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**Hudson Valley Agribusiness Development Corporation**  
**Annual Report 2015**

The Hudson Valley Agribusiness Development Corporation (HVADC) is the only economic development agency in the Hudson Valley with a specific focus on the viability of the agricultural economy in the region. HVADC's charge is to enhance the agricultural sector in the Hudson Valley by assisting both new and existing agri-businesses, and supporting policies and regulations that recognize and support New York State's agricultural economy. Our services are carefully designed to promote the Hudson Valley as an attractive, viable region for agriculture and to foster growth and development of the agricultural sector through a creative program or marketing, promotion and the provision and coordination of financial and other resources.

**Scope of Services**

HVADC offers the following services to farms and farm-related/farm dependent businesses:

1. Technical assistance to businesses applying for funding or implementing awards from various public and private sources to include but not limited to: USDA Value Added Grant, USDA Rural Business Enterprise Grants, SBA, EDA, NYS Consolidated Funding Applications, etc.
2. Business planning services to businesses seeking to diversify production.
3. Business expansion counseling to businesses seeking to add process capacity and expand operations to make room for next generation.
4. New business referrals for site search selection opportunities to locate in the county.
5. Representation and technical support to ensure these business interests are included in NYS Regional Economic Development Councils' plans and implementation.
6. Local farm product sourcing for regional co-packers, value added processors and other regional commercial and institutional buyers.
7. Development and promotion of farm and local business sourcing to support agri/culinary-tourism and educate the community members and markets of the role local sourcing plays in economic development through the Hudson Valley Bounty Program and regional branding.

**Operations and Accomplishments**

In 2015, HVADC improved and expanded its primary programs: Incubator without Walls (IWW), a program designed to meet a variety of needs of current and potential agri-businesses and Hudson Valley Bounty (HVB), a project that pushes the farm-to-table agenda by encouraging the community to eat and shop local while fostering relationships between restaurants and farms.

HVADC is an equal opportunity provider, and employer. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6392 (TTD).

## **Incubator without Walls**

Qualified businesses that are admitted into our IWW program can tap into a wide range of services to accelerate their growth and increase their chances of long-term success. These services can include: business and financial planning, value-added infrastructure services, financing and networking. For the 2015 year, HVADC estimated that we could assist approximately 35 to 40 businesses; we were able to successfully achieve our goal. Through IWW, HVADC has been able to assist 46 businesses in 2015. The various types of services we have provided are list below:

- 18 businesses with general business planning
- 15 businesses with strategic planning for growth/development
- 2 businesses with project planning
- 1 business with marketing/sales and project planning
- 9 businesses with financing/grant writing
- 1 business with legal and strategic planning for land acquisition

HVADC also provided 28 business with education and training on marketing products

## **Hudson Valley Bountly**

HVADC is in the process of performing an overhaul of current Hudson Valley Bountly (HVB) website. These changes will provide a more comprehensive and navigable platform to effectively promote Hudson Valley-based farm and food businesses to consumers and wholesale buyers.

- HVB has collected and/or updated directory listings for approximately 200 farms to date in 7 counties for the new directory.
- HVB provided marketing and promotion for approximately 21 business within the HVB network.
- HVB provided vendor opportunities to 15 local farm and food business through an HVB sponsored event.

## **HVADC Special Projects**

HVADC has allocated significant time, effort and funds towards furthering many locally driven projects this past year. Some examples of these specialized projects are:

1. **Farm to Institution:** HVADC as a Working Group member in the American Farmland Trust's (AFT) "Scaling Up" report and now a member of the Implementation Team is working with AFT to tackle systemic barriers to increasing the volume of food produced in New York that is served in institutions, including colleges, schools, hospitals, emergency food providers and senior centers. HVADC has assisted in the development of several FINYS funding requests that will support a Market Readiness Training Program for farmers with a focus on food safety, scaling up food production, packaging and requirements of the region's institutional food service markets. Two of our primary Farm to Institution projects are:
  - a. *Farm to SUNY:* The FINYS-SUNY Farm to College pilot project facilitated increased purchases of locally and regionally grown food by colleges and universities within the State University of NY (SUNY) network that also provides a sustainable profit margin to farmers. FINYS partnered with the SUNY Office of Sustainability, sustainability directors

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and food service managers at 4 SUNY campuses.

The project was completed in 2015 and measurable highlights of success:

*\* University at Albany increased local purchasing of fresh and minimally processed produce by 38%, investing \$156,129 back into the local economy.*

*\* SUNY Oneonta increased purchasing of NY apple cider from 24 gallons to 588 gallons.*

*\* SUNY New Paltz increased purchasing of locally-grown onions by 151%.*

*\* SUNY Oswego purchased 1,660 pounds of peeled and cubed butternut squash in 2014 from a NY farm-processor seven times more than in 2013.*

- b. *Market Readiness Training:* Based on the award-winning [MarketReady™](#) training, is an interactive program for Extension educators and other professionals in New York. Participants are learning about the growing demand for local food by institutions and the specific requirements and procedures for selling to state agencies, USDA school meals, and food service management companies, Senior Meals, day care centers, food banks and other institutions. They will be equipped with the knowledge and resources to offer workshops to farmers and help them meet buyers in the farm-to-institution supply chain.
2. **Hudson Valley Food Hub Project:** HVADC, in partnership with Farm to Table Co-Packers and Hudson Valley Harvest, was awarded a CFA \$775,000, which will expand the infrastructure of these two successful food processing and distribution firms that serve New York State farms. The grant identified a need for additional processing equipment, cold/freezer storage, trucks and distribution depots. With the additional equipment, these two businesses will have expanded capacity to meet the growing demand for local food from customers in New York City and throughout the Northeast. The result has already expanded sales and profits to these two businesses, as well as increased income opportunities for farms and food producers in the Hudson Valley and throughout New York State.
3. **Food & Farm Business Accelerator:** The Food and Farm Business Accelerator supports the creation and growth of robust regional supply chains by providing entrepreneurs with the tools they need to be successful. This program is designed to help make your food or farm business market and investment ready. The FFBA features a 6-month customized curriculum to provide entrepreneurs with the skills and resources they need to scale up their business as well as networking opportunities to connect participants to the growing network of New York City and Hudson Valley-based funders that are seeking to invest in ventures that support the local food system. The FFBA is not suited for every business. Accepted participants are expected to make a dedicated investment of time, resources, and energy to meet program requirements and responsibilities.

4. **Dutchess, Orange and Sullivan County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plans:** These three counties adopted their respective county agriculture and farmland protection plans in 2015. HVADC participated on each of the county's committees to develop the plan and our serving as members of county implementation committees. Additionally, HVADC facilitated regional conversations with the three county planning offices represented to develop ideas for regional collaboration on projects.

**Compensation Schedule:**

There was one employee that made over \$100,000 in 2015.