

FARMLAND PROTECTION PLAN SURVEY for FARMERS Liberty

Agriculture is the #1 year-round business in Sullivan County. Because it is so important, several Sullivan County towns have partnered to develop agricultural enhancement plans. Callicoon together with Delaware, and Bethel together with Liberty have received funding from New York State to support development of these plans and have formed committees to start work. This survey is our first step toward a complete understanding of the many issues, concerns and opportunities related to agriculture. The committees will use this information and other public input to establish goals for the future of agriculture, so that the final plans can help towns better enhance and promote this valuable industry. You have been identified as a person involved with agriculture because you own land with either an agricultural assessment or an agricultural exemption. We need your input in order to make this planning effort a success. **This survey is completely anonymous.** We hope you will take 15 minutes to complete it and return it to the Sullivan County Division of Planning and Environmental Management in the postage paid envelope by **November 18, 2008**. If you are no longer connected with agriculture in any way, please fill out the last page and return. **Thank you!**

1. What is your farm's primary enterprise?

(Please choose one and indicate type or other relevant details.)

- 5 Dairy
- 8 Livestock
- 1 Horticulture
- 0 Christmas Trees
- 0 Cash Crops
- 0 Vegetables
- 0 Fruits
- 0 Forestry
- 0 Beekeeping
- 1 Maple Products
- 2 Other Horses, Hay production

2. What secondary farm and non-farm activities are you engaged in, to diversify your farm? (For example, farmstands, lodging, alternative energy, agri-tourism, etc.)

Logging (3), lumber., garden center farm market, fire-wood, forestry, sell to public, paying taxes

3. Do you sell goods or services at local farmers markets?

1 Yes 16 No

If so, which ones?

Catskill Harvest

4. Please list the number of parcels and the number of acres that you farm in each town, including both land that you own and land that you rent. (# of farms) Total/Average

| Town | Total Acres Owned | Total Acres Rented |
|-----------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Bethel | <u>(3) 1,160/387</u> | <u>(2) 800/400</u> |
| Callicoon | <u>(2) 495/248</u> | <u>(1) 260/260</u> |
| Delaware | <u>(1) 45/45</u> | <u>(0)</u> |
| Liberty | <u>(16) 1,766/110</u> | <u>(8) 1,754/219</u> |

5. How many acres of your land are used for each of the following? Total/Average

Farmstead Complex (house, barns, roads, etc.): 106/8 acres
 Actively farmed: 2,183/146 acres
 Wooded: 1,052/75 acres
 Open, idle land: 61/15 acres
 Rural residence: 11/12.2 acres

6. How many workers (including family) does your farm employ? Total/Average

| | Year-Round | Seasonal |
|-------------------|---------------|--------------|
| Full-Time Workers | <u>92/8.4</u> | <u>3/0.6</u> |
| Part-Time Workers | <u>12/1.5</u> | <u>6/1.2</u> |

7. How many households does your farm support? (Do not include hired help.)

Average 1.1

8. How many years have you owned your farm?

Average 32

9. How long has your land been in farm production?

Average 94

in your family?

Average 50

10. Please rate your level of support for the following farmland protection strategies on a scale of 1 to 4, with 1 being STRONGLY SUPPORT and 4 being STRONGLY OPPOSE (circle the appropriate number).

STRONGLY SUPPORT STRONGLY OPPOSE

| | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
|--|-----------|----------|----------|----------|
| A. Conservation Easements <i>A legal document that restricts the use of land to farming, open space, or wildlife habitat. A landowner may voluntarily sell, lease, or donate an easement to a government agency or private land trust and as a result may be eligible for federal tax and NY property tax benefits.</i> | <u>4</u> | <u>7</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>1</u> |
| B. Purchase of Development Rights <i>The voluntary sale of the rights to develop a piece of property by the landowner to a government agency or land trust. The sale price is determined by an appraisal. The land is permanently restricted to farming or open space.</i> | <u>5</u> | <u>7</u> | <u>1</u> | <u>1</u> |
| C. Transfer of Development Rights <i>Property rights that are not used on the land from which they come. These may be sold to be used on another designated site in a growth area in order to allow the farm or open space to remain undeveloped. It allows landowners to receive the full equity of the property.</i> | <u>5</u> | <u>5</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>1</u> |
| D. Lease of Development Rights <i>When the development rights of a property are leased to a municipality through a contractual agreement for a specified period of time in return for tax benefits or other monetary transaction. This results in land being restricted to farming or open space for that specified time period.</i> | <u>6</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>0</u> |
| E. Farm Friendly Zoning <i>Local regulations that do not restrict agricultural activities. Zoning laws that are farm friendly allow agriculture in more than one zoning district, simplify regulations and standards for farms and agricultural businesses, and allow flexibility in agriculture related businesses on the farm.</i> | <u>14</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> |
| F. Conservation Subdivisions <i>A development design technique that concentrates buildings on a portion of the site to allow the remaining land to be used for recreation, open space, or farming.</i> | <u>8</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>1</u> | <u>1</u> |
| G. Loan Programs <i>Dedicated funding stream to disburse loan funds to farms and agricultural businesses to start new businesses, expand operations and/or diversify.</i> | <u>10</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>1</u> | <u>0</u> |
| H. Differential Assessments <i>When land is assessed for tax purposes as farmland, it is based on its use-value for farming rather than on its "highest and best" use for potential development. New York State offers an agricultural exemption program which lowers the assessment of lands devoted to farming.</i> | <u>14</u> | <u>1</u> | <u>0</u> | <u>1</u> |
| I. Growing New Farmers <i>Promotes and encourages new farmers to locate in the town by offering information, incentives and programs to help them get started.</i> | <u>8</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>1</u> | <u>0</u> |
| J. Ag-Enterprise Zones <i>Designated areas that satisfy income or employment criteria that benefit businesses. For example: 100% exemption from the General Excise Tax (GET), income tax credits, and exemptions from the GET for licensed contractors.</i> | <u>7</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> |
| K. Overlay Zoning District <i>An area where certain additional requirements are superimposed upon a base zoning district or underlying district and where the requirements of the base or underlying district may or may not be altered.</i> | <u>3</u> | <u>5</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>2</u> |
| L. Exclusive Agricultural Zones <i>Zoning districts that only allow agricultural uses and prohibit any other uses unless they are related to farm use.</i> | <u>5</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>5</u> | <u>2</u> |
| M. Sullivan County Agriculture & Farmland Protection Plan <i>A plan created in 1999 to specifically address the development and preservation of farmland in Sullivan County.</i> | <u>11</u> | <u>5</u> | <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> |
| N. Town Comprehensive Plan <i>A plan created at the town level that summarizes the current condition of the community, projects future needs, and develops general policy goals and objectives. The comprehensive plan is the legal basis for zoning and other land use laws.</i> | <u>8</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>0</u> |
| O. Other please explain: _____ | <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> |

11. Please list your top 3 strategies, either from the above list or others, that you feel the town should pursue to help keep farming viable. Top Strategies, (Number of times picked)

E (4), F (4), B (3), H (3), G (2), I (2), L (2), A (1), C (1)

12. What information do you feel the local planning & zoning boards need to ensure that agriculture is considered during project review? (See Attached Notes)

13. Which of the following programs do you currently participate in or have you taken advantage of?

(Check all that apply.)

- 10 Enrolled in a State certified Agricultural District 3 Watershed Agricultural Council Programs
- 11 Agricultural Value Assessment on your property 9 School Tax Relief (STAR) Program
- 9 Agricultural Exemptions on agricultural structures 2 Other: [value added prod. loan](#)
- 0 Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Programs 1 None
- 0 Industrial Development Agency (IDA) Agricultural Tax Abatement
- 0 New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) Programs

14. Please rate the following challenges on a scale of 1 to 4 with 1 being VERY CHALLENGING and 4 being NOT CHALLENGING AT ALL to the future success of your farm (circle the appropriate number).

| | VERY CHALLENGING | | NOT CHALLENGING AT ALL | | NOT APPLICABLE |
|--|------------------|----------|------------------------|----------|----------------|
| A. Availability of farm labor | <u>6</u> | <u>6</u> | <u>1</u> | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> |
| B. Property taxes | <u>14</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> |
| C. Land prices | <u>9</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>1</u> | <u>0</u> | <u>2</u> |
| D. Loss of productive farmland | <u>5</u> | <u>6</u> | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>1</u> |
| E. Rental costs | <u>2</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> |
| F. Availability of rental land | <u>5</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> |
| G. Fuel cost | <u>15</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> |
| H. Residential encroachment/ nuisance complaints | <u>10</u> | <u>1</u> | <u>1</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>1</u> |
| I. Limited succession plans for the farm (few new farmers) | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>0</u> |
| J. Estate taxes | <u>8</u> | <u>5</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>1</u> | <u>1</u> |
| K. Environmental regulations | <u>7</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>0</u> |
| L. Land use regulations (zoning & permitting) | <u>6</u> | <u>7</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>0</u> |
| M. Water availability (quality & quantity) | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>0</u> |
| N. Global climate change | <u>2</u> | <u>6</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>2</u> |
| O. Access to adequate financing | <u>6</u> | <u>5</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>1</u> |
| P. Access to agri-services | <u>4</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>2</u> |
| Q. Access to marketing or business support | <u>4</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>1</u> |
| R. Lack of local consumers/ clients | <u>4</u> | <u>1</u> | <u>5</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>3</u> |
| S. Lack of processing facilities | <u>6</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>2</u> |
| T. Lack of local dairy processing | <u>3</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>3</u> |
| U. Lack of community kitchen | <u>2</u> | <u>1</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> |
| V. Machinery costs | <u>12</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>0</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>1</u> |
| W. Production costs | <u>11</u> | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>1</u> | <u>1</u> |
| X. Other: _____ | <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> |

15. Of the above challenges, what are the top three greatest challenges facing you individually?

Top Challenges, (Number of times picked) B (7), G (5), H (4), V (4), L (3), W (3)

16. What percentage of materials/ equipment/ supplies for your farm do you buy from outside the County?

- 11 Less than 25% 4 25-49% 1 50-74% 1 75-100%

17. What were your gross annual sales last year from your farm?

- 2 \$0 (personal use only) 2 \$25,000 – \$49,999 3 \$200,000 – \$499,999
- 3 \$1- \$9,999 0 \$50,000 – \$99,999 2 \$500,000 +
- 4 \$10,000 – \$24,999 0 \$100,000 – \$199,999

18. About how much of your net family income came from your farm last year?

- 9 Less than 25% 3 25-49% 0 50-74% 4 75-100%

19. What attracted you to farm in Sullivan County?

(See Attached Notes)

- 20. What trends do you see in agriculture in Sullivan County?** (Please check all that apply.)
- 9 A smaller number of large farms
 - 6 Farm diversification
 - 7 A larger number of small operations
 - 8 Movement of farms out of Sullivan County
 - 1 No significant change
 - 1 Other: lot of hobby farms

21. Indicate which of the following you plan to do, and within which timeframe. (Check all that apply.)

| | Within 1 year | ... 5 years | 10 years or more |
|---|---------------|-------------|------------------|
| Increase your farming operation | <u>0</u> | <u>5</u> | <u>1</u> |
| Decrease your farming operation | <u>0</u> | <u>1</u> | <u>3</u> |
| Diversify your farming operation | <u>1</u> | <u>1</u> | <u>3</u> |
| Stay the same | <u>4</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>1</u> |
| Sell all or a portion of your land to another farmer for farm use | <u>0</u> | <u>1</u> | <u>0</u> |
| Sell a portion of your land for non-farm purposes | <u>1</u> | <u>1</u> | <u>0</u> |
| Sell all of your land for non-farm purposes | <u>0</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>0</u> |
| Relocate and continue to farm elsewhere | <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> | <u>1</u> |
| Transfer the farm to a family member | <u>2</u> | <u>0</u> | <u>3</u> |
| Begin a farming operation on your land | <u>0</u> | <u>1</u> | <u>1</u> |
| Stop renting your land for farm use | <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> | <u>1</u> |
| Increase agricultural sales | <u>4</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>2</u> |
| Decrease agricultural sales | <u>0</u> | <u>1</u> | <u>1</u> |
| Eliminate agricultural sales | <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> | <u>1</u> |
| Sign a gas lease | <u>0</u> | <u>5</u> | <u>0</u> |
| Other, please explain: <u>wind farming</u> | <u>1</u> | <u>0</u> | <u>0</u> |

- 22. How concerned are you about the loss of farmland in your town?**
- 10 Very concerned 4 Somewhat concerned 1 Not very concerned 1 Not concerned at all
- Why?** **(See Attached Notes)**

- 23. Do you feel there is a negative relationship between local farms and non-farm neighbors?**
- 5 Yes 9 No **Why or why not?** **(See Attached Notes)**

- 24. What can be done to improve/strengthen the relationship between local farms and non-farm neighbors?** **(See Attached Notes)**

- 25. Do you think natural gas drilling will help or impede agriculture in your town?**
- 9 Help 2 Impede 4 No opinion
- Explain.** **(See Attached Notes)**

- 26. How old are you?**
- 0 Under 25 6 45 - 54 3 65 - 74
0 25 - 34 2 55 - 59 2 75 or older
1 35 - 44 3 60 - 64

- 27. How long have you lived in Sullivan County?**
- 0 5 years or less 1 6-10 years 4 11-20 years 13 more than 20 years

- 28. What is the highest level of education you have completed?**
- 0 Less than 9th grade 2 Some college, no degree 4 Masters Degree
2 9th to 12th grade, no diploma 3 Associates degree 0 Ph.D.
5 High school graduate or GED 1 Bachelors degree

- 29. Please provide any additional comments on preserving local farms and farmlands, below or on a separate sheet of paper. If you have comments specific to a particular town, please be sure to indicate the town's name.** **(See Attached Notes)**

12. What information do you feel the local planning & zoning boards need to ensure that agriculture is considered during project review?

Get zoning/planning to communicate with SCS and Extension agents

Financial importance of farming to local economic

Make sure and tell new home or land owners they are in an ag zone

Basic understand of Ag & Farming and it's approved and (**) practices

Limitation of tract type of home building

One thing you can preserve is land. They don't make land, the land is here and we must preserve what we have.

19. What attracted you to farm in Sullivan County?

Lived here, raised here

close to market NYC and land price was lower than Orange County

family owned farm for many years

We got the land cheap from the Indians years ago. They didn't want to farm here

the land

open space

No people

been here all my life (5th generation on this farm)

location and beauty of land

family/land

family roots

family owned for 70 years

proximity to NYC

22. How concerned are you about the loss of farmland in your town?

demise of agriculture

overdevelopment

keep farming in Sullivan, not a NYC backyard

Farming isn't profitable, so farms will be sold.

because this is what makes this place what it is and why were attracted to it in the first place

loss of ruralness

everyone wants to build

not much open farm land left

23. Do you feel there is a negative relationship between local farms and non-farm neighbors?

Yes perception that I am a nuisance

some neighbors do not understand farming

newcomers do not understand farm business

not always- but many simply don't understand what farming is about and what happens every day

They don't understand farmers feed them- sometimes have to smell the smells.

They don't want smell ****

No seem to like us here

we coexist peacefully

N/A don't have any neighbors

24. What can be done to improve/strengthen the relationship between local farms and non-farm neighbors?

find and utilize planning/zoning board members that have a brain

educated to the neighbors about farming

Good communication.

education of non-farm neighbors

visit a farming facility

**25. Do you think natural gas drilling will help or impede agriculture in your town? Explain:
people will keep their land**

cash for the needed farmer

\$\$

I am concerned about the effect on the water quality and supply.

farmer will sell out

influx of capital

increased non-interest revenue

needs more resources

People will keep their land

29. Please provide any additional comments

Noted on survey: #11 (1) keep taxes low

Noted on survey: #11 lower taxes, #15 (2) taxes (not specific)

strategies town should pursue to help keep farming viable: lower property tax and support Cornell Extension
Town of Liberty is entrenched with politics- the school district is rampant with unimaginative and high spending
officers. (Noted on survey: #15 greatest challenges- taxes, taxes, taxes (but not specific))

Question Marks (?) for 10 C (Transfer of Dev Rights) and K (Overlay Zoning District); Strategy for town to
pursue: tax programs to support the farm community

Noted on survey: #11 strategies for towns to pursue- (1) keep taxes down, (2) encourage young farmers, (3)
give back to your community. #15 greatest challenges- (1) taxes (but not specifically noted), (3) finances
(but not specific- adequate financing or general state of finances?).

Noted on survey: #11 promote agritourism

This was the Pintler dairy farm from 1820. We bought it in 1961 and we don't farm. Fields are used for hay
and David Weiss hays them. (Frances Simulinas, 1089 Briscoe Rd, Swan Lake, NY 12783-5943)

Noted on survey #21: Sign a gas lease-- maybe.

Summary of Liberty Farmer Survey

- Q 1 and 2. There is a small variety of farms represented in the survey with the prevalent products being livestock (including horses) and dairy. Other farms were much less prevalent but included one horticulture, and one maple products farm. Secondary farming operations included logging, garden center, farm market, and fire wood.
- Q 3. One farm sold goods or services at farmers markets at the Catskill Harvest Farmers Market.
- Q4. Within Liberty, 1,766 acres are owned by the farmers who participated in the survey and 1,754 additional acres are rented. The average size of owned land is 110 acres and rented lands average slightly larger (219 acres).
- Q5. Participants categorized about 3,413 acres of the total land into farmsteads, actively farmed land, wooded, idle, and rural residential acres. About 64% of the land is actively farmed and 30% is wooded. Less than 2% is considered idle.
- Q6. 113 people are employed by the farms that participated in the survey. This included 92 full time workers, 12 part time workers employed year-round, 3 full time seasonal and 6 part time seasonal workers.
- Q 7 – 9. These farms typically support one household. Almost all farms have been in existence for a long time: the average number of years the farmer owned the farm was 32, with an average of 50 years in the family.
- Q10. This question explored the level of support for various farmland protection strategies. There was support for most of these techniques from most farmers. However, there was much less support for overlay zoning districts, and exclusive agricultural zones. Those techniques that were strongly supported by more than half the participants included farm friendly zoning, differential assessments, the Sullivan County Ag and Farmland Protection Plan, and Loan programs. There were very few people who strongly opposed these techniques. Most were strongly supported to general support.
- Q11. The participants ranked the farmland protection strategies and in order, chose: farm friendly zoning, conservation subdivisions, purchase of development rights, and differential assessments as preferred methods for the Town to pursue.
- Q12. In order to ensure that agriculture is reviewed adequately by local planning boards, farmers felt there needed to be better education and more communication between the board and farms.
- Q13. A majority of farmers participated in ag value assessments on their property and structures, the STAR tax program, and were enrolled in a State certified Agricultural District. There was very little participation (3 maximum) in the Sustainable

Agriculture Research and Education program, IDA tax abatement programs, NYSERDA programs, and Watershed Ag Council programs.

- Q14. Farmers were asked to identify what their challenges were. Top challenges included property taxes, machinery costs, and fuel costs. Other challenging factors included availability of farm labor, land prices, residential encroachment/nuisances, estate taxes, land use regulations, access to adequate financing, and production costs. Factors that were not as challenging or not applicable to area farmers were availability of rental land, rental costs, water availability, global climate change, access to marketing or business support, lack of local consumers, lack of dairy processing and lack of a community kitchen.
- Q15. Farmers felt that property taxes, fuel costs, machinery costs, and residential encroachments were the top challenges facing them personally.
- Q16. About 50% buy less than 25% of their supplies and equipment from within Sullivan County. Only one participant buys over 75% of their supplies locally. Five farms buy between 25% and 74% of their supplies locally.
- Q17 - 18. Sixteen farms answered these questions. Of these, 56% of participants earn less than \$25,000 in gross sales from their farming operations. Two famers considered their farm personal use only and earned no income from it. About 31% (5 farms) earn over \$200,000 in gross farm income. Nine or about 56% (16 farmers answered this question) consider their farm to contribute less than 25% of their family net income. Four farms considered themselves to have the farm contribute greater than 75% of their family net income.
- Q19. Most farmers indicated they were in Sullivan County because they had family roots and the farm was a family farm. Other factors that attracted people to the area included the beauty, open space, and proximity to markets – especially in New York City.
- Q20. There were mixed opinions about this question. Future trends in farming are felt to be either a smaller number of large farms, movement of farms out of Sullivan County, or a larger number of small operations. However, 6 felt there would be more diversification and one felt there would be no significant change.
- Q21. This question explored farmers' future plans. Plans included staying the same (8 farms), increasing sales (8), transferring farms to a family member (5), and increasing farm operations (6) were the most common strategies. Fewer were planning on selling to another farmer (1), or for non-farm purposes (4). For the most part, this question showed there are about half the farmers who plan on continuing and even increasing their operations. Five plan on signing a gas lease over the next 5 years.
- Q22. Farmers were very concerned (77%) or somewhat concerned about loss of farmland in town. One participant was not very concerned and one was not concerned at all.

The reasons for this concern included loss of farmlands to overdevelopment, loss of ruralness, and loss of character (that is what attracted them in the first place).

Q23 - 24. Slightly more farmers feel that there is no negative relationship with non-farmers. About 36% (of 14 who answered this question) do feel there are negative relationships. Most of the reasons given for the negative relationships revolved around the lack of awareness and information non-farmers have about farming. To improve these relationships, farmers felt there needed to be more education of non-farmers.

Q25. Many more Liberty farmers feel that gas leasing will help agricultural activities (9 out of 15). 60% felt that it would help farmers and 4 participants had no opinion. Reasons were that the added income would be very helpful to keep farmers going from an economic point of view.

Q26. There were no young farmers that were included in the survey. One farmer was between the ages of 35 and 44. Six were between 45 and 54, 5 between 55 and 64, and 5 were over 65 years.

Q27. One participant has lived in Sullivan County for 6 to 10 years, 4 between 11 and 20 years, and 72% have lived in Sullivan County for more than 20 years.

Q28. All participants except two had at least a high school degree. Almost 60% have some college or a college degree and 4 have a master's degree.

Q29. See notes on survey.

What the Survey Tells Us

- There are a wide variety of farms, but dominated by dairy and livestock. Many farmers have secondary operations that further diversify farming in the town.
- Not many farms participate in farmers markets – probably due to the nature of the farm.
- Some Delaware farmers actively own or rent farmland in surrounding towns to support their businesses. A small percentage of farmers have rental lands not owned by the farmer out of the town. However, 67% rely on non-farmer owned/rented lands within town. There is potential that this loss could be very negative on Callicoon farmers.
- The 239 farms who participated in the survey contribute to the employment of the area by employing a total of 60 people for at least part of the year. This is not an unsubstantial contribution to the economy.
- Farms typically support one household and have mostly been in the family for many years. There is a lot of history and experience in the community as a result.
- There is support for many ag protection methods. Overlay zoning techniques would probably not be acceptable. Programs that attracted new farmers, farm friendly zoning, PDR and use of conservation easements, and continued tax benefits for farming are all priority solutions. However, other innovative ideas do have support such as conservation subdivisions, TDR, ag enterprise zones, and even exclusive agricultural zones.
- Overall, participants felt that more education and awareness of the role agriculture plays in the town as well as the potential negative impacts to agriculture need more attention by the local planning board.
- Farmers are taking advantage of some of the tax programs, but not all. This might indicate the need for more education of the farmers about these programs.
- Taxes and operations costs (fuel, machinery, production) were among the top challenges of farmers. They feel that rental land and its cost, water, and access to marketing and business support were not problems. Some farmers who concentrate on fresh produce felt that lack of local processing facilities were a challenge to them.
- Farmers are going out of the area to purchase many of their supplies and equipment. This might indicate that not all services are available locally. It also may indicate that there may be business opportunities for some of these services to be provided locally.
- Unfortunately, the overall economic picture of Delaware farms is not strong, but is

perhaps stronger than in Callicoon. About 50% of the farmers have small gross sales (less than \$25,000) and many have their farms contributing less than 25% of their family income. That means that off-farm income is required and that much of the farms in Town do not contribute to a large degree to the owners income. Compared to Callicoon however, there is more income generated from the farm in Delaware.

- Farmers feel that there will be a loss of farms resulting in fewer farms (some moving out of the county) and farmland being incorporated into other farms. This would result in fewer, but larger farms. They also feel that some farm diversification will occur. Even so, many farmers hope to increase their sales, increase their agricultural operations, and maintain the farms in their families. Three indicated that they would be selling all or part of their farm, but that means that most will be staying the same or attempting to expand.
- There is concern about loss of farmland both from an economic point of view as well as from a community character point of view. Increased development and continued loss of income were reasons why so many were concerned.
- Some farmers are clearly having difficulties with their non-farm relationships. There are still many farmers who have not had that problem, but given that 44% do have issues, it is a problem that needs addressing. Education was the key tactic felt to improve relationships.
- Although there were mixed feelings about the role gas drilling can play in maintaining farms, slightly more people felt it would be good for farmers because they would earn additional income that could keep the farm going and the land in agriculture. Some were clearly concerned about possible negative environmental impacts.
- The farming community is aging and that means that in the next decade or two, there might be significant changes in farm and land ownership. Lack of young farmers is a potential large problem.