

Appendix A

Public Meetings

Agriculture In Ulster County Is Important To Everyone



The Ulster County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board is creating a plan to ensure the future of farming in Ulster County

We need your help!
Here's how you can participate...

First--

Please come to a public information meeting in your district to share your ideas and concerns and help us set priorities for preserving agriculture in your community.

Tuesday, January 14, 7 PM
Hudson Valley Lab
RT 9W, Highland

Tuesday, January 21, 7 PM
Plattekill Senior Center
RT 32, Modena

Monday, February 3, 7 PM
Cornell Cooperative Extension Office Ulster County
74 John St., Kingston

Tuesday, February 25, 7 PM
Rochester Reformed Church
RT 209, Accord

And then...

Join us for a County-wide public meeting to discuss our preliminary Plan and make suggestions.

Tuesday, March 25
7 - 10 PM
Central Hudson Building
RT 28, Kingston
(Behind Johnson Ford near the Thruway circle)

For more information contact
Ellen Strother
Cornell Cooperative Extension
(914) 338-3494

Linda M. Reidy
Linda Reidy, Executive Director

Express your concerns and help us identify solutions!

Funded in part by an Agricultural and Farmland Protection Planning Grant from the New York State

Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan Public Meeting

Agriculture District 1
Hudson Valley Lab
Highland
January 14, 1997

The public meeting in Agricultural District 1 was very productive! 21-25 people attended. Board members Jack Gill and Dave Roehrs attended as did several established farmers, several new or prospective small scale farmers, a SUNY New Paltz historian, several non-farm residents, 3 members of the Cancer Coalition, a reporter, Ben Carlos and Warren Smith of Cornell Cooperative Extension. Ellen Strother, project coordinator, facilitated.

Each individual was asked to identify and prioritize issues that concerned them.

Priority Issues 1/14/97 Ag District 1

Farming viability/profitability

- high taxation and over regulation
- farm generational inheritance, estate planning

Education

- youth, consumer, farmer, non-farm neighbors, local government

Pesticides

- create buffer zones, develop alternatives, education

Marketing

- education, develop new strategies, develop and support niche marketing, specialty marketing (i.e. Christmas trees), encourage local buying

Alternative Agriculture

- niche marketing and growing i.e. organic growing, community supported agriculture

Agricultural Districts

- hard to get in, easy to get out, need to strengthen, need to understand

Other concerns raised:

- want to know why farmers lost their farms or stopped farming
- want to see small scale farming promoted
- tax relief still needed for farmers with significant outside employment
- need land use protection options for ag districts when a participant wants to sell to developers
- motor vehicle regulation now hurts farmers
- farm heritage and farming community need to be acknowledged and valued

Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan Public Meeting

Agriculture District 2
Plattekill Library
January 21, 1997

The public meeting in Agricultural District 2 took place at the Plattekill Library's Senior Center on Rt 32 in Modena. Sixteen people attended. Five active farmers, one retired fruit farmer and two part-time farmers were present. Two agribusiness owners and two farm neighbors were present. The two part-time farmers are also Plattekill's town supervisor and a member of the Plattekill planning board. Four SUNY New Paltz college students attended; they are trying to form a sustainable agriculture club on campus. Project coordinator Ellen Strother served as facilitator.

Each individual was asked to identify and prioritize issues that concerned them.

Priority Issues 1/21/97 Ag District 2

Marketing

- develop new markets (i.e. organic markets, farmers market at a Thruway exit that wouldn't compete with existing road side stands)
- attract institutional markets such as SUNY New Paltz
- promote agritourism through local ag events (i.e. develop an apple trail, hayrides, create a strong presence at the Ulster County Fair)
- develop markets for smaller "off the main road" producers
- utilize NY City as a primary market

Education

- educate consumers to demand local products in the grocery stores
- create an agriculture position that will keep the ag industry communicating (i.e. an agricultural agent or group responsible for communication)
- increase Ulster County's Cornell Cooperative Extension agricultural services
- educate and increase communication among local governments and the ag industry
- make information on pesticide alternatives available to farmers

Farming viability/profitability

- new farmers need access to start up capital
- taxation relief needed
- develop new markets (see #1 item Markets)
- make it easier to hire interns and other seasonal workers (insurance, social security and workers comp. costs are prohibitive and time consuming)

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Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan Public Meeting

Other concerns raised:

- active town planning board member and supervisor want to know how to gain farmers support
- like Dutchess County's support of agriculture
- need to create greater ag markets through development of large use items (biofuels)
- need land use protection options
- need to apply for state and federal funds to protect farmland
- all conservation easements purchases should be administered by the county
- county, not towns, should administer all ag preservation moneys

Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan Public Meeting

Agriculture District 4
Cornell Cooperative Extension Education Center
Kingston
February 3, 1997

The public meeting in Agricultural District 4 took place at the Ulster County Cornell Cooperative Extension Education Center in Kingston. Twenty five people attended. Agricultural and Farmland Protection board members Lydia Reidy, Jack Gill, Herb Hekler and Chris Kelder were present. Jennifer Harvill of the Real Property Tax office represented Priscilla McBride who is retiring. In addition to board members, the group consisted of four farmers, two Cancer Coalition representatives, twelve nonfarmers (including farm neighbors, some organic gardeners, a Marist College professor and a rep from Hudson Valley Sustainable Communities Network), and extension agent Ben Carlos. The meeting was facilitated by project coordinator Ellen Strother.

Each individual was asked to identify and prioritize issues that concerned them.

Priority Issues 2/3/97 Ag District 4

Tax/Regulation Reduction

- labor regulations (immigration and health) excessive

Education

- improve communication between assessors and farmers
- pesticide safety
- nonfarmers concerning agriculture
- promote "buy local"

Farm Preservation/Viability/Land Use

- NY City market development
- need sources of capital for starting new farms
- promote organic methods
- deer control
- good environmental stewardship equals success

Several nonfarmers expressed concerns involving risks associated with pesticides.

Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan Public Meeting

Agriculture District 3
Rochester Reformed Church
February 25, 1997

We had a very successful public meeting in Agricultural District 3 at the Rochester Reformed Church in Accord. Thirty people attended. At least twenty-five of them were farmers. Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board members Chris Kelder and Bob Davenport were present. Extension agents Ben Carlos and Roger Sysak attended. Project coordinator Ellen Strother facilitated.

Each individual was asked to identify and prioritize issues that concerned them.

Priority Issues 2/25/97 Ag District 3

Strengthen Right-To-Farm Law

- landowner and private property rights need to be respected
- reduce harassment from nonfarm community
- strengthen realtor disclosure statements about ag districts

Education

- improve communication between farmers and the public
- promote and strengthen youth programs such as 4-H and FFA
- improve communications concerning the pesticide issue
- increase awareness of livestock agriculture among youth
- educate legislators about normal agricultural practices

Reduce Taxes

- all taxes need to be reduced
- local implementation of Historic Barns Act
- small farmers who rent lands also need tax relief

Other concerns:

- need sources of capital for starting new farms
- deer control
- need to level the playing field concerning exports and their lack of inspection

Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan
Public Meeting

ADDENDUM

In response to the public meetings, the following additional comments are recognized by the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board for inclusion in the plan:

- FAA (Federal Aviation Administration) regulations will be followed.
- Recommend that an organic farmer is appointed to the Board.
- Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ulster County will maintain a list (at the Education Center) of chemicals approved by the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) permitted to be used on each of the various crops grown in Ulster County, along with the MSDS sheets. An additional copy of these materials will be available at the Ulster County Health Department.
- Encourage open communication between farmers and their neighbors about planned agricultural practices (i.e. pesticide spraying and manure spreading).
- It is recognized that there is a concern in the community about the health effects resulting from chemical use, including pesticides, from all sources.