

# ONONDAGA COUNTY

## AGRICULTURE & FARMLAND PROTECTION PLAN

### AGRICULTURAL PLANNING PROFILE

Onondaga County, the broader Central NY region, and local municipalities within Onondaga County, are utilizing formal planning mechanisms to advance farmland protection and promote agricultural viability. The County, local governments and other decision-making entities are generally supportive of agriculture; however, the ways in which this support is manifested varies based on the size of a municipality, location, planning resources, and regulatory authority.

This section briefly summarizes policies, planning efforts, and agencies/organizations related to agriculture in the region. This section also presents the **Farm Friendly Municipal Toolbox**, which developed from this planning process as a set of land use tools municipalities can use to protect farmland and support agriculture at the local level.

### AGRICULTURAL DISTRICTS

New York's Agricultural Districts Law, Article 25-AA of the NYS Agriculture and Markets Law was enacted in 1971 to help keep farmland in agricultural production. Agricultural districts define areas within local jurisdictions that rely on farming as the primary economic activity and primarily benefit owners of land that is farmed. In doing so, agricultural districts protect agriculture through a combination of landowner incentives and protections that discourage the conversion of farmland to non-agricultural uses, including:

- providing the framework to limit unreasonable local regulation on farm practices
- providing Right to Farm provisions that protect agriculture from private nuisance suits
- modifying state agency administrative regulations and procedures to encourage the continuation of farm businesses
- modifying the ability to advance public funds to construct facilities that encourage development
- preventing benefit assessments, special ad valorem levies, or other rates and fees on agricultural lands for the finance of improvements such as water, sewer or nonfarm drainage
- modifying the ability of public agencies to acquire farmland through eminent domain

Agricultural Districts primarily benefit owners of land that is farmed. Of note, being part of an Agricultural District does not:

- directly limit or affect the use of enrolled land beyond existing requirements such as zoning; or
- directly reduce or increase tax assessments—agricultural landowners can, however, apply to the local tax assessor for an annual agricultural value assessment.

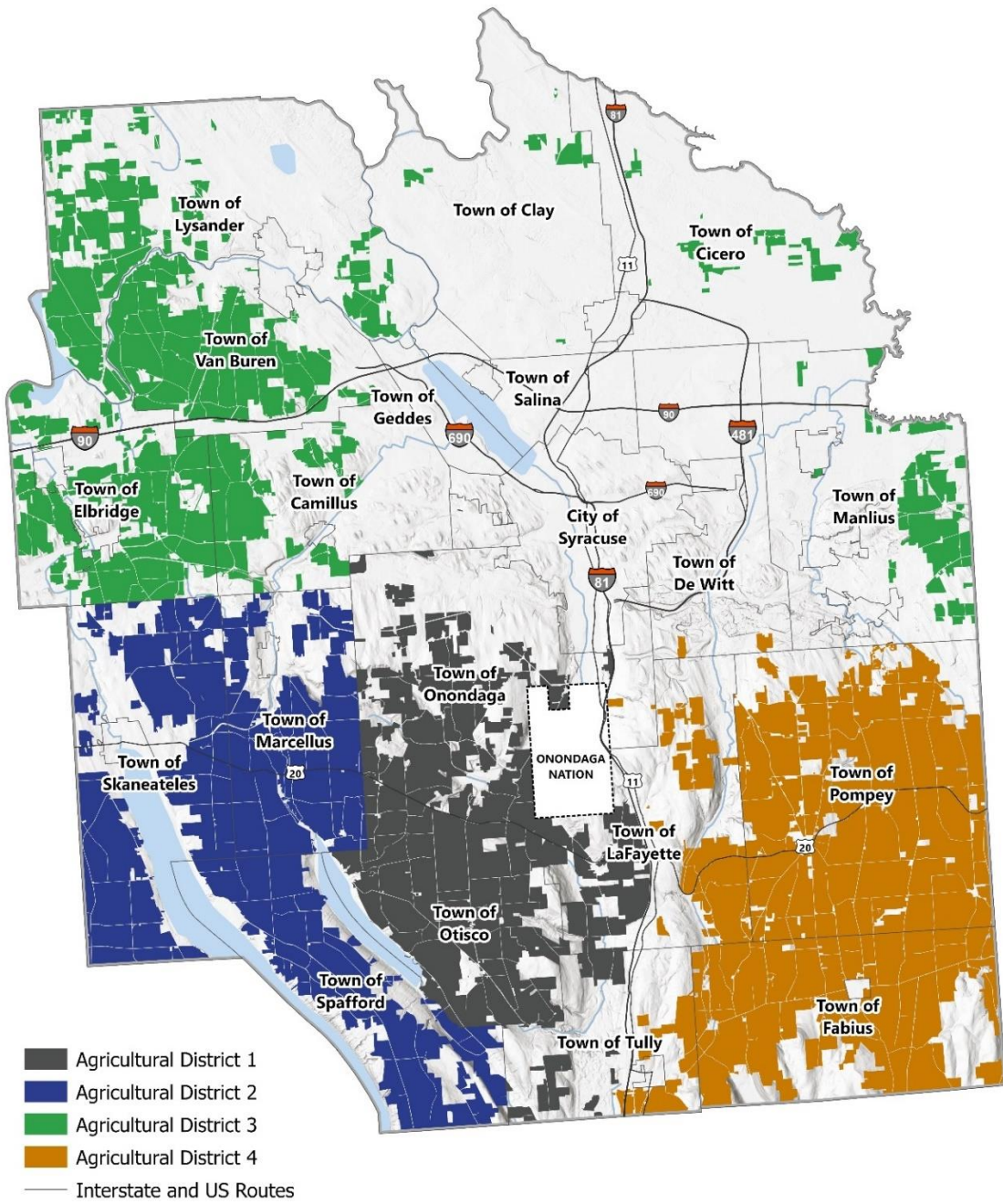
Every eight years agricultural districts are reviewed by the Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board and parcels recommended for inclusion are sent to the Onondaga County Legislature for approval. Once approved the districts are recertified by the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets Commissioner. During the review, landowners or municipalities can request that property remain in the district, be removed, or added. Property may also be requested for addition annually during a month-long request period January 1-30, as part of the annual additions process. Land may only be removed during the eight-year review.

Map 5 shows the geography of Onondaga County's Agricultural Districts, which are certified per Section 300 of Article 25-AA of the New York State Agriculture and Markets Law. These districts are summarized in Figure 18 based on their most recent eight-year recertification reports.

# ONONDAGA COUNTY

## AGRICULTURE & FARMLAND PROTECTION PLAN

Map 5. Onondaga County Agricultural Districts



Source: Onondaga County (2021)

# ONONDAGA COUNTY

## AGRICULTURE & FARMLAND PROTECTION PLAN

It is important to note that not all farmland is in an agricultural district and not all land in agricultural districts is necessarily farmland. As districts were previously required to encompass a contiguous area, some non-agricultural lands are still enrolled in agricultural districts. This dynamic is slowly correcting itself through the district renewal process.

Awareness is increasing regarding the benefits of participating in the agricultural districts program. While the pressures to develop farmland continue to increase, enrollment of farmland in the agricultural district program has increased as well, with a net increase of almost 5,000 acres of land since 2016. It is notable that this is despite properties removing themselves from Agricultural Districts at the same time. The reasons for the additional lands vary, and range from large farms consolidating large parcels, existing farmers adding land that should have been enrolled previously, and smaller lots (5-20 acres).

Figure 18. Summary of Onondaga County Agricultural Districts

Agricultural District	Most Recent Renewal Date	Most Recent Renewal # of Parcels	Most Recent Renewal Acreage	Prior Renewal Date	Prior Renewal Acreage	Change In Acres Since Prior Renewal
District 1: West of I-81 in the Towns of LaFayette, Onondaga, Otisco, and Tully	2018	2,313	38,580	2010	37,539	+1,041
District 2: Towns of Marcellus, Skaneateles, and Spafford	2020	2,600	47,733	2012	47,230	+503
District 3: Towns of Camillus, Cicero, Clay, Elbridge, Lysander, Manlius, and Van Buren	2022*	2,631	49,677	2014	47,325	+2,352
District 4: Towns of DeWitt, Fabius, Pompey and East of I-81 in the Towns of LaFayette, Onondaga, and Tully	2016	3,441	62,893	2008	61,950	+943
<b>Totals</b>		<b>10,985</b>	<b>198,883</b>		<b>194,044</b>	<b>+4,839</b>

\*Anticipated.

More information about the individual districts, including detailed maps and review and recertification reports, is available at <http://www.ongov.net/planning/review.html>.

### COUNTY AND REGIONAL PLANNING RELATED TO AGRICULTURE

#### ONONDAGA COUNTY AGRICULTURAL AND FARMLAND PROTECTION PLAN

Adopted in 1997, the original Onondaga County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan promoted three main goals for the local agricultural sector: 1) enhance the viability of agriculture in Onondaga County, 2) protect farmland resources, and 3) promote the economic and social importance of the agricultural industry in Onondaga County. The plan was created to be used by individual farmers, farmer groups, and all levels of elected officials as a guide for the development of local planning and land use decisions to support the

# ONONDAGA COUNTY

## AGRICULTURE & FARMLAND PROTECTION PLAN

viability of the agricultural industry in Onondaga County. Seven recommendations were defined at the County and municipal levels accompanied by a range of actions:

- Reduction of property and estate taxes on farmland
- Exploration and implementation of land use mechanisms to protect existing areas of important farmland resources at the municipal level
- Recognition and promotion of the agricultural industry as separate and equal to other industrial sectors in Onondaga County
- Support of public and private land protection initiatives at the county level
- Increase of technical support provided to agriculture
- Expansion of agricultural education in the classroom throughout the County through public and private initiatives
- Promotion of agriculture throughout the County through public education and community awareness

There has been significant progress on the recommendations since 1997, and specific implementation actions are found in the Executive Summary.

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### CNY RISING UPSTATE REVITALIZATION INITIATIVE

CNY Rising is the regional plan and investment prospectus submitted in 2015 for New York State's Upstate Revitalization Initiative, ultimately awarded \$500 million in competitive economic development funding. This plan sets forward the following vision for the region: *"Transform our communities by retooling for a modern economy and the intentional pursuit of collective prosperity. This prosperity must be built by including all regional residents in opportunities for economic and social empowerment through processes that are transparent and equitable."*

One of the important focuses for this revitalization initiative is **agribusiness development**. CNY Rising includes a strategic proposal for agribusiness with the following four strategies:

1. Establish the region as a center of innovation, research and manufacturing expertise for the production of a variety of extended shelf life (ESL) food products (aseptic, UHT) that respond to growing global demand in key markets;
2. Make investments in physical infrastructure with primary focus on improvements to rail freight and ports to gain access to metropolitan New York and international market;
3. Establish the Central New York region as the East Coast Center for Controlled Environment Agriculture (CEA) production in the United States;
4. Develop technologies and support services to manage organic wastes.

More information is available through <https://esd.ny.gov/central-ny-rising-uri>.

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### CNY REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL 2021 PROGRESS REPORT

The 2021 CNY Regional Economic Development Council's Progress Report was created to assess economic development across the region, as well as to suggest strategies for continued progress. The report highlighted recent economic investments being made to increase agricultural viability in the region. These projects include the Grow NY Competition to promote technological innovation in agriculture, Heritage Hill Brewery improvements, and expansion of Cayuga Milk Ingredients facilities for dried milk production, along with other smaller projects to assist local agricultural producers.



# ONONDAGA COUNTY

## AGRICULTURE & FARMLAND PROTECTION PLAN

Like many places across New York, impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic were heavily felt within the agricultural industry. Particularly impacted were producers of dairy and vegetables who distributed to school systems and restaurants. The Nourish NY program helped stabilize producers affected by the pandemic by providing \$25 million in funding to New York's food banks to purchase produce and dairy products.

Two regional priorities were recommended for the agricultural sector, the first being the diversification of revenue streams. This means providing opportunity for farms in the region to participate in and benefit from value-added agriculture to stabilize their own businesses and regional farming in general. A second priority was the expansion of local processing and supply chains to increase local food system resiliency by linking farmers to institutions via distributors. Investment in local processing and technological improvements to the local food system such as extending shelf life through aseptic packaging are important takeaways from the COVID-19 experiences in Central New York.

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### FOOD PLAN CNY

Food Plan CNY, commissioned by the Onondaga County Agriculture Council and prepared through a partnership between Syracuse University and SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry, is a collaborative project to assess, coordinate, educate and make recommendations to improve the food system of Central New York. Based on a robust baseline assessment supported by data, the Food Plan CNY identified three main opportunity areas for improving the economic, public health, and environmental outcomes in the food system of Onondaga County and surrounding counties: resilience, access, and coordination.



Food Plan CNY offers five core recommendations to strengthen the County's food system:

- 1) Strengthen the “middle” of the food system: build processing and distribution infrastructure and strengthen community capacity and connections.
- 2) Grow community-based, healthy food environments: support diverse and resilient food environments, promote diverse food cultures, and increase community demand for healthy foods.
- 3) Create healthy, resilient environmental systems: connect environmental outcomes to economic advantages, including reducing greenhouse gas emissions from food system practices and integrating them into climate action plans, promoting the value of ecological services in agriculture, diversifying agricultural production, developing market-based strategies for sustainable agriculture, re-integrating waste as a resource in all food system sectors, and integrating farmland protection with food system planning.
- 4) Expand public space and participation in the food system: improve access to locally grown fresh food and farmers markets and equitably promote business development and economic opportunities.
- 5) Coordinate food system projects, planning, and policy: support the newly formed Syracuse Onondaga Food System Alliance (SOFSA) and build inclusive processes for identifying food council partners, integrating food systems into City and County policies, and monitoring food system developments through collaborative studies.

# ONONDAGA COUNTY

## AGRICULTURE & FARMLAND PROTECTION PLAN

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### PLAN ONONDAGA: ONONDAGA COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The PLAN ONondaga County Comprehensive Plan is being developed to define a vision and goals for community success that incorporates the shared needs, goals, and challenges of each municipality in Onondaga County. The plan focuses on the importance of and linkages between community engagement, quality of life, and economic development, and will explore five thematic areas as a framework for community-based planning and developing impactful projects.

Agriculture is one of the 5 thematic areas in the countywide comprehensive plan, along with strong centers, housing and neighborhoods, greenways and blueways, and community mobility. Supporting local agriculture is recognized by the plan to be vital to the future success of Onondaga County's economy, landscape, and food system. Visit [plan.ongov.net](http://plan.ongov.net) for more information on PLAN ONondaga.



The logo for the PLAN ONONDAGA County Comprehensive Plan features the word "PLAN" in dark blue, "ONONDAGA" in a multi-colored font (O: yellow, N: green, D: grey, A: purple), and "COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN" in a smaller, dark blue font below it. The logo is set against a white background with a thin grey border.

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### ONONDAGA COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

Although land use is not regulated directly by Onondaga County, the Onondaga County Planning Board play a role in influencing agricultural land use decisions at the local level through reviews of proposed local comprehensive plans, zoning laws, special use permits, site plans, variances, and subdivisions pursuant to General Municipal Law §239. The Planning Board is tasked with reviewing actions within 500 feet of active agricultural lands enrolled in a NYS Agricultural District, for any countywide or intermunicipal impact, including the viability of commercial agriculture.

### MUNICIPAL PLANNING RELATED TO AGRICULTURE

In New York State, land use is controlled primarily at a local level, and thus, municipalities have a critical role in effective protection of agricultural lands. Meanwhile, agriculture has evolved in multiple ways over the past several decades and will continue to evolve into the future. Throughout, it has remained a very diverse and robust economic sector in Onondaga County. Through partnerships with local farmers, municipal governments can work to plan for the long-term viability of their agricultural sectors and create local land use regulations that are up to date, farm-friendly, and meet the needs of the community as well.

Onondaga County's town and village governments, on the other hand, have a more direct role in land use planning and land use regulation. Most of the towns within Onondaga County have adopted regulatory tools such as zoning laws, subdivision ordinances, and Right to Farm laws. Many towns and villages in Onondaga County also have comprehensive plans, and some (e.g., the Town of LaFayette) have their own Farmland Protection Plan.

There are several tools available to assist communities that desire to protect the agricultural land resources and enhance the long-term viability of agriculture.

# ONONDAGA COUNTY

## AGRICULTURE & FARMLAND PROTECTION PLAN

### MUNICIPAL SURVEY

As part of the planning process, municipal representatives were engaged over the Summer of 2021 through an online survey. The municipal survey was created to provide an opportunity through which representatives of Onondaga County municipalities could provide specific input regarding the state of agriculture in their municipalities, issues or opportunities, and topics of local interest related to agriculture.

Survey respondents reported several noticeable changes to agriculture in recent years, with the most noticeable changes resulting in a decrease in smaller/mid-sized farms that are getting purchased by larger farms. There was also a noticeable increase in agritourism over recent years.

	Very Interested	Somewhat Interested	Neutral	Not Very Interested	Not Interested / Not Applicable
Commercial Solar Development	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Commercial Wind Development	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Rural Broadband	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Marijuana Farming	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Indoor Vertical Farming	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Agritourism / Event Spaces	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Small / Start Up Farming	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The top benefits of agriculture for municipalities, as reported by survey respondents, included low demands on municipal services and open space and views that increased adjacent land values. The top challenges facing agriculture include residential encroachment, labor shortages, and retirement/succession planning. Survey respondents reported manure application/storage/transportation as the number one conflict between farmers and non-farmers, followed by urban sprawl and acreage requirements for animals.

### FARM-FRIENDLY MUNICIPAL TOOLBOX

The project team has created a **Farm-Friendly Municipal Toolbox** to assist municipalities in implementing the Agriculture & Farmland Protection Plan recommendations, and to provide best practices in local regulation and planning support for agriculture. The Toolbox is intended to help municipalities integrate and update its land use plans and regulations as it relates to best practices in support of agricultural land uses, address new and changing dynamics in agriculture, and ensure consistency with NYS Agriculture & Markets law.

To aid in the process, four Towns in Onondaga County – Cicero, LaFayette, Manlius and Onondaga – volunteered to have their current planning documents and codebooks reviewed by the project team. An individual assessment, or “audit”, was performed for each, which included an interview with municipal and farmer representatives, and development and presentation of an individualized written assessment for each participating Town. See Appendix E for results of the assessments.

Pulling from the individual town assessments, the team has also compiled a general Farm-Friendly Municipal Toolbox for use by any town, village or the City of Syracuse. An open webinar was also held for municipal planning and zoning board members in Onondaga County to present the toolbox of recommendations. Tools are organized into planning level tools (e.g., comprehensive plans, open space plans, and economic development plans), regulatory tools (e.g., Right-to-Farm laws, zoning regulations, farm friendly solar ordinances, and subdivision and other land use tools), and farmland preservation tools (e.g., purchase of development rights and lease of development rights).

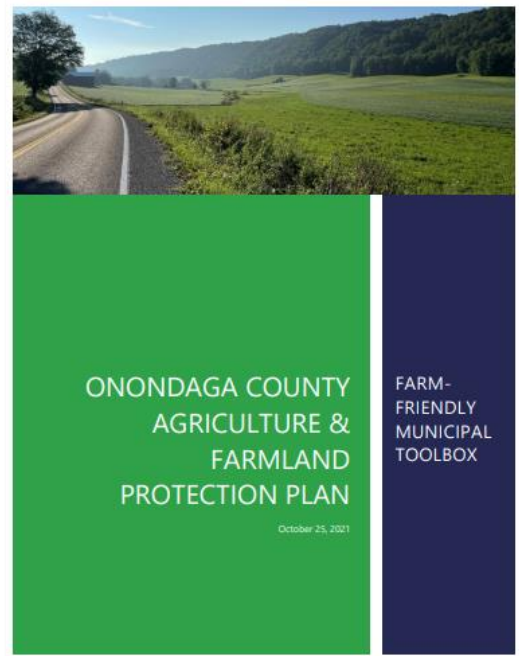
# ONONDAGA COUNTY

## AGRICULTURE & FARMLAND PROTECTION PLAN

It is envisioned that local governments will use this toolbox:

- In reviewing zoning and other land use regulations to ensure they are up to date as they apply to agriculture
- As a resource to consult when creating or updating the community's comprehensive plan, or a farmland protection plan, or other local planning efforts
- As a resource to consult when creating or updating the community's zoning, subdivision, and other land use regulations
- In reviewing proposed new development for consistency with the ag community's goals and needs.

See Appendix A for the Farm Friend Toolbox. The Toolbox and recorded webinar are also posted on the County's [agriculture.ongov.net](http://agriculture.ongov.net) website. It is envisioned that the toolbox will be maintained and updated to serve as a continuing source of information on best practices in local support and regulation of agricultural lands in Onondaga County.



### AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS RELATED TO AGRICULTURE

The involvement of agricultural support agencies helps to protect farmland as well as to make Onondaga County an attractive place for agricultural businesses. The agencies and organizations below provide programs and services that are critically important to the viability of the agricultural sector in Onondaga County and to the regional economy.

#### ONONDAGA COUNTY AGRICULTURE AND FARMLAND PROTECTION BOARD

The Onondaga County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board (AFPB) was created by the Onondaga County Legislature and is composed of farmers from areas throughout Onondaga County, as well as representatives from agribusiness community, natural resources organizations, the Onondaga County Legislature, Syracuse-Onondaga County Planning Agency, Onondaga County Real Property Tax Services, and Cornell Cooperative Extension. The mission of the AFPB is to protect and value agriculture and farmland to enhance its vibrancy, resiliency, and viability throughout the County. Tasks overseen by the board include:

- [The County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan](#)
- [Review of local Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plans](#)
- [Agricultural Districts program administration](#)
- [State grant program solicitations, coordination, and project execution](#)
- [Guidance to the Onondaga County Legislature on agricultural matters](#)
- [Other farmland protection activities](#)



# ONONDAGA COUNTY

## AGRICULTURE & FARMLAND PROTECTION PLAN

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### ONONDAGA COUNTY AGRICULTURE COUNCIL

The Onondaga County Agricultural Council supports the agricultural community through education, promotion, and advocacy programs with the vision for a strong agricultural economy, secure and healthy food supply, abundant farmland in agricultural production, and stewardship of the environment. Specific initiatives include:



- Executing an annual “Buy Local. Buy Onondaga Grown” media campaign, which seeks to:
  - educate the public on the importance of farming to the local community and on the size and scope of agriculture in the County
  - increase demand for locally grown food by making the public aware of what Onondaga County farms can produce
  - let people know when seasonal items are available
  - generate support for protecting farmland
  - encourage the community to purchase food products grown or produced in the County by looking for the Onondaga Grown logo at local grocers, convenience stores, farm stands, farmers markets, and restaurants
- Sponsoring the annual ON Farm Fest “day on the farm” event that helps to build a relationship between the food producers and consumers. The event encourages the community to visit, tour, and support local farms, discover the latest advances in agriculture, explore what life is like on a farm, meet the farmers who grow their food, and have fun on the farm.
- Support for urban agriculture initiatives such as the Brady Farm, the Dr. King Urban Garden, the RISE SyRAP Agricultural Program, and the Jubilee Homes' Southwest Community Learning Farm.
- Funding for the creation of Food Plan CNY to assess the regional food system and identify strategies for improving food access, environmental and economic viability, and coordination of the local and regional food system.
- Funding for the development of agricultural programming in local school districts and support for educational programs such as Agriculture in the Classroom.
- Permanently protecting valuable farmland by supporting NYSDAM Farmland Protection Implementation Grant (FPIG) applications and creating a local donation of development rights program.
- Maintains the Onondaga Grown website that connects visitors to local producers, farmers markets, and farm-to-table restaurants.

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### SYRACUSE-ONONDAGA COUNTY PLANNING AGENCY

The Syracuse-Onondaga County Planning Agency (SOCPA) provides a variety of planning services for Onondaga County and the City of Syracuse. Their mission is to provide and promote effective planning by Onondaga County, its 19 towns, 15 villages, and the City of Syracuse. Specific services as it relates to agriculture include:

- Representation and staff support to the Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board
- NYS Agricultural District Reviews and boundary revisions under NYS Agriculture and Markets Law §25-AA for the AFPB
- Staff support to facilitate farm owner access to the NYS Farmland Protection and Implementation Grants Program, commonly known as the “Purchase of Development Rights” (PDR) program, and/or related programs
- Representation and staff support to the Onondaga County Agriculture Council, created to promote and preserve the local agricultural community

# ONONDAGA COUNTY

## AGRICULTURE & FARMLAND PROTECTION PLAN

- Municipal technical assistance for land use and comprehensive planning
- Trainings for local government officials
- Staff to the Onondaga County Planning Board to conduct reviews under NYS General Municipal Law §239
- Grant assistance and administration for municipalities
- Preparation of the County's comprehensive plan (PLAN ONondaga)
- Infrastructure coordination with local and regional entities
- Partnership and coordination with community organizations and agencies related to agriculture and farmland protection

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### CORNELL COOPERATIVE EXTENSION OF ONONDAGA COUNTY

The mission of Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) is to enable people to improve their lives and communities through partnerships that put experience and research knowledge to work. Extension staff and trained volunteers deliver education programs, conduct applied research, and encourage community collaborations. Educators connect people with the information they need on topics such as commercial and consumer agriculture; nutrition and health; youth and families; finances; energy efficiency; economic and community development; and sustainable natural resources. CCE's ability to match university resources with community needs helps play a vital role in the lives of individuals, families, businesses, and communities throughout Onondaga County. Specific programming includes:

- Educational and technical assistance/trainings on agricultural topics (e.g., marketing, production, processing, and waste management of various types of agriculture)
- Operation of young farmers programming (e.g., 4-H, Cornell Beginning Farmers Program)
- Coordination/support of local promotional and educational initiatives (e.g., Empire Farm Days, Onondaga Grown, Agriculture in the Classroom)
- Urban agricultural education in partnership with the Refugee and Immigrant Self-Empowerment (RISE) program
- Natural resource education (e.g., invasive species management, forest management)
- Gardening programming (e.g., site improvement, plant selection and care, composting)
- Nutrition and health programming with workshops, applied research projects, and other information

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### ONONDAGA COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

The Onondaga County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) offers natural resources programs and services, including technical assistance to farmers and landowners, training programs, and environmental education programs. Specific programs include:

- Technical assistance to landowners (e.g., pond design/maintenance, sediment/erosion control, drainage, flooding prevention/mitigation)
- Author grants for Best Management Practices projects to protect water quality & environment
- Administration of the Agricultural Environmental Management program
- Nutrient management planning; soil sampling and analysis
- Critical area seeding/revegetation; Annual tree and shrub sale
- Watershed assessment
- Agricultural use value assessment
- Equipment rental (e.g., no-till drill, hydro seeder, soil meter)
- Invasive species management (terrestrial and aquatic)
- Agricultural emergency response



# ONONDAGA COUNTY

## AGRICULTURE & FARMLAND PROTECTION PLAN

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### LOCAL LAND TRUSTS

Local land trusts play an increasingly important role as it relates to farmland protection. These local non-profit organizations are asked to and provide the resources to work as partners with farmers to execute farmland conservation easement projects via the NYS Farmland Protection Implementation Grants program and other national and local programs.

Land trusts also purchase land for conservation, either farmland or related open spaces, which enhance and maintain rural communities, protect natural resources, and act as buffers for agricultural operations. Onondaga County is fortunate to have local land trust organizations such as the New York Agricultural Land Trust and Finger Lakes Land Trust as valued partners. However, capacity within these organizations is limited, impacting the ability to reach local farmland protection goals.

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### ONONDAGA COUNTY FARM BUREAU

The Onondaga County Farm Bureau gives farmers and non-farmers alike the opportunity to be part of an organization dedicated to supporting and enriching agriculture. The Farm Bureau is active on a broad range of issues relating to agriculture, ranging from taxation, conservation, and local food availability. Specifically, the Farm Bureau provides the following:

- Public policy advocacy at local, regional, state, and federal levels
- Administration of Workers' Compensation Insurance
- Coordination of educational and technical assistance/trainings
- Higher education scholarships for children of farm families



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### SYRACUSE-ONONDAGA FOOD SYSTEMS ALLIANCE (SOFSA)

Established in 2019, the Syracuse-Onondaga Food Systems Alliance (SOFSA) is an independent food council in Central New York serving the city of Syracuse and surrounding Onondaga County. SOFSA's mission is to strengthen the local food system so that it works for all people in Syracuse and Onondaga County, particularly as it relates to food justice and food sovereignty. SOFSA brings communities together to foster relationships, develop projects, align resources, and advocate for policies to improve the health of local neighbors and environment. Specific highlights from recent work include:

- Speaker series and meet-up events to build connection and deepen relationships with those working on food system issues
- Publications in the media and academic research related to the local food system
- Co-hosting events and site visits to players in the local food system, ranging from Hudson Egg Farm to the Salt City Commercial Kitchen and the Brady Market

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### CENTRAL NEW YORK ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Operated by the CNY Regional Planning and Development Board as a non-profit, the CNYEDC administers the following funds and loan programs:

- CNY Enterprise Development Fund to support the growth and development of small businesses in Central New York, including Cayuga, Cortland, Madison, Onondaga, and Oswego Counties. These grants are available for small businesses with 10 or fewer employees
- CNY Quasi-Equity Loan Programs to provide funds tailored to support challenging projects, including start-ups and small businesses with limited or specialized collateral

# ONONDAGA COUNTY

## AGRICULTURE & FARMLAND PROTECTION PLAN

- Rural Micro-Entrepreneur Assistance Loan Program, which is available to small businesses with 10 or fewer employees located in a USDA designated rural area
- Energy Efficiency Loan Program is a revolving loan fund geared toward financing eligible energy efficiency projects, including feasibility studies, machinery, or equipment replacements
- NYS Grown and Certified Ag Producers Grant Program which provides funds to assist NYS ag producers in meeting food safety standards necessary for participation in the NYS Grown & Certified Program
- NYS Job Development Authority Small Business Agriculture Loan Program, which provides loans to small agribusinesses (100 or fewer employees)

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### NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND MARKETS (NYS DAM)

The New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets is the department of the New York state government that enforces laws relating to agriculture, weights and measures, and the production, processing, transportation, storage, marketing and distributing of food. Specific programs and services related to farmland protection include:

- Administers many programs to protect these resources, from environmental planning to invasive species eradication, integrated pest management, seed, and fertilizer regulation. Planning activities include the following:
  - Farmland Protection Planning Grants
  - Farmland Protection Implementation Grants
  - Land Trust Grants
  - Agricultural Districts Program
  - The Advisory Council on Agriculture, which advises the Commissioner of Agriculture and Markets and other state leaders on matters affecting agricultural districts and farmland protection.
  - The Farmland Protection Working Group, which recommends strategies to the State on the siting process of major renewable energy facilities and to minimize the impact of siting on productive agricultural soils on working farms.
- Supports the state's network of farmers' markets through programs that expand sales, promote improved nutrition, and help increase consumption of locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables
- From marketing programs such as the Taste NY and NYS Grown & Certified® programs, to assistance with exporting products or starting a new farm operation, the Department works with the agricultural community to connect farms to new markets, increase sales and exposure of New York products, and help protect and grow businesses across the state.

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### USDA REGIONAL SERVICE CENTER

USDA Service Centers are designed to be a single location where customers can access the services provided by the federal Farm Service Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and the Rural Development<sup>2</sup> agencies. The USDA Regional Service Center in Onondaga County provides services in the administration a variety of NRCS programs (environmental quality incentives, watershed rehabilitation, conservation innovation grants, etc.) and Farm Service Agency programs (dairy margin protection, loan programs, etc.).

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<sup>2</sup> Rural Development programs are offered by the USDA Service Center in Marcy, NY.