

APPENDIX E: COMMUNITY INPUT

This appendix features a municipal survey, meeting summary notes, and materials used at community engagement events held throughout the planning process.

MUNICIPAL SURVEY

Municipal representatives were engaged over the Summer of 2021 through an online survey and online meetings related to the Farm Friendly Toolbox and Municipal Assessments. 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.

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.



Participate in the

Onondaga County Agriculture & Farmland Protection Plan

Working with Farmers, Local Governments, and the Public on a Vision for the Next Generation of Agriculture in Onondaga County



WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

Visit our website at agriculture.ongov.net

- Join our email list
- Find information on upcoming events
- Submit your ideas and comments
- Learn about agriculture in Onondaga County

FARMERS

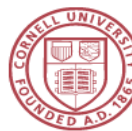
Share your experiences. Tell us what's working and what's not. Help us envision the next generation of agriculture in Onondaga County.

LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Tell us your perspective on agriculture and farmland. Participate in mapping priority lands in your community. Get tips on building farm-friendliness into your local regions.

THE PUBLIC

Learn more about the value of agriculture in Onondaga County and how you can help support local farmers and rural communities.



The Onondaga County Agriculture & Farmland Protection Plan is being overseen by the Onondaga County Legislature's Agriculture & Farmland Protection Board (AFFB) and managed by the Syracuse-Onondaga County Planning Agency (SOCPA), with funding and support from the NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets, the Onondaga County Agriculture Council, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Onondaga County and the Onondaga County Soil & Water Conservation District.

**"My FAVORITE thing about farming in
Onondaga County is..."**



ONONDAGA COUNTY
AGRICULTURE AND FARMLAND PROTECTION PLAN

**"Agriculture Onondaga County
would be BETTER if.."**



ONONDAGA COUNTY
AGRICULTURE AND FARMLAND PROTECTION PLAN



Municipal Questionnaire on Agriculture & Farmland Protection

* Required

Farming in Your Community

1. What Town, Village or City are you representing? *

2. For your municipality, are you a/an: *

- ☐ Elected Official
- ☐ Planning or Zoning Board Member
- ☐ Planning Director or Staff

☐

Other

3. Do you consider your community an "Agricultural Community"?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐

Other

4. What percentage of your municipality's land area would you say is dedicated to farming and agriculture? (1=10%, 10=100%)

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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0%

100%

5. Is agriculture and/or rural land changing in your community? Check all that apply.

- ☐ No significant changes in our agricultural community
- ☐ Farmers are quickly buying available land
- ☐ Large farms are purchasing smaller farms
- ☐ An increase in small farms
- ☐ A decrease in small farms
- ☐ Previously farmed land is going fallow
- ☐ More buildings/greenhouses/farmstands being built
- ☐ Fewer buildings/greenhouses/farmstands than before
- ☐ An increase in agritourism land uses (on-farm breweries/wineries, event venues, visitor activities, etc.)
- ☐ Landowners are subdividing off rural roadside frontages
- ☐ Landowners are selling agricultural or open space land to residential developers
- ☐ Landowners are selling agricultural or open space land to commercial/industrial developers
- ☐

Other

6. Are you aware of disputes or conflicts between agriculture and non-agricultural land uses in your community? If Yes, please describe.

7. What are the biggest challenges that farm owners face in your community? Check all that apply.

- ☐ High Property Taxes
- ☐ Increased Regulations
- ☐ Lack of Available Farmland
- ☐ Competition for Land with Developers/Speculators
- ☐ Residential Encroachment
- ☐ Neighbor Complaints / Disputes
- ☐ Low Commodity Prices / Federal Pricing Issues
- ☐ Retirement / Succession Planning
- ☐ Labor Shortages

☐

Other

Agriculture & Economic Development

8. Is agriculture as an economic benefit to your community? If Yes, in what ways? Check all that apply.

- ☐ Jobs / Direct Employment
- ☐ Supports Other Businesses and Related Industries
- ☐ Property Tax Revenue
- ☐ Low Demands on Municipal Services
- ☐ Open Spaces and Views Increase Adjacent Land Values
- ☐ Agritourism Uses / Attracts Visitors to Community
- ☐ Quality of Life / Attracts Residents
- ☐ Farms are not an Economic Benefit
- ☐

Other

9. The Farmland Protection Plan will include research and scoping for up to 5 "Venture Proposals" - new projects or programs that enhance the viability of agriculture in Onondaga County (examples may include a processing facility for value-added ag products, mobile meat processor, biomass production/processing, tourism initiative, etc.)

Are there new agricultural or food related opportunities for your community that would strengthen the local agricultural economy? Please describe any ideas for your community or the region.

Agriculture & Local Governments

10. We are interested in learning what agriculture related regulations and protections ("tools") are most common in municipal codes and plans in Onondaga County, and what items municipalities would like to know more about.

	Tool Is In Place	Working On This Item	Don't Have But Would Like To Know More	Don't Have / Not Interested	Not Applicable to this Municipality	Not Sure
Town/Village Agriculture & Farmland Protection Plan	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Comprehensive Plan (updated in the last 10 years)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Within your Comprehensive Plan, a Discussion of Farmland Protection	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Right to Farm Law	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Agricultural Zoning District (agriculture as the predominant use, although residential and other uses are permitted)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Conservation Subdivision Provisions in Local Codes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

11. What agriculture or farmland protection topics are of interest to you and your community?

	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"/>
Adding additional revenue streams to farms	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Protection of Soils	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Drinking or Public Water Source Protection / Buffering	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Stormwater / Runoff Management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Conservation Subdivisions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Farmland Conservation Easements (Purchase or Donation of Development Rights)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Farm Worker Housing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Food Processing & Distribution	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Very Interested	Somewhat Interested	Neutral	Not Very Interested	Not Interested / Not Applicable
Farmers Markets / Farmstands	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Buy Local / Promoting Local Farms	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Zoning for Agriculture	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Zoning for Breweries, Wineries, Farm to Table Restaurants, etc.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Farm Activities on Residential Parcels (chickens, bees, etc)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

12. Commercial solar development, or "solar farms", are now emerging in Onondaga County. Please share your municipality's views on commercial solar development, particularly as it relates to agriculture and/or local regulation of larger-scale solar projects.

The Agriculture & Farmland Protection Planning Process

13. The Project Team is preparing a Municipal Toolbox of best practices in local government support of agricultural communities and farmland protection.

As part of this effort, the Team is also seeking up to 5 municipalities in Onondaga County to undergo a voluntary Farm-Friendly Assessment of local plans and regulations, based on the Toolbox and your questions or items of local interest.

To participate, you will be asked to submit your plans and code documents, and we will schedule a brief Zoom call with municipal representatives. Once complete, the Planning Team will share a written Farm-Friendly Assessment with you to share with your boards, staff and residents as you wish. The team will also host a webinar open to all municipalities at the end of the process to review the Toolbox and general findings from the Farm-Friendly Assessments.

Would your municipality like to be considered for a Farm-Friendly Assessment?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Maybe, please contact me to discuss

14. If you are interested in a Farm-Friendly Assessment, please enter contact information for the municipal representative we should coordinate with.

15. Please help us spread the word about the Onondaga County Agriculture & Farmland Protection Plan. Please indicate your interest in the following:

- ☐ I/we would like to volunteer to serve on a Municipal Focus Group in Fall 2021
 - ☐ Please send flyers or postcards to display in our municipal offices
 - ☐ Please send materials to provide a link on our website to the plan and upcoming events
 - ☐ We would be happy to share information via our facebook/twitter pages
 - ☐ We would like a presentation to our Board or Committee on the Plan
 - ☐
- Other

16. Please share your thoughts! Provide any comments or questions in the space below relating to the Onondaga County Agriculture & Farmland Protection Plan or other topics related to agriculture.

Thank You

Please visit our website at agriculture.ongov.net (<http://agriculture.ongov.net>) for content, news and updates. We will be reaching out to you in the near future with additional opportunities to participate in the Onondaga County Agriculture & Farmland Protection Plan Update. Thank you for your time. Let's Grow Agriculture!!

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 Microsoft Forms

Municipal Survey Results

21 responses

- 13 of 19 towns
- 6 of 15 villages
- City of Syracuse

Reported conflicts

- Manure (application, storage, and transportation)
- Urban sprawl
- Acreage requirements to have animals

Top three reasons for changes to agricultural land uses

- Decrease in small farms (10)
- Large farms are purchasing smaller farms (8)
- Increase in agritourism land uses (8)
- Landowners are selling agricultural or open space land to residential (5), commercial/industrial developers (3)

Municipal Survey Results

Top benefits of agriculture

- Low demands on municipal services (11)
- Open space/views increase adjacent land values (10)
- Jobs (8)
- Supports other businesses (8)
- Quality of life/attracts residents (8)

Top challenges

- Residential(6) encroachment
- Labor shortages (6)
- Retirement/succession planning (6)
- Low commodity prices (5)
- Lack of available farmland (5)
- High property taxes (5)

Municipal Survey Results

Top interests re: agriculture

- Commercial solar
- Broadband
- Agritourism
- Soil protection
- Water quality protection
- Farmers markets
- Buy Local
- Zoning (ag protection + agritourism)

Venture proposal ideas

- Agritourism (2)
- Farmers markets (2)
- Eco-tourism
- Buy Local campaign
- Meat processor
- Bio-mass production

ONONDAGA COUNTY AGRICULTURE & FARMLAND PROTECTION PLAN

Farm-Friendly Toolbox Webinar | October 25, 2021



ONONDAGA COUNTY AGRICULTURE & FARMLAND PROTECTION PLAN

Prepared For

Onondaga County Agriculture & Farmland Protection Board (AFPB)
Onondaga County Legislature

Project Team

Syracuse-Onondaga County Planning (SOCPA)
Cornell Cooperative Extension of Onondaga County (CCE)
Onondaga County Soil & Water Conservation District (SCWD)

Consultant Team

EDR (Environmental Design & Research)
George Frantz & Associates
KK&P



Purpose

Report on the State of Onondaga County's Agriculture

Develop a Shared Vision for Agricultural Economic Development and Farmland Protection

Create Actionable Strategies to Increase Agricultural Viability

Increase public awareness and interest in Onondaga County agriculture



Project Elements

Engagement - Farmers, Municipalities, & Public

Municipal Survey
Focus Groups
Public Meetings

Pop- Up Events
Website / Social Media

Agricultural Profiles

Community
Economic
Market Study

Farm-Friendly Toolbox

Farm-Friendly Assessments

Farmland Mapping Tool

Vision & Goals for Agriculture

Implementation Plan

Venture Proposals

October 25, 2021



October 25, 2021



What is the Farm-Friendly Toolbox?

It provides resources for communities to protect farmland through local planning, land use ordinances, and other programs that work.

Basic principles

- Contemporary agricultural enterprises need flexibility to compete
- Agriculture should be promoted to obtain long-term economic viability of in Onondaga County
- Rural character of our communities should be protected from incompatible development

Agriculture today is not what it used to be....

- Complex, capital-intensive business
- Constantly evolving in face of new challenges, new opportunities
- Unstable markets & global competition
- Increasing regulation



Local government decisions impact agriculture

- Comprehensive plans set land use policies that can promote or hinder the long-term trajectory of agriculture in communities
- Zoning regulations impact day-to-day agricultural operations
- Subdivision regulations can impact the agricultural land resources

Changes to New York State Agriculture

	2017	2007	% Change
Number of Farms	33,438	36,352	-8%
Total Value of Production	\$5.369 billion	\$4.419 billion	+21.5%
Grains	\$572 million	\$315 million	+81.0%
Fruits, berries tree nuts	\$400. million	\$363 million	+10.2%
Livestock, poultry & their products	\$3.261 billion	\$2.857 billion	+14.1%
Milk	\$2.528 billion	\$2.280 billion	+10.9%
Cattle	\$426 million	\$318 million	+34.0%
Direct sales marketing	\$316 million	\$77.46 million	+308%

*USDA, Census of Agriculture, 2017, 2007.





Definition:

“...the use of land, buildings, structures, 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 or a hobby...”



New York Agriculture Today



New York Agriculture Today

Farm-Friendly Comprehensive Plans

- Recognize the importance of agricultural land as a natural resource and an economic asset
- Document agricultural operations in the community and their characteristics
- Identify the challenges, opportunities weaknesses & strengths of local agriculture



Farm-Friendly Comprehensive Plans

- Recognize the economic potential of a robust, local food and agriculture system
- Move beyond viewing farmland “simply as land in reserve for future urban development”
- Provide a clear set of goals, objectives, and policies to protect the agricultural land resource, and promote the long-term viability of local agriculture



Other Farm-Friendly Plans

Municipal Agriculture & Farmland Protection Plans

- Community-based, farmer guided
- Detailed look at the farm sector and issues it faces
- Tailored recommendations to enhance long-term viability of local agriculture
- Long-term protection of the agricultural land resource
- Long-term viability of local agriculture



Other Farm-Friendly Plans - Open Space Plans

- Detailed look at community open space resources: ecological, recreational, scenic, agricultural lands
- Tailored recommendations to enhance long-term protection of open space resources, including agricultural lands



Other Farm-Friendly Plans

Local Economic Development Plans

- \$15.5 billion annually to State's economy
- Key part of the local economic base
- One element in a diverse economic base
- Policies and actions that can promote growth of agricultural sector



Farm-Friendly Zoning

- Promotes agriculture as a legitimate, long-term land use with the same status of other land uses
- Protects the agricultural land asset by channeling development away from actively farmed areas
- Provides farmers the flexibility they need to adapt and compete in a dynamic market
- Avoids unreasonably burdensome restrictions on agricultural operations



Farm-Friendly Zoning Definitions

- Comprehensive
- Clear and concise
- Ensure the term is defined as you mean it to be defined
- Don't fall back on the NYS Ag & Markets definitions
- Leave behind commonly used terms (those that can be defined in the dictionary)



Farm-Friendly Zoning Definitions

- Are they up-to-date?
- Definition of agriculture
- Other key definitions
 - Agriculture-related businesses
 - Agri-tourism
 - Farm brewery, farm cidery, farm distillery, farm winery
 - Farmstand
 - On-farm commercial processing
 - Business directional signs



Farm-Friendly Zoning Definitions

Agriculture

The use of land and on-farm buildings, equipment, manure processing and handling facilities, and practices which contribute to the production, preparation and marketing of crops, animal husbandry, livestock and livestock products as a commercial enterprise, including a commercial horse-boarding operation, and timber processing as defined in this zoning law.

* Example only. Consult your municipal attorney when amending any zoning regulations.



Farm-Friendly Zoning Definitions

Agri-tourism

An agriculture-related enterprise, operated as an accessory use to an active farm operation engaged in the production, preparation and marketing of crops, animal husbandry, livestock and livestock products as a commercial enterprise, which brings together tourism and agriculture for the education and enjoyment of the public, and which may include: hay rides, corn mazes, hay mazes, petting zoos (farm animals only), farm tours and agriculture themed festivals and other public or private events.”

* Example only. Consult your municipal attorney when amending any zoning regulations.



Farm-Friendly Zoning Definitions

Business Directional Signs

“A sign located off the premises on which a business is located, not exceeding nine square feet in area, posted by the business along a public road or highway for the purpose of guiding prospective customers to their location.”

* Example only. Consult your municipal attorney when amending any zoning regulations.



Farm-Friendly Zoning Definitions

Farmstand

A permanent or temporary structure and accessory use to an ongoing agricultural operation, with or without appurtenant open display area, for the retail and wholesale sale of agricultural produce and other natural, processed or manufactured food products which are directly linked to and promote the use and sale of agricultural products.

* Example only. Consult your municipal attorney when amending any zoning regulations.



Farm-Friendly Zoning Definitions

On-Farm Processing

The production or processing of whole fruit and vegetables, baked cakes, muffins, pies or cookies, candy, jellies, jams, preserves, marmalades, cheeses, butters, and other milk derived products, meats and meat products and other foodstuffs, as regulated by state and federal law, for wholesale or retail sale, and operated as an accessory use to an active farm operation engaged in the production, preparation and marketing of crops, animal husbandry, livestock and livestock products as a commercial enterprise.

* Example only. Consult your municipal attorney when amending any zoning regulations.



**Farm-Friendly Zoning
Definitions**

Farm brewery, cidery, distillery, winery

The production or processing of whole fruit vegetables and grains into beer, cider, distilled spirits or wine for wholesale or retail sale as regulated by state and federal law, operated as an accessory use to an active farm operation, and which may include subsidiary cafes, tasting rooms, gift shops and agri-tourism activities."

* Example only. Consult your municipal attorney when amending any zoning regulations.



**Farm-Friendly Zoning
Definitions**

By right: permitted with approval of building permit, etc.

Accessory use: a subordinate and incidental use to a primary permitted land use (e.g., agriculture) on the same property



**Farm-Friendly Zoning
Definitions**

Site Plan Approval: A technical review of a proposed development, generally by a planning board, to ensure conformance with zoning, local design standards, engineering standards and, to ensure the health and safety of the general public entering the premise



**Farm-Friendly Zoning
Definitions**

Special Use Permit/Special Approval: Higher level of review for proposed development which is permitted in a zoning ordinance or local law, subject to conditions to ensure that the proposed use is in harmony with zoning and will not adversely affect the neighborhood if such requirements are met



Renewable Energy Regulations: Non-commercial

- Non-commercial solar and wind renewable energy systems are appropriate accessory uses to agricultural operations and should be permitted as such in zoning codes;
- Protected uses under the “use of land, buildings, structures, equipment” language in the NYS definition of farm operation;
- Should be permitted by right with building, other relevant permits.



Renewable Energy Regulations: Commercial

- Commercial wind renewable energy systems are considered generally compatible with agriculture
- Commercial scale solar can present major issues
 - Competition for higher quality farmland
 - Locate on inactive farmland, unimproved pasture or other lands
 - Decommissioning plan to fully restore site critical



Renewable Energy Regulations: Section 94-c:

- Office of Renewable Energy Siting oversees approval of solar and wind energy projects with 25 MW/year or more capacity
- Must consider local land use regulations in its review
- Has power to override “unreasonably burdensome” local regulations



31

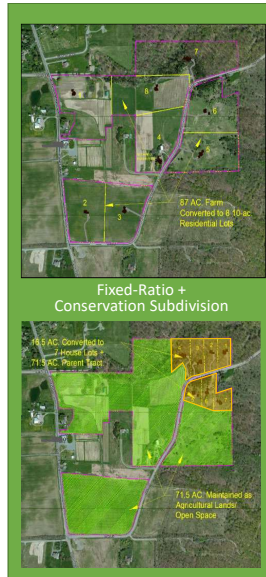
Renewable Energy Regulations: Section 94-c

- Local land use regulations must be clear:
 - Where such development is permitted, include prohibition on use of best quality agricultural soils
 - Have clear design and operating standards for such development



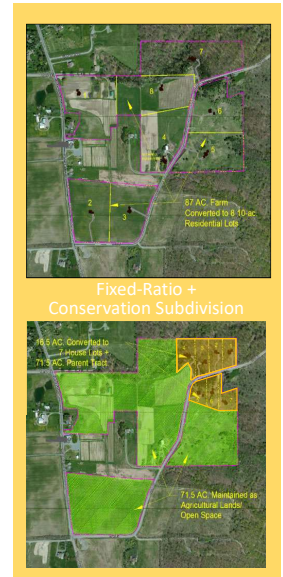
Fixed Ratio (Density Averaging) Zoning

- Zoning and subdivision concept in which density is calculated by number of lots permitted based on acreage (e.g., 1 lot for each 10 acres)
- Permitted lot sizes much smaller: 1 to 2 acres or minimum required for on-lot septic
- Permits small scale low density rural subdivision by landowners
- Can preserve large tracts of agricultural lands



Conservation Subdivision

- Avoids productive agricultural lands and environmentally sensitive areas through careful placement of individual homes on a site
- Utilizes smaller than conventional permitted lot sizes: 1-acre or minimum required for on-lot septic
- Preserves large tracts of open space and agricultural lands, and rural character



Purchase of Development Rights

- Voluntary between a landowner and another party to permanently protect farmland
- Landowner surrenders their rights to develop the land, accepts restrictions that protect the agricultural land and other open space lands
- Provides cash compensation to landowner;
- Can be state, locally funded, or combination
- Not-for profit land trusts also active

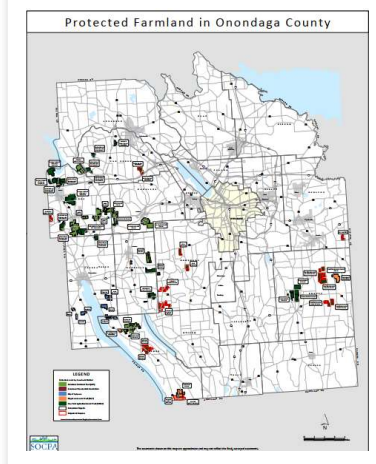


Purchase of Development Rights (PDR)

Protected lands through PDR in Onondaga County

- Over 30 farms protected
- Over 13, 000 acres protected

For more information on PDR visit:
<http://www.ongov.net/planning/pdr.html>



Questions?

ONONDAGA COUNTY
AGRICULTURE AND FARMLAND PROTECTION PLAN
agriculture.ongov.net

PLAN ONONDAGA
COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
plan.ongov.net



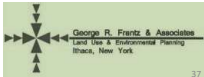
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ONONDAGA COUNTY AGRICULTURE & FARMLAND PROTECTION PLAN

Presentation for Municipalities;
June 2021



What is the Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan?

- Update to the 1997 plan
- Reports on the state of Onondaga County's agriculture
- Provides a framework for both protecting our farmland and supporting agricultural viability



Project Team

County (Syracuse-Onondaga County Planning Agency) - principal point of contact for all inquiries regarding the project

Cornell Cooperative Extension - staff resources toward assistance with the planning process in stakeholder engagement and facilitation of the public meetings

Consultant Team

EDR - project manager and primary contact for consultants during this project

George Frantz & Associates - specialist related to local regulations and farmland protection

KK&P - specialists related to food system policy and market assessment

Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board - oversight committee for the plan



Goals of the Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan

Describe current agricultural conditions in Onondaga County

Develop a shared vision for agricultural economic development and farmland protection

Create actionable strategies to increase agricultural viability

Encourage and support farmland protection

Increase public interest and awareness of local agriculture.

Farmer, landowner and municipal engagement is key.

Link to NYSDAM Circular 1500 Art. 25AA on Ag and Farmland Protection Programs:
https://apps.agriculture.ny.gov/rfps/CAFPPGA/Article25AAA_Circular1500.pdf

Goals of the Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan

Project Kick-Off

Gathering Data

Modeling and Assessing

Vision and Goal Development

Strategies

Final Adoption



Memorandum

To: Megan Costa and George Frantz
From: Erica Tauzer
Date: July 2, 2021
Reference: Meetings with Town of Onondaga and Town of LaFayette to Launch County Ag Plan Farm Friendly Assessments
EDR Project No: 20242

Below are notes from the introductory meetings for Farm Friendly Assessments in the Towns of Onondaga (held June 30th) and LaFayette (held July 2nd). Feel free to add to this as needed with your own notes.

2021-06-30

**Project Team: Megan, Dan, George, Erica
Tony Donito and John Mahar (Dep. Supervisor)**

Presentation observations:

Presentation from Megan on Ag Plan – remove the word “audits” (should be assessments)
How exactly *does* the development pressure in Onondaga County compare to other places that have used Lancaster/Maryland? If things start picking up here, we should be monitoring this to possibly recommend TDR in the future.

Issues to Consider:

New types of ag becoming agri-commercial, how does ag infringe on the ever-increasing residential activities, balancing act needed and to date Town feels pretty good about striking that balance, Town of Onondaga has most of Beak n Skiff within the Town

GF: How do you protect things like noise complaints or other issues related to large events? How do we keep the idea from mushrooming/event centers popping up everywhere?

Town: B&S is their own neighbor, the issues occur when smaller farms within ag districts want to become the new B&S and they're in proximity to housing, farmer needs to be a good partner (they hire sheriffs for traffic control), so far so good: no issues have occurred as of yet.

DK: Corridor Plan for Rte 20 to inform DOT management for EcoTourism
Navarro Orchards is big too.

Town of Onondaga Mennonite and Amish populations have expanded rapidly; commercial home businesses require

Solar development – Town does not permit commercial solar in residential or residential country, just in light industrial zone (landfill would be a good spot for it). Use variance is required. This has kept the developers out. There was an individual farmer that wanted to sell to solar as a way to retire; town met with him and said no because it would be an exception to the rule. Zoning based on soil types can make it hard for solar facility layouts and neighbor payments. 2 ac parcels required for areas that are off water/sewer.

PDR- has been supported; conservation easements lock farming in for ag use. The Town sees their zoning for agricultural areas as enough protection given the development pressure, especially when compared to places like the Town of Otisco. Sewer line extensions are expensive and are the main deterrent for sprawl, and 2 acre lot zoning keeps residential from expanding (but in theory could keep the area from expanding).

Smell complaints from liquid fertilizer (DEC receives them); Hourigan Farms is the main instigator, no right to farm law.

Processing/indoor farming/large commercial areas? None identifiable off the top of their head, small vacant areas along Salina/Nedrow with some possibilities

202-07-21

Town of LaFayette: Supervisor Bill McConnell and Councilor Melanie Palmer

Project Team: Megan, Dan, Erica

Issues to consider:

Landowners use small parcels as dumping ground for liquid manure which creates environmental issues; how do young farmers compete? Update to comp plan by B&L; comp plan 2012 original; 2014 LaFayette; hamlet plan too: synergies and AgriTourism

Residents struggle with farm activities; manure storage can create hot spots of resident opposition, education on municipal staff is needed to answer and respond to residents about right-to-farm activities; 20 year residents are now seeing large out-of-town landowners come in and complaining about smells they never had to worry about before.

Where are all the young farmers? Would be interested in understanding land succession issues more. How can young people compete as ag operations are getting larger and larger.

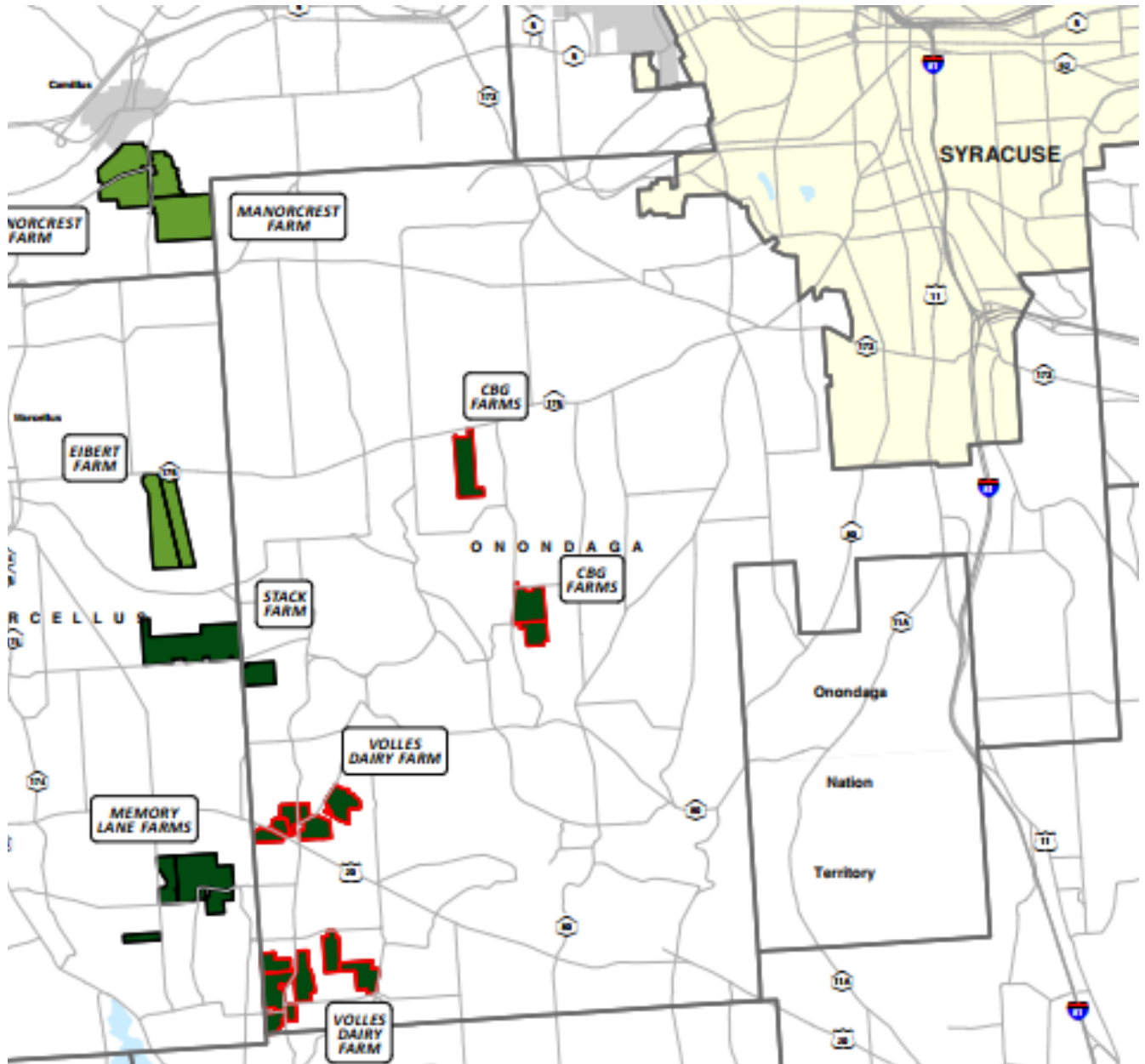
Agri-Tourism needs to be the focus; farms that need to make extra income: How to protect the land and viewscape to not be sold off (e.g. solar)? How to make it in the future (llama farm)? Value-added businesses small farm?

Make sure Route 20/Route 80 corridor plan and hamlet plan converge

Over the past 7 years, we've tried to have regional markets but they have failed because of lack of traffic; maybe Cornell could start an incubator farm?

Next Steps:

1. We can present report to Town board- they would like to (August meeting, 2nd Tuesday of the month)
2. Melanie will be go-to person for Town: mjp6331@gmail.com





Memorandum

To: Megan Costa and George Frantz
From: Erica Tauzer
Date: July 6, 2021
Reference: Meetings with Town of Cicero to Launch County Ag Plan Farm Friendly Assessments
EDR Project No: 20242

Below are notes from the introductory meetings for Farm Friendly Assessments in the Town of Cicero (held July 6th). Feel free to add to this as needed with your own notes.

2021-06-30

Project Team: Megan, Dan, George, Erica

Kate Fiorello (Town Engineer), Gabrielle (Supervisor's Secretary), Mark Marzullo, Mike Mirizio (Planning Board), Mark Parrish (Engineer), Mike Becallo (Town Board member)

Notes:

Cicero –suburban community currently; much of which George presented on does not apply and that's ok. It's time to discuss what the future of farming is for the Town. Is what little ag that is left in the Town something that they do want to protect? Even though there is a small base, could there be an increased role in the Syracuse metro food system?

There is about 7-8 farmers; they were too busy to join in because it's farming season.

Right to Farm Law: no?

Town Comprehensive Plan: ongoing for the next year or two, just starting. Comprehensive Planning process is just starting. Citizen volunteers have stepped up (about 24 so far). They would like to bring us into the Comp Plan process in any way possible. One focus that they need to build in: ag zone allows for residential dev but not with the same density; issue is that ag zoned land is converting to residentially zoned land.

Any topics to explore further? Barrone's farm did a hop house/brewery restaurant, and it looks nice (this area is actually zoned commercial but partially ag too; zoning process was easy,). "We hope the farms that we have left stay, and the zones are allowing agriculture, but it is a hard thing to protect what few farms are left".

Solar ordinance is in the process of being drafted; they will send that along. County has some solar guidance on website (specifically how to balance/review projects on ag land), and Town is interested in it.

What is the profit margin of ag lands in Cicero? It seems like they would be high. We should point this out, because there may be a great future in high-value ag produce (e.g. greenhouses).

Residential ag: chickens, bees, etc. – specific design standards, basic language would be helpful. Town is interested.

Next steps:

Questions? Call Kate.

In a month, we'll call with the findings and report back to the board if desired.



Memorandum

To: Megan Costa and George Frantz
From: Erica Tauzer
Date: July 9, 2021
Reference: Meetings with Town of Cicero to Launch County Ag Plan Farm Friendly Assessments
EDR Project No: 20242

Below are notes from the introductory meetings for Farm Friendly Assessments in the Town of Cicero (held July 6th). Feel free to add to this as needed with your own notes.

2021-06-30

Project Team: Megan, Dan, George, Erica

Town representatives: Sara Bollinger (Town Councilor, Co-Chair of Comp Plan committee), Judie Fenster (100 ac part farm) knit farmland into other uses, Richard Rosetti (Town Planning Board), Doug Miller (Planning and Dev Office as assistant of activities, member of community since 1966), Edward (Town of Manlius Supervisor), Melissa Spicer (Farmer wants to make farm Forever Wild/Forever Farm, grass fed beef, lease farmland to others as well)

Notes:

Recognition that Manlius has unique challenges re: growth management and zoning. That said, has a lot of land in the ag district.

Richard: zoning code is not going to help much with these questions.

GF: This is common throughout NYS; you're not alone. Planners have finally begun to catch up to the need for local agriculture in efforts to promote sustainability. Urban agriculture is thought of more regionally in other counties than it is here.

Sarah: Farmland protection is a focus on the comp plan too; need to adjust our Comp Plan efforts to adapt the zoning code.

Edward: Manlius' challenge at this point is that there's not enough farmland left to protect. What can we do to generate more farming incomes for people?

Doug Miller: Silviculture is becoming more of thing (3-4 farms), microbreweries and small operations, Mulaney off of Pck Hill now leases out, Allen Olmstead real estate agent lives in the town, how can we start promoting things that fly under the radar today?

Meg: Are large dairy farmers buying up land and cutting out smaller farms?

- Town's response: No, largest farm is Gridly but they no longer do dairy. That's not happening here like it is in the southern town.

Melissa: Our next gen of farmers is struggling to see farming in their future. How can the local municipalities keep land in ag and not sell off to renewable energy? We have a historical revolutionary farm tract. Manlius's farmers are interested in keeping large tracts in tact. The farmer community is aware of this

Richard: lack of municipal infrastructure keeps sprawl away.

- Doug's Response: ...but there's pressure to expand.

Doug: Another interesting aspect is the diversification and the different types of farming in different areas of the Town, flatter areas have more fruit/flower farming, Nicotra farm stand near intersection in Kirkville is nice.

- GF: Lancaster County now has a farm stand that's larger than small shopping malls. Be careful what you wish for.

Ed: Increased awareness of different varieties of farms in the Town, Would love to promote Manlius in terms of its agricultural land area: are there programs to promote local agriculture?

- Megan will bring this up to the Onondaga Grown campaign.

Richard: Timing couldn't be better; solar is a hot topic. Is there any kind of an IMA? Contract?

- Megan: No- this is a free service for municipalities.

Sara Bollinger: Maybe we could create our own local designation for local agriculture? Like how historic properties are labeled with signs.

Melissa Spicer: A bit of confusion about the County's efforts to protect farmland (specifically "Farm Plan" listed in pre-application) compared to FSA services (CRP) for farm plan. How do these

compare and what does that term "Farm Plan" mean? We just want to do the right thing for our land, but there are multiple programs that .

- Meg: we will take a careful look at this in our data gathering.

Board is seeking moratorium for now re: solar. Have had 7 or so plans, but some of them haven't been serious, only one has been initiated so far. We can all agree that solar is going to be around, so we need to think about it now.

Next Steps:

- Timeline: August to turn over results, public outreach in mid-fall, Late Winter to share results

ONONDAGA COUNTY AGRICULTURE & FARMLAND PROTECTION PLAN

Natural Resources Focus Group
November 29, 2021



November 29, 2021

Agriculture & Farmland Protection Plan Focus Groups
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1

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2

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3. Review of Relevant Data and Gaps (10 mins)
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Develop a Shared Vision for Agricultural Economic Development and Farmland Protection

Create Actionable Strategies to Increase Agricultural Viability

Increase public awareness and interest in Onondaga County agriculture



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Municipal Survey

Focus Groups

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Pop-Up Events

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Agricultural Profiles

Community

Economic

Market Trend Assessment

Farm-Friendly Toolbox

Farmland Mapping Tool

Vision & Goals for Agriculture

Implementation Plan

Venture Proposals



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5



Purpose of Focus Groups

Let us know your thoughts on the county's agriculture & food system

- Environmental, economic, or social connections
- Impact of local resources and regulations
- Barriers and opportunities for growth and viability

November 29, 2021

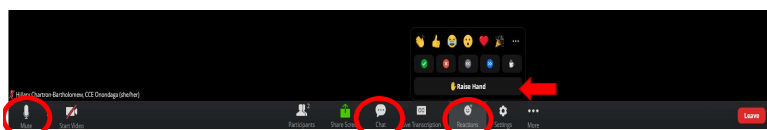
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- **Test it out** – Send your name and organization in the chat

Helpful Hint: Move your cursor if controls disappear from your screen



General Questions / Ice Breakers

Please introduce yourself briefly before answering!

Local
Advantages
and Strengths

What are the advantages of Onondaga County over other areas when it comes to agriculture?

Local Needs &
Barriers

What makes farming in Onondaga County difficult? What are ways to overcome these barriers?

Future Growth
&
Opportunities

How can Onondaga County better support agriculture and the local food system?

November 29, 2021

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8

General Questions

Local Advantages and Strengths

Local Needs & Barriers

Future Growth & Opportunities

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How can Onondaga County better support agriculture and the local food system?

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General Questions

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How can Onondaga County better support agriculture and the local food system?

Soil & Agriculture

Soils in Onondaga County are some of the best in New York State, over 70% classified as important farmland soils.

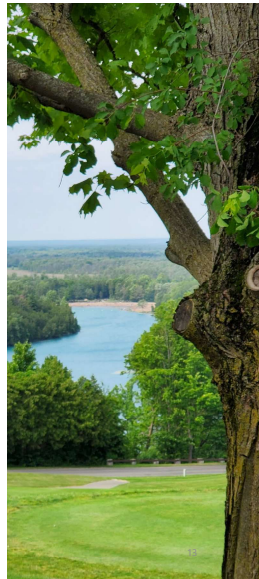


Water & Agriculture

Onondaga County has public drinking water sources from the Skaneateles Watershed and the Peble Aquifer.

Most farms within these areas have enrolled in the Whole Farm Planning process to address water quality concerns on farmland.

There are other private water systems near agricultural areas.

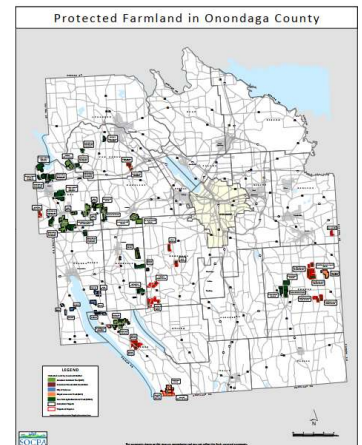


Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) & Agriculture

Protected lands through PDR in Onondaga County

- Over 30 farms protected
- Over 13, 000 acres protected

For more information on PDR visit:
<http://www.ongov.net/planning/pdr.html>



Natural Resources Focus Group Jam-Board:

<https://jamboard.google.com/d/14K12eKCZOuV42OoigQNopBYRKAZU1gXNSw31tWn92gE/edit?usp=sharing>

AFPP FOCUS GROUP: ENVIRONMENT
Nov 29, 10am

Attendees:

Brian Reeves, Reeves Farm, AFPB Board Chair
Mark Tucker, Tucker Farm, AFPB Board Member
Frank Moses, Skan Lake Association
Tim Creamer, Otisco Lake Preservation Association
Tarki Heath, Tully/Kettle Lakes Association
Jeanie Gleisner, CNY Regional Planning & Development Board
Rich Abbott, Syracuse Water Department, Watershed Quality Manager
Raymond Heer, Heer Farms (no till crop farm)
Will & Patrick Frazee, Frazee Farms
Christina Kohler, Hudson Egg Farms
Lynn Lunch, President of Eno Point Campers Assoc and Op Mgr at Scolarlo law firm
Keith Ward, Tiognioga Lake Pres Found
Jim & Ryker Smith, Tre-G Farms, Farm Bureau
Mark Burger, OC SWCD
Travis Glazier, On Co Office of the Environment
Erica Tauzer & Jane Rice, EDR
Dan Kwasnowski & Megan Costa, SOCPA
David Skeval & Hilary Chartron-Barthowamew, CCE

Icebreakers:

Advantages:

Lot of Farmland
Great Soils
What County doing to engage in pride in OnCo farms, marketing being done
Accessibility to our farms in the region
Proximity to transportation assets for agritourism and markets
Water Supply for Agriculture

Difficulties:

Need more education of non-ag folks in county, Skan Lake Wshed (eg. manure nutrient applications)
Farmers being persecuted for meeting quality standards

County Support:

Water – common sense approach to water management, allow farmers to keep farming (with innovative solutions and financial help) since all
Crossroads/Sweet Spot in watershed
Reducing risk of too much water, with climate change
Difficulties with too much water, but also times with inadequate water
Stronger education posture for getting word out for what being done and how successful they are
Water is near and dear, with so many benefits, but can be bane of existence
Issues with runoff, better controls as far as nutrient load

Bridge between preserving ag nutrients for ag benefit as well as for watershed protection (farmers don't want to lose those nutrients)

Build pride around good works done to help shift negative attitudes, lot of opps

Anticipate climate change impacts – some kind of resiliency planning program specific to ag community; be prepared for drought

Solar - exercise in T Clay, solar as option for ag operations; some guidance for towns so they don't create policies that prohibit flexibility by farmers; lot of externalities that solar on ag may be able to benefit

PLUG: Hazard Mitigation Plan and Solar Guidance

Slides...

Jamboard:

Natural Resource Concerns:

Pollinators – colony collapse; threats to pollinators

Solar – healthy balance? Overdue state level guidance to idea that state/prime soils ;

Soils are never the same, short term 30 years are non productive ag land

What site prep stds help? How to avoid earthen work, how to blend

Soil types best bet, presence of scrub/brush on top is an indicator

Water Quality - runoff

Resiliency – seeing the highs and lows, are they the new norm? lots more 100 year storms, can only design stream stabilization to certain extent, so what are we doing to look at that in the future; what new opps? Wetlands? Shotwell project example;

Capacity – threats larger than remedy?

Folks chomping for immediate fix, but also marathon running important

Not combine subwatersheds

Challenge to improve capacity

Otisco – challenges looking at streams, ditch cleaned by county, runs through 3 props, then under road, barriers are the cooperation from all parties, best to control the stream, and ID responsibility for payment and/or liability, especially downstream

This is the 'back and forth' blame issue

On lakeside can do better maintaining septic and resid runoff, pointing up the hill and down the hill

Land use and land clearing

Solar great on marginal or grazing land but towns resisting,

Find alternate sites – town bldgs.

Tax burden on farmers

Syr water – 62 farm ops down to 46 , fewer operators

Resid and commercial constr, high septic discharge on poor septic soils

Initially farmland, now proposed for devel on poor septic

Dollar value high, developers seeking large tracts of land, and concentrating septic effluent on lots

Concentrating septic

Land devel a major issue

Wetlands – ecosystems services that wetlands provide, anything to conserve open wetlands and potentially create new wetlands/basins in low lying areas for drought times, may be a resiliency action

World renowned watershed protection program (Skan and Otisco/OPWA), but no coordinated watershed effort on others (Seneca, Oneida, Onondaga, Tioghniga, etc.)

How do we get more resources, partnerships, funding etc to other non-drinking watersheds

State co local need to put \$ in those watersheds, ag council

Keith – areas where drinking water, better controls, initiate some controls, very hard to get funding, still heavy rains last few years, lots of inflow/debris, and upper part another issue

Detention basins needed, some control of water

Working with farmers, some changes for when they spray, etc..

Lack of funding for those areas, lot of damage being done, and all those places flow somewhere just as needed

If there are lands going out of production, anecdotally more real estate stresses, if there's something there where might not be ag, but smart growth, infrastructure, 50% match to upgrade septic, etc.

Increase sewer lines on Skan Lake to take pressure off farming community

Role of Land Trusts in Farmland Transition

Need to remember sometimes an unintended consequence of water sewer lines is development of that previously open land (eg. water/sewer that went along southern shore Oneida Lake a few years ago)

Will Frazee - chemical or; anyone on lake associations have data what major concerns are? ID relative to nutrients, ID to what degree septic the issue vs ag

Frank - ESF Hyatt Green? Pilot PCR DNA analysis, human, ag, geese, etc.. some scientific options of interest; 9 element plan with data/modeling; SU representative streams characterization of ag/forest coverage in sub-watersheds could do modeling – Initial take on what you've looked at?

Loss of lake buffers!

30k view: great water quality protection; great natural systems, make sure we're maintaining and not creating new problems, and have resources

Monitoring important

Work Needed:

Volunteer monitoring programs?

Homeowners?

Conservation efforts collaborative in nature

Need to have highway depts. involved when talking about water quality (deicing, esp near steep slopes)

Want farms to have buffer of road ditches, and doing great work on-farm, but if Hwy depts.

cleaning/clearing the actual road ditches irresponsibly, could use a gentle nudge

Do they maintain often enough? Do they maintain well?

WQUIP

NYS EPF most heavily used; used to be 30 now 3, fed \$ dried up

Sometimes the juice of state/fed programs isn't worth the squeeze?

Human resources to push the paperwork; how can entities change the process?

Tell Ag & Markets, others..

Patrick Frazee call:

In a nutshell - 1) be careful placing too much blame on farmers (last slide offensive?) and animal ag for water quality without data showing chemicals in the water; septic are also a core issue; horse farms not regulated, big offender at a local level; organic is not the answer, doesn't provide enough food, 2) He is on Pompey ZBA, and the threat to farming is small scale development, not manlius subdivisions, and 3) To measure solar impacts, suggests looking at yield data (says county collects?) vs soil type; also look for the mapping that shows grid capacity to ID areas susceptible to conversion, very small area in Pompey actually shows potential for solar because of grid capacity

Frank Moses Follow Up

Some Ag related areas that did not come up today that might be of interest in terms of BMP implementation, education, and research -

- Air quality (esp. ammonia) and emissions reduction strategies
- Continuation of spill response efforts and educating watershed communities of what to look out for and who to call.
- Small farm strategies and efforts for those not participating in whole farm and/or Skaneateles Lake Watershed Ag Program
- Analysis on newly emerging agricultural markets and how they potentially compare to current farming market in regards to risk and opportunity assessment for water quality protection- ie. native plant nurseries, hops, hemp, etc.

Jeanie Follow Up

One other thought, related to the issue of farm viability losses to residential development. I think it would be helpful to have a county-wide circuit-rider kind of effort specifically focused on conservation land use training for agricultural viability for municipal planning and zoning boards. I have found that, although we know the proven effectiveness of some of the tools George Franz introduced in the "Toolkit", municipal leaders almost always need more information on the details of the tools, how they work, case study examples, and assistance in setting up locally sensitive regulatory language when they are ready to act on those best practices. They don't generally ask for that level of assistance, and it's a challenging hill to climb to make the local level progress needed in terms of land use regulation updates.

ONONDAGA COUNTY AGRICULTURE & FARMLAND PROTECTION PLAN

Agritourism Focus Group
November 29, 2021



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1

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2

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6

Agriculture in Onondaga County

Onondaga County is an agricultural hub

- 600+ farms contributing \$300+ million

Onondaga County is in the top 5% of U.S. counties for milk production

- Milk accounts for over half of the county's sales, followed by corn and poultry

As a resource base/food shed, agriculture is strong

- Entire metropolitan population of Syracuse could be fed by agriculture within a 20-mile radius



Agri-Tourism in Onondaga County

Farms that participate in agritourism

- Onondaga County farms with agricultural tourism sales is nearly identical with national levels (1.4% of farms)
- Lower than the New York State (2.5% of farms)

Onondaga County's agritourism brings in twice the revenues compared to US, but less than NYS

- Onondaga County: \$5.09 agritourism sales for every \$100,000 in ag sales
- NYS: \$6.86 agritourism sales for every \$100,000 in ag sales



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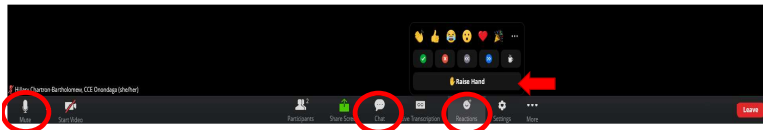
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Agri-Tourism Focus Group Jam-Board link:

<https://jamboard.google.com/d/1Gw6-QuDm96cFHwo2BZEocB1WY415Th3tw6YACz9p8Ls/edit?usp=sharing>

FG NOTES – AGRITOURISM

Nov 29 @ 12:30pm

Paulie Drexler - Springside Farm
James Smith – Tre-G , Farm Bureau
Mark Tucker – Tucker Farm, AFPB
Brian Reeves, Reeves Farms, AFPB Chair
Dan & Megan, SOCPA
Erica & Jane, EDR
David & Hilary, CCE

Slides...

600+ Farms

1.4% of OnCo Farms do agritourism; identical to Nation, less than state

Onco Agritourism brings in 2x revenue compared to US, less than NYS

Onco: \$5.09 agritourism sales for every \$100,000 in ag sales (\$6.86 NYS)

What is Agritourism?

Anything to attract non-farm public to farm props and reason for going has something to do with product of that farm;

Attracted to farm bc of what

Homestead Farms vs Hobby Farms – not necessarily a hobby
smaller commercial

May not be main occupation, but significant nonetheless

Organic farms, xmas trees

Gotta start somewhere

Scenery and landscape is 'part of the product'

Working landscape – diversity of experience

Pumpkins, fall activities, fun and games, (with accidental learning)

End up asking questions that they don't know who else to ask

Lack of knowledge of general public is always surprising

Really based in education and product(s) at its core

"Agritainment" may not be agritourism

Zoning

At Ag & Markets – some venues loosely defined as agritourism, but is it ag? (wedding venues, etc); issues we wrestle; some breweries that look like farm some don't. *Issues for municipal consideration and farmland protection.

Agritourism zoning to allow for flexibility allowances

Wedding venue in ag district needs to be connected to USDA definition of farming

Pompey, has to be attached to 'farm'. What if wedding income exceeds farm income

Any downside for farmers?

Agritourism is great

Skate zoning / special permits, hearings, etc = works well

Most aren't ag

Largely a win-win

How has agritourism changed?

Pressure to get bigger

Expectations of something new each year

Some original customers complain it's too busy

Careful what you add

Gotten bigger, add, add, add

Ones that stay small don't survive (cost of labor)

Traffic/Parking/Safety

Increased ag tourism = increased traffic from non-farmers, accidents with farm vehicles

Educate those wanting to get in – parking, access

Educate drivers – heed farm vehicle characteristics

Traffic control – where does responsibility lie? Farm, Muni, etc ; maybe muni set up framework, but allow owner to come up with own plan.

Crossing the street a real issue

Skaneateles – special permits used for managing safety

Parking is an important first impression

Resources

Direct Farm Mkt Assoc

Value of networking, conferences, etc.

NAFDMA (conf)

Network locally?

Wish Onondaga Grown would do OnFarm Fest in “off season” or 2x/yr when they can offer free admit

Advertising / Mktg is hard

Help with non-farmer skillsets (logistics, zoning, marketing, people skills, etc)

Social media – helps to have someone; google difficult; need internet

Alcohol vs non-alcohol venues

Small vs large – room for both?

Broadband/Internet access is a good problem (online registration)

Internet sales / searches

Farmers sometimes adapt to agritourism

Venture proposals (eg. pasteurization equip may have helped Tucker)

Not enough to promote the diversity that we have

It is not normal, it is unique, that we can feed Syr Metro ourselves

Highest per capita xmas tree sales – but fake one in dtown syr

Greatly accessible, great central locale

Hard to communicate with other farmers

Hub of Ag in non-nyc NY, need to promote

Tell the story of the benefits of the so-called dirty, smelly farms

ONONDAGA COUNTY AGRICULTURE & FARMLAND PROTECTION PLAN

Farming Operations Focus Group
November 30, 2021



November 30, 2021

Agriculture & Farmland Protection Plan Focus Groups
www.agriculture.ongov.net

1

ONONDAGA COUNTY AGRICULTURE & FARMLAND PROTECTION PLAN

Prepared For

Onondaga County Agriculture & Farmland Protection Board (AFPB)
Onondaga County Legislature

Project Team

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Onondaga County Soil & Water Conservation District (SCWD)

Consultant Team

EDR (Environmental Design & Research)
KK&P

George Frantz & Associates



November 30, 2021

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2

Agenda

1. Overview of the Agricultural Plan (10 mins)
2. Review of Relevant Data and Gaps (10 mins)
3. 4. Focus Group Questions (~1 hour)



November 30, 2021

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Purpose of Ag Plan

Report on the State of Onondaga County's Agriculture

Develop a Shared Vision for Agricultural Economic Development and Farmland Protection

Create Actionable Strategies to Increase Agricultural Viability

Increase public awareness and interest in Onondaga County agriculture



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Project Elements

Engagement - Farmers, Municipalities, & Public

Municipal Survey

Focus Groups

Public Meetings

Pop-Up Events

Website / Social Media

Agricultural Profiles

Community

Economic

Market Trend Assessment

Farm-Friendly Toolbox

Farmland Mapping Tool

Vision & Goals for Agriculture

Implementation Plan

Venture Proposals



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We want to hear from you about your thoughts on:

- Local resources and regulations that impact farms or the local food system
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Agriculture in Onondaga County

Onondaga County is an agricultural hub

- 600+ farms contributing \$300+ million

Onondaga County is in the top 5% of U.S. counties for milk production

- Milk accounts for over half of the county's sales, followed by corn and poultry

As a resource base/food shed, agriculture is strong

- Entire metropolitan population of Syracuse could be fed by agriculture within a 20-mile radius



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Agriculture in Onondaga County (con't)

Agricultural producers in Onondaga County tend to be significantly older than the general population in Onondaga County

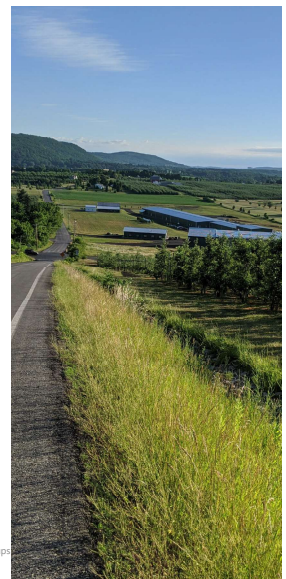
The number of individual farms has declined over the same period, indicating a trend toward larger farms and consolidation.

Land leased by farmers has increased, particularly in for certain types of agricultural production (specifically dairies and field crops).

Solar energy is competing for farmland: energy systems require 5 to 10 acres of land per megawatt of electricity generated

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Relevant Data and Gaps Identified: **Farm Ops**

Fluctuating commodity prices combined with increasing production costs make it challenging.

Due to climate change, increasing common heat waves are expected to stress livestock and crops and prolong exposure to invasive species, causing farms to increase pesticide use. Additionally, wetter springs can delay planting for crops, reducing yields. Floodwaters may also spread invasive plants.



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Who's
Farming
Today?

Would you refer to your operation as small, medium or large? How do the needs of your operation differ from operations of a different size?

What kinds of crops do you grow and how does that impact the challenges you face?

What challenges exist for new farmers in Onondaga County? How are people working around them?

Are farm succession plans common local ag operators? Why or why not?

What labor issues have you encountered in agriculture?

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17

Specific Questions

**LAND
USE**

What are recent trends in land use practices for farming, and how has that changed the ways you practice agriculture?

What issues and opportunities exist with respect to renewable energy development and agriculture?

Do you have any experiences with local regulations, policies, real property tax assessments,, or programs that discourage/hinder the growth of your operation? If so, can you explain the issue(s)?

**TECH.
+
LOCAL
FOOD**

What are some trends in technology (or otherwise) when it comes to local agriculture?

Is the lack of cold storage facilities a barrier for you? What would the facility need to be useful for local farmers?

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18

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19

Future Ventures

Here are some projects that may be promoted by the Ag Plan to venture proposals. Any thoughts?

- Manure digesters on farms or community based.
- Broadband (high speed) internet to support agriculture technology (sensory, GPS, GIS, ect...)
- Cheese plant.
- Meat processing.
- Agriculture and food processing waste disposal especially in meat processing.
- Logistics and distribution centers and a transportation and coordination

FG NOTES – FARM OPERATIONS

Nov 30 @ 11:00am

Erica Tauzer
Megan Costa
Dan Kwasnowski
Jane Rice
George Frantz
Bart Bossard
Pat Frazee
Will Frazee
Brian Reeves
Douglas Blumer
Kevin Doody
Ed Doody
John Fatcheric
Jim Smith
Nancy Hourigan
Lee Hudson

Slides...

Scale + Needs

Small to Medium dairy: land base needed to farm – 1,700 acres operate (w/ cash crop)

Large to medium: smaller farm – direct marketing vs big claim determines what is needed vs consumer cost of food vs local + fresh

Medium size: land sub division regs would be beneficial

Very large: downsized to small with off farm income

Scale has changed/shifted: local muni leaders don't understand the needs and necessary impacts of farming

Medium – should we grow?

(3 family's) land based issues! Farmers are taking all the land.

2 county + 3 townships Sewer line being proposed which will generate pressure to develop land for non-farmer use

Location of new wells in ag/rural area

County Dept of Health

Sewer and water infrastructure: long-term planning with bigger picture

Pressures: next generation – who wants to run it?

Network can be fragile and mostly word of mouth – connection with educational institutions

Large – 3 counties, 4000 cows/9000 acres/75 employees (50 cows per worker)

Sm/Md/Lg (scale is people to animals)

Need the same land base (tight and competitive leasing) and need same labor
Diversification – size – downsized dairy to be organic; robotic (minimal labor) increased efficiency
Land owners may not be local and are not farmers

Land leasing

Waste disposal/community digester – is it worth the effort to invest?

Commercial digging: increases trucking
300 trucks to empty manure pit – one farm with 300 +/- cows. Com. Dig. Will triple truck traffic
On farm digester – one (word with a t) to run several on-farm digesters

Carbon credit vs food waste in digester

Labor issues: biggest competitor for labor is government (handy work up, benefits and predictable hours)

Slintekote

\$ per unit needs to go up

Land Use

Solar – looking for location to transmitter or substation; should move transmission lines to better land that is not prime land.

State agencies should be more progressive with long-term planning

Soil recovery time? Decommission plan?

Stop light approach – go (green), maybe pause (orange), no go (red) – incentives, disincentives, fees

Renewable energy via methane: market rate for energy produced by methane digester

Broadband high-speed internet services necessary for farms to become technically more efficient

Milk processing is trending issue: labor issues, inefficient and out of today's standards, need aseptic processing needed

Update technology– need investment into newer technology - co-ops need assistance

Subsidy – Social Issues – Political Issues

Strategic: educational campaign – law makers, middle business person, __? , __? ?

Spokesperson as 1st line of defense

How do we get general public to understand farming and farmers?

Onondaga Grown campaign

City support/subsidize purchase of local food for school age kids

ONONDAGA COUNTY AGRICULTURE & FARMLAND PROTECTION PLAN

Food Systems / Economic Development Focus Group
December 2, 2021



December 2, 2021

Agriculture & Farmland Protection Plan
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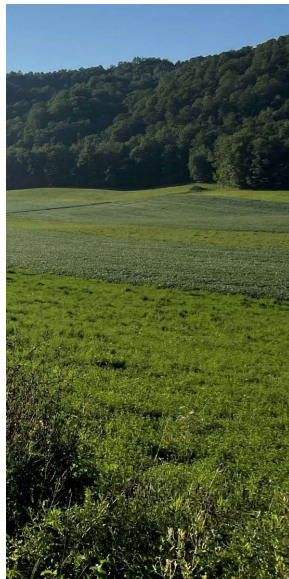
December 2, 2021

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2

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December 2, 2021

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Focus Groups www.agriculture.ongov.net

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Focus Groups www.agriculture.ongov.net

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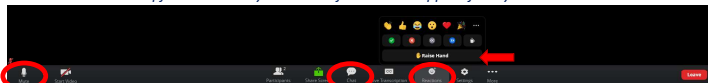
December 2, 2021

6

Basic Zoom Controls

- **Audio/Muting** – All participants will be muted upon entry, you can unmute to speak
- **Chat** – For technical issues or comments
- **Raise Hand** – To be called on so you may unmute and speak

Helpful Hint: Move your cursor if controls disappear from your screen



7

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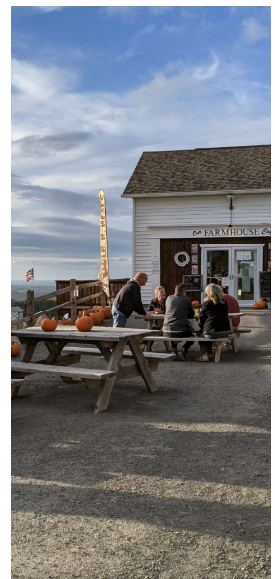
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November 29, 2021

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Gaps identified by Food Plan CNY

Food Plan CNY is part of an ongoing coordinated effort to increase the health of our local food system.

Many people cannot find healthy AND affordable food in their own neighborhoods.

Farmers cannot sustain operations economically.

The region has lost much of its original food processing and distribution infrastructure.

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Using a market-oriented approach: Strong food sectors

Onondaga County businesses in the following food and agricultural sectors employ more employees as a share of total county employment than the national average.

In descending order of Location Quotient (LQ), these are:

- specialty food stores (1.81)
- grocery and related product wholesalers (1.78)
- dairy product manufacturing (1.71)
- cattle ranching and farming (1.53)
- grocery stores (1.36)
- alcoholic beverage retailers (1.30)
- support activities for animal production (1.06).

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Direct Retail Sales

Direct retail sales (selling directly to consumers via farmers' markets, farm stands, CSAs, etc.) is common in Onondaga County but doesn't garner as many sales as elsewhere in NYS

Onondaga County outranks both NYS and national averages in terms of direct retail sales

- In Onondaga County just over 21% of farms have direct retail sales
- 17% of New York state farms, and only 6% of U.S. farms.

Onondaga County exceeds the national average for % of direct retail sales \$, but is less than NYS

- Onondaga County: 2.4% of agricultural sales; National avg 0.7%; NYS average of 4.2%.
- Direct retail sales per capita are higher in Onondaga County (\$9.44) compared to the U.S. as a whole (\$8.57), but also lower than New York State (\$11.40).

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Direct Wholesale

A high proportion of Onondaga County agricultural products are sold via direct wholesale (farmers selling directly to local restaurants, grocers, institutions, etc.).

- Over 14% of county sales are sold via direct wholesale
- More than six times greater than the national average of 2.3% and over twice the state average of 5.9%.
- Nearly 6% of Onondaga County farms have direct wholesale sales, exceeding both the national average of 1.4% and New York State average of 4.8%.

December 2, 2021

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Value-Added Product Sales

More Onondaga County farms have value-added product sales compared to the U.S. and New York state.

- Just over 8% of Onondaga County farms sell value-added products
 - New York State ~6%
 - US: ~1.6%.
- Value-added products constitute 2.5% of Onondaga County agricultural sales
 - nearly 2.5 times US average but less than the New York state average of 3.4%.

December 2, 2021

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Food Systems / Economic Development Focus Group Jam-Board link:

<https://jamboard.google.com/d/1WJsKUDpcKa20FXdWHTjdkHOKMcJVfdZTApwVo9c0OXw/edit?usp=sharing>

Amanda Vitale, CNYRMA
Matt Potteiger, ESF, CNY Food Plan
Brian Reeves, Reeves Farm, AFPB Board Chair
Jenn Smith, Grown NY Program
Len Rauch, Onondaga County Econ Development
John Russo, Russo Produce
Tony Mangano, Emmi & Sons, Inc
Erica, Meg, David, Hilary, Ben, Brian

CNY FOOD PLAN / FOOD SYSTEM

MP: comment on data and local food sales; hard to get; any means to get; USDA getting better but tough
DS: What's a farm? Those \$10k.; 75 dairy farms; 15 of those produce half the milk in OnCo.; so most of our dairies are not "big dairy"; same for vegetable; need to look at scale, and way to look at numbers to put a bit more nuance to it.

BK: fair direct, fair wholesale, but FG to build out qualitative data

Food Systems Plan - How can OnCo better support local agriculture? OnCo in scope of NE, dairy dominates; irony that production, structural issues of concentrated poverty so some don't get adequate food, and farms like other places in global system struggle economically because we haven't looked at it, and need to; potential to think regional local level to address opps; many individuals innovating, but not together. Lot of opportunity to start working regionally.

Got into planning for develop on ag

AV: Once a farm goes out, if not born into it, nearly impossible to afford land and take over ops; hard to do small scale not profitable; people interested but not able to find their way in; when small farm goes out, often taken by larger operation; keeps ag, but not feeding into local sales;

AV: Gaps in local food system, local food deserts surrounding the market; did do a mobile market, but not ultimately consistently successful;

AV: schools local food is a huge struggle in NY, getting fresh product requires manuf and processing; food insecure issues; RMA would like to make the connections/relationships, would be good to have a liaison between farmers and school district;

Liaison: for schools, for farm starts, for farm transitions, can't do until create the market; some kind of coordinating middle market; have had some niche farm to market efforts but very niche; needs sustenance that can work with govt, stakeholders, etc.; to get connections, funding; BK: coordinator role common, wonder if in OnCo an entity to house

John Russo - school dist, local producers, sat with majority of producers, brian, and from that come up with a plan to check all the boxes; problem is there has to be a certain return to farmer to be sustainable

and unfortunately schools can't pay; work with a co-op state growers and packers; doing food boxes, overwrapping, trying to turn total dollars over, need to look at **** How to get the farmer the return they need when dealing with custom orders/customers?? Have a whole business plan, but finding a local processing location hard. Russo has wholesale, but need area to process with food safety/etc., would need a facility. Market has looked at a few locations and prices high. As a group, actively working on. Would like to stay central @ market. Strong distrib channels for large and small farmers.**

Market self funded, no public funds. No budget to outfit a space. Budget to fund processing; market mgmt. looking at; mkt wants to provide facil, but need people

Jenn Smith: Grow NY food and ag startup, work with REDC's so they can facilitate growth; become familiar with things; creating a virtuous dependence on school district is that processing capacity; wondering degree to which other institutions engaged too (SUNY construction fund); somewhere where pooling and infrastructure can be build so other institutions can rely on local producers/; univ good ideas; had discussed other agencies, like senior living; SUNY largest employer, SU tried but not yet successful

TECHNOLOGY

JS: Given what knows about resources, expand drones to automation/robotics, Genius/Tech Garden applicable; one of the reasons I think OnCo should double down and support programs that are supportive of innov and entrepreneurs in drone/robotics, is there creates a draft for workforce development, a way for those not in ag to get involved in food production sector without being a farmer; Erie 21 @ LeMoyne starting in middle school, working with them to try to find some \$ in ag tech sector; build skills to build/maintain equipment; secondary issues, but need farmers to use them; Long term investment sector makes sense.

Broadband is prerequisite for tech

Cannabis is coming, so why not get into the game; next 5 years issues to work through

DS: Turnpike Trail; Add subpage to Onondaga Grown search by product; searchable direct sales; rather than separate; not out of realm to create web resource on how to source local food; some efforts in past, but nothing now; keeping up to date a challenge; good to bring local procurement/access; web based social media platform

Social Media campaign @ RMA; Bill LeMann program to highlight; there are farms that don't go to market; great that market highlighting, but others

Even if product created, need to maintain/sustain the team

PRIORITIES:

Talked about:

Buy Local; marketing; media

Processing for institutions

Broadband

How about:

Meat/Cheese processing?

Logistics, Transp?

Biomass production?

Cold Storage? And Flash Freezing, ability for year round use

Diversifying operations in agriculture – diversifying crops or diversifying

Value Chain Coordinator – human infrastructure

A lot of these in place, look at existing resources to work within them; from Russo, both local in season and ship in during off season; challenge to be sustainable doing just local project in our environment; places like Mineo's; expand on local production within existing distribution channels; ride shares/transp company to share product delivery to NYC; food hubs come and gone

Sat with city schools IQFing quick freeze system

Tony Mangano (Emmi): Labor major issues; everything he grows he sells; labor ine thing going crazy; fed H2A Program; not a lot of local labor; # hrs; more upkeep, ; struggling with cost of labor;

Ag Job fair?

Skilled labor, tractors, harvesting techniques

Robotics, palletizers, robotic technology, mechanics,

Carmen/Joe Emmi – Our family farm 300, down to 150 , love pkg/frozen pkg; can grow as much as need just need right price for product; county help with that

Hard to compete

IF lower threshold to 40 hrs, wont be able to farm again; H2A farmers want the hours even if 60 hr limit; can go elsewhere even though rate higher, by law have to advertise for local lablr ; labor regs,County Lobby governor on labor issues

Not going to be feasible at 40 hours; struggle at 60 ; going to be a time it doesn't work anymore;

Dealing with regs ; looking at getting out of business altogether, roadblocks

Kids gone, no succession,

Willing to do what county wants us to do can't continue labor wage increases and regulation;

Labor when stuff ready to be picked, day off don't want;

Competing with other states

Most of apps for labor from HS kids;

DS: program at RISE immigrant pop training; raised in ag; being acclimated to farm work; pluses for new American program come from that ethic of outside hard labor; maybe catholic charities; a resource in OnCO, but need to

DS: county help with healthcare to migrant workers; farm laborers need healthcare

Please Join Us for a Public Meeting

to present the draft

ONONDAGA COUNTY AGRICULTURE & FARMLAND PROTECTION PLAN

Thursday, April 7

6:00 PM

Marcellus Public Library

Onondaga County has been working over the past year with farmers, municipalities and partner organizations on a new countywide plan to support the next generation of agriculture in Onondaga County. Please join us to share your feedback, and learn about the value of farming in our communities.

For more information, visit agriculture.ongov.net



The Onondaga County Agriculture & Farmland Protection Plan is being overseen by the Onondaga County Legislature's Agriculture & Farmland Protection Board (AFPB) and managed by the Syracuse-Onondaga County Planning Agency (SOCPA), with funding and support from the NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets, the Onondaga County Agriculture Council, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Onondaga County and the Onondaga County Soil & Water Conservation District.

