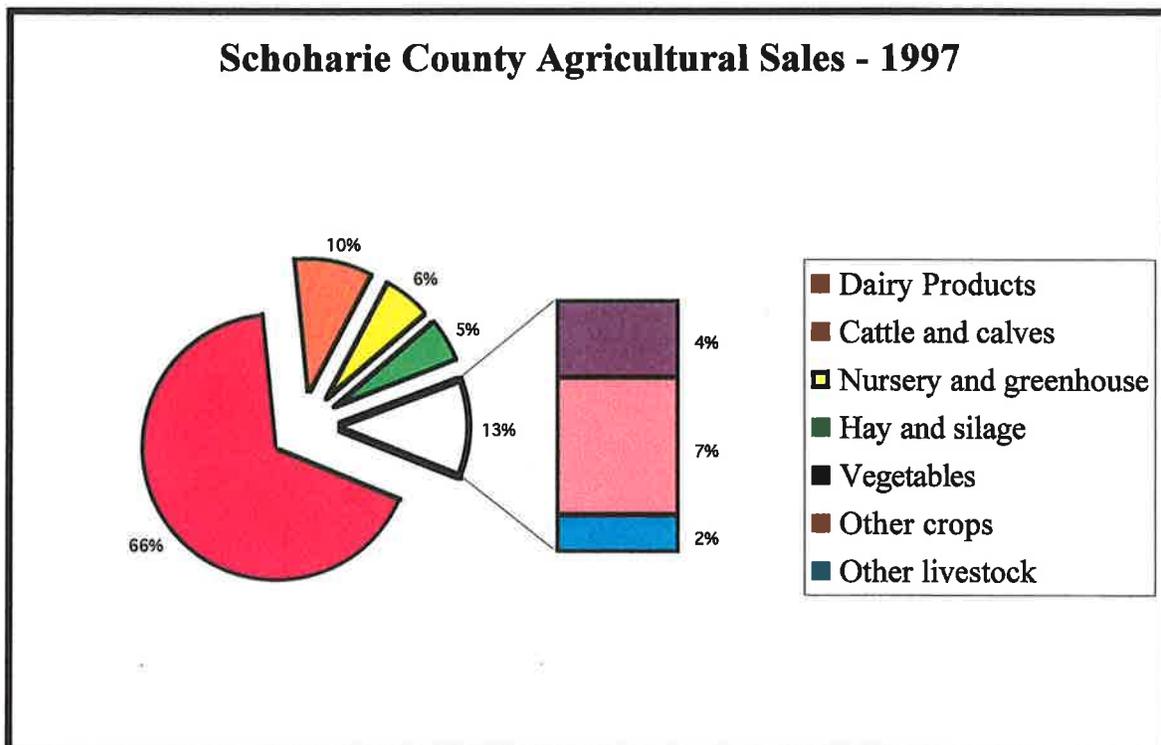
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2.4 The Economics of Schoharie County Agriculture

Approximately 110,800 acres of Schoharie County is in farm use, some 28% of the total land mass. About 24,500 acres or 22% of this farmland is wooded, this area being in addition to approximately 242,200 acres of other forested land, meaning that fully 94% of Schoharie County is in farm or forest use and overwhelmingly accounts for its character.

There were 409 farms generating sales of at least \$2,500 in 1997 and 251 of these produced \$10,000 or more of product. Altogether, these farms produced some \$26,973,000 in sales in 1997, of which \$21,126,000 or 78% was livestock-related. These various products accounted for 822 full or part-time jobs (including 311 owner-operators primarily occupied with farming). This is the agricultural economic base of Schoharie County and it is fairly diverse with a very strong dairy sector composed of small to mid-sized farms.¹⁸ The following chart and Table 2.5 provide further data.



¹⁸ Source: 1997 U.S. Census of Agriculture. It must be noted that New York State Agricultural Statistics Service surveys indicate somewhat higher numbers in certain instances (e.g. 575 total farms versus the 518 counted in the Census). This is attributable to the fact the State does more frequent data analysis and more follow-up. Nevertheless, Census numbers are more complete overall and, therefore, more suitable for planning purposes.

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**Table 2.5 - Market Value of Schoharie
County Agricultural Products, 1997**

Agricultural Products	1997 Cash Receipts	% of Category	% of Total	No. of Farms
Nursery & greenhouse crops	\$1,549,000	26.4%	5.7%	33
Hay, silage & field crops	1,410,000	24.1%	5.2%	197
Vegetables	1,039,000	17.8%	3.9%	34
Grains	1,038,000	17.8%	3.9%	25
Other crops (fruits, etc.)	811,000	13.9%	3.0%	42
Total Crops =	\$5,847,000	100.0%	21.7%	270*
Dairy products**	17,976,000	85.1%	66.6%	139
Cattle & calves	2,665,000	12.6%	9.9%	188
Other livestock	485,000	2.3%	1.8%	69
Total Livestock =	\$21,126,000	100.0%	78.3%	349*
Total Agricultural =	\$26,973,000	100.0%	100.0%	518*

* Because multiple products are often produced from the same farm, numbers of farms overlap and cannot be directly totaled.

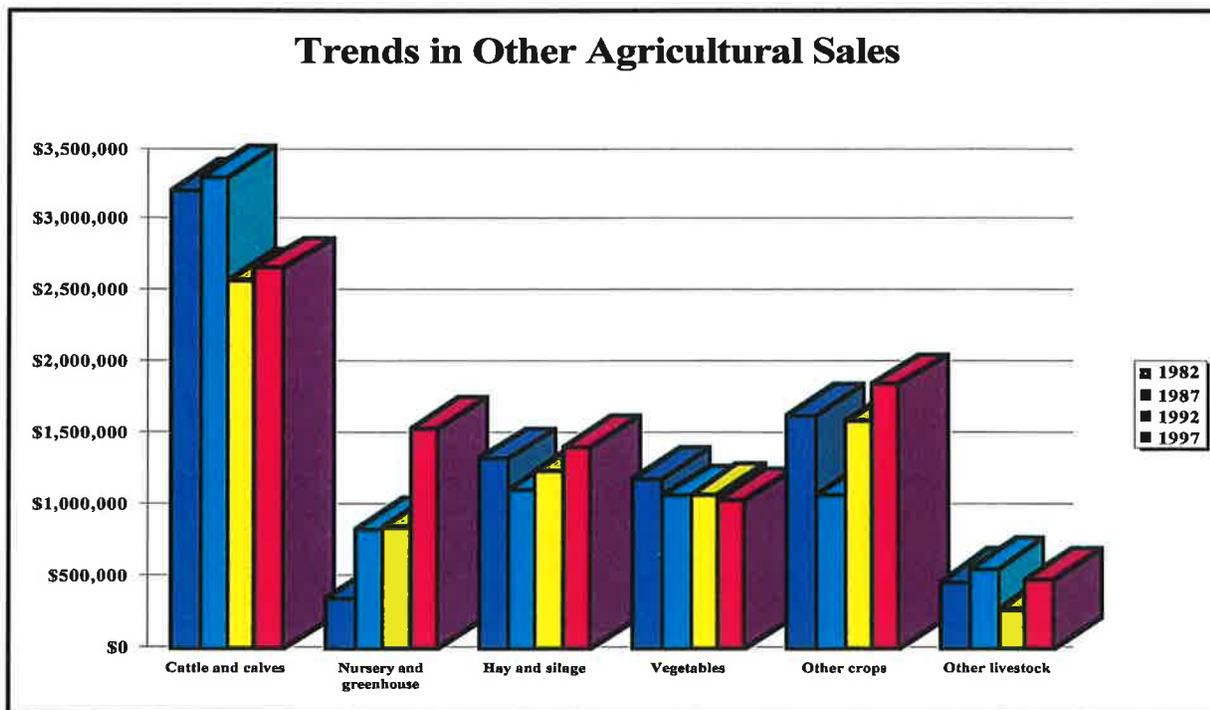
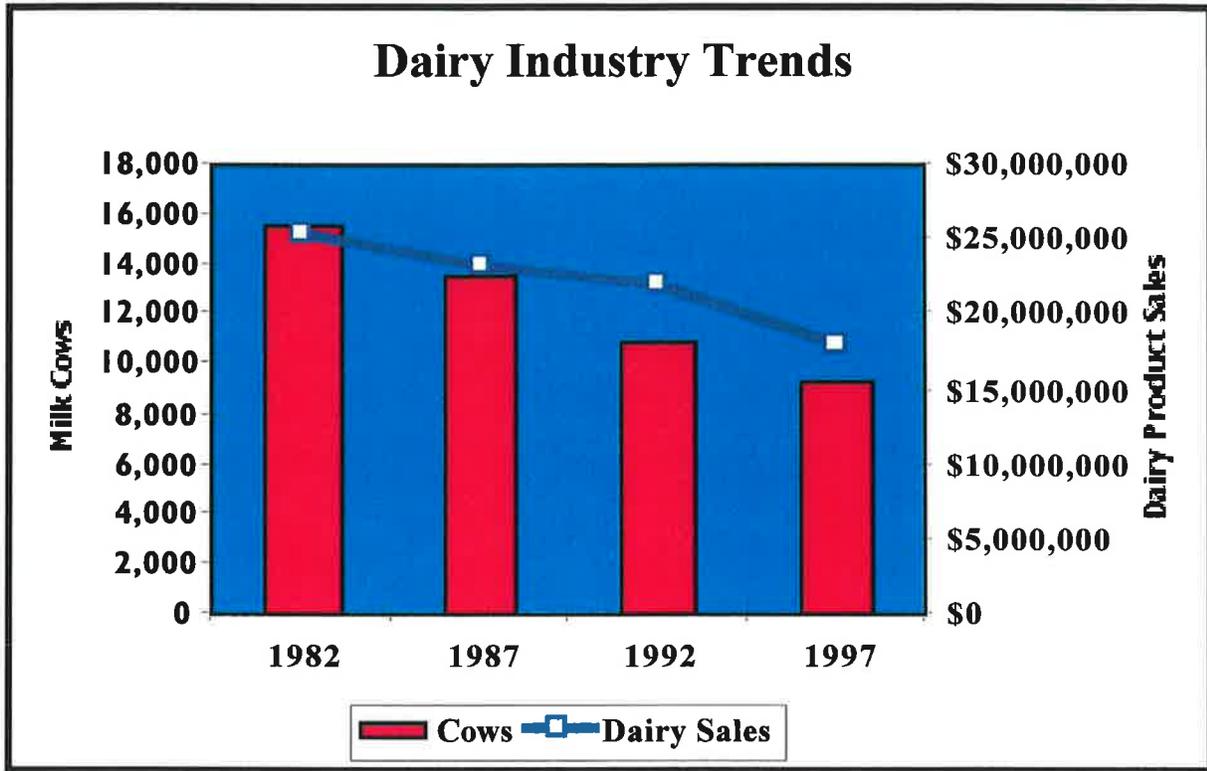
** Farms with milk cows totaled 156 in 1997 but only 139 are recorded as selling dairy products.

The two charts following illustrate trends with respect to sales of dairy and other agricultural products. Sales of agricultural product declined by 19% between 1982 and 1997, with dairy dropping 29%, cattle and calves losing 17% and vegetable sales reduced by 12%. Nevertheless, there were increases of 341% in nursery and greenhouse crops, 6% in hay and silage sales, 14% in other crops and 2% in other livestock.

Overall, Schoharie County agriculture has not fared badly. The agricultural economy has been in transition and given the shifts to cash crops one can assume some sales are probably being under-reported. Also, agricultural industries in the Northeast as a whole have faced particularly difficult times over the last 15 years with relentless price pressure on milk and general economic conditions within the sector that did not favor growth. The fact Schoharie's agricultural base consists mostly of smaller farmers has also led to larger numbers going out of business. More recently, however, as some of these farmers have specialized and, for example, gone into raising heifers, sales of cattle and calves have actually increased (3% since 1992) and similar patterns can be expected in other areas.

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County agricultural sales are ranked as follows among New York State's 61 counties:¹⁹

Table 2.6 - Schoharie County Agriculture By State Rank, 1997

Agricultural Products	Criteria	Rank
Broilers and other meat-type chickens	Birds sold*	8
Sheep and lambs sold	1,443 animals sold	10
Sheep and lamb inventory	1,571 animals	14
Bee colony inventory	Bee colonies*	15
Duck, geese & other poultry inventory	1,056 birds	16
Maple trees tapped	316 acres	19
Hay crops	42,584 acres	20
Vegetable, sweet corn & melons	\$1,039,000 in sales	26
Dairy products	\$17,976,000 in sales	30
Livestock and poultry (all)	\$21,126,000 in sales	32
Crops (including nursery and vegetables)	\$5,847,000 in sales	35
All agriculture	\$26,973,000 in sales	42

* Data not disclosed to protect individual producers

** There are 61 counties generating agricultural sales in New York State.

Some small direct market businesses have also proliferated in the last 5 years. An excellent brochure entitled Year Round Bounty from Schoharie County, prepared with help from the Regional Farm & Food Project, promotes a number of such producers offering goods ranging from beef to pastured poultry to maple products. The successful Schoharie County Country Music Festival's Farmers Market in Cobleskill (one of 26 producers featured in the brochure) has also helped to stimulate interest in direct marketing and consumer trends will increase the opportunity for small and part-time farms to increase in numbers.

New York is of one the top states in the nation in milk production and, therefore, Schoharie still does well in that regard, though several counties within the State do better. The County is, in fact, ranked 232nd out of 2,563 counties in the U.S. producing dairy products. Also, sales of dairy products in the County have, as the above chart demonstrates, declined

¹⁹ Source: 1997 U.S. Census of Agriculture. This information indicates the value of Schoharie County agriculture relative to the small size of the County.

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more slowly than cow numbers.²⁰ This reveals the substantial consolidation in the dairy industry improvements in production per cow. Additionally, low milk prices throughout the early 1990's (a trend temporarily reversed in 1998 with some very high pricing) may have distorted the sales trends. Finally, it must be noted that some farmers within the County are, in fact, choosing to reduce cow numbers to pursue intensive rotational grazing and other least cost feeding programs with the hope of increasing profits even though production may drop.

One must also consider the substantial multiplier effects connected with farm sales when evaluating the size and nature of an agricultural economy. Farmers typically purchase most of their goods and services from within a 20-25 mile range of the farm, while their product is marketed outside the region. This export of product and import of dollars puts them on the high side of multiplier scales according to a Cornell University study.²¹ That Cornell research, conducted for 1991, indicates the following range of multipliers, by sector of the New York State economy, for both total income and full-time equivalent jobs:

Table 2.7 - Economic Multipliers by Sector, New York State, 1991

	<u>Total Income</u>	<u>Employment (FTE's)</u>
<u>Production Agriculture Industries</u>		
Dairy	2.29	1.52
Crops	2.28	1.51
Nursery and wood products	1.78	1.39
Poultry and livestock	1.64	1.37
 <u>Agricultural Manufacturing Industries</u>		
Dairy processing	2.61	3.53
Grain processing	2.16	2.58
Fruits and vegetables processing	1.67	2.09
Meat processing	1.65	1.99
 <u>Other Economic Sectors</u>		
Construction	1.66	1.57

²⁰ Dairy farms dropped from 318 in 1982 to 156 in 1997, while cows declined from 15,521 to 9,264 over the same period.

²¹ Department of Agricultural, Resource and Managerial Economics, Policy Issues in Rural Land Use, December, 1996, "Economic Multipliers and the New York State Economy."

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Services	1.48	1.39
Manufacturing (non-food)	1.41	1.62
Retail and wholesale trade	1.40	1.30
Finance, insurance and real estate	1.19	1.54

The Cornell data suggests agriculture is responsible altogether for as much as \$61,633,000 of the Schoharie County economy.²² It accounts for as many as 1,245 jobs and these are found not only on farms, but also at accountant offices, feed mills, dairy processing facilities, farm stores, automobile and truck dealers, truckers, veterinarians and the like.²³ Schoharie County farmers, for example, own and must maintain and replace 755 trucks, 1,395 tractors and numerous other pieces of farm equipment and machinery. They also purchase over \$992,000 of petroleum products, \$4,734,000 of feed, \$1,716,000 of hired farm labor and approximately \$12,008,000 of other products and services from Schoharie County and other nearby enterprises, many of which would not be considered farm supply businesses. Likewise, various out-of-County businesses serving the regional agricultural community depend on Schoharie County farm trade including, for example, slaughterhouses, feed manufacturers and tire service. For these various suppliers to survive and prosper, a core critical mass of farmers must be preserved and vice-versa. Otherwise, competitiveness cannot be maintained.²⁴

Cornell University also prepares a "Dairy Farm Business Summary" of financial data from participating farms. The 1998 Summary for the New York Small Herd Farms, 65 Cows or Fewer, typical of those found in Schoharie County, breaks down average accrued income and expenses for 53 dairy enterprises. This information is included in Table 2.8 following.²⁵ It illustrates the wide range of contributions each farm makes to rural economic activity.

Moreover, the average dairy surveyed ended the year with assets of \$422,078 and an average farm net worth, not including non-farm assets and liabilities, of \$313,287. Dairy farms, therefore, are very significant economic development sites as compared with other small manufacturing or service enterprises. The 139 milk producers represent major

²² Multiply \$26,793,000 of sales by the economic multiplier of 2.285 for dairy/crop agricultural production.

²³ Multiply 822 jobs times by an employment multiplier of 1.515 for dairy/crop agricultural production. The 1997 Ag Census indicated there were 511 hired employees and 311 operators principally employed in farming.

²⁴ Source: 1997 U.S. Census of Agriculture.

²⁵ The survey does not include dairies utilizing milking parlors.

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investments in Schoharie County, as much as \$58,600,000 based on the average, although it must be noted that 1998 was unusually good for dairy farmers with record high milk prices during a large part of the year.

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**Table 2.8 - Small Herd Farms, 65 or Fewer
Dairy Farm Income and Expenses, 1998
(Average of 53 Farms)**

<u>Average Income</u>	
Milk sales ²⁶	\$133,359
Cattle, calf & other livestock sales	9,334
Crop sales	1,666
Governmental receipts	2,976
Other revenues	<u>3,126</u>
Total Income	\$150,461
<u>Average Expenses</u>	
Hired labor	\$5,075
Feed	37,578
Machinery (including repairs & depreciation)	21,070
Livestock (including expansion)	2,682
Breeding, veterinary and medicine	4,620
Milking supplies	3,652
Other livestock expense	3,312
Milk marketing	6,062
Fertilizer and lime	3,286
Seeds, plants and other crop expense	3,021
Buildings/fence (repairs and depreciation)	5,657
Property lease expense	1,763
Insurance	2,629
Utilities (farm share)	4,502
Interest	7,435
Taxes	4,006
Miscellaneous	<u>1,815</u>
Total Expenses	\$118,165
Net Farm Income	\$32,296

²⁶ This average for milk sales multiplied by the 139 milk producers in the County yields total dairy product sales of \$18,537,000, very close to the Census figure of \$17,976,000 and indicating these averages are very near to the actual for Schoharie County.

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2.5 Relationship to Other Planning

Although Schoharie County has not formally adopted a county comprehensive plan or economic development strategy, there have been a number of planning efforts with impacts upon agriculture. Some of the most important are reviewed below:

Schoharie County Land Use: Projections, Growth Policy and Plan

This 1976 report by the Schoharie County Planning Commission includes a section entitled "Agricultural Viability and Districts." It addresses the potential impacts of the I-88 interstate highway and the New York State Power Authority's pumped storage project on growth and farmland preservation (The latter's plans then included additional projects.). It also endorses a balanced slow growth policy and the use of Agricultural Districts and land use regulations to protect farming. Finally, the report recommends careful local government scrutiny of projects for impacts on agriculture and steering of development to areas where services are available and such impacts will be minimized.²⁷

Schoharie County Business Retention and Expansion Initiative

The County, in cooperation with Cornell University and the Chamber of Commerce, recently conducted a survey of existing businesses. It found that "on the whole, Schoharie County was rated as a very favorable place to do business" and attributed this to community character (including size, people and scenery), public services, education and generally low costs of living. Agriculture, obviously, contributes to many of these factors. The study also documented that 47% of businesses employ less than 25 persons yet fully 46% gross over \$2,000,000 in sales and 80% market their goods and services primarily out-of-County and import dollars, similar to agriculture. Nevertheless, only 22% purchase their raw materials and services with the County, indicating an opportunity to co-locate more support businesses in the area. The most frequently cited business problems have been labor-related (also common to agriculture) and suggestions for local leaders include; 1) better preparing of the labor force with basic skills, 2) providing funding and regulatory support to start-ups, 3) giving more consideration to existing businesses and 4) using incentives to encourage business growth. Businesses surveyed also want to make more use of SUNY-Cobleskill as a resource.

²⁷ Interestingly, the Commission anticipated a food shortage that, of course, never materialized, illustrating a dual set of problems that have persisted in discussions of farm issues until recently - the mistaken belief that the general public can be convinced of the worthiness of farmland protection on the basis of Malthusian theory and an over-emphasis on increasing production, as compared to improving profitability.

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State University of New York at Cobleskill

SUNY-Cobleskill, which began in 1916 as the Schoharie State School of Agriculture, is one of the County's most prominent assets. It enrolls approximately 2,200 students in nearly 40 associate degree programs and one 4-year Bachelor of Technology in Agriculture degree program. Major academic areas include, but are not limited to; 1) Agriculture and Natural Resources, 2) Business and Computer Technologies and 3) Culinary Arts, Hospitality and Tourism. Each of these has a very tangible relationship to the agricultural industry. The dairy industry is primary to the college's theme and it includes a 65-cow Holstein herd (soon to be expanded to 200 animals), an extensive farm and a flexible curriculum that involves off-campus case farm analysis as well as traveling seminars on national and international levels. There is also a modern operating slaughterhouse on campus that is open to community use and adding capacity to do poultry processing. Additional facilities include an arboretum, fish hatchery, numerous greenhouses, agricultural engineering laboratories and horse stables.

SUNY-Cobleskill degree programs are available in agriculture business, animal science (with concentrations in dairy, equine, aquaculture and livestock fields), plant science (with concentrations in agronomy, environmental, floriculture, landscape and turf grass studies), agricultural engineering, fisheries and wildlife technology, ornamental horticulture, accounting, business administration, computer science, culinary arts, institutional foods, restaurant management and travel and resort marketing. Nearly all of these degree programs have significant impacts on the potential for agricultural development and profitability in the County but the culinary arts, hospitality and tourism training, as an example, might have even greater impacts if the Schoharie Valley were to be used as a living laboratory for development of regional food brands linked with agricultural tourism.

The Schoharie-Mohawk Regional Hydro Consortium

This is an organization of 11 counties working to "develop and implement a comprehensive and strategic plan to protect lives and property during flood events" throughout the Mohawk River and Schoharie Creek Watersheds. The latter encompasses 966 square miles including nearly all of Schoharie County, and the Consortium has made it part of its mission to gather more accurate flooding data regarding the Schoharie Creek and to improve flood planning coordination among emergency management agencies, towns, the farm community, the New York State Power Authority and New York City. A cooperative project with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and the Federal Emergency Management Agency is, for instance, yielding new floodplain maps and a very sophisticated early flood warning system is in the process of being developed.

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A critical need for more education of local officials regarding floodplain law administration has also been identified.

There are several implications for agriculture in regard to this planning. First and foremost is the impact of levees designed to protect farmland from flooding. Farmers have often relied upon such levees and many have sought further levee construction for this purpose. However, the impact of such levees in one area is often to channel water flow and increase flooding in another. This then increases the need for more extensive flood control measures downstream, creating conflicts between upstream and downstream landowners. Clearly, this issue will not be easy to resolve and will be of serious impact to the farm community.

The coordination of reservoir releases during flood emergencies is also a matter of some concern and may require further study. Another issue is stream bank erosion and how to protect farm lands from encroachment without preventing the stream from taking its normal meander course. Finally, remapping of floodplains will clearly result in some farm lands being newly classified as flood hazard areas and other areas being removed. This will limit the development of some Schoharie Valley properties and open up possibilities for others, with both positive and negative impacts on farmers, creating or eliminating ancillary income opportunities and raising or reducing the potential for farm conflicts with neighboring land uses.

The Timothy Murphy Trail and Scenic Byways of the Schoharie Valley

The Schoharie Valley is not only an agricultural resource but also an historical and scenic attraction. The combination of beautiful farmland, farm stands, reservoirs, Revolutionary War (and pre-Revolutionary) sites, attractive villages and outstanding views which are found along Route 30 have led to the formation of the Schoharie Valley Association and the designation of the highway as the Timothy Murphy Trail. Named after a Revolutionary War folk hero, the Trail is an effective tourism promotional device for Schoharie Valley businesses. A brochure has been developed which highlights the various museums and other attractions along the Trail and also lays out 9 different driving tours from the Trail into other part of the County.

The Trail has also been proposed as an official New York State Scenic Byway, which would provide additional credibility and allow more intensive promotion but this has proven controversial with fears of further outside governmental regulation being attached to the designation. Regardless of which direction is ultimately chosen by local officials (who must approve a Scenic Byway designation) it is clear the promotion of the Trail and

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the Schoharie Valley generally would be of tremendous value to the County's agricultural industry. Many opportunities exist to build upon the Trail, promote u-pick and farm stand activity and generate agricultural tourism. The "Sc'ary County" promotion is a small but excellent beginning and could be complemented with packaged bus tours and regional food labeling for greater impacts.

Local Comprehensive Planning

A number of communities within the County have been updating their Comprehensive Plans and land use regulations and these efforts have offered opportunities to incorporate recommendations and measures to address agricultural issues. The Town of Schoharie, for example, is considering a land use code based on environmental features such as steep slopes rather than fixed districts.

The Town of Middleburgh has established a goal to "preserve the opportunity to successfully conduct agricultural activity in Middleburgh and the various benefits agriculture provides." Their plan also recommends a Town right-to-farm law, the investigation of potential to allow installment payments of Town taxes and establishment of "a Town/Village committee to review the state of local infrastructure and its suitability to (the) needs" of the agricultural community.

Local land use planning can have significant impacts on agriculture. Some towns, for example, have required residential lots to be sized so large (e.g. 3 acres) that any new development is bound to consume excess agricultural land. Other towns, nonetheless, have included impacts on agriculture as part of their site plan review criteria. Overall, land use planning within the County has tended to operate at a very fundamental level and might well benefit from more innovative strategies such as conservation subdivisions, use of sliding-scale lot sizes and employment of real agricultural protection areas as opposed to effectively unzoned "agricultural-residential" districts. It is also apparent that many planning Board members could benefit from education regarding the Agricultural District Law, Agricultural Data Statements and farm issues in general.

Table 2.9 following provides an overview of land use planning among the County's towns and villages:

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Table 2.9 - Local Land Use Planning in Schoharie County²⁸

	<u>Planning Board</u>	<u>Comprehensive Plan</u>	<u>Zoning Law</u>	<u>Site Plan Review</u>	<u>Subdivision Regulations</u>
Blenheim	No	No	No	No	No
Broome	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
Carlisle	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Cobleskill Town	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cobleskill Village	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Conesville	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Esperance Town	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Esperance Village	Yes	No	No	No	No
Fulton	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
Gilboa	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
Jefferson	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
Middleburgh Town*	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Middleburgh Village*	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Richmondville Town	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Richmondville Village	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Schoharie Town	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Schoharie Village	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Seward	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Sharon	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Sharon Springs	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Summit	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
Wright	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes

* Joint Planning Board

Otsego County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan

Schoharie County shares many features with its neighbor, Otsego County (e.g., large numbers of small income farms), and the latter, with the assistance of the Schoharie firm, "Community Planning & Environmental Associates" has already assembled an Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan.²⁹ That plan potentially impacts on Schoharie in several

²⁸ Information supplied by Schoharie County Planning and Development Agency.

²⁹ Headed by Nan Stolzenburg, AICP, who, with her husband, is also a Schoharie County farm owner.

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ways. Its goals include; 1) increasing agricultural awareness, 2) improving profitability and encouraging new enterprises, 3) strengthening the role of agriculture in economic development, 4) implementing cost-effective farmland protection, 5) preserving a critical mass of farmers and agri-businesses, 6) enhancing farm transfer programs and, 7) sustaining the rural landscape and acknowledging the environmental benefits of farmland.

All of these goals are, obviously, as appropriate for Schoharie as for Otsego. Also, Otsego's Plan recommends working with the Schoharie Land Trust to help preserve farmland, formation of buying and marketing cooperatives, application to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for funds to establish an "Agricultural Diversification and Enhancement Fund," establishment of a farm mentoring program, working with surrounding counties to promote regional agri-tourism and hiring of an agricultural specialist who might be shared with adjoining counties and focused on implementing these plans. The Otsego Plan also includes numerous other recommendations with applicability to Schoharie but those listed above clearly offer specific opportunities for the two counties to work together.

Schoharie County Local Agri-preneurship Project for Next Generation Farmers

Shannon Hayes, a Schoharie County resident and Cornell University graduate student, prepared this report in January, 1999 "to determine the opportunities and barriers facing the area's agriculturists." It identifies several barriers "threatening the health and future of Schoharie County's agricultural industry." These include; 1) lack of custom services, 2) lack of knowledge about farm transfers, 3) desire for information on alternative agriculture, and 4) need for improved business management skills.

The report also suggested there was considerable pessimism regarding farm income opportunities and an expectation that new agriculture endeavors would be input-intensive. A number of community and social issues with respect to cooperation among agencies, unresponsive educational programs and institutions, conflicts among and between members of farm and non-farm communities and problems with organizing the agricultural sector are also pinpointed.

Recommendations are offered with respect to; 1) mechanisms for bringing farmers together, 2) methods of capitalizing on emerging agricultural markets through diversification, niche businesses and directing marketing and 3) gaining public recognitions of the value of agriculture through appointment of an Agricultural Development Coordinator. Suggestions were also made to further research the contribution of farmers grossing less than \$10,000 of sales annually, the feasibility of community-based learning

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initiatives to bring together farm and non-farm community members, the potential viability of new diversified farm enterprises and value-added ventures, and the possibilities for funding of a position or agency dedicated to community agricultural development.

As a follow-up to the report, the Schoharie County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board together with Farm Bureau, the County Planning and Development Agency, SUNY Cobleskill, the Schoharie Land Trust, the County Industrial Development Agency and the Regional Farm and Food Project co-sponsored a conference on March 20, 1999 for the purpose of identifying opportunities in Schoharie County agriculture. Held at SUNY-Cobleskill, the all-day conference was attended by some 55 persons, most of whom stayed for the entire day. Slightly over half the participants were actively engaged in farming at some scale and most had a direct pecuniary interest in agriculture. They ranged from self-described hobby sheep farmers to some of the Schoharie County's largest dairy operations.

The following are some of the various observations drawn by program participants throughout the day (which are not necessarily the views of the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board):

- Schoharie County farmers need higher profits more than new sources of capital.
- SUNY-Cobleskill's meat/poultry facility provides a processing infrastructure that can, if used, be an economic asset to the local farm community .
- There is a need for a livestock directory to promote small-scale farming.
- Winter weather limits Northeast dairy farmers competing with California and Arizona factory dairies and it is unrealistic to "knock heads" in commodity markets.
- Many buyers of Schoharie County real estate only want "places in the country" and not necessarily farms. Their ability to pay higher prices makes it difficult for younger generations to buy farms.
- There are substantial opportunities available to farmers through diversification and exploitation of adjacent urban markets.
- Marketing is the key to creating opportunity in agriculture and professional technical assistance is often required. More direct marketing and local markets for local farm products are needed and more effective marketing and distribution systems need to be structured and implemented.

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- There is a great need to connect young farmers with older farmers who might sell or lease. A support system for inter-generational land transfers should be developed.
- Agricultural Districts should be strengthened to protect prime farmland from development. Smaller farms need to be included in AG Districts.
- Technology can greatly aid small-scale agriculture by creating marketing and networking opportunities but can also increase capital costs for farmers as new equipment or ways of doing business have to be brought on board.
- Change always produce winners and losers and it is critical that farmers learn how to adapt and respond to new opportunities.
- Farmers need to be more tolerant of other farmers and work together whether they are hobby farmers or represent production agriculture.
- Grass resources are not being used as effectively as they could be in Schoharie County to lower the costs of inputs.
- More vocational emphasis is needed in directing young people to agricultural careers.
- Smaller and more diversified farms can take advantage of the County's poorer soils.
- The financial needs of many smaller-scale farmers are often less than banks want to lend. Farmers need more help in approaching bankers and doing business planning.
- Active farms are needed to create a true rural environment and there is a need to communicate that this includes the smells, slow-moving vehicles, etc.
- Farmers must get involved with local government and act as advocates.
- More arrangements for the sharing of equipment and other resources are needed among farmers.
- Educational program to increase the awareness of agriculture among the general population are needed along with more rural/urban mixing opportunities . There is also a need for more agricultural education in the classroom.

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- More coordination among farm and agricultural organizations must be promoted.
- Many farmers would benefit from a farmer to farmer mentoring program similar to the SBA's Service Corps of Retired Executives ("SCORE").

Further follow-up has occurred with the formation, from the group of conference participants, of an organization known as "MADE," for Marketing Agricultural Diversity and Excellence. Its mission is "to strengthen the environmental, economic and social vitality of our local farms so that our children will want to stay in our community. We aim to make agriculture an accepted and acceptable way of life, build stronger relationships among the diversity of area agriculturists; strengthen and expand local and regional markets and business opportunities, and to engage ourselves in community issues as advocates for local family-scale agricultural enterprises." Among the tasks this group has identified for itself are the following:

- Establishing marketing contacts within the community
- Forming groups of farmers who can jointly market their products
- Exploring the possibilities of a potential farmers market near I-88
- Developing a "local identity" logo
- Creating local publicity on agricultural issues (through newspapers, newsletters)
- Researching liability issues/feasibility of marketing local products
- Establishing "standards" for marketing under county logo
- Marketing availability of farm products at county fair
- Examining possibility for using web sites for marketing products
- Getting more people involved in buying locally.
- Teaching youth about specialty farming
- Studying examples of agricultural successes in other parts of the country
- Conducting outreach efforts to vocational classes in the schools
- Finding people willing to work on farms through local school ag programs
- Developing a local product list week by week to be made available to *"My Shopper"*

This group could well play an important role in implementing certain portions of this Plan.

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2.6 Existing Farmland Protection Programs

There have been, in addition to the Agricultural Districts discussed earlier, some other efforts to protect farming and farmland in the County. Some towns, for example, appear to have appointed agricultural members to their planning boards and a few towns have discussed enacting Right-to-Farm law. Schoharie County enacted such a law in 1991 but it is rather general and provides no mechanisms for resolving disputes. Also, it also lacks enforcement provisions, does not protect new agricultural operations and is of questionable use with respect to significant farm expansions. Moreover, it is not applicable with respect to any contradictory regulations enacted previously or in the future and, therefore, is of relatively little value in actually protecting agricultural activity from new projects or programs that could have negative impacts on it. Nonetheless, it does set forth a County policy that local municipalities can build upon and, precisely because it lacks too many details, it is virtually assured not to conflict with any local Right-to-Farm laws that may be enacted.

The most significant protection effort in the County has been within the New York City Watershed area, encompassing parts of the Towns of Broome, Conesville, Gilboa and Jefferson. The Watershed Agricultural Council has entered into a contract with the City of New York to administer a Whole Farm Easement Program in the Watershed and funds are available to purchase conservation easements on selected farms that participate in the Council's Whole Farm Planning Program to protect water quality. A pilot program is now in motion. The easements will not only serve to protect water quality and farmland, but also help to put more money in the pockets of farmers by giving them the opportunity to sell some of their hard-won equity and further capitalize their on-going farming operations.

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2.7 Agricultural Innovations and Trends

The single greatest challenge facing agriculture today is low profitability. Finding the right niche market in which to make a decent living is every farmer's battle. Some have chosen to leave the farm for other opportunities but recent innovations and trends offer hope for keeping them on the land. These include the following:

- New generation farm cooperatives are being formed across the country to market agricultural products and purchase supplies. These are taking shape around the original concept of cooperatives, which was to serve the narrow but compelling interests of small groups of producers united by specialized needs. Many of the larger cooperatives have failed in this regard by serving too many interests. An example of the new generation version is Catskill Family Farms which has been formed with the help of the Watershed Agricultural Council (WAC) to market specialty produce (e.g. fingerling potatoes) grown on Whole Farm Planned farms within the Watershed to New York City restaurants. It secures growing contracts in advance, advertises and promotes using a collective theme and by operating from a narrow scope is able to focus its efforts on highly profitable lines of business. WAC anticipates additional such cooperatives may be formed, for instance, to market meat or forest products.
- Small-scale agriculture, farm diversification and specialization are also regaining favor in some quarters as farmers realize the opportunities to earn high margins off small enterprises and niche lines of business. Specialization can increase profits and is the answer for many farmers but when it is used solely for the purpose of increasing production without corresponding management to lower the costs of inputs, the market can quickly become flooded with too much product. Only price supports and farm consolidations have allowed farmers to earn reasonable incomes under such conditions and they are now ever more subject to the whims of governmental policies and market prices on a relatively few products. Dependence on the market price of a single commodity can lead to financial ruin but diversity can help to spread the risk and allow a farmer to address niche opportunities. Indeed, specialization works best in synchronization with diversification (e.g. a beef stocker who also raises vegetables). Specialization also allows opportunities for diversification in the form of strategic alliances among farmers where one will grow grain and/or mix rations for another in return for rented crop land as an example. Small farmers in other counties (e.g. Wyoming) have, in fact, been able to prosper in relationships of this sort with larger farmers.
- Adding value to farm and forest products before they leave the County is also a

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method increasingly being used by farmers and others to increase profitability. Cornell Cooperative Extension of Sullivan County, for example, recently conducted a symposium on mini-dairy operations. There are various international and other firms marketing on-farm equipment that can put a dairy farmer in the business of producing yogurt, ice cream, butter and other added value products. With proper marketing and exploitation of access to the New York City market, this could offer dairy farmers a means of becoming “price-makers” rather than “price-takers.” New York State's farm tax breaks and the Schoharie County IDA’s Tax Abatement Program for industrial value-added businesses could be used to further enhance these opportunities.³⁰

- A corollary to the above trends is more and more emphasis on direct marketing of farm products. Farm stands have gained in popularity and add to the tourist charm of an area. The various Schoharie Valley farm stands and the Country Music Festival Farmers Market in Cobleskill provide excellent examples of how to do this and these can become ever more important tourist attractions by adding stands, creating variety and linking to other tourist attractions, thereby providing opportunities for local farmers to earn extra income. Some farmers in the Catskills depend on direct marketing for their entire income by selling vegetables, poultry and other farm products to the New York City green and live markets.
- Green-labeling of farm products is another trend which is of particular import to Schoharie County because it sits on the edge of the largest environmentally conscious market in the world - the New York City metropolitan area. The County is also poised, of course, to tap the much nearer Albany market. Green-labeling in this context can take many forms. It can include organic products, produce grown on Whole Farm Planned farms, fresh produce, pastured poultry, natural beef or firewood taken from forests managed under environmentally friendly conditions.

There are examples and/or opportunities for each of these in Schoharie County. One of the challenges, of course, is to avoid diluting the value of the green-label by employment of lax standards, balancing this concern against setting standards so high that small farmers cannot participate. The organic food industry faces such a challenge at the moment with too many farmers claiming to be organic who are really not. Nonetheless, proposed Federal standards threaten to worsen the problem by setting unrealistic standards, rather than remedying it as was hoped. A similar problem existed with New York State’s Seal of Quality program. It’s new “Pride of New York” program, however, appears much more workable and is now being used

³⁰ The IDA’s program could benefit some clarification in this regard to classify such mini-dairy and other agricultural processing enterprises as “industrial value-added.”

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by some 180 producers across the State. Unfortunately, none of them are from Schoharie County excepting for the aforementioned Catskill Family Farms.

A good example of very specific green-labeling is the Chesapeake Milk program now being launched by Penn State University, EPA, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation and others. It will label milk, produced under water quality programs designed to protect the Bay, with an environmental certification and then add a 5¢ per half-gallon premium onto the price. That premium will be returned to participating farmers as a profit share and for use in covering the costs of environmental improvements.

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2.8 The Forestry Sector

Forest Service data (which must be used very cautiously) suggests some 266,700 acres or 67% of Schoharie County is forested. Some 151,700 acres of this, or 38% of the County, is considered sawtimber.³¹ All but 39,400 acres of that timberland is owned by corporations or private individuals and it is a valuable income-producing asset for many farmers in the County. It is also the foundation for recreation and tourism industries. The following table provides a breakdown:

**Table 2.10 - Schoharie County
Private Timberland by Forest Type, 1993**

<u>Forest Type</u>	<u>Acreage</u>
White-red-jack pine	73,900 acres
Oak-pine	11,100 acres
Oak-hickory	38,300 acres
Elm-ash-cottonwood	5,100 acres
Maple-beech-birch	129,100 acres
<u>Aspen-birch</u>	<u>3,900 acres</u>
Total Timberland	266,700 acres³²

These largely hardwood forests produce high quality timber and the spectacular fall foliage that attract tourism. The most common species, in terms of numbers of trees, are Hard Maple, Soft Maple, Beech, Eastern Hemlock, Eastern White & Red Pine and Ashes. Significantly, some 159,100 acres or 60% of Schoharie's timberland is considered by the U.S. Forest Service to be either fully stocked or over-stocked and altogether the County's timberland represents 407,600,000 cubic feet of growing stock.³³

This growing stock includes an estimated 1,165,600,000 board feet of sawtimber and is

31 The source of all forestry data, unless otherwise indicated, is the USDA Forest Service, Northeastern Station, "Northeastern Forest Inventory and Analysis Project," 1993. Unfortunately, this data is based on samples and is subject to error. It must be used with great caution but is nevertheless the only official source available in most instances.

32 An additional 5,300 acres of sawtimber is classified as "non-typed."

33 Growing stock generally refers to all usable portions of trees, those portions which exceed 4" in diameter.

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growing by 40,900,000 net board feet per year.³⁴ The following table compares this growth to average annual removals of sawtimber:³⁵

34 Sawtimber refers to net volume of saw logs in trees.

35 Average annual removals refers to the net growing stock harvested, killed in logging operations, cleared or reclassified from forest to non-forest land.

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Table 2.11 - Schoharie County Average Net Annual Growth and Average Annual Removals of Sawtimber by Species Group, 1993
(All figures, except percentages, are in board feet)

<u>Species Group</u>	<u>Sawtimber Base Volume</u>	<u>Annual Growth</u>	<u>Annual Removals</u>	<u>Cutting Rate</u>
Eastern White - Red Pine	283,200,000	12,000,000	400,000	0.1%
Other Pine	6,600,000	400,000	0	0.0%
Eastern Hemlock	177,200,000	5,800,000	0	0.0%
Spruce-Fir	3,900,000	200,000	0	0.0%
Total Softwoods =	470,800,000	18,400,000	400,000	0.1%
Select White Oak	12,400,000	200,000	100,000	0.8%
Select Red Oak	112,600,000	4,900,000	3,800,000	3.4%
Other White Oak	14,700,000	700,000	0	0.0%
Hickory	2,400,000	0	100,000	4.2%
Yellow Birch	8,700,000	100,000	0	0.0%
Hard Maple	234,300,000	8,900,000	200,000	0.1%
Soft Maple	57,000,000	1,400,000	300,000	0.5%
Ashes	67,600,000	2,000,000	200,000	0.3%
Cottonwood-Aspen	25,000,000	1,500,000	100,000	0.4%
Basswood	35,300,000	400,000	0	0.0%
Beech	102,600,000	1,600,000	0	0.0%
Other Soft Hardwoods	17,800,000	500,000	0	0.0%
Other Hard Hardwoods	4,400,000	100,000	0	0.0%
Total Hardwoods =	694,800,000	22,600,000	4,900,000	0.7%
All Species =	1,966,000,000	40,900,000	5,300,000	0.5%

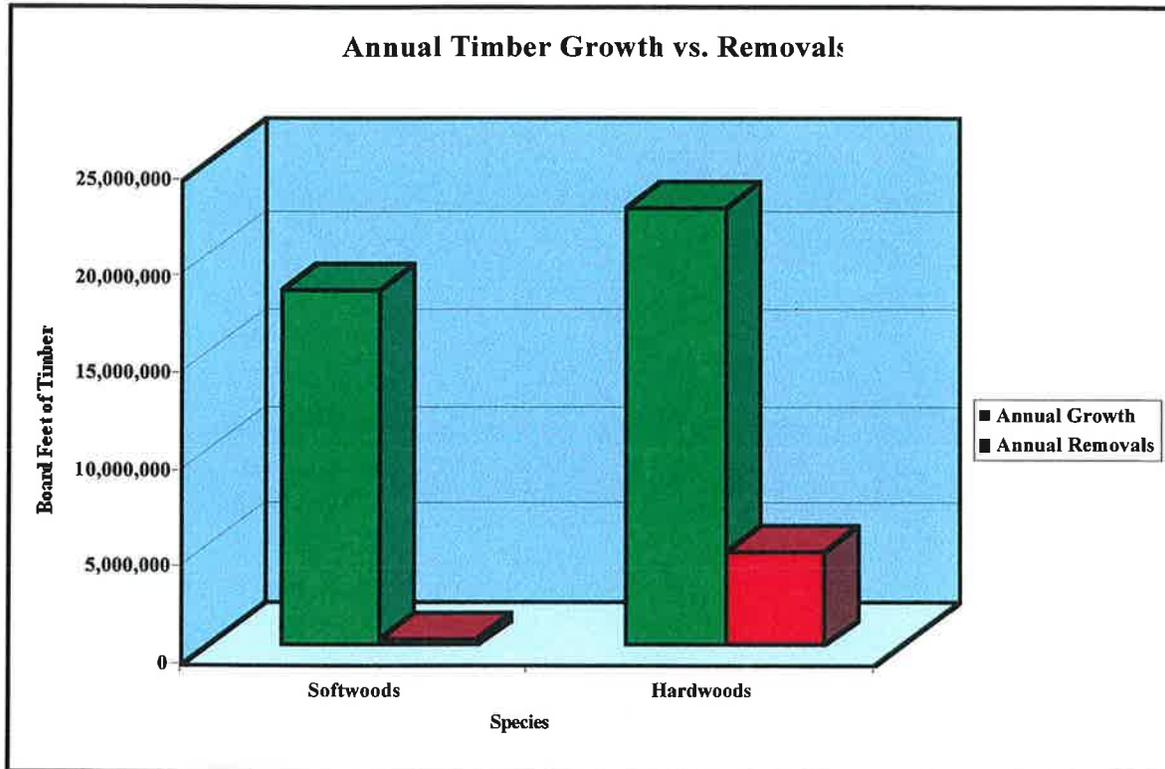
The data indicates cutting rates within the County are slightly below New York State's 0.8% average, though slightly above the 0.4% figure typical of the Catskills/Lower Hudson region.³⁶ The rates are also generally sustainable, with the exception of Hickory, and the proof of this is in the ratio of annual growth to removals which indicates a continually maturing forest in the County (see chart following). This is not necessarily good for

³⁶ Source: "Cutting Activity in New York's Forests," USDA Forest Service, Northeastern Forest Experiment Station, Radnor, PA.

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wildlife, the long-term vitality of woodlands or the forest industry. Too many large trees crowd out the understory vital to regeneration and to the animal populations for cover and as food. More timbering in general would create a healthier forest for the long-term. It must also be noted cutting rates in New York are well below those of neighboring states (e.g. 1% per year in Pennsylvania and 1.3% in New England).



Nevertheless, there are some obvious concerns with the harvesting patterns which have been taking place in the County. Hickory trees are being removed at rates that are not sustainable and Select Red Oaks are being cut at a rate far exceeding the remaining species, although hardwoods in general and all softwoods are not being harvested in anywhere near the amounts desirable - some not at all. The trend throughout the Northeast has been to "high-grade" forests to remove the better quality trees while leaving behind the less-valuable stock. This is a result of the general lack of demand in the region for low-grade logs and species and it raises the prospect of forests being taken over by these species or simply prevented from regenerating if markets are not identified for them as well.

Overall, hardwood lumber production in New York State is up 50% since 1990 and, although Schoharie County is an excellent source of this timber resource, it doesn't seem to

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be participating in the boom. The contributions of the forestry industry to the County economy are significant but nowhere close to potential. The following table summarizes some estimates and key economic facts regarding the forest industry in Schoharie County:

**Table 2.12 - Schoharie County
Forest Industry Economic Factors, 1996**

Logging establishments ³⁷	2
Sawmills and planing mills	1
Millwork manufacturers	2
Other wood manufacturers	1
Total forestry - related establishments	6
Number of employees	90
Annual pay per worker	\$21,944
Total annual payroll ³⁸	\$1,975,000
Estimated cash receipts ³⁹	\$4,444,000
Total economic impact ⁴⁰	\$7,910,000

The forest industry as a whole can fairly be described as underdeveloped on the basis of these statistics although it is a significant economic asset. Below average cutting rates and relatively limited development of wood processing industries within the County indicate there is a great deal of potential in the industry that is not being pursued as aggressively as it could or should be for the long-term health of the County's forests. The quality is relatively good at present with 75% of hardwoods rated as Grade 3 or better, comparable to the State average of 76%. The County's hardwood stock also primarily consists of lighter-colored woods which have been more in demand in recent years. It represents a self-replenishing resource if managed correctly. Farm and woodlot owners in the County who are able to create income from it have incentives to maintain land in forest use and this, in turn, benefits the tourism industry by helping to maintain the County's appealing character.

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- ³⁷ Once again the official data must be used cautiously because many smaller operations do not report data to the Department of Commerce, which is the sources of these figures. Experience suggests, for example, that the number of timber harvesters (logging establishments) is greatly understated.
- ³⁸ The County Business Patterns data indicates 90 employees received \$2,036,000 in payroll and this figure is extrapolated on the basis of the estimated 185 employees and then rounded.
- ³⁹ The Empire State Forest Association reports, based on 1992 data, New York State forest related-industries produced \$2.25 in value added for every dollar of payroll generated.
- ⁴⁰ Based on estimated cash receipts times 1.78 multiplier for wood products (see Table 2.7 above).

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The proximity of urban populations, many of whom possess strong environmental views, can also be used as a marketing opportunity if best forestry management practices are incorporated into a certification program. Wood products manufactured using such a "green-certified" program would enjoy better access to these markets and might be able to command better prices.

Much like the agricultural sector, Schoharie County's forest industry would benefit by the development of value-added enterprises which utilize locally produced wood. Craft-related enterprises which would mesh with the County's tourism industry are a distinct possibility and other niches could include specialty products marketed in the New York City metropolitan area (e.g., decking, wood pens, wooden lawn furniture). The key is to approach development from the standpoint of the market first and the resource second.

While finding uses for low-grade sawtimber is a challenge (and a necessity), there are some distinct opportunities given the large quantity of growing stock available. An obvious possibility is manufactured firewood, bundled for wholesale distribution to metropolitan area supermarket chains. Mulching facilities and pallet manufacturers are additional possibilities. The County's geography puts it within reasonable trucking distance to all the major metropolitan markets which would purchase these products.

Finally, there are a number of possibilities to complement Schoharie County's tourism industry by using its forest land to develop recreational attractions. If such activities are constructed as recreational leases they also hold the potential to generate added income for forest owners and, thereby, help the industry. Forest land is ideally suited to mountain biking, wilderness camping, hunting and other similar endeavors which, if promoted properly in conjunction with area Bed and Breakfasts, campgrounds and restaurants, can contribute in substantial ways to the economy.

Unfortunately, New York has been a high tax state and, while many recent reforms have helped to lower taxes on farmers, seniors and other residents, forest land is still often taxed at rates which exceed the annual income which can be derived for woodlot owners from forest management.⁴¹ Section 480(a) of the Real Property Law provides a measure of relief for participating landowners, but there is a strong disincentive to promote this program because the tax "costs" (savings to individual landowners) must be made up within the municipality. Clearly, there are no compelling reasons for private owners to hold onto forest land except for speculative purposes and this poses a substantial threat to long-term maintenance of forest land uses.

⁴¹ A recent analysis of real estate taxes on private forest land in the adjoining Catskill counties indicated annual tax rates of \$7-\$33/acre compared to forest revenues averaging less than \$5/acre.

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2.9 Schoharie County Agriculture - Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

The Schoharie County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board, in the course of preparing this Plan, made an initial analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats applicable to the County's agricultural industry. The listed items in each category were also ranked. The results of the Board's analysis are offered on the next page. Some additional discussion regarding a few of these is warranted and is provided below:

Taxes

Taxes were, for many years, the greatest concern of farmers and a competitive disadvantage for New York State farmers. Agriculture Value Assessment helped but in rural communities it did not solve the problem. Several recent tax laws, however, have had a significant positive impact in lowering farm taxes and actually creating a marketable advantage for New York State. There is, for example, a Refund of School Taxes program for farmers which provides for a full refund of school taxes paid on farmland and buildings (not including the residence). The refund is received on farmers' New York State Income Tax returns. Additional farms will qualify for 1999 and, while small and part-time farmers who could be a source of future agricultural expansion may not always qualify, this is of extraordinary benefit to production agriculture.

The STAR Program, too, provides reduced assessment for school tax on those portions of the property not subject to refund or for farmers not eligible for the latter. This includes substantial tax relief for farmers over age 65 (many Schoharie farmers are in this category) and a \$10,000 assessment break for farmers under age 65. There is need of an educational program to ensure all farmers are getting maximum benefit from the STAR and Refund of School Taxes programs as well as other farm tax incentives. These include a 10 year exemption on all real estate tax on new farm buildings, a requirement that assessors use depreciated values for farm buildings and the exception of certain classes of farm structures from real estate taxation. This applies to silo's, manure storage facilities, bulkhead tanks and greenhouse structures (including those used for raising calves). There is also a New York State Investment Tax Credit on new capital purchases equal to 4% of the purchase price. Many young farm families have large carryovers of Investment Credit and the Board should work with Farm Bureau and others to achieve legislative changes which would make these dollars refundable.

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STRENGTHS	OPPORTUNITIES
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 There is a good base of agricultural support services both in and outside the County (agri-business, agencies). 2 There is still a strong agricultural base left to protect and the County's agricultural industry is already quite diversified in terms of products. 3 I-88 provides a convenient means of moving people and goods to and from the County. 4 The County possesses a number of prime and unique soils 5 The County's climate grows good grasses for low-cost rotational grazing and hay crops that can be marketed both in-county and elsewhere as a specialty crop. 6 Rt. 20 and the NYS Thruway make the County accessible for farm stand visitors and farm deliveries/pick-ups. 7 The County enjoys good highway access to several markets and a population of 75,000,000+ to which farm and forest value-added products can be marketed. 8 The present mix of land uses within the County consists of activities generally compatible with agriculture. 9 There is good farm knowledge and networking among local officials and the agricultural community 10 The County supports agriculture and is farm-oriented. 11 The County's education system supports agricultural programs as does SUNY-Cobleskill, FFA and 4-H. 12 There are already Right to Farm Laws in the County protecting agricultural activities. 13 Schools (e.g. SUNY) provide temporary labor. 14 Land prices and taxes are reasonable compared to many other counties in New York State. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 The Farmland Protection Plan can be used as a device to build consensus and a coordinated strategy for agricultural economic development. 2 The County's diverse landscapes and enterprises could be used to create additional farm income through development of supplementary niche businesses. 3 Schoharie can be marketed to agricultural entrepreneurs if they are made more aware of its unique soils. 4 Greater use of farm markets and other direct marketing techniques (for meat as well as vegetables) could increase sales and margins. 5 The large dairy base offers the potential to develop value-added enterprises (e.g. ultra-pasteurization). 6 Unused but intact dairy farms can be marketed to dairy farmers priced out of other areas. 7 Branding of some sort could allow agricultural products to be more broadly marketed. 8 Specialization of agricultural activities could create new markets for both commodities and forages while increasing returns from dairying. 9 There is a need and, therefore, and a possible opportunity to develop a slaughterhouse in the County. 10 Schoharie Valley land offers potential for additional vegetable and related farm industries. 11 Farm activity can be coordinated with tourism to increase income opportunities for many farmers. 12 SUNY-Cobleskill could be used more as an agricultural training and labor source for farmers.
WEAKNESSES	THREATS
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 I-88 has stimulated residential growth and potential competition for farmland and conflicts with farming. 2 Skilled labor for agricultural enterprises is increasingly difficult to obtain. 3 Much of the best farmland is already tied up and unavailable for new agricultural enterprises. 4 While Schoharie's taxes are relatively low, New York is a high tax state. 5 Weather conditions limit the ability to grow certain crops and attract certain types of tourism. 6 There is, among the general population, insufficient knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the value of agricultural or the nature of farm practices. 7 The County remains relatively poor by income standards although its status is improving. 8 Obtaining adequate water supplies can be difficult due to the unique geology of the area 9 A "Not In My Back Yard" attitude makes development of new enterprises occasionally difficult. 10 Preferential tax treatments for various individuals and industries shift tax burdens and raise equity issues. 11 I-88 cuts many farms and makes access to fields difficult. 12 The County soils can be stoney and difficult to work with respect to farm crops. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Attrition of older individuals from farming could end it as an industry if younger replacements are not found. 2 The Wal-Mart distribution center and other similar enterprises could raise wage scales above the ability of agricultural industries to pay for farm labor. 3 New housing being developed in the County near prime farmland and operating farms could create long-term conflicts with farm management practices. 4 Land use regulations which are not well thought out can create farm conflicts and/or lead to limits on the ability of farmers to use their assets. 5 Environmental mandates absent funding could destroy over-leveraged farm operations and even perceived imposition of such rules could stop expansions. 6 Proposed remapping of wetlands by New York State DEC could render many farm fields practically useless. 7 The New York City watershed regulations, if tightened or expanded, could limit the ability of farms to grow. 8 Lack of agricultural education and promotion of farm opportunities could deprive the industry of the younger labor force it needs to survive. 9 Future tax increases on income, sales or property could easily wipe out farm profit margins. 10 The lack of accessible slaughterhouse facilities could choke the ability of livestock producers to grow.

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Unique markets

Schoharie County, because of its unique relationship and short distance to New York City, has access to special markets. These include a substantial ethnic populations wanting Kosher, Halal and other comparable goods. There is also a demand among new immigrants for foods traditional to their cultures such as lamb and goat and certain breeds of poultry. Likewise, the New York City market is particularly strong for organic products and anything that can be "green-labeled." There is also an active green market program in the City.

Parts of the County lie within the New York City Watershed area and the Watershed Agricultural Council (WAC) has been engaged in a Restaurant Supported Agricultural program which provides opportunities for Catskill farmers to grow specialty produce and market it directly to New York City restaurants and other metropolitan outlets. This program is linked to Whole Farm Planning water quality programs which give the Catskill products unique value to environmentally conscious consumers. The recently formed Catskills Family Farms cooperative could in those portions of Schoharie County outside the watershed and this option should be considered by WAC.

Low profitability

Agricultural enterprises have been subject to low profitability and this has had a particularly serious impact on Schoharie County's dairy farmers. The 53 small-herd dairy farms surveyed by Cornell, for example, received a return on average total capital of only 1.6% before asset appreciation, after deducting an average of \$33,095 for unpaid family labor and management income. The return was only 3.7% with asset appreciation considered and this was during a relatively good year. Attracting new operators to farming under such circumstances is next to impossible. Many existing dairy farmers, unfortunately, have been living off their equity and recently adopted changes in milk marketing orders will worsen a situation only temporarily eased in the latter part of 1998.

Nevertheless, it is clear good management can make an extraordinary difference. The top 25% of the small herds surveyed, for example, earned respectable rates of return on average total capital of 9.0% without appreciation and 10.7% with it. Good managers employ assets such as those found in Schoharie County (e.g. excellent grasses, an existing small dairy cooperative, access to the New England Dairy Compact) to lower the costs of inputs, negotiate milk price premiums and secure all available existing premiums for protein, quality, and the like. These measures can increase the margin on milk by as much as 10% with no change in overhead or operating expenses. This can make all the difference in the

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world.

This data indicates small dairy farms can, in fact, be very profitable and do have a future if farmers want it. Specialization in herd management, custom work, high-protein milk, breeding stock and similar ventures can produce the added cost control and value that permit success. This will be even more so in the future with component pricing of milk. For others the answer may be to diversify into related but complementary fields of agriculture or to grow larger. Still others will need to update practices to increase production using the same overhead. It is instructional in this regard that the majority of large western New York State dairy farmers, whose success is often envied by others, use BST, but eastern farmers generally do not. While non-BST milk could have a market value of its own, it does not appear this is the reason most eastern farmers are choosing not to use it. Rather, they appear simply to lack the motivation to use it. Is this a result of lack of knowledge or are Schoharie farmers unconvinced of the economic value and merely being prudent? The answer is not clear and this is one of the challenges faced by small dairy farmers - getting information they need to make sound management decisions.

Nutrient management

Pressure on farm operations to do a better job with manure management continues to grow. The emphasis is typically on control of nutrients (phosphorous and nitrogen) as a means of limiting eutrophication of water bodies but the Safe Drinking Water Act, among other State and Federal regulations, has imposed new standards for pathogens and other criteria. The Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) regulations, though now limited to very large farms, could well be made applicable to smaller farms in the very near future, with very serious economic impacts on the industry. There are, too, ever more strict standards on the use of farm chemicals.

There are benefits in terms of public health and gaining maximum fertilizer value from manure. Nevertheless, the additional costs of installing manure management systems, using integrated pest management techniques and environmental compliance can be enormous and many farmers, already operating at very low margins, could opt to simply go out of business and recover their equity by selling their farms for non-farm purposes. Others may simply be overwhelmed by the prospects of burdensome regulations and bureaucratic oversight. Either way, the threat to agriculture as an economic sector is substantial.

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3.0 Goals and Objectives

The following goals and objectives have been established for Schoharie County's agriculture and farmland protection program. These are based on the results of interviews with farm community leaders and the farm producer and agri-business surveys summarized in 5.1 of this report. Input obtained from a March, 1999 conference held at SUNY-Cobleskill on "Creating Greater Opportunity for Schoharie County Farming" was also used. The goals are intended to be multi-year in nature and reflect the basic policies of the County for agricultural and farmland protection, while the objectives spell out more specific criteria by which policy performance can be measured. Measures of success are also suggested and, unless otherwise indicated, the prime responsibility for leadership on these goals and objectives will be with the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board, although it may well ask the Planning and Development Agency, Cornell Cooperative Extension or others to provide staff support. Specific major recommendations may be found in Section 4.0 of this Plan.

- 3.1 Goal: Preserve a critical mass of both farmers and agri-businesses to support competition and provide a foundation for a sound agricultural economy, maintaining a base of 100,000 acres of Schoharie County land in farming (including 50,000 acres in cultivation).**

Objectives:

- 3.1.1 Identify Schoharie County's most valuable farmland (particularly within the Schoharie Valley) for purposes of providing regulatory protection, purchasing or leasing development rights and offering other incentives to stay in farming. Agricultural districts are a primary tool in this regard and Schoharie County needs to consolidate and refine its districts so as to be more inclusive of small farms and property adjoining all farms, with boundaries tied to property lines.

Measure: Maps produced (Ag District and otherwise) for local government use, number of farm properties included in Ag Districts and a consolidation of the eleven existing districts into no more than four.

- 3.1.2 Develop a program in cooperation with the Schoharie Land Trust to purchase or lease development rights from voluntarily participating owners of some of the most valuable farmland (particularly in the developable portions of the Schoharie Valley where conversion pressure is strongest) that will allow those farmers to capture their equity, reduce their carrying costs and continue farming.

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Measure: Number of farmers participating and acres of farmland protected.

- 3.1.3 Provide local officials with training on agricultural planning issues and methods of countering farmland conversion pressures. Towns need more information on the use of agricultural data statements and other provisions of State law that protect agricultural land uses such as temporary housing for farm laborers.⁴⁰

Measure: Number of towns employing agricultural protection incentives (e.g. cluster development provisions built around farmland preservation) in their land use regulations.

- 3.1.4 Develop a new tax benefit program targeted to complement the Section 483 of the New York State Real Property Tax Law (10 year property tax exemption on newly constructed or reconstructed agricultural structures), by expanding benefits for agricultural support industries, farm marketing buildings and agricultural tourism projects. Buildings where consumer or tourist activity takes place (e.g. farm stands and stores, mini-dairy processing facilities with on-site sales, etc.) are not now eligible for ag assessment and the County's standard tax abatement for non-industrial enterprises is limited to NYS 485-b program benefits.

Measure: Adoption of a Schoharie County IDA Agricultural Industry Tax Abatement Program providing a substantial reduction in taxes on agri-business investments and numbers of local agri-businesses utilizing.

- 3.2 Goal: Increase the economic returns associated with farming by: 1) generating at least 10% higher prices at the farm gate, 2) increasing net farm incomes by 2% per year to achieve parity with the typical non-farm wage earner and 3) producing a rate of return of at least 8% on farm investments so as to be able to attract private capital.**

Objectives:

- 3.2.1 Identify specific new agricultural product lines and opportunities to add value to existing products through, for example, use of mini-dairy production facilities to produce cheeses and yogurts.

Measure: Number of educational programs conducted to disseminate this data and

⁴⁰ Farm labor housing is, for all practical purposes, exempted from most requirements of local land use law under State law although towns can require permits and impose conditions or limitations on later conversions to permanent residential use. There are, however, considerable disagreements and legal arguments regarding the extent to which the State law should prevail in these matters.

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number of new added-value and new product initiatives undertaken by farmers.

Measure: Hours of training provided and numbers of farmers using methods.

- 3.2.2 Encourage best management practices for farm woodlands as a means of increasing value and returns as well as establishing a "right to forest" principle with respect to local laws.

Measure: Hours of training provided and number of farm wood lot owners who participate.

- 3.2.3 Strengthen existing small cooperatives (e.g. Schoharie County Cooperative) and form new such marketing groups where necessary to bid truckloads of milk annually and provide better outlets for cull-dairy cows.

Measure: Number of farmers participating in such bargaining groups.

- 3.2.4 Provide farmers with technical and additional financial assistance (e.g., replacing the EQIP program) to respond to CAFO regulations, potentially turning these practices into profit through a form of "green certification" in the manner of the "Chesapeake Milk" program. The Watershed Agricultural Council could be the vehicle to accomplish this in at least a portion of the County but the need is countywide. Regional and state leadership is clearly demanded.⁴¹

Measure: Hours of training provided, dollars of financial assistance provided and number of farmers who participate in training and/or green-certification programs.

- 3.2.5 Encourage small farms to specialize by profit centers, even in those instances where diversification is the overall strategy. A dairy farmer growing vegetables as a side venture might, for example, benefit by concentrating the dairy operation on the animal husbandry aspects and avoiding the high costs of field machinery, thereby also making more time available for the vegetable operation and opening up opportunities for others to specialize in commodities, custom work, forages, raising heifers, etc.. Specialization is the key to developing greater business management skills and improving profit margins.

Measure: Hours of training provided and number of farmers choosing to specialize their operations.

- 3.2.6 Encourage farmer participation in regional Cornell Cooperative Extension programs to

⁴¹ Money for constructing, expanding and upgrading manure management systems is required.

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provide additional specialized technical expertise in the areas of vegetable production, dairying and other agricultural lines. The 5-county dairy program for counties west of Schoharie is one that many local farmers might well find useful. These types of programs need to be broadly focused in terms of constituencies, however, and should receive statewide funding support rather than be dependent on local funding.

Measure: Annual commitment to participate in regional programs and number of farmers utilizing.

- 3.2.7 Market the County's vacant farmland and farm properties as an asset to attract farmers from higher cost areas of the Northeast, combining this with technical training and promotion regarding the economics of small to medium dairy operations when least cost feeds and specialization are used to increase returns. Schoharie County is uniquely positioned to take advantage of this profit-based (as opposed to production-based) approach to farming.

Measure: Number of marketing pieces developed and distributed and number of vacant farms returned to agricultural production.

- 3.2.8 Promote leasing of farm wood lots for hunting and other outdoor recreational activities as additional sources of farm income.

Measure: Hours of education provided, development and distribution of model leases and number of farmers using.

- 3.3 Goal: Diversify and broaden the agricultural economic base to provide new income opportunities, increasing agricultural sales in hay, greenhouse, fruit, vegetable, poultry, sheep, goats, beef and other diversified products by 5% per year.**

Objectives:

- 3.3.1 Identify Schoharie County's marketable advantages (e.g. prime soils, access to markets, lower costs of energy, etc.) for new agricultural endeavors and promote these both within the farm community and outside the County. Greenhouse vegetables, tree fruit based wines and ciders and pastured livestock and poultry all offer possibilities and perhaps the greatest opportunity is in quality hay production for export to nearby regions with large horse populations and high land costs.

Measure: Development and distribution of promotional literature and/or videos such as a "Top 10 Reasons to Farm in Schoharie County" list.

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- 3.3.2 Work with locally owned/operated food stores to market local produce and develop new products. Shaul Farms, for example, is already marketing its products in Price-Chopper. Other possibilities of this nature exist, particularly when Integrated Pest Management programs are used and some value can be attached to this additional quality. This is an area, however, where professional marketing and group negotiating assistance at the corporate level is required to obtain that value because it is unlikely a single producer trying to deal with a single supermarket manager will be able to secure such premiums.

Measure: Number of local or regional stores handling Schoharie County products and number of farmers growing for them.

- 3.3.3 Expand farm-based tourism by adding features to farm stand promotions (e.g. corn mazes, animal petting and feeding), cross promoting with Bed & Breakfast operators and developing bus tour programs which play off the Timothy Murphy Trail concept and incorporate the Power Authority and New York City watershed projects. The Pumpkin Patch Park near Esperance is an excellent example and base from which to begin and the County's recent initiative to establish information kiosks throughout the area provides an additional foundation. A demonstration program along this line is needed and the Power Authority could be a source of financial assistance along this line.

Measure: Number of farm-based tourism enterprises, number of visitors and farm-stand sales.

- 3.3.4 Continue the development of a quality farmers' market in Cobleskill to take advantage of college visitor and local markets.

Measure: Number of visitors and number of vendors participating.

- 3.3.5 Develop, in conjunction with adjoining Counties, a regional crop auction facility or program where growers of hay, silage and other commodities can market to local farmers and develop a regional agricultural economic economy which depends less on outside inputs and creates greater opportunities within.⁴²

Measure: Establishment of facility or program and number of farmers participating.

- 3.3.6 Promote the horse industry as a vehicle for keeping farmland in productive use, increasing

⁴² There is already a similar type facility in Central Bridge that could possibly be expanded upon and other auctions as well (e.g. Unadilla).

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agricultural tourism and maintaining a core of agricultural support industries such as feed mills. The County's proximity to Albany and New York City makes it ideal for this purpose.

Measure: Promotional literature developed and distributed, hours of education provided and numbers of horses boarded in the County.

3.4 Goal: Increase public recognition of the value of agriculture and farmland and develop a better understanding of farm issues by non-farmers through education.

Objectives:

- 3.4.1 Increase the level and frequency of farm community communications with the non-farm community by conducting more shared events, use of additional publications and employment of public service announcements and advertising (e.g., a "Down on the Farm Day" for Schoharie County to promote and take pride in the dairy and vegetable industries).

Measure: Number of communications to non-farm community and number of non-farm participants in events.

- 3.4.2 Increase the participation of farmers and agri-business owners in local government and, specifically, on town planning boards by getting all towns with significant agricultural activity to appoint agricultural members under the authority of § 271.11 of the Town Law. Also, provide training for local officials on agricultural planning issues.

Measure: Number of Planning Boards with designated agricultural members and hours of training provided.

- 3.4.3 Conduct training and agricultural awareness programs for high school students who might not have exposure to farm opportunities but could benefit from learning more about agricultural careers.

Measure: Hours of training provided and number of students participating.

- 3.4.4 Specifically address the lack of public knowledge regarding animal agriculture by promoting farm tours, utilizing videos such as "Feeding the Green Machine" and conducting educational sessions.

Measure: Numbers of showings and tours conducted and number of participants.

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- 3.4.5 Work with schools and their guidance counselors as well as work force development program leaders to add agriculturist training tracks wherever possible. Develop programs to expand and train the supply of agricultural workers (vegetable farms and dairy).

Measure: Number of agricultural-related training programs available, number of participants and number of trained workers available.

- 3.4.6 Reach out to small-scale and part-time farmers as allies in the effort to strengthen the role of farming as an economic sector and as a way of life in Schoharie County, building relationships among all farmers and with the non-farm community. The recently established "MADE in Schoharie County" group may provide an opportunity to do this through jointly sponsored activities and events.

Measure: Number of small-scale and part-time farmers participating in existing or new programs and initiatives designed to implement the recommendations of this Plan.

- 3.5 Goal: Attract new entrepreneurs and younger households to farming ventures and expand the availability of capital to finance such enterprises.**

Objectives:

- 3.5.1 Actively promote Schoharie County as a location for new farm and agri-business enterprises by working with schools and using targeted advertisements and mailings in cooperation with the the South Central New York RC&D program, the Chamber of Commerce, the County Planning and Development Agency, Southern Tier East and real estate firms.

Measure: Number of new farm enterprises recruited.

- 3.5.2 Develop and promote the availability of financing programs, including a micro-enterprise loan program (the County lacks one at present), which can provide capital for farm and agri-business ventures, doing so in cooperation not only with farm agencies but also the County Industrial Development Agency and Southern Tier East.

Measure: Dollar volume of loan capacity available to creditworthy farmers. and number of institutions and programs available to help.

- 3.5.3 Encourage the formation of new generation farm cooperatives for marketing purposes, financing of new ventures and purchasing of raw materials (e.g., electricity).

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Measure: Number of Schoharie farmers participating in such cooperatives.

- 3.5.4 Promote intergenerational farm transfers by conducting educational sessions, providing technical assistance on estate and business planning and identifying and/or establishing sources of start-up capital for young farmers. This should include direct assistance in business partnering of younger and older farmers so as to provide for management skills that will permit financing of new farm endeavors.

Measure: Hours of training and technical assistance provided, number of participants and number of successful farm transfers.

- 3.5.5 Develop a temporary labor pool of relief milkers and other farm workers who will be available to help farmers get away from the farm, attend training and participate in regional organizations.

Measure: Number of workers trained and recruited and number of farmers utilizing them.

- 3.5.6 Educate bankers and other potential agricultural lenders regarding the economics and risks of non-basic agricultural commodities so as to encourage more cash flow based lending and expand the supply of capital available for new diversified agricultural initiatives.

Measure: Hours of training provided and number of financial institutions willing to finance new crops and ventures for creditworthy customers.

- 3.6 Goal: Protect farmers from development and regulatory intrusions that threaten their ability to operate in a normal competitive fashion as agricultural enterprises.**

Objectives:

- 3.6.1 Streamline town land use and zoning measures to simultaneously accommodate both agricultural activities and other development, incorporating the latest elements of State law affording protection for farmers and agri-businesses.

Measure: Number of towns with specific provisions in their land use regulations to not only allow but also protect agricultural enterprises.

- 3.6.2 Encourage development of sewer and water infrastructure within town centers rather than agricultural areas and encourage towns to promote hamlet development over highway-oriented suburban sprawl in zoning laws, so as to ensure development within and adjacent

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to agricultural zoning districts is fully compatible with farm activities.

Measure: Number of towns with strong incentives for hamlet and village development and disincentives for strip development.

- 3.6.3 Encourage towns with zoning to enhance agricultural districts by developing agricultural zoning districts to provide for compatible forms of development within these districts.

Measure: Number of communities employing these measures in their zoning laws (if they have such laws).

- 3.6.4 Encourage all Schoharie County towns to adopt meaningful Right to Farm Laws.

Measure: Proportion of Schoharie County towns with local Right to Farm laws.

- 3.6.5 Encourage Farm Bureau and other agricultural organizations to broaden the farm constituency by seeking modification of the agricultural and forestry assessment laws so as to shift the burden of tax reduction from affected towns to the State as a whole and make farmers earning between \$2,500 and \$10,000 per year eligible for some level of agricultural assessment benefit.

Measure: Number of farm organizations supporting legislative changes.

- 3.6.6 Train local officials in the requirements applicable to conversions of land out of agricultural assessment to discourage such conversions.

Measure: Number of training sessions conducted and participants.

- 3.7 Goal: Increase the capacity of agricultural producers and organization to market Schoharie County farm products.**

Objectives:

- 3.7.1 Provide direct marketing training and technical assistance to farmers in developing new outlets, pricing strategies and marketing themes that can be employed to sell more of Schoharie County agricultural products, including milk, directly to consumers at higher profit margins as opposed to lower margin commodity markets. Put another way, the objective is to help farmers sell more carrots and yogurt over the counter as compared to shipping their products to baby-food factories and metropolitan fluid milk markets.

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Measure: Hours of specialist training and technical assistance provided and volumes of new products marketed.

- 3.7.2 Develop a livestock directory (perhaps a spin-off of the "Year Round Bounty from Schoharie County" brochure) to complement existing brochures aimed largely at farm stands and provide an opportunity to build up markets for small-scale producers.

Measure: Number of brochures distributed, number of farmers participating and number of additional livestock marketed.

- 3.7.3 Build on the "Scary County" program success by linking it even more tightly to Schoharie County farm stands and to the Timothy Murphy Trail, supporting a locally designed and managed program to designate Route 30 as a scenic byway, adding signage and building recognition in the manner of New York State's successful wine trails.

Measure: Number of farm stand operators participating in Scary County promotion and number of visitors.

- 3.7.4 Work with surrounding Counties to develop a regional label(s) for specialty food products by working off Catskill, Mohawk Valley or Schoharie Valley themes and combining them with the Pride of New York program.

Measure: Development of a label(s), number of farmers participating and number of stores and farm stands carrying inventory with the label.

- 3.7.5 Work with surrounding Counties (e.g. the Hudson Valley Livestock Marketing Task Force) to develop meat marketing programs that take advantage of the meat processing facilities at SUNY Cobleskill as well as nearby metropolitan markets and solicit or support the establishment of additional slaughterhouse capacity in the region to ensure consistent availability of services at a high quality level (including those required for poultry and small animals).

Measure: Development of marketing program(s), number of farmers who participate and number of animals processed.

- 3.7.6 Develop links to the Watershed Agricultural Council's restaurant-supported agricultural marketing initiative so as to offer all of Schoharie County an opportunity to participate on the basis of a water quality management quid pro quo that would ensure consistent standards.

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Measure: Opening up of WAC's program to all of Schoharie County and number of farmers participating.

- 3.8 Goal: Integrate agricultural development into town and County economic strategies and land use plans so as to take advantage of the farm opportunities which will inevitably result from growth of the community as a whole.**

Objectives:

- 3.8.1 Strengthen relationships between farm and economic development agencies through appointment of cross-memberships and execution of formal cooperation agreements.

Measure: Number of cooperative agreements implemented.

- 3.8.2 Incorporate the goals, objectives and recommendations of this Plan as elements of an overall County economic development strategy.

Measure: Inclusion of agricultural recommendations in other County plans and policies affecting economic development as these are developed.

- 3.8.3 Establish a revolving loan program targeted at agriculture by working with the County Industrial Development Agency, Southern Tier East and the Mohawk Valley Economic Development District.

Measure: Establishment of program, dollars committed and number of participants.

- 3.8.4 Work with major agricultural towns now lacking land use planning to develop, at a minimum, effective site plan review laws which afford a measure of protection to agriculture and limit development pressure.

Measure: Number of towns with site plan review criteria that include agricultural protection.

- 3.8.5 Conduct an annual agricultural program development conference among farmers, farm agencies and others involved in agriculture within the County to coordinate programs of activity, highlight the value of agriculture and share ideas. A model for this activity is the "Creating Greater Opportunities" session held at SUNY-Cobleskill and referenced earlier. The program, however, needs to be somewhat shorter, more focused and more inclusive with respect to mainstream farmers, the vegetable industry and traditional farm service

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organizations such as FSA, and Cornell Cooperative Extension.⁴³

Measure: Numbers of both program and farm participants and numbers of shared initiatives taking place as outgrowth of conference.

3.9 Goal: Provide continuing education to the agricultural community regarding methods of improving profitability.

Objectives:

3.9.1 Continue to provide farmers with general information and research findings on innovative and alternative farming practices that can lower the costs of inputs and/or improve quality for a greater return (e.g. rotational grazing, direct commodity purchasing and other least cost feeds programs).

3.9.2 Educate farmers and others regarding the various aspects of legislative initiatives potentially affecting farm profitability (e.g. the Dairy Compact and proposed changes in marketing orders that could impact Northeast farmers).

Measure: Hours of education provided and number of farmers who participate.

3.9.3 Train farmers in the use of the Dairy Futures Program and similar mechanisms as means of stabilizing milk prices and securing greater farm control over pricing.

Measure: Hours of training provided and number of farmers who participate.

3.9.4 Annually conduct an intensive training programs for farmers on the availability of farm tax relief under both New York State and Federal law, including agricultural assessments, exemptions and refunds offered to the 10 to 20% of farmers who are apparently unaware of many of them.⁴⁴

Measure: Hours of training or one on one assistance provided, number of farmers who participate in training or mentoring programs and proportion of farmers who take advantage of tax programs.

⁴³ This idea and that particular conference both grew out of work by Shannon A. Hayes in meeting educational requirements for a Cornell University degree program. Her work included a report entitled "Schoharie County Agri-preneurship Project for Next Generation Farmers" that provides excellent background on the County's farm challenges.

⁴⁴ Results of agricultural producer survey.

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- 3.9.5 Provide labor management training for farmers to increase their skills in obtaining higher productivity of labor and reducing labor turnover. A number of farmers appear to be poorly skilled in this area and the tight labor market has forced competition for workers such that it is imperative farmers become better labor managers.

Measure: Hours of training provided, number of participants and labor turnover rates on larger farms.

- 3.9.6 Develop a one-on-one mentoring program for small-scale farmers using the Small Business Administration's Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) program as a model.

Measure: Numbers of retired business persons participating and numbers of young farmers mentored.

- 3.9.7 Educate and provide technical assistance regarding the formation of shared facility farm operations.

Measure: Hours of training provided and number of participants in such arrangements.

- 3.9.8 Establish a cooperative program with SUNY-Cobleskill to provide agricultural education geared toward those small-scale dairy and alternative agricultural opportunities prevalent in Schoharie County and focused on least cost methods of production combined with best return methods of marketing.

Measure: Establishment of program and number of participants.

- 3.9.9 Establish shared agricultural economic development or marketing staff who can work with both farm and non-farm agencies to promote new farm and agri-business ventures. This type of staff might also be involved be manure management issues.

Measure: Creation of an Agricultural Marketing Specialist position serving Schoharie County (and potentially others).

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4.0 Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Major Recommendations

Agriculture is always in transition and farming will disappear unless it continually adapts to these changes and evolves. New markets, new products, new ways of doing business and new partnerships are needed. The Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board has an opportunity to lead this effort and if it does so, there can be substantial payoffs in tourism, quality of life and the long-term growth of the Schoharie County economy. The Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board should make implementation of the recommendations which follow its primary mission over the next 3-10 years.

4.1 Economic Development of Agriculture

Farmland preservation is useless and irrelevant unless there is profit in farming and, therefore, the thrust of this Plan is to address means by which agriculture as an industry can be further developed to increase economic returns. The following measures are recommended:

4.1.1 Agricultural Marketing Specialist

It is recommended that Schoharie County, either on its own or together with Otsego County, create an Agricultural Marketing Specialist position. A similar recommendation, as indicated earlier, is already found in the Otsego Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan and there is an effort underway in the Cooperstown area to form a local cooperative modeled on Catskill Family Farms.⁴⁰ Such programs could be duplicated for the Schoharie Valley and environs or the Catskill Family Farms could be expanded outside the watershed with the same results. The Valley has a unique identity that can be capitalized upon (as does Cooperstown) and the person employed should be expected to be involved in both agricultural and tourism marketing.

This person would lead a coordinated effort by the Schoharie County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Schoharie County, the Industrial Development Agency and Chamber of Commerce to implement the recommendations of this Plan. He or she would identify new markets for agricultural products and services and be assigned to provide technical assistance to farmers and agri-

⁴⁰ This organization, known as Cooperstown Area Products, is being assisted through the Center for Agricultural Development and Entrepreneurship in Norwich and will work with 20-40 small farmers to market diverse products both locally and to the New York City metropolitan area. It includes Schoharie County producers and has apparently made arrangements with two distributor outlets for this purpose.

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businesses in selling to those markets. This individual would also have the responsibility of working with existing dairy and grain farmers to explore strategic alliances with other farmers (an approach that has helped to drive Wyoming County's huge success in the dairy industry) and specialization options such as heifer growing, raising of stock for export and custom work.

A sample job description for this position may be found in Appendix 5.2 of this Plan. It identifies one approach that could be taken to address the need, but there are others that could also work, including not only sharing with other counties but also sharing of existing agency staff or even use of marketing consultants. However the position is established, it is recommended the person hired be directly responsible to the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board with specific responsibilities to work closely with both Cornell Cooperative Extension of Schoharie County and the Schoharie County Planning and Development Agency. If a new individual is hired it might be advantageous to locate him or her in the former's offices with direct support and resources from the latter or vice-versa. The shared duties are essential to highlighting the value of agriculture and forestry to the local economy and further integrating agriculture into the County's economic development program. Supervision of the Specialist's efforts, however, would be the responsibility of the Board.

Funding for this position could come from a variety of sources including the County but, initially, such an endeavor should be approached as a demonstration project. Grant funds should be requested from State and/or Federal sources to help launch the project with the Schoharie County Planning and Development Agency taking responsibility for making such applications.⁴¹ The position should, however, be designed to be supported by producers over the long-term on a fee-for service or cooperative basis. If this position were combined with one to provide assistance to farmers in responding to CAFO and other manure management mandates in the model of the Chesapeake Milk program, additional funding sources could be available.

Implementation Period: 1) Start-up 2001
2) Demonstration period 2001-2004

Responsible Parties: 1) Planning and Development Agency
2) Cornell Cooperative Extension of Schoharie County
3) Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board

⁴¹ The Cooperstown Area Products project discussed earlier in Section 2.0 was funded with an Appalachian Regional Commission demonstration grant. Implementation funds from the Department of Agriculture and Markets also need to be opened to this sort of program.

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4.1.2 Formation of Additional Cooperatives

Schoharie has, in the Schoharie Dairy Cooperative, an excellent example of the type of cooperative needed to further agricultural development. It is a relatively small but highly effective organization with limited overhead that is able to negotiate among dairy processors to secure and lock in the best milk prices for its members. It is also positioned to leverage the advantages of the next-door New England Dairy Compact. There are other opportunities of both a formal and informal nature to form additional selling or purchasing cooperatives in the County. Such organizations are needed not only to pursue better pricing for dairy products, but also others and to secure less costly goods and services through joint purchasing arrangements. In some cases these groups can be loosely knit while, in others, more structured legal entities will be required but, in all cases, these cooperatives need to be relatively small and narrowly focused to be successful. A group of 10-20 dairy farmers, for example, could be organized to collectively solicit bid prices on an annual basis for animal health supplies. A group of Schuyler County dairy farmers is doing this very effectively now.

There is in either case a need for technical assistance in forming and administering the cooperatives. Assistance is available from the U.S.D.A. Rural Development Agency insofar as start-up, but on-going activities will demand the help of the Agricultural Marketing Specialist or some outside private help which is free to get involved in price negotiations and other day to day business activity. Once organized, such cooperatives might, in fact, do well to employ their own personnel on a part-time or consulting basis for this purpose.

Implementation Period:

1) Start-up	2002
2) Operation	2003

Responsible Parties:

- 1) Agricultural Marketing Specialist
- 2) Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board
- 3) U.S.D.A. Rural Development Agency
- 4) Farm Bureau
- 5) Cornell Cooperative Extension of Schoharie County

4.1.3 Added Value Initiatives

One of the key tasks of the Agricultural Marketing Specialist will be to identify and spur the development of opportunities to add value to existing agricultural products grown or produced in the County. The mini-dairy concept is an excellent example and Cornell Cooperative Extension should take a lead in educating dairy farmers as to the

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opportunities for establishing such operations in the County by conducting a seminar(s) on the subject. The Agricultural Marketing Specialist and Extension together could assist interested farmers in further exploring the possibilities, identifying financing and helping to get a demonstration project going.

There may also be opportunities on a higher level, given the large milkshed that extends from Delaware County north, to attract a larger processor that would create a new market and help to stabilize regional milk prices. Facilities such as the Ultra-Dairy pasteurization plant in Delhi and the Polly-O cheese plant in Campbell, New York have done just that. It is also significant that Kraft (owner of Polly-O and a cottage cheese plant in Walton) was one of the very few milk processors not to oppose the Northeast Dairy Compact. Ultra-pasteurization is clearly a future opportunity for the U.S. as a whole when one considers the long-shelf life and demand within the European markets for the product but the downside is that long shelf life also it makes it possible to rely upon large factory-farms in Arizona and California for a supply and ship anywhere.

A better opportunity may exist with cheeses for which the proximity of the trendy New York City market and the ports for export could be a distinct advantage. Small Vermont cheese producers are now successfully selling to both the New York City and European markets and there is no reason a small to medium sized commercial cheese plant couldn't be done. New York cheeses are among the best in the world and need to be marketed in the fashion of its wines.

A Schoharie Valley or Mohawk Valley label on cheese could be an asset if there is effective work done to build on and market its "Lancaster-like" image and tourism appeal. A processor could be attracted by a combination of a reliable milk supply such as the Schoharie County Cooperative's combined with a site and a financing and tax-incentive package. It is recommended a task force composed of Cooperative, IDA, Planning and Development Agency, Cooperative Extension and Southern Tier East representatives be assembled to further study this potential and, if feasible, design the package of incentives required to solicit such an enterprise.

Other opportunities exist in green-sealed firewood, Kosher and Halal products and pastured livestock and poultry, as discussed earlier. There are also significant opportunities with respect to smaller enterprises such as maple syrup production and there are excellent models in Schoharie County and elsewhere of how to add value and develop new lines (e.g. maple vinegar). Each of these should be approached in the same manner as the mini-dairy concept - start with a seminar, follow with a working group, identify financing, promote and continue with technical assistance through start-up. Pricing of products is one of the areas where such technical assistance could pay great

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benefits.

Implementation Period: 2001-2005

Responsible Parties:

- 1) Agricultural Marketing Specialist
- 2) Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board
- 3) Planning and Development Agency
- 4) Farm Bureau
- 5) Cornell Cooperative Extension of Schoharie County
- 6) Industrial Development Agency

4.1.4 Green Labeling

The fairly successful effort by Catskill Family Farms to develop new green-labeled markets in specialty produce, based on the water quality hook, could be extended to new products in new areas of the County. Green-labeling or environmental certification can be done by a number of organizations but, to be effective, the program must have credibility and there must be brand recognition attached to it. This can only be done effectively by a regional entity. Catskill Family Farms, with initial assistance from the Watershed Agricultural Council, has demonstrated some ability to reach into new markets with this technique. Therefore, it could be a logical vehicle for implementing such a program not only in the Watershed but also throughout the remainder of the County.

This concept could offer several advantages to Catskill Family Farms as well as the County starting with the fact that, by pulling all of Schoharie County into the program, it would provide a larger base of farmers with whom to work and solidify the Catskill image by including all of the region, not just the Watershed part, into the program. It could also provide a means for Catskill Family Farms to increase its own financial base of support and become self-sustaining much quicker by charging for its services outside the Watershed. There are some practical difficulties in reaching outside the Watershed but these can be overcome by an insistence that participating farmers outside the Watershed meet the same environmental quality standards as those in it.

This, of course, also means extending the Whole Farm Planning program outside the Watershed and charging for it as well. The costs of the planning and implementation could not, in this case, be covered by New York City but there may be other ways to fund them including State and Federal sources, private foundations and private capital markets. Indeed, it would make sense to establish a Whole Farm Plan financing program, complete with tax abatements and low-interest revolving funds discussed elsewhere in this Plan. Investing in water quality in this context makes economic sense because it will

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The County should also meet with local financial institutions to explore ways to enhance this fund with leveraged below-market rate or market rate financing which would help to meet their Community Reinvestment Act obligations. A "Funding for Farm Projects," brochure should also be developed to identify all the various funding sources which the IDA can assist agri-businesses and farms in obtaining. This would differ from existing informational pieces in that it would be more focused on agriculture and also identify additional programs not available to non-farm entities.

The Planning and Development Agency and Industrial Development Agency should also be charged with the responsibility of identifying and helping to secure funding for environmental management generally and manure management in particular. The purpose of these efforts should be to maintain a level economic playing field for Schoharie's smaller farmers. This will be crucial not only to the County's dairy industry but also the Route 30 vegetable farms that are forced to fertilize heavily.

Implementation Period: 2001

Responsible Parties:

- 1) Planning and Development Agency
- 2) IDA
- 3) Agricultural Marketing Specialist

4.1.6 Solicit New Farm Enterprises

Oneida County, New York has developed an excellent program to solicit new farmers, entitled "The Mohawk Valley - The Agricultural Edge." Lewis County also has an excellent program. These should essentially be duplicated in Schoharie and the Schoharie County Chamber of Commerce has made some excellent efforts in that regard already. Oneida's program is managed by their Agricultural Economic Development Specialist and a special sub-committee of their Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board. A similar approach is warranted in Schoharie and Southern Tier East has identified this as a potential regional goal as well.

Implementation Period: 2001

Responsible Parties:

- 1) Ag & Farmland Protection Board
- 2) Planning and Development Agency
- 3) Chamber of Commerce
- 4) Farm Bureau
- 5) Agricultural Marketing Specialist

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4.1.7 Agricultural Tourism Initiative

The County would benefit greatly by developing an agricultural tourism initiative around the Schoharie Valley Association promotions. The Schoharie County program is excellent but can be greatly expanded upon by packaging of bus tours and Bed & Breakfast promotions and marketing of these outside the region. The Valley offers enough agricultural, historical and other resources to begin now with such a program but a professional marketing program is required along with packaging of the attractions. The Power Authority and the Catskill Fund for the Future are both potential funding sources if the packages are extended from one end of Route 30 to the other. Signage is needed along the lines of New York's successful wine trails and employing the Timothy Murphy Trail as a foundation. A two-year demonstration project to develop and market bus tours of the Valley and Bed & Breakfast visits centered around agricultural, historical and reservoir attractions is appropriate. Long-term, the project should be assumed by the Schoharie Valley Association and should include incentives for the development of additional agricultural tourism ventures such as additional fruit and vegetable stands, corn maze, farm tours, u-pick operations and the like.

Implementation Period: 2001

Responsible Parties:

- 1) Ag & Farmland Protection Board
- 2) Schoharie Valley Association/Chamber of Commerce
- 3) Agricultural Marketing Specialist
- 4) Farm Bureau
- 5) New York Power Authority

4.2 Agricultural Policy - Right to Farm

Right to farm laws should be encouraged in all Schoharie County towns with significant agricultural activity, particularly in Sharon, Seward, Carlisle, Schoharie, Wright and Middleburgh. A suggested model is included as Appendix 5.1 of this Plan and representatives of the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board should meet with local officials of these towns on an individual basis over the next two years to explain the benefits of agriculture and propose the adoption of this model or a close facsimile. Other towns with particularly significant individual agricultural enterprises (e.g. Cobleskill has a great deal of agricultural coded land) should also be encouraged to consider Right-to-Farm policies.

The County Right to Farm law is helpful as a foundation but lacks specifics and the

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priority should be on the six major agricultural towns in the County. It is town government which typically receives agricultural complaints and takes responsibility for mediating these conflicts. Towns also control building and development and, therefore, are the logical entities to administer Right to Farm laws. Some of the towns did adopt weak right-to-farm laws several years ago and they are demonstrations of good intentions toward agriculture but, generally, do not contain specific enough language to be sustainable in a legal challenge. They would benefit by updating to incorporate definitions of sound agricultural practices and mechanisms for dispute resolution.

Right to Farm laws, it should be noted, are intended to complement the New York State Agricultural District Law and provide a means for resolving farm-neighbor conflicts. They do so by protecting the rights of farmers using sound agricultural practices to continue those practices and to grow and expand within the community. They establish a policy which recognizes agriculture as a priority land use and puts the burden of proof that a farm practice constitutes a nuisance squarely upon those who would oppose such practices. The model law establishes specific criteria which broadly define the nature of a sound agricultural practice and make it extraordinary difficult for such practices to be declared nuisances. The real strength of such laws, however, is that they create a mechanism to discuss problems, educate the parties and resolve conflicts on a local level. They also serve to establish a statement of town policy which, it is hoped, will carry over to other aspects of local government.

There has recently been a successful legal challenge to Right-to-Farm legislation in Iowa on the basis that the right to create an agricultural nuisance effectively establishes an easement over someone else's property without providing just compensation. However, the Iowa law was much broader than those of most states or the model local law recommended in this Plan. The Iowa law did not provide a right for an aggrieved neighbor to sue under any circumstances, regardless of negligence, whereas the New York State legislation and the model offered herein require use of sound agricultural practices and do not limit the ability to file a nuisance suit where such practices have not been followed or there has been negligence on the part of the farmer. Indeed, the thrust of these laws is simply to provide a defense against nuisance suits where sound agricultural practices have been followed. Consequently, neither the New York State legislation nor the model local law recommended should run afoul of the recent case law.

Implementation Period: 2000-2001

Responsible Parties:

- 1) Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board
- 2) Cornell Cooperative Extension of Schoharie County
- 3) Farm Bureau

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4.3 Education and Public Relations

This is an area in which much can and needs to be done. Sullivan County's "Down on the Farm Day" is an excellent example along this line and an annual publication similar to Saratoga County's "Saratoga Farms" resource guide to farms in the County should be developed to map Schoharie farms and promote agriculture in general. This might simply be as a Down on the Farm Day newspaper insert or it could be done in the manner of the quarterly "Hudson Valley Business Perspectives" publication. The Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board, along with the IDA and/or Chamber and SUNY-Cobleskill, could also develop such a publication on an annual basis as the vehicle for agricultural promotion inasmuch as most of the County's economy revolves around agriculture. It should include not only the map but also economic data on agri-business and farming, excerpts from this Plan, descriptions of all significant farms in the County by category and promotional material. The goal should be to use the piece for education of both the farm and non-farm community and to instill pride among members of the industry.

There should also be increased efforts to get this type of information and agricultural vocational training into BOCES and local high schools. The "Feed the Green Machine" video is one place to start and there are several similar curriculum programs. A program of seminars and, eventually, courses should also be developed, particularly in the areas of agricultural diversification and specialization, with SUNY-Cobleskill as an active partner. These programs need to be heavily promoted in the non-farm community to build knowledge of farm practices and an appreciation for agricultural economic opportunities in the County as well as the need to support and protect farming.

Implementation Period:

1) "Schoharie Farm Resources"	2001
2) Presentations	2001
3) Seminars and Courses	2002

Responsible Parties:

- 1) Cornell Cooperative Extension of Schoharie County
- 2) Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board
- 3) BOCES
- 4) SUNY-Cobleskill
- 5) Farm Bureau

4.4 Taxation

The County of Schoharie Industrial Development Agency offers a tax abatement program for value-added industries and this needs to be specifically opened up to agricultural

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enterprises. A substantial number of the County's existing employers are agricultural enterprises and these industries generate extraordinarily high employment multipliers, offering a very logical rationale for the IDA to make its industrial value-added tax incentive program available to complement the Agricultural Revolving Loan Fund recommended above. It would allow the County to offer unique packages of benefits to agricultural enterprises and makes it the place to be if one is in those businesses (e.g. a cheese plant).

The County's existing program offers 5 years of no taxes on improvements for industrial valued-added enterprises and then phases in at 50% the 6th year, 60% the 7th and so on until the 10th year when the abatement expires. It is recommended that the IDA add a definition to its Uniform Tax Exemption Policy for the term "industrial value-added" that would specifically incorporate any agricultural processing facility, including feed mills, dairy processing facilities (on or off-farm) and fruit and vegetable processing. It is further recommended that the IDA provide a more aggressive abatement schedule for these enterprises on the basis that they are integral to the County's most important industry - agriculture. It is suggested that the schedule be modified to start with 10% of taxes in the 6th year and add 10% per year until 100% is reached in the 16th year. This type of schedule will be necessary to attract attention and provide the critical advantages required to secure major agri-businesses such as a cheese plant.

Similar or even greater benefits could be extended to all farm enterprises through a program of leased development rights (LDR) wherein the IDA would hold title to development rights for a specified period of time during which taxes (actually payments in lieu of taxes) would only be collected on that percentage of the tax base specified in the abatement schedule. There is also a great need, for reasons expressed earlier, for tax relief to the forest industry. These vehicles could be used for this purpose as well, but modification of the State's 480(a) program is required to effect meaningful change.

Finally, there is a demand within the farm community for increased awareness of existing tax benefits available to farmers. Surveys conducted as part of this planning process indicating a lack of knowledge regarding fairly generous tax benefits available to New York State farmers. As a result presentations were made to both the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board and the County Assessors Association. This needs to continue on a regular basis and be extended to the farm community as a whole. A farmers tax guide needs to be developed along this line with annual seminars and release of reminder notices

Implementation Period:	1) IDA Program	2000
	2) Investigation of LDR	2001
	3) Farmers tax guide	2001

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- Responsible Parties:**
- 1) County of Schoharie Industrial Development Agency
 - 2) Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board
 - 3) Cornell Cooperative Extension of Schoharie County
 - 4) Planning and Development Agency
 - 5) Farm Bureau

4.5 Land Use Planning

Purchase of development rights (see below) will often be impractical in Schoharie County due to limited differentials between agricultural and development values, the existing of floodplain situations and lack of community support. Other measures are appropriate in those circumstances (which may well include most situations) and these include land use regulations. Farming can be greatly helped or greatly hurt by zoning and other land use regulations, depending on how well agricultural interests are incorporated in the land use planning which undergirds the regulations. Three recommendations for accomplishing this objective are outlined below:

4.5.1 Agricultural Zoning

Where zoning exists within the County, the zoning laws should include agricultural zoning districts that match, to as great a degree as practical, the New York State Certified Agricultural Districts within those borders. The Agricultural Farmland Protection Board should, in cooperation with the Schoharie County Planning and Development Agency, develop a model set of district regulations for this purpose. The regulations should permit a wide range of uses in such districts but only at densities compatible with farm activities so that adequate buffers can be provided and reduce potential nuisances suits. Uses should also be oriented toward compatible activities like campgrounds, farm resorts, light manufacturing and other activities where the potential for conflict with agriculture is minimized and residential development of any significant nature should be discouraged.

The districts should discourage activities that will require the extension of sewer and water lines into active farm areas but encourage "conservation" or "farm-friendly" subdivisions which allow the area to develop in a reasonable and compatible manner and permit farmers to secure extra income from sale of equity in land which is not essential to their farm operations. Such subdivision regulations typically require clustering of housing and development along the edges of properties or wooded areas to avoid using up valuable farm fields. Some sample language along this line might be as follows:

"Proposals for subdivision of parcels including active farm or crop land

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within New York State Agricultural Districts shall include delineation of proposed building sites on each lot, which sites shall be located outside of or along the edges of the active farm and crop lands. Subdivisions of five (5) lots or more shall ordinarily be required to employ conservation subdivision or clustering techniques which provide for presentation of active farm and crop land without reducing overall density of development."

Some caution must be exercised, however, in planning developments of this nature to avoid creating conflicts between homeowners and farmers engaged in normal agricultural practices such as manure spreading, weed spraying and cattle pasturing. Density of development and buffering are both factors which should be considered in this regard.

Implementation Period: Start-up - 2000

Responsible Parties: 1) Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board
 2) Planning and Development Agency

4.5.2 Agricultural Planning Guide

Local officials and, particularly, planning board members, require continuous education on planning issues in general and agricultural law. Many planning board members often come from non-farm backgrounds and are unaware of farm issues and the law as it pertains to agriculture. An Agricultural Planning Guide is, therefore, recommended and a draft document of this nature has been separately provided as part of this project. This publication should be combined with planning schools and seminars for local officials to help them understand how the Agricultural Districts Law works and the considerations they should give to development adjacent to farms.

Implementation Period: 2001-2002

Responsible Parties: 1) Planning and Development Agency
 2) Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board

4.5.3 Farm Representation on Planning Boards

Section 271.11 of the New York State Town Law specifically provides towns with the authority to appoint one or more agricultural members who earn at least \$10,000 per year in gross income from agricultural pursuits. Such members can be in addition to the 5 or 7 other members the Law specifies each Board must have. All major agricultural towns

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should take advantage of this provision to designate additional farm members. Such members are more effective in the long-term than simple appointments of farmers to regular planning board positions because there is no guarantee with the latter that farmers will stay on the boards in the case of reappointments over the years. Getting towns to make such appointments will demand not only some initial persuasion but also continued follow-up and technical assistance.

Implementation Period: 2000-2001

Responsible Parties:

- 1) Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board
- 2) Planning and Development Agency
- 3) Cornell Cooperative Extension of Schoharie County
- 4) Farm Bureau

4.6 Farmland Protection and Equity Redemption

The County should, together with the Schoharie Land Trust, consider establishing a very limited program to acquire at least temporary conservation easements on the most valuable farmland in the County, provided the program is strictly voluntary and limited to high-value farmlands threatened by development (e.g. Schoharie Valley tracts located near town and out of the floodplain). Conservation easements effectively separate commercial and residential development rights from farming rights. The acquisition of the former is, therefore, often referred to as "purchase of development rights" or "PDR" although a more practical approach for Schoharie County is probably a shorter-term program where the rights are effectively leased for a specified period ("LDR"). The values of such programs are two-fold. They preserve farmland with all the attendant benefits of protecting open space, critical mass and future opportunities to farm. They also, and much more importantly, allow a farmer to redeem equity in farmland.

The program will require funding for easement purchases or leases (tax abatements could be a source for a LDR program), administrative assistance and an organization to receive and hold the easements or development rights. The Watershed Agricultural Council's program can serve as an excellent model for the County's own program with appropriate modifications for areas outside the Watershed. The primary areas to be protected may be described as those farms, depicted on the map found in Section 2.2 of this Plan, that lie within a New York State Certified Agricultural District and are located within those Soil Groups rated as "highly suited" in terms of Agricultural Suitability (see Table 2.1). Areas already protected by designation as floodplain should not be included and emphasis should be on areas potentially served with infrastructure that actually bear a risk of conversion to other non-farm uses.

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The receiving organization for the easements could be the County itself through the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board, the Schoharie Land Trust or even the Watershed Agricultural Council. The Schoharie County Land Trust is already operating within the County and it might well also play an administrative role. WAC, too, could be contracted for a fee to act as the County's agent outside, as well as within, the Watershed. The benefit of using WAC, of course, would be that it is staffed and already has set up a system to administer a program. Even if WAC were not to be the receiver of easements it could still be contracted to provide technical assistance in administering the program. The American Farmland Trust, which works with WAC, is another possibility and, of course, AFT has assisted with the preparation of this Plan and is, therefore, familiar with the County. Also, regardless of who is chosen to receive easements or administer the program, AFT is a reservoir of valuable information and models of easement or LDR/PDR programs.

Funding for the program could come from many sources including the New York State Environmental Bond Act, the Federal Farms for the Future program, the New York State Agricultural and Farmland Protection Program, local and national land trusts and/or private individuals. A landowner might, for example, donate a portion of the easement value for a tax write-off and to provide the match for New York State or other funding. This could work particularly well with wealthier owners of rented farmlands, of which there are several in Schoharie County. The Land Trust, if involved in the program might well also be able to raise private donations for matches. There are, too, other programs such as the Federal Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) which might well be piggybacked onto the local program as a way of leveraging additional monies. Finally, if the development rights were leased, they could be purchased with tax abatements rather than, or in combination with, cash.

This is why the AFT and/or WAC could be of extraordinary help in developing the program. The Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board will need to develop guidelines for dealing with the sensitive issues of how farms are chosen for the program and the management of the conservation easements, setting off of areas that can be reserved for family residential development and limiting other commercial and residential development of the farmland itself through negative covenants which confine or prohibit such activity. It will be important to avoid discriminating against small farmers in the selection process. Cornell Cooperative Extension can help to ensure this. The Board will also need to do a fair amount of preliminary organization before it can solicit easements, but the program can come together quickly with the right help and the Board should establish high goals and publicize them as a way of generating interest in the program, both from farmers and potential contributors.

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A critical element in any successful LDR/PDR program is the degree to which it will allow participating farmers to recover and reinvest equity or take it out if the intent is to retire and transfer the farm to a younger generation. If sufficient equity cannot be redeemed, then the downside risk of giving up future returns associated with escalating land values will be too great. There must be a significant difference in agricultural and development value for the program to work. If the differential is expanding rapidly, however, the farmer may not be wise to sacrifice potential future for present gains. It is difficult to know where one stands on the spectrum in Schoharie County because various parts of the County are affected in different ways by growth outward from the Albany and New York City urban areas. These areas are in a state of transition where land values could be subject to wide fluctuation over the next 10 to 30 years.

Given this circumstance, most farmers would not be well-served by a permanent conservation easement program that would eliminate opportunities for a younger generation to also redeem their sweat equity in the land. This is why a Leased Development Rights (LDR) program similar to the one employed in Vermont would work best for the County. It should be based on a one-generation type easement agreement (say 20-25 years) where some portion of the easement might be purchased with tax relief that is also inappropriate to give away forever. A LDR program would provide an opportunity to recover equity in the short-term, preserve future equity development options for the younger generation and cost much less to implement. Finally, it puts the responsibility for farmland preservation in the only place it ultimately can be - the hands of the farmer who must, using the economic development approaches outlined in this plan or others, be able to generate a profit sufficient to amortize the value of his farm investment. It is a good fit for Schoharie County.

Implementation Period: 1) Start-up 2002
2) Acquisition 2003-2012

Responsible Parties: 1) Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board
2) Planning and Development Agency
3) Schoharie Land Trust

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Section 4.7 - Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan Summary and Implementation Schedule by Priority (Part 1)

No.	Description	Priority	Responsible Persons	Implementation Date
4.1.1	Create Agricultural Marketing Specialist position	Most Important	Ag & Farmland Board Cooperative Extension Planning and Dev. Agency	Start-up, 2001 Demonstration, 2001/2004
4.1.3	Added value initiatives	Extremely Important	Ag Marketing Specialist Ag & Farmland Board Planning and Dev. Agency Cooperative Extension Farm Bureau Industrial Dev. Agency	2001-2005
4.1.7	Pursue agricultural tourism initiative	Extremely Important	Ag & Farmland Board Chamber of Commerce Farm Bureau Ag Marketing Specialist	2001
4.1.5	Expand financing programs	Very Important	Planning and Dev. Agency Industrial Dev. Agency Ag Marketing Specialist	2001-2005
4.2	Promote use of Right to Farm Laws among Towns	Very Important	Ag & Farmland Board Cooperative Extension Farm Bureau	2000/2001
4.4	Adopt/utilize IDA program Investigate LDR Farmers Tax Guide	Very Important	Industrial Dev. Agency Ag & Farmland Board Cooperative Extension Farm Bureau Planning and Dev. Agency	IDA Program, 2000 LDR, 2001 Guide, 2001
4.5.3	Get major agriculture towns to appoint agricultural members to Planning Boards	Very Important	Ag & Farmland Board Planning and Dev. Agency Cooperative Extension Farm Bureau	2000-2001
4.5.1	Promote agricultural zoning where zoning is in place already	Very Important	Ag & Farmland Board Planning and Dev. Agency	Start-up, 2000
4.1.2	Formation of additional farm cooperatives	Important	Ag Marketing Specialist Ag & Farmland Board USDA Rural Development Farm Bureau Cooperative Extension	Start-up, 2002 Operation, 2003
4.1.4	Green-labeling program	Important	Ag Marketing Specialist Ag & Farmland Board Watershed Ag Council Cooperative Extension Chamber of Commerce	Investigation, 2001-2002 Implementation, 2003
4.1.6	Solicit new farm enterprises	Important	Ag & Farmland Board Planning and Dev. Agency Chamber of Commerce Farm Bureau Ag Marketing Specialist	2001

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Section 4.7 - Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan Summary and Implementation Schedule by Priority (Part 2)				
No.	Description	Priority	Responsible Persons	Implementation Date
4.3	"Schoharie Farm Resources" Agricultural presentations Seminars and courses	Important	Cooperative Extension Ag & Farmland Board BOCES SUNY-Cobleskill Farm Bureau	Guide, 2001 Presentations, 2001 Seminars/courses, 2002
4.5.2	Agricultural planning education	Important	Planning and Dev. Agency Ag & Farmland Board	2001-2002
4.6	Offer a voluntary LDR or similar protection program as a source of equity for farm ventures	Important	Ag & Farmland Board Planning and Dev. Agency Schoharie Land Trust	Start-up, 2002 Agreements, 2003-2012

4.8 Plan Reviews and Revisions

This Plan is intended to be a dynamic document subject to review and revision as circumstances change. Revisions should be made when and as necessary to reflect growth, experience and new ideas. Obsolete sections should be removed or updated as appropriate. All revisions should be subject to review and recommendation by the Schoharie County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board and approval by the Board of Supervisors. A comprehensive review and update should also be made every 5 years by these two Boards. The next such review should be accomplished in 2005.

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5.0 Appendices

Attached are the following Appendices to this Plan:

- 5.1 Model Right to Farm Law**
- 5.2 Job Description for Agricultural Marketing Position**
- 5.3 Summary - Agricultural Protection Plan Surveys**
- 5.4 Watershed Agricultural Council Farmland Easement Program**
- 5.5 Agricultural Planning Guide**
- 5.6 Written Comments Received on Plan**
- 5.7 Public Hearing Comments**
- 5.8 Sources of Implementation Funds**
- 5.9 Costs of Services Analysis**

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Appendix 5.1
Model Right to Farm Law

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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 agribusinesses, 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.

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- 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.
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:

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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,
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 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

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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 on 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 effect 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

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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.

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Appendix 5.2
Job Description for Agricultural Marketing Position

Schoharie County, New York

Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan

Agricultural Marketing Specialist Job Description

This is a new position with the Schoharie County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board. It will also involve specific continuing responsibilities to the Schoharie County Planning and Development Agency and Cornell Cooperative Extension of Schoharie County. The person accepting this position will be expected to lead a coordinated agricultural economic development initiative by County government, the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board, the Planning and Development Agency and Cornell Cooperative Extension, with emphasis on marketing. The work of the Marketing Specialist will be guided by the County Farmland Protection Plan developed by the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board and approved by the County Board of Supervisors.

Specific Responsibilities:

The Marketing Specialist shall be specifically responsible for working with individual farmers, agri-businesses and other agricultural entrepreneurs in an advocacy role to develop and successfully implement marketing strategies and business plans. These responsibilities shall include assisting these entrepreneurs with the following tasks:

- Gathering market data that will assist them in exploring who the potential consumers of their product are.
- Researching the industry and the business environment connected with the product including government policies and regulations, technological changes and industry trends.
- Investigating the competition (both current and potential) including who they are, their location, their products and services, their price ranges, their reputation, their promotional activities, and what they do well.
- Developing product or service ideas based on the information from the consumer and industry research.
- Identifying a profitable target market segment based on consumer behavior and business markets.
- Testing the market potential.
- Determining specific and measurable marketing objectives relating to sales, net profits and market share.

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- Selecting marketing strategies such as product differentiation, market segmentation, new product introduction, diversification, business positioning, and any number of alternative to accomplish objectives.
- Evaluating the need for complementary services such as packing, grading, storing, and inventory management.
- Developing a distribution plan that fully addresses product delivery systems, hours of operation and number of locations.
- Creating a promotional campaign that includes a variety of advertising, public relations, and sales promotion activities.
- Identifying and soliciting available project financing from both private and public sources.
- Developing an implementation program for who will be responsible, what asks they are responsible for and when the tasks are to be completed with a schedule of activities and responsibilities assigned to individuals who must get the job done.
- Monitoring, evaluating and modify the business/marketing plan, including setting up performance standards to monitor sales, costs, net margin and customer satisfaction.

General Responsibilities:

Other general responsibilities of the Marketing Specialist shall include:

- Promoting the positive image of the agricultural industry in Schoharie County through a variety of media efforts.
- Communicating the advantages of a Schoharie County based agriculture industry to commercial agricultural industry representatives, industrial prospects (agricultural processing) and real estate brokers.
- Networking with individuals and various organizations to improve and enhance the viability of local ag producers through diversification, niche marketing, direct marketing, and local identification products.
- Working with various governmental and economic development agencies to develop and assemble a portfolio of financial resources including grants and loans to secure necessary

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capital for the production, marketing, and processing of agricultural products.

- Representing the county's agriculture industry to local restaurateurs, hoteliers, industries, schools, state and county government institutions to encourage them to utilize locally grown and processed products.
- Representing the agricultural industry on various economic development committees or task forces relevant to issues such as business retention and revitalization, attraction of new business, workforce preparation, competitiveness, promotion of new technology or quality of life.
- Serving as a resource to the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board in carrying out the economic development aspects of the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan.

Reporting Duties:

The Marketing Specialist will report directly to the Chairperson of the Schoharie County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board. He or she shall, however, work closely with both the County Planning and Development Agency and Cornell Cooperative Extension. The offices for the Specialist will be located in one of these two agencies with the expectation that the Specialist would also be regularly available at the other location and report periodically thereto for purposes of integrating agricultural and economic development disciplines and strategies.

Required Skills:

The Agricultural Marketing Specialist must be skilled in communications and marketing and possess a working knowledge of the agricultural industry. He or she must have relevant experience in advertising, sales and/or marketing, be able to write effectively and work well in both professional and non-professional environments. The Specialist must also have demonstrated negotiating skills and be able to act as a forceful marketplace advocate in promoting both the County's agricultural industry as a whole and the interests of individual entrepreneurs. Experience and proven talent in developing and marketing both project ideas and products are essential. Education should include at least a Bachelor's degree in related field such as agricultural education, agricultural economics, communications, business administration, finance or marketing.

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Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan

Appendix 5.3
Summary - Agricultural Protection Plan Surveys

Schoharie County Agricultural Surveys - 1999

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Agricultural Producer Survey

Response Rate: 810 delivered surveys and 202 replies = 25% return

1) Where is your farm located?

	No.	%		No.	%
Town of Sharon	29	17.8%	Town of Middleburgh	14	8.6%
Town of Seward	25	15.3%	Town of Gilboa	7	4.3%
Town of Wright	23	14.1%	Town of Broome	6	3.7%
Town of Schoharie	22	13.5%	Town of Jefferson	6	3.7%
Town of Cobleskill	19	11.7%	Town of Fulton	5	3.1%
Town of Carlisle	16	9.8%	Town of Blenheim	5	3.1%
Town of Esperance	15	9.2%	Town of Summit	5	3.1%
Town of Richmondville	14	8.6%	Town of Conesville	4	2.5%
			TOTAL =	163	100.0%

2) How many total acres of land do you farm in Schoharie County?

	No.	%		
25 acres or less	15	9.0%	Total Farm Acres Surveyed	35,729
26 to 50 acres	21	12.6%	Average Acres Farmed	214
51 to 100 acres	27	16.2%	Median Acres Farmed	178
101 to 200 acres	34	20.4%		
201 to 500 acres	56	33.5%		
More than 500 acres	14	8.4%		
TOTAL	167	100.0%		

How much of this farmland do you rent from other landowners?

	No.	%		
25 acres or less	17	23.3%	Total Rented Acres Surveyed	9,139
26 to 50 acres	13	17.8%	Average Acres Rented	125
51 to 100 acres	4	5.5%	Median Acres Rented	97
101 to 200 acres	25	34.2%		
201 to 500 acres	14	19.2%		
More than 500 acres	0	0.0%		
TOTAL	73	100.0%		

How much of the land you own is simply idle?

	No.	%		
25 acres or less	44	40.7%	Total Idle Acres Surveyed	5,480
26 to 50 acres	28	25.9%	Average Acres Idle	51
51 to 100 acres	25	23.1%	Median Acres Idle	30
101 to 200 acres	9	8.3%		
201 to 500 acres	2	1.9%		
More than 500 acres	0	0.0%		
TOTAL	108	100.0%		

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How many acres of land do you farm outside the County?

	No.	%		
25 acres or less	4	26.7%	Total Outside Acres Surveyed	5,130
26 to 50 acres	1	6.7%	Average Outside Acres	342
51 to 100 acres	2	13.3%	Median Outside Acres	92
101 to 200 acres	3	20.0%		
201 to 500 acres	3	20.0%		
More than 500 acres	2	13.3%		
TOTAL	15	100.0%		

How many acres of the land you farm is within an Ag District?

	No.	%		
25 acres or less	10	10.3%	Total Ag District Acres Surveyed	22,300
26 to 50 acres	9	9.3%	Average Ag District Acres	230
51 to 100 acres	15	15.5%	Median Ag District Acres	194
101 to 200 acres	20	20.6%		
201 to 500 acres	37	38.1%		
More than 500 acres	6	6.2%		
TOTAL	97	100.0%		

Are you currently considering relocating your farm?

	No.	%
Yes	8	5.0%
No	152	95.0%
TOTAL	160	100.0%

3) Crop Acres Surveyed (1998)

	No.	%
Hay	17,861	63.6%
Grain/silage crops	5,996	21.4%
Forest products	1,921	6.8%
Pasture	660	2.4%
Other field crops	594	2.1%
Maple/honey products	258	0.9%
Sweet corn	257	0.9%
Other vegetables	228	0.8%
Tree fruits	120	0.4%
Herbs and other	75	0.3%
Christmas trees	63	0.2%
Small fruits	33	0.1%
Nursery/greenhouse	6	0.0%
Sunflowers	5	0.0%
Other	0	0.0%
TOTAL	28,077	100.0%

Animals on Surveyed Farms (1998)

	No.	%
Dairy cows	3,211	31.7%
Replacement heifers	2,723	26.9%
Poultry	1,338	13.2%
Beef (except multi-county)	1,319	13.0%
Sheep	584	5.8%
Deer	300	3.0%
Horses/ponies	263	2.6%
Hogs	187	1.8%
Rabbits	166	1.6%
Meat goats	21	0.2%
Dairy goats	19	0.2%
Llamas	2	0.0%
Emus/ostriches/ratites	2	0.0%
Other	2	0.0%
Fish (1 farm - no numbers)	0	0.0%
TOTAL	10,137	100.0%

4) How do you sell what you produce?

	No.	%
Sell to cooperative or processor	58	29.3%
Sell through auction, broker, dealer or other 3rd party	68	34.3%
Sell directly to consumers (e.g. farm stand, mail order)	72	36.4%
TOTAL	198	100.0%

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What other types of direct marketing do you do?
 (answered by most in terms of products sold directly to consumers)

	No.	%
Hay	32	23.9%
Meat animals & products	30	22.4%
Vegetables, herbs and fruits	20	14.9%
Maple syrup and honey	11	8.2%
Nursery and greenhouse	10	7.5%
Silage and grains	9	6.7%
Milk, eggs and wool	8	6.0%
Other	8	6.0%
Heifers and other livestock	6	4.5%
TOTAL	134	100.0%

5) What percentage of your household's income comes from your farm?

	No.	%
Less than 25%	100	57.5%
25-50%	14	8.0%
50-75%	17	9.8%
75-100%	43	24.7%
TOTAL	174	100.0%

What percentage of your farm income comes from direct marketing?

	No.	%
Less than 25%	84	66.1%
25-50%	8	6.3%
50-75%	10	7.9%
75-100%	25	19.7%
TOTAL	127	100.0%

6) Number of principal farm operators by age:

	No.	%
Under 30 years	12	5.1%
31-40 years	42	17.9%
41-50 years	55	23.5%
51-60 years	58	24.8%
Over 60 years	67	28.6%
TOTAL	234	100.0%

Other farm employees by age:

	No.	%
Under 30 years	61	39.9%
31-40 years	38	24.8%
41-50 years	31	20.3%
51-60 years	17	11.1%
Over 60 years	6	3.9%
TOTAL	153	100.0%

Children on farm by age:

	No.	%
Under 10 years	52	39.1%
11-17 years	52	39.1%
18-24 years	20	15.0%
Over 24 years	9	6.8%
TOTAL	133	100.0%

7) Is any of your land under the Agricultural Assessment Program?

	No.	%
Yes	87	49.7%
No	49	28.0%
Don't know	39	22.3%
TOTAL	175	100.0%

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Are you aware of the assessment break for farm buildings in NYS?

	No.	%
Yes	71	42.5%
No	96	57.5%
TOTAL	167	100.0%

Have you taken advantage of the assessment break for farm buildings?

	No.	%
Yes	47	27.2%
No	126	72.8%
TOTAL	173	100.0%

Are you aware silos, commodity sheds, etc. are tax-exempt in NYS?

	No.	%
Yes	91	54.2%
No	77	45.8%
TOTAL	168	100.0%

8) Are you aware of the school tax credit New York offers farmers?

	No.	%
Yes	113	65.3%
No	60	34.7%
TOTAL	173	100.0%

Did you qualify for the school tax credit New York offers farmers?

	No.	%
Yes	73	54.5%
No	61	45.5%
TOTAL	134	100.0%

Did you get a refund of school taxes as a farmer for 1997?

	No.	%
Yes	45	27.3%
No	120	72.7%
TOTAL	165	100.0%

Will you get a refund of school taxes as a farmer for 1998?

	No.	%
Yes	59	36.2%
No	104	63.8%
TOTAL	163	100.0%

9) Do you sell hunting and fishing rights to any of your property?

	No.	%
Yes	5	2.8%
No	172	97.2%
TOTAL	177	100.0%

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Do you lease any of your property for other recreational activities?

	No.	%
Yes	1	0.6%
No	176	99.4%
TOTAL	177	100.0%

10) Have you had problems with neighbors concerning you farm operation?

	No.	%
Yes	30	16.7%
No	150	83.3%
TOTAL	180	100.0%

If there were neighbor problems, what were the nature of the complaints?

	No.	%
Boundary conflicts	17	36.2%
Manure odors	6	12.8%
Drainage issues	5	10.6%
Noise issues	3	6.4%
Other issues	16	34.0%
TOTAL	47	100.0%

If there were neighbor problems, how were the complaints resolved?

	No.	%
Compromise	11	34.4%
Mediation	3	9.4%
Court action	5	15.6%
Not resolved	9	28.1%
Other	4	12.5%
TOTAL	32	100.0%

11) How long do you, as principal operator, expect to be farming your land?

	No.	%
Less than 5 years	24	14.7%
5 to 10 years	33	20.2%
10 to 15 years	18	11.0%
15 to 20 years	32	19.6%
More than 20 years	56	34.4%
TOTAL	163	100.0%

12) If you retire, what do you most likely expect to do with your farmland?

	No.	%
Transfer to family members to farm	69	40.1%
Sell to other farmers	36	20.9%
Transfer to family members for non-farm uses	25	14.5%
Sell to non-farmers	26	15.1%
Other (land trust, golf course, keep for own use, etc.)	16	9.3%
TOTAL	172	100.0%

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13) Which of the following would most help you keep your land in agriculture?

	No.	%
Higher farm income	82	42.3%
Lower property taxes	69	35.6%
Availability of someone else to take over farm	24	12.4%
Ability to sell off development rights for equity	19	9.8%
TOTAL	194	100.0%

14) Rate the importance of the following to future farming in Schoharie County:

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	Not Sure
State school tax reform	122	40	7	5
Limit increases in other property taxes	121	37	6	5
Capital gains & estate tax reform	117	31	5	10
Health insurance cost reductions	109	63	13	4
Property/liability insurance cost reductions	101	54	5	4
Right to farm laws	101	49	3	8
Utility cost reductions	99	54	10	4
Income tax cuts	92	51	15	4
Agriculture district development	84	68	7	10
Marketing for higher prices to new outlets	81	49	20	16
Workmens compensation insurance cost reductions	81	40	18	11
Youth agricultural education	71	74	19	10
Development of new products and markets	70	48	29	16
Agricultural land cost	68	68	16	9
Estate planning education	63	70	21	12
Environmental training (pesticides)	61	55	19	9
Access to support businesses	60	69	19	12
Consumer "buy local" education	58	64	27	15
Availability of skilled labor	57	67	29	9
Direct marketing of products to consumers	55	66	28	15
Environmental regulation reform	53	83	18	9
Financing availability	52	71	23	8
Farm neighbor education	49	67	28	13
Labor regulation reform	30	69	39	17
Purchase of development rights programs	29	64	37	31

15) How many years have you been farming at your current farm location?

	No.	%
Less than 10 years	37	32.5%
10-20 years	46	40.4%
More than 20 years	31	27.2%
TOTAL	114	100.0%

How many years have you farmed elsewhere in Schoharie County (If at all)?

	No.	%
Less than 10 years	14	46.7%
10-20 years	9	30.0%
More than 20 years	7	23.3%
TOTAL	30	100.0%

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How many years have you farmed outside of Schoharie County (If at all)?

	No.	%
Less than 10 years	16	42.1%
10-20 years	17	44.7%
More than 20 years	5	13.2%
TOTAL	38	100.0%

16) Are you a full or part-time farmer?

	No.	%
Full (40+ hours/week)	80	50.3%
Part (Less than 40 hours/week)	79	49.7%
TOTAL	159	100.0%

What percentage of your work time is devoted to your farm?

	No.	%
Less than 25%	47	30.9%
25-50%	14	9.2%
50-75%	17	11.2%
75-100%	74	48.7%
TOTAL	152	100.0%

Do you have off-farm employment?

	No.	%
Yes	64	44.4%
No	80	55.6%
TOTAL	144	100.0%

17) Is any other member of your household actively involved in the farm operation?

	No.	%
Yes	100	56.8%
No	76	43.2%
TOTAL	176	100.0%

What percentage of your spouse's work time is devoted to your farm?

	No.	%
Less than 25%	37	42.0%
25-50%	15	17.0%
50-75%	18	20.5%
75-100%	18	20.5%
TOTAL	88	100.0%

Does your spouse have off-farm employment?

	No.	%
Yes	75	44.9%
No	92	55.1%
TOTAL	167	100.0%

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18) Is your farm/business a member of a marketing cooperative?

If so, please specify:

	No.	%		No.	%
Yes	40	23.7%	Milk marketing	29	87.9%
No	129	76.3%	Wool cooperative	2	6.1%
TOTAL	169	100.0%	Other	2	6.1%
			TOTAL	33	100.0%

Do you participate in any buying groups?

Are these local or regional groups?

	No.	%		No.	%
Yes	17	13.3%	Local	14	10.9%
No	111	86.7%	Regional	11	8.6%
TOTAL	128	100.0%	TOTAL	25	19.5%

19) Which of the following materials, supplies, or services do you spend the most money on over the course of a typical year?

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th+	Score	Rank
Insurance and taxes	44	30	26	13	18	462	1
Machinery & equipment	35	35	24	15	20	437	2
Feeds and feed ingredients	60	13	12	6	13	413	3
Hay, silage, etc.	12	14	9	6	19	174	4
Fertilizer	15	8	0	11	36	165	5
Veterinarian services	10	5	8	8	44	154	6
Hired labor	13	11	5	9	11	153	7
Seed or fruit stock	4	9	12	10	28	140	8
Spray materials/chemicals	5	3	9	5	34	108	9
Transportation	3	7	10	4	27	108	10
Other	18	0	0	0	0	90	11
Legal/accounting	0	1	6	2	35	61	12
Custom harvesting	3	1	3	4	15	51	13
Packaging material	2	1	2	1	19	41	14

What percentage of these do you purchase within Schoharie County?

Do you use migrant labor?

	No.	%		No.	%
Less than 25%	31	20.0%	Yes	1	0.6%
25-50%	25	16.1%	No	161	99.4%
50-75%	42	27.1%	TOTAL	162	100.0%
75-100%	57	36.8%			
TOTAL	155	100.0%			

If so, how important is this labor to you?

How many man-days/year do you use?

	No.	%		No.	%
Critically important	1	7.7%	30 days or less	0	0.0%
Very important	2	15.4%	More than 30 days	1	100.0%
Somewhat important	5	38.5%	TOTAL	1	100.0%
Not that important	5	38.5%			
TOTAL	13	100.0%			

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20) In 1998, about what percent of your farm or business supplies were purchased from:

	<25%	25-50%	50-75%	>75%	TOTAL	%
Schoharie County	20	23	28	75	146	48.8%
The rest of New York State	32	32	28	22	114	38.1%
Outside New York State	24	8	5	2	39	13.0%
					299	100.0%

21) Which category best represents your gross sales for 1998?

	No.	%
Less than \$10,000	49	31.2%
\$10,000 to \$24,999	39	24.8%
\$25,000 to \$49,999	13	8.3%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	16	10.2%
\$100,000 to \$249,999	24	15.3%
\$250,000 to \$499,999	13	8.3%
\$500,000 to \$999,999	3	1.9%
\$1,000,000+	0	0.0%
TOTAL	157	100.0%

22) Which category best represents your gross sales for a typical year?

	No.	%
Less than \$10,000	57	35.4%
\$10,000 to \$24,999	32	19.9%
\$25,000 to \$49,999	15	9.3%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	15	9.3%
\$100,000 to \$249,999	26	16.1%
\$250,000 to \$499,999	11	6.8%
\$500,000 to \$999,999	5	3.1%
\$1,000,000+	0	0.0%
TOTAL	161	100.0%

23) Do you feel local governments support agriculture in the following:

	Very Supportive	Somewhat Supportive	Not Supportive	Not Sure
Right to farm	28	68	38	32
Taxes	21	60	64	15
Provision of services	20	69	40	24
Loans and grants	11	36	61	38
Planning/zoning matters	0	76	46	20

24) Have you, in the past 5 years, significantly expanded your operation by any of the following?

	No.	%
Purchased additional equipment	72	25.4%
Owned additional animals	40	14.1%
Brought inactive acreage into production	40	14.1%
Renovated building(s)	39	13.8%
Rented additional acres	29	10.2%
Constructed new building(s)	26	9.2%
Purchased additional acres	23	8.1%
Hired additional employees	14	4.9%
Leased additional animals	0	0.0%
TOTAL	283	100.0%

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If you did not expand, what were the primary reasons?

	No.	%
Age of owner/operator	44	25.6%
Poor profit margins	42	24.4%
Satisfied with current size	39	22.7%
High cost of additional labor	19	11.0%
Lack of available labor	11	6.4%
Lack of available land to rent	7	4.1%
Lack of available land to be purchased	4	2.3%
Other	4	2.3%
Retiring	2	1.2%
TOTAL	172	100.0%

Are you considering expanding or renovating at this site in the 5 years?

	No.	%
Yes	62	38.8%
No	98	61.3%
TOTAL	160	100.0%

Do you have enough property to expand?

	No.	%
Yes	79	52.3%
No	54	35.8%
Not sure	18	11.9%
TOTAL	151	100.0%

If you don't have room to expand, how much additional acreage/space do you need?

	No.	%
25 acres or less	0	0.0%
26 to 50 acres	6	26.1%
51 to 100 acres	15	65.2%
101 to 200 acres	0	0.0%
201 to 500 acres	2	8.7%
More than 500 acres	0	0.0%
TOTAL	23	100.0%

How much capital do you think your farm/business will need for renovation and/or expansion?

	No.	%
Less than \$25,000	6	12.5%
\$25,000 to \$49,999	11	22.9%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	14	29.2%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	9	18.8%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	4	8.3%
More than \$200,000	4	8.3%
TOTAL	48	100.0%

25) Are you considering adding to, diversifying or changing your type of operation?

	No.	%
Yes	31	20.3%
No	122	79.7%
TOTAL	153	100.0%

Examples:
 Adding/changing crops (13)
 Adding/changing livestock (13)
 Other (6)

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26) Have you had difficulty receiving the necessary financing to develop/expand?

	No.	%
Yes	27	21.6%
No	98	78.4%
TOTAL	125	100.0%

If you've been offered financing, were the terms reasonable?

	No.	%
Yes	28	50.0%
No	14	25.0%
Not sure	14	25.0%
TOTAL	56	100.0%

27) What programs or institutions have you approached for financial assistance?

	No.	%
Commercial bank or savings and loan	59	45.7%
Farm Credit Agency	46	35.7%
Federal loan programs (USDA, SBA)	17	13.2%
Local revolving loan fund	4	3.1%
Empire State Development Corporation	2	1.6%
Industrial Development Agency	1	0.8%
TOTAL	129	100.0%

28) Over the last 5 years, have the following business factors increased, stayed the same or decreased for your operation?

	Increased	Same	Decreased
Your number of customers	43	60	13
Your sales quantity volume	55	56	16
Your sales dollar volume	52	52	30
Your profit	36	57	47

Over the next 5 years, do you expect the following business factors to increase, stay the same or decrease for your operation?

	Increase	Same	Decrease
Your number of customers	48	70	8
Your sales quantity volume	65	64	7
Your sales dollar volume	60	70	12
Your profit	67	49	17

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29) From which of the following sources do you request or seek information on agricultural issues such as production, regulations, farm programs, etc.?

	No.	%
Other farmers	107	13.7%
Farm magazines/books	106	13.6%
Cornell Cooperative Extension	104	13.4%
Soil & Water Conservation District	78	10.0%
Newspapers	66	8.5%
Agricultural businesses	57	7.3%
USDA Agencies (NRCS, FSA)	56	7.2%
Farm Bureau	46	5.9%
NYS Department of Ag & Markets	46	5.9%
Friends/relatives	40	5.1%
Computer/Internet	38	4.9%
Television/radio	30	3.9%
Other	5	0.6%
TOTAL	779	100.0%

30) In your opinion, how effective are the following in supporting agriculture in Schoharie County?

	Very Effective	Somewhat Effective	Not too Effective	Very Ineffective	Not Sure
Cornell Cooperative Extension	62	59	12	11	3
Soil & Water Conservation District	46	62	20	11	17
Farm Bureau	46	53	24	13	25
Farm supply/equipment dealers	45	63	20	8	19
Farm Services Agency	30	49	30	10	34
Dept. of Agriculture & Markets	19	46	38	24	23
Natural Resources Conservation Service	14	38	35	14	37
Banks and other lenders	12	44	38	22	32
Chamber of Commerce	8	40	39	33	38
Industrial Development Agency	5	18	47	39	46
Economic Development Partnership	3	16	40	32	51

31) Are the State and County doing enough to protect and enhance agriculture?

	No.	%
Yes	38	25.5%
No	111	74.5%
TOTAL	149	100.0%

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Comments:

What are they doing? (4)
High taxes. (3)
Farms are disappearing. (2)
How can you say enhance when all they do is control volume, and let imports control price?
Counties should work with supermarkets & others to encourage milk & cheese sales by reducing prices when farmers prices go down.
Uncompetitive price for milk, high feed cost, high equipment cost, high taxes.
Agencies look after their own interests, e.g., Road Dept, Water Dept, DEC, etc. Nobody has told them agriculture is worth protecting.
No because good managers are having trouble making ends meet at 12 dollar milk.
Consumer education is vital. People must be educated about where their food comes from.
Not enough pressure to USDA for better milk prices.
They have to explain to consumers that farmers are not making much money; especially dairy farming.
Too much New York City politics and not enough thought and common sense.
Not that I'm aware.
Need more protection for farmer re "Right to Farm."
Need program like Massachusetts where state/county makes up the difference between sale of farm to farmer or sale to developer.
Lack of cooperation to smaller farmers.
Low profit margin causes farmers to go belly up and have to sell their land off. They work a lifetime just to keep their land.
Taxes on farm lands must be reduced by 50%.
There are 9,200 farms left in NY down from 15,000 a few years ago.
More tax and insurance relief needed.
Need to contain urban sprawl.
Must allow milk price equal cost of production.
How many farms in the County have gone due to taxes, costs and lost profits.
More help is needed if ag. is to survive.
State should help keep deer out of crops by allowing special permits in hard hit areas. (DEC Permits)
Should do more to outlaw frivolous lawsuits etc. against landowners.
They have not tried to help the dairy farmer in years past. Do not know currently.
Politics.
Too much regulation.
Nothing done to attract ag based enterprise to create market, i.e. dairy based business - cheese, ice cream, etc.
Zoning boards go out of their way to find excuses to re-zone and split up Ag areas.
County does but not State. Except for exemptions, I don't know of any new help.
Not saving enough land for farms - summer people are developing all farm lands.
State must make a significant long term investment in Agriculture and related development.
They allow school districts and towns to raise taxes to an unaffordable level.
Expansion of Ag Days.
Land use planning laws should guide local planning boards in farmland preservation when considering subdivision plans.
Lower property taxes would make more farmland affordable.
Too much farmland going to developments for housing.
A business park or a WalMart will trump farming every time.
More property tax relief.
Programs being talked about should be put in place, i.e., tax reform, purchase of development rights.
Its a way of life for many locals and they cater to the out-of-area landowners.
Most things are done politically only.
(1) Northeast Dairy Compact Commission, (2) Roads and highways in extremely poor condition.
We are a disappearing group, there are fewer and fewer left each year.
If they were, why fewer farms?
Need more legislative interaction with milk pricing.
They do not make it easier for younger people to make a good living.
Taxes too high. Representatives never keep their promises for on-sight inspections except timber reps.
Each month I see farm auctions and farm sales. In fact, I often go to them.
The State and County must do everything to create a financial environment in which agriculture can survive.
It would be good to sell development rights.
Too much tax regulations
As far as I can see they aren't doing anything. One year they didn't even fund the Cooperative Extension position.
Too much "Good old Boy Syndrome." Many farmers left out in the cold. Too many "politics."
Legislation is always stagnant and we get nowhere.
Greater encouragement/support of Agriculture of Cobleskill College Farm.
Development of real estate is still seen as more advantageous than supporting farms.
If they were farmers they would not be going out of business.
Already have had farms destroyed with businesses moving in and expanding highways

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Comments:

No efforts are apparent.
 Letting too much land to be developed.
 Farmers have land not being able to use because State refuses to give right away to that they land-locked.
 NY needs to actively support agriculture instead of weak support. Farmers are going out too fast to keep up NY's supply.
 They put too much money into conservation easements and not enough into treating ag as a small business enterprise.
 There is too many big business.
 Assess farm land too high especially woods, pasture and waste land.
 Lower taxes; more money for products - market improvement needed.

32) Do local planning and/or zoning boards have enough understanding of farming to make effective land use decisions regarding agricultural enterprises?

	No.	%
Yes	52	38.8%
No	82	61.2%
TOTAL	134	100.0%

Comments:

Depends on the people serving on these boards. (2)
 I'm not sure zoning exists here.
 Should look into individual need.
 I think they understand farming, but don't know what to do to help or to promote ag development.
 There is no regional consensus - no plan for ag development.
 I haven't seen a planning board with enough farmers on it to make the rest understand, maybe Schoharie is different.
 Many simply don't care that land is best suited for farming - not houses.
 Mostly city people.
 Most planning boards and zoning boards are made up non ag minded persons mainly because lack of time on farmers part.
 Not where I'm located it's a joke!
 Rt. 30 Industrial Park is in wrong location must be closer to Village of Schoharie (don't use prime farmland).
 Most people think their food comes from the store.
 Some have good understanding, some have no clue.
 Focus on short term effects, i.e., the taxable land.
 The zoning laws are a pain in the neck. They should never have come in to being. Have only created a disaster - for cities only.
 No agricultural representation.
 Some Board members are not agricultural, but rather more construction oriented (i.e., Cobleskill).
 They use government money to put schools, etc. on the best farmland. They talk a good game.
 Not in Richmondville. They are more knowledgeable in development than farming.
 Politics and lack of agricultural know how.
 Building restriction on property.
 Don't know - ask them
 Probably not due to new techniques that are always being introduced on farms.
 If they are not, or have not been farmers, how could they?
 They do not understand property rights issues.
 We have had no dealings with the Town of Sharon personnel but the Town of Canajoharie leaves a lot to be desired.
 They are often handicapped by inadequate regulations.
 They know subdivisions and special exceptions, little concept of secondary impacts.
 I'm new, but want to learn more; therefore making workshops, discussion groups, training, etc. more available.
 More concerned with development of second homes.
 Too many urban-type people serving on Planning Boards. Example - Finnegan Associates has re-valued land for Schoharie County.
 We need people involved in agriculture on these boards not people employed by local and state governments.
 Some do. Others I don't feel have a clue.
 Receive no classes/training from State/County agencies in planning and zoning matters.
 No farm knowledge.
 I don't see any farmers on them.
 We needed more housing for help but was unable to do what we needed to do.
 Politics again - Good knowledgeable farmers never asked to participate.
 Many farmers available who have bought and paid for their farms never asked how they did it, etc.
 They are only concerned with Village and residential life.

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Comments (continued):

Not up to modern farming methods.
 I would hate to guess how many acres of farmland have been rezoned in this County.
 There should be Ag people on the Planning Board.
 I think most of them look to increased real estate development for improved life in their community.
 Have had farms broken up for housing.
 Primarily relate to large farms. Not aware of e/or relate to small farm entrepreneurial activities.
 Most members know nothing about farming.
 Planning Board rules are not acceptable.
 Most aren't from the farm so they don't know how the operation works and the limited finance they have thanks to the government.
 They think that the present farmers don't know the impact of expansion.
 The good farmers are well aware of pesticides and manure problems and are doing something to prevent future troubles.
 They have no idea what real agriculture means and needs to stay in business.
 They don't know enough about farming or they don't care.
 Pay more to the farmers and all other methods will be unnecessary!

33) Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Sure
Land use planning in Schoharie County is needed to better protect farmland and farmers.	96	62	3	5	8
Residential/commercial development competes for land and is a threat to local agriculture	84	51	19	13	6
The future of agriculture in the County depends on development of new markets and products.	61	84	8	6	15
Agriculture will be enhanced by the development of more agricultural tourism.	40	67	30	16	19
Local government decision-makers understand the importance of agriculture to the local economy	22	59	41	40	13
The general public understands the importance of agriculture to the local economy	4	31	57	74	6

34) Do you have other ideas about improving and/or retaining agriculture in the county?

Yes: (1) What about ag programs in high schools - they are mostly public speaking projects and conventions and such. They are known as being classes for only "slow" kids. They don't really teach what its like to operate a farm of any type.
 (2) Farm income needs to be relative to other professions. No one nowadays is going to work hard for next to nothing. Children of farmers are looking to other careers with better health ins. benefits. Why can't the farm bureau offer a group plan that is more reasonable than what you pay as an individual plan?
 Taxes to be lowered. More money should be available to farmers, more help financially.
 There is much land in Schoharie Co. - ag is threatened by unwillingness to change and lack of markets, much more than development. There is room for everyone here - we just have to find viable ag. opportunities and develop them.
 Hire lobbyist to go to Washington and lobby for higher milk prices and against the processors who are trying to lower it.
 The County is trying new ways to enhance Schoharie, including the Chamber trying to attract Amish farmers to move.
 Why don't you work on cleaning the eyesores up that are all around Schoharie Co. i.e., the roadside junkyards.
 Enforce our zoning! We have a beautiful county, yet you are letting them turn it into a dump.
 Agriculture education should be taught to all students in the school systems, the same as reading, etc.
 Great need for farmers to be cooperative when setting prices for their products, not competitive with each other.
 Better margin of net profit. This can be achieved w/lower taxes and better milk prices.
 Why is it that dairy farmer prices are set by Washington but vegetables and fruit farmers set their own prices?
 A nickel or dime more on a cuke, pepper, etc. or \$1 per bushel of potatoes - 50¢ more dozen corn can make the difference.
 This form amounts to 0 to 10 = "0".
 For one thing - it would help to let the public know we exist.

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Comments (continued);

Need news articles of top producing farms - achievement awards, pictures of high producing cows, etc. Scope of the industry, etc. Profitability lacks in agriculture.

Unless government helps to set production limits nationwide, small farms cannot compete in the northeast and will slowly die. Only those that directly market will have a chance to survive.

Improve appearance. Remove items such as old equipment and cars, any unregistered cars should be stored out of sight.

Laws should be made or enforced for a prettier county.

Schoharie Co. Manager should contract Beechnut Plant Mgr. in Canajoharie to promote frozen foods packaging business.

If they are not farmers, they do not have clue!

Yes: (1) Lower land taxes, (2) Increase market, (3) Option of purchasing development rights.

Put higher taxes on developments. Some subdivision land is still taxed the same as pastureland even though approved for building, etc.

If you could keep yuppies out it would help!

If you wish to continue agriculture, you need to put farmers on your planning boards.

Low interest loans readily available. Grant monies for market research - some how tie raw farm products to processed items.

Yes - by bringing a cooperatively owned milk plant to Schoharie Co. and building farmer markets.

I am trying to develop my farm enterprise slowly on a part time basis. Being part time it is hard to keep up on all new developments.

I try to stay away from financing at this stage.

Lower taxes!

(1) Develop livestock marketing cooperative; (2) attract value added business based on local agricultural products.

We have trouble routing trucks to the farm because of lowered weight limits on roads and bridges.

Our farm also has problems with getting trucks to the farm in the winter because of ice building up on county and town roads.

Farmers need to get more money for their products, but it seems as soon as we do get more, everything else goes up.

Get rid of all government programs for farming and make it a truly supply and demand ag economy.

Farming is not just the \$100,000+ income farms with 500 acres.

It's also the guy with 10 beefers and a barn or the son doing haying on his retired parents' farm.

If the farm land gets split-up for housing lots because of taxes or foreclosure it will never be a farm again.

Retired farmers should be given a tax break to be able to rent their farms for farm use.

(1) Keep the "little farmer" included; (2) keep people who buy large pieces of land (50+ acres) with intention of "sideline" farming.

This keeps land in ag use rather than subdivision.

Cut the local and school taxes way back for farmers then maybe we could afford to keep the land.

Farmer to farmer or consumer directly, big business, big Coops, and governments do not help farmers. Look at the record.

The number of family farms declines year after year. None of the mainstream organizations have stemmed the decline.

The government supports big business and cheap food not family farms. 30 cent wool doesn't cover the cost of shearing the sheep!

Since none of the programs have worked after billions of dollars have been spent I recommend they be eliminated.

Farmers must sell directly to the consumer bypassing government and big business. A quality product always has a market.

Zoning laws geared to preservation of rural landscape. The center of a hayfield isn't a good place to build a house.

This survey is a good first step towards planning for rural preservation.

Sprawl is the number one concern of mine. Schoharie land is valuable for farming not housing and cannot be replaced.

Get a hold of IDA, purchase development rights and scenic easements; use the Schoharie Land Trust and support it with dollars.

More stress on agricultural opportunities. Directed towards students thru 4H, FFA, vocational-agriculture, AG in the Classroom.

Change school tax from land-based tax to income-based tax, limited to those who have children of school age.

(1) Increased support/budget allocations for Cooperative Extension and Soil/Water Conservations groups;

(2) Promote "Eco/Ag Tourism" - sponsor more conservation and recreational stocking programs in cooperation with ag events;

(3) Encourage use of fewer chemicals but improved research for local crop improvement methods (tax credits for reduced tillage land?)

Fully educate the public - especially the children about agriculture -- being a farmer should not be a stigma.

Farmers should be treated with respect instead of disgust.

Farmers raise food, repair equipment, pay insurance, and all on a shoestring budget with a high capital investment and too many hours!

Recently my insurance agent said we have a new class of insurance called Hobby Farming - it will save you money.

There are too few farms left - most hobby farm horses, beet, etc.

Feed is high, labor impossible to get so we all have other jobs to pay the bills.

So as to support the hobby I'm hoping a developer will want my land. As a farm it has marginal value at best.

Cooperative marketing, discussing management ideas, etc. may be beneficial.

Lower taxes!

You could start by treating farmers as people, not as second class citizens.

Just because dairy farmers walk around with a tin cup in their hand sometimes, it doesn't mean they want to live by getting handouts.

A fair price for their product would be better.

I wanted to do some farming on my land but I could not find anyone to do some plowing so I could plant.

Very disappointed. I use the land just for relaxation and am looking for someone again this year to do some plowing.

Lower taxes on farm land and buildings in Ag Districts. More farm programs with grants - not government loans!

Yes. Get more good farm families that are farming successfully involved. Remember many wives are the main spoke of the business.

So are sons and daughters. They know the business upside and out. New faces are needed on these local boards and committees.

They could teach these overly large head over heels in debt farmers a lesson or two.

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Comments (continued);

Not the "same old, same old" politics and "good old buddy" syndrome should be out of government local agencies as is here in our "local" off This all boils down to profit. Without it, all your efforts are band-aids.

(1) Establish joint programs with SUNY Cobleskill; (2) Establish link between Planning Board & SUNY Cobleskill.

Question #14 lacks the most important thing to Schoharie Co. agriculture and that is farmer education to help us make better managers.

Schoharie County's dairy extension program is sadly lacking in that regard in comparison to programs in our neighboring counties.

We need to be part of a multi-county dairy group like our neighbors do.

From this survey how are you going to account for people who own cropland but rent it to another farmer?

I have some very confused landlords who have received surveys but can't fill them out because there is no provision for that here.

This is going to hamper the usefulness of your results.

You are only surveying active farmers - not people who own farmland (regardless of how it is used).

We need to account for that land in the plan. How will you do it?

And IDA needs to be developed for farmers to boost, encourage and assist farmers.

Schoharie Co. and local towns need to address zoning.

There seems to be a lack of planning for the preservation of green fields, (e.g. Exit 23 zoned commercial & this is ag county?)

There needs to be a program to purchase conservation easements similar to those in Pennsylvania, here in the county.

More low interest loans for solvent farmers, who are not 1st time farmers to purchase land.

Top priority should be to educate farm operators to be better managers.

We must spend more time helping (educating) part-time farming ventures.

These small operations will keep land in ag. when there are no longer dairies or crop/veg. farms in an area to use that land.

Some parcels like this also may be too small for larger operations to consider farming.

SUNY Cobleskill needs to become more proactive.

Faculty needs to be more aggressive in research, demonstration, and supporting Schoharie County's potential.

It should be lead organization. There is so much potential being wasted. Perhaps new blood is needed to encourage more activity.

I feel that there could be a more reliable pricing system put on the milk produced.

Farmer can do things to help keep peace with neighbors and friends, produce products that he or she needs.

We can make a good living & be happy at doing it because we can count on the amount of that check not going up & down so much.

Farms need to be treated as a small business. Farmers need to work together.

Farm Bureau needs to change its policy - they are not effective in helping us.

Just hope for the best. Try to teach the younger kids to get in to it. Also teach the farmer how to spend money wisely.

Dairy farming is probably the most prominent ag in county.

The price of milk regulated by the government is way too low to insure a decent return for all the expense and time involved.

A cooperative feed lot would of value to encourage such land owners to raise quality beef and hogs.

It would do uniform finishing & marketing with slaughtering facilities to retail beef and hogs and have a specialty restaurant

Also, offer bunk house style bringing in bus tours, etc.

Promote the County for settlement by Amish or Mennonite farmers to maintain farming on the smaller farms.

(1) Need advice as to what tax incentives or help we are entitled to for farm buildings and for tax assessments, generally; and

(2) Need help concerning contract farmers who might be interested in cutting this years hay crop.

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Agri-Business Survey

Response Rate: 44 delivered surveys and 8 replies = 18% return

1) Please tell us, by Schoharie County town or other county, where your business is located:

	No.	%
Town of Cobleskill	5	25.0%
Town of Schoharie	4	20.0%
Town of Esperance	1	5.0%
Town of Middleburgh	1	5.0%
Town of Richmondville	1	5.0%
Town of Sharon	1	5.0%
Town of Wright	1	5.0%
Fultons County	1	5.0%
Herkimer County	1	5.0%
Montgomery County	1	5.0%
Otsego County	1	5.0%
Saratoga County	1	5.0%
Schenectady County	1	5.0%
TOTAL	20	100.0%

2) How many people do you employ (data distorted by large multi-county employer):

	No.	%
Part-time	78	22.9%
Full-time	263	77.1%
TOTAL	341	100.0%

3) How long has this business been in operation?

	No.	%
Less than 5 years	1	12.5%
5-10 years	2	25.0%
10-20 years	0	0.0%
20-40 years	3	37.5%
40+ Years	2	25.0%
TOTAL	8	100.0%

4) What type of agri-business do you operate?

	No.	%
Machinery Sales and Repair	1	10.0%
Agricultural Consultant	1	10.0%
Seed Dealer	1	10.0%
Insurance/Finance	4	40.0%
Feed Dealer	1	10.0%
Livestock dealer	1	10.0%
Meat processing	1	10.0%
TOTAL	10	100.0%

5) What percentages of your customer base are from the farm/vineyard community and from Schoharie County:

	0-25%	25-49%	50-74%	75-100%
% from farm community	3	0	1	3
% from Schoharie County	4	1	2	1

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- 6) **How valuable to your business are your farm customers, considering the amount of activity, degree of prompt payment, profit and seasonality of business?**

	No.	%
Not all that valuable	0	0.0%
Somewhat valuable	1	12.5%
Quite valuable	2	25.0%
Extremely valuable	5	62.5%
TOTAL	8	100.0%

- 7) **Over the next 5 years please indicate whether you intend to:**

	No.	%
Increase your operation	5	45.5%
Increase agricultural sales	4	36.4%
Stay the same	2	18.2%
Transfer the business to a family member	0	0.0%
Decrease agriculture sales	0	0.0%
Eliminate agriculture sales	0	0.0%
Relocate your business outside of Schoharie County	0	0.0%
TOTAL	11	100.0%

- 8) **Are you aware of any nuisance suits or right to farm complaints among your clientele?**

	No.	%
Yes	0	0.0%
No	8	100.0%
TOTAL	8	100.0%

- 9) **Are the State and County doing enough to protect and enhance agriculture?**

	No.	%
Yes	2	33.3%
No	4	66.7%
TOTAL	6	100.0%

If not, please explain:

No State ag development initiatives.
I don't really know.
They need to stabilize support prices so people can make long term plans.

- 10) **Do local planning and/or zoning boards have enough understanding of farming to make effective land use decisions regarding agricultural enterprises?**

	No.	%
Yes	2	28.6%
No	5	71.4%
TOTAL	7	100.0%

If not, please explain:

Man times they are afraid of offending a developer or real estate agent.
Frequently, decisions are made without full knowledge of industry and dollar impact.
Most Boards are outside people and very few Boards have farmers.

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- 11) From your experience in dealing with your farm customers, what do you see as the greatest issues facing farmers in Schoharie County? (Respondents ranked up to 5 items and these were allocated points based on rankings)

	No.	%
Labor availability	23	19.8%
Low profitability	22	19.0%
Milk marketing	18	15.5%
Environmental issues	13	11.2%
High property taxes	13	11.2%
The costs of doing business	9	7.8%
High land prices	7	6.0%
Machinery costs	6	5.2%
Access to agri-services	5	4.3%
TOTAL	116	100.0%

- 12) What challenges do you face doing business in Schoharie County? (Ranked by points)

	No.	%
Access to skilled labor	22	27.2%
Lack of farm profits to spend	17	21.0%
High cost of doing business	13	16.0%
High property taxes	12	14.8%
Loss of farm clientele	12	14.8%
Government regulation	5	6.2%
TOTAL	81	100.0%

- 13) How important is protecting farming and farmland in the County to the success of your particular business?

	No.	%
Very important	4	57.1%
Somewhat important	3	42.9%
Not too important	0	0.0%
TOTAL	7	100.0%

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14) Please rate the importance of the following to the future of farming in Schoharie County.

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	Not Sure
Availability of skilled labor	5	1	0	0
Agricultural land cost	4	2	0	0
Estate planning education	4	2	0	0
Health insurance cost reductions	4	1	0	0
Youth agricultural education	4	1	0	0
Farm neighbor education	4	1	1	0
Access to support businesses	3	2	0	0
Capital gains & estate tax reform	3	2	0	1
Financing availability	3	2	0	0
Development of new products and markets	3	1	1	0
Direct marketing of products to consumers	2	3	0	0
Environmental regulation reform	2	3	0	0
Workmens compensation insurance cost reductions	2	3	0	0
Agriculture district development	2	2	0	1
Right to farm laws	2	2	0	1
State school tax reform	2	2	0	0
Consumer "buy local" education	2	2	1	0
Marketing for higher prices to new outlets	2	2	1	0
Labor regulation reform	1	4	0	1
Limit increases in other property taxes	1	4	0	0
Property/liability insurance cost reductions	1	4	0	0
Environmental training (pesticides)	1	3	0	1
Income tax cuts	1	3	1	0
Utility cost reductions	1	3	1	0
Purchase of development rights programs	0	3	1	1

15) Based on your own business activity, what trends have you observed regarding agriculture in Schoharie County?

	No.	%
A drop in the number of all farms	7	36.8%
A smaller number of larger operations	4	21.1%
A change in emphasis to other types of farms	4	21.1%
Movement of farms out of county	2	10.5%
A larger number of smaller operations	2	10.5%
TOTAL	19	100.0%

16) Have you, in the past 5 years, significantly expanded your operation by any of the following?

	No.	%
Adding product lines/services	4	30.8%
Hiring more employees	4	30.8%
Adding/renovating new facilities	3	23.1%
Increasing inventory levels	2	15.4%
TOTAL	13	100.0%

If you did not expand, what were the primary reasons?

	No.	%
Satisfied with current size	1	33.3%
Declining agricultural sales	1	33.3%
High cost of additional labor	1	33.3%
TOTAL	3	100.0%

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17) Over the last 5 years, have the following business factors increased, stayed the same or decreased for your operation?

	Increased	Same	Decreased
Your number of customers	4	0	2
Your sales quantity volume	4	1	0
Your sales dollar volume	4	0	1
Your profit	4	0	1

Over the next 5 years, do you expect the following business factors to increase, stay the same or decrease for your operation?

	Increase	Same	Decrease
Your number of customers	3	0	2
Your sales quantity volume	3	1	1
Your sales dollar volume	3	1	1
Your profit	4	0	1

Additional comments, suggestions and observations.

I see a large number leaving farms each year.
 Too many big businesses.
 Too many large housing programs.
 Too many homes popping up by our mountains, hills and farm lands.
 People don't care where they build.
 They complain about farming smells.

Schoharie County, New York
Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan

Appendix 5.4
Watershed Agricultural Council
Farmland Easement Program



WATERSHED AGRICULTURAL COUNCIL

Whole Farm Easement Program

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Walton, NY 13856-9751

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Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easement (PACE) Program

The Watershed Agricultural Council (WAC) has just concluded a contract with the New York City Department of Environmental Protection to administer a "purchase of agricultural conservation easement" program that will be known as the Whole Farm Easement Program. The Program is directed by the WAC Watershed Farmland/Forest Retention Committee (known as the Easement Committee), whose members include your friends and neighbors who understand farming in the Catskills.

The purchase of agricultural easements is by no means a new concept. In the northeast, the states of Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Rhode Island, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Connecticut all run purchase of agricultural easement programs. In all of these programs, farmer interest far out-strips available funding: many programs have waiting lists of over two years. As is the case with the state-run agricultural easement programs, WAC's program will pay farmers the fair market value of their "development rights" – while the farmers will continue to own their land.

Development rights are a major component of the market value of a landowner's property. The value of these development rights is established by a New York State certified appraiser who compares the market value of a property (without the agricultural conservation easement) to the agricultural value (after the agricultural conservation easement is in place). The difference between the two is the value of the development rights. In other words (these are fictional figures), if your farm is worth \$225,000 *without* an easement, and \$100,000 *with* an agricultural easement, the development rights you could sell would be worth \$125,000.

WAC will begin the Whole Farm Easement Program with a Pilot Project that includes five to fifteen watershed farms. Upon successful completion and review of this Easement Pilot Project, a larger Easement Program will be initiated. We expect that there will be significantly greater interest than funding available, so we cannot guarantee that all interested parties will be able to participate.

What is WAC's agricultural conservation easement?

An agricultural conservation easement is a legal document, written in the form of a deed, which promotes working, commercial agriculture as the preferred, long-term, land use. The landowner voluntarily protects his/her land from future development, while retaining full ownership of the farm. WAC's Whole Farm Easement Program sets a new standard for agricultural easements by incorporating the principles of Whole Farm Planning to balance the farm's economic viability with water quality and natural resource conservation measures.

The Easement allows for changing farming conditions and practices, as well as expansion and improvements to the farmstead and related farm structures. While these easements generally restrict land use to agricultural purposes, a limited number of house sites may be reserved on the farm if they are located to minimize their impact on surrounding agricultural lands and water quality. WAC's Easement will allow the farmer to lease, sell, and mortgage their land. Subdivision will be permitted as long as it does not negatively impact the long-term agricultural viability of the farm.

What is the process WAC will use to purchase Whole Farm Easements on "Pilot Farms"?

Pilot Farm Selection: The Easement Committee will seek to identify farmers interested in participating, on a voluntary basis, in the Pilot Project as a "Pilot Farm." Pilot Farms must have an approved Whole Farm Plan and submit an application to the Easement Committee. Both rented and owned lands, as well as forest, pasture, and hay and crop lands are eligible for the Pilot Project. Upon receiving applications, the Easement Committee will select Pilot Farms using criteria such as soil types and location within the watershed. "Pilot farmers" must be committed to working closely with the Committee as concepts and procedures are tested for later application in Phase II of the Easement Program.

Easement Planning: Each Pilot Farm will work with WAC's Easement Team lead by Karl Czymmek (WAC's Whole Farm Easement Program Manager) and representatives from the American Farmland Trust (a national farmland conservation organization). The Easement Team will assist pilot farmers in developing an Easement that will be tailored to meet their specific farming requirements and long-term goals, while maintaining water quality.

Why would a farmer participate in a purchase of agricultural conservation easement program?

Thousands of farmers throughout New England and across the United States have entered into a purchase of agricultural conservation easement program for reasons as diverse as they "needed the money" to they "wanted to be sure that the land never sprouts houses". Other farmers have found that working with their neighbors to permanently protect multiple farm parcels has allowed them to invest in their farms--knowing that the surrounding land use (and thus, their neighbors) will be supportive of farming practices. Finally, an increasing number of farmers have realized that if they wish to pass their farm from one generation to the next, agricultural conservation easements can become a critical estate planning tool.

Questions?

We appreciate your interest in the Whole Farm Easement Program. If you have any questions, please call Karl Czymmek (pronounced "zimick") at the WAC Office on NYS Route 10 in Hamden (607-865-7790). We look forward to hearing from you.

The Watershed Agricultural Council's Whole Farm Easement Summary:

What is a conservation easement?

An agricultural conservation easement is a legal document, written in the form of a deed, which promotes working, commercial agriculture as the preferred, long-term, land use. The landowner voluntarily protects his/her land and retains full ownership of the farm. WAC's Whole Farm Easement Program sets a new standard for agricultural easements by incorporating the principles of the whole farm planning process to balance the farm's economic viability with water quality and natural resource conservation measures.

Conservation easements are written as "negative restrictions" and therefore generally state what is prohibited, prior to stating what is permitted. When reading a conservation easement, it is very important to read the entire section to understand what is permitted and prohibited.

We will now walk you through a summary of each section of the WAC easement:

Whereas clauses:

This section establishes the importance of farmland protection in the general region, specific legislative support for farmland protection, and local initiatives promoting sound farming practices. Because the Watershed Agricultural Council's easement strives to protect both farmland and water quality, the "whereas clauses" also establish the importance of water quality and the relationship of the program to the New York City water supply. The "whereas clauses" set the tone and context for the conservation easement document.

Section 1: Conservation purposes.

The conservation purposes section is the cornerstone of a conservation easement. When future readers of the easement need clarification of the general context or other clauses within the easement, they would refer to the "purpose clause". The Watershed Agricultural Council's conservation easement clearly states in its purpose clause that the easement is to serve a dual purpose: protecting farmland and water quality.

Section 2: Definition clauses.

WAC's easement provides a definition section to ensure that current and future landowners, and conservation organizations, will fully understand the specific terms used throughout the easement document. Defined terms are capitalized throughout the easement to alert the reader to refer to the definition section.

Section 3: Organizing the easement into general "easement areas".

Every conservation easement program has its own method of organizing a conservation easement document. WAC's conservation easement is organized around the whole farm concept: both farmland and forestland are protected under a single WAC easement. However, because of the different funding sources for farmland and forestland protection established under the New York City memorandum of agreement, the easement has been organized into two general areas: an agricultural conservation easement area and a forestry conservation easement area. A conservation easement map, specifically tailored to each farm, will depict each easement area and the use areas explained below. Different uses are allowed within each different "easement area."

3a) Designating each farm property into three basic “use areas”:

To enable landowners to quickly understand what they are permitted to do in a certain area of their farm, the easement is further organized by general “use” area. The use areas are determined by the landowner who protects his/her land with the assistance of the WAC easement planning team. Every easement will have different configurations for the three use areas, depending on the farm and the landowner’s conservation goals. The three “use areas” are as follows:

Acceptable Development Area (ADA): An ADA is a building envelope where most of your future agricultural buildings and all residential buildings will be constructed.

Resource Protection Areas (RPA): RPAs are designed to protect areas which may have important water quality attributes. These could include steep slopes, wetlands, and areas around streams or ponds. Farming allowed in the RPA, pursuant to local, state and federal regulations. However, you will only be able to construct small, incidental buildings and improvements such as pump houses or farm roads.

Farm Area (FA): The FA will consist of agricultural conservation easement area land not covered in ADAs or RPAs. Generally speaking, this will be the majority of a landowner’s farmland. New agricultural buildings are permitted within the FA. If a landowner wishes to construct greater than 5,000 square feet of new farm buildings, as determined from the time the easement is signed, he/she will need prior permission from the WAC easement committee to ensure such construction does not substantially diminish the water quality or agricultural productivity of the farm.

3b) How can the landowner find out what is permitted under the terms of the easement?

The easement is organized into sections, with supporting headings to guide landowners to the relevant easement clauses. For example, depending on whether they want to find about what they could construct under the terms of the easement they would refer to “Section 4: Construction of Building and Improvements.”

Section 4: Construction of buildings and improvements.

This section describes what type of buildings are allowed within each “use area.” Section 4 is organized into subsections based on what type of building or improvement the landowner wishes to construct. For example, if you wished to construct housing for farm employees, you would refer to subsection under Farm Support Housing.

Section 5: Permission and notice requirements for construction of buildings and improvements.

Generally speaking, construction within the Acceptable Development Area does not need prior permission from WAC. However, to ensure that the construction is completely within the ADA, the landowner is required to notify WAC of the pending construction to allow the WAC easement staff to confirm the location. For construction outside the ADA, the easement establishes different requirements for obtaining prior permission from WAC. For example, agricultural construction outside the Acceptable Development Area, above a total of 5,000 square feet requires prior permission from WAC.

Section 6: Subdivision.

WAC’s easement recognizes that subdivision can make farming difficult and reduce water quality. While the easement allows for subdivision of the property, subdivision is allowed only if it does not negatively impact the long-term agricultural viability and water quality of the property. The minimum

acreage required for subdivision will be pursuant to local planning and zoning laws. All future owners of the property will need to respect the terms of the easement.

Section 7: Development rights.

This section clarifies that the landowner has sold, and therefore extinguished, all development rights except those reserved in the easement. For example, if the landowner who protected his/her property reserved two building sites (ADAs), a future landowner could not, at some future time, decide to “add” development rights (house sites, etc.).

Section 8: Conservation and farming practices.

No one can predict where agricultural is headed, or what type of agricultural enterprise may be best suited to your land in the future. Section 8 of the conservation easement recognizes the need for farmers to change, and adapt, their farming practices pursuant to a whole farm plan.

Section 9: Forest management.

The easement allows landowners to manage their lands for personal use (firewood, small scale timber) or commercial forestry. Because the easement strives to protect both water quality and farm viability, the easement requires a harvest plan which will respect water quality issues for larger-scale “commercial” harvesting. The specific details of this plan are outlined in *Water Quality Guidelines for Timber Harvesting*, available through the WAC Forestry Committee.

Section 10: Mining.

WAC understands that farmers may need to improve barnyards, farm roads, or residences and allows for on-farm use of gravel or shale. In addition, WAC’s easement recognizes the possibility that landowners may wish to sell bluestone at sometime in the future. In order to assure that the mining does not negatively impact long-term agricultural viability or water quality, the mining will need to comply with “best management practices.”

Section 11: Impervious surfaces and road construction.

The easement allows landowners to construct roads for on-farm use including driveways, farm roads, and logging roads. Impervious surfaces (such as roads, pavement, roofs, etc.) other than those in accordance with a whole farm plan or servicing permitted residences and buildings will be prohibited, to reduce the chances of a high-level of surface water run-off and thus an increased probability of soil erosion and a decline of water quality.

Section 12: Trash and waste disposal.

The easement allows for landowners to store used equipment for parts, store feed (indoors and outdoors) and to dispose of farm-generated waste on the property, subject to local, state and federal laws. Landowners can not import waste to be dumped on the property. The storage of septic waste for houses sited within the easement is permitted on the property pursuant to local, state and federal laws.

Section 13: Rights retained by Grantor.

This clause is written to assure the landowner that any rights not specifically prohibited in the easement are allowed so long as the activity is consistent with agricultural viability and water quality. For example, you retain the right to exclude the public from your property, the right to sell, lease, mortgage or transfer your property to anyone you choose, and the right to farm. As stated throughout the easement, a landowner who owns land protected by WAC’s whole farm easement will need to farm in accordance with a whole farm plan.

Section 14: Indemnification.

Conservation easements incorporate an indemnification clause to clarify the legal responsibilities of the landowner and the conservation organization which holds the easement (WAC). WAC's easement strives to fairly allocate possible future risks. In other words, if WAC's employees or agents cause damage or harm on the property, WAC shall be responsible. Likewise, if the landowner's actions cause damage or harm, the landowner shall be responsible.

Section 15: Real property taxes.

This section clarifies that the landowner is responsible for future property taxes. New York City may pay for a portion of taxes on the forestry conservation area, if there is a change in assessed value. A landowner receiving an "agricultural use" tax exemption will need to continue to apply for continued agricultural assessment, as long as the farm operation qualifies, except for situations in which an agricultural assessment would result in a tax increase.

Section 16: Inspection.

Conservation easements need to be monitored on a regular basis to ensure that terms of the easement are being upheld. WAC representatives will visit the property at least once a year, and will be available as necessary, to discuss the terms of the easement with the landowner. New York City's Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) will also be permitted to visit the site with the WAC representative during these annual site visits. As is currently the case, in situations where there may be a direct threat to the New York City's water supply, DEP could visit the farm without a WAC representative.

Section 17: Dispute resolution.

WAC is committed to maintaining a positive, working, relationship with landowners who own land protected by a WAC easement. As discussed in the enforcement clause, WAC will make every possible attempt to answer a landowner's questions or help them understand the terms of their easement. However, in the case where a landowner and the conservation organization find they need an outside interpretation of the easement, they may obtain the services of a mutually agreed upon mediator rather than bringing the issue to court. This does not preclude the opportunity for either the landowner or WAC to bring an issue before a court for a final determination.

Section 18: Enforcement.

This section is written to explain to both WAC and the landowner, the steps which would be taken by WAC should an easement violation or imminent violation occur.

Section 19: Third party enforcement.

A third party enforcement clause provides the New York State Attorney General and the New York City Department of Environmental Protection with the right to enforce "material" or substantial violations of the easement. This provision is required by the NYC Memorandum of Agreement.

Section 20: Acts beyond Grantor's control.

Landowners are sometimes concerned that they will be held responsible for events which happen during natural disasters. This section clarifies that WAC can not bring legal action against the landowner for changes in the property induced by a fire, flood, storm, etc.

Section 21: Transfer of Easement.

WAC intends to hold the easements in perpetuity. However, if at some time in the future WAC felt that an other organization, such as American Farmland Trust (AFT), would be better suited to monitor and enforce the easements, it could transfer the easements to that conservation organization. If this transfer occurred, the landowners would be notified.

Section 22: Transfer of property.

WAC believes in building a partnership with the landowners which own protected land to make sure that the land is protected forever, as stated in the easement. To enable new landowners, and those renting land, to understand the terms of the conservation easement which runs with their land, WAC's easement requires that the landowner notify WAC if they plan to sell, lease or otherwise transfer the ownership of property.

Section 23: Waiver or amendment.

While WAC's easement is written to provide a landowner maximum flexibility to farm within the context of a whole farm plan, no one knows what form agriculture will take in the future. Nor do we know what type of water quality issues will become most important. The waiver or amendment clause provides an avenue to allow for changes in the easement, which are consistent with the purpose clause and general context of the easement. For example, if a landowner reserved an Acceptable Development Area (ADA), and the landowner 50 years from now wanted to construct a house in the ADA but found that it did not meet the health code requirements at that point in time, WAC would work with the landowner to find a comparable location for a new ADA and could file a waiver to clarify the new location.

Section 24: Termination of Easement.

WAC's whole farm easement is a perpetual conservation easement. However, under very rare conditions, an easement can be terminated. This clause explains under what conditions an easement (or a portion of an easement) can be terminated, including condemnation proceedings.

Section 25: Other laws and regulations in effect.

This section reminds the landowner that local, state, and federal laws regarding your land remain in effect. For example, if the easement allows for farm support housing and your local zoning code does not permit such housing, you will not be able to construct the housing until you receive approval from your planning board.

Section 26: Filtration not to defeat purpose of easement.

As a dual purpose easement where public funds were used to purchase the development rights restricted in the easement, this section clarifies that if New York City constructed a water filtration or treatment plant at some time in the future the easement would continue to be in effect.

Section 27: Interpretation.

The interpretation section states that the laws of New York State, and the conservation purposes of the easement, will be used to interpret the easement in the future.

Section 28: Duration and binding effect.

This section states that the easement is perpetual and runs with the land. Therefore, every landowner who owns the property now and in the future, will be responsible for upholding the terms of the easement.

Section 29: Notices.

To ensure that the landowner and WAC clearly communicate issues of importance, as required by the notice and permission clause of the easement, this section requires WAC and the landowner to either hand deliver or send materials via certified mail.

Section 30: Subsequent liens on property.

Landowners are often concerned that an easement will prevent them from obtaining a mortgage. This section states that the easement does not prohibit the landowner from borrowing against the property. However, both the landowner and the lender will need to acknowledge that the property is restricted by a conservation easement, as stated below in Section 31.

Section 31: Subordination.

To ensure that the easement runs with the land forever, and can not be extinguished in a foreclosure proceeding, the easement requires all lenders or lien holders to agree that the easement is binding and takes precedence over their liens, mortgages and other security interests.

Section 32: Estoppel Certificates.

Upon landowners' request, WAC will issue an opinion as to whether their property is in compliance with the terms of their easement. Potential buyers may want WAC's assurance that the property at the time of sale is in compliance with the easement. If so requested, WAC would conduct a site inspection prior to the sale to determine if the property was in compliance.

Section 33: Severability.

The severability section explains that if a portion of the easement is found invalid by a court, that the rest of the easement still remains in effect.

Section 34: Acceptance.

When signing the easement WAC agrees to accept the terms of the easement, as it relates to the current and future conditions of the property, in perpetuity. WAC therefore acknowledges its responsibility to uphold the terms of the easement.

Schoharie County, New York
Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan

Appendix 5.5
Agricultural Planning Guide

Schoharie County, New York

**Agricultural
Planning
Guidelines**

June 2000

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Schoharie County, New York Agricultural Planning Guidelines

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Schoharie County, New York Agricultural Planning Guidelines

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This publication has been prepared to help guide local planning board members, agricultural and farmland protection board members and elected officials in their review of development applications that affect farmlands. The regulation of land use within agricultural areas requires balancing of growth with protection of prime farmland and, even more importantly, the rights of farmers to engage in sound agricultural practices. Good planning can help avoid future conflicts, allowing agriculture itself to grow and develop.

Land use planning and zoning with regard to agriculture cannot be rigid - the flexibility to adapt based on circumstances is critical. Many large farming operations involve a variety of land uses that may include housing for farm workers, the manufacturing of agricultural products, trucking operations, machinery repair, warehousing, or retail sales of farm products. The impacts of a particular farming enterprise will depend the intensity of the activity, the nature of the land involved and the amount of buffer area between agricultural and residential activities. Arbitrary standards common to other commercial, industrial and residential uses, therefore, don't work well in dealing with agricultural issues.

Section 305-a of New York State Agricultural Districts Law prohibits towns from employing land use regulations to unnecessarily restrict the operation of farms within locally adopted agricultural districts. It also provides for the preparation of an *Agricultural Data Statement* if the proposed action “ involves a special use permit, site plan application, use variance, or subdivision application on a property within an agricultural district containing a farm

operation or on property with boundaries within five hundred feet of a farm operation located in an agricultural district.” These provisions demonstrate a commitment by the State to agricultural protection. While they restrict local government from over-regulating agricultural activities, they also offer a mechanism for avoiding conflicts between farm and non-farm neighbors, that towns might otherwise have to arbitrate, by means of prior notification.¹

An Agricultural Data Statement for a proposed conventional subdivision adjacent to a large dairy farm, for example, could help reveal a situation where new single-family homes are planned immediately adjacent to prime cropland on which the farmer seasonally spreads manure. Prospective homebuyers visiting the site might not realize this is an ordinary sound practice for those fields and later be confronted, unexpectedly, with what they consider offensive odors.

The Agricultural Data Statement ensures notification at the front end.² It also allows a Planning Board to consider and suggest alternatives to the conventional subdivision. These include clustering where smaller residential lots are permitted in exchange for the preservation of open space between the two uses. The use of clustering is further explained in the main body of this report.

1 Such actions are also required to be referred to the County Planning Board for advisory opinions pursuant to Section 239 L, M, and N of General Municipal Law.

2 Farmers are protected by the requirement that, prior to the sale of land within an agricultural district, the buyer must be informed that adjacent farm operations may generate certain noise, dust and odors. Disclosure prior to sale offers farmers a defense to private nuisance lawsuits.

Schoharie County, New York Agricultural Planning Guidelines

What follows is an overview of agricultural planning principles coupled with examples of how to address various land use conflicts associated with agricultural practices and non-farm uses in agricultural areas.

2.0 PRINCIPLES OF AGRICULTURAL PLANNING

Some of the basic principles of agricultural land use planning and zoning are as follows:

2.1 Farming is More Than Raising Animals and Crops.

Agricultural enterprises, by their nature, often comprise a variety of land uses. Given the low profit margin of most agricultural operations, farms often include accessory commercial operations intended to supplement the primary sources of farm income. Farms may include sand and gravel operations, firewood production, feed manufacturing, farm stands, tourism features, slaughterhouses, wineries and assorted other complementary activities, depending on the type of the operations.

These accessory activities assist in stabilizing farm incomes by allow farmers to add value to farm products and direct market them for additional profit. This, in turn, helps preserve working landscapes offering valuable open space to the community. Therefore, broad latitude to allow these uses is required. The intensity of these uses should be the basis for determining whether they should be regulated.

Traditional family farm stands, for example, should be permitted as accessory uses to the farm operations as a matter of right although a building permit application for a larger commercial farm market might warrant

site plan review. Reasonable regulation to address issues such parking and access is appropriate. The key is not to exclude ancillary agricultural activities from on-farm locations.³

The best way to accomplish this is to encompass broad definitions of agriculture and agricultural accessory activities in the text of any land use or zoning regulations. Such a definition is offered below:

Agriculture - Any activity connected with the raising of crops, livestock or production of livestock products, including but not limited to field crops, fruits, vegetables, horticultural specialties, livestock and livestock products, furs, 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 and 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; 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 agriculture practices. Agriculture shall also include the processing and wholesale and retail marketing, including U-pick 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 of agricultural products so long as at least fifty percent (50%) of the annual gross sales of the farm stand have been grown on said farm.

³ A recent example from another County illustrates the point. A large landowner near a hamlet operated a vineyard and a small retail farm market operation adjoined by recent homebuyers delighted with the open space. However, when the owner decided to put up a winery on the farm, these same neighbors took the position that this was a commercial use that "belonged in town." The municipality could have avoided this conflict if it had broadly defined agricultural to include on-farm processing and ancillary agricultural activities. A reasonable standard might be that at least 50% of the raw product must be produced from the farm on which it is located or of which it is a part (farms can include multiple unconnected properties).

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2.2 Buffers Between Farm and Residential Uses Are Essential

Residences placed too close to farms can create unnecessary conflicts with farming activities over noise, dust and odors. These potential conflicts, however, can be greatly mitigated with the provision of open space buffers between the uses. Buffers also provide farmers with protection from adverse impacts associated with adjacent residents driving off-road vehicles into crop areas, other trespassing impacts, stormwater runoff, broken bottle litter problems and similar problems.

When residential subdivisions are proposed in close proximity to a farming operation, the responsibility of providing a sufficient buffer between the proposed home sites and the farm should be placed on the developer, not the farmer. This can be accomplished by substantially increasing minimum lot sizes for residential development within agricultural zones, requiring greater setbacks of residences along side and rear lot lines and limiting the range of residential uses allowed in these areas. These measures help to increase the separation distances between farm and residential uses.

A number of Pennsylvania, Maine and Maryland communities, for example, have required that dwellings be setback a minimum of 100 feet from land in any designated agricultural zone or tract. It is not uncommon for this distance to be increased to as much as 500 feet in the case of dwelling units proposed adjacent to intensive livestock operations within designated agricultural districts.

There are also a number of communities that have enacted agricultural protection zoning (APZ) regulations sharply limiting subdivision

activity within specified prime agricultural areas. Minimum lot sizes of as much 25 acres have been imposed in these areas to effectively prevent subdivision for other than farm purposes.

More typical, however, is a sliding scale formula that provides for a maximum number of dwellings decreasing proportionally as the size of the tract increases. This is usually accompanied by a requirement that the house lots themselves be restricted in size to avoid consuming too much farm land.

The overall impact of such regulations is to keep both the total number of dwellings created from a given farm and the land consumption associated therewith as low as possible. This concept works well with the "conservation subdivision" approach discussed below.

A simple but practical approach is also incorporated in the following sample language:

Farm and Residential Buffers - New residences within or adjacent to agricultural districts shall be limited to single-family dwellings setback a minimum of 100 feet from all rear and side lot lines shared with a farm tract lying within the district. The Planning Board may require that this buffer area be increased to as much as 300 feet and planted with trees where the proposed dwelling adjoins any existing intensive livestock, agricultural processing or manure disposal operation.

The range of other uses allowed within agricultural districts should be relatively narrowed and focused on agricultural support activities and complementary uses. Agricultural zoning district boundaries should generally follow those of New State State Agricultural Districts. The following is a sample set of use regulations that would be appropriate in such districts:

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Agricultural Protection District

Principal Permitted Uses

1. Agriculture (see definition)
2. Cemeteries
3. Forest uses
4. Greenhouses and nurseries
5. Single-family dwellings (see special standards)
6. Wildlife preserves

Special Uses

1. Bed and breakfast operations
2. Campgrounds
3. Clubhouses
4. Communications towers
5. Farm equipment sales and repair
6. Farm and feed stores and feed manufacturing
5. Houses of worship
6. Kennels
7. Tool and die and other light manufacturing uses
8. Outdoor recreation facilities
9. Sawmills
10. Veterinary offices and animal hospitals

Accessory Uses

1. Home occupations
2. Signs
2. Other uses customarily incidental to Principal Permitted and Special Uses

The above list can be modified to add or delete uses as appropriate to individual communities but it is representative of those uses that are generally compatible with agriculture.

The agriculture uses can also be broken down into Principal Permitted, Special and Accessory Uses. This provides municipalities with somewhat more control but can easily become confusing when incidental activities not specifically listed are proposed. It also runs the risk of conflicting with the New York State Agricultural District Law. A simple approach that broadly defines all agriculture in one category is usually more appropriate. Towns can always reserve the right to require site plan review of specified activities that pose

particular health and safety concerns. Some communities, indeed, classify intensive livestock operations as Special Uses so as to have the authority to require special setbacks.

Communities have to very cautious, however, in enacting any land use regulations imposing special requirements on agricultural uses. If the located in an official Agricultural District, the proposed use is subject to Section 305-a(1)(a) of the Agriculture and Markets Law (and 283-a of the Town Law) that states local governments cannot "unreasonably restrict or regulate farm operations...unless it can be shown that the public health or safety is threatened."

Regulations brought to the attention of the Department under this provision are evaluated on the basis of whether they are reasonable on their face and as applied to a particular situation. This means a given rule found reasonable in one situation may still be found unreasonable in another, depending on the nature of the individual circumstances.

Such problems can be avoided by: 1) permitting the broadest possible range of agricultural uses possible within agricultural districts and 2) applying needed setback and buffer requirements on the new non-farm uses proposed within the district. Should standards be proposed for particular application to agricultural uses they should first be reviewed with the Department of Agriculture and Markets.

2.3 Prime Farmland Should Be Protected from Development

The American Farmland Trust is the best overall source of information available on

Schoharie County, New York Agricultural Planning Guidelines

farmland protection. They have offer technical assistance and excellent publications on a wide variety of approaches including conservation easements, purchase or lease of developments rights and the agricultural protection zoning discussed above. There are, nevertheless, certain measures that are wholly within the province of municipal planning authorities to employ.

These include "conservation subdivision" techniques (also known as "cluster development") designed to accommodate residential growth while ensuring that prime agricultural soils remain in production. Under conservation subdivision provisions, a landowner is allowed to develop a property to the same density as allowed under present zoning, and sometimes even higher with bonuses for additional farmland protection. However, smaller lot sizes are permitted in exchange for the preservation of the open space or farmland.⁴

For example, if a 100 acre parcel is zoned for a minimum lot size of 2 acres, a developer could create 50 residential lots from it, assuming no environmental constraints. If the developer used a conservation subdivision approach, however, the 50 lots would be clustered on perhaps 25 acres (one-half acre each), leaving seventy-five (75) acres as open space. This land could then be available for crops and other agricultural uses that would actually complement the residences by preserving the open space setting attracting them to the area. A portion of the open space could, of course, also be used to buffer the two uses.⁵

This technique, where a farm operation is included as an integral component of the subdivision plan, can be an effective means of preserving prime agricultural lands. Good examples include subdivisions designed to surround beef or horse farms and productive fields in the manner of a golf course. Such subdivisions also help maintain the viability of adjacent farms by providing additional crop and pasture land they can lease. Care must, of course, be taken to ensure appropriate deed restrictions are put in place to protect the continuation of the farming operation. Additionally, homeowners must be informed of potential odors, noises and dust in the manner of Agricultural Data Statements.

Most farms contain a variety of soil types with the least productive soils used for pasture and the most productive soils for crops. If farms within a town are being acquired for residential development, the Planning Board should consider encouraging or even requiring conservation subdivision techniques that preserve the prime soils and allow continuation of farming as an approved open space use.

This would provide many farmers with the opportunity to recover some of their equity in the land for retirement or other purposes while keeping the best farmland in agriculture.

Sample Subdivision Regulation Provision Requiring Protection of Farmland

Proposals for subdivision of parcels including active farm or crop land within New York State Agricultural Districts shall include delineation of proposed building sites on each lot, which sites shall be located outside of or along the edges of the active farm and crop lands. Subdivisions of five (5) lots or more shall ordinarily be required to employ conservation subdivision or clustering techniques that provide for presentation of active farm and crop land without reducing overall density of development.

4 See Section 278 of New York State Town Law.

5 See Section 3.1 for illustration.

Schoharie County, New York Agricultural Planning Guidelines

Another technique available to communities is known as Transfer of Development Rights (TDR's). This is a method of removing the right to develop or build (expressed in dwelling units per acre or floor area) from land in one zoning district (e.g. agricultural) and transferring that right to land in another zoning district.

If the farm is in a TDR sending district (where credits are assigned using the zoning or local ordinance) the farmer can sell these credits to a developer in a TDR receiving district (zone where rights can be purchased). TDR credits have value because a developer who purchases TDR credits can increase the permitted density of development on their site.

In an area with water and sewer, the increased density allowed with the TDR credits could significantly increase the profit margin for the developer. For the farmer, the sale of TDR credits can be a means to secure needed capital to make necessary improvements to their farm without losing valuable farmland. TDR can also help to ensure that the prime agricultural soils in a community are preserved for future generations.

Due to their legal complexity, TDR's are not right for every community. An active real estate market is also necessary. TDR's benefit, however, is that it doesn't demand public funding to acquire development rights.⁶

Additional information on both these techniques are available through American Farmland Trust and by contacting the County Planning and Development Agency.

⁶ See Section 261-a of the New York State Town Law for authority.

2.4 Do No Harm to Agriculture

The Hippocratic Oath taken by medical doctors begins with an admonition to "first, do no harm" to the patient. If agriculture is truly a priority industry within a community then a similar policy should apply to actions that can hurt or kill off farming.

Towns should, for example, consider using Municipal Home Rule authority to restrict their Zoning Boards of Appeals from granting use variances within an agricultural district. Such a provision should, in addition to the four (4) part test established in New York Law for granting such variances, require that use variances within agricultural districts must not conflict with agricultural practices or farming. Sample language is offered below:

Sample Limit on Use Variances within Agricultural Districts

The Town hereby exercises its authority under Section 10 of the New York State Municipal Home Rule Law to supersede Section 267-b(2)(b) of the New York State Town Law so as to require that, in addition to items (1) through (4) thereunder, all applicants for use variances within Agricultural Districts shall demonstrate that the proposed use shall not in any way conflict with agricultural practices, the conduct thereof by persons engaging in agricultural industries or the purposes of Section 283-a of the Town Law pertaining to coordination with the Agricultural Districts program.

As farms are modernized with new facilities farmers should also be allowed to reuse old farm buildings and other facilities with great flexibility. The conversion of old barns into residences or offices provides a unique opportunity to maintain the rural landscape while preserving the unique architectural history of the community. Converting old barns to residences may also provide a unique housing alternative for farm workers. Old silos

Schoharie County, New York Agricultural Planning Guidelines

can be reused for cellular tower locations which is one means of preserving this vanishing symbol of the American farm. As an incentive, the reuse of farm buildings should be allowed as-of-right without the need for variances provided that such uses meet building code requirements.

Farmers can also be adversely impacted by storm water runoff and sedimentation from adjacent residential development causing long-term damage to valuable farm lands. New roadways for proposed subdivisions should follow the natural topography and avoid excessive grading of the site that can lead to erosion. Storm water management facilities associated with new developments must be designed so as not to adversely impact adjacent farmland. The preparation of a detail erosion and sediment control plan by a qualified engineer, should be required for applications requiring site plan or subdivision approval.

3.0 ILLUSTRATED EXAMPLES OF AGRICULTURAL PLANNING

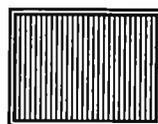
The following illustrative examples of agricultural planning principles are offered for planning boards:

- 1) conservation subdivision,
- 2) farmstand site planning,
- 3) planning for other farm facilities.

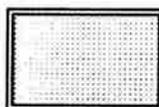
Each example includes a description of a proposed action and an analysis of issues that local boards should be considering when reviewing applications. The examples also include recommendations planning boards may want to consider.

The following is a key to all the illustrations that follow:

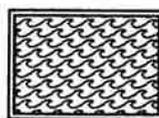
Key to Illustrations



Prime Agricultural Farmland



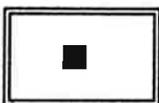
Pasture



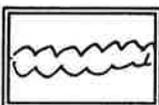
Wetlands



Open Space



Buildings



Hedgerow



Treeline

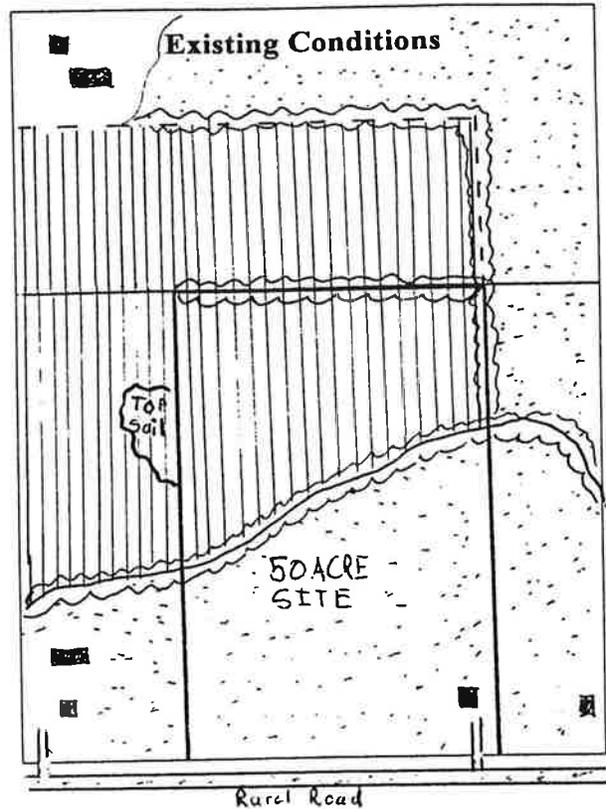
Schoharie County, New York Agricultural Planning Guidelines

3.1 Conservation Subdivision

The following examples compare conventional and conservation subdivision techniques as applied to farm situations:

Existing Parcel

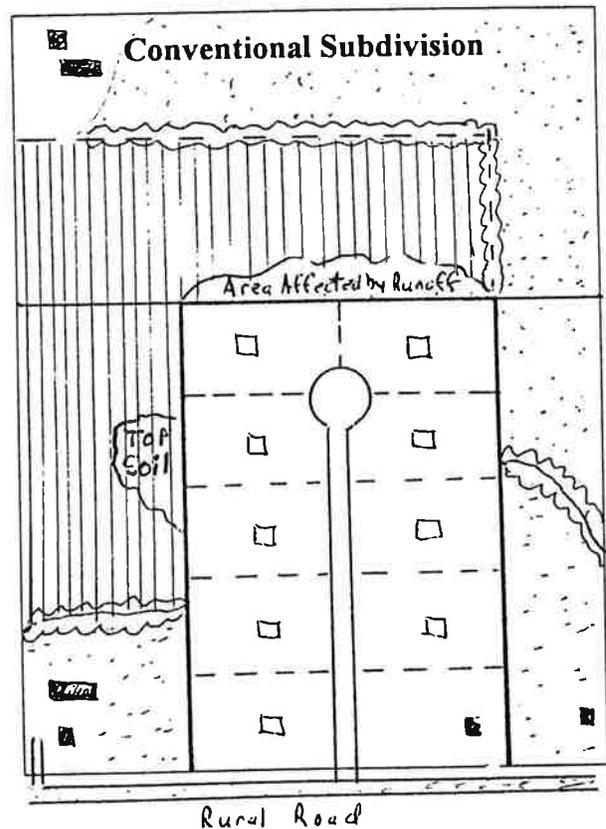
This 50-acre parcel consists of 25 acres of prime soils and 25 acres of gently sloping Pasture that overlooks the cultivated fields. The existing farmhouse and outbuildings are located adjacent to a local road and on the edge between the pasture and cultivated fields.



Conventional 5-acre Subdivision Plan

Under the existing zoning, the 50-acre parcel could be developed into 10 single-family lots of five acres each.

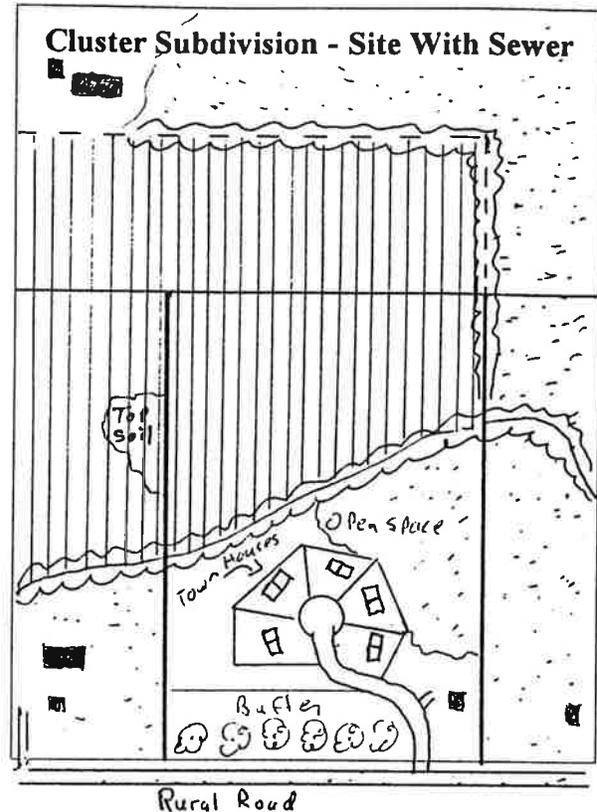
Notice that under the conventional subdivision, the entire site is broken up into development lots leaving none of the prime agricultural soils available for development. Furthermore, by fully developing this 50 acre property, the rural landscape along the road is disrupted and three (3) adjacent farm operations are potentially adversely impacted. With some flexibility of the reviewing board, these potential adverse impacts can be avoided. Alternatives to the conventional subdivision are illustrated on the following page.



Schoharie County, New York Agricultural Planning Guidelines

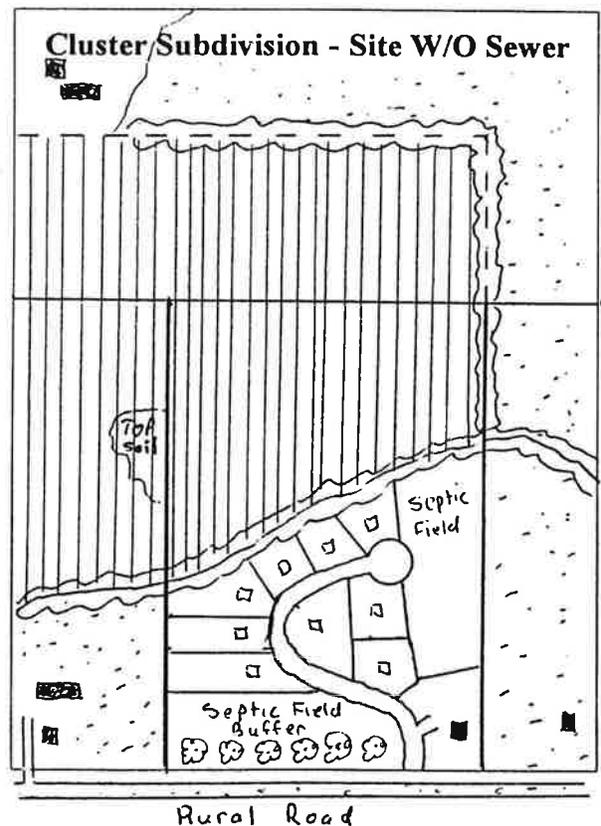
Agricultural Protection Analysis

There is, in this example, significant agricultural value to be protected. The 25 acres of prime soils should be preserved for future cultivation. The adjacent farmer could lease these fields, for example, and the farm use would complement the proposed development by providing open space. Also, note the conflicts in land use that conventional subdivision (previous page) creates. Residential lots abut active farming operations, including pasture land and a top soil operation, and no buffer is provided between these uses. Furthermore, the impervious surface connected with the new cul-de-sac to serve these homes will increase storm water runoff and involves the partial removal of a hedgerow and stone wall.⁷



Conservation Subdivision Alternative

Prime soils are preserved in this conservation subdivision. Moreover, many of the potential conflicts between the existing farm operations and new residences are avoided. Clustering the lots near the existing roadway eliminates the need to remove a large portion of the hedgerow and stone wall. Additionally, the preservation of the open fields provide a buffer between the residences and the neighboring farm operations. Clustering has, too, allowed the developer to strategically place units in an area of the site least likely to be impacted by noise, odor, or dust generated from agricultural uses and has helped to preserve the working rural landscape.



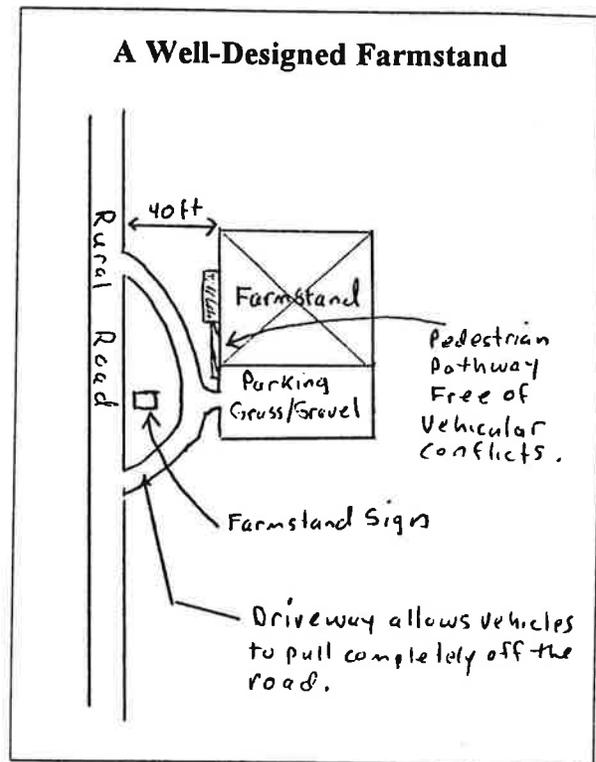
⁷ Farmers should, however, be permitted to remove hedgerows for the purpose of expanding fields or pasture.

Schoharie County, New York Agricultural Planning Guidelines

3.2 Farmstand Site Planning

Farmstands are the type of traditional accessory farming activity that should be allowed as-of-right, however, there are some basic guidelines that should be followed to ensure such activities do not create safety concerns or conflicts with local vehicular traffic. The following guidelines are suggested for consideration:

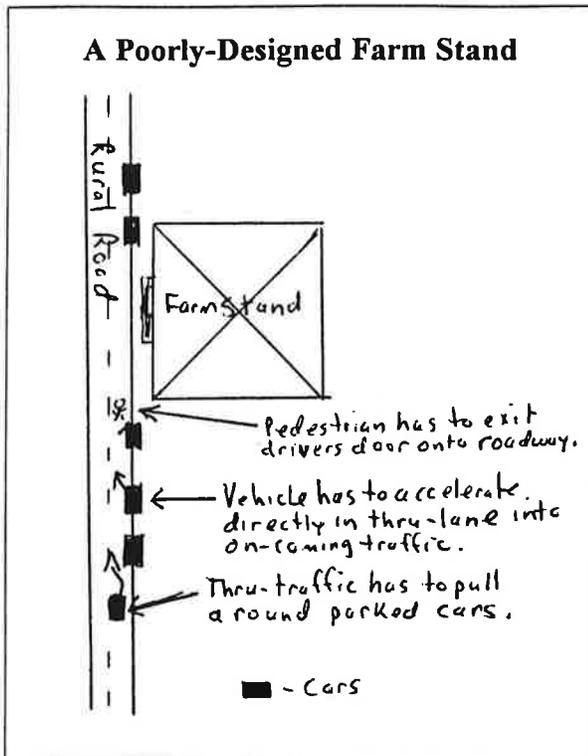
- (1) The farmstand should be located no closer than thirty (30) feet to the edge of the public right-of-way and no closer than ten (10) feet to any side property line.
- (2) Access to the public highway should be limited to existing driveways or to new driveways established pursuant to permits from the Town, County, NYSDOT. All new uses, including dwellings, are typically required to secure such permits for driveway curb cuts. It is important to notify farmers that these permits are required to avoid future hassles in trying to secure a permit after the fact. However, towns can ease the burden by providing for a simple process with minimal improvements required for such seasonal uses.
- (3) Customer parking spaces should be provided on site, and the vehicle maneuvering area should be maintained out of the public right-of-way.
- (4) Signage should be limited to a single sign, not greater than twelve (12) sq ft in area and located not less than five (5) feet from any street line.



Site Plan Analysis

In the illustration above, the farmstand has been setback from the road by forty (40) feet which allows for sufficient driveway length into the site so that vehicles are not parking along side the road. When vehicles park on the side of roads, pedestrians come into direct conflict with through traffic by stepping out of their cars onto busy highways and this needs to be avoided.

The farmstand driveway illustrated above provides adequate space for multiple vehicles to pull off the roadway and safely into the site. The designated parking area (grass or gravel) directs customers to a safe area to get in and out of their vehicles and out of the way of vehicles entering the site. The small farmstand sign also effectively advertises to the motoring public that the farmstand is open for business.



Site Plan Analysis

In this example, the farmstand is located too close to the roadway which forces customers to park along the roadside. Notice the multiple conflict points that are created between both vehicle and pedestrians in this example.

Since there is no room to park on-site, multiple cars have been stacked up along the roadside. Conflicts are created between vehicles trying to get back on the road and those trying to park for the farmstand. Making matters worse, pedestrians are trying to get safely to and from their vehicles.

The other negative aspect of this type of layout for a farmstand is that it impacts the level-of-service along an area roadway. Vehicles trying to drive through are forced to slow down and stop for cars pulling on and off the roadside and pedestrians who should not be on the road.

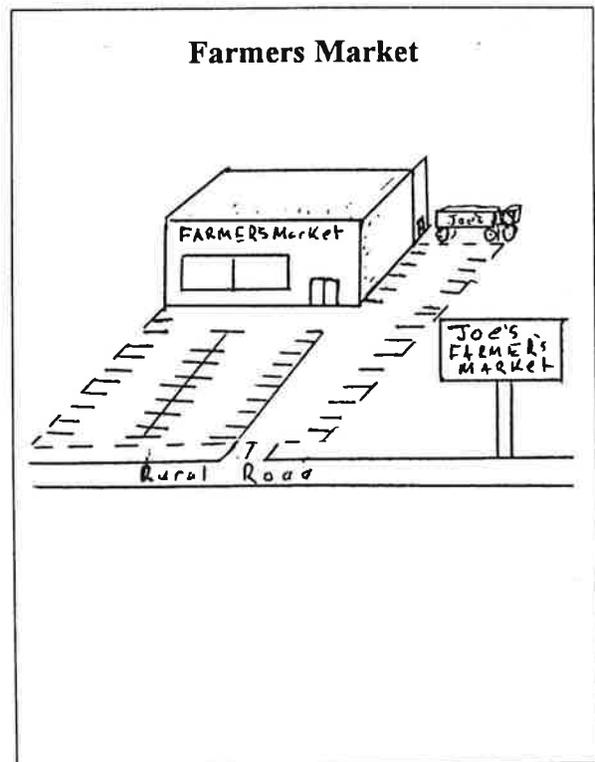
When Is A Farmstand No Longer One?

There are some useful indicators that may help a planning board determine if a proposed farmstand may be more retail in nature and should perhaps be subject to a more stringent review.

For example:

- Is the farmstand operation year-round?
- Is the structure designed for year-round use?
- Are full-time employees proposed?
- Are there extended hours of operation?
- Are the goods primarily produced off-site?

YES answers to more than one of these questions may indicate that the proposed use would be better regulated as a retail establishment and subjected to site plan review.



3.3 Planning for Other Farm Facilities

CAFO Compliance

Several other farm facilities raise particular planning issues. The following are general planning guidelines with regard to some of the most prevalent:

Farm Worker Housing

- (1) The provision of housing for farm workers in either multiple dwellings or mobile homes, should be a permitted use on a farm.
- (2) The housing should be supported by water supply and sewage disposal facilities in accordance with the standards of the Health Department or other controlling authorities.
- (3) The housing should be in compliance with the provisions of the New York State Uniform Fire Prevention and Building Code.
- (4) The housing should be located on the farm parcel no closer to any property line than the minimum setback requirement for a principal dwelling in the zoning district.
- (d) The housing should be immediately moved from the site upon cessation of farm operations and not allowed to be occupied for non-farm purposes. The property owner should be required to specifically acknowledge this standard, in writing, prior to the issuance of a building permit or certificate of occupancy for the intended building or use. This will eliminate future conflicts for the town.

There are now Federal and State manure management requirements applicable to concentrated animal feeding operation (CAFO) farms. Towns should not attempt to replicate these ever-changing regulations but may want to insist upon evidence of compliance insofar as new building or expansion projects are concerned. Attempts to develop local standards would also certainly run into conflicts with the CAFO regulations and could prevent the application of the latest technology to a given situation. Communities are better served by allowing farmers the flexibility to meet the Federal and State requirements in the most environmentally and economically effective manner.

Slaughterhouses

Custom slaughterhouse operations are often part of farm operations and can be completely unobtrusive if properly designed. The key considerations are the locations of any animal holding areas, the offal disposal arrangements and the volume of business in terms of traffic. Most custom slaughterhouses generate only minimal traffic and involve no outside activities. All are subject to State or USDA regulation.

Towns may wish to require that such facilities be setback a reasonable distance from property borders (say 100 feet) and that some percentage of the volume (say 5%) be raised on the farm where the facility is to be located so as to be able to distinguish the operation from a purely commercial facility. Nevertheless, a custom slaughterhouse is a very appropriate use to a farm and should be protected as a farm operation.

Breweries and Wineries

Breweries and wineries can also be normal parts of farm operations in New York State. The State is a major wine producer and has experienced tremendous growth in farm winery activity. It was also a major hops producer many years ago and is a logical location for micro-brewery operations designed to appeal to the young urban markets in the Northeast.

The key factor with regard to these operations is traffic. The commercial traffic is seldom significant but a facility offering wine tasting, for example, can be a major tourist traffic generator. This is a generally good effect but municipalities need to address access and parking.

This type of facility, too, should be encouraged as part of a vineyard or farm operation. It may be appropriate, once again, to specify that a portion of the raw product be produced on the farm where the facility is to be located but it should be minimal (say 10%) because most operations of this sort have to buy and sell grapes from a number of suppliers to obtain the proper varieties to meet customer demands and address seasonal crop production. This is why the New York Farm Winery Act only requires that the grapes used be New York State grown - they do not have to be grown on the farm where the winery is located.

Similar approaches to these are warranted for cider mills.

Schoharie County, New York
Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan

Appendix 5.6
Written Comments Received on Plan

The Schoharie Land Trust, Inc.
Box 482
Cobleskill, NY 12043



March 29, 2000

Schoharie County Planning and Development
RR #3 Box 12
Cobleskill, NY 12043

The Board of Directors of the Schoharie Land Trust adopted the enclosed response to Farmland Protection Plan at the March 23, 2000 meeting. We are pleased with the interest this plan has generated in the community, and commend the Farmland Protection Board for its hard work.

If you have any questions or comments on this response, please call me at 295-6003.

Sincerely,

Nancy Kelly
Nancy Kelly
Board Member

The Schoharie Land Trust, Inc.

Response to Schoharie County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board Plan

One of the primary goals of the ***Schoharie Land Trust*** is the preservation of farmland in Schoharie County. The economic viability of agriculture, cooperation between those who are involved in agriculture and those who are not, sensible land use policies and purchase of development rights are crucial to land preservation efforts. The Farmland Protection Plan offers objectives and strategies to these ends and the Land Trust supports the major recommendations and urges the Board of Supervisors to adopt and implement this plan.

In particular, the ***Schoharie Land Trust*** supports land use planning: smart-development/smart-growth models, farm representation on planning boards and a purchase of development rights (PDR) program for valuable farmland.

The Land Trust has experience in acquiring easements and believes it is the appropriate vehicle to receive PDR easements. The Land Trust is exploring the administrative requirements for this program and considering criteria to evaluate eligibility of farmland for the PDR program.

The ***Schoharie Land Trust*** is appreciative of the efforts of the Farmland Protection Board and offers the following suggestions:

1. Prioritize the recommendations, based on feedback at public hearings;
2. Review and revise the plan periodically, so it continues to meet the needs of the county;
3. Promote public awareness of the economic and cultural importance of agriculture in the county so that the community at large can make informed decisions regarding future land use.

Want to make written comments about the Agriculture and
Farmland Protection Plan?

If you are unable to attend a hearing and want to make a comment in writing, please use
this form and mail it to:

Schoharie County Planning and Development
RR #3 Box 12
Cobleskill, NY 12043

NAME: MADE IN SCHOHARIE County: HCR Box 152 WARRENVILLE
NY 12187

COMMENTS:

See Attached

The members of MADE in Schoharie County met on Friday, March 17, 2000 to compile a collective statement regarding our primary concerns with the proposed Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan for Schoharie County. We commend the efforts of the Ag and Farmland Protection Board for pulling this plan together, and have highlighted six items that we would like to see addressed. References to the sections of the plan we are referring to are listed at the end of each item.

1. We feel that the recommendations in the plan should be prioritized, with the primary focus on active promotion and public understanding of the economic and cultural importance of existing agricultural activity. This promotion should include clear explication of the multiple economic returns of the county's agricultural enterprises, the potential future of our communities were it not for our farms, as well as candid discussion about the challenges facing our agricultural community. We believe that the emphasis should be on *agricultural activity*, as there are many farms in Schoharie County that are overlooked because they are not easily defined as "farms" according to our tax codes, in spite of the valuable contributions they make to our community. The members of MADE, an open organization committed to public dialogue, would like a role in designing these promotional efforts. re: 4.1.7, 4.1.4, 4.3, 4.5.2

2. A Sunset Clause should be added to the document, requiring that it undergo specified periodic review. While the recommendations and concerns contained in the plan may be applicable today, we believe that our leaders and citizens of Schoharie County should revisit the document regularly to make sure that we are staying on track with our goals, that we are able to develop policies to address new issues that may emerge in the future, or that goals and recommendations may be changed if they are not proving effective in strengthening our agricultural community. The members of MADE would like a public role in the periodic review process of the plan.

3. The Right To Farm law and its jurisdiction needs to be defined so that the broader community can understand its implications. While the concept of a Right To Farm law is laudable, we are concerned that, if not carefully crafted, it may leave a legal loophole for controversial agricultural practices, with little or no local control options. Specifically, we are concerned with potential for large-scale industrial agriculture, such as the hog operations found in North Carolina and Iowa. We honor the importance of enabling the continuation of responsible traditional, conventional and alternative farming here in the county, but do not want to leave ourselves open to enormous enterprises that could enter later and prove damaging to our economy, our environment, our quality of life and our health. re: 4.2

4. We would like to see a formal mechanism in place in the plan for encouraging young adults to pursue agricultural careers on the land. We would like to see entrepreneurship encouraged. The State of Wisconsin has done some excellent work in this area. re: 4.1.6

5. The proposed position of an agricultural marketing specialist needs to be filled by a highly creative person skilled at organizing innovative responses to a multitude of ag-related issues. We feel it is important that this person be granted independence to act in the best interest of Schoharie County. We believe the person in the position could be most responsive to our community's needs if his or her office were located in an agency that is already addressing agricultural concerns. Possible administrative homes could be the Farm Service Agency, Cooperative Extension, or with the South Central Resource Conservation and Development District. We have a great desire for the Ag and Farmland Protection Plan to be an effective tool for strengthening our community. Therefore, we would like to see its leadership and administration housed in the place that will best ensure its successful implementation. re: 4.1.1

6. Agricultural District laws should be strengthened by local enactments to benefit land with distinct agricultural potential, as well as currently active farmland. We support Smart-development/Smart growth and Ag-friendly zoning for all towns and villages. Re: 4.5.1

MADE in Schoharie County is committed to strengthening the economic, environmental and social vitality of our local farms so that our children will want to stay in our community. We aim to make agriculture an accepted and acceptable way of life, to build stronger relationships among the diversity of area agriculturists, to strengthen and expand local and regional markets and business opportunities, and to engage ourselves in community issues as advocates for local family-scale agricultural enterprises. We welcome everyone to our meetings, farmers and non-farmers alike. Meetings are held on the third Friday of each month from 7-9 pm at the Cobleskill Public Library.

Want to make written comments about the Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan?

If you are unable to attend a hearing and want to make a comment in writing, please use this form and mail it to:

Schoharie County Planning and Development
RR #3 Box 12
Cobleskill, NY 12043

NAME: Larry Van De Valk - Cobleskill 234-3984

COMMENTS: The plan does a good job of identifying + quantifying the economic impact of agriculture in the county (i.e. 27 million in sales, 140 million w/ multiplier effect etc.). The plan also does a fairly good job of identifying the economic impact of forestry related activities, considering you did not have very good statistics to work with.

① I would suggest that you modify the draft plan to include a sub-section (one paragraph) that attempts to combine the economic impact of agricultural enterprises and those forestry activities that take place on those same "agricultural" lands. This would give a more accurate picture of the total economic impact of those activities on these lands. (i.e. 27 million in Ag. Sales plus 4.5 million in forest product sales = 31.5 million times multiplier effect equals....).

Attach additional pages if necessary

(over)



- ② This might also enable you to list forest products along with the other Ag. Products listed in table 2.5, and take its appropriate place in the ranking of those products. (Forest products would rank higher than any of the crop categories, and almost as high as all of those categories combined!)
- ③ Lastly, I encourage the board to do some "homework" so as to have more accurate statistics in the report. For example, there are more than 2 logging establishments, more than 1 sawmill located in the county - (Table 2. one needs only to check the "M. Shopper" or telephone book to find them! Also, there is clearly a lot of Hemlock removed in the county, but table 2.11 reflects none!

received
4-14-00

Want to make written comments about the Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan?

If you are unable to attend a hearing and want to make a comment in writing, please use this form and mail it to:

Schoharie County Planning and Development
RR #3 Box 12
Cobleskill, NY 12043

NAME: Mary J. O'Donnell by District #1

COMMENTS: RR #3 Box 325 Schoharie

At the head of its recommendations the Farmland Protection Plan points out (4.1) that "the thrust of the plan is to increase economic returns for agriculturists." Ways of doing this must have priority.

Because the number of farmers is a small percentage of the total population it is essential that they have the good will and understanding of non-farmers. This to provide more support for the enactment of favorable legislation. Therefore Education and Public Relations (4.3) are most necessary & more effort should be put into these areas.

Also the Ag Planning Guide (4.5.2) would be helpful in acquainting officials with agricultural issues & laws & further the goal of wider support.

One action to protect farmland that should be taken ought to be included in the plan. Corporate farming (e.g. large national & global conglomerates - ADM, Monsanto, Del Monte) are a threat all over the country and should be banned in Schoharie County.

Attach additional pages if necessary

NOTES

Agricultural Zoning (H. 5.1) is one of the most important recommendations. It should however go further and advise strict agricultural zoning which would designate land most suitable for agriculture to be used solely for farming. There would be no other permitted uses such as mentioned on page 4-12.

The American Farmland Trust (Fact Sheet p4) recommends "Agricultural Protective Zoning" restricting residential development and other uses. Schoharie County is an ideal subject for such zoning. This is where the first Ag District in the state was established to cover the length of the fertile Schoharie Valley.

That law could be strengthened by reducing the minimum acreage and income required for the benefits. It should also include land with potential for agriculture even if it is not presently being farmed.

There should be incentives for owners to keep their land in the Ag District. Agricultural Zoning would accomplish this especially if the commercial value of farmland could reflect its immense intrinsic worth.

Want to make written comments about the Agriculture and
Farmland Protection Plan?

If you are unable to attend a hearing and want to make a comment in writing, please use
this form and mail it to:

Schoharie County Planning and Development
RR #3 Box 12
Cobleskill, NY 12043

received
4-14-00 jz

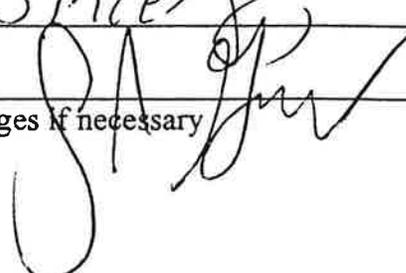
NAME: TONY Gelber

COMMENTS:

I believe in an agricultural
future for Schoharie County &
believe the farmland protection
plan is an important part of
agricultural vitality.

I support the plan & recommend it
be passed by the Board of Supervisors

I would like to see a task force
be setup to help pass & then
implement the plan. I would be
honored to serve with some of
my friends from the County

Sincerely,


Attach additional pages if necessary

Schoharie County, New York
Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan

Appendix 5.7
Public Hearing Comments

COPY

STATE OF NEW YORK
COUNTY OF SCHOHARIE
DIVISION OF PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

In the Matter

-of-

a Public Hearing to Receive Comments on a
Proposed Agricultural and Farmland Protection
Plan for Schoharie County, New York.

Curtis-Mott Hall
SUNY-Cobleskill Campus
Cobleskill, New York

April 15, 2000
10:00 a.m.

PRESIDING:

RICHARD BATES, Chairman
Schoharie County Agricultural and
Farmland Protection Board

PRESENT:

THOMAS J. SHEPSTONE, AICP
Shepstone Management Company

ALICIA TERRY, Executive Director
Schoharie County Division of Planning
and Community Development

SHANE NICKLE, Senior Planner

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. BATES: We've reached the
appointed hour; I guess we better get started.

I want to welcome everybody to
our public hearing on the Draft Farmland
Protection Plan. First off, I invite everybody
to sign in and, when you make a comment, will
you please make sure you state your name so we
can have it on the record.

First speaker is going to be Tom
Shepstone.

MR. SHEPSTONE: Thanks, Jim.

I'll be very brief.

I just want to kind of capsulize
the recommendations of this forum. I just want
to point out this is the third one we're
wrapping up at this point. We've already done
two, one in Sullivan County and one in Schuyler
County, New York, and one of the things I'm
very pleased about is that both of those
counties are moving ahead toward implementation
of the plan by doing some of the things we have
recommended, and we have recommended in this
particular case 13 major items. There are a
number of smaller recommendations throughout,

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1 but the 13 major items are found in Section 4
2 of the plan and those, I think most of you are
3 aware of, are, first of all, the creation of an
4 agricultural marketing specialist type of
5 service.

6 We're probably going to be very
7 flexible on that, not necessarily being in an
8 employment position, could be working with an
9 existing agency either within the county or
10 region. Could be an expansion of duties with
11 somebody existent. We're not sure, could be a
12 specialty type service but in any event we
13 think there is a need for more marketing help
14 to get farmers to be able to make that -- find
15 better outlets for their products and do a
16 better, more sophisticated job of marketing,
17 and I know Charlie Buck is here and he has done
18 exactly what we're talking about with his maple
19 syrup products that he offers, in selling
20 them. You sell a lot of maple products
21 directly.

22 MR. BUCK: We sell -- well, not
23 "we" any more; I sold my stock to my daughter
24 and my son-in-law. They use mail order all over
25 the world really, floating farmers markets,

1 wholesale to restaurants and wholesalers, every
2 way you can, but we take it, we make it.

3 MR. SHEPSTONE: And that's the
4 essence of what we want to promote in the
5 county.

6 MR. BUCK: If you want a word,
7 just one more, and this is just a little bit of
8 additional information that I do to try to
9 impress people.

10 I had three dairy farms that
11 milked 140 head, and the maple syrup business
12 in the last few years grossed more than the
13 three dairy farms.

14 MR. SHEPSTONE: There you go!
15 You can't say it any more clearly than that.

16 MR. BUCK: One other comment on
17 that. A couple of short years that we had --
18 years ago in Canada they were growing a lot of
19 potatoes, and syrup went high enough that year
20 so that we could get more for a barrel of
21 syrup, that's 33 gallons of syrup, than you
22 could for a tractor-trailer load of potatoes.

23 MR. SHEPSTONE: How about that!
24 And that's the whole point. Charlie brought
25 also some reports of the Department of

1 Agriculture for 1921 and 1922, and we find out
 2 that we had the same commodity price problems
 3 then that we have now, and, of course, the
 4 answer to that is to get out and sell your
 5 products. That's why Recommendation Number 1
 6 is so important.

7 Number 2 is the formation of
 8 additional cooperatives and not necessarily
 9 formal cooperatives; could be informal. You
 10 got a good example of one here, the Schoharie
 11 County Cooperative, but we think there is an
 12 opportunity to achieve some benefits in that
 13 area.

14 Number 3 is added value
 15 initiatives to do things, again like Charlie is
 16 doing with his maple products to add value to
 17 that basic maple syrup. The same thing applies
 18 to dairy; it applies to vegetables, and so on.

19 Number 4 is the Green Labeling.
 20 We think there is lots of opportunities there,
 21 particularly in the southern end of the county
 22 connected with the Catskills. Some of that is
 23 already occurring, and clearly we have the
 24 ability to expand upon that throughout the
 25 county.

1 Financing programs, we'd like to
 2 see more financial assistance made available to
 3 do more marketing initiatives and more added
 4 value things and some of that is going to take
 5 some money, and we think there are
 6 opportunities and that's why we headed our
 7 conference, when people talk about these
 8 liabilities and funds, we'd like to see some of
 9 those targeted to Schoharie County.

10 Number 6 is soliciting new farm
 11 enterprises. Some of that's been done already,
 12 wasn't initially successful, but we think
 13 there's a lot of interest in continuing that
 14 through the Chamber of Commerce and other
 15 organizations, and that's one of our
 16 recommendations.

17 Also an Agriculture Tourism In-
 18 itiative to follow up on what's happened in the
 19 Schoharie Valley. You have one of the best
 20 opportunities really available in this county
 21 to develop more agriculture tourism than I see
 22 anywhere, and we'd like to see that pursued.

23 Right to farm: Like to see every
 24 town have a "right to farm" law; some do
 25 already.

1 More education and public
 2 relations with regard to promoting the farm
 3 industry and making people aware of the skills
 4 that they need to do these things. I noticed
 5 that, in some of the comments we received to
 6 date, that's a recurring theme, so we're glad
 7 to see that some of you agree on that point.
 8 Taxation: More promotion of the
 9 tax benefits that are available. We've done
 10 some materials there, we did some articles as
 11 part of this project on that. We think there's
 12 more opportunity to do things with the IDA and
 13 others, but primarily just educating people in
 14 what's available now.
 15 Number 11, promote in most com-
 16 munities that do have zoning, the use of agri-
 17 cultural zoning concepts and to promote more
 18 technical assistance to planning boards to deal
 19 with farm and agricultural issues. We also
 20 would like to see more farm rep's on agricul-
 21 ture planning boards. There is a mechanism to
 22 specifically do that, and we pointed that out;
 23 and finally, we see the opportunity to do
 24 something in the area of farmland preservation
 25 working with the Schoharie County Land Trust

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1 and others.
 2 We think there is a number of
 3 ways to approach that. We don't want to be
 4 wedded to any one, but we -- some of you know
 5 we had a good presentation at the conference on
 6 the wide range of ways to approach that, and we
 7 suggested some of those in this plan.
 8 And those are -- that's it. I'm
 9 not going to speak any longer than that because
 10 this is really your meeting, and we're happy to
 11 have the comments that have been offered so
 12 far. Appreciate the opportunity to have worked
 13 with everybody here, a great county and a lot
 14 of wonderful people and a lot of initiatives
 15 that have already been taken that are really
 16 quite wonderful, and we would like to see you
 17 follow through on this plan because we think
 18 there's some great opportunities to go
 19 further.
 20 With that, I'll be quiet.
 21 MR. BATES: Thank you, Tom.
 22 Who's the next speaker? Who would like to be
 23 the next speaker?
 24 MR. GELBER: Just public
 25 comments?

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1 MR. BATES: Yes.

2 MR. GELBER: My name is Tony

3 Gelber, G-e-l-b-e-r, a landowner in Schoharie

4 County. I worked on a dairy farm in Schoharie

5 County when I was in high school. Was great;

6 the farmer is out of business. I had my own

7 operation a few years ago and lost my shirt on

8 that.

9 I'm a member of the American

10 Farmland Trust. I support this farmland

11 protection plan as outlined by Tom. I believe

12 in preserving farmland in New York State and

13 Schoharie County, and I support agricultural

14 economic development.

15 MR. BATES: Thank you. Any other

16 comments from anybody?

17 MS. CROSS: Yes, my name is Linda

18 Cross. I'm here speaking on behalf of my

19 husband, Bob Jr., and myself. Bob is offering

20 the need for a stone chipper which indicates

21 the level of farming that we're into.

22 VOICE: How do you that?

23 MS. CROSS: That's part of the

24 plan. We have what I'd call a hobby flock of

25 sheep, about 56 adult sheep and anywhere from

1 56 to 80 or so lambs in season. We also cut

2 and sell hay, and Bob has been conducting a

3 farming operation since he came to Schoharie

4 County in 1946. I joined him when we were

5 married. We are active in Schoharie County

6 Shepherds. I'm treasurer for the New York State

7 Sheep and Wool Growers Cooperative. We are

8 members of Farm Bureau and obviously support

9 agriculture in the county and in the state.

10 We've been very interested in the

11 development of the Farmland Protection Plan

12 and, first of all, would like to give our

13 commendations to the committee which worked to

14 draft this plan. As retired teachers, we

15 remember the days when we had to participate in

16 drawing up curriculum courses of study with

17 some sort of plan for the school that was the

18 latest "bell and whistle" to come from Albany.

19 It wasn't always fun. It wasn't always easy,

20 and the most frustrating aspect of our whole

21 process for us was to see the plan developed

22 and put our heart and soul into it and then the

23 plan was put on a shelf and gathered dust, and

24 we hope that that will not be the fate of this

25 plan.

1 We've seen much opti... we have
 2 an optimistic feeling for this plan and feel
 3 that it can truly accomplish good things for
 4 farmers in Schoharie County. We see as pluses
 5 in this plan the hiring of an agricultural
 6 marketing specialist and a specialty form of
 7 cooperatives. Trying to sell wool, as many of
 8 you heard, the prices are terrible. We're
 9 getting about 34 cents a pound now for grease
 10 wool, and about 10 to 15 years ago the price
 11 was 75 cents a pound. If you take into account
 12 inflation, we might as well dig a ditch and
 13 bury it.

14 We see the ag' marketing
 15 specialist as needing to be someone who is
 16 particularly energetic, enthusiastic, farm and
 17 farmer oriented, proactive and responsive to
 18 diverse needs and driven to reach consensus
 19 amongst participants in the groups that this
 20 person will work with.

21 Our concerns about the plan are
 22 concerns. We do not see these as weaknesses
 23 but we would like to see certain additions. We
 24 feel for example the ag' marketing specialist
 25 should work from a farm-oriented office, not,

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1 for example, the Chamber of Commerce. By farm-
 2 oriented we mean Cooperative Extension or CMD.
 3 CAED, some conglomeration of those offices. We
 4 feel that in this way the ag' marketing
 5 specialist will have access constantly to
 6 expertise on many issues relating to farmers.

7 We see a need for prioritizing
 8 the recommendations that is very unique and
 9 easy to understand, obviously, the recommen-
 10 dations set forth, and we would like to see
 11 some sort of categorizing. This one is really
 12 the most important. Perhaps that's what is
 13 meant by the order that they are printed, but
 14 it isn't immediately obvious to us; and we see
 15 the need for provision to review the plan, not
 16 just to say, Here it is and it's going to go
 17 this way forever and ever, some sort of built-
 18 in review after a given number of years, where
 19 the current participants or new participants
 20 will look at it and say, Part A is working
 21 wonderfully; we won't change it; Part B never
 22 got off the ground and we need to do something
 23 differently and with that in mind we also feel
 24 there's need for a sunset clause so that once
 25 the review has taken place, if the participants

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1 feel that it is no longer appropriate, it
 2 automatically ceases to exist, and you don't
 3 have to go through some sort of horrendous
 4 process to say it's off the shelf, it's into
 5 the garbage can.

6 Also I offer commendations to the
 7 committee. You've spent many hours and we know
 8 you've put in a lot of work and a lot of
 9 effort. Thank you.

10 MR. BATES: Thank you. Any
 11 comments?

12 MR. SHEPSTONE: Can I make a
 13 comment on that? I certainly agree on that and
 14 I know Alicia as well, and I know we talked
 15 about that. Alicia attended board meetings, we
 16 recognize the need to do that.

17 MS. CROSS: Thank you.

18 MR. BATES: We also talked about
 19 the process of review, a review process, and we
 20 do need to do that.

21 MR. BUCK: If I may, Tom, I'd
 22 like to say a word. Whether or not the
 23 farmland protection plan is adopted -- I hope
 24 it will be -- there is material available to
 25 everybody, that I haven't sat down and read,

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1 but hopefully what I have to say and what I
 2 read here will be helpful.

3 Now, the first article I'm going
 4 to read is that of Rural Futures: U. S.
 5 agriculture is competitively suffering relative
 6 to low cost nations in South America and Asia.
 7 Referring to our 1998 Federal Reserve Bank
 8 Report, U.S. data on importing proves imports
 9 rose by \$11 billion since 1994, to 37.5
 10 billion. The recent Associated Press item noted
 11 that apple growers, for example, say China has
 12 quickly become a top competitor supplying apple
 13 juice concentrate below the cost of our own
 14 juice. USDA recently predicted that net farm
 15 income would drop 7.6 billion, 7.6 billion in
 16 2000, at 40.4 billion. Anybody like the WTO,
 17 World Trade Organization?

18 VOICE: No.

19 MR. BUCK: For instance, in
 20 Switzerland, as you know, according to the
 21 World Trade Organization rules, it's illegal or
 22 they should not subsidize the product.
 23 Switzerland, they don't subsidize the product;
 24 they subsidize the cow, \$3,000 per cow.
 25 Doesn't -- has no one tracked onto the World

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1 Trade Organization?

2 NAFTA, another one of our trade
3 organizations, we can ship all kinds of milk
4 into Canada because they pay a relatively good
5 price for it. I would definitely not ship one
6 pound across that they may carry across and
7 sell to individuals.

8 Mexico is importing a lot of
9 fluid milk out of Arizona and New Mexico like
10 three, four years ago. Now, the way I
11 understand it, we ship zero into Mexico.
12 They're producing their own and first thing you
13 know, that's going to be coming back to the
14 United States.

15 O.K. Next magazine John Deere
16 Furrow. This has to do with ag' land
17 preservation. This gentleman in this picture,
18 I believe, is committing almost every Saturday
19 when he used to go to the green market in New
20 York City, Henry Smith is his name, vegetable
21 grower down in Middletown/Goshen area. His
22 parents and family operate a farm closer to New
23 York. I can't tell you what town it was. He
24 and his wife decided they wanted to get their
25 own farm then, he told us, in the Middletown/

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1 Goshen area. They said, Why wouldn't you buy
2 in the black dirt? As you know, the black dirt
3 is almost totally humus. There's no stone,
4 very high in nitrogen in its soil, and he said,
5 No farmer in his right mind ever buys black
6 dirt. Never worked any more than it did for
7 agriculture.

8 Some farmers when they start will
9 be leery of tying up the land in ag' land
10 protection plans such as the land trust,
11 because if you get ready to retire from farming
12 you could sit there and have to pay the taxes
13 and insurance and everything on the land so
14 much, so long that it eats up a lot of your
15 savings.

16 There is a certain upward
17 pressure in the price from agricultural land to
18 development land and when you do away with that
19 it's not going to be in the farmers' best
20 interests, but this was actually in his words,
21 Only a man not in his right mind would buy land
22 in the black dirt. I think the psychological
23 effect, for one thing, a farmer -- young farmer
24 goes in the land business, you know, and the
25 other morning on a television program they were

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1 talking about the testosterone level and that's
 2 usually quite high too, and you think you're
 3 going to make a million dollars farming it and
 4 if you're not, why your manhood isn't going to
 5 be worth it, and when you take away that
 6 psychological effect, it is not going to be
 7 good.

8 I'm already retired from farming,
 9 still own one farm, 100 acres, sold one farm to
 10 my son and daughter-in-law and the other to my
 11 daughter and son-in-law and they're both
 12 operating with no restrictions on them as to
 13 what they can do with them, and I don't think
 14 it's wise to sell a lot of agricultural or buy
 15 a lot of agricultural easements and that's my
 16 feeling, I just don't.

17 O.K. Under "Landlocked", and this
 18 is Progressive Farmer -- I don't even know how
 19 come I get the magazine, but this month's
 20 issue, I believe. Southern Indiana 140 acres
 21 of land, with 135 tillable, sold to a farmer
 22 for \$230,000 or \$3,072 per acre. East Central
 23 Texas 841-acre ranch with 200 acres in winter
 24 wheat and the balance in improved pasture sold
 25 for \$825,000 or \$981 per acre. Northwest Iowa

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1 320 acres of tillable rolling land sold for
 2 \$798,400 or \$2,495 an acre.

3 Now, they're not too high prices
 4 and the most of them are higher than the milk
 5 prices around here. Probably the production is
 6 not quite as high around here as it is in some
 7 of these areas, and perhaps that Texas farm
 8 production around here would be higher for it.
 9 I think you get, if the profit margin is there
 10 and the interest is there, people will pay an
 11 adequate price to people for land.

12 I guess my next comment would be
 13 some 40 years, 45 years ago the supervisor from
 14 Jefferson, man named Howard Bailey, was in two
 15 meetings and Cooperative Extension was there
 16 asking for more money and this may be 45 years
 17 ago. Howard's comment was, You going to tell
 18 the farmers how to grow two blades of grass
 19 where you grew one before, but you haven't told
 20 him how to sell the product. Truer statement
 21 was never made, was never said.

22 USDA and Cooperative Extension
 23 pretty much have turned into consumer
 24 organizations rather than farmers'
 25 organizations. Sales are our biggest problem.

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1 Water now, you probably sell more water than
2 they do any other beverage and yet prices are
3 almost equal to milk.

4 Farms lower taxes. This is on
5 page 1-2 of your plan. Three years ago the
6 town of Jefferson in January moved into a brand
7 new building. They put up a nice board on the
8 wall there where you can tack up and post
9 notices. The only thing they have on there is
10 a map of the New York City watershed and the
11 other one is an article on how farms lower
12 taxes. Farm land is good for the tax base.
13 That was the first one that they put up on the
14 wall.

15 You sit at a desk like this and
16 that's right up on the other wall where I can
17 look at it, so I do a lot of thinking. Number
18 one, and I have a pretty good assessment on my
19 land I mean as far as fair in terms of what we
20 use it for, but when you give special
21 assessments to farmers, and this is what you
22 should look at, I'm not saying that it should
23 happen, but it's the way it should be looked at
24 because it's the American way. Those taxes for
25 that land should be equal to almost any other

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1 land except building lots, because the money
2 for those taxes should come out of the market,
3 not out of your neighbor who may just own a
4 house and two acres, and that's what's
5 happening where you give special breaks to farm
6 land on taxes.

7 Most of the milk around this area
8 goes to Franklin, Massachusetts and is sold in
9 Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut.
10 Some of it is sold in New York but very, very
11 little, so who's getting the tax break? The
12 people of Rhode Island, Massachusetts and
13 Connecticut. It's not fair. It may not be
14 able to be corrected, but it's not fair.

15 The other thing is we've had
16 many, many houses in all 16 towns and counties
17 built. It was, first, week end homes and then
18 gradually turned into retirement homes. People
19 make good retirements have moved into them.
20 Think about this, if that tax base was gone
21 what it would do to your local tax rates. Many
22 of these houses can allow these towns, if your
23 assessments are up to date, are assessed for
24 \$100,000 and more, they built very nice homes
25 and it's a very good tax base, but the services

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1 that we render would have to be done anyway and
 2 without these homes your tax rate would be a
 3 lot higher.

4 I have to say there's some good
 5 comments in here, we are focused on higher
 6 profits rather than new sources of capital.
 7 You know that's true all over the United States
 8 now, not just Schoharie County. Every time
 9 there's a disaster, crop failure, anything like
 10 that, if you're not insured the government will
 11 offer to loan you money, lower interest rate to
 12 help you through. That's not what farms need.
 13 Most of them owe more than they ought to owe
 14 now.

15 I don't know what the answer is
 16 to it. One thing is higher profits. That's
 17 for sure. You have read those 1921 and 1922
 18 books; I have another one at home from 1925.
 19 Read those books, we're talkin' 78, 79 years
 20 ago, conditions were no different. People in
 21 the factories that worked in the community
 22 earning twice as much as what the farmers
 23 shared if you compare it on an index basis.
 24 They thought it was a problem back there.
 25 Government poured billions of dollars in it.

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1 It hasn't helped and yet there's
 2 a simple, simple solution to it. You don't
 3 have to pay the farmer to take acres out of
 4 production or anything else. You just tell him
 5 flat out, this is your allotment, you're going
 6 to get paid so much for it and that's it and
 7 we're not going to pay you for those idle acres
 8 and, if you produce on those idle acres then
 9 you're only going to get half as much.
 10 Wouldn't cost the government hardly anything.
 11 The money would come out of the market and
 12 that's what you'd have because you cannot
 13 continue to think that the government is going
 14 to subsidize or support your price and you
 15 should be able to produce all that you want to.
 16 Never going to happen.

17 California and Arizona, gettin'
 18 ready to build an operation in California
 19 47,000 cows, one operation within the country.
 20 Farming three or four years, or three or four
 21 weeks ago was available to everybody. One
 22 operation 47,000 cows. Subsidized wealth.
 23 Every government subsidizes the wealth. What's
 24 going to happen when you drive the eastern
 25 farmer out because of the large land -- the

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1 cheap prices of land in some of those areas and
 2 they subsidize the water and all of a sudden
 3 there isn't water enough to run and they've
 4 pushed all the eastern farmers out where most
 5 of the time we don't have to put water on any
 6 of the ground to get a decent crop.

7 Like in Iowa, getting ready to
 8 build a 15,000-cow operation and pipe directly
 9 to the cheese plant, no trucks or anything
 10 until they get ready to deliver the product.
 11 The land around there grows 45 tons of corn
 12 silage per acre. How do you tell the people?
 13 This is -- I mean that's why I like this plan
 14 to get some ideas in here on how we're going to
 15 keep this.

16 We have one of the best resources
 17 that anybody can have and that's the people and
 18 markets, but we're going to have to direct
 19 market to do it and you can't stand here in
 20 Cobleskill or Schoharie and do that and make a
 21 surf operation of that. Everybody jokes about
 22 getting on the surf; it would only take about
 23 25 percent of our production. Guy can go to
 24 Union Square in New York City and see probably
 25 50- to 100,000 people in one day. We're going

1 to have to move out of this area to sell the
 2 products. They're not going to come to you.
 3 They don't have time. People are busy, same as
 4 everybody else.

5 Mainly the agricultural problem,
 6 and this is true across the country, not just
 7 here in Schoharie County, but failure of farm
 8 profits to keep pace with the economy. Our
 9 prices have not risen. Go down to the
 10 automobile dealer, see what you're paying for a
 11 car. I bought a brand new Buick Century in
 12 1976 for, I think it was between 5600 and
 13 \$6,000. In the next year or two, they took the
 14 same frame that that car was built on and put
 15 it under the large Buick, which I can't tell
 16 you, not the Park Avenue but it was about the
 17 same model, I don't know what they call it.
 18 Probably that car sells for, I don't know, 25-,
 19 30,000, I'll bet you -- same frame, same
 20 engine; but we haven't had any inflation.

21 Many of the large farm
 22 organizations, they're going today, large dairy
 23 farms and like that, more farmers, their crops
 24 were subsidized at one time at 80 percent, 90
 25 percent, very few times at 100, but I think

1 there was a few short years when it hit. What
 2 about the young farmer who is starting out now
 3 where he's probably about 50 percent parity?
 4 Is that fair?

5 On the direct marketing, I don't
 6 want to go on too long, but there was some talk
 7 of co-ops, possibly a cheese plant, possibly
 8 encouraging individual farmers to form a milk
 9 bottling plant, and most farmers realize with a
 10 bottling plant there is a problem with out-
 11 dated milk, not much you can do with it.

12 I think they have to do a little
 13 more research on that, but I have a good
 14 solution to that problem. I think that a
 15 creamery here probably in the Cobleskill area
 16 both bottling milk and making cheese would be
 17 an excellent investment. Stay in Green Market
 18 New York and in line. Dairy farms get out of
 19 line all day long selling milk. You want
 20 chocolate, a tie-up, O.K. You buy the bottle,
 21 you spend a dollar or two dollars for the
 22 bottle and then, as you return them, you get
 23 credit, but there's a line all day, for a
 24 dollar and a half a quart, so when that
 25 gentleman said at that presentation we had up

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1 to the Best Western, I knew there was a line
 2 because I watched them. In fact, I think I had
 3 the bottle there that I purchased from that
 4 line.

5 Forty-three and a half quarts in
 6 a hundred pounds of milk times a dollar and a
 7 half. \$65.00 a hundred. You'd be surprised, I
 8 think, if you started a creamery here in
 9 Cobleskill, put some trucks on the road. I know
 10 it sounds expensive, but I think it could be
 11 done and made a profit at it, and start
 12 delivering milk the way they used to in glass
 13 bottles, how much milk you could sell. Put it
 14 in the stores also, would put it in places down
 15 around -- I can't tell you the exact town it
 16 was in, Millbrook maybe, that bottles this milk
 17 and they have several stores now that put the
 18 milk in. I don't know what they get wholesale,
 19 but I believe it's -- it was an excellent
 20 suggestion, and I think it should happen.

21 And I have other comments on the
 22 plan, but I think I've had the floor long
 23 enough. Let somebody else talk. Hopefully,
 24 hopefully, apparent to everybody else the
 25 farmer has not taken the bull by the horns in

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1 the last 80 years that I can find out, and I
 2 don't have too much written material but before
 3 that the farmer tried to help himself. How
 4 many saw the 60 Minutes presentation Sunday? I
 5 know Alicia did. You didn't see the wonderful
 6 presentation on Farm Bureau?

7 MS. CROSS: Oh, Yes.

8 MR. BUCK: I heard about it, you
 9 know; how they invested money in airlines that
 10 went bankrupt, how they are investing a lot of
 11 their money in ConAgra which is one of your
 12 biggest competitors for independent farmers
 13 there is. How many remember the hog business
 14 eight months or a year ago when they were
 15 bringing ten cents a pound? ConAgra buys them
 16 by the thousands, probably has its own
 17 slaughterhouse. How much you think they were
 18 gettin' for the hogs? They weren't gettin' ten
 19 cents a pound. They were only paying ten cents
 20 a pound to the farmers that wanted to bring
 21 them into their slaughterhouse, which I'm
 22 pretty sure they have one. I don't have proof
 23 of that, but I'll tell you one thing, they
 24 weren't taking ten cents a pound for it.
 25 That's enough.

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1 MR. SHEPSTONE: If I could
 2 respond to that, I think some of the comments.
 3 You can make the farm economical, that's one
 4 way and I certainly agree with a lot of the
 5 other ideas.

6 I just wanted to say one thing
 7 that one of the things I would say and I
 8 compliment you because Alicia spent a lot of
 9 time addressing that product you talked about
 10 with the Extension I think years ago, and I
 11 think we all agree on that and one of the
 12 things we observed that she's been working on
 13 because that work very early on made an example
 14 of some of the smaller farmers who concentrated
 15 on making the money and not the production.

16 MR. BUCK: Right, and by the way
 17 I have to thank Alicia on that part because
 18 Cornell has not been a big factor of pasturing
 19 cows. They really haven't. Soil and water,
 20 some local Extension offices -- and they have a
 21 background -- I should have saved that
 22 article. I might have it. There was an
 23 article in this magazine that I saved and I
 24 can't seem to find it this morning, where soil
 25 and water and some of the local Extension

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1 offices, and there was another organization --
2 of course, now there is an organization back
3 into pasturing cattle, so it could have been
4 them too, that has done more research and
5 pushed this form of farming more so than other
6 farming.

7 You'd be hard-pressed to be in
8 business today if you kept up with all the
9 changes that Cornell has gone through since I
10 went there. In '59, I graduated, or didn't
11 graduate -- I only took the two-year course in
12 agriculture -- that was 1957 when I got out and
13 if you went through all the different forms of
14 housing cows and managing cows which is what I
15 mainly have been involved in all my life, you'd
16 be hard put not to be right up to here in debt
17 and maybe bankrupt.

18 You got to remember that those
19 boys don't do it, they may tell you how to do
20 it, but they don't come around with a checkbook
21 when you're ready to go broke or you're
22 bankrupt. You know, as a matter of fact, and I
23 will tell it this time when Lisa is around, at
24 least two, I believe, of the Extension agencies
25 discount bankrupted their farms before they

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1 decided to tell all the rest of us how to do
2 it. Yes, it was -- Ernie Nissen was one that
3 didn't make out, did a very good job with, I
4 think, the dairy industry although I'm not sure
5 he made it at all.

6 MS. FIELDS: Well, I would say
7 finally for the Extension in the state, the
8 Extension is accountable locally in the county
9 and not directly to the farmers. In other
10 states, the Extension is accountable directly.

11 MR. BATES: Thank you, Charlie,
12 for your comments. Who would like to be the
13 next speaker?

14 MS. O'DONNELL: I think I should
15 say something, I guess. I -- I think Charlie
16 Buck pointed out the dilemma that we have with
17 families who own this valuable land and look at
18 it as their retirement, and the problem is that
19 developers will pay more for that land than
20 farmers and maybe what we have to do is find a
21 way of bringing up the value of farmland, so
22 that it will be recognized for its intrinsic
23 value and farmers won't have to dispose of it
24 in order to take care of their retirement; and
25 that brings up zoning for agriculture which is

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1 one of the things mentioned in the plan, and
 2 again there's the dilemma that, if it's zoned
 3 for agriculture, then it would be preserved and
 4 used solely for agriculture, but it could not
 5 be sold for higher prices if that's what the
 6 development would bring and maybe there the
 7 PDR, purchase of developmental rights, could
 8 help in that area where the farmer would be
 9 given money for the difference between what his
 10 farmland is worth in agriculture and what it
 11 would bring in development.

12 I think that needs more study in
 13 practice, and then the other thing is public
 14 relations so that people who are not farmers
 15 would be more aware of the problems of farmers
 16 and would be more willing to support
 17 legislation that would help the farmers.

18 What the government is doing is
 19 subsidizing cheap food, and Charles mentioned
 20 the difference in the prices of cars, washing
 21 machines, pots and pans, anything has escalated
 22 to a large percentage, but farmers' prices for
 23 food, fruits and vegetables are still very
 24 cheap in comparison. So that I think that's
 25 one of the suggestions that should be worked on

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1 to somehow have programs, newsletters,
 2 whatever, that will be distributed so that
 3 people would become more aware of their
 4 dilemma; and I think that's the main thing.
 5 I'm Mary O'Donnell, Schoharie.
 6 MR. BATES: Thank you. Anyone
 7 else?

8 (There was no response.)

9 MR. BATES: Maybe we should take
 10 a short recess.

11 MR. NICKLE: I might mention
 12 there will be a second hearing in the southern
 13 part of the county on May 3rd, at the New York
 14 Power Authority. I also left, if someone thinks
 15 of comments after they leave, we have a form
 16 here for written comments and feel free after
 17 you've had a chance to go through the plan, if
 18 it's the first time you're seeing it, to send
 19 your written comments or attend the next public
 20 hearing.

21 The Ag' and Farmland Protection
 22 Board plan is to, after this second public
 23 hearing, take the written comments and all the
 24 comments we've received at the hearings and go
 25 through and decide what changes they want to

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1 make in this draft that you have right now. The
 2 final will then be presented to the Board of
 3 Supervisors before their next May meeting
 4 which, I think, is the 19th of May.

5 So that is the plan of -- you
 6 only receive one draft and Jim mentioned there
 7 are changes the board wants to see made that we
 8 just haven't done because of the amount of
 9 paperwork that would be necessary and we have
 10 maps and appendices that will be added also.

11 MS. KELLY: On May 19th, at the
 12 Board of Supervisors, is that another hearing
 13 or not?

14 MR. NICKLE: Yes, it's a public
 15 hearing. I think it's set for 10:00 o'clock in
 16 the morning.

17 MS. KELLY: You said the board
 18 was looking at some changes. What would those
 19 changes be?

20 MR. NICKLE: I can't go into all
 21 of them in detail, but I know there was some
 22 discussion about where the housing of an ag'
 23 marketing specialist would be, a specialist
 24 would be in what department to give the county
 25 more options for that position. However, that

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1 could be shared with Montgomery and Otsego
 2 County, things along that line. I don't think
 3 you were here in the beginning, but there was
 4 talk about a regular review of the plan over so
 5 many years, three to five years, so probably
 6 after the May 3rd meeting, if you're interested
 7 in what those changes are, we'll have a final
 8 plan which is the one we're going to present to
 9 the Board of Supervisors that everyone else can
 10 also get a copy of. We'll probably more than
 11 likely summarize the changes of what you have
 12 now to what we're doing.

13 MS. KELLY: Are you looking for
 14 prioritizing the objectives in that?

15 MR. SHEPSTONE: There will be no
 16 changes other than what we discussed here.
 17 There are none planned other than what we've
 18 discussed already.

19 MS. O'DONNELL: The Farmland
 20 Protection Board will have like a few sheets
 21 showing the changes instead of a whole big
 22 summary.

23 MR. NICKLE: Yes, there will be
 24 another summary but probably not a draft of the
 25 entire document because some things won't

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1 change, but there are a few pages that have to
2 be changed.

3 MS. O'DONNELL: Did you say we
4 were going to get copies of that?

5 MR. NICKLE: Copies of the --

6 MS. O'DONNELL: Were you going to
7 distribute copies of the comments or the
8 changes?

9 MR. NICKLE: Of the comments or
10 the changes.

11 MS. O'DONNELL: You know, of the
12 comments that were sent in for this.

13 MR. NICKLE: Oh, yes, we can
14 definitely make them available. I don't know,
15 Tom, if you're going to make those available in
16 addition.

17 MR. BATES: Yes, in the plan.

18 MR. SHEPSTONE: It will be in the
19 plan.

20 MR. BUCK: I have a question on
21 something here in the plan. It says, The large
22 dairy base offers the potential to develop
23 value-added enterprises, and indicates ultra-
24 pasteurization. Has anybody tasted an American
25 ultra-pasteurized product?

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1 MR. SHEPSTONE: I have not.

2 MR. BUCK: Because the only one
3 I've ever tasted was Dutch and that would ruin
4 a cup of coffee. It's only a question.

5 MR. BATES: That is a very good
6 comment we had at one of our meetings.

7 MR. BUCK: I just, you know, I
8 only asked.

9 MR. SHEPSTONE: It is not done,
10 that's correct; it is an international market.

11 MR. BUCK: Well, where I got it
12 was out in St. Martin's and, of course, power
13 is very high there and refrigeration is fierce,
14 where they use almost exclusively ultra-
15 pasteurized products from The Netherlands, and
16 I'll tell you, that's terrible. If you stand
17 to drink it, that would ruin a cup of coffee,
18 but then when they started to build the mills
19 they got a lot of people down there who
20 actually flew custom milk down there.

21 DR. HAYES: I did a -- a study,
22 we took a sample of milk and they -- it didn't
23 have -- usually the stuff they bought was right
24 out of the Price Chopper, and that had a taste,
25 but it didn't have the, like, taste to drink

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1 like the skim milk. One of the highest in
2 milks, the solidarity came from Stewart's, but
3 it didn't have the substance of this milk that
4 was distributed.

5 MR. BUCK: There's more of those
6 products coming on the market that have more
7 solids and this sort of thing, so the American
8 ultra-pasteurized needs -- the RD or something
9 of the ultra-pasteurized milk didn't seem very
10 good.

11 One other comment here was
12 Wal-Mart Distribution Center and other
13 enterprises would raise wage scales above
14 availability of wages paid to farm labor. Not
15 blaming Tom or anybody else as being the first
16 to invent this, but whenever they did a study
17 on how much it costs to do something they
18 always go to the wages. Didn't make any
19 difference that they were going down to the
20 level of \$150,000 worth of equipment. You
21 could hire somebody at a minimum wage to do
22 that job.

23 Well, how come agriculture can't
24 afford to compete in the market for the -- it's
25 another one of the cheap foods, and I'm not

1 blaming anybody for putting in this report,
2 because we've been schooled on it so long and
3 we don't know it.

4 MR. SHEPSTONE: Let me just add,
5 I think there's a different comment in there,
6 maybe if there isn't one we'll put it in, that
7 we visited -- the board, we visited a dozen
8 farmers and it was very plain funny to us to go
9 to two different farmers, I won't mention the
10 two or where they produced, but two different
11 farmers, one of whom just couldn't say enough
12 negatives about the labor and just trying to
13 pay minimum wage, and the other one who was
14 maybe one of the labor politicians, "I get all
15 the people I want; I don't have any turnover,"
16 and, yeah, very liberal standards.

17 MR. BUCK: Depends on the
18 politicians.

19 MR. SHEPSTONE: It was clearly a
20 matter of attitude; you're absolutely right.

21 MR. BUCK: I mean farms should be
22 able to compete for the labor that's necessary
23 to do the job, just the same as everybody else
24 but, with the cheap product, and I will tell
25 you policy like that in a rural county can

1 really hurt you if you have a lot of, let's
 2 say, low qualified, low income, whatever you
 3 want to call it, I mean Richard sat on the
 4 board down there and watched the Medicaid
 5 bill. I can tell you in this budget is
 6 \$800,000 and now that's coming out of the
 7 taxpayers' pockets for Medicaid.

8 MR. BATSFORD: Throw in a comment
 9 about the labor market -- Jim Batsford from the
 10 Chamber of Commerce.

11 We were hearing similar comments
 12 from other businesses as well that, despite the
 13 labor market and other businesses are feeling
 14 the pinch, that they need to look at their wage
 15 scales also to attract, you know, the quality
 16 employee.

17 MR. BUCK: But that's also a --
 18 what do you call it, a trickle-down effect,
 19 Jim, because if the farmers aren't paying the
 20 wages, then they can't afford to buy the
 21 products.

22 MR. BATSFORD: Exactly.

23 MR. BUCK: Then they have to pay
 24 higher wages.

25 MR. BATSFORD: Oh, yes.

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1 MR. BUCK: So it's a trickle-down
 2 effect and in most of your rural areas, that's
 3 the reason they're depressed, agricultural
 4 wages have been low as mentioned in that book.
 5 I don't know what happened to them; I gave them
 6 to Alicia.

7 MS. TERRY: Right here, Charlie.

8 MR. BUCK: But in 1922 that is
 9 reiterated for a few pages in there. I mean
 10 unbelievable how the farm wages, because they
 11 couldn't get enough for our products so we
 12 couldn't pay the wages that we should, and I
 13 would love to -- maybe I can get Alicia to do
 14 that, make a few copies of it that could be
 15 passed around some time to show you what
 16 happened back there almost 80 years ago and
 17 then look at it today, and I'll tell you
 18 there's a lot of education, a lot of education
 19 in there.

20 MR. BATES: Are there any more
 21 comments?

22 (There was no response.)

23 MR. NICKLE: We thank everybody
 24 for coming. If you did not sign in, will you
 25 please do it on the way out, and then we can

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1 have a record.

2 MR. BATES: Any other comments?
3 Feel free to make written comments, and the
4 board will review it.

5 (Whereupon at 11:00 a.m., the
6 hearing was concluded.)

7 STATE OF NEW YORK)
8 COUNTY OF ALBANY)

9 Pauline E. Williman, being duly
10 sworn, deposes and says:

11 That she is a Certified

12 Shorthand Reporter licensed by the University
13 of the State of New York under permanent
14 Certificate Number 297 issued May 21, 1949;

15 that she acted as the Official Reporter at the
16 hearing herein on April 15, 2000; that the
17 transcript to which this affidavit is annexed
18 is an accurate transcript of said proceedings
19 to the best of deponent's knowledge and belief.

20
21 *Pauline E. Williman*

22 Sworn to before me this
23 4th day of May, 2000

MARCIA A. EARLEY
Notary Public, State of New York
No. 5009172
Qualified in Greene County
Commission Expires March 8, 2001

24 *Marcia A. Earley*
25

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ORIGINAL

STATE OF NEW YORK
COUNTY OF SCHOHARIE
DIVISION OF PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

In the Matter

-of-

a Public Hearing to Receive Comments on a
Proposed Agricultural and Farmland Protection
Plan for Schoharie County, New York.

Auditorium
State Power Authority
Visitors Center
Blenheim, New York

May 3, 2000
7:30 p.m.

PRESIDING:

RICHARD BATES, Chairman
Schoharie County Agricultural and
Farmland Protection Board

PRESENT:

THOMAS J. SHEPSTONE, AICP
Shepstone Management Company
SHANE NICKLE, Senior Planner

P R O C E E D I N G S

1
2 MR. NICKLE: Guess we'll get
3 started. I'm Shane Nickle from Schoharie County
4 Planning. Welcome to our second public hearing
5 on the Ag' and Farmland Plan. We had one on
6 April 15th at SUNY-Cobleskill. This is the
7 second public hearing that the Ag' and Farmland
8 Board has been having. Richard Bates from the
9 town of Seward is here. He was the chairman of
10 our Ag' and Farmland Protection Board, and Tom
11 Shepstone has been the consultant for the plan
12 from Shepstone Management Company, and I will
13 turn it over to Rich. He'll explain the
14 guidelines for the public comments.
15 Tom, did you need to give any
16 further presentation?
17 MR. SHEPSTONE: Maybe I can make
18 a few remarks.
19 MR. BATES: Thank you, Shane.
20 Why don't you go ahead and do
21 your summary.
22 MR. SHEPSTONE: All right, do it
23 now? I can speak from here, I guess. This is a
24 relatively small group, rather informal meeting.
25 I'll move up this way so the stenographer can

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1 hear me a little better.

2 We just identified several major

3 recommendations in the plan. There is the

4 detailed goals and objectives which gives some

5 of the various sundry minor recommendations, but

6 there are really 13 major recommendations that

7 came out of this plan and, very briefly, one of

8 them is to look at the employment of an ag'

9 marketing specialist. We think there's a number

10 of ways to go about that that can be done in

11 collaboration with other counties, with existing

12 agencies. It could be done by staff or it could

13 be done by working with, you know, some existing

14 organizations, but we do think that we need some

15 targeted marketing help to the county's

16 agricultural industry to help develop new

17 markets and proceed further in the program.

18 Secondly, we think there is an

19 opportunity to form some additional cooperatives

20 in the county, not necessarily formal

21 cooperatives in the way that we've thought about

22 them in the past. You've got some good examples

23 of smaller cooperatives now, but we think, for

24 example, there's more opportunities to do some

25 informal buying and selling through loosely

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1 organized groups of farmers and producers who

2 can work together to tap some of the things --

3 some of those markets that exist out there.

4 For example, the same way in

5 which the Catskill Family Farm Cooperative,

6 which is a little bit south of here, has gone to

7 the New York City market.

8 Number three, we think there is a

9 number of opportunities for added value

10 initiatives in the county to add value to

11 existing products, be more businesslike in the

12 way to go about agriculture, to take the

13 existing product and really package it in a way

14 that we can capture more of that price going up

15 the ladder to the consumer, or down the ladder

16 to the consumer, depending on how you look at

17 it, and I used at the last hearing Charles Buck

18 as an example of that, and I will this evening

19 too, because with the maple operation that they

20 have, they're selling maple popcorn and maple

21 vinegar and things like that that you don't even

22 think about, all over the country really and

23 selling it by direct mail, and that's what we're

24 talking about, that kind of added value

25 opportunity to make use of.

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1 Fourth, we see some opportunities
 2 for green labeling of products. That's already
 3 occurring in the Catskill portion of it, which
 4 is really rather small but, in terms of tapping
 5 the culture that lies to the south of us and
 6 toward New York City, with people who are very
 7 interested in environmentally sound practices
 8 and welcome the opportunity to purchase those
 9 kind of products.

10 We think also financing programs,
 11 that there needs to be more attention to
 12 promoting some of those that exist and perhaps
 13 developing some that are targeted to this county
 14 that are agricultural in nature.

15 Number six, soliciting new farm
 16 enterprises. The Chamber has already done some
 17 stuff in that regard; hasn't been too
 18 successful, but we think -- we haven't given up
 19 and we think they shouldn't because there are
 20 opportunities in that to solicit some new farm
 21 enterprises in this area and that that should be
 22 pursued.

23 Ag' tourism, we strongly believe
 24 there's more opportunity in ag' tourism in this
 25 area. It's already occurring in this valley all

1 the way through up to Barber's and --
 2 MR. BUCK: You do what you have
 3 to do.

4 MR. SHEPSTONE: -- you see, there
 5 is one example of how they are not only selling
 6 vegetables which are their main product but
 7 practicing ag' tourism too because they're also
 8 inviting people to see the calves in the barn
 9 behind. We're kind of tying it into a bigger
 10 experience and we see that, this whole Route 30
 11 valley, as being a perfect opportunity to do
 12 that, and we see it also up in the northeastern
 13 corner of the county in the Esperance area with
 14 the Pumpkin Product Patch project. That's
 15 certainly a big thing for ag' tourism throughout
 16 the county.

17 Right to farm, we would like to
 18 see each of the major agricultural communities
 19 in the county adopt "Right to Farm" legislation
 20 to protect the right to farm.

21 Education and public relations.

22 We'd like to see more farm guides -- tours, and
 23 more events throughout the year. Barry was
 24 telling me about the very successful Maple
 25 Festival. That's just one aspect of

1 agriculture, and we need more of that for other
 2 parts of agriculture. Those kinds of events
 3 involve the entire community and promote an
 4 understanding of what it's all about, and
 5 enthusiasm for agriculture which we think is
 6 very important.

7 Taxation, we'd like to see some
 8 of the IDA benefits promoted through agriculture
 9 and possibly the use of some offsetting tax
 10 benefits in return for development rights, for
 11 example, on a release type basis where people
 12 aren't permanently committed to it.

13 Number 11, agricultural zoning
 14 and planning assistance. We think there's a
 15 need to educate our planning boards about
 16 agriculture and how to handle it.

17 Number 12, getting more farm
 18 representation on all our planning boards. Not
 19 that there isn't some now, but we'd like to see
 20 that in a formal way on a continuing basis; and
 21 finally, we have recommended some measures with
 22 respect to farmland preservation. Those also
 23 can take many forms. The classic form, of
 24 course, is the purchase of development rights.
 25 I know there's some here this evening that

1 probably don't necessarily support that, but
 2 there are some options in the ways we go about
 3 that and flexibility in the way we do it. We
 4 think that that should be considered.

5 So those are the major
 6 recommendations and we look forward to having
 7 your comments with regard to them.

8 MR. BATES: Our plan was created
 9 from the questionnaires that we sent out to the
 10 farming community, and this is the result of
 11 those questionnaires, and now we're asking the
 12 public for their input, and I'm open for
 13 questions or comments from the public.

14 Yes, sir? She needs to have you
 15 come up here so that she can hear.

16 MR. GELBER: Well, I'm Tony
 17 Gelber. I made a comment at the last public
 18 hearing, and I just came to see what the
 19 southern portion of the county had to say about
 20 the plan today, so I'm just curious to see what
 21 the other people have to say. I'm not a farmer;
 22 I'm a property owner. I believe in farmland
 23 preservation, development rights and all that.
 24 I grew up on a farm and didn't look too
 25 prosperous, and so I went into other things.

1 I'm talking about the farmland trust which is
2 taking farms all over the country, and I commend
3 your county people for trying to take farmland
4 in this way and I support the plan.

5 MR. BATES: Thank you.

6 Any other comments from the
7 public?

8 MR. SINGLETARY: Yes.

9 MR. BATES: Yes, sir.

10 MR. SINGLETARY: Good evening.

11 My name is Dan Singletary. Thank you,
12 Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to address
13 this issue. We, my wife and I, came to the
14 conference that you had a couple of weeks ago
15 and were very impressed. We have a farm that we
16 recently purchased in Jefferson, the town of
17 Jefferson, not too far away from Mr. Buck. We
18 are very happy to be here. We have farming in
19 our background, but we've lived in other places,
20 and I'm very excited to see the thrust of what's
21 happening, and I suspect as I look at this,
22 you're going to need more people not only to
23 hold the farmers that you have in the area but
24 to get more people like us to come into
25 Schoharie County, to buy in, to put the money

1 into it, to invest in the county and to try to
2 see what we can do. If we lived other places,
3 we have been down in the City and maybe some of
4 our marketing expertise or some of the things
5 we've done in the City could very well add to
6 the ability to open new markets, new opportunity
7 for markets.

8 That said, I would hope that on
9 the final report there would be a little bit
10 more emphasis put on an office, a group,
11 something in which people like myself and maybe
12 even the farmers that have been around for a
13 long time could go to not necessarily on a
14 one-to-one venture but to go to so that we don't
15 have to re-invent the wheel.

16 Every county is a little bit
17 different. Every situation is a little bit
18 different. We have to learn. We've been here
19 now four years. We had to learn where the
20 auction markets were. Where do you buy the
21 tractors? Where do you do this; where do you do
22 that? If there was just one place, it would
23 make it a little bit easier and even in one
24 place would make it easier for us to meet the
25 people who are the players in the county and in

1 the town. So that wasn't a kind of like
 2 stand-offish thing. I'm pretty easy; I can go
 3 in and shake a hand, but there are a lot of
 4 people who would not be, and it would be really
 5 a nice thing to welcome people if you wanted to,
 6 and maybe not, but at least there's something
 7 there.

8 I just heard you and Mr. Buck
 9 talk about, you know, how you're going to get
 10 your tractor out. You know, for example,
 11 something like that we don't know anybody if we
 12 get stuck up the hill and again it gets pretty
 13 difficult and it would be easy to deal -- to
 14 call somebody, Mr. Buck or somebody, and say,
 15 "How do you get out of here?" But it's hard.
 16 This is just an example.

17 This week, after reading about
 18 taxation and everybody knowing the problems with
 19 taxation that farmers have, the farm value
 20 assessments are a terrific thing. I had to
 21 learn about them a great deal in the past couple
 22 days because we got hit with a 15 percent
 23 increase in our assessment and it wasn't because
 24 of anything. It was just because we bought
 25 land; it was an absentee landlord, you know, 337

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1 acres, but nobody really cared. Nobody really
 2 thought about it, so when we came in to take a
 3 look at it now, there's no relationship between
 4 what the assessment is and what the farm looks
 5 like. I mean whatever the acreage or whatever,
 6 even though we've got out the soil and water
 7 plan, we had to go look for that. You know, I
 8 had to find all these little pieces. Now I got
 9 soil and water, now I can do this. You don't
 10 ask the right questions; you don't aggravate or
 11 step on the toes. You don't go Aarghh! You
 12 know, that kind of stuff, and it should be
 13 easier to help somebody out.

14 Now, what I really wanted to say,
 15 along with the taxes, along with that I looked
 16 up in the Schoharie -- in the town of Jefferson
 17 we have 1,441 taxable properties. Because of
 18 what Mr. Buck said about the farmers selling
 19 conservation rights, I got more than just a
 20 little bit interested in that. Out of those
 21 1,441 properties in the town of Jefferson, we
 22 have the State land, the reforestation number
 23 one. We have the Potter Hollow forested area,
 24 but we also have a Schoharie Land Trust that
 25 purchases abandoned land, purchased 252 acres.

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1 Now, this 252 acres has been taken off the tax
 2 rolls. All the rest of us who are contemplating
 3 farming have to make up, albeit it's a little
 4 bit, but have to make up some of the tax money
 5 that was taken off the tax rolls for this
 6 Schoharie County Land Trust.

7 Now, the Schoharie County Land
 8 Trust, as I understand it simply from people
 9 living around, that allows certain people on the
 10 property, certain people not on the property;
 11 some people can hunt, some people not to hunt,
 12 but yet those of us who are taxpayers are kind
 13 of making up for what the Schoharie County Land
 14 Trust, in this particular situation to my
 15 knowledge, is doing in this particular case.

16 I suspect that it goes much
 17 farther than what Mr. Buck is suggesting; it's
 18 simply not being fair to the farmer. I mean,
 19 after all, the biggest value that we have as
 20 farmers is our development rights,
 21 notwithstanding anything else. The biggest
 22 value that we have are the development rights.
 23 To sell those off and to actually cause a burden
 24 on the rest of the farmers and, after all, the
 25 farmers because of their bigger investment, have

1 more out-of-pocket total dollars that they would
 2 have to pay to make up for the taxes that some
 3 of these other things would cause to happen if
 4 they're taken off the rolls.

5 I find that -- I find that, you
 6 know, pretty difficult because this particular
 7 land is not even being managed as a managed
 8 forest and now we know if you're going to
 9 cultivate certain things like forests, they
 10 should be managed; but this isn't being managed.
 11 It was just simply taken off the tax rolls, and
 12 what does the public -- what is the public good
 13 that is served by just simply taking this off
 14 the tax rolls? Yes, it's vacant land and open,
 15 but I would hope that in your final report, you
 16 don't put so much emphasis on taking this land
 17 away from the farmers out of the public domain
 18 until we know more about it.

19 Vermont is looking at it. I've
 20 read in the papers I have looked at that came
 21 across my desk, which I told Mr. Buck I promptly
 22 lost, that at any rate they're looking at
 23 whether or not farmers should be allowed to
 24 sell, and when they're next generation could
 25 resell as they go down the line. It's a very

1 difficult problem. I understand the goal, but
 2 in this particular case, as I know it from what
 3 I've seen in the town of Jefferson, whatever
 4 public good is served -- whatever public good is
 5 served, I don't think is being offset by the
 6 loss of tax dollars in the town.

7 That's really all I have to say,
 8 and I would really hope that you could consider
 9 putting something a little bit more for people
 10 like us in these towns of this county. I know
 11 it's very difficult because farmers, I think,
 12 are basically competitive people. Getting
 13 together and having new farmers come in is
 14 somewhat difficult. The towns in the county are
 15 competitive. When I called Schoharie County and
 16 asked for help with the tax rate, they said it
 17 has to be done locally, and I understand that,
 18 because the taxing power has to be locally, you
 19 know. I know each town is local; each town is
 20 different, and it gets really quite complicated
 21 as we go down and just, maybe this committee,
 22 this Farmland Protection Board could begin to
 23 establish the need to begin to break some of
 24 that down to get the towns together within the
 25 county and go forward.

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1 I'm taking entirely too much
 2 time. Thank you very much, sir.

3 MR. BATES: Your comments are
 4 very well taken. Some very interesting
 5 comments.

6 Any further comments from the
 7 public?

8 Yes, sir.

9 MR. MOWER: Yeah, I'm Edward
 10 Mower and I run a dairy farm down in DeVoe.

11 MR. BATES: Okay.

12 MR. MOWER: And like the other
 13 guys in farming, like when we go to try to buy
 14 land or anything now, we're competing against
 15 the New York City, you know, market and which,
 16 you know, you can -- \$1500 they want for, you
 17 know, right along for, you know, land and then
 18 on up to maybe 2000, and to come up with that
 19 kind of money, you know, in farming, there's no
 20 way to come up with that.

21 MR. BATES: Right.

22 MR. MOWER: You know, it almost
 23 puts you out of the marketplace.

24 MR. BATES: Land competition has
 25 become very great in this section.

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1 MR. MOWER: Yeah, the value.
 2 MR. BATES: The value, yes.
 3 MR. MOWER: Yeah, unlike the
 4 farmland, it's being used for like houses
 5 mainly. Kind of off the point but like where
 6 our dairy, we're kind of running into problems
 7 with the roads and bridges all the time with
 8 their weight limits, you know. With the trucks,
 9 as you know, we're continuously bringing more,
 10 and more trucks back on the roads and we're kind
 11 of getting into like down here in DeVoe we have
 12 an 18-ton weight limit on the State bridge
 13 there, and some of the trucks will fit the load
 14 so they're not too far overweight, but empty
 15 they're overweight when they come across.
 16 MR. BATES: M-m h-m-m. So
 17 infrastructure appears to be part of the problem
 18 then.
 19 MR. MOWER: Yeah, yeah.
 20 MR. BUCK: Richard, they're New
 21 York City bridges; they're not New York State.
 22 MR. BATES: Okay.
 23 MR. BUCK: And they're close to
 24 letting a contract, one going towards
 25 Prattsville here, pretty quick and I think the

1 one that goes over the Schoharie down 990-B is
 2 supposed to be later this year, so you'll see
 3 some relief.
 4 MR. MOWER: That's probably what
 5 we heard about three, four years ago.
 6 MR. BUCK: I guess this is pretty
 7 promising.
 8 MR. MOWER: Then we get into the
 9 county roads there. Some of those are pretty
 10 bad in that area. You know, I've discussed it
 11 with the town, with our town supervisor, but
 12 it's -- that's about as far as it gets.
 13 MR. BATES: Yes. You have to
 14 discuss it with the county board. People did
 15 anyway when I was there.
 16 Any further comments?
 17 MR. MOWER: No.
 18 MR. BATES: Any further comments?
 19 Charlie?
 20 MR. BUCK: I'd like to ask Tom a
 21 question if he wouldn't mind.
 22 What effect has tourism, ag,
 23 tourism or tourism in general had on your area?
 24 MR. SHEPSTONE: Had an awesome
 25 effect. It's had an awesome effect obviously,

1 and people including farmers like my dad and my
 2 brother go down there all the time to take
 3 advantage of it and it's not just there, but
 4 it's also -- we see it in some other areas of
 5 the state as well. We are seeing it coming back
 6 now, the roads through the center of the state
 7 where there is always the beautiful country and
 8 that sort of activity there appears as well, and
 9 I would say it's really had a tremendous impact.
 10 It's also even in some of the urban areas. For
 11 example, Bucks County which is several thousand
 12 people and the outskirts, suburban parts of
 13 Philadelphia, Bucks County had a large number of
 14 farm stands and farm tours and that kind of
 15 activity that maybe the tourism promotion
 16 campaigns would include a lot of that, and they
 17 are packaged with bed-and-breakfasts on the
 18 tour, so even in that area which most of us
 19 would think of as being more of an urban area,
 20 we see the value of agriculture -- of
 21 agriculture being integral to the whole tourism
 22 thing.

23 MR. BUCK: Has it had an adverse
 24 effect on the farmers in terms of land values
 25 and that?

1 MR. SHEPSTONE: I would say
 2 that's probably more in our area but in
 3 Lancaster County, the land values are
 4 extraordinarily high but the people -- the
 5 farmers do pay it because they are getting
 6 extraordinarily good returns from their soil.
 7 It's very high value soil so you see the Amish
 8 paying huge prices that we would think is crazy
 9 for farmland but they do it all the time. I
 10 think, however, in our areas which I'm from the
 11 Poconos area, in our area we see a lot of
 12 competition for ag' and land generally where I
 13 understand what Mr. Mower was talking about,
 14 where you have New York City people coming in
 15 and snapping up the land and it's very difficult
 16 to pay for that land out of ag' income unless
 17 you're selling maple vinegar.

18 MR. BUCK: Well, I tell you, a
 19 lot of the large areas of land in our town now
 20 you can buy for around \$600 an acre and if you
 21 buy it before it's divided up -- and right now
 22 the market is not in dividing; they're not
 23 dividing, they want the large parcels -- I mean
 24 not necessarily 200 acres but 60- and 70-acre
 25 parcels, so that they have room between the

1 housing to carry on their recreation activities,
 2 so it's kind of turned around from where it was
 3 like eight or nine years ago. That's what we've
 4 been seeing. Invite anybody that wants to do
 5 that to do it. I have a good friend that's in
 6 the bed-and-breakfast business out of New
 7 Jersey, and they said there's a large market for
 8 bed-and-breakfasts with a farm. People want to
 9 come to a farm, stay at a bed-and-breakfast. So
 10 if you need money, it's a lot easier to take
 11 in -- maybe two rooms in a house and take in
 12 people every night for 70, 80, \$90 a night, than
 13 it is to get out and work on the land. They're
 14 willing to pay it, and you can make money
 15 through it. We get requests all the time and we
 16 have to turn them down because we no longer have
 17 that.

18 MR. BATES: You can sell them
 19 some of yours, Charlie.

20 MR. BUCK: I don't have that kind
 21 of land any more.

22 MR. BATES: Don't have them any
 23 more.

24 MR. BUCK: But, you know, there
 25 is a big market for it and they get big money.

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1 MR. BATES: That's what I think
 2 the whole plan is about, developing something
 3 that will create income for somebody.

4 MR. BUCK: I have here -- this is
 5 the USDA Agricultural Yearbook, and it's a
 6 report from the Secretary of Agriculture to the
 7 President of the United States in 1925, and I
 8 was just showing it to Tom before the meeting
 9 started here, and the preface in here, you know,
 10 tells you how farms will keep producing until
 11 they keep running out of business and they'll
 12 just keep right on.

13 The working person today has held
 14 on a lot of his profits, his goods and other
 15 times he barbers for more money. The farmer
 16 continues to give up his increase in efficiency
 17 to the market all the time. He has not kept any
 18 of it for his own and that's rough, and I have
 19 three books -- 1922, 1923 and 1925 -- that says
 20 essentially the same thing. You're going back a
 21 long time, 75 years. This is just the same
 22 thing, they gotta control their production.
 23 They cannot continue to put out surpluses
 24 because when they do, they put the price down
 25 and nobody has learned a lesson, and the

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1 government doesn't want it because they know
 2 it's going to create a little bit higher prices,
 3 but in the volume that most farmers are doing
 4 today in order to make you into a well-operated
 5 farm with the right kind of finances and the
 6 right kind of income, the increase in what you
 7 sell is minimal. You know, a dollar a hundred
 8 is not that much on milk but a dollar a hundred
 9 is a lot of money to a lot of farmers.

10 MR. BATES: Yes, sir.

11 MR. SINGLETARY: You know, it's
 12 very interesting the last couple weeks in Easter
 13 season, Cornell has a web site which all the
 14 producers of sheep and lamb in the Eastern
 15 market would get together and would check notes,
 16 but one of the things which I noticed is that
 17 all of the small producers, the guys and gals
 18 that have, you know, like a hundred, 200 ewes,
 19 for that matter maybe have a hundred lambs for
 20 the market in their own setting and they would
 21 go out and try to get this market, but it wasn't
 22 enough to get a real big producer or the real
 23 big producers involved in. Somebody else would
 24 come over with 25, so the guys from Utica,
 25 basically they would come, with a bunch of 25

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1 here, 50 over here, and keep the price down.
 2 What are you going to do? The small producer
 3 has to get rid of them, you know, it's Easter
 4 time. Why not take a buck thirty and get rid of
 5 them. The guys that held out were able to get
 6 two bucks a pound for some of them and made some
 7 decent money. Most of the rest of them around
 8 here, you know, it would be perfect to have some
 9 kind of a co-op. I mean they just could hold
 10 out but then on the other hand, if you have a
 11 co-op for a lot of live animals, they got to be
 12 fed and how are you going to do that?

13 MR. BATES: Right. Soon as you
 14 accomplish one thing, you create another.

15 MR. SINGLETARY: You betcha.

16 MR. BATES: Any further comments?
 17 (There was no response.)

18 I thank everybody for their
 19 comments and we'll be around for a while. If
 20 you think of anything more, feel free to talk
 21 with our Protection Board and feel free to talk
 22 about what things they have to go over and
 23 anything that's on your mind like that.

24 We thank the Power Authority for
 25 the use of the facility.

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1 MS. DECOCO: You're very welcome
2 and thank you very much.

3 MR. NICKLE: The Ag' and Farmland
4 Committee will now, over the next few weeks,
5 take all of the comments that we have received
6 in writing and at the public hearing and
7 determine if some changes are going to be made
8 to the plan. We intend to present the final
9 plan, final in the committee guide, to the board
10 of supervisors during the week of May 15th, and
11 then the board will be holding a public hearing
12 on May 19th -- Friday, the 19th -- during their
13 regular scheduled county board meeting. You
14 know, we are hoping that they take a number of
15 weeks to consider the plan and then maybe take
16 action this summer on the plan or make some
17 recommendations to us of what they would like to
18 see changed.

19 So we do thank everyone for
20 coming. If you have written comments or if you
21 would like a copy of the plan, you can contact
22 Schoharie County Planning and Development Office
23 here in Cobleskill. I can give anybody the
24 phone number if they want to have it; it's in
25 the phone book but we do appreciate your

1 comments and thank you for coming out.

2 MR. BUCK: I got a comment to
3 make, and I would rather just do it briefly. On
4 the other side of the river, the Hudson River,
5 they have a little maybe a quarter of an acre
6 corn patch up there, biggest one in their area.
7 They just scratch it over with a harrow, run
8 some corn seed in it and run it through. They
9 probably sold all of the pumpkins that are
10 raised in Schoharie County out of that quarter
11 acre of land because every night about dark the
12 truck pulled up and dropped the pumpkins and the
13 next day they sold them out and the next night
14 another truck backed up out of that quarter acre
15 of corn so, you know, just an interesting little
16 thing that you have to do to show you how easy
17 it is to fool some of the people that live in
18 the more urban areas.

19 MR. NICKLE: Thank you all.
20 (Whereupon, at 8:03 p.m. the
21 hearing was concluded.)
22
23
24
25

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Appendix 5.8
Sources of Implementation Funds

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Sources of Implementation Funds

The following is an overview of potential sources of implementation funds for this Plan:

1) **USDA Business and Industry Loan Guarantees**

USDA Rural Development joins together with local banks and other commercial lenders to provide financing for businesses located in rural areas. Lenders are able to offer larger loans and better terms with a guarantee which may cover up to 80% of the lenders exposure on the loan. Guarantees are available in all parts of New York except for cities of more than 50,000 population and the urbanized areas surrounding them. Eligible lenders include all State or Federally chartered banks, savings banks, savings and loan associations, credit unions and Farm Credit System. Eligible applicants include individuals, corporations, partnerships and cooperatives. Loans can be used to finance real estate purchases, equipment, rolling stock, working capital, expansions and new locations. Purchase of an existing business is included only if it is necessary to preserve jobs or will result in new jobs being created.

The lender determines the repayment term of the loan and the interest rate. Rural Development allows maximum terms of 30 years for loans for real estate purposes, 15 years for machinery and equipment and 7 years for working capital. Revolving credits cannot be guaranteed. Interest rates are not subsidized by the Government and are usually the prevailing commercial rates. Variable or fixed rates are allowed and separate rates can be charged on the guaranteed and unguaranteed portions of the loan. There is no minimum loan size, but applicants eligible for guarantees through the Small Business Administration program are encouraged to also explore the possibility of obtaining assistance through that program. Guarantees of 80% are available for loans up to \$5 million.

A test for other credit is not required. The program seeks to promote long-term job development through guarantee of quality loans to businesses which have the resources to survive and prosper. All applicants must have a positive tangible net worth of at least 10% of tangible assets (20% to 25% for new businesses), adequate collateral to secure the loan, cash flow based on either historical results or well supported projections which is adequate to repay the debt, and good management. Personal guarantees are usually required of the owners. Feasibility studies may be required for new businesses or when past results do not support the projections. A one-time only guarantee fee is charged to the lender and may be passed on to the borrower. The fee is equal to 2% of that portion of the loan which is guaranteed and is payable when the guarantee is delivered.

The guaranteed portion of the loan is considered to be an investment and does not have to be included in determining the bank's maximum loan. Guaranteed loans often help the bank to meet its CRA requirements. The guaranteed portion of the loan can be sold to investors providing more liquidity to the bank. Banks can also participate out part of the unguaranteed portion as long as they retain at least 5% of the loan, all unguaranteed. Application forms and information about the program can be obtained from USDA Rural Development.

2) **USDA Rural Cooperative Development Grants**

The 1996 Farm Bill revised the Rural Technology and Cooperative Development Grant program to make it available only for cooperative development. The program provides grants for establishing and operating centers for cooperative development. The primary purpose is to improve economic conditions in rural areas. Grant funds can pay up to 75% of the costs for establishing and operating such centers. Grants may be made to public bodies or not-for-profit institutions. The Watershed Agricultural Council used such a grant to help set up the Catskill Family Farms Cooperative.

The Cooperative Services branch of the USDA Rural Business-Cooperative Service also provides a wide range of assistance for people interested in forming new cooperatives. This help can range from an initial

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feasibility study to the creation and implementation of a business plan. Cooperative Services staff includes cooperative development specialists who do everything from identifying potential cooperative functions through the development of bylaws and business plans. They also provide training for cooperative directors. The overall goal of Cooperative Services is to provide a realistic view of what it will take to make a new cooperative succeed. Recent examples of rural cooperatives. New York Rural Development now has a Cooperative Development Specialist on staff at the Rural Development State Office in Syracuse. He is available to provide assistance to any rural group in New York State that is interested in forming a cooperative organization.

3) **Rural Business Enterprise Grants ("RBEG")**

Rural communities can receive assistance in promoting the development of small and emerging businesses through the RBEG program. Grants are made to public bodies or not-for-profit organizations. Grantees use the funds to promote the development of small and emerging private businesses which are defined as having 50 or fewer new employees, less than \$1 million in projected gross revenue, or will use innovative technology to produce/manufacture new products in rural areas. Rural communities include cities with up to 50,000 population and cannot be within the urbanized area of a larger city. Eligible applicants for RBEG grants include public bodies and private not-for-profit corporations.

Funds can be used to acquire property such as land, buildings, machinery or equipment which will be owned by the grantee, but will be made available for use by the private business or businesses. Grantees can also use funds to provide technical assistance to private business enterprises, make loans for startup operating costs or working capital or to establish a revolving loan fund. Reasonable fees for professional services necessary for planning and development of the project and training in connection with technical assistance can also be eligible uses of grant funds. Agricultural production is not an eligible type of business to benefit from a grant.

Interested applicants file a preliminary application with the USDA-Rural Development office serving their area. Rural Development will analyze applications and determine their priority score based on the factors in the program regulations. If funds appear to be available for an application the applicant will be notified and requested to complete the full application. Application forms and information about the program can be obtained from USDA Rural Development.

4) **Rural Business Opportunity Grants**

Rural Business Opportunity Grant funds provide for technical assistance, training, and planning activities that improve economic conditions in rural areas. Applicants must be located in rural areas. Nonprofit corporations and public bodies are eligible. A maximum of \$1.5 million per grant is authorized by the legislation. RBS is designing the program to promote sustainable economic development in rural communities with exceptional needs.

5) **Resource Conservation & Development Program (RC&D)**

The purpose of the Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) program is to accelerate the conservation, development and utilization of natural resources, improve the general level of economic activity, and to enhance the environment and standard of living in authorized RC&D areas. It improves the capability of State, tribal and local units of government and local nonprofit organizations in rural areas to plan, develop and carry out programs for resource conservation and development. The program also establishes or improves coordination systems in rural areas. Current program objectives focus on improvement of quality of life achieved through natural resources conservation and community development which leads to sustainable communities, prudent use (development), and the management and conservation of natural resources. Authorized RC&D areas are locally sponsored areas designated by the Secretary of Agriculture for RC&D technical and financial assistance program funds. NRCS can provide grants for land conservation, water management, community development, and environmental needs in

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authorized RC&D areas.

The local RC&D is the South Central New York Resource Conservation and Development Project. Its main priorities include "retention and expansion of the number of farms, farmers, and acres of farmland." The partnership of federal, state, local and private organizations/agencies results in dollars brought into the region and the empowerment of rural residents. Funding and support for RC&D projects typically is obtained from the Natural Resource Conservation Service, Appalachian Regional Commission), Empire State Development, counties and private organizations supporting similar objectives.

Importantly, the South Central New York Resource Conservation and Development Project's specific objectives include the following:

- Marketing education and assistance for all types of livestock products to increase sales and prices received;
- Providing animal husbandry technical assistance to producers;
- Educating the general public and students on the importance of livestock agriculture in our region, and accompanying environmental issues;
- Promoting performance evaluations of all classes of livestock to ensure uniform quality for greater industry acceptance;
- Supporting the grass fed and natural livestock product option.

6) **Small Business Administration 504 Loan Program**

The SBA's 504 loan program provides growing businesses with long-term, fixed-rate financing for major fixed assets, such as land and buildings. It relies upon the use of Certified Development Companies (CDC) which are nonprofit corporations set up to contribute to the economic development of a community or region. Typically, a 504 project includes a loan secured with a senior lien from a private-sector lender covering up to 50 percent of the project cost, a loan secured with a junior lien from the CDC (a 100 percent SBA-guaranteed debenture) covering up to 40 percent of the cost, and a contribution of at least 10 percent equity from the small business being helped. The maximum SBA debenture generally is \$750,000 (up to \$1 million in some cases). The CDC's portfolio must create or retain one job for every \$35,000 provided by the SBA.

Proceeds from 504 loans must be used for fixed asset projects such as: purchasing land and improvements, including existing buildings, grading, street improvements, utilities, parking lots and landscaping; construction of new facilities, or modernizing, renovating or converting existing facilities; or purchasing long-term machinery and equipment. The 504 Program cannot be used for working capital or inventory, consolidating or repaying debt, or refinancing.

Interest rates on 504 loans are pegged to an increment above the current market rate for five-year and 10-year U.S. Treasury issues. Maturities of 10 and 20 years are available. Fees total approximately three (3) percent of the debenture and may be financed with the loan.

7) **Farmer/Grower Grant Program**

The Farmer/Grower Grant Program is an initiative of the Northeast Region Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program. Its goal is to develop, refine, and demonstrate sustainable techniques, and to help farmers shift to production and marketing practices that will enhance the viability of agriculture in the region. Proposals may address any food, production or marketing issue. Project activities may involve small research trials, demonstrations, farmer/grower workshops or surveys. Proposers must show that the problem is one faced by other producers and that the project results will be of general benefit. Grant recipients are required to share information about their projects, including all results, with other farmers and members of the agricultural community. To this end, each proposal must include an outreach plan. Successful applicants must submit a final report summarizing the project upon its

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completion.

It is requested that proposals address ways to:

- reduce environmental and health risks in agriculture
- prevent agricultural pollution
- reduce costs and increase net farm income;
- conserve soil, improve water quality, and protect natural resources;
- increase employment opportunities in rural areas; and/or
- enhance the quality of life for farmers and society as a whole.

The local contact for this is the Northeast Region SARE office at the University of Vermont (802) 656-0471. This program could be a source of financial support for marketing and, in particular, crafting a natural certification program.

8) Federal-State Marketing Program

The Federal-State Marketing Improvement Program (FSMIP) provides matching funds to State Departments of Agriculture and other State agencies for 20-30 projects per year. These funds have been used by States to conduct marketing studies or assist in developing innovative approaches to the marketing of agricultural products. FSMIP funds can be requested for a wide range of marketing research and marketing service activities, including projects aimed at:

- Developing and testing new or more efficient methods of processing, packaging, handling, storing, transporting, and distributing food and other agricultural products;
- Assessing customer response to new or alternative agricultural products or marketing services and evaluating potential opportunities for U.S. producers, processors, and other agri-businesses, in both domestic and international markets; or
- Identifying problems and impediments in existing channels of trade between producers and consumers of agricultural products and devising improved marketing practices, facilities, or systems to address such problems.

USDA encourages the State department of agriculture or equivalent agency to assume the lead role for FSMIP activities, using cooperative or contractual linkages with other agencies, organizations, and institutions, including producer or industry organizations, as appropriate. Federal funds requested for FSMIP projects must be matched, at least equally, from non-Federal sources. Matching requirements may be met in the form of cash or properly valued, in-kind resources. FSMIP funds are most commonly allocated to projects of approximately 1-year duration. Priorities include:

- Increasing the base of marketing research and marketing services of particular importance to small-scale, limited-resource farmers and rural agri-businesses.
- Identifying and evaluating opportunities for producers to respond directly to new or expanding consumer demands for products and value-adding services.
- Encouraging the development of marketing channels and methods consistent with maintaining or improving the environment, with emphasis on projects aimed at expanding consumers' choices with regard to the environmental impact of alternative production and marketing technologies.

9) Catskill Watershed Corporation (CWC) Economic Development Program

The CWC covers part of Schoharie County. Its Economic Development Program is intended to correct

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some of the imbalances in the Catskills economy due to the imposition of New York City Watershed regulations, and the city's anticipated acquisition of thousands of acres of land in the region. The cornerstone of the CWC's efforts in the West-of-Hudson Watershed is the Catskill Fund for the Future (CFF), an economic development fund capitalized by a \$59.7 million appropriation by New York City. This fund will be used to make loans and grants to businesses and organizations proposing environmentally responsible projects.

Some \$7.5 million has thus far been allocated for the REDI loan revolving fund to provide low-interest loans to watershed businesses, both existing and new. A loan committee of four business and banking people, along with representatives of the CWC and the NYC Department of Environmental Protection, review applications and forward recommendations to the full CWC Board of Directors. Among the economic sectors the CWC has identified as important is agriculture.

This program could be used for various aspects of funding if the facilities were to be located within the watershed area covered by the CWC.

10) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program

New York State now administers CDBG funds from HUD under this Federal program for non-entitlement areas. Non-entitlement areas include those units of general local government which do not receive CDBG funds directly from HUD as part of the entitlement program (Cities and urban counties). The State will award grants to units of local government that carry out development activities. Local governments have the responsibility to consider local needs, prepare grant applications for submission to the State, and carry out the funded community development activities.

The primary statutory objective of the CDBG program is to develop viable communities by providing decent housing and a suitable living environment and by expanding economic opportunities, principally for persons of low- and moderate-income. The State must ensure that at least 70 percent of its CDBG grant funds are used for activities that benefit low and moderate-income persons. Communities receiving CDBG funds from the State may use the funds for many kinds of community development activities including, but not limited to:

- acquisition of property for public purposes;
- construction or reconstruction of streets, water and sewer facilities, neighborhood centers, recreation facilities, and other public works;
- rehabilitation of public and private buildings;
- planning activities;
- assistance to nonprofit entities for community development activities; and
- assistance to private, for profit entities to carry out economic development activities (including assistance to micro-enterprises).

This program has been used in nearby Sullivan County to establish an Agricultural Revolving Loan Program used to help finance several poultry processing facilities. It could have applicability to similar projects in Schoharie.

11) Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) provides a source of funding for manure management systems as does the Watershed Agricultural Council's whole farm planning program. EQIP provides technical, financial, and educational assistance primarily in designated priority areas-half of it targeted to livestock-related natural resource concerns and the remainder to other significant conservation priorities. It helps to install or implement structural, vegetative, and management practices called for in 5- to 10-year contracts for most agricultural land uses. USDA also offers the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), which puts sensitive croplands under permanent vegetative cover for 10 to 15 years. CRP contract

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holders receive annual rental payments. Other USDA, federal, State, and local programs provide additional tools for producers to care for our private lands—a shared commitment between public and private interests.

EQIP works primarily in priority areas identified through the local Soil and Water Conservation District, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) staff, Farm Service Agency (FSA) county committees and key staffs. Additional emphasis is given to areas where State or local governments offer financial or technical assistance and where agricultural improvements will help meet water quality and other environmental objectives. The FSA County Committee approves for funding the highest priority applications. Applications are ranked according to environmental benefits achieved weighted against the costs of applying the practices. Higher rankings are given to plans developed to treat priority resource concerns to a sustainable level. EQIP seeks to maximize environmental benefits per dollar spent.

Cost sharing may pay up to 75 percent of the costs of certain conservation practices, such as grassed waterways, filter strips, manure management facilities, capping abandoned wells, and other practices important to improving and maintaining the health of natural resources in the area. Incentive payments may be made to encourage a producer to perform land management practices such as nutrient management, manure management, integrated pest management, irrigation water management, and wildlife habitat management. These payments may be provided for up to three years to encourage producers to carry out management practices they may not otherwise use without the program incentive. Total cost-share and incentive payments are limited to \$10,000 per person per year and \$50,000 for the length of the contract.

Eligibility is limited to persons who are engaged in livestock or agricultural production. Eligible land includes cropland, rangeland, pasture, forestland, and other farm or ranch lands where the program is delivered. The 1996 Farm Bill prohibits owners of large confined livestock operations from being eligible for cost-share assistance for animal waste storage or treatment facilities. However, technical, educational, and financial assistance may be provided for other conservation practices on these "large" operations. In general, USDA has defined a large confined livestock operation as an operation with more than 1,000 animal units.

There are several additional funding programs available through the Mohawk Valley and Southern Tier East regional planning and economic development agencies and from Empire State Development. These include Economic Development Administration programs, Appalachia Regional Commission initiatives, linked deposit programs and matching state economic development funding. These programs have been well discussed in various forums, including the Farmland Protection Conference held in connection with this planning effort and are well known to Schoharie County officials.

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Appendix 5.9
Costs of Services Analysis

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Costs of Services Analysis

Background

Comparisons of agricultural tax contributions to the costs of services generated by the sector have consistently indicated that farms are tax winners. Results of Tompkins County studies in this regard were discussed in Section 1.5 of this Plan. These are generally in line with other analyses conducted throughout the Northeast. Nevertheless, Schoharie County presents some unique situations that, in the judgment of the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board, warranted some local studies of these factors. These include the large numbers of relatively small farms, a fairly wide range of land values throughout the County, a diverse agricultural economy and varying development patterns with the County pulled in a number of different directions.

Four communities were chosen for this purpose. They were the Towns of Carlisle and Seward in the northern section of the County and Conesville and Fulton in the southern end. These towns all straddled multiple school districts. None, however, included any villages. This facilitated relatively simple analyses. Results for each comparison of revenues and costs follow. Methodology and findings are summarized below:

Methodology

- 1) Costs of services provided by the four communities were obtained from official budget data. Actual costs were the 1998 fiscal year were used. Only General Fund and Highway Fund expenditures were considered because special districts revenues and costs are, by nature, user-based and would have a neutral impact on the revenues to costs of services ratio.
- 2) General Fund expenses were allocated on the basis of the relationship of agricultural-coded tax parcels to estimated 1998 households for each each town. It was assumed these types of general government services were used on a relatively even basis by all households.
- 3) Highway Fund expenses were allocated on a similar basis to General Fund costs but double-weighted to reflect the fact that farms do generate some additional road maintenance costs associated with the accommodation of heavy milk trucks and other vehicles.
- 4) Residential and commercial costs of services were not segregated because one is typically dependent on the other. Although tourist economies can be exceptions, commerce cannot exist without residential customers and a labor supply. Residential and commercial

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growth are inextricably linked. It makes little sense, therefore, to evaluate them separately. Agriculture, however, is an industry not dependent on local residents for customers. It generally exports its products to other regions. It is appropriate, consequently, to look at it apart from other sectors.

- 5) Costs of County government were not considered in the analyses because virtually all such services are of a general government nature. Moreover, a very large share of County revenues are from outside sources to cover the costs of mandated services. Therefore, the effects of including County figures in the analyses would be largely neutral.
- 6) School expenses were allocated totally to the residential/commercial side of the equation because the agricultural parcels, in themselves, generate no schoolchildren. Farm families do, of course, but their residences are counted with the others.
- 7) Property tax revenue data was obtained from official town and school budgets using 1998 town and 198/1999 school year actual figures. These revenues were allocated on the basis of the estimated proportion of assessed value for agricultural-coded parcels (not just agricultural assessed land) to total assessment for each town. It is important to consider all agricultural coded parcels because property values in some parts of the County have not warranted pursuit of agricultural assessment benefits.
- 8) Other revenues for towns were allocated on the same basis as costs of services. State support for highway maintenance, for example, is largely mileage based, which tends to allocate additional monies to rural roads in the same manner as the costs are proportionally greater for farm users of those roads.
- 9) No other school revenues were allocated to the agricultural sector (even though many costs of services studies do so) because the largest source of such monies is the State. The Farmers School Tax Refund program has, to some extent, removed the agricultural sector as a source of this portion of school budgets. While many farms still pay school taxes and individual towns are not affected (refunds come from the State while taxes are paid locally), it was felt unfair to argue that farms are a substantial source of of State school funding. If that conclusion is wrong, moreover, it only serves to make the analyses contained herein more conservative.
- 10) Where a school district represented less than 1% of a town, it was not considered in the calculations of revenues to costs of services ratios.

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Findings

The agricultural sector produced revenues to costs ratios ranging from a low of \$1.09 to \$1.00 for Conesville to a high of \$2.06 to \$1.00 in Seward. Fulton also rated high at \$1.96 to \$1.00 while Carlisle produced \$1.38 of revenues for every \$1.00 of municipal costs generated by agriculture. The Conesville ratio is clearly lowest because it has the least real agriculture. Conversely, Fulton and Seward have large amounts of farm activity.

It must also be noted that much of the Gilboa-Conesville school budget is supported by New York City. If this were fully factored into the equation, the agricultural contributions would be relatively smaller yet. Overall, however, these results substantiate the conclusions of earlier studies. Agriculture is, in fact, a tax winner for Schoharie County, more so among those communities where agriculture is a substantial part of the tax base.

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Revenues to Costs of Services Analysis
Town of Carlisle, Schoharie County

	1998 Total Expenditures	Residential/ Commercial Expenditures	Residential/ Commercial %	Agricultural Related Expenditures	Agricultural Related %
Costs of Services:					
Town					
a) General Fund	\$195,521	\$160,327	82%	\$35,194	18%
b) Highway Fund	\$282,897	\$181,054	64%	\$101,843	36%
Sub-total =	\$478,418	\$341,381	71%	\$137,037	29%
Schools					
a) Cobleskill-Richmondville@10%	\$2,366,405	\$2,366,405	100%	\$0	0.00%
b) Schoharie@3.3%	\$370,977	\$370,977	100%	\$0	0.00%
c) Sharon Springs@5%	\$217,693	\$217,693	100%	\$0	0.00%
Sub-total =	\$2,955,075	\$2,955,075	100%	\$0	0.00%
Total =	\$3,433,493	\$3,296,456	96%	\$137,037	4%
Revenues:					
Property Taxes					
a) Town	\$295,368	\$256,970	87%	\$38,398	13%
b) School (Cobleskill-Rich.)	\$587,032	\$510,718	87%	\$76,314	13%
c) School (Schoharie)	\$135,921	\$118,251	87%	\$17,670	13%
d) School (Sharon Springs)	\$65,574	\$57,049	87%	\$8,525	13%
Sub-total =	\$1,083,895	\$942,989	87%	\$140,906	13%
Other Revenues					
a) Town Revenues	\$101,567	\$83,285	82%	\$18,282	18%
b) Highway Revenues	\$81,483	\$52,149	64%	\$29,334	36%
c) School Revenues (Cobleskill)	\$1,779,373	\$1,779,373	100%	\$0	0%
d) School Revenues (Schoharie)	\$235,056	\$235,056	100%	\$0	0%
e) School Revenues (S. Springs)	\$152,119	\$152,119	100%	\$0	0%
Sub-total =	\$2,349,598	\$2,301,982	98%	\$47,616	2%
Total =	\$3,433,493	\$3,244,971	95%	\$188,522	5%
Revenues to Costs Ratio =		0.98		1.38	

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Revenues to Costs of Services Analysis
Town of Conesville, Schoharie County

	1998 Total Expenditures	Residential/ Commercial Expenditures	Residential/ Commercial %	Agricultural Related Expenditures	Agricultural Related %
Costs of Services:					
Town					
a) General Fund	\$133,380	\$120,042	90%	\$13,338	10%
b) Highway Fund	\$255,271	\$204,217	80%	\$51,054	20%
Sub-total =	\$388,651	\$324,259	83%	\$64,392	17%
Schools					
a) Cairo-Durham@0.3%	\$45,213	\$45,213	100%	\$0	0.00%
b) Gilboa-Conesville@30%	\$1,598,212	\$1,598,212	100%	\$0	0.00%
c) Greenville@0.3%	\$40,341	\$40,341	100%	\$0	0.00%
d) Middleburgh@0.7%	\$77,486	\$77,486	100%	\$0	0.00%
Sub-total =	\$1,761,252	\$1,761,252	100%	\$0	0.00%
Total =	\$2,149,903	\$2,085,511	97%	\$64,392	3%
Revenues:					
Property Taxes					
a) Town	\$262,000	\$251,520	96%	\$10,480	4%
b) School (Cairo-Durham)	\$20,165	\$19,358	96%	\$807	4%
c) School (Gilboa-Conesville)	\$938,975	\$901,416	96%	\$37,559	4%
d) School (Greenville)	\$5,983	\$5,744	96%	\$239	4%
e) School (Middleburgh)	\$32,402	\$31,106	96%	\$1,296	4%
Sub-total =	\$1,259,525	\$1,209,144	96%	\$50,381	4%
Other Revenues					
a) Town Revenues	\$54,795	\$49,316	90%	\$5,480	10%
b) Highway Revenues	\$71,856	\$57,485	80%	\$14,371	20%
c) School (Cairo-Durham)	\$25,048	\$25,048	100%	\$0	0%
d) School (Gilboa-Conesville)	\$659,237	\$659,237	100%	\$0	0%
e) School (Greenville)	\$34,358	\$34,358	100%	\$0	0%
f) School Revenues (Middleburgh)	\$45,084	\$45,084	100%	\$0	0%
Sub-total =	\$890,378	\$870,527	98%	\$19,851	2%
Total =	\$2,149,903	\$2,079,671	97%	\$70,232	3%
Revenues to Costs Ratio =		1.00		1.09	

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Revenues to Costs of Services Analysis
Town of Fulton, Schoharie County

	1998 Total Expenditures	Residential/ Commercial Expenditures	Residential/ Commercial %	Agricultural Related Expenditures	Agricultural Related %
Costs of Services:					
Town					
a) General Fund	\$146,199	\$130,117	89%	\$16,082	11%
b) Highway Fund	\$371,900	\$290,082	78%	\$81,818	22%
Sub-total =	\$518,099	\$420,199	81%	\$97,900	19%
Schools					
a) Cobleskill-Richmondville@1%	\$236,640	\$236,640	100%	\$0	0.00%
b) Gilboa-Conesville@2%	\$106,548	\$106,548	100%	\$0	0.00%
c) Middleburgh@25%	\$2,767,256	\$2,767,256	100%	\$0	0.00%
Sub-total =	\$3,110,444	\$3,110,444	100%	\$0	0.00%
Total =	\$3,628,543	\$3,530,643	97%	\$97,900	3%
Revenues:					
Property Taxes					
a) Town	\$368,402	\$331,562	90%	\$36,840	10%
b) School (Cobleskill-Rich.)	\$58,703	\$52,833	90%	\$5,870	10%
c) School (Gilboa-Conesville)	\$62,598	\$56,339	90%	\$6,260	10%
d) School (Middleburgh)	\$1,157,219	\$1,041,497	90%	\$115,722	10%
Sub-total =	\$1,646,922	\$1,482,230	90%	\$164,692	10%
Other Revenues					
a) Town Revenues	\$48,292	\$42,980	89%	\$5,312	11%
b) Highway Revenues	\$101,405	\$79,096	78%	\$22,309	22%
c) School Revenues (Cobleskill)	\$177,937	\$177,937	100%	\$0	0%
d) School Revenues (Gilboa)	\$43,949	\$43,949	100%	\$0	0%
e) School Revenues (Middleburgh)	\$1,610,037	\$1,610,037	100%	\$0	0%
Sub-total =	\$1,981,620	\$1,953,999	99%	\$27,621	1%
Total =	\$3,628,543	\$3,436,229	95%	\$192,313	5%
Revenues to Costs Ratio =		0.97		1.96	

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Revenues to Costs of Services Analysis
Town of Seward, Schoharie County

	1998 Total Expenditures	Residential/ Commercial Expenditures	Residential/ Commercial %	Agricultural Related Expenditures	Agricultural Related %
Costs of Services:					
Town					
a) General Fund	\$145,410	\$119,236	82%	\$26,174	18%
b) Highway Fund	\$265,200	\$169,728	64%	\$95,472	36%
Sub-total =	\$410,610	\$288,964	70%	\$121,646	30%
Schools					
a) Cobleskill-Richmondville@10%	\$2,366,405	\$2,366,405	100%	\$0	0.00%
b) Sharon Springs@5%	\$217,693	\$217,693	100%	\$0	0.00%
Sub-total =	\$2,584,098	\$2,584,098	100%	\$0	0.00%
Total =	\$2,994,708	\$2,873,062	96%	\$121,646	4%
Revenues:					
Property Taxes					
a) Town	\$310,445	\$239,043	77%	\$71,402	23%
b) School (Cobleskill-Rich.)	\$587,032	\$452,015	77%	\$135,017	23%
c) School (Sharon Springs)	\$65,574	\$50,492	77%	\$15,082	23%
Sub-total =	\$963,051	\$741,549	77%	\$221,502	23%
Other Revenues					
a) Town Revenues	\$35,565	\$29,163	82%	\$6,402	18%
b) Highway Revenues	\$64,600	\$41,344	64%	\$23,256	36%
c) School Revenues (Cobleskill)	\$1,779,373	\$1,779,373	100%	\$0	0%
d) School Revenues (S. Springs)	\$152,119	\$152,119	100%	\$0	0%
Sub-total =	\$2,031,657	\$2,001,999	99%	\$29,658	1%
Total =	\$2,994,708	\$2,743,549	92%	\$251,159	8%
Revenues to Costs Ratio =		0.95		2.06	