

Columbia County Farmland Protection Plan Committee Presents a Survey for Agricultural Producers

Dear Columbia County Producer:

Columbia County has received a grant from New York State Ag and Markets to develop a county agricultural and farmland protection plan. The grant is being administered through the County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board (AFPB). The AFPB offers this survey to producers as a mechanism for soliciting feedback on the current state of farming in Columbia County including the economic value and benefits of farming to the towns and county, an assessment of the future of farming and an evaluation of a range of farmland protection tools.

This is your chance to make the County officials aware of your thoughts and concerns regarding farming in Columbia County. Your input is critical in developing a plan which suits the needs of the farmers. Information generated by responses to the survey will be analyzed and reported by class or type of enterprise.

The AFPB will also be holding a series of workshops related to this effort. Again, this will be a forum for you to express your thoughts about farming and its future in Columbia County. You are welcome to participate at any event, but for your convenience we are holding five workshops based on geographic location. Please be sure to mark your calendar and attend an event which fits in your schedule. The event dates, times and locations are as follows:

Date	Time	Location	Snow Date
Saturday Jan. 22, 2011	10am to 12pm	North Chatham Firehouse 653 County Route 32, North Chatham	Monday, Jan. 24 7pm to 9 pm
Thursday Feb. 3, 2011	7 pm to 9pm	Cornell Cooperative Extension 479 Route 66, Hudson	Saturday, Feb. 5, 10am to 12pm
Saturday Feb. 19, 2011	10am to 12pm	Copake Town Hall 230 Mountain View Road, Copake	Tuesday, Feb. 22, 7pm to 9pm
Thursday Mar. 3, 2011	7pm to 9pm	Kellner Activities Bldg 54 Palatine Park Road, Germantown	Saturday, Mar. 5, 10am to 12pm
Saturday Mar. 19, 2011	10am to 12pm	Stuyvesant Town Hall 5 Sunset Drive, Stuyvesant	Monday, Mar. 21, 7 to 9pm

Some of the topics to be discussed at the workshop meetings include:

- How existing markets could be improved to make farming more profitable and promote the preservation of agricultural land? What can the Town or County do to help?
- What can be done to improve/strengthen the relationship between local farms and non-farm neighbors?
- How can zoning or land use regulations in your Town be improved for future agricultural use or agricultural related uses?

Be sure to remove this page before you return the survey that follows!

If you have any questions about the survey or need more information about the workshops, please contact Todd Erling at 518-828-4718.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Jim Waterhouse
Chair, Columbia County Ag & Farmland Protection Board

Part I – Land & Farming Practices:

1. What are your farm’s enterprises?

	For livestock, indicate # of animals which are:				Indicate acres in production:
	Mature	Immature	Other		
				Horticulture	
Dairy				Christmas Trees	
Horse				Cash Crops	
Beef cattle				Vegetables	
Sheep				Fruits	
Pigs/hogs				Forestry	
Chickens				Beekeeping	
Ducks				Maple Products	
Other:					

2. If you listed multiple crops/products in question 1, please indicate your primary enterprise:

3. How much land do you farm in Columbia County?

(Please place a check in the appropriate category)

Amount of Land	Owned	Leased
0 to 49 acres		
50 to 100 acres		
101 to 150 acres		
151 to 200 acres		
201 to 350 acres		
351 or more acres		

4. In what town(s) is your farm located? (Please check all that apply)

	Own	Lease		Own	Lease
Ancram			Greenport		
Austerlitz			Hillsdale		
Canaan			Hudson		
Chatham			Kinderhook		
Claverack			Livingston		
Clermont			New Lebanon		
Copake			Stockport		
Gallatin			Stuyvesant		
Germantown			Taghkanic		
Ghent					

Note: the identity of individual producers will be kept confidential.

Individual responses will not be included in the report.

5. Do you reside on the land you farm? Yes No
If YES, how many years have you lived there? _____ years

6. How long has your land been:
in farm production? _____
in your family? _____

7. Is Columbia County your permanent residence? Yes No

Part II - Economic Data:

8. Please 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			
Decrease your farming operation			
Diversify your farming operation			
Stay the same			
Sell all or a portion of your land to another farmer for farm use			
Sell a portion of your land for non-farm purposes			
Sell all of your land for non-farm purposes			
Relocate and continue to farm elsewhere			
Transfer the farm to a family member			
Begin a farming operation on your land			
Stop renting your land for farm use			
Lease all or a portion of your land			
Transition to a new crop/commodity			
Other, please explain:			

9. Please indicate your top five challenges facing you and the future success of your farm?
(Please number 1-5, one being top priority)

Availability of farm labor		Estate taxes	
Property taxes		Environmental regulations	
Residential encroachment/ nuisance complaints		Land use regulations (zoning & permitting)	
Loss of productive farmland		Water availability (quality & quantity)	
Rental costs		Global climate change	
Availability of rental land		Access to adequate financing	
Fuel cost		Access to agri-services	
Limited succession plans for the farm (few new farmers)		Access to marketing or business support	
Land prices		Lack of local consumers/ clients	
Machinery costs		Lack of processing facilities	
Production costs			

17. Are you familiar with the following farmland protection tools and strategies?

	Yes	No
A. Conservation Easements		
B. Purchase of Development Rights		
C. Transfer of Development Rights		
D. Lease of Development Rights		
E. Farm Friendly Zoning		
F. Conservation Subdivisions		
G. Loan Programs		
H. Differential Assessments		
I. Growing New Farmers		
J. Ag-Enterprise Zones		
K. Overlay Zoning District		
L. Exclusive Agricultural Zones		
M. Town Comprehensive Plan		
N. NYS Agricultural District Law		
O. Right to Farm Law		
P. Incentive Zoning		
Q. Other <i>please explain</i> : _____		

18. Are you interested in helping the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board gather additional information about farming in the County? Yes No

If **Yes**, how may we contact you?

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email: _____

Please return this survey to:

**HVADC
4303 US Route 9
Hudson, NY 12534**

Or you can also fax it to HVADC at 518-828-0901.