

APPENDIX 4

Agricultural Economic Development Specialist Job Description

Montgomery County Job Description and Related Material Relating to Position of "Coordinator - Agriculture Economic Development Project"

Position Description

General Responsibilities

- To promote and develop programs that will enhance the economic vitality and sustainability of agriculture and the food systems industry in Montgomery County.
- To assist farmers on agricultural marketing and business development issues.
- To work with the county economic development staff to incorporate agriculturally based economic development strategies into the county economic development strategies and programs.
- To monitor proposed legislation and advocate for agricultural policy.

The primary audience for programming will include agricultural producers and related service providers, new entrepreneurs in production, processing and agriculture related business including agricultural tourism, and community members whose support of agriculture is important. Work with individuals and organizations to enhance the viability of local agriculture through product diversification, direct marketing, promotion of local product labels and value-added opportunities by linking with available expertise. Provide leadership for the development of promotion of county agricultural resources.

Program, Development and Implementation

- Develop a collective relationship with the agriculture community and other key agencies and organizations to provide leadership for the implementation of county farmland protection plans.
- Educate legislative bodies and local officials regarding the benefits and challenges of the agriculture and food systems industry.
- Working with other collaborators (Farm Bureau, Planning Department, Economic Development Department, Cornell Cooperative Extension, environmental groups, community development organizations, groups of farmers, etc.), develop a strategy or strategies for agricultural-based economic development that links them to community

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economic development efforts in the County and region.

- Promote the positive image of the agriculture and food systems industry through a variety of efforts, including connecting with local media, and a web site.
- Publicize the economic and environmental advantage to buying locally grown products to consumers, restaurant owners, schools and other institutions.
- Serve as a resource to the agricultural community by responding to requests for speakers, resource materials, funding assistance or resources from clientele.
- Represent the agriculture and food industry on various committees relevant to issues such as business retention and revitalization, attraction of new businesses, workforce development and preparation.
- Search for funding sources appropriate for the county agricultural industry and write proposals.

Education

Bachelors degree in agricultural economics, marketing, public policy or closely related field. Masters degree in agricultural economics, adult education, finance, administration or related field is strongly recommended. A minimum of three years experience.

Knowledge, Skills and Abilities

- Background in business management and marketing.
- Experience with and knowledge of challenges facing agriculture locally and in New York State.
- Ability to plan and manage projects and programs.
- Capacity to link industry needs with available expertise and to apply expert information to local situations.

Montgomery County Job Description and Related Material Relating to Position of "Coordinator - Agriculture Economic Development Project"

- Ability to understand and manage the planning process.
- Ability to successfully market programs.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills.
- Computer skills in word processing, spreadsheets and database management.
- Demonstrated ability to secure and administer grants, contracts and agribusiness loans.
- Ability to work effectively with a variety of groups and individuals and establish and maintain networks.

Other Requirements

- Willingness to work flexible schedules, including weekends and evenings.
- Willingness to travel to conferences and promotional events.
- Must have reliable transportation and valid driver's license.

Special Arrangement and Supervision

This position will receive administrative supervision from the Chair of the Agricultural Economic Development Committee. Cornell Cooperative Extension of Fulton and Montgomery Counties will provide office space and administer funds.

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Agricultural Economic Development Accomplishments - 2001

The Agricultural Economic Development Project has made significant progress toward the goals outlined in the grant from Assemblyman Paul Tonko.

As Agricultural Economic Development Coordinator I have several different areas to work on:

1. Develop a market for existing agriculture and encourage more agribusinesses to open in Montgomery County.
2. Discourage the loss of farmland to nonagricultural uses. Marketing to farmers who may be pushed out by development in urban areas.
3. Serve as a one-stop resource center for farmers and agribusinesses.

To achieve these goals the Agricultural Economic Development Project has:

1. Developed the initial design and content for the web page:

www.montgomery.ny.com/agriculture.htm

The site is currently linked to the county planning web site. The web page is designed to encourage farmers and agribusinesses to come to the Mohawk Valley to do business.

2. "Produced, in the Mohawk Valley," a buy local produce project, was continued, this year with Price Chopper. Six farmers sold produce at the Amsterdam and Palatine Bridge Stores. This is the maximum number of farmers Price Chopper was willing to have this year. "PROduced in the Mohawk Valley" logo stickers were placed on apple bags to help identify local products.

KEEPS MONEY LOCAL

- Local farms mean more jobs for local people.
- The "economic effect" of the family farms is higher than other business sectors. Every dollar is turned over up to 5 times when farmers buy supplies, equipment, fuel,

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groceries.

- When you buy directly from the farmers, the farm family receives more of the food dollars spent.
 - Farming in Montgomery County has an impact of 117 million dollars on the local economy.
 - For every tax dollar collected from a farmer, he or she will utilize only 34 cents in community services, while residents in new developments will use \$1.15 in community services.
 - The more farms, the more economic opportunities for people in rural communities,
3. A marketing flyer was developed for use at out-of-state trade shows and the local fair. By joining the Mohawk Valley Leatherstocking Region Agricultural Economic Development Group of six counties, our promotion materials have traveled to Pennsylvania, Connecticut, and other Agricultural Trade Shows is the east. This has been very cost effective for Montgomery County. The Pennsylvania effort resulted in 16 contacts wanting information on New York farms.

The first question asked is "are the taxes bad in New York?" A flyer, developed by G.J. Skoda, was edited to reflect New York State farm taxes and incentives to be distributed to potential farmers.

4. Currently, creating a network and database of realtors, agribusinesses and farmers that can be distributed to potential farmers wanting to farm in the Mohawk Valley. Farmers will realize that the infrastructure is already in place to farm and transport products to markets.
5. Working with schools to get local agricultural product into the cafeteria program. Again, this keeps local money local and definitely helps with the tax base.
6. Worked with Farm Bureau to plan a Farm Tour on September 20. The goal of the farm tour was to show people how farms operate.
7. Working with the Agriculture in the Classroom Program to teach local school children what

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foods are grown locally and the cost of local food production. In September, talked to 167 children plus teachers and chaperones.

8. Currently, we've secured a small grant from NY Farms! to develop a market of local products to local restaurants. Earlier this year, took two chefs to a conference on the "Finger Lakes Culinary Bounty." This conference allowed two local chefs to see how buying local helped the restaurant business. Again, by developing this niche market for food products, the dollars are staying local.

Right now, a market is growing for organic and ethnic food's in the Capital District and NY City areas. Farmers with year-round greenhouses can have a quality product for this market.

9. Have purchased a UPC code for "PROduced in the Mohawk Valley." This will allow local products to compete in large store chains with their own bar code and pricing. An example this would allow a small farm cheese plant to sell their specialty cheese to Hannaford's or Price Chopper and not have to take the lower prices on a lost leader. In the future, other new value-added farm products will be using this code to sell to a broader market or establish a cooperative to wholesale to larger markets.

The value-added products are in addition to other farm products already being sold. Now over 50% of the farms in Montgomery County are dairy, however the price of fluid milk changes every month making farm budgeting very difficult. By adding another product line, a farmer can add revenue to farm pot and slowly change products without selling the farm and changing professions.

10. The Agricultural Economic Development Project is not yet a year old and several projects have been started that need to be finished. Farms are cost effective when compare to housing developments; they don't require sidewalks, streetlights, town or city water and sewers. The Agricultural Economic Development Committee recommends putting \$10,000 in the budgets of the Chamber, Planning Department and Cornell Cooperative Extension. to continue finding new marketing opportunities for agricultural products, agribusiness and farmers.