

Fulton County, New York

Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan

IV - Agricultural Goals and Objectives

The following are the goals and objectives are the basis of Fulton County's agriculture development and farmland protection program as set forth in this Plan. They are based on detailed surveys of agricultural producers summarized in Appendix 2 and input received at the Agricultural Conference conducted by the Fulton County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board in September, 2001.

The goals are long-term and reflect the basic policies of the Fulton County Board of Supervisors and Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board for agricultural development and farmland protection. The objectives spell out more specific criteria for measuring success. Together, they are intended to lay out a framework for agricultural development and farmland protection in Fulton County that can be followed by the Board of Supervisors and the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board.

A number of cooperating agencies will also be involved including but not limited to Cornell Cooperative Extension, the Soil and Water Conservation District and the Fulton County Economic Development Corporation. The goals and objectives set forth a unified policy, adopted by the Board of Supervisors and to be used by each of these entities. The specifics of major recommendations may be found in the Section VIII.

Fulton County, New York

Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan

1. GOAL: COORDINATE AND FOCUS THE EFFORTS OF ALL AGENCIES INVOLVED IN PROMOTING AGRICULTURE IN FULTON COUNTY.

Lead Responsibility: Fulton County Board of Supervisors and Fulton County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board.

Measures of Success: Degree of coordination and cooperation among agencies and organizations involved in agriculture in Fulton County, sales of agricultural products and farmland maintained in productive use.

Objectives:

- 1.1 Employ an Agricultural Economic Development Specialist to provide staff leadership in agricultural coordination and development. *Note: An Agricultural Economic Development Specialist shared between the two Counties is specifically recommended in Section VIII of this Plan).*
- 1.2 Convene regular meetings of agricultural groups to coordinate policy and exchange information.

Fulton County, New York

Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan

2. GOAL: DIVERSIFY FULTON COUNTY AGRICULTURE AND ESTABLISH NEW MARKETS FOR ALL FULTON COUNTY FARM PRODUCTS.

Lead Responsibility: Cornell Cooperative Extension of Fulton and Montgomery Counties.
Note: An Agricultural Economic Development Specialist shared between the two Counties (see Section 4.0 Recommendations) should eventually assume most of this responsibility.

Measures of Success: Hours of training and assistance provided to farmers and volumes of new products and services marketed from Fulton County farms.

Objectives:

- 2.1 Train and assist farmers in marketing, pricing and promoting agricultural products.
- 2.2 Expand farm-based tourism by cross promoting with Bed & Breakfast operators to take advantage of the County's position as the "Gateway to the Adirondacks."
- 2.3 Continually research new and added-value agricultural production opportunities for Fulton County, such as specialty cheeses processed on-farm.
- 2.4 Work with food stores to market local farm products.
- 2.5 Increase the number of Fulton County farmers using the Pride of New York label and create Mohawk Valley and Adirondack region branding programs with adjacent counties to capture more intrastate and tourist sales.
- 2.6 Add value to Fulton County farm products by increasing participation in quality certification programs (e.g. the New York State Cattle Health Assurance Program).

Fulton County, New York

Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan

3. GOAL: INCREASE PUBLIC AWARENESS OF AGRICULTURE AS AN ECONOMIC RESOURCE FOR FULTON COUNTY AND VALUABLE CAREER PATH FOR ITS YOUTH.

Lead Responsibility: Cornell Cooperative Extension of Fulton and Montgomery Counties, together with the Fulton County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board, Herkimer-Fulton-Montgomery BOCES and the Fulton-Montgomery Community College as sponsors.

Measures of Success: Numbers of education programs conducted, materials developed and farm and non-farm participants.

Objectives:

- 3.1 Conduct broad-based public education programs designed to increase public awareness of the value of agriculture as an industry to Fulton County.
- 3.2 Work with public schools, Herkimer-Fulton-Montgomery BOCES, the Fulton-Montgomery Community College and work force development agencies to add agriculturist training tracks wherever possible and promote the "Ag in the Classroom" curriculum.
- 3.3 Encourage more 4-H program participation in both rural and urban areas of the County, increasing the range of offerings to emphasize the high-tech nature of modern agriculture.
- 3.4 Conduct more on-farm demonstrations of the science involved in agriculture, thereby also creating farm tourism opportunities for visitors.
- 3.5 Increase the level and frequency of farm community communications with the non-farm community.

Fulton County, New York

Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan

4. GOAL: SUPPORT FARM INVESTMENT BY THE PRIVATE SECTOR.

***Lead Responsibility:** Cornell Cooperative Extension of Fulton and Montgomery Counties.
Note: An Agricultural Economic Development Specialist shared between the two Counties (see Section VIII Recommendations) should eventually assume some of this responsibility.*

***Measures of Success:** Hours of training and assistance provided to farmers and the profitability of Fulton County farms, based on farm business summaries and amount of new investment.*

Objectives:

- 4.1 Provide farmers training in how to lower the costs of farm inputs (e.g. rotational grazing or direct commodity purchasing).
- 4.2 Conduct intensive annual training for farmers regarding farm tax relief under State and Federal law, business planning and labor management.
- 4.3 Assist farmers in creating bargaining cooperatives to negotiate higher prices for other agricultural products on the basis of quality and volume.
- 4.4 Assist farmers in on-farm specialization (e.g. raising high-bred cattle for export) and diversification (e.g. combining dairy and beef operations).
- 4.5 Promote recreational leasing as a means of supplementing farm incomes.
- 4.6 Conduct "train the trainer" in business and financial planning for farm agricultural advisors (including bankers, accountants, lawyers and agency personnel).
- 4.7 Reduce the impact of estate taxes and assist new farm transfers through the Farm Link program, farmer education and technical assistance in estate planning.
- 4.8 Work with Farm Bureau and others to eliminate all State and Federal capital gains and estate taxes on farm transfers.
- 4.9 Form bargaining groups to jointly purchase farm supplies, cooperatively advertise farm products, provide outlets for products and facilitate use of custom services.
- 4.10 Maintain lists of sources for intra-county purchases, similar to the "hayfinder" program but extending the concept to other forages, products, services and labor.

Fulton County, New York

Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan

5. GOAL: CREATE AND MAXIMIZE THE USE OF ECONOMIC INCENTIVES FOR DEVELOPMENT OF AGRICULTURAL ENTERPRISES, PARTICULARLY LOCAL SUPPLIERS OF FARM SUPPORT SERVICES.

Lead Responsibility: Fulton County Economic Development Corporation (EDC) and Fulton County Industrial Development Agency (IDA).

Measures of Success: Amount of new investment in farm and agribusinesses ventures.

Objectives:

- 5.1 Integrate agriculture into the Fulton County's economic development strategy.
- 5.2 Encourage the EDC to develop agriculture based commerce and industry.
- 5.3 Use the Fulton County IDA tax abatement program to solicit agri-businesses such as feed mills, farm machinery dealers, other farm suppliers, agricultural processors and marketing organizations.
- 5.4 Disseminate information to farmers and other agricultural entrepreneurs on sources of capital for farm and agribusinesses ventures.
- 5.5 Allow commercial horse boarding operations to take advantage of agricultural assessment.
- 5.6 Encourage the EDC to allocate a portion of their revolving loan pool to agricultural enterprises.
- 5.7 Establish and/or promote new revolving loan programs specifically targeted at agriculture by working with the Mohawk Valley Economic Development District and State and Federal funding sources.

Fulton County, New York

Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan

6. GOAL: ENCOURAGE FARMERS TO MANAGE FARM WOODLANDS FOR ADDITIONAL PROFIT AS SECONDARY CROPS.

Lead Responsibility: *Fulton County Soil and Water Conservation District , the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and the United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service.*

Measures of Success: *Number of farmers with sustainable forest management plans in place and additional farm income generated from woodlots.*

Objectives:

- 6.1 Provide landowner education and technical assistance in applying best management practices to farm woodlands.
- 6.2 Create additional markets for wood products in the County by establishing economic incentives for the development of new wood processing ventures (including on-farm enterprises).
- 6.3 Develop a technical assistance and training program on effective deer control to reduce crop damage and promote forest regeneration.
- 6.4 Provide more training for local assessors and more effective programs for determining the real economic value of forest land.

Fulton County, New York

Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan

7. GOAL: PROTECT THE RIGHTS OF FARMERS TO USE SOUND AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES.

Lead Responsibility: Fulton County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board.

Measures of Success: Numbers of farmers participating in Agricultural Districts and on local planning boards, protective measures adopted by towns and amount of training provided to towns.

Objectives:

- 7.1 Increase the participation of farmers and agribusinesses owners on town planning boards through town appointment of agricultural members under the authority of § 271.11 of the Town Law.
- 7.2 Conduct regular training programs for local officials on how to accommodate both agriculture and development and apply the latest elements of State law affording protection for farmers and agri-businesses.
- 7.3 Encourage development of sewer and water infrastructure within already developed areas with infrastructure rather than agricultural areas to ensure development in these areas is compatible with farming.
- 7.4 Encourage agricultural towns to adopt Right to Farm Laws.
- 7.5 Promote the use of disclosure notices to put land buyers and home builders on notice they are locating within agricultural areas where sound management practices can produce odors, slow moving traffic and other consequences.
- 7.6 Continue to include Fulton County's most valuable farmland in the County's Agricultural District as the District is reviewed and updated, to offer farmers all the protections afforded under State law.
- 7.7 Encourage towns with zoning to enhance the Agricultural District by developing agricultural zoning districts that provide for compatible forms of development within the District.
- 7.8 Promote development of town Comprehensive Plans and encourage Towns to incorporate agricultural components into those plans.