

## **Town of Carlisle**

### **Draft Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan**

*January 25, 2011*

**Insert Adoption Date**

**Created by  
Town of Carlisle  
Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan Committee  
with assistance from  
American Farmland Trust**

## **Acknowledgements**

### **Town of Carlisle Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan**

### **Prepared by Town of Carlisle Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan Committee**

#### *Committee Members*

Larry Bradt, Town Supervisor  
Linda Cross  
MacDonald Holmes  
Doug Holyoke  
Michelle Linnane  
Mary Tillapaugh

#### **With Assistance From: American Farmland Trust**

David Haight, *New York State Director*  
Laura Ten Eyck, *New York Field Representative*  
Tammey Holtby, *New York Operations Coordinator*

#### **Contributors**

##### **Schoharie County Planning and Development Agency**

Michele Strobeck, *Agriculture Marketing Specialist*  
Lee Pratt, *Agriculture Marketing Specialist*  
Zachary Thompson, *Planner*  
Brian Fleury, *GIS Specialist*

##### **Cornell Cooperative Extension of Schoharie County**

David Cox, *Agriculture Program Leader*

##### **Schoharie County Soil and Water Conservation District**

Stephen Hoerz, *District Manager*

##### **Schoharie County Real Property Tax Services Agency**

Susan Kennedy, *Deputy Director*

## **Table of Contents**

*Insert page numbers*

### **Executive Summary**

### **Introduction**

### **Planning Process**

### **Community Outreach**

### **Farming in Carlisle**

### **Soils**

### **Environmental and Recreational Benefits of Farmland in Carlisle**

### **Economic Impacts of Agriculture in the Town of Carlisle and Schoharie County**

### **Conversion Pressure**

### **Land Use Regulations & Land Use Plans**

### **Prioritizing Agricultural Land**

### **The Future of Farming**

### **Goals & Recommendations**

### **Implementation Matrix**

### **Resources**

### **Appendices**

*Insert page numbers*

**Interview Summary**  
**Input from Public Meeting--SWOT Analysis**  
**Comprehensive Land Use Plan Survey Analysis**  
**NYSDAM Definition of Agriculture**  
**Sample Disclosure Statement**  
**Soil Definitions**  
**Review of Town of Carlisle Land Use Regulations**  
**Sample Brochure for New Residents**  
**New York Agricultural Landowner Guide**

## **Figures**

**Figure Cost of Community Services**

## **Maps**

**Map Location Map**  
**Map Soil Map**  
**Map Agricultural Lands Map**  
**Map Zip Code Map**

## **Executive Summary**

### **Introduction**

The Town of Carlisle lies in northern Schoharie County. The western town line borders the Town of Seward. Montgomery County lies to the north, the Town of Esperance to the east and the Town of Cobleskill to the south. The Town includes a number of small hamlets including Becker Corners, Carlisle, Carlisle Center, Grosvenor Corners and Little York.

#### *Insert Location Map*

The Town of Carlisle is an approximately one-hour drive from the City of Albany, the state's capital, forty minutes from the City of Schenectady, and two-and-a-half hours from the New York Metropolitan Area, the largest city in the United States. The town is in close proximity to the Village of Cobleskill, which is home to over 4,500 people, as well as the State University of New York at Cobleskill (SUNY Cobleskill) and its School of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

Agriculture has historically been and remains the foundation of the Town of Carlisle's economy, producing food, employing people and paying taxes. Carlisle's farms provide open space, buffer natural resources and protect water quality.

The Town of Carlisle is comprised primarily of agricultural lands, forest, scattered residential development and very limited small-commercial development. The town is 34.2 square miles or 21,229 acres in size. At the time of the 2000 U.S. Census of Population Carlisle had a population of 1,744 and 732 housing units.

### **Planning Process**

In 2007 the Town of Seward and the neighboring Town of Carlisle, with Seward acting as lead agency, applied for a grant from the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets (NYSDAM) of \$50,000 to fund the joint development of two municipal agricultural and farmland protection plans. This funding is made available through NYSDAM's Agricultural and Farmland Protection Program which supports local efforts to protect agricultural land and ensure the economic viability of the agricultural industry.

Farming is vital to the health of New York State's economy, environment and communities. The importance of farmland is reflected in the New York State Constitution:

*“the policy of this state shall be to conserve and protect its natural resources and scenic beauty and encourage the development and improvement of its agricultural lands for the production of food and other agricultural products...”*

In 1992 the Agricultural Protection Act was passed creating the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Program to support local efforts to protect agricultural land and ensure the continued economic viability of the state's agricultural industry. The program funds the development of local agricultural and farmland protection plans and implementation grants such as funds for the purchase of agricultural conservation easements.

Local governments play an important role in protecting farmland. New York is a "home rule" state where town government officials make land use decisions and enforce them through local laws such as zoning ordinances and subdivision regulations. Agriculture and farmland protection plans are developed at both the town and county level. The majority of the counties in the state with farmland, including Schoharie County, already have agriculture and farmland protection plans in place. The state is now making funding available to counties to update their plans. Schoharie County is eligible to apply for renewal and plans to put in an application. As of 2010 62 towns have adopted or are developing plans.

Agriculture and farmland protection plans enable communities to take stock of existing agricultural resources, including working farms, high quality farmland, and farm-related infrastructure. The plans recommend strategies for retaining farmland, educating the non-farming public about agricultural practices and ensuring that local regulations do not impede farmers' ability to take advantage of economic opportunities that will help them grow their business.

On February 27, 2008 the state awarded Seward and Carlisle a grant to develop municipal agricultural and farmland protection plans for each town. The Seward and Carlisle town boards then appointed committees made up of farmers and other residents to oversee the development of each town's plan. From these two committees a joint executive agriculture and farmland protection plan committee was appointed to meet regularly to develop the plans.

The committee hired American Farmland Trust (AFT) as a consultant to help in the development of the plan. AFT is a national, non-profit organization dedicated to saving farmland and supporting a sustainable future for farms and communities. AFT's New York State office is headquartered in Saratoga Springs with field representatives working across the state. In addition the towns have received assistance from the Schoharie County Planning and Development Agency (SCPDA), the Schoharie County Cooperative Extension (CCE) as well as the county's Soil and Water Conservation District and Real Property Tax Service Agency.

While developing the plan the committee:

- inventoried the various types of agriculture in Carlisle and conducted a windshield survey of farms in the town
- created a map of the town's current active agricultural land by working with aerial photographs and maps
- conducted extensive community outreach
- analyzed the economic impact of agriculture on the towns

- reviewed the town's land use regulations and offered suggestions on how they could be revised to be more farm friendly
- formulated goals to accomplish with the plan
- drafted recommendations for how those goals could be achieved, along with suggestions on how to implement the recommendations

The intention of this plan is to balance a steady increase in residential and commercial development and the rights of individual property owners with the community's collective desire to remain a farming town. This plan establishes goals for sustaining agriculture and makes recommendations on how to achieve these goals. The recommendations are offered as a guideline for town planning and the Town Board must approve any actions recommended by this plan before they can be undertaken.

By developing an agricultural and farmland protection plan the Town of Carlisle has positioned itself to remain a viable farming community as it grows in the future. Through strategies such as supporting farmers with farm friendly land use policies, working regionally to foster new economic opportunities for agriculture, and guiding dense residential development away from working agricultural land, Carlisle intends to accommodate growth while continuing its agricultural tradition.

### **Community Outreach**

The Town of Carlisle sought and received much helpful input from the community during the development of the plan's goals and recommendations. American Farmland Trust conducted interviews with ten farmers and owners of agricultural lands in the Town. Carlisle held a public meeting during which the members of the community shared their thoughts and concerns about the business of agriculture and the use of farmland in the town through a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) exercise led by American Farmland Trust. In addition an AFT did an analysis of the results of a 2004 survey of town residents conducted as part of the process of developing a comprehensive plan.

### **Farming in Carlisle**

Palatine Germans originally settled the Town of Carlisle. The settlement was agricultural in nature and Carlisle continues to be primarily a farming community. The development of the town's economy was influenced heavily by the construction of the Great Western Turnpike, today US Route 20, which bisects the town, as well as its proximity to the Albany Susquehanna Railroad and the Erie Canal.

Not only was Carlisle able to ship out agricultural goods produced in town, goods from Central and Western New York, including herds of cattle and flocks of geese and turkeys, passed through Carlisle enroute to market according to *The History of the Town of Carlisle*. "Some days, the entire highway would be so full of animals, that the children on their way to school

must step near the fence and wait until the drove passed,” recalled a Carlisle native born in the late 1800s.

Farms in the town produced dairy products, hops, maple syrup, orchard fruit and cider. The Carlisle Creamery shipped cheese to Boston. Hops were shipped to breweries in major cities across the country. The town was also full of business in support of agriculture such as grain mills, saw mills, blacksmiths and harness shops.

According to a nineteenth century census the town produced: tobacco; honey and beeswax; wool; hops; barley; oats; rye; buckwheat; flax; apples; potatoes; pumpkins; milk, butter; and cheese. In 1865 Carlisle had 14,658 acres of farmland and produced: 2848 bushels of wheat; 33,100 bushels of cereal grains; 3,367 tons of hay, 14,626 bushels of potatoes; 17,995 bushels of apples; 17,995 pounds of butter; and 52,972 pounds of cheese. *Show this data in chart form*

Today agriculture in Carlisle takes various forms with dairy, beef, horses and field crops predominating. The prolonged volatility of the prices paid to modern New York dairy farmers combined with rising operating costs has resulted in a steady decline in the number of dairy farms. In 2010 the town’s agricultural assessment records show seven active dairy farmers in Carlisle. In addition six farmers grow hay; five farmers produce beef; three grow hay and produce beef; two grow hay and raise heifers; and five raise and care for horses.

Farmers are also producing vegetables, eggs, and goat’s milk. An informal inventory of agricultural activity in the town reported the presence of dairy cattle, beef cattle, horses, sheep, dairy goats, pigs, alpacas, poultry, game birds, donkeys, fruit and vegetable production, bees, nursery plants, maple products, lumber and Christmas trees,

Carlisle has 16,903 acres within agricultural district #3, which represents nearly three-quarters of the entire acreage in town. The majority of the land lying in the eastern part of the town is not included in the agricultural district. This land features the broadest swath of soils of statewide significance found in the town.

## **Soils**

According to the *Soil Survey for Schoharie County* the entire northeastern portion of the Town of Carlisle is composed of Burdet-Erie-Nunda-Langford association soils. These soils are deep, gently sloping to moderately steep and range from somewhat poorly drained to moderately well drained. These soils are best suited for pasture. Corn, oats and hay can be grown on these soils but planting is often delayed because the soils are not well drained.

The northwestern and southeastern sections of the town are composed of Darien-Nunda soil associations. This section features deep, medium-lime soils on moderate slopes that range from somewhat poorly drained to well-drained. The Darien-Nunda association is also suited to dairy farming as well as producing corn, oats and hay. However some areas are too wet to cultivate.

The southwestern section of the town features Mohawk-Honeoye association soils, which are among the better soils formed in glacial till in the county. Mohawk-Honeoye association soils are deep, high lime soils that can be gently sloping or increasingly steep and range from well to moderately-well drained. Because of the range in slope from gentle to steep these soils are best suited to dairy farming, along with the production of corn, oats and hay. Areas too steep, stony or wet for cultivation provide farm woodlots and pasture.

In the western and southern sections of town are two sections of Honeoye-Farmington Association soils. These shallow soils lay on top of limestone bedrock and are well drained to excessively well drained, featuring sinkholes and caves. This acreage is suitable for corn, oats, and hay.

The majority of the prime soils found within the town lie in the southern section, while a significant amount of soils of statewide importance occur throughout the town.

**Insert Soil Map**

*Map: Soil Map*

**Insert Agricultural Lands Map**

**Map: Agricultural Lands Map**

### **Environmental and Recreational Benefits of Farmland in Carlisle**

Working farmland is responsible for much of the open space in the Town of Carlisle. An overwhelming majority of the respondents to the Town of Carlisle land use survey wanted to preserve the rural nature of the Town. Open space and a rural environment are critical to town residents' quality of life.

Agricultural land also provides food and cover for wildlife, helps control flooding, and protects wetlands and watersheds. Farmland absorbs and filters wastewater and run off and provides groundwater recharge that protects the quality of drinking water in the town.

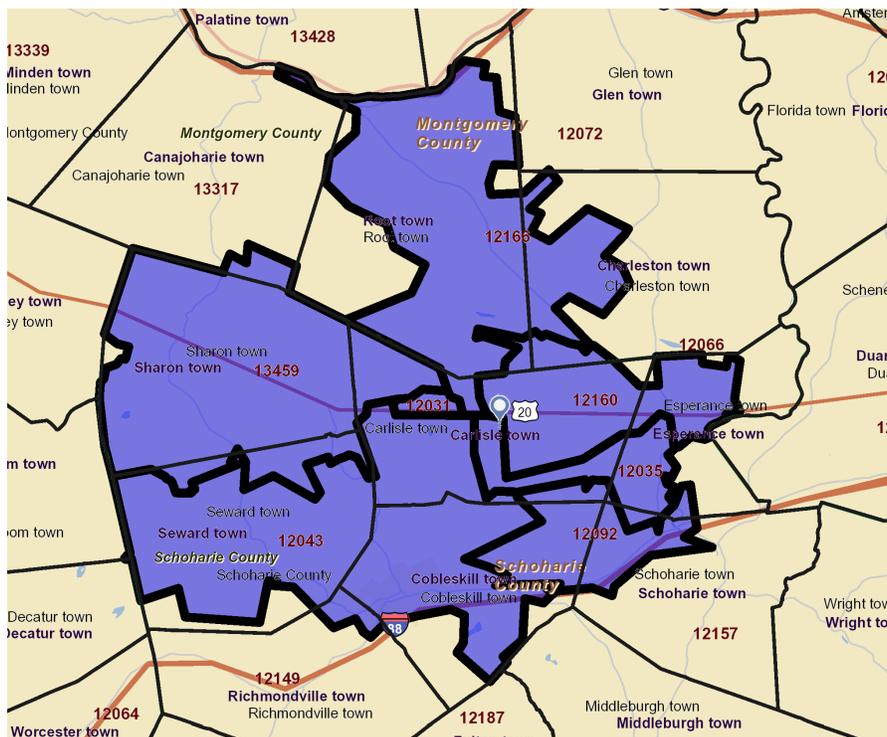
Farmland and associated woodlands provide opportunities for outdoor recreation such as hunting, fishing, hiking, cross country skiing, bicycling and snowmobiling. Many farmers allow hunters access to their land during hunting season. Cripplebush Creek is popular with local fishermen.

With permission from farmers not-for-profit snowmobile clubs such as the Ice Cave Riders and Sharon Pathfinders maintain over 200 miles of trails in the region. The snowmobilers express appreciation for the access farmers grant them with an annual landowner appreciation dinner.

### Economic and Fiscal Impacts of Agriculture in the Town of Carlisle

As an industry, the total economic impact that agriculture has in the Town of Carlisle is undeniably significant. As previously indicated, the town primarily consists of rural residential and agricultural land uses. There is no significant impact from retail, manufacturing, or service based businesses located within the town.

A full inventory of agricultural census data is not available at the town level. However, an analysis of the 2007 agricultural census data by zip code is available, and can provide us with some reasonable information to further assess the economic impact that agriculture has on the area surrounding the Town of Carlisle. However, we must be mindful that the Town of Carlisle is serviced by 8 different zip codes that also encompass the Hamlet of Carlisle, and the Towns of Sharon, Seward, Cobleskill, Root (Montgomery County), Esperance, and Schoharie (see map below).



(Source: ESRI – Business Analyst)

In the Town of Carlisle as is the case for all of Schoharie County, the largest segment of the agricultural industry is by far dairy farming. According to the 2007 Census of Agriculture, the sale of dairy products in 2007 was valued at \$21,287,000 or 60% of the total sales of agricultural products in the County (\$35,153,000). Of the 74 dairy farms included in this value, approximately five are located in the Town of Carlisle. Four additional dairy farms utilize significant portions of land in the town although the headquarters of their operations are located in a neighboring town. Using an average value of milk products sold of \$288,000 per farm, (based on total value of all sales in the county \$21,287,000 divided by 74 farms) it is reasonable to value the amount of dairy products sold

in the Town of Carlisle at \$1,440,000. Using a conservative economic multiplier of 2.5<sup>1</sup>, that \$1.4 million in dairy sales becomes a value of \$3.6 million whence it is turned over within the community. If we apply a more widely cited dairy agricultural economic multiplier of 3.2 to this figure, the overall economic impact of the Town of Carlisle's dairy farms is valued at \$4.48 million. Again, this is an estimated value, assuming that each dairy farm is of equal size, which we know is not the case. We do know, however, that two of the farms located in the Town of Carlisle meet the thresholds to be considered medium sized Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations, or CAFOs. These two farms in particular sell much more than the county average of \$288,000 in gross sales, potentially creating even more value for the Town of Carlisle and Schoharie County. In addition, we also must recognize that while some of the \$1.4 million in milk sold is turned over within Carlisle itself, the economic multiplier effect is much more significant on the county and regional economies. As it may have been in the past, many of the products and services utilized by a dairy farm may not be right in their own town, but New York Farm Bureau estimates that most dairy farms purchase most of their equipment, feed, and services from companies that are within 50-100 miles of them.

As much as the dairy industry has dominated agriculture in the town, region and state over the last 75 years, dairy farming is equally a sector at risk. While this plan was under development the New York's Dairy Farmers were hit with the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. Dairy Farmers were receiving less than \$12 per hundredweight (cwt) for milk for much of 2009 while the estimated cost of production was well over \$17/cwt. Although the price of milk has somewhat rebounded researchers from Cornell University have estimated that the dairy industry continues to reel from the economic downturn. Some dairy farms lost nearly half of their farm's total assets, which will take years, if not decades to rebound from.

According to the Schoharie County Office of Real Property Services (SCORPS), the total market value of all property (land only) receiving an agricultural exemption in the Town of Carlisle in 2010 was \$8,217,720. The value of land and buildings on parcels receiving an agricultural exemption was \$14,751,093.00. Given the Town of Carlisle and County tax rates from 2010, property taxes generated from agricultural parcels include:

\$116,131 paid to Schoharie County

\$48,639 paid to the Town

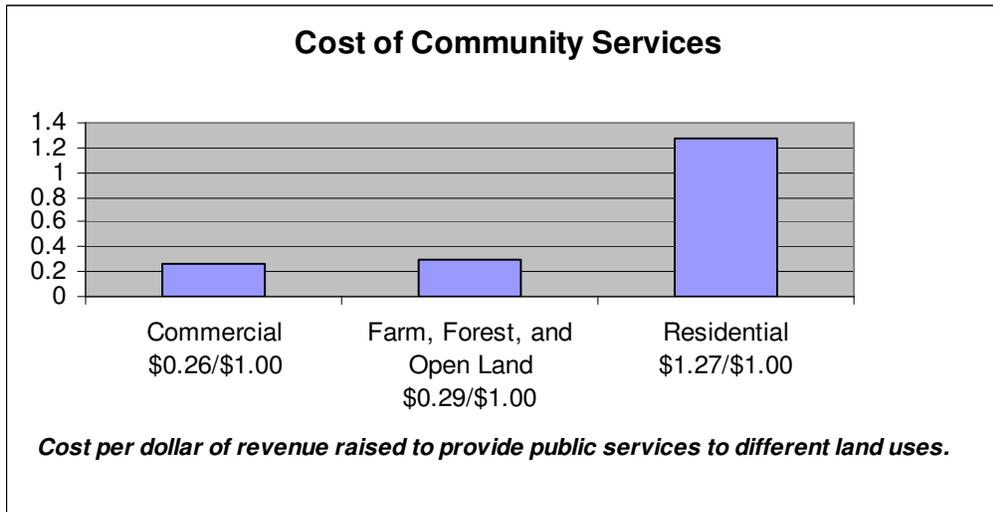
\$254,280 paid to the Cobleskill-Richmondville Central School District

In addition, property taxes to the School Districts of Sharon Springs at a rate of \$25.998524 (per thousand) and Schoharie Central at a rate of \$25.762494.

It is widely accepted that there are numerous tax advantages to maintaining an agricultural base within the town and minimizing residential development. Cost of Community Service Studies (COCS), developed by American Farmland Trust determine the difference between taxes generated by different types of land uses and the cost of services each type of land use requires. As you can see from the graph below, farm, forest, and open land by far pays more than it requires in services while residential development actually costs more to serve than what they generate in tax dollars.

---

<sup>1</sup> The concept refers to the fact that each dollar generated by a specific industry is subsequently recirculated throughout the local economy. The frequency of recirculation determines the overall impact the particular industry has on the local economy. Professor Nelson Bills of Cornell University has developed economic multipliers for regions within New York State. The economic multiplier for the central New York region, including Schoharie County, is 3.235.



Information from Haight et al. "New York Agriculture Landowner Guide". Saratoga Springs: American Farmland Trust, 2009.

**Figure: Cost of Community Services**

### Conversion Pressure

The town is 34.2 square miles or 21,229 acres in size. At the time of the 2000 U.S. Census of Population, Carlisle had a population of 1,744 and 732 housing units. Although the town's population increased by 4 percent from the 1990 census count of 1,672, the number of houses rose by 20 percent, from the 1990 count of 613. The Census estimated the town's population in 2009 to be 2,007. The 2010 Census is being conducted at the time of this writing.

According to the U.S. Census housing development in the Town began to increase significantly during the 1970s, a decade during which 139 new houses were constructed. During the 1980s another 124 houses were built. By 1990 there were 616 houses in the Town of Carlisle. Over the next 10 years another 116 houses were built for a total of 732 houses by the year 2000.

Since 2001 another ??? permits for new construction have been issued. If all of these construction projects were completed the number of houses in Carlisle is now, an increase of nearly ??? percent since the year 2000.

<b>Town of Carlisle Building Permits New Construction</b>	
<b>Year</b>	<b>Permits</b>
2009	4
2008	2
2007	4
2006	3
2005	
2004	
2003	
2002	
2001	
<b>Total</b>	

The town is crossed from east to west by US Route 20. There are also short sections of two highways within the town. NYS Route 145 crosses the far southwest corner of the town and NYS Route 162 cuts across the far northeast corner of the town. According to the New York State Department of Transportation, US 20 is the busiest highway carrying approximately 3,000 vehicles per day, and is traveled in the summer by tourists enroute to and from Cooperstown. Carlisle is located seven miles north of I-88, which links the Capital District with New York's Southern Tier.

Such excellent road access makes the Town of Carlisle an ideal bedroom community for the Capital Region. As it is now, half of the workers in the town commute a half hour or longer to get to work and 30 percent of the workers have a commute ranging between 45 and 90 plus minutes.

Because of slim profit margins traditionally associated with agriculture many farmers are unable to save money for retirement and instead must rely on the equity in their land. In addition, non-farmers who own agricultural land in the Town may choose to develop their land. As the Town's population grows it is likely that some farmland will be developed. This plan provides recommendations for ways in which Town residents can work together to minimize any negative impacts potential development may have on working farms and ensure the strongest future possible for active farming in the Town.

### **Land Use Regulation & Land Use Plans**

The Town of Carlisle does not have zoning regulations. Site plan review and subdivision regulations are in place. The town also has a comprehensive plan and a right to farm law, along with a number of local ordinances.

## **Prioritizing Agricultural Land**

State agricultural and market law provides for the development of municipal agriculture and farmland protection plans. According to the language of the law plans shall include the “location of any land or areas proposed to be protected.”

The Schoharie County Agriculture and Farmland Protection plan places a priority on preserving land in agricultural districts with soil groups rated as “highly suited” for agriculture. According to the county plan these major blocks of farmland should be designated as core agricultural districts which should include not just commercial agricultural land but also adjacent and intervening buffers in order to protect the industry from incompatible land use activities and complaints from non-farming neighbors. The county plan refers to the agricultural district program as “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.”

Some Carlisle farmers interviewed during the research for the development of this plan believe that high quality of farmland in certain parts of the town justifies some form of protection. “We’ve got pockets of good land in this town that should be preserved, said one farmer.

The Schoharie County agricultural and farmland protection plan’s third stated goal is to “preserve a critical mass of both farmers and agribusiness 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).”

Many farmers in Schoharie County worry that without large, contiguous tracts of farmland, agriculture will no longer be a viable industry in the town. “You can see it coming,” said a farmer. “You get more development, you get more traffic, you get more people that don’t understand farming and don’t want to hear tractors on a Sunday morning or a farmer out there at midnight on a Friday night trying to get hay done. That kind of thing is going to make it harder and harder. This town is going to get chopped up to bits and pieces.”

The question of exactly what constitutes a “critical mass” of farmland is complex. Scenic Hudson, a significant Hudson Valley land trust has taken what they call a “critical mass” approach to protecting farmland by working with farmers to purchase agricultural easements from farms in Hudson Valley towns such as Red Hook. They assert that preserving a core or critical mass of farmland in a region assures a setting favorable for farming. Scenic Hudson

states that there is no universal definition of a critical mass of farmland but instead it is a locally determined margin of viability. Acreage protected through agricultural easements in the Town of Red Hook has exceeded the original goal of 1,000 acres.

In 2002 American Farmland Trust conducted a study entitled “Is There a Critical Mass of Agricultural Land Needed to Sustain an Agricultural Economy? Evidence from Six Mid-Atlantic States.” According to this study the critical mass concept is based on the idea that a certain amount of agricultural activity must be sustained in order for the agricultural economy in an area to remain viable. As production levels decline below a given threshold, costs will rise. A decline in agricultural profits and thus a higher relative return for conversion to other uses, such as residential housing, may increase the rate of loss of farmland in the area. Increased property taxes brought about by the increased demand for services that comes with residential development will escalate costs further for agriculture, causing yet more farms to go out of business continuing the cycle of farmland loss and residential development.

The entire Town of Carlisle is 34.2 square miles or 21,299 acres in size. Carlisle is comprised primarily of agricultural lands, forest, scattered residential development and very limited small-commercial development. Although the majority of the town is included in agricultural district three nearly the entire eastern end of the town remains outside the agricultural district. This is a matter of concern because a great deal of this land is comprised of soils of statewide importance. This issue is further complicated by the fact that the Town of Carlisle does not have zoning regulations and therefore has little control over where development occurs. This plan recommends that the eastern end of the town be included in the agricultural district, if the landowners’ are willing, in order to receive protection under state agricultural district law.

### **The Future of Farming**

The Town of Carlisle needs to find ways to sustain its established farms and at the same time, promote alternative and value-added agricultural enterprises. Carlisle’s contiguous tracts of agricultural land enable commodity farmers to produce their crops without significantly impacting residential areas. However, scattered residential development is beginning to fragment agricultural lands, making it more difficult for farmers to work the land. An increase in traffic has also made it difficult for farmers to move agricultural equipment along the roads.

The community is extremely supportive of farming and most believe that the best way to protect farmland is to keep farms profitable, however this is difficult under current economic conditions. There is no doubt that serious challenges lie ahead for farmers in the Town of Carlisle. Such challenges, which are documented in the interview summary found in the appendix of this plan, include: lack of a support infrastructure and farm labor force; difficulty moving farm equipment on roads; narrow profit margins; high input costs; depressed milk prices; and property taxes.

Fortunately, by coming together to plan for the future of agriculture in the town, the community has accomplished several important things. The process of developing an agricultural and farmland protection plan has helped the community understand the scope of agricultural activity occurring in the town. In addition, the community has identified the problems it faces in retaining its farm businesses and agricultural land such as property taxes, road safety and a lack of public understanding of agriculture. Lastly, through developing this plan, Carlisle has created

strategies for thoughtful land use planning that will minimize development's impact on agriculture. The town has also devised ways of supporting existing agricultural businesses at the town level while working towards creating new economic opportunities for farmers. Examples of such strategies include: the development of a town agricultural committee; support for direct marketing; improving broadband access; and developing an educational brochure about local agriculture for town residents.

Insert Corbin Hill Road Farm info.

## **Goals & Recommendations**

### **Goal I**

#### **Support Agriculture at the Town Level**

Encourage town governments to be proactive in identifying and resolving issues impacting agriculture. Strengthen the business of agriculture in the town with farm friendly town policies and land use regulations. Retain the critical mass of agricultural land necessary for agriculture to remain the primary land use in the towns by providing incentives for landowners to continue agricultural activities and to keep land available for agriculture use.

#### **A. Agricultural Land Use Planning**

##### **Recommendation 1**

##### **Agricultural Advisory Committee**

The town board should establish an agricultural advisory committee to address issues affecting agriculture. This committee would be responsible for working with the town board to implement the recommendations of the town's agriculture and farmland protection plan and address any issues impacting agriculture that may arise in the future. (*see sample town resolution forming an agricultural advisory committee in appendix*)

##### **Recommendation 2**

##### **Represent Agricultural Interests on Appointed Boards & Committees**

Encourage the presence of individuals from the agricultural community on the town's appointed boards and committees whenever possible.

##### **Recommendation 3**

##### **Provide Training in Agricultural Land Use Planning**

Provide quality training in agricultural land use planning, New York State agricultural district law and the state's farmland protection program for members of the town board, planning board zoning board of appeals, town attorney and code enforcement officer. Such training is available from organizations such as the New York Planning Federation, American Farmland Trust, New

York State Department of State's Office of Local Government Services, New York State Office of Real Property Services and New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets. Contact information for these organizations is provided in the Resources section of this plan. (*see appendix for NYS brochure on its Land Use Training Program*).

#### **Recommendation 4**

##### **Educate Realtors and Home Builders About the Benefits of Retaining Agricultural Land**

Educate homebuilders, developers and realtors on the benefits of retaining agricultural land and how they can develop their land in a way that will minimize negative impact on farming activities. Produce a brochure that offers examples of how an individual landowner can design their lot in way in which preserves farmland. (*looking for educational brochure sample to illustrate this recommendation, floating this idea as potential project for AFT in collaboration with municipalities*)

#### **Recommendation 5**

##### **Consider Conservation Subdivisions**

Review the concept of conservation subdivision and how it differs from cluster development. Cluster development is currently part of Carlisle's land use regulations. Residential cluster development groups houses on a portion of the available land while reserving a significant amount of the land as protected open space. A higher density allowance often acts as an incentive for the developer to opt for cluster design. In cluster design generally the housing sites are designated first and the open space tends to be the land unsuitable for development that is left over.

Conservation subdivision takes the cluster design concept one step further requiring the agricultural land to be set aside for conservation to be designated first. The houses are then located in a way that allows the housing sites to take the most advantage of their proximity to the farmland. This undeveloped land is not an afterthought or what is "leftover" but instead the organizing principal of the development. This is not a new concept but instead is an old tradition with its roots in agriculture where houses in a community were grouped near what were considered "common lands" for the growing of crops and pasturing of livestock.

Town officials need to be educated about conservation subdivisions. Town regulations should be updated to encourage conservation subdivisions as a means to protecting high quality agricultural land and specify that land set aside as part of a subdivision should not just be considered as open space but be available for agriculture.

#### **Recommendation 6**

##### **Consider Cooperative Farm Subdivisions**

Research the viability for cooperative farm subdivisions (see Charlton plan, appendix). Cooperative farm subdivisions are similar to cluster housing or conservation subdivisions in which a piece of land is subdivided for homes, leaving a section of undeveloped land. However in a cooperative farm subdivision this is done with the specific intention of retaining the open

piece of land for agricultural use. The land can be preserved jointly by the homeowners and used for agricultural purposes such as small crops, or horse pasture.

## **B. Agricultural Districts**

### **Recommendation 1**

#### **Ensure Agricultural District Law is Followed**

Make sure that the requirements of the state's agricultural district law are being adhered to during the subdivision and site plan review process and clarify which town officials are responsible for making sure the requirements are met. Examples of these requirements include: disclosure notices advising future property owners that the property is in an agricultural district and features of modern agricultural practices that will be ongoing prior to signing of purchase agreement; filing of agricultural data statements for certain land use determinations within 500 feet of a farm operation located in an agricultural district; filing of a notice of intent and detailed agricultural impact statement prior to the expenditure of public funds on certain non-farm projects proposed in an agricultural district. A sample disclosure notice appears in the appendix.

### **Recommendation 2**

#### **Encourage Enrollment in Agricultural Districts**

Encourage owners of agricultural land not currently part of an agricultural district to enroll.  
**Insert Ag District Enrollment info and schedule**

### **Recommendation 3**

#### **Educate Town Officials, Staff & Assessors**

Hold a meeting of all town officials, committee members, staff and the assessor. Distribute copies of the state agricultural district law, the town's right to farm law and agriculture and farmland protection plan. Discuss the importance of agriculture to the community. The purpose of this meeting would be to build awareness among all town representatives of the priority the town places on retaining agricultural land and supporting farm operations as well as the requirements and recommendations regarding agriculture at both the state and local level.

## **C. Property Taxes**

### **Recommendation 1**

#### **Ensure All Eligible and Interested Landowners Receive Agricultural Assessment**

Property taxes are often cited as a major obstacle to retaining ownership of farmland. Ensure that all eligible farmers and owners of agriculture land are receiving all the tax relief through various existing programs that they are eligible for and opt to take advantage of. Such programs include: agricultural assessment; farm building exemptions; farmers' school tax credit; forestland exemption; historic barns rehabilitation tax credit; orchard and vineyard exemption; sales tax exemptions; NYS conservation easement tax credit. Information and contact details are provided in the *New York Agricultural Landowner Guide* provided in the appendix of this plan.

Consider having the assessor periodically send out a letter to owners of agricultural land informing them about agricultural assessment and the required record keeping.

### **Recommendation 2**

#### **Consider Adopting Agricultural Assessment for Service Districts**

Research the viability of basing taxes for service districts on agricultural assessments. The governing body of a fire protection or ambulance district may adopt a resolution stating that agricultural assessment values should be used to determine the taxes levied by that district. Such a measure ensures that farmland is taxed at its current, non-speculative value, recognizing that farmland generally requires fewer public services and should be taxed accordingly.

### **Recommendation 3**

#### **Train Assessor on Assessing Agricultural Land & Structures**

Ensure regular training for assessor on assessing agricultural land and buildings. Courses are available through the New York State Office of Real Property Services and Cornell University. Training sessions are offered in classroom settings, online and through self-study programs. All assessors are required to receive training and certification by the Office of Real Property Services. However the “Introduction to Farm Appraisal” training session is not required to be taken by the assessor until their third year in office. If the assessor has not yet received training specific to assessing agricultural land the towns could encourage the assessor to put a priority on taking this course up front.

### **Recommendation 4**

#### **Ensure Accuracy of Property Type Classification Codes**

During review of agricultural parcels in the towns conducted during the background research for the town’s agricultural and farmland protection plan, it became apparent that a large number of parcels of agricultural land are coded with an incorrect property type classification code. Property type classification codes, developed by the New York State Office of Real Property Services, form a uniform property classification system to be used by municipalities in assessment administration. The towns need to conduct a thorough review of tax maps and property codes and make sure all land, particularly farmland receives the appropriate property type classification code. (*see property classification codes in appendix*)

### **Recommendation**

#### **Protect Farms From Negative Impacts of Commercial and Industrial Development**

Encourage the location of light industry and retail operations in the town that will not have a negative impact on agriculture. Such commercial development can contribute to the town’s tax base and help alleviate tax pressure on agriculture.

## **C. Working Lands**

### **Recommendation 1**

#### **Make Roads Safe for Farmers Operating Agricultural Equipment**

Work with the county and the state to make sure that appropriate speed limits are established and enforced on routes frequently traveled by farm vehicles. Make sure the appropriate signage appears in areas where there is limited visibility or other risks involving farm traffic.

Rural roads should be suitable for rural traffic and farm equipment. When roads are overbuilt, the speed of traffic increases. In addition bridges need to be wide enough and strong enough to accommodate farm equipment. Offer training to farmers on how to safely navigate farm equipment along town roads. Educate town residents on sharing the road with farm equipment. Distribute brochures and other safety information regarding slow moving vehicles provided by SafeNY, a state traffic safety program. Contact information is provided in the Resource section of this plan. (*see appendix for sample SafeNY brochure*)

### **Recommendation 2**

#### **Develop Farmland Rental Network**

Maximize the use of agricultural lands by developing a network of farmers and landowners to facilitate farmland rental. Educate non-farming owners of agricultural land about how rental agreements can work, how to become eligible for agricultural assessment and the paperwork necessary to qualify. Reach out to landowners who are not currently renting land to farmers, educate them, and invite them to join the network.

### **Recommendation 3**

#### **Maintain Agricultural Data at Town Level**

Maintain accurate records of farmland acreage and agricultural activities and production in the town. Agriculture at the town level is not generally tracked and data is hard to come by. By maintaining its own database the town will be better positioned when it comes time to update this plan and for future land use planning.

## **D. Land in Transition**

### **Recommendation 1**

#### **Market Town to Farmers**

Develop a brochure and/or website that markets the Town of Carlisle as a good place to farm. If a farmer decides to sell his or her land, the best way to keep it in agriculture is to have another farmer buy it. A good example of a community that has done this is Jefferson County in northern New York and their *Come Farm With Us* website, [www.comefarmwithus.com](http://www.comefarmwithus.com). (see appendix).

### **Recommendation 2**

#### **Provide Assistance to Farmers in Transition to Keep Land in Agriculture**

Part of a traditionally strong dairy region, Carlisle has felt the impact of the latest crisis in milk prices. A significant amount of the farmland in Carlisle has been and continues to be in dairy production. The tenuous economic situation for dairy farms puts the town's farmland base at risk. Some dairy farmers may find it necessary to diversify or transition out of dairy entirely and the town needs to be prepared to support them during these transitions.

Some transitions may involve a change in ownership or management. The town should work closely with support networks such as Cornell University's FarmLink/FarmNet program to help farmers in need of special assistance and to match farmers interested in selling their land with farmers that are looking for land to purchase. See Resources page for contact information. *(Contact FarmLink/FarmNet and for suggestions on how municipal agriculture and farmland protection programs can work with them)*

### **Recommendation 3**

#### **Encourage Beginning Farmers**

Create a mentoring program where experienced farmers can assist and guide new farmers. Collaborate with SUNY/Cobleskill and MADE in Schoharie County's livestock internship program ([grassfedinterns.com](http://grassfedinterns.com)) to match recent graduates of the University's School of Agriculture and Natural Resources with farmers in the town who are interested in mentoring an individual and perhaps transferring ownership over time. The New York Beginning Farmers Project, part of Cornell University is another resource to help new farmers. Contact information is provided on the Resource page.

## **E. Farmland Protection**

### **Recommendation 1**

#### **Educate Landowners About Conservation Easements**

Educate landowners about voluntarily placing conservation easements on their land. A conservation easement is a deed restriction landowners voluntarily place on their property to protect resources, natural areas or productive agricultural land. An easement on agricultural land is called an agricultural conservation easement. In general agricultural conservation easements limit non-farm development and activity. Most agricultural conservation easements are permanent and the restrictions travel with the deed to the land when it changes ownership. Landowners can sell or donate an easement to a qualified conservation organization or government body. The value of the easement is generally the monetary difference between the land's value for development and its value for agricultural use. Landowners who place easements on their land can receive various tax advantages.

Currently the federal government and NYSDAM's Farmland Protection Program offer funding on an application basis for purchase of development rights. Easements can also be donated to land conservation organizations such as the Schoharie Land Trust. More information on purchase of development rights is available in the appendix. *(AFT fact sheets, P4Ag Guide PDR chapter, FRPP info, SLT brochure)*

## **Recommendation 2**

### **Research Viability of Lease of Development Rights Program**

Conduct a review of other communities offering lease of development rights programs. Estimate how many landowners in town would be willing to participate in such a program. Analyze what the impact would be on the tax base and project how such a program would positively and negatively affect the Town of Carlisle..

Lease of development rights programs (LDR), also known as term conservation easement programs, provide incentives to landowners who voluntarily commit to keeping their land undeveloped for a agreed upon number of years. LDR programs are similar in concept to purchase of development rights programs but the incentives they offer are more modest because the commitment is not permanent.

In an LDR program a town can reduce property tax assessments for landowners willing to sign a temporary deed restriction that will be in place for a set number of years. LDR programs can help farmers maintain their land while stabilizing areas within the town, allowing the community time to develop longer-term farmland protection strategies. More information on LDR programs is available in the appendix. (*Planning For Ag Guide section on LDR*)

## **Recommendation 3**

### **Review Plan Every Five Years**

The town board should require a review of the agricultural and farmland protection plan every five years and update as needed.

## **Recommendation 4**

### **Participate in Update of Schoharie County Plan**

Participate in the updating of the Schoharie County agricultural and farmland protection plan.

## **Goal II**

### **Foster Economic Opportunities for Agriculture**

The best way to keep land in agriculture is to keep farms profitable. If people can make money from farming the incentive to sell land for development will be reduced.

## **Recommendation 1**

### **Disseminate Information About Economic Opportunity**

Collaborate with farmers and state and local agencies to share information and resources and provide support to farmers in the town. Develop a system to update farmers on developing markets for new products that can be produced in the town's region. Establish an information center at the town hall where materials on agricultural programs, issues and opportunities can be distributed.

## **Recommendation 2**

### **Support Government Initiatives to Stabilize Milk Prices**

Support efforts at the state and federal level to resolve issues concerning the pricing of fluid milk and other dairy commodities and support initiatives to provide economic support to dairy farmers.

### **Recommendation 3**

#### **Collaborate to Develop Regional Cooperative**

Participate in the development of a regional cooperative of local farmers to market their products. Hire a centralized person to coordinate the sale of local agricultural products to urban markets as well as to institutions and other large volume purchasers. Collaborate with Schoharie County to research the availability of grant funding to finance market development for local agricultural products.

#### **A. Livestock**

##### **Action i**

##### **Grassfed Meats**

Collaborate with Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE), Schoharie County Planning Department Agency (SCPDA), MADE in Schoharie County and SUNY/Cobleskill to utilize the land base for production of crops to which it best suited and are most profitable as markets change. For example, enhance the developing grass-fed and/or pastured livestock initiative in Carlisle and Schoharie County as a whole. Dairy has long been the predominant form of agriculture in Carlisle because the land is well suited to producing hay and forage. These pastures and hayfields also lend themselves to raising livestock for meat.

The market for both grass-fed and pastured meat has been growing over the past several years and concerns regarding food safety appear to be accelerating the expansion of this market. Carlisle is well situated geographically to service this market, which exists primarily in urban and suburban areas such as the Greater Capital Region and the New York Metropolitan Area.

The development of this initiative should include a locally based USDA inspected livestock processing facility that can handle the anticipated volume. Currently a lack of slaughterhouses as well as limited of refrigeration capacity for hanging and storing meat is restricting the growth of pastured/grass fed meat production. Many farmers must transport their animals considerable distances for processing and must schedule their time slots as much as a year in advance. Until it becomes economically feasible for local facilities to be developed farmers could consider cooperating to truck livestock to processing facilities outside of the region.

Local slaughter initiatives have been undertaken in the past by SUNY/Cobleskill, which runs a meat lab for slaughtering and butchery instruction. A mobile slaughter unit has also been developed by a farmer in Carlisle and is used by several area livestock farmers.

##### **Action ii**

### **Ethnic Markets**

Cater to the ethnic market for live animals and on-farm butchering by the customer. Carlisle is within a relatively short driving distance of the Capital Region with excellent roads and direct routes making access easy for potential customers.

Live animal markets, such as Broadway Live Poultry Market in Schenectady, represent another potential outlet for livestock raised in Carlisle. There are approximately 90 live poultry markets in the New York Metropolitan Region with additional markets existing in New Jersey and New England. Many of these markets also sell goats, lamb and beef. Currently the Broadway Live Poultry Market buys its animals from a farm in Queens. These animals could be bought from local farms.

Farmers could cater to the food ways of diverse populations. One example of a growing market is the Guyanese population currently being cultivated by the City of Schenectady. Guyanese have been relocating to Schenectady from Queens. Several thousand Guyanese now reside in Schenectady. Growers could make connections with this community and grow the types of agricultural products they desire. The Guyanese diet includes a substantial amount of chicken as well as beef and pork. Sweet potatoes, pumpkins, garlic and sorrel are also agricultural products that can be grown in the region that are staples of the Guyanese diet. The Schenectady Greenmarket, located in downtown Schenectady is a good venue to trade with these customers. .

### **Action iii**

#### **Horse Boarding**

Develop a support network for farmers that either want to start up or convert part or all of their existing operation to horse boarding. Between second homeowners, students at SUNY/Cobleskill and horse enthusiasts in the Greater Capital/Saratoga Region, there is a market for farms that board horses. The recession has limited the ability of some horse owners to maintain their own barns and riding facilities and they are finding it more economical to board their horses and ride at the boarding facility. Horse care is a specialized skill that can be developed through education and experience. The town could establish an ad hoc equine committee to advise newcomers to this business about facilities, management and horse care standards.

### **B. Crops**

#### **Action i**

##### **Value-Added Processing**

Support the development of a value added processing facility in Schoharie County. Such a facility could enable farmers to produce value-added products to sell at area farm stands, and farmers markets as well as other regional retail outlets. Freezing or canning could provide locally produced foods outside of the growing season to retail outlets, restaurants, schools and other institutions. For example Farm 2 Table Co-Packers, located in Kingston, NY is a 20,000 square foot kitchen with a dedicated processing line, bakery and test kitchen with 8,000 feet of storage space for refrigerated, frozen and dry goods. Winter Sun, an associated farm, is a Community

Supported Agriculture (CSA) operation that freezes locally grown produce, which it makes available to its members outside of the growing season.

**Action ii**  
**Custom Hay**

Collaborate with the CCE and the county's agricultural marketing specialist to identify markets and pricing for hay customized to available high-end markets and recruit growers to produce it. Identify farmland that, if untreated with chemicals for a period of three years, could be converted into organic hay production.

**C. Direct Marketing**

**Recommendation 8**  
**Support Dairy Farmers Converting to Direct Marketing**

Support the development of an initiative at the county and/or state level to assist dairy farmers in direct marketing. Some dairy farms in the region have begun to process their own milk and sell it directly to the consumer. Meadowbrook Farms in Albany County and Kings Brothers Dairy in Saratoga County are two examples. In addition to direct marketing milk some dairy farms are also making and selling other dairy products such as yogurt, cheese and ice cream.

Farmers who had transitioned into direct marketing before the fluid milk price dropped have been able to keep their price constant. Commodity dairy farmers suffering from the drop in milk prices are eyeing direct marketing as a means stabilizing their revenue. However, processing and direct marketing milk and dairy products is a complex undertaking that will require special assistance, training and ongoing support for the farmers involved.

**Recommendation 9**  
**Expand Area Farmers Markets**

Expand area farmers markets. Collaborate with SCPDA to expand the Cobleskill farmers market so that it can attract a larger customer base and move more goods, providing revenue for a broader pool of farmers.

**Recommendation 10**  
**Sell Local Farm Products to Tourists**

Collaborate with SCPDA to promote and market locally grown farm products through a farmers market and other farm oriented events at local tourist destinations such as Howe Caverns and the Iroquois Indian Museum. Some non-perishable farm products such as preserves, maple syrup and candy as well as beeswax items could also be sold in these destinations' gift shops. Foster the development of roadside stands along Route 20 to take advantage of tourist traffic to Cooperstown. People who travel this route regularly, as many do, will become repeat customers.

**Recommendation 11**

### **Encourage Farmers to Work Together to Participate in Urban Farmers Markets**

Encourage farmers to participate in Greater Capital Region farmers markets as well as the Greenmarket in New York Metropolitan Area. Identify farmers who sell their products at farmers markets and wholesale to urban-based businesses such as restaurants and develop a transportation cooperative that would save on time and wear and tear on delivery vehicles.

### **Recommendation 12**

#### **Increase Rural Access to High Speed Internet**

Town officials need to work with county, state and federal officials to make high-speed internet access available to farmers and individuals in rural settings. Farmers need high-speed internet access for many reasons. Farmers need to research farming techniques as well as shop online for competitively priced supplies. Farmers need to maintain contact with agricultural groups and associations that share knowledge and develop initiatives. Farmers need to be able to promote and market their products online and be able to interact online with their customers.

### **Recommendation 13**

#### **Support the Development of Community Supported Agriculture**

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) has grown tremendously in popularity over the last 20 years. A farmer operating a CSA offers a certain number of shares of the produce the farm will produce in a given year for a fee. In exchange the shareholder will regularly receive quantities of seasonal goods produced on the farm. The CSA model allows the farmer, who receives the money at the beginning of the year, to make the capital investment necessary to produce the crops. CSAs contain an element of shared-risk which means that both the farmer and the consumer lose out in the case of the failure of a certain crop. However, the vast majority of CSAs produce a diverse number of crops throughout the growing season so the likelihood of total loss is remote. The town should support the development of CSAs in the region.

### **Goal III**

#### **Educate People About Agriculture**

In the past an understanding of the basic concepts of agriculture was ingrained in the general public's outlook because the majority of people had some kind of background in farming. Today this is not the case. Non-farming members of the community may have little or no understanding of common agricultural practices. In order for farmers to continue normal operations and live in harmony with non-farming neighbors, residents must be educated about the types of agriculture occurring in their communities and the kinds of activities that they can expect to encounter.

### **Recommendation 1**

#### **Produce Brochure About Agriculture for Town Residents**

Develop a brochure for non-farming residents explaining what types of agriculture exist in the town and what kinds of agricultural activities they may expect to encounter. Explain the benefits of agriculture to the community. Describe state and local regulations relating to agriculture such as the state's agricultural districts law and the town's right to farm law. Distribute this brochure

to new and existing residents. A sample brochure from Washington County “*So You Want to Live in the Country*” appears in the appendix.

### **Recommendation 2**

#### **Educate Children in the Community About Agriculture**

Collaborate with local school districts, 4H clubs and the Future Farmers of American (FFA) to educate children about agriculture in their community. Work with the Cobleskill Richmondville and Sharon Springs Central School Districts to create farm to school lunch programs paired with educational field trips to local farms. Children need to have a basic understanding of where their food comes from and how an agricultural community works. If children do not develop an interest in agriculture there will be no next generation capable of caring for the town’s farmland.

### **Recommendation 3**

#### **Support Development of Social Network for Farmers**

As farming has declined throughout the town the social fabric of the farming community has eroded. Create or revive a social group for farmers in the town such as the Grange. This social group can function as a support group for farmers facing challenges and can also aid in public education efforts. Such a community group could be bolstered by an online network or social media venue such as Facebook allowing farm families to stay connected.

### **Goal IV**

#### **Protect Natural Resources and Open Space**

### **Recommendation 1**

#### **Work Together to Protect Water Quality**

Water quality and availability are critical to the success of agriculture. The town should work with naturalists and geologists to identify, inventory, map and monitor the quality and quantity of water and other natural resources in the town. Maps should be generated that depict the soils, slopes, creeks, wetlands and karst areas in the towns.

### **Recommendation 2**

#### **Help Farmers Take Advantage of Natural Resources Conservation Programs**

Educate farmers about federal and state natural resource conservation programs they are eligible to participate in that offer financial aid and/or tax incentives to help farmers protect the environment. Some examples of such programs are: Conservation Reserve Program; Federal Wetlands Program, Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program, Debt for Nature; Grassland Reserve Program; Landowner incentive program; Wetlands Reserve Program; Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program. These programs are described in the *New York Agricultural Landowner Guide* included in the appendix.

### **Recommendation 3**

#### **Research Opportunities For On Farm Production of Renewable Energy**

Explore possibilities for farm production of renewable energy both for on-farm use and for environmental markets.

#### **Action i:**

##### **Biofuels**

Collaborate with CCE and SCPDA to research how Carlisle could best meet the needs of the market for biofuels. Local biofuel businesses exist (Albany Renewable Energy, Empire State Ethanol and Energy, new business at former Blue Seal feed mill) and are planning expansions. Find out what products they need in what quantities. Make this information available to farmers.

An increasing number of farmers and agricultural landowners are interested in opportunities to generate renewable energy as a means of reducing business costs, diversifying their income sources and enhancing the environmental sustainability of their businesses. Other farmers are interested in reducing energy consumption or participating in emerging environmental markets such as carbon trading. There are many financial incentives and state and federal programs designed to help farmers tap into new environmental market and energy opportunities.

### **Resources**

#### **American Farmland Trust**

(518) 581-0078

[www.farmland.org/newyork](http://www.farmland.org/newyork)

#### **Association of Towns of the State of New York**

(518) 465-7933

[www.nytowns.org](http://www.nytowns.org)

#### **Cornell Cooperative Extension of Schoharie County**

(518) 234-4303

<http://cceschoharie.org/>

#### **Land Trust Alliance**

(518) 587-0774

<http://www.landtrustalliance.org/community/northeast>

#### **NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets**

Agriculture Protection Unit (518) 457-2713

Agricultural Districts Law: [www.agmkt.state.ny.us/AP/agservices/agdistricts.html](http://www.agmkt.state.ny.us/AP/agservices/agdistricts.html)

Agricultural and Farmland Protection Program: [www.agmkt.state.ny.us/AP/agservices/farmprotect.html](http://www.agmkt.state.ny.us/AP/agservices/farmprotect.html)

#### **NYS Energy Research and Development Authority**

(518) 862-1090

[www.nyserda.org](http://www.nyserda.org)

Town of Carlisle  
Draft Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan  
1/25/11

**NYS Department of State**

(518) 474-4752

[www.dos.state.ny.us](http://www.dos.state.ny.us)

**New York Farm Bureau**

(518) 436-8495

[www.nyfb.org](http://www.nyfb.org)

**New York FarmNet/FarmLink**

(800) 547-3276

[www.nyfarmnet.org](http://www.nyfarmnet.org)

**New York Planning Federation**

(518) 270-9855

[www.nypf.org](http://www.nypf.org)

**Schoharie County Planning and Development Agency**

(518) 234-3751

<http://www.schohariecounty-ny.gov/CountyWebSite/Planning/planninghome.jsp>

**Schoharie Land Trust**

(607) 652-2162

[www.schoharielandtrust.org](http://www.schoharielandtrust.org)

**SUNY Cobleskill**

(518) 255-5700

[www.cobleskill.edu](http://www.cobleskill.edu)

## Appendices

- B. Interview Summary**
- C. Input from Public Meetings**
- D. SWOT Analysis**
- E. Comprehensive Land Use Plan Survey Analysis**
- F. NYSDAM Definition of Agriculture**
- G. Soil Definitions**
- H. Agricultural Statistics Worksheet**
- I. Review of Town of Carlisle Land Use Regulations**
- J. Sample Brochure for New Residents**
- K. New York Agricultural Landowner Guide**



## **Town of Carlisle Interview Summary**

### **Background**

This summary of perspectives on agriculture in the Town of Carlisle is based on interviews with 10 farmers conducted by Laura Ten Eyck, field consultant for American Farmland Trust. The interviews took place during the winter, spring and summer of 2009.

The interviews were undertaken as part of the development of the Town of Carlisle's Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan. This research was intended to document opinions of farmers and rural landowners about the state of agriculture within Carlisle and opportunities and challenges facing local farmers. In addition, a series of agricultural and farmland protection tools were discussed including agricultural assessment and land use regulation as well as broader issues such as changing community dynamics and the local foods movement. The following is a description of key themes, ideas and opinions expressed during these interviews.

### **Farm Profitability and the Future of the Family Farm**

“Can the next generation afford to keep farming?” asked one farmer. “And if the next generation doesn't farm, who does?” Unwilling to risk burdening their children with a money-losing venture, many older farmers are choosing to sell their

land when they retire instead of passing it down to the next generation. Even though the land has often been in the family for multiple generations and there may be younger family members who would like to farm, farming as a business is often seen as no longer profitable so the land is sold for development.

“I try to be realistic instead of emotional,” said one farmer. “Are the kids going to hang around? Truthfully I’m not sure that I want them to have this way of life it is so stressful. I just hope not to lose the farm until the kids are on their own.”

Farmers are contending with a situation in which input costs are on the rise while the price of their product is either static or, in the case of dairy farmers, well below the cost of production. Farmers who produce hay and other feed crops find demand is down and beef farmers worry about the extensive culling of dairy herds lowering beef prices. Dairy farms are the hardest hit. At the time of this writing milk prices in New York State averaged \$11 per hundredweight with the average cost of production at \$17 per hundredweight. Prices are not projected to rise until 2010.

“We had a year and half of decent milk prices,” said one dairy farmer. “The price went up, I caught up on bills, paid back money I borrowed, fixed some things that were broken and now this. How do you make a business plan when the price per hundredweight is \$6 below what it costs to make the milk? It is like seeing a light at the end of the tunnel and then getting slammed again.”

Inevitably some dairy farmers will shut down. “More farms will go out of business,” observed a farmer. “A lot will get discouraged and quit and a lot will be

forced out.” Some dairy farmers consider transitioning to another type of agriculture but the prospect is daunting. “People told me I was crazy to make the switch,” said one farmer who transitioned out of dairy. “But sometimes you’ve got to take the chance. You have got to do your own thinking. You can’t wait around for the government to help you out because that isn’t going to happen. I tell people there is life after cows but that it is going to be different. It isn’t like the milk truck backs in every day and you get your milk check. You have to cater to people to a certain extent.” Unfortunately in the current economic situation getting out of the dairy business now will result in a hefty financial loss since the market price of a dairy cow today is well below half of what it was a year ago. Many farmers have no choice but to try to hang on until the milk price goes up.

### **Farmland Sold for Development**

When a farm goes on the market, real estate developers based in nearby Cobleskill often buy it, subdivide it and market lots to retiring downstate residents. Although the buyers, accustomed to New York City real estate prices, think they are getting a great deal, they are actually paying considerably more than the land had previously been valued at.

As a result everyone’s assessment goes up causing property taxes to continue to climb, squeezing the remaining farms’ profit margins even tighter. “Development keeps coming closer and closer,” observed a farmer. “The first thing that happens is land values sky rocket then taxes go along with it.” As this process continues to cycle farmland is being broken up into smaller and smaller tracts interspersed with homes making the area more difficult to farm. “You can see it coming,” said a

farmer. “You get more development, you get more traffic, you get more people that don’t understand farming and don’t want to hear tractors on a Sunday morning or a farmer out there at midnight on a Friday night trying to get hay done. That kind of thing is going to make it harder and harder. This town is going to get chopped up to bits and pieces.”

New residents recently transplanted from more urban areas are unfamiliar with, and sometimes unwilling to accept, agricultural practices. They also expect the town to provide more services, increasing property taxes. “Farmland is being lost in town,” said one farmer. “It is being used for residential development. And the more people you get the more problems you get. They all want to live in the country but once they get here they want more services. They want to change it into what they had. But who’s going to pay for it all?”

Another consequence of residential development is increased traffic on the roads which makes moving farm equipment hazardous. “Over the last 20 years it has gotten bad and it is going to get worse,” said one farmer. “People are impatient as all get out. It doesn’t matter if you have slow moving vehicle signs. There is going to be an accident.”

Although farmers don’t like encroaching development they need to retain the right to sell their own land if it becomes financially necessary to do so. “You never want to see farms disappear,” said a farmer. “But in my opinion a farmer’s equity is in his land and he needs that money to retire on. If he can’t sell it to another farmer it

will have to go for buildings. As much as I'd like to see it stay farmland I can't tell another farmer not to sell."

"It is not a job it is a life," said another farmer. "And when you have to leave that life you have to leave with something. The farm doesn't come with a retirement plan because you don't make enough along the way to put into the bank. You can't build it into your costs, your revenues, you just can't."

### **Challenges and Opportunities for the Future**

In the midst of such economic adversity a small population of new farmers are making their way onto the scene. Inspired by the local foods movement, these farmers are starting up smaller farms and bypassing the problems associated with commodity farming by selling directly to the consumer. "I grew up on a dairy," said one farmer who now raises grass-fed beef. "Dairy farms are at the mercy of milk check. They are getting less today than we got 30 years ago. At least with us no one tells me how much I can sell my meat for." They may get better prices but they have to work long hours in order to market their product. "The biggest challenge to getting farm like this started is that you are doing everything: producing; marketing; managing; selling. Producing, in the long run, is the easiest part," said another farmer.

Several of these farms are focusing on the growing market for all natural, grass-fed meats which they sell at farmers markets and other venues. "We bought the grass farming mantra hook line and sinker and decided to try to turn this into grass

farm,” said a farmer. “We started with two cows and now we are up to 100. We graze another 40 or 50 and we sell every piece of meat direct to the consumer.” These farmers’ biggest challenge is the lack of a local USDA inspected slaughterhouse. They must travel some distance to bring their stock to the slaughterhouse and book their slaughter dates at least a year in advance in order to be assured of getting in. Some take advantage of a mobile meat processing truck operated by a local farmer in which they can cut their own meat and make products such as sausages. Although they appreciate having control over the processing of their product it is a huge time commitment in addition to their other responsibilities on the farm.

Because these farms are start-up ventures, some of the farmers have not yet grossed the annual revenue required to qualify for lower property taxes through agricultural assessments. Lacking resources, many are holding down full-time jobs in addition to farming in order to get access to health insurance and provide for their families. Although these new farmers are often highly educated there are some who lack hands-on skills and could benefit from interaction with the older, more experienced farmers.

Unfortunately a social divide exists between the two groups. The older, commodity farmers refer to the new farmers disdainfully as “hobby farmers,” maintaining that an individual is not a real farmer if he has the safety net of an off-farm job. The younger farmers disapprove of conventional farming techniques and view the older farmers as stuck in their ways. “There used to be a community of farmers with

similar interests, similar problems,” recalled a farmer. “Farmers don’t have that community anymore.”

“We need to blend more social capital into the equation,” said another farmer. “In this society everyone is out for themselves. We need a cooperative where established farmers are linked with newer farmers so that we can better utilize resources and get cheaper prices. We could save money and in the process learn from the old guard.”

Finding seasonal labor is another challenge. “It’s pretty simple,” summed up a farmer. “No one wants to work.” Farmers are also concerned about insurance issues if a worker were to become injured. “Every time someone crosses the road on your tractor they’ve got their whole life in your hands,” said one farmer. “If someone in another vehicle hit them you would be sued till you were tattooed.”

### **How Can the Town Help?**

Most farmers feel the town government values agriculture. “I think the town government is supportive of farming,” said a farmer. “We have the right to farm law. A neighbor can’t move in next door and stop us from growing crops or raising animals. The farmer should have the right to farm.”

“I think the town is supportive of agriculture and farmland,” said another farmer. “But the problem is the state and federal government have just given up

on the farmer. It baffles my mind that they would let the people that made this country go under.”

Carlisle has no zoning and most farmers are leery of regulation “To me there is too much regulation now,” said one farmer. “Staying out of people’s way is the best thing the town can do to help farmers.” However some farmers believe land use planning is a useful tool for protecting farmland from sprawl. “The idea of an agriculture and farmland protection plan is good as long as there is not too much red tape for farmers.” Others see the value of zoning when it comes to protecting agricultural land. “What we should have done a long time ago is zone the really good agricultural land so that no one can develop it,” said one farmer. “We’ve got pockets of good land in this town that should be preserved.”

However, in the minds of many, farm profitability and the value of farmland as real estate are the bottom line. “To be honest, we don’t have any control over a lot of what happens with farmland around here,” said a farmer. “It all depends on the dollars and cents of it. You’ve got to bring money in. And if you sell, you sell to the highest bidder.”

Ultimately the town will have to balance the interests of all its residents. “The biggest task the town has ahead of them is to keep everyone satisfied—the farmers, the government, the residents and the commercial business owners,” observed one farmer. “That is the hard part.”

And of course hope springs eternal. “In the spring the seed catalogs come out and you start thinking green grass,” said one farmer of retirement age after a long winter. “You think ‘Last year was bad. This year is going to be great.’”

NEW YORK STATE OFFICE  
112 Spring Street Suite 207 Saratoga Springs, NY 12866  
Tel: (518) 581- 0078 Fax: (518) 581-0079  
[www.farmland.org](http://www.farmland.org)

Carlisle SWOT Analysis

**Public Meeting**

**3/18/09**

**Seward/Carlisle Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan**

**Strengths**

**Transportation, accessible by highway**

Veterinary services

### Rich soils

Land, viable land being used, marginal land sits vacant

Small scale farms, land available for them

Lack of zoning, don't have to do a lot of paperwork to put up building,  
orchard, etc.

### Weaknesses

#### No place in town to buy fuel

Small fields

City neighbors complaining

Instability of price of agricultural products, hard to do long-term planning

Relatively short growing season

Marginal land

Tax burden

Increasing development pressure

Over regulation of direct marketing

Trash removal (limited hours at the dump)

Town burning regulations

Lack of USDA approved meat processing plant locally

Good plants nearby get booked up far ahead

### Opportunities

#### Farm stands, selling local produce, taking advantage of Rt. 20

Proximity to Howe Caverns and Cooperstown good for direct marketing

Education of customers, teach them where farm products come from

Good number of teachers, farmer to farmer

Proximity to Capital District

Proximity to existing farmers markets, Cobleskill, Cooperstown,  
Schenectady

Good location for dairy because of proximity to New England markets  
and better price

Possibility of holding farmers market at Howe Caverns

Dairy processing

Take advantage of cannery start up

General public is fed up with the lack of reliability in the food supply

and is turning toward local food  
Farmers market in Carlisle  
Use marginal land to develop new crops such as switchgrass  
Pelletize, work with college  
Festivals, on farm, educational, collaboration  
Referral network  
Farmers Chamber of Commerce

### **Threats**

#### **USDA**

Government

#### **GOVERNMENT**

National Animal Identification System (NAIS)

EPA (methane tax, perhaps diversionary)

Subdivision

Farms being subdivided

Taxes

Pesticide application adjacent to organic growing operations

Situation with bees

Lack of young farmers

Schools doing away with FFA and home economics

Lack of large animal veterinarians

Lack of public education about farms (odors, where does food come from)

New people moving in

High speed traffic and slow moving farm equipment on roads

Restrictions on signage



## **Town of Carlisle Comprehensive Plan Survey Review**

## **Focus: Rural Land Use**

### **The Survey**

A survey of residents in the Town of Carlisle was conducted in the summer of 1997 as part of the background research for the development of the Town's Comprehensive Plan, which was first adopted in 1998. A second survey was conducted in 2004 and the plan was subsequently amended in 2006. The survey was conducted by the Town of Carlisle. This analysis will draw from the 2004 survey unless otherwise noted.

### **Town Population**

Carlisle has always been a small town but during the 1960s its population dipped well below 1,000 as many left the rural community, presumably to move to more populated areas and the jobs they offer. Between 1960 and 1970 the population began to grow slowly. The rate of growth increased at a faster rate during the 1980s and 1990s when people, seeking the benefits of rural life and attracted to the relatively inexpensive land prices, began to move into the area.

In 1990 the town had a population of 1,672. The projected population in the 1998 comprehensive plan for the year 2010 was 1,711. According to the U.S. Census, the town's population in 2,000 was 1,758, already exceeding the 2010 estimate. The Census projected the Town's population would be 2,000 by the year 2008. The Town's population today is 1,975 (<http://www.city-data.com/city/Carlisle-New-York.html>). The population has increased by 20 percent since 1990.

### **Town Residents**

According to the 2004 survey 36 percent of the respondents have lived in the Town for 20 years or more and 56 percent of the respondents have lived in the Town for under 20 years. Nearly half of the respondents that have lived in town for under 20 years have come to the town since 1996. Almost 50 percent of the residents surveyed reported having moved to the Town of Carlisle from outside of Schoharie County.

### **Farmland, Open Space & Natural Resources**

Over half of the survey respondents described their property as residential and 43 percent of the respondents described their land as agricultural or "vacant." Half of those surveyed reported owning less than 5 acres of land, 34 percent owned between 6 and 25 acres and 31 percent owned 25 acres or more.

The vast majority of respondents, (90 percent) felt that agriculture should be encouraged in the Town. The majority of the respondents also expressed an interest in promoting preservation of

environmentally sensitive areas and scenic vista protection, including open farmland, vistas, wetlands, forests, caves and the Route 20 corridor. In addition the majority of those surveyed stated their concern regarding, water quality and availability as well as air quality. Subdivision of farms and uncontrolled growth were exceeded only by high taxes as significant sources of concern for those who responded to the survey.

### **Summary**

The two surveys seen together demonstrate that Carlisle is a growing community. As the population expands more and more houses are being built. Town residents are concerned about new development resulting in higher taxes as a result of increased demand for services. Residents are open to accommodating a certain level of controlled commercial and light industrial development to offset this trend.

Although Carlisle remains a rural community residents feel the town's rural character is at risk and want to see it preserved. In general residents are extremely supportive of agriculture as both a business and land use, as well as a means to preserve open space. In addition to maintaining a rural atmosphere, residents are concerned about making sure there is abundant, clean water and that wetlands, stream corridors and other environmentally sensitive areas, such as karst formations, remain pristine.

## **New York State Legal Definitions Relating to Agriculture**

§ 301. Definitions. When used in this article:

1. "Agricultural assessment value" means the value per acre assigned to land for assessment purposes determined pursuant to the capitalized value of production procedure prescribed by section three hundred four-a of this article.

2. "Crops, livestock and livestock products" shall include but not be limited to the following:

a. Field crops, including corn, wheat, oats, rye, barley, hay, potatoes and dry beans.

b. Fruits, including apples, peaches, grapes, cherries and berries.

c. Vegetables, including tomatoes, snap beans, cabbage, carrots, beets and onions.

d. Horticultural specialties, including nursery stock, ornamental shrubs, ornamental trees and flowers.

e. Livestock and livestock products, including cattle, sheep, hogs, Goats, horses, poultry, ratites, such as ostriches, emus, rheas and kiwis, farmed deer, farmed buffalo, fur bearing animals, wool bearing animals, such as alpacas and llamas, milk, eggs and furs.

f. Maple sap.

g. Christmas trees derived from a managed Christmas tree operation whether dug for transplanting or cut from the stump.

h. Aquaculture products, including fish, fish products, water plants and shellfish.

i. Woody biomass, which means short rotation woody crops raised for bioenergy, and shall not include farm woodland.

j. Apiary products, including honey, beeswax, royal jelly, bee pollen, propolis, package bees, nucs and queens. For the purposes of this paragraph, "nucs" shall mean small honey bee colonies created from larger colonies including the nuc box, which is a smaller version of a beehive, designed to hold up to five frames from an existing colony.

3. "Farm woodland" means land used for the production for sale of woodland products, including but not limited to logs, lumber, posts and firewood. Farm woodland shall not include land used to produce Christmas trees or land used for the processing or retail merchandising of woodland products.

4. "Land used in agricultural production" means not less than seven acres of land used as a single operation in the preceding two years for the production for sale of crops, livestock or livestock products of an average gross sales value of ten thousand dollars or more; or, not less than seven acres of land used in the preceding two years to support a commercial horse boarding operation with annual gross receipts of ten thousand dollars or more. Land used in agricultural production shall not include land or portions thereof used for processing or retail merchandising of such crops, livestock or livestock products. Land used in agricultural production shall also include:

a. Rented land which otherwise satisfies the requirements for eligibility for an agricultural assessment.

a-1. Land used by a not-for-profit institution for the purposes of agricultural research that is intended to improve the quality or quantity of crops, livestock or livestock products. Such land shall

qualify for an agricultural assessment upon application made pursuant to paragraph (a) of subdivision one of section three hundred five of this article, except that no minimum gross sales value shall be required.

b. Land of not less than seven acres used as a single operation for the production for sale of crops, livestock or livestock products, exclusive of woodland products, which does not independently satisfy the gross sales value requirement, where such land was used in such production for the preceding two years and currently is being so used under a written rental arrangement of five or more years in conjunction with land which is eligible for an agricultural assessment.

c. Land used in support of a farm operation or land used in agricultural production, constituting a portion of a parcel, as identified on the assessment roll, which also contains land qualified for an agricultural assessment.

d. Farm woodland which is part of land which is qualified for an agricultural assessment, provided, however, that such farm woodland attributable to any separately described and assessed parcel shall not exceed fifty acres.

e. Land set aside through participation in a federal conservation program pursuant to title one of the federal food security act of nineteen hundred eighty-five or any subsequent federal programs established for the purposes of replenishing highly erodible land which has been depleted by continuous tilling or reducing national surpluses of agricultural commodities and such land shall qualify for agricultural assessment upon application made pursuant to paragraph a of subdivision one of section three hundred five of this article, except that no minimum gross sales value shall be required.

f. Land of not less than seven acres used as a single operation in the preceding two years for the production for sale of crops, livestock or livestock products of an average gross sales value of ten thousand dollars or more, or land of less than seven acres used as a single operation in the preceding two years for the production for sale of crops, livestock or livestock products of an average gross sales value of fifty thousand dollars or more.

g. Land under a structure within which crops, livestock or livestock products are produced, provided that the sales of such crops, livestock or livestock products meet the gross sales requirements of paragraph f of this subdivision.

h. Land that is owned or rented by a farm operation in its first or second year of agricultural production, or, in the case of a commercial horse boarding operation in its first or second year of operation, that consists of (1) not less than seven acres used as a single operation for the production for sale of crops, livestock or livestock products of an annual gross sales value of ten thousand dollars or more; or (2) less than seven acres used as a single operation for the production for sale of crops, livestock or livestock products of an annual gross sales value of fifty thousand dollars or more; or (3) land situated under a structure within which crops, livestock or livestock products are produced, provided that such crops, livestock or livestock products have an annual gross sales value of (i) ten thousand dollars or more, if the farm operation uses seven or more acres in agricultural production, or (ii) fifty thousand dollars or more, if the farm operation uses less

than seven acres in agricultural production; or (4) not less than seven acres used as a single operation to support a commercial horse boarding operation with annual gross receipts of ten thousand dollars or more.

i. Land of not less than seven acres used as a single operation for the production for sale of orchard or vineyard crops when such land is used solely for the purpose of planting a new orchard or vineyard and when such land is also owned or rented by a newly established farm operation in its first, second, third or fourth year of agricultural production.

j. Land of not less than seven acres used as a single operation for the production and sale of Christmas trees when such land is used solely for the purpose of planting Christmas trees that will be made available for sale, whether dug for transplanting or cut from the stump and when such land is owned or rented by a newly established farm operation in its first, second, third, fourth or fifth year of agricultural production.

k. Land used to support an apiary products operation which is owned by the operation and consists of (i) not less than seven acres nor more than ten acres used as a single operation in the preceding two years for the production for sale of crops, livestock or livestock products of an average gross sales value of ten thousand dollars or more or (ii) less than seven acres used as a single operation in the preceding two years for the production for sale of crops, livestock or livestock products of an average gross sales value of fifty thousand dollars or more. The land used to support an apiary products operation shall include, but not be limited to, the land under a structure within which apiary products are produced, harvested and stored for sale; and a buffer area maintained by the operation between the operation and adjacent landowners. Notwithstanding any other provision of this subdivision, rented land associated with an apiary products operation is not eligible for an agricultural assessment based on this paragraph.

5. "Oil, gas or wind exploration, development or extraction activities" means the installation and use of fixtures and equipment which are necessary for the exploration, development or extraction of oil, natural gas or wind energy, including access roads, drilling apparatus, pumping facilities, pipelines, and wind turbines.

6. "Unique and irreplaceable agricultural land" means land which is uniquely suited for the production of high value crops, including, but not limited to fruits, vegetables and horticultural specialties.

7. "Viable agricultural land" means land highly suitable for agricultural production and which will continue to be economically feasible for such use if real property taxes, farm use restrictions, and speculative activities are limited to levels approximating those in commercial agricultural areas not influenced by the proximity of non-agricultural development.

8. "Conversion" means an outward or affirmative act changing the use of agricultural land and shall not mean the nonuse or idling of such land.

9. "Gross sales value" means the proceeds from the sale of:

a. Crops, livestock and livestock products produced on land used in agricultural production provided, however, that whenever a crop is processed before sale, the proceeds shall be based upon the market value

of such crop in its unprocessed state;

b. Woodland products from farm woodland eligible to receive an agricultural assessment, not to exceed two thousand dollars annually;

c. Honey and beeswax produced by bees in hives located on an otherwise qualified farm operation but which does not independently satisfy the gross sales requirement;

d. Maple syrup processed from maple sap produced on land used in agricultural production in conjunction with the same or an otherwise qualified farm operation;

e. Or payments received by reason of land set aside pursuant to paragraph e of subdivision four of this section;

f. Or payments received by thoroughbred breeders pursuant to section two hundred fifty-four of the racing, pari-mutuel wagering and breeding law; and

g. Compost, mulch or other organic biomass crops as defined in subdivision sixteen of this section produced on land used in agricultural production, not to exceed five thousand dollars annually.

11. "Farm operation" means the land and on-farm buildings, equipment, manure processing and handling facilities, and practices which contribute to the production, preparation and marketing of crops, livestock and livestock products as a commercial enterprise, including a "commercial horse boarding operation" as defined in subdivision thirteen of this section, "timber processing" as defined in subdivision fourteen of this section and "compost, mulch or other biomass crops" as defined in subdivision sixteen of this section. For purposes of this section, such farm operation shall also include the production, management and harvesting of "farm woodland", as defined in subdivision three of this section. Such farm operation may consist of one or more parcels of owned or rented land, which parcels may be contiguous or noncontiguous to each other.

12. "Agricultural data statement" means an identification of farm operations within an agricultural district located within five hundred feet of the boundary of property upon which an action requiring municipal review and approval by the planning board, zoning board of appeals, town board, or village board of trustees pursuant to article sixteen of the town law or article seven of the village law is proposed, as provided in section three hundred five-a of this article.

13. "Commercial horse boarding operation" means an agricultural enterprise, consisting of at least seven acres and boarding at least ten horses, regardless of ownership, that receives ten thousand dollars or more in gross receipts annually from fees generated either through the boarding of horses or through the production for sale of crops, livestock, and livestock products, or through both such boarding and such production. Under no circumstances shall this subdivision be construed to include operations whose primary on site function is horse racing. Notwithstanding any other provision of this subdivision, a commercial horse boarding operation that is proposed or in its first or second year of operation may qualify as a farm operation if it is an agricultural enterprise, consisting of at least seven acres, and boarding at least ten horses, regardless of ownership, by the end of the first year of operation.

14. "Timber processing" means the on-farm processing of timber grown

on a farm operation into woodland products, including but not limited to logs, lumber, posts and firewood, through the use of a readily moveable, nonpermanent saw mill, provided that such farm operation consists of at least seven acres and produces for sale crops, livestock or livestock products of an annual gross sales value of ten thousand dollars or more and that the annual gross sales value of such processed woodland products does not exceed the annual gross sales value of such crops, livestock or livestock products.

15. "Agricultural tourism" means activities conducted by a farmer on-farm for the enjoyment or education of the public, which primarily promote the sale, marketing, production, harvesting or use of the products of the farm and enhance the public's understanding and awareness of farming and farm life.

\* 16. "Apiary products operation" means an agricultural enterprise, consisting of land owned by the operation, upon which bee hives are located and maintained for the purpose of producing, harvesting and storing apiary products for sale.

\* NB There are 2 sb 16's

\* 16. "Compost, mulch or other organic biomass crops" means the on-farm processing, mixing, handling or marketing of organic matter that is grown or produced by such farm operation to rid such farm operation of its excess agricultural waste; and the on-farm processing, mixing or handling of off-farm generated organic matter that is transported to such farm operation and is necessary to facilitate the composting of such farm operation's agricultural waste. This shall also include the on-farm processing, mixing or handling of off-farm generated organic matter for use only on that farm operation. Such organic matter shall include, but not be limited to, manure, hay, leaves, yard waste, silage, organic farm waste, vegetation, wood biomass or by-products of agricultural products that have been processed on such farm operation. The resulting products shall be converted into compost, mulch or other organic biomass crops that can be used as fertilizers, soil enhancers or supplements, or bedding materials. For purposes of this section, "compost" shall be processed by the aerobic, thermophilic decomposition of solid organic constituents of solid waste to produce a stable, humus-like material.

\* NB There are 2 sb 16's

## Soil Definitions

Source: National Resource Conservation Service – National Soil Survey Handbook (NRCS-NSSH; Part 622 / NRCS Soils; Part 657.5 Identification of Important Farmlands)

- (1) Prime Farmland is land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops, and is also available for these uses (the land could be cropland, pastureland, rangeland, forest land, or other land, but not urban built-up land or water). It has the soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to economically produce sustained high yields of crops when treated and managed, including water management, according to acceptable farming methods. In general, prime farmlands have an adequate and dependable water supply from precipitation or irrigation, a favorable temperature and growing season, acceptable acidity or alkalinity, acceptable salt and sodium content, and few or no rocks. They are permeable to water and air. Prime farmlands are not excessively erodible or saturated with water for a long period of time, and they either do not flood frequently or are protected from flooding. Examples of soils that qualify as prime farmland are Palouse silt loam, 0 to 7 percent slopes; Brookston silty clay loam, drained; and Tama silty clay loam, 0 to 5 percent slopes. (Unique farmland is land other than prime farmland that is used for the production of specific high value food and fiber crops. It has the special combination of soil quality, location, growing season, and moisture supply needed to economically produce sustained high quality and/or high yields of a specific crop when treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods. Examples of such crops are citrus, tree nuts, olives, cranberries, fruit, and vegetables.)

- (2) (Additional) Farmland of Statewide Importance is land, in addition to prime and unique farmlands that is of statewide importance for the production of food, feed, fiber, forage, and oil seed crops. Criteria for defining and delineating this land are to be determined by the appropriate state agency or agencies. Generally, additional farmlands of statewide importance include those that are nearly prime farmland and that economically produce high yields of crops when treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods. Some may produce as high a yield as prime farmlands if conditions are favorable. In some states, additional farmlands of statewide importance may include tracts of land that have been designated for agriculture by state law.
  
- (3) (Additional) Farmland of Local Importance. In some local areas, there is concern for certain additional farmlands for the production of food, feed, fiber, forage, and oilseed crops, even though these lands are not identified as having national or statewide importance. Where appropriate, these lands are to be identified by the local agency or agencies concerned. In places, additional farmlands of local importance may include tracts of land that have been designated for agriculture by local ordinance.