

**Jefferson County  
Agricultural and  
Farmland Protection  
Plan  
Background Information**

**Adopted April 5, 2016**

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## Appendix A. Summary of Programs Implemented Since 2002 Plan

### Existing Plans, Programs and Initiatives Based from the 2002 Jefferson County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan

The 2002 Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan established a series of objectives and strategies to protect and conserve viable agricultural land and promote farming in the County. Since that time, the County, along with the agencies and organizations that support agriculture, have made great strides toward reaching goals called for in the 2002 Plan. Projects have been started ranging from developing the Dairy Profit Team concept, promoting County farming through the comfarmwithus.com project and creation of the Jefferson County Agricultural Development Corporation to guide the County's agricultural economic development. These programs have greatly benefited Jefferson farms and have helped position the County to being ranked #4 in the State for dairy production and # 9 for total value of agricultural products sold. Where many locations have experienced loss of their farm economies, Jefferson County has seen increases with more land used for farming and increased market values of products sold. Financial and technical assistance programs and other resources for farmers in Jefferson County are available through numerous local, state, and federal agencies and private organizations.

#### i. Promote Agricultural Protection Programs.

Progress has been made in promoting the existence of NYS Agricultural Districts and enrolling additional landowners in the Districts since the 2002 Plan. Approximately 24,500 additional acres of land have been added since then, bringing the County's Certified Agricultural District total to approximately 200,000 acres.

Jefferson County, in coordination with the American Farmland Trust and the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board, designed a Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program. Requests for proposals from landowners are on hold pending the identification of funds to purchase agriculture conservation easements.

The US Army, in cooperation with Ducks Unlimited, Inc and the Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust, has been operating the Army Compatible Use Buffer (ACUB) program for the past four years. This program purchases conservation easements near the boundary of the US Army's Fort Drum military post in Jefferson County. A total of ten parcels representing 1,935 acres have been protected through this program. Most of the land area protected is in agricultural use. Approximately \$3 million in Federal funds was utilized to purchase the easements.

The Development Authority of the North Country operates a tile drainage loan program that is serving to improve the viability of agricultural land. Since 2001, over 1,400 acres of farmland have been improved through this program at a total project cost of \$860,000.

Jefferson County Soil and Water Conservation District oversees the Agriculture Environmental Management (AEM) program to assist county producers with environmental stewardship to protect the natural resources of Jefferson County. In addition, the SWCD applies for funding annually through NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets, on behalf of county producers, to install a variety of Best Management Practices. These practices protect and enhance the natural resources of the County, in addition to assisting farms meet environmental regulations.

ii. Increase Educational Awareness Programming in Agriculture.

(1) Develop an educational outreach program using existing resources to educate agricultural and non-agricultural communities about what the social and economic value of agriculture and natural resources is in the County.

Home Grown Show- This weekly radio show, conducted by the County's Agricultural Coordinator utilizing a talk radio format, educates listeners on the importance of agriculture to their everyday lives. The show has been running since 2002. The show is available currently on Saturday mornings at 6am on AM 790 WTNY and "on demand" on the internet at [www.790wtny.com](http://www.790wtny.com). The show was recognized by former NYS Governor David Patterson for its contributions to informing the public about agriculture.

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Jefferson County Agricultural Newsletter- While primarily serving the agricultural public, this newsletter provides timely, well written informational articles about agriculture that often educates the farm community about the important role they play socially and economically in the lives of their surrounding communities.

Jefferson County Soil and Water Conservation District Newsletter and website- The Soil and Water Conservation District newsletter and website often feature informative stories about the importance of the abundant natural resources in the community.

[www.comefarmwithus.com](http://www.comefarmwithus.com), was developed in 2002 to accomplish three goals. The first goal is to help promote Jefferson County's agricultural products and destinations to the community. The second goal is to attract new farms and agribusinesses to Jefferson County. The third goal is to provide important and timely information to the agricultural industry.

NNY Business Magazine Monthly: Agricultural Column- Since 2010, a monthly column appears in the magazine providing readers with an insightful examination of current agricultural issues.

Thousand Islands Agricultural Tour- Through a partnership between the Thousand Islands International Tourism Development Council and the Jefferson County Agricultural Coordinator's Office, a drive it yourself tour of agriculture in Jefferson County was created that lets participants enjoy and learn about the variety and

richness of agriculture in Jefferson County. People can visit the website, [www.agvisit.com](http://www.agvisit.com), to learn more.

(2) Continue to inform County officials about the economic importance of agriculture.

Through many of the methods described in (1) above, elected officials are continually reached out to inform them about agricultural issues. In addition, County Legislators serve actively on the Boards for Cornell Cooperative Extension of Jefferson County, Jefferson County Soil and Water Conservation District, Jefferson County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board, and the Jefferson County Agricultural Development Corporation. In addition, members of agricultural organizations and agencies appear in front of the County Board of Legislators to actively engage the Legislators about agricultural issues.

(3) Educate Landowners about agricultural land use programs that are available in Jefferson County.

Through many of the methods described in (1) above, landowners are continually informed about agriculture issues. Another method used to provide opportunity for education is through the County's Land Use Workshop Series. Robert Somers of NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets has twice presented workshops on how land use laws interact with certified Agricultural Districts. In 2010, the series organized a session by David Haight of the American Farmland Trust on the Local Government's Role in Strengthening the Future of Agriculture.

iii. Support the Local Dairy Industry

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Jefferson County is constantly providing educational opportunities and demonstrations to keep farmers aware of new technologies and methodologies to maintain and improve the viability of the dairy industry. Included in these efforts is their Dairy Institute program, which works to train current farm staff to look forward towards an improving future.

Jefferson County Dairy Profit Teams Initiative Through the Jefferson County Agricultural Coordinator's Office, a grant was obtained to help local dairy farms implement the use of advisory boards to help the farm improve profitability and operating efficiencies, and look at new technologies for use on farms. Over seven farms participated in the County. After completion of this pilot program dozens of profit teams started on farms across New York State, the Jefferson County Industrial Development Agency provided further seed funding for more teams and the Development Authority of the North Country also started offering seed money for teams on a regional basis.

Sandy Creeks Watersheds Cow Comfort Grant Initiative- Through a partnership between the Jefferson County Agricultural Coordinator's Office, the Jefferson County Soil and Water Conservation District and the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets, a grant program was offered to dairy farms in southern Jefferson County to help them improve their per cow milk production and milk quality by

introducing new technologies on the farm that improve the comfort and health of their dairy cows.

Support through Grant/Loan Opportunities - Great Lakes Cheese in Adams, NY built a new manufacturing operation on the same property of the old plant. The new plant doubled their capacity to manufacture cheese and increased their demand for milk.

#### iv. New Technologies and Product Development

##### (1) Promote agricultural research in Jefferson County and expand upon these efforts to encourage new product and market development in the region.

Willow Biomass Research- Cornell Cooperative Extension of Jefferson County, the Jefferson County Agricultural Coordinator's Office, Belleville Henderson Central School Agricultural Program and SUNY School of Environmental Science and Forestry partnered to establish a willow biomass demonstration plot at Belleville Henderson Central School. This demonstration plot led to attracting foreign investors into Jefferson County who purchased a farm in northern Jefferson County and have established Celtic Energy Farms. Celtic Energy Farms has obtained over 1,000 acres of land to plant to willow to supply the Re-Energy Black River Power Plant on the US Army Base at Fort Drum.

##### (2) Evaluate specific microclimates and soils in Jefferson County, especially along Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River, which may have the potential for alternative types of agricultural products.

NNY Grape Growers Association- While this initiative did not start under this name, the original group of private entrepreneurs who conducted the initial variety trials of cold hardy species of grapes have grown into the named association. Their initial efforts, to examine which varieties of grapes could be grown in northern New York and turned into products such as wine have yielded tremendous success. Currently, six wineries are operating and over 80 vineyards have been started. An 87-mile wine trail was created to help promote the regions new wine and grape industry.

##### (3) Research what types of agricultural products may be economically viable in Jefferson County.

Northern New York Agricultural Development Program. This program, run by a group of farmers with funding from New York State, has provided research funding for important initiatives that examine new opportunities or how to improve existing methodologies and techniques.

Distilleries – There are two micro distilleries in operation.

## v. Capital Financing Programs

- (1) Develop a database of both public and private funding sources that landowners can gain access to that are less traditional sources of capital.

[www.comefarmwithus.com](http://www.comefarmwithus.com)- A section of this website is dedicated to providing information on funding programs available to the agricultural industry. The site is in need of revamping and updating.

- (2) Continue to support and increase monies available to be used as a capital fund to offer producers low interest rate loans to install tile drainage on their farms.

Development Authority of North Country- As noted earlier, the Development Authority of the North Country continues to provide a valuable low interest tile drainage loan program.

## vi. Marketing

- (1) Promote Jefferson County as a place to develop other types of agricultural production enterprises.

Come Farm With Us Regional Farm Marketing Program- This regional marketing program actively recruited agricultural enterprises from across the Northeast, Mid-Atlantic and Mid-Western United States. Lack of funding sources has led to the program becoming inactive. While active, numerous farmers visited the North Country region looking for opportunities to start beef, vegetable, fruit, small livestock, poultry and other types of agricultural production operations. Probably the greatest success of this program was attracting Morris Northstar Hatchery into Jefferson County which is a multi-million-dollar high tech egg hatchery exporting broiler chicks.

- (2) Increase the marketing and promotion of locally produced products and businesses by creating new farmer's markets and encouraging greater use of existing markets.

In 2012, during the height of the July- September growing season, there were farmers markets every day except Sunday. Four days a week, there were multiple markets across Jefferson County. These markets are promoted through the Home Grown Show on AM790 WTNY, on the [www.comefarmwithus.com](http://www.comefarmwithus.com) website, through the Jefferson County Agricultural News Flash Network which is an email network throughout Jefferson County, and through the Local Food Guide published annually by Cornell Cooperative Extension of Jefferson County.

- (3) Provide education and training opportunities for producers of agricultural products in the process and techniques of marketing.

Both the Jefferson County Agricultural Coordinator's Office and Cornell Cooperative Extension of Jefferson County have provided training opportunities for farmers on the process and techniques of marketing. Training on using Facebook and other social media has been in greatest demand and numerous group and individual training opportunities have been offered to the public.

# Appendix B. Farmer and Agri-business Input

## Jefferson County Ag Plan Survey Results/Summary

43 survey responses

1. What Town is your farm located in?

Ellisburg - 7; Cape Vincent - 5; Clayton and LeRay - 4; Adams and Rodman - 3; Alexandria, Brownville, Henderson, Orleans, Philadelphia, and Watertown (town) - 2; Champion, Hounsfield, and Pamela - 1.

There were no responses from the towns of Lorraine, Lyme, Rutland, Wilna, Worth, Theresa, Antwerp, and the City of Watertown.

2. How long has your farm been in operation in Jefferson County under your family's ownership?

Range from 1 to 172 years, with an average of 47 years. 6 answered 100 or more years. 19 answered 50 or more years. 12 answered 10 or less years.

3. How many tillable acres do you:

a. Own? Range from 4 to 3,500 acres, with an Average of 321 acres

b. Rent? Only 16 of the respondents rent land. Ranges from 20 to 1,000 acres, with an Average of 450 acres (for the 16 that do rent land)

The average total tillable land (owned and rented land) is 489 acres.

4. Are you a full or part time farmer?

22 answered full-time, 21 answered part-time.

5. Approximately what percent of your household income comes from your farm operation?

About half of the full-time farmers said 75-100% of their income was from the farm operation while slightly less than half said it was 50-74%. Two full-timers said less than 25% of their income was from the farm operation and another two said it was 25-49%.

15 of the 21 part-timers said less than 25% of their income was from the farm operation while 3 said it was 25-49%, and another 2 said it was 50-74% of their income.

6. How many employees do you have working for you, including family members?

a. Full-time Total - 154 Average - 4

Range - 0 to 30 with 9 farms employing 8 or more full-timers

b. Part-time Total - 72 Average - 2

Range - 0 to 20, with all but 1 employing more than 6 part-timers

7. Have you enrolled your farmland in a Jefferson County Agricultural District?

30 (70%) of the respondents answered yes.

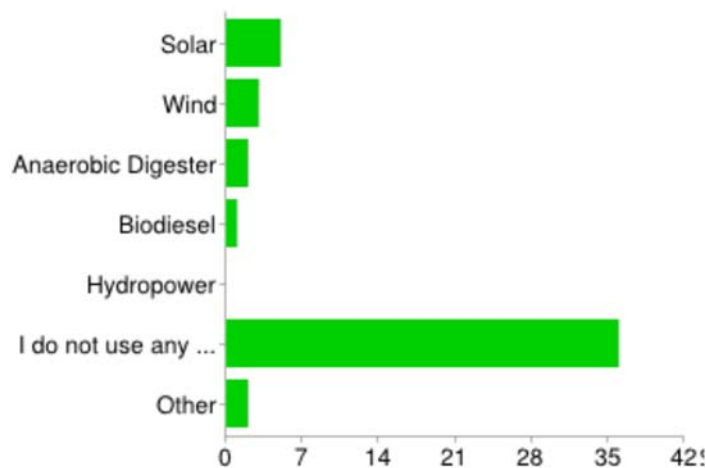
8. Does any of the farmland you own or rent receive an agricultural value assessment?



22 (51%) of the respondents answered yes.

9. Do you use any of the following alternative energy sources on your farm?

36 (84%) of the respondents do not use any alternative energy sources. The most popular alternative source is solar (5), followed by wind (3). Two respondents use an anaerobic digester, while one uses Biodiesel and wood.



10. Is your farm conventional, organic, or natural certified?

34 (79%) of the respondents consider their farms a conventional operation. 5 called themselves Natural, and 3 were Organic certified.

11. How much financial investment have you made in your farm over the last five years?

17 (40%) of the respondents have invested less than \$50,000 in their farms over the last 5 years.

7 have invested \$50,000 - \$100,000

6 have invested \$100,001 - \$250,000

3 have invested \$250,001 - \$500,000

4 have invested \$500,001 - \$1,000,000

2 have invested \$1,000,001 - \$2,500,000

4 have invested \$2,500,001 - \$5,000,000

12. If you have internet access, is it adequate for your business needs?

All but 3 respondents said their internet access was adequate for their needs.

These three were located in Orleans, LeRay, and Cape Vincent.

13. Do you have adequate electrical service to your farm?

All but 2 respondents said they have adequate electrical service.

These two were located in Ellisburg and LeRay.

14. Is lack of access to three-phase power a barrier to growth on your farm?

7 respondents said lack of access to three phase power is a barrier to their growth.

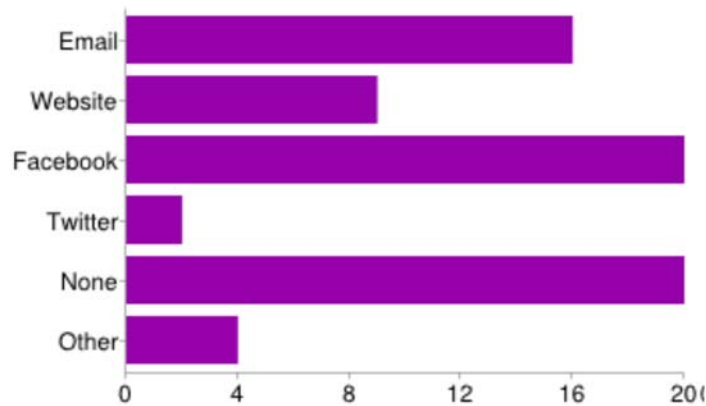
3 from Ellisburg, and one each from Adams, Rodman, Henderson, and Pamela.

15. Do you have an adequate supply of clean water for your farm's needs?

7 respondents said they do not have an adequate supply of clean water.

3 from Ellisburg, 2 from Cape Vincent, one from Henderson, and the last did not give a location.

16. What social media do you use to promote your farm to the public?



17. Will you be doing any of the following in the next five years?

19 Expanding my Farm

17 Adding new revenue streams

7 Expanding into value added production

11 Adding direct sales to consumers

7 Bringing in a younger family member

8 Begin transitioning ownership to a family member

0 Begin transitioning ownership to a non-family member

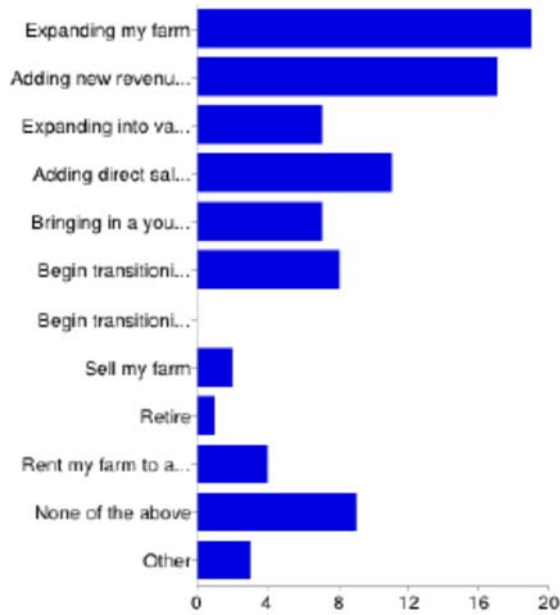
2 Sell my farm

1 Retire

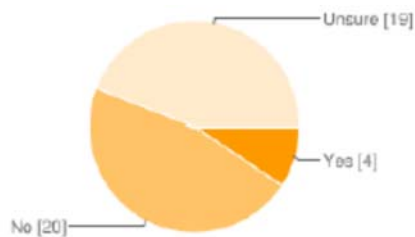
4 Rent my farm to another farm

9 None of the above

3 Other



18. Are you interested in selling or donating the development rights to your farmland to keep it forever available for agriculture or open space?



19. How important are each of the following issues to your farm operation?

The following scores represent the number of respondents that answered either “Very Important” or “Important” to each item. They are arranged in order from highest to lowest ranking score.

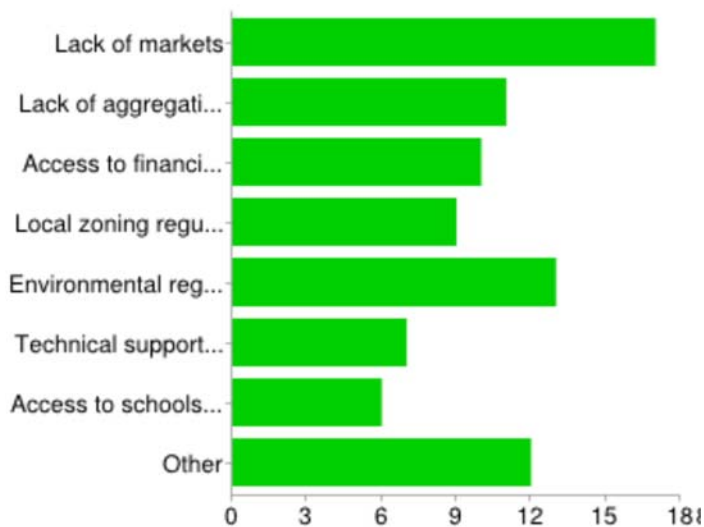
- 42 (98%) Quality of water
- 41 (95%) Water quantity
- 40 (93%) Real property taxes
- 40 (93%) Local boards understanding of land use issues
- 39 (91%) Production costs
- 38 (88%) Adequate community support for farms
- 36 (84%) Federal policies
- 35 (81%) Access to agri-services
- 30 (70%) High speed internet access
- 30 (70%) Availability of next generation farmers
- 29 (67%) Fuel costs
- 29 (67%) Lack of consumers willing to pay higher prices for local produce

- 29 (67%) Manure spreading restrictions
- 24 (54%) Availability and Cost of Farmland
- 24 (55%) Transportation costs or difficulty transporting products
- 24 (55%) Residential encroachment
- 24 (55%) Climate change
- 23 (53%) Availability of affordable or skilled labor
- 22 (50%) Development pressure
- 21 (48%) Conflicts with neighbors regarding your agricultural practices

20. What barriers are affecting your business?

- 17 - Lack of markets
- 11 - Lack of aggregation and processing facility
- 10 - Access to financial capital
- 9 - Local zoning regulations
- 13 - Environmental regulations
- 7 - Technical support for my business
- 6 - Access to schools and other public institutions to sell product to
- 12 - Other:

Answers included - consumer disposable income, time, neighbors, labor, and government regulations



21. Do you think more needs to be done locally to preserve farmland?

Yes - 31 No - 11

a. If yes, what do you think should be done?

- Answers included:
- Discourage large lot housing development (one house on lots greater than an acre).
- Establish a Farmland Land Trust to buy farms & lease/sell them to beginning farmers (young) with easement restrictions requiring them to stay in farm production.
- Preserve farmland in order to be able to feed our population.

- Ensure that what is now usable agricultural land will remain so and not become scrub land or unused land
- Re-activate agricultural land that has lain fallow for years to again become productive"
- "STOP GIVING MONEY TO DEVELOPERS FOR BUILDING HOUSING.
- Form networks with retiring farmers given access to new farmers to increase availability of land and the opportunity for mentorship
- Ag Districts
- Lower Land and school taxes.
- More state or county protection from local governments and seasonal residents who could care less if farmers can afford to keep their farms. In the last few years' land values have more than tripled on the heavy clay soils BECAUSE of #1 large farms desperate for land, #2 High commodity prices bringing in outside competition, #3 Amish who feel this land is a bargain, #4 nonfarm people buying land for hunting and recreation.
- Ag districts need much more black and white protection from local zoning boards and local government
- Payments to keep farmland forever in farming with tax caps
- Totally removing the tax burden from farm land and putting it all on housing would be the next option."
- Zoning that favors land use management.
- Before a residential development is started the location of the poorest quality farmland should be considered for the siting.
- We need access to selling our development rights from our farm land.
- Less housing developments
- Make forever farm district
- Small farms need more protection due to the fact most everything g here is geared to large crop and dairy farms and economy of scale. The price of farmland will still be driven by the market but if the market is being driven by one type of Ag producer, (dairy and crop at the moment), then it will be increasingly difficult for alternative Ag producers to start or expand. At the rate it is going now can we expect to see only ten large farms occupying all the better farm land in 10 years?
- Small farms need more protection due to the fact most everything g here is geared to large crop and dairy farms and economy of scale.
- The price of farmland will still be driven by the market but if the market is being driven by one type of Ag producer, (dairy and crop at the moment), then it will be increasingly difficult for alternative Ag producers to start or expand.
- Lower property taxes for farmland.
- Development needs to stay in the city and local villages. Too much land is being destroy with new housing and business, while there is both land and buildings available in the city and villages.
- Federal and state regulations, and estate taxes
- Manure spreading is something the public needs to get educated on.
- Give more tax breaks for farms

- Taxes should reflect actual use not highest potential use
- Land with poor access should be reflected in tax"
- Lower taxes
- Farmland needs to be preserved, for future generations, to protect where our food is grown, and for the benefits of wildlife.

22. Do you think more needs to be done locally to promote agriculture?

Yes - 33 No - 8

a. If yes, what do you think should be done?

- Promote local products for a strong local economy which can stand its own.
- Maintain current efforts.
- Continued outreach and education on the how's and why's of modern agricultural practices
- Through internet & other media inform Fort Drum personnel about existence & offerings of local farmers.
- Promote agriculture in order to educate the public of the need preserve farmland in order to be able to feed our population
- To change attitude and be willing to pay more for local food.
- People who live in towns, village, and cities have absolutely no idea what goes on out in the agricultural areas. There needs to be some way to connect the two in a very public nature.
- Too often, the term 'farmer' still carries a negative image
- We need to do more to help growers in these hard times as well as when we have a natural occurrence like the ice and cold weather last year.
- HE TAXES ARE TOO HIGH AND THE MILK PRICE IS BACK IN THE DARK AGES THANKS TO CORNELL TAKING AWAY PARITY. WE COULD SAVE A LOT OF TAX DOLLARS IF WE SHUT DOWN CORNELL, SINCE THEY ARE THE ONES THAT HAVE DESTROYED NEW YORK AGRICUTURE
- There needs to be more markets and hubs to increase the availability of local foods at restaurants in the area
- Educate youths.
- People are very concerned about where their food comes from so state or county support for year round markets in any shape or form would be very welcome
- TV or radio commercials or billboards to educate non-farm people about why farming is critical to our region and the repercussions of losing it.
- More promotion of both current and historical presence of agriculture in and around our community.
- Promote locally produced farm products and value added products in local and larger 'big box' stores.
- Tell the story of the modern farm in media
- More agricultural education for school children
- FAA can help more with promotion of farming
- More needs to be done for veterans interested in Ag.

- Many people are so far removed from the farm that we need to continually educate the public as to how and why we do what we do.
- Marketing - educating the public.
- Try to get people to understand what country living means.
- Local farm market should be encouraged
- incentives so that young people will want to make agriculture their way of life after leaving school or college, even it's on a part-time basis or as hobby farmers.
- Maybe a quick "Meet the farmer" interview and tour of some local farms to place a face with a name. These could be in the paper or better yet on the news. The Farm Bureau pieces were very nice
- Farms (not the JCIDA) should organize to do more education and promotion of agriculture to our neighbors and customers.
- We should be educating small children in our schools about agriculture. Agriculture does a good job talking to agricultural professionals, and adults. We need to regularly visit the preschools and elementary schools on production, farm diversity, and how we care for our environment.

23. Will your farm need additional land in the next 5 years?

2 - Yes, and I believe I will be able to purchase or rent land to meet my farm needs

16 - Yes, but I am not sure there will be enough land available to purchase or rent

24 - No, I will not need to purchase or rent additional land for my farm needs

24. Would your farm benefit from having another USDA inspected and certified meat processing facility within 50 miles?

Yes - 26 No - 17

25. What are your top three immediate business needs?

14 responses included Market issues (access, stability, additional)

13 responses included references to labor

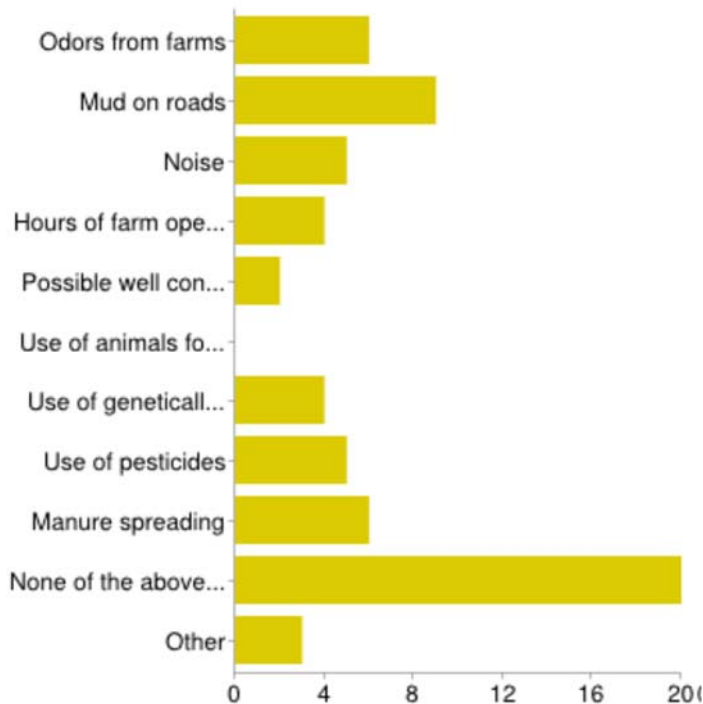
7 responses mentioned the following: Access to capital, Prices, Processing facilities, Tax relief, and some form of technical assistance

5 responses mentioned government or regulatory relief

26. Please let us know if you have experienced any of the following complaints from neighbors or the public regarding your farm operation:

20 (47%) of the respondents said they have not experienced any complaints from neighbors.

The most often cited complaint was Mud on roads (9) followed by Odors and manure spreading (6 each), and Noise and Pesticide use (5 each).



27. How do you feel about the effectiveness of the following Farmland Protection Strategies?

The following scores represent the number of respondents that answered either “Very Beneficial” or “Somewhat Beneficial” to each item. They are arranged in order from highest to lowest ranking score.

- 42 (98%) Education programs about farming for the non-farm community
- 39 (91%) Right to farm laws
- 38 (88%) Farm friendly local zoning that allows a variety of agriculture-related uses on one property
- 34 (79%) Incentives for farmland to be preserved, including tax incentives
- 33 (77%) Limitations on non-farm development in productive farm areas
- 27 (63%) Purchase of development rights (PDR) programs
- 22 (51%) Lease of development rights (LDR) programs

28. How do you feel about the effectiveness of the following Agricultural Economic Development Strategies?

The following scores represent the number of respondents that answered either “Very Beneficial” or “Somewhat Beneficial” to each item. They are arranged in order from highest to lowest ranking score.

- 38 (88%) Marketing assistance
- 38 (88%) Development of processing facilities
- 37 (86%) Local branding for products
- 37 (86%) First time farmer financing programs



37 (86%) Additional programs to promote locally-grown farm products

33 (77%) Farm business planning assistance

29. Are there any new programs that should be developed regarding agricultural opportunities? Please describe:

- Apprentice programs on local farms funded by source other than the farmer.
- Assistance in establishing paperwork/licensing for marketing your product- What needs to be done to attend markets? Where does one achieve these certificates? etc.
- Better partnerships between producers and processor facilities.
- Pomology (a branch of botany that studies and cultivates fruit)

30. For the Specific Sector Questions, the following number of responses were received from the various sectors identified in the survey:

Sector:	Yes, primary	Yes, but not primary
Dairy	14	0
Beef Cattle	3	4
Vegetable, Fruits, Grapes, Hops	11	3
Small Livestock/Poultry	6	4
Commodity Crop	4	10
Other	10	

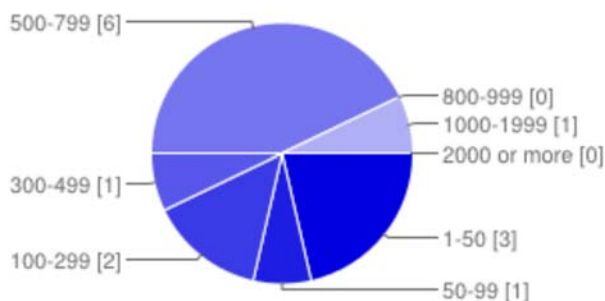
31. Are you a dairy farmer?

Yes, Primary 14

Yes, but not primary 0

No 27

32. How many cows do you milk?



33. What are your plans for the next five years?

12 - Increase milk production per cow

9 - Increase herd size

8 - Increase farm acreage

3 - Add or expand dairy beef production

3 - Add or expand cash crop production

1 - Add a satellite farm

1 - Other

34. Are you considering using robotic milkers on your farm?

Yes - 4 No - 5 Unsure - 5

35. Would a new dairy processing facility in the County be beneficial to your farm operation?

Yes - 9 No - 2 No Opinion - 2

36. What actions do you feel will help the Jefferson County dairy industry the most?

- Education to improve neighbor relations.
- Limit any new laws the restrict ag. Or hurt businesses in general.
- Greater number of and competition between milk buyers.
- As a new dairy processing facility is a joke. First should be price paid to farmers. Cost plus investment plus living. County wasted money on great lake cheese. Where is the farmer pay? You also have h.p.hood who is slowly ending operations. No new plant needed. Take care of the two you have left. Farmer pay first!
- A stable price for the milk.
- Somehow if we can all get together and on the same page. There is power in numbers but the numbers must have the same voice.

37. Are you a beef cattle farmer?

Yes, Primary	3
Yes, but not primary	4
No	35

38. How many animals are you currently raising for beef production?

1 to 50	3
50 to 99	3

39. Do you currently use a USDA certified and inspected processing facility?

Yes - 3 No - 3

40. If yes, does it meet your needs?

Yes - 2 No - 1

41. What actions do you feel will help the Jefferson County beef cattle industry the most?

- Continue to expand USDA beef processing facilities, especially in Jefferson County
- An auction barn to serve western Jefferson County
- A closer USDA plant and a year round farmer's market.
- Lack of close certified processing, both conventional and organic.
- Being able to source local dairy steers for a NY State beef program.

42. Are you a Vegetable, Fruits, Grapes, or Hops farmer?

Yes, Primary	11
Yes, but not primary	3
No	26

43. Estimate the acres of each of the crops you grow. (Answer all that apply)

	Total	Average	Range
Vegetables	55.6	5	0.1 to 22
Fruits	10	1.4	0.1 to 5
Grapes	22.1	5.5	0.1 to 10
Hops	1	1	(only 1 grower)
Other	10	2.5	

44. How do you sell your crops?

- 10 - Direct to consumers through a farm stand or on-farm store
- 6 - Wholesale to retailers
- 4 - Direct to consumers through Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)
- 4 - Direct to consumers through Farmers' Markets
- 3 - Sell to winery, brewery, and distillery
- 3 - Use crops in my own value added production
- 3 - Institutional buyers such as a restaurant
- 2 - Direct to restaurant or other food establishment
- 2 - Retail outlet such as grocery stores
- 3 - Other

45. How do you currently market or advertise your products?

- 9 - I produce my own marketing materials such as brochures, flyers, pamphlets
- 7 - I advertise using - Social media
- 6 - I advertise using - Print publications
- 5 - I do not advertise at all
- 3 - I have a webpage for my business
- 2 - I advertise using - Online publications
- 1 - I purchase professionally designed marketing materials
- 1 - I advertise using - Television ads
- 1 - I advertise using - Radio ads
- 3 - Other

46. Do you plan to further diversify your crops?

Yes - 9      No - 7

47. If yes, what do you plan to diversify into?

- Beef
- More uncommon fruits
- Organic meats: Chickens, pigs and rabbits
- Hops
- Would like to add greens, root crops, and eventually fruit.
- Add on more acreage of more varieties

48. Do you plan to build high tunnel greenhouses on your farm?

Yes - 5      No - 10

49. If yes, how many are you considering?

(This question was not phrased properly in the online survey. It was given a yes-or-no answer type when it should have allowed a number to be entered.)

50. What actions do you feel will help the Jefferson County vegetable/fruit/grapes/hops industry the most?

- Promote the Cold Hardy Grape Varieties
- Local processors, if they are under ag & markets, should be required to buy 51% of their product locally.
- Alternative methods for producing fruits and vegetables. Currently I have a greenhouse and a high tunnel. Have available more local professionals related to the industry. I currently have to contact Cornell staff for questions related to my raspberry crop in the high tunnel and outside. Also allowing more signage to be used when selling direct to consumers. Are there contacts made to see if a processor or manufacturer could be interested in locating to the area? I have not seen anything lately. Other counties seen to be making at least more headlines.
- Provide a hops harvesting machine
- Further interest in buying local/know your farmer.
- County or City have an Oktoberfest with local produce only

51. Are you a Small Livestock or Poultry farmer?

Yes, Primary           6  
 Yes, but not primary 4  
 No                       33

52. How many head of the following do you raise?

	Total	Average	Range
Hogs	2,014	503	3 to 2,000 (one farm with 2,000. Others 3 to 8)
Sheep	130	43	10 to 100
Goats for Dairy	0	0	
Goats for Meat	95	32	10 to 65
Alpacas/Llama	0	0	
Laying chickens	766	153	6 to 700
Broiler chickens	3,105	1,035	5 to 3,000
Exotics	2	2	(one farm with 2)
Other	18	18	(one farm with 18, unspecified other)

53. In the next 5 years do you plan to increase the number of animals you raise for the following? (Estimate the number you plan to increase by):

	Total	Average	Range
Hogs	524	131	6 to 500
Sheep	80	27	10 to 50
Goats for Dairy	5	5	5
Goats for Meat	120	30	5 to 75

Alpacas/Llama	0	0	
Laying chickens	135	67	35 to 100
Broiler chickens	1,050	525	50 to 1,000
Exotics	0	0	
Other	42	14	(10 beef, 20 rabbits, 12 unspecified)

54. What markets do you sell your products to?

- 7 - On farm sales of products
- 6 - Freezer trade - direct to consumer selling quarters, halves, whole animals
- 6 - Eggs sold direct to consumer
- 5 - Cuts of meat USDA certified/inspected to consumer
- 2 - Farmers' Markets
- 1 - Cuts of meat to food establishments
- 1 - Cuts of meat to retail shops
- 1 - Community Supported Agriculture (CSAs)
- 1 - Products made from wool, hair direct to consumer
- 1 - Eggs sold at farmers' markets
- 1 - Eggs sold to retailers
- 2 - Other

55. How do you market your products?

- 4 - I do not advertise at all
- 4 - I produce my own marketing materials such as brochures, flyers, pamphlets
- 4 - I advertise using - Social media
- 3 - I advertise using - Print publications
- 3 - I have a webpage for my business
- 2 - I advertise using - Online publications
- 2 - I purchase professionally designed marketing materials
- 0 - I advertise using - Television ads
- 0 - I advertise using - Radio ads
- 2 - Other

56. What actions do you feel will help the Jefferson County small livestock and poultry agricultural industry the most?

- Making the buyers understand that locally raised farm products are better than imported store products
- More processing facilities for USDA inspected meats, more markets, and more marketing for small farmers to join together to fill larger orders
- More processing facilities- facilities that will take smaller quantities- more frequently- assistance with achieving the certifications necessary to sell legally
- Marketing - just bit by bit telling the story of small producers and the facts of nutrition of other products than beef or chicken and of the nutrition facts of meats produced locally, naturally.
- Lower taxes, especially school
- More promotion of products and practices

- Need young people who want to shear sheep
- Branding our region, our ag community, and natural resources

57. Are you a Commodity Crop farmer?

Yes, Primary	4
Yes, but not primary	10
No	29

58. Do you plan to increase, decrease, or maintain the same acreage of these crops over the next 5 years?

	Increase	Decrease	Remain the same
Corn	3	0	6
Soybeans	2	0	5
Hay	4	1	7
Small Grains	4	0	5
Other	2	0	4

59. What will have the greatest influence on your decision about changing your crop acreage?

- 5 - Crop price
- 4 - Land Availability
- 2 - Input costs
- 2 - Other (Profit, and Age)

60. Are there adequate markets for your products?

Yes - 11 No - 3

61. What actions do you feel will help the Jefferson County commodity agricultural industry the most?

- Increase of current commodity prices.
- Building a large commodity grain milling and shipping facility

62. If your farm includes honey production, how many pounds do you sell...

Direct to consumers - Three responses: 100 lbs., 80 lbs., less than 10 lbs.  
 To retailers - 0  
 Wholesale - 0

63. If your farm includes Christmas trees, how many acres does this include?

0

64. If your farm includes maple products:

- How many gallons of syrup do you produce per year? - One answered 20, noting this will increase in 2015
- How many acres of land is used in maple production? - One answered 5 acres, noting this will increase in 2015

65. If your farm does not include any of the products we've mentioned so far in this survey, please describe what you grow, raise or produce here:

- Milk some beef

- At this time, I am more a landowner, retired farmer and farmer at heart than active farmer. I have standing hay which I sell to a neighboring farm.
- Grapes and pumpkins
- Crops for my own use ... hay, corn silage
- MILK, HAY, BALEAGE
- Dairy
- U Pik strawberries, raspberries, Sweet Corn
- Apples
- Wood

66. If you have any additional thoughts about farming in Jefferson County, please feel free to include them here. We are especially interested in hearing your ideas about specific programs and projects you feel need to take place to enhance agriculture and farmland protection in Jefferson County.

- Labor training and regulation compliance are to large areas that will always have limiting influence on farming.
- I like Cuomo's great initiative. No taxes on income no taxes on property no fees. The only thing he added that sounds good is grants to operate with no payback. That would make Jefferson County the best place to operate a business for 10 years."
- Thank you for your efforts we enjoyed the meeting last night at CCE
- All farmers want to keep farmland as farmland, but when it comes times to retire - selling your land for development often does not look so bad.
- More social events on farms i.e. weddings, birthday parties. Bring the non-farmer to the farm. Yes, I know it's already been done, make it a bigger deal!
- Ag. in the classrooms
- We have farmed in three different states. Farmers are connected to the land. They will do anything to preserve their land. This includes selling off lots or parcels of the farm to preserve as much of the land as possible. Joseph H. Geiser. 5665 County Route 14 Chase Mills, New York 13621 St. Lawrence County 315 322 4354
- Farmers need higher prices for their products. These prices need to increase when the costs of inputs raise.
- I think if you get out and see other areas we are very fortunate here that we aren't experiencing the neighbor problems that big cities close to farming communities can create. We have our share of headaches but overall we all do a great job in a friendly environment.
- I feel it very important that our region invests in Ag infrastructure. We should be looking to invest in a large USDA meat processing facility (100 hd beef, 500 hd hogs, 1000 birds daily production) a large scale feed facility (roasted soy, processed grain, corn, soy) to take big volumes of grains in and re market and a specialty food facility (further cooked products). One or all of these projects would help support our Ag-economy and surrounding farms. Agriculture communities are severely shrinking in the US. Consumers are getting farther away from their food source. Let it not be us, let's keep our heritage and our strong farm economy.

- You did leave out the equine businesses in the area. There are perhaps over a dozen equine businesses in the county.

## Jefferson County Ag Plan - Farmers' Workshop Group Notes

Held on November 5th, 2014

Table 1 - Identified Strengths Related to Agriculture

Strength	Priority Votes Received
Adequate Water	4
Change of Seasons	3
Proximity to Markets (Boston, NYC)	2
Room for growth of beef industry	1
Fort Drum - diverse markets	
Relatively inexpensive land	

Table 2 - Identified Challenges Related to Agriculture

Challenges	Priority Votes Received
Town government doesn't understand the needs of agriculture	3
Assessments, taxes, and PILOTs	3
Lack of 3-phase power	2
Lack of internet	2
Traffic - speeds, impatience with farm vehicles	2
Farmland values increasing Amish willing to pay more Southern Co. farmers moving north	2
Concentrated ownership of large farms	2
Restrictive local regulations	1
Some towns are not farm friendly	1
Urban sprawl or attitude of new residents	1
Condition of town and county roads	1
Farmers pay a higher percentage of taxes than 10 years ago	1
Lack of animal processing facilities Beef Other small animals	1
Competition for farmland Availability Price	1
Little information about market opportunities	1
Attitude of neighbors towards agriculture	
Growth around Fort Drum - not going away	
Passing on to next generation Old guard waits too long	



Lack of cooperation between small farms For the benefit of many	
Labor and immigration rules Can't expand without reliable labor	

Table 3 - Identified Opportunities for Agriculture

Opportunities	Priority Votes Received
Agri-tourism	4
Buy local promotion	3
Get dairy and wine producers together, wine and cheese	2
Programs to improve marginal soils	1
Mentoring program - match old farmers with new farmers	1
Aggregate produce for larger markets	1
Education of local officials	
Cost of Community Services Study as an educational tool	
Form plans to pass on to next generation	
Improve local wine distribution system (statewide)	
Cooperative marketing of vegetables	
Maple products - expansion	
Food hub	
Extension of growing season - Hoop and Green houses	
Indoor/year-round farm market	

Vision for the future...In the future, agriculture will be:

- Diversified
- Adapting to a changing climate
- Profitable
- Cooperative among small farms, using marketing and sales to make more profitable
- Have a better informed public, knowledgeable about their food supply
- Accessible to more open Canadian markets

## Focus Groups and other Interviews/Meetings

The following focus groups or interviews with ag-businesses were conducted to learn more about the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats facing agriculture in Jefferson County. The results of these focus groups and interviews are included in the SWOT chapter of this Plan.

CAFO Farms

Great Lakes Cheese

Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust and Fort Drum ACUB Program

Agri-businesses

Agriculture Economic Development

Individual farm businesses including dairy, agri-tourism and vineyard

Jefferson County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board

Jefferson County Agricultural Agency Round Table

## Appendix C. Detailed SWOT Analysis

### Details from Public Input on Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

#### Strengths

- Farmland resources
  - Large contiguous areas of productive soils<sup>1</sup>
  - Good climate for agriculture
  - Inexpensive farmland
  - Farmland available
  - Availability of farmland
  - Good Water supply
- Farm Infrastructure Exists
  - Agribusiness - suppliers, dealers still exist - large value-added businesses and supply chain supports ag
  - Technical assistance, loan funds available, support organizations and ag infrastructure intact/new farmer loans and programs
  - Educational infrastructure, support for Ag
  - Large Web presence for Ag - ComeFarmWithUs url
  - Development of beverage industry - wineries, breweries, distilleries - with State support
  - Supportive Regional (REDC)
  - Government support for agriculture is very strong/supportive community
  - Railroad transportation access
  - Agritourism support
  - Farmers' markets exist
- Development Pressures
  - Not much development pressure in major farming areas, relatively stable land prices recently, but it is changing
  - Limited amount of Ag conversion compared to other areas
  - Good communications between agencies and with farmers - County government, agencies, and farmers
  - Compatible military uses
  - Population density - makes for more market access
  - Impact of Fort Drum is positive - consumer demand
- Location - market access/proximity to Canada/market access
- Diversity of commodities - dairy, cash crops, livestock, more diversity of farm types
- Fourth largest dairy county - milk production up 20%, acres in production is increasing, (with fewer farms)
- Quality of milk is high
- Money from Great Lakes watershed

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<sup>1</sup> Highlighted items were those identified as priority by the farmers who participated in the workshop. Note also that this list records comments from all public input sources, including those that were brought up by an individual. Inclusion on this list represents the full range of comments or observations made. See SWOT, page 51 to see the priority SWOT items as that list represents a consensus of opinions.

- Progressive thinking farmers - also very good at adopting technology
- Support for farming in schools
- Use of biofuels, bio-digesters, renewable energy (including landfill)
- Increase in Amish population - bringing back productive ag lands
- Acceptance of farm practices by most communities
- Opportunity to use marginal land for grazing, livestock
- Young people interested in Ag/more entering as a career
- Last spot in the state where Ag expansion is possible, and happening
- Relatively low cost of power
- Area farmers very good at adopting technology
- ACUB program
- Fort Drum biomass electric generator plant
- Some well-known regional brands exist (such as 1000 Islands)
- Right to Farm law in County
- Lots of seasonal homeowners in Jefferson County creates increased demand for ag products

### Weaknesses

#### Labor issues

- Immigration issues with proximity to border
- Issues finding and keeping quality labor

#### Regulations

- Environmental regulations, Regulatory environment
- Concerns over potential future regulation of manure spreading
- Maintaining farm-friendly land use practices (Farm friendly land use laws are in place, but often overlooked)
- CAFO regulations - use of spent grains for feed
- OSHA regulations
- Food Safety Act - unknowns make farmers uneasy
- Milk processors may require more tracking of farm activities in the future
- Regulations are not set, moving target and this puts stress on farms
- Town government doesn't understand needs of agriculture
- Tariffs - into Canada

#### Competition for Land - Increasing pressure for Ag land, availability of Ag land between farmers

#### Lack of ...

- Livestock processing for large and small animals lacking
- Need regional bottling of maple products
- Lack of new markets
- Lack of aggregation/distribution of products NYC is far away/ Lack of efficient access for farmers to get produce to market - especially important for small farmers
- Lack of local branding for county/region not cohesive
- Lack of funding for alternative and non-dairy farming (lenders don't get it) - lack of capital
- Lack of start-up capital for new/young farmers
- Lack of competitive buyers for cattle, processing, finishing means prices are \$0.15 lower than other areas
- Lack of enough ag business planning, especially for small farms
- Lack of internet county-wide
- Lack of information on marketing opportunities

- Lack of understanding of agriculture as a good career limits young people from entering ag as a profession
- Lack of interaction of agriculture and children leads to an uneducated populace
- Lack of efforts to promote agriculture locally
- Lack of right to farm laws locally to protect farming operations

#### Attitudes and Conflicts Attitudes Bring About

- Fewer people realize where food comes from
- Lack of community support for farmers
- Perception that “Big farms are bad”
- Negative attitudes about agriculture among non-farmers
- Farmer/non-farmer conflicts
- Large vs small farm issues and attitudes
- Agriculture and farmers are highly fragmented and segmented and don’t work together cooperatively
- Lack of familiarity about agriculture on the part of non-farmers builds on negative perceptions Fort Drum turnover - requires ongoing education of residents
- Regulators have enforcement attitudes that are hard line rather than helpful.
- Apathy of farmers to get involved with towns or farm organizations.
- Lack of cooperation between small farms
- Lack of farm friendly zoning and local regulations

#### Aging and fewer farmers

- Dairies lack transition/succession plans
- Lack of understanding about land use and farm issues

#### Development Pressures

- Conversion of farmlands for residential and commercial uses
- Fort Drum is driver for sprawl and development pressure
- Conversion - adjacent to Fort Drum, marginal areas around the edges, municipal water coming in (Southern part of county), traffic is a major concern of conversion
- Land availability under pressure, and land prices rising (lack of land availability and affordability)
- Road traffic issues and conflicts between farm and non-farm traffic/roads are stressed
- Signage requirements/issues along the Scenic Byway are not business friendly and hurt agri-tourism efforts
- Water and sewer infrastructure that has been extended into farm areas brings conflict and promotes sprawl

#### Farm/Farmer Technical Support

- Harder for support agencies to get funding, less money for staff
- Need some specialists for some growing sectors (veggies), but not enough need to justify additional staff
- Little infrastructure for non-dairy Ag
- Harder for small farms to get financing

#### Agri-tourism

- Not a lot of family friendly tourism opportunities in County now
- Insurance liability for agri-tourism is an issue

#### General Farm Issues

- Not all farms are in NYS Agriculture district
- Not all farms receive NYS ag value assessment
- Consistency of products varies
- Dairy price volatility

- Cost of doing business in NYS - production costs
- Ag producers can't access low cost power (but processors can); Cost barriers to 3-phase power/access to 3-phase power
- Manure management - more manure, less land/threat of regulation of manure spreading. Limited land resources for manure management which limits expansion possibilities for dairy farms
- Taxes and assessments are high
- Aging of large animal vets may make this service more difficult to access in the future
- Concentrated ownership of large farms
- It is hard to attract people to northern New York due to climate
- Some farmers worried that money and program support for non-dairy efforts will adversely affect the dairy industry
- Farmers markets in the lake/river area are not robust - they are too spread out

## Opportunities

### Attract more food processing

- All around, especially USDA inspected meat processing facilities, and hubs to aggregate and process food products from smaller farms
- Food hub for distribution/aggregation/efficient access to distant markets
- Improve wine distribution
- Expand maple production
- Add more milk processing capacity
- Meat processing

### Education and Awareness

- Opportunities for Ag education for next generation - elementary schools
- Start mentoring program to match old and new farmers
- Educate elected officials and assessors
- Farmers have to come together to support all segments
- Provide education on role of technology in helping farms be sustainable
- Engage highway crews with ag landowners when road work is being done
- Initiate proactive steps for BMP instead of it being forced on farmers
- Start internship program for ag with area colleges
- Educate farmers about new technologies (such as robotics)
- Institute a pomology program
- Technical assistance to help farmers diversify farms
- Encourage farmers to use more renewable energy
- Training and assistance in farm succession and transfer
- Education programs on organic/GMO operations
- Mentorship and apprenticeship programs
- Educational outreach to public, youth and elected officials
- Education programs on organic/GMO operations
- Get farmers involved

### Marketing, Local Branding and Buy Local Programs

- Agritourism growth - cheese trail to compliment wine trail/farm stays and farm to table
- Buy-local promotion, indoor and year-round farmers market

- Local branding and buy local programs
- More marketing - especially Cooperative marketing of vegetables/more cooperation overall
- Get dairy, wine and cheese together
- Work to help recognize role agriculture plays economically in County
- Have positive spokesperson for Ag
- Market the positive side and role of ag in the county
- Start online market for small farmers
- Start co-packer operation
- Develop new markets
- Promote county as a good place to live and work in agriculture

#### Profitability, Value Added and Diversification Programs

- Value-added dairy - cheeses, butter patties/beef
- Grain fed beef
- Increased milk production per cow
- Push for beverage industry in NYS, beyond wine-only (sweet reds, beer, distillery)
- Wineries are becoming event centers
- Hoop houses to extend season, with labor resources
- Mechanical harvesting - vegetables
- Hop harvester
- Market phosphorus by-product instead of as waste
- Promote NYS funding for anaerobic digesters
- Promote willow for biomass
- Offer incentives for cow comfort
- Promote distilleries
- Promote dairy beef
- Promote aquaculture
- Develop new markets first, then promote as farming opportunity
- Better/expanded use of the "Pride of NY" program, - revitalize this program
- Have central location for farmers market
- Have a mobile farmers market that goes to campgrounds
- Include ag tourism in 1000 Island tourism programs
- Aggregate wine/cheese/brewery into a consolidated trail map
- Expand commodity crops (malt barley, cereal rye, red spring wheat)
- Grain drying operations
- More direct sales opportunities
- Improve water quality to improve milk production
- Programs to enhance groundwater quality and quantity
- Grow internet and communications infrastructure

#### Assistance with Regulations

- Clarification of Ag and Markets laws - education

#### Agri-business Development

- Attract equipment manufacturers - near Canada
- Develop more rail - intermodal facility for Ag commodities
- More funding to SWCD for programs, especially buffer areas

#### Land Planning

- Opportunities to use more conservation easements
- Institute more programs to improve marginal soils
- Do COCS as an educational tool
- Use PDR for acquiring lands for manure management
- Identify lands that are most productive and at risk for conversion
- Work with towns to limit sprawl
- Preserve land in larger acreage units
- Increasing the intensity of farming in underutilized farm parcels north of the Black River
- Promote use of easements and development rights programs
- Land use programs that are farm friendly
- Smart Growth programs to direct more growth to areas with infrastructure
- Methods to use fallow land more
- Increase use of marginal soils with technology
- Start farmer/farmland owner land match program
- Work with Fort Drum officials to limit conflicts with fort-related development
- Increase use of easement requirements that require preservation of farmland
- Work with area land trusts to strengthen land preservation efforts

#### Farm Business Planning

- Succession planning
- Have more ag business planning
- Business training and planning for expansion
- First time farmer financing program
- Bring in more large animal vets
- Keep supporting Ag Position at IDA
- Small business development center
- Work with State for more business friendly programs
- Support JCC ag-related programming

#### Threats

- Development Pressure/farmland conversion
- Regulations, especially possible regulation of manure spreading
- Rising land prices
- Rising competition for land resources
- Lack of labor and immigration issues
- Dairy price and crop commodity price volatility
- Lack of education and awareness of the public and local officials about agriculture and about understanding the role of agriculture
- Negative attitudes and conceptions about agriculture
- Apathy of farmers
- Increasing reliance on farmland not owned by farmers
- Development pressures and conversion of farmland to non-farm uses