

**SCHUYLER COUNTY, NEW YORK**

**AGRICULTURAL  
DEVELOPMENT  
AND FARMLAND  
PROTECTION PLAN**



**2008 Supplemental Revision**

**Schuyler County Agricultural  
and Farmland Protection Board**

**Shepstone Management Company  
Cornell Cooperative Extension of Schuyler County**

# Schuyler County, New York

## Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan

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### Introduction

This 2008 Supplemental Revision is intended to update and supplement the *Schuyler County Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan* crafted in 1997. The Update is limited in scope and many of the original goals and policies adopted and recommended at that time remain in effect.

This update was made possible through the volunteer efforts of the members of the Schuyler County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board and staff support from Cornell Cooperative Extension of Schuyler County. Professional assistance was also provided by Shepstone Management Company.

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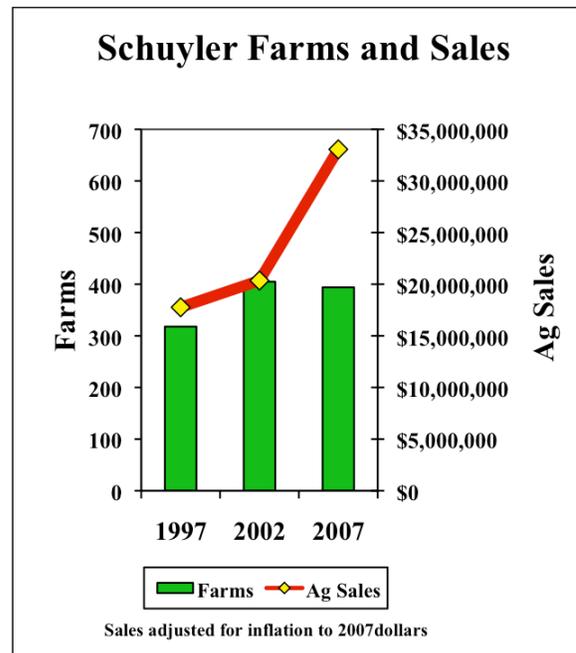
### 1.0 Why Farming Is Important to Schuyler County

Farming is the very foundation of Schuyler County's economy. Consider the following:

#### 1.1 Farming is big business in Schuyler County.

Agriculture within Schuyler County involved some 394 business locations generating sales of \$33,059,000 million in 2007, not including winery sales classified under manufacturing or retail (which are major as later discussion reveals). Despite a recent small decline, the number of farms is 24% higher than 10 years earlier.

Much more importantly, agricultural sales increased by an astounding 86% in real inflation adjusted dollars over the same decade, as the chart to the right illustrates. The average value of land, buildings and equipment used in these businesses was \$434,054 for a total farm sector investment of over \$171 million in Schuyler County.<sup>1</sup>



#### 1.2 Income from agriculture goes further in helping the economy.

Agriculture produces much higher economic multipliers than any other sector of the Schuyler County economy. A Bureau of Economic Analysis study specific to Schuyler County indicates the direct effect multiplier for agricultural output is 1.63 which means every dollar of farm sales generates \$1.63 in output for the Schuyler County economy as a whole. Moreover, lumber and wood products manufacturing, another facet of agriculture in the County, generates \$1.71 per dollar of sales. These are the two highest multipliers for the County and they compare to 1.25 for construction, 1.23 for hotel, amusement and recreation services, 1.33 for the next best manufacturing enterprise (which is also food related, due to the number of wineries in the County) and 1.18 for retail trade.<sup>2</sup>

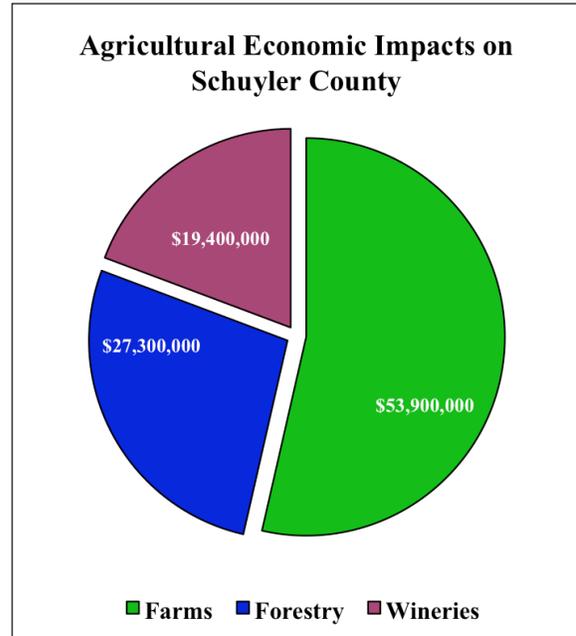
1 Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture, 2007. Market value of land and buildings averaged \$366,966 in 2007 and machinery and equipment was valued at an average of \$67,088.

2 Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis, U.S. Department of Commerce, "Total Multipliers for Output, Earnings and Employment by Industry Aggregation - Schuyler County, New York."

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Applying these various economic output multipliers to sales (direct impacts), so as to measure indirect impacts as well, indicates farming alone represented a total contribution to the County economy of approximately \$53.9 million in 2007. Wood products manufacturing and related forestry and logging activities generate another \$27.3 million of direct and indirect economic impact. Finally, wineries and associated activities produce \$19.4 million of direct and indirect impacts, bringing the total impact of agricultural-related industries on the Schuyler County economy to \$100.6 million.<sup>3</sup> This is not only a very large impact but one that has grown in importance as Schuyler County has suffered loss of some manufacturing.



### 1.3 Farms lower taxes.

Farms are net tax producers despite preferential assessments afforded by the Ag District Law. A 1995 study of adjacent Tompkins County found "agricultural .. uses should be recognized as beneficial because they do not demand a large amount of services and provide other benefits such as employment." A 2005 study of Sullivan County came to similar conclusions. Agriculture typically requires only 15¢ to 40¢ of town and school expenditures for every \$1.00 in tax revenue it generates, helping offset residential development costs of \$1.09 to \$1.56 per \$1.00 of taxes gathered.<sup>4</sup> This is consistent with results of a number of other similar studies done throughout the Northeast including 1992 and 1993 studies done for the Towns of Dix, Hector, Montour and Reading by the League of Women Voters.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, agriculture serves to mitigate the tax impacts of residential development and is essential to the balanced growth of Schuyler County, which is in the interest of all residents and property owners.

3 See Section 2.4 hereof for more information.

4 Source: Costs of Community Services Study, Tompkins County, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County and Tompkins County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan, August, 1995.

5 Source: These include studies by American Farmland Trust, Cornell Cooperative Extension, and Commonwealth Research Group, Inc. of communities in Dutchess and Oneida Counties in New York and various other Connecticut and New England areas, including some previous studies conducted within Schuyler County.

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### 1.4 Farming attracts tourists.

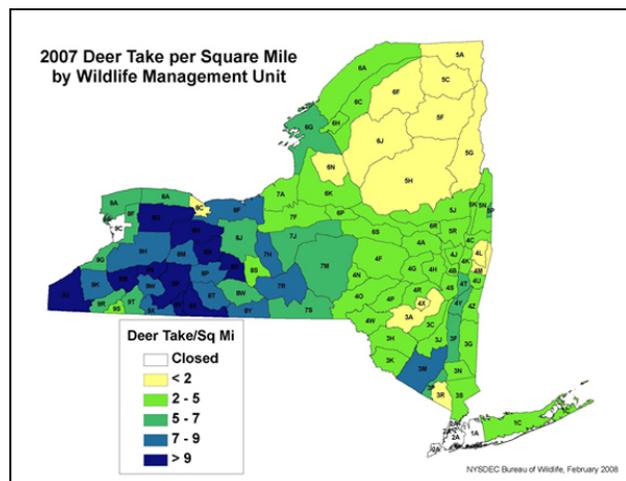
Farms and vineyards are essential to the tourism industry in the County. Visitors are attracted to the County not only by NASCAR events and Seneca Lake but also by the 36 wineries on the Seneca Lake Wine Trail, several local farm stands and orchards and the diverse landscapes and scenic drives which Schuyler County farms offer. The County's bed and breakfast industry is a natural outgrowth of the wine trail and there are many opportunities to further develop the industry along these themes. The *Schuyler County Lodging & Tourism Association* website, for example, talks about "rolling vineyards that rise above rock ledges and cliffs" and uses a number of farm scenes and farm-based attractions to appeal to visitors. Preserving that countryside is essential for the County if tourism is to grow.

### 1.5 Farms create rural character - a precious asset.

Farms preserve rural character and open space which are also essential to the quality of life for permanent residents. Any number of surveys of rural residents and second-home dwellers indicate the primary reasons people live in such areas have to do with their appreciation of the natural resources and open spaces offered, but the anecdotal evidence is perhaps even stronger and local real estate brochures provide examples. They include references not only to the County's historic auto racing and natural sites but also its "the region's thriving wine industry" and "rolling hills" created by work farm landscapes. There is a direct relationship between farming and the attractiveness of Schuyler County as a place to live.

### 1.6 Farms and forests support wildlife and sport hunting.

Farms support wildlife such as deer and small-game and thereby sustain hunting as a source of tourism. The State reports the 2007 white-tail deer harvest was 2,258 animals. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's 2006 *National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation* indicates New York State's 537,000 resident and non-resident hunters spent an average of \$1,237 per sportsman on hunting, suggesting the County's deer harvest alone equates to a \$2.8 million hunting economy.



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### 1.7 Schuyler County agricultural opportunities will grow with development.

The leading agricultural county in New York as of the 2007 Census of Agriculture, and for many years, has been Suffolk County on Long Island - home to 1.4 million people and one of the most highly developed suburban environments in the nation. This proves not only that farming and urbanization can co-exist, but also that demand for agricultural products greatly increases with development and growth, thereby raising the value of farming as an economic enterprise.<sup>6</sup> Schuyler County experiences some development pressures, especially along Seneca Lake and in other popular recreational and residential areas, but farming will, for the same reasons, be ever more important to the County as it develops and grows in population and seasonal visitation. This is particularly true for the fruit and wine industry, which depends so much on direct marketing.

### 1.8 Farmland is a valuable economic resource for future generations.

Farmland is a valuable future resource for the County in providing for a healthy and plentiful local supply of food products and generating new sources of farm income. Many new residents of the County and of areas to the East (e.g. Ithaca), as well as visitors to the Finger Lakes Region, are seeking locally grown fresh fruits, vegetables and



flowers, both organic and non-organic. The *Finger Lakes Culinary Bounty* program seeks to exploit that opportunity. The County is already capitalizing on these opportunities but continuing to do so requires the protection of high-quality farmland, so such enterprises might develop and flourish. They offer tremendous economic potential for the future and, once again, Suffolk County provides an illustration. Its agricultural economy has been reinvented several times with urbanization but today yields well over \$243 million in annual sales and its strength as New York's most valuable agricultural producer is increasing because of the shift to these higher valued products.

### 1.9 Farming provides a year-round business base for Schuyler County.

Agriculture is much more than farming. A substantial number of non-agricultural businesses supply the needs of farmers. These include processors, vehicle and equipment dealers and other enterprises. Schuyler County farmers, for example, own and must maintain and replace 1,055 tractors, 252 hay balers, 538 trucks and numerous other pieces of farm equipment and machinery. They also purchase some \$1,358,000 of gasoline and oil products, \$3,879,000 of feed, \$4,516,000 of hired farm labor, \$2,573,000

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6 Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture, 2007.

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of repairs, supplies and maintenance services, \$1,423,000 of livestock and approximately \$11,803,000 of other products and services from Schuyler County and other nearby enterprises, many of which would not be considered farm supply businesses. For these businesses to survive and prosper, a core critical mass of farmers must be preserved and vice-versa. Otherwise, competitiveness cannot be maintained.<sup>7</sup> Simply put, farming supports more farming and success in one sector breeds more success in all sectors.



### 1.10 The wine industry gives Schuyler County a special identity.

Wineries on the Seneca Lake Wine Trail and others within Schuyler County have helped put it on the map, branding it as a prime location for additional business. There are a total of 22 wineries located in Schuyler County, according to the New York State Wine and Grape Foundation. Many of these rely upon other growers for their grape supplies. The 2002 Census of Agriculture reported 48 vineyard owners in the County, indicating they maintained a total of 1,033 acres in grape production. Wineries along the Seneca Lake Wine Trail produced 785,000 gallons of wine in 2003 (up from 401,000 in 1997) and had capacity to produce a total of 1,059,000 gallons (up from 633,000 in 1997).



The Foundation also indicates the Seneca Lake Wine Trail attracted an estimated 1,298,000 visitors in 2003, up from 658,000 in 1997. This represented nearly one-third of the New York State total for wine trails and wineries, and was up from a mere 56,000 visitors in 1985. Wine accounted for an estimated \$26,413,967 in sales in 2003. Some 13 out of 36 wineries along the Wine Trail are located in Schuyler County suggesting a minimum of \$9.5 million of impact on the County economy. Other wineries and sales of related products bring the total impact for Schuyler County to an estimated \$11.9 million. Applying the 1.63 agricultural multiplier discussed earlier, this yields a total wine industry economic impact on Schuyler County of \$19.4 million. Clearly, this element of the agricultural sector has been a bright success story for Schuyler County and made it both well-known and attractive for new investment now being reflected in continued winery and tourism development.

<sup>7</sup> Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture, 2007.

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### 2.0 Schuyler County Agriculture, 1999 – 2008

The following represents an overview of trends within the agricultural sector of the Schuyler County, New York economy since the original *Schuyler County Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan* was published in 1999.

#### 2.1 Natural Resources for Agriculture

Use of *vitis vinifera* grafted onto native root stock has expanded slightly, from about 10% of New York State acreage in the 1990's to about 12% today. Because this allows soils as difficult as Lordstown-Arnot (rated as “generally unsuitable for farming” in the Soil Survey) to be used for vineyards, climate has become the primary qualification for grape acreage, although soil acidity is also a major factor. The ability of Schuyler County soils to grow *vitis vinifera* vines such as Riesling, Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, Gewürztraminer, and Cabernet Sauvignon has allowed the wine industry locally to take a major step in quality and earned recognition of the Finger Lakes as a unique *terroir* for wine growing.

Notwithstanding the advantages of *vitis vinifera* varieties, the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station at Geneva makes the following observations:

“Severe injury to *vinifera* grapevines is likely to occur when temperatures are less than -5 to -10°F. Climatic maps show the entire state of New York experiences temperatures below these thresholds at least once every 10 years. Grape cultivation also requires 160 frost-free days, a variable that is strongly influenced by proximity to large bodies of water such as the the Finger Lakes. Soils also need to be deep and well drained, with moderate to high pH. The most suitable soils in New York are those derived from limestone bedrock, which run in a crescent shape across the state.”



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Location with respect to Seneca Lake is, therefore, critical. The Agricultural Experiment Station has prepared generalized soil suitability maps for the State to suggest where the best grape prospecting areas are located. They are, as might be expected, found along the shores of Seneca Lake with concentrations toward the southern end and the area around Valois on the eastern side of the Lake. Cornell University studies indicate Native American grapes grow best in the southern Finger Lakes, where the bedrock is mainly acidic shale. However, vinifera cultivars grow best in the northern Finger lakes, where the bedrock is alkaline limestone.

## 2.2 Agricultural Land and Districts

Schuyler County now includes three New York State Agricultural Districts encompassing over 97,000 acres of land, summary data for which may be found in the periodic reports prepared in connection with renewals of each. A description of each District follows: <sup>8</sup>

### Agricultural District #1

Agricultural District #1 is centered on the Town of Hector. It includes some of the County's best soils (e.g., Lansing, Howard, Castile, Chenango and Conesus soil types) and is positively affected by Seneca Lake, which acts as thermal sink, allowing for the 11 vineyards found in this area. There are also a number of other farms throughout the district including a very successful dairy industry that, as of 2003, had increased production by 15% over 1995. Farming within this Agricultural District #1 also includes several niche areas including artisanal cheeses, vegetable crops, small and tree fruits and other livestock such as sheep, beef and horses.



A key issue within this district is maintenance of a land base for continued dairy production. Dairy farmers require extensive land to grow hay and silage as well as dispose of manure. Protecting this land base and securing the freedom of farmers to continue to engage in sound agricultural practices while accommodating growth brought on from the increased popularity of the area is a distinct challenge.

### Agricultural District #2

Agricultural District #2 includes approximately 41,500 acres of land in the Towns of Dix, Orange, Reading and Tyrone. Its 70 farms include sheep, beef, goat, horse, chicken and various exotic animal operations. There are also vineyards, tree fruit and berry growers,

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<sup>8</sup> Source: Reports on Agricultural Districts prepared by Schuyler County Planning & Community Development Office.

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Christmas tree growers, Maple syrup producers and organic farmers. Soils are generally good and allow for diverse forms of crop farming. Dairy, grain crops, hay, fruits and livestock operations are predominate. Production has been stable overall and there has been some diversification into herbal products and other added-value items.

Key issues within this district have included dealing with the extension of sewer and water lines to the Watkins Glen International Racetrack (accomplished with agricultural industry input and support) and ensuring zoning and other land use regulations found here are farm-friendly. Fortunately, sewer lateral construction was limited within agricultural areas when the former was addressed. Moreover, zoning within this area remains protective of agriculture, establishing it as a preferred land use in most areas.

### Agricultural District #3

Agricultural District #3 includes 17,000 acres in the Towns of Catherine, Cayuta and Montour. Its 80 farms include some large dairy producers (including organic dairy farming), Maple syrup producers, field crop and grain farmers and poultry operations. Soils are reasonably good and allow for excellent forage production. Agricultural production has been generally stable overall and farmers within this district have been adopting new equipment and farming practices, diversifying into different areas of agriculture that take advantage of Schuyler County tourism.



The principal issues within this district are very similar to those found in Agricultural Districts #1 and #2. Addressing the potential conflicts of growth with large scale dairying and ensuring zoning is farm-friendly are key. The Town of Montour is now in the process of updating its zoning regulations, for example. The Town remains committed to a strong agricultural sector and the proposed revisions protect the industry, so this challenge is being met. The County and several of the Towns have also adopted Right-to-Farm legislation that addresses the former issue for all three Agricultural Districts.

## 2.3 Land Use and Development Trends

Schuyler County experienced very slow but steady growth over several decades resulting in limited development pressures on certain parts of the County in relatively close proximity to the Ithaca area and the County's lakes. There was, as a result, some loss of farmland within the County. The County gained 1,097 acres of farmland between 1997 and 2007. Cropland increased by 110 acres and harvested cropland acreage expanded by 3,370 acres

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or 12.9% compared to a decade earlier. One cannot conclude, therefore, development is overwhelming agriculture, although there are some pressures in selected areas near Seneca Lake that are prime for vineyards, as well as other recreational areas.<sup>9</sup>

Growth patterns within the County are revealed in Tables 2–1 and 2–2, which indicate Hector, Orange, Tyrone and Dix gained population during the 1990’s while the rest of the County saw outmigration. Overall, growth was very limited, being a little less than a quarter of the national population growth rate and slightly more than half the New York State rate. No community exceeded the U.S. growth rate (13.2%) and only Hector, Orange and Tyrone had growth rates higher than New York’s 5.5%. Census Bureau estimates for 2007, however, most of this growth has since evaporated with the County shrinking by 1% and every community but Hector losing population. Hector’s 1.9% growth rate was also well below the 6.4% national gain.

**Table 2 – 1**

### Schuyler County Population Growth by Town, 1990 – 2007

Town	1990 Population	2000 Population	90-00 Change	% Change	2007 Population	00-07 Change	% Change
Catherine	1,991	1,930	-61	-3.1%	1,887	-43	-2.2%
Cayuta	599	545	-54	-9.0%	528	-17	-3.1%
Dix	4,130	4,197	67	1.6%	4,079	-118	-2.8%
Hector	4,423	4,854	431	9.7%	4,946	92	1.9%
Montour	2,528	2,446	-82	-3.2%	2,362	-84	-3.4%
Orange	1,561	1,752	191	12.2%	1,751	-1	-0.1%
Reading	1,810	1,786	-24	-1.3%	1,782	-4	-0.2%
Tyrone	1,620	1,714	94	5.8%	1,692	-22	-1.3%
<b>Schuyler County</b>	<b>18,662</b>	<b>19,224</b>	<b>562</b>	<b>3.0%</b>	<b>19,027</b>	<b>-197</b>	<b>-1.0%</b>

Source: U.S. Census, 1990 and 2000 and U.S. Census Population Estimates, 2007

The growth among the communities has traditionally come west from Ithaca and northeast from the Elmira-Corning area. It has largely (though not exclusively) taken place in lakeside and lake view areas. Such farmland conversion pressures as have existed, therefore, have been limited to very specific areas of the County. There is some housing growth in all municipalities and, as is typical in recent years with shrinking household sizes, this growth exceeds population gains. There has been some conversion of second homes to first homes - common in vacation areas. While this tends to stimulate growth,

<sup>9</sup> Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture

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which has been strongest in Hector and Orange, the former lost second homes as did Tyrone, Cayuta and Catherine. The Towns of Hector and Orange are also the areas of the County where such limited pressure on farmland as exists can be expected to be greatest in the future. Many farmers are experiencing difficulty in these areas in competing with recreational and residential land purchasers.

**Table 2 – 2**  
**Schuyler County Housing Growth by Town, 1990 – 2000**

Town	1990 Units	2000 Units	90-00 Change	% Change	1990 2nd's	2000 2nd's	90-00 Change	% Change
Catherine	809	865	56	6.9%	79	77	-2	-2.5%
Cayuta	213	233	20	9.4%	4	3	-1	-25.0%
Dix	1,750	1,797	47	2.7%	22	31	9	40.9%
Hector	2,071	2,378	307	14.8%	381	367	-14	-3.7%
Montour	1,043	1,078	35	3.4%	13	17	4	30.8%
Orange	548	666	118	21.5%	67	102	35	52.2%
Reading	803	868	65	8.1%	97	108	11	11.3%
Tyrone	1,235	1,296	61	4.9%	577	549	-28	-4.9%
<b>Schuyler County</b>	<b>8,472</b>	<b>9,181</b>	<b>709</b>	<b>8.4%</b>	<b>1,240</b>	<b>1,254</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>1.1%</b>

Source: U.S. Census, 1990 and 2000

### 2.4 The Economics of Schuyler County Agriculture

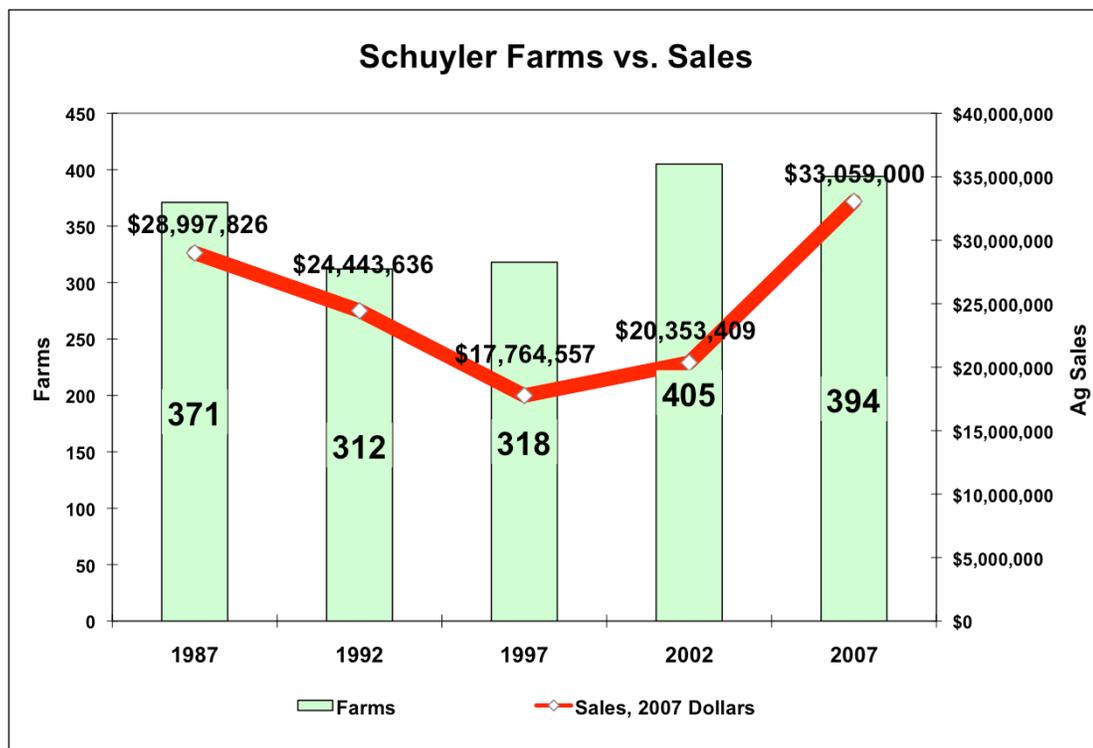
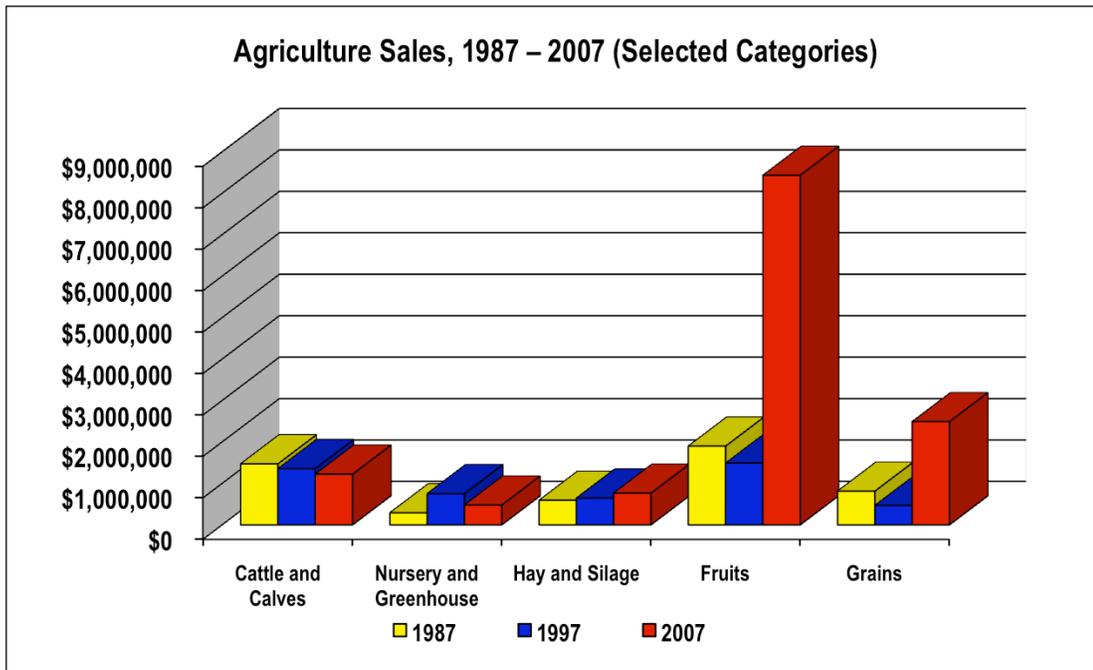
Some 66,378 acres of Schuyler County was farmed in 2007, up from 65,281 acres in 1997. Some 37,086 acres of this total was cropland, with 30,540 acres classified as harvested cropland, both up significantly over 1997 although farmland declined from 2002. There were 265 farms generating sales of at least \$2,500 in 2007 and 164 of these produced \$10,000 or more of product (up from 130 farms in 1997).

Altogether, these farms produced some \$33,059,000 in sales in 2007, of which \$20,496,000 or 62% was livestock-related. These various products accounted for 933 full or part-time jobs (including 220 owner-operators primarily occupied with farming). This is up from 455 persons employed in agriculture in 1997. This is the agricultural economic base of Schuyler County. It is fairly diverse sector with, in particular, a very strong dairy subsector (\$17,642,000 in sales in 2007 as compared to \$8,083,000 in 1997).<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Source: 2007 U.S. Census of Agriculture. Totals may not agree due to rounding.

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These numbers reflect some very positive changes in the dairy and wine industries. Dairy sales have dramatically increased, as noted earlier, having more than doubled over the last 10 years. The growth of large dairies has had major positive impacts on the County.

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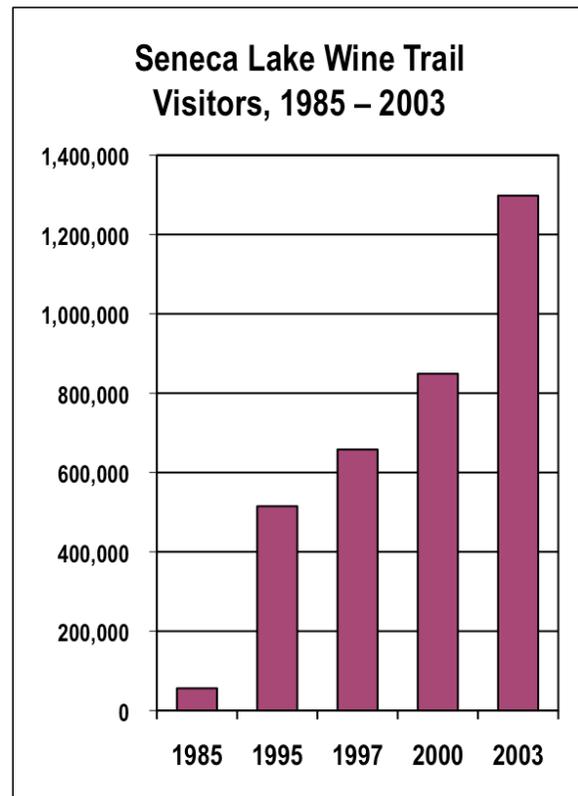
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Winery sales are not counted by Federal agencies as agriculture but, rather, as food manufacturing. New York State, however, is the second largest producer of wines in the U.S. with 212 wineries in 2006 (up from 125 in 1999). Nearly all have been established since 1976 when the Farm Winery Act was passed. Some 36 are found on the Seneca Lake Wine Trail.

There a total of 22 wineries located in Schuyler County, according to the New York State Wine and Grape Foundation. The farm wineries produce fewer than 150,000 gallons each but are growing and expanding at a steady rate with the success of the wine trails throughout the Finger Lakes. Many of these wineries rely upon upon other local growers for their grape supplies, there being some 48 such vineyard owners in the County in 2002. Those growers maintained a total of 1,033 acres in grape production that year. Total acreage has declined as vineyards formerly devoted to juice grape production have been abandoned, but acreage devoted to wine grapes has increased over the years.

Wineries along the Seneca Lake Wine Trail produced 785,000 gallons of wine in 2003 (up from 401,000 gallons in 1997) and had capacity to produce a total of 1,059,000 gallons (up from 633,000 gallons in 1999). Capacity in 1985 was only 232,000 gallons and production was only 100,000 gallons, indicating the tremendous growth that has taken place over the last few decades. The diversity of varieties (French American, *Vitis Vinifera* and Native American) utilized in New York State and Schuyler County winemaking has helped to stabilize the industry and allowed it to continue to grow, employing soils that were not previously considerable suitable for grape production.



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The New York Wine and Grape Foundation, source of the above data, indicates the Seneca Lake Wine Trail attracted an estimated 1,298,000 visitors in 2003, up from 658,000 visitors in 1997. This represented nearly one-third of the New York State total for wine trails and wineries, and was up from a mere 56,000 visitors in 1985. Clearly, this element of the agricultural sector has been a bright success story for Schuyler County. The Seneca Lake Wine Trail achieved an average price per gallon of \$33.65 in 2003 (\$80 per case according to the Wine and Grape Foundation). The 785,000 gallons produced in 2003 therefore

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accounted for an estimated \$26,413,967 in sales. Some 13 out of 36 wineries along the Wine Trail are located in Schuyler County suggesting a minimum of \$9.5 million of impact on the County economy. Moreover, the other nine wineries that are not connected with the wine trail also contribute. Assuming they generate an average of no more than another \$100,000 each in sales, the total direct impact of wine sales is approximately \$10.4 million.

There are, in addition to this, the obvious tourism impacts and multiplier effects, some of which overlap. The Wine and Grape Foundation studies indicate wine represented 87% of Seneca Lake Wine Trail customer expenditures, suggesting sales of other items accounted for as much as \$1.5 million in additional sales, taking total direct sales within Schuyler to \$11.9 million. Applying the 1.63 agricultural multiplier discussed earlier, this yields a total additional wine industry economic impact on Schuyler County of \$19.4 million.

### 2.5 The Forestry Sector

The following table summarizes the most recent estimates and key economic facts regarding the forest industry in Schuyler County based on data from the Census Bureau's *2006 County Business Patterns* report:<sup>11</sup>

**Table 2 – 3**  
**Schuyler County Forest Industry Economic Factors, 2006**

Logging establishments	3
Wood products manufacturing	3
Total forestry - related establishments	6
Number of employees <sup>12</sup>	175+
Annual pay per worker (estimated) <sup>13</sup>	\$40,030
Total annual payroll	\$7,005,389
Estimated cash receipts <sup>14</sup>	\$15,993,119
Total economic impact <sup>15</sup>	\$27,348,234

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<sup>11</sup> Independent loggers often provide incomplete data and are not fully accounted for in official tabulations.

<sup>12</sup> Employee data is only available by ranges. Mid-range numbers, combined with first-hand knowledge of local operations, have been applied to yield this estimate.

<sup>13</sup> The County Business Patterns data indicates 552 employees received \$22,097,000 in payroll county-wide and the average figure of \$40,030 is applied to the estimated 175 employees and the rounded.

<sup>14</sup> The Empire State Forest Association reports, based on 1997 data, New York State forest related-industries produced \$2.28 in value added for every dollar of payroll generated.

<sup>15</sup> Based on estimated cash receipts times 1.71 multiplier for lumber and wood products estimated by the Bureau of Economic Analysis, which compares with the 1.78 multiplier estimated by Cornell University.

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### 3.0 Goals and Objectives

Detailed goals and objectives were established for Schuyler County's agriculture and farmland protection program in the original *Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan* adopted in 1999. The goals were intended to be multi-year in nature and reflect the basic policies of the County for agricultural and farmland protection, while the objectives spelled out more specific criteria by which policy performance can be measured. Measures of success were also suggested. An evaluation of how the County did in meeting these goals (fairly well overall) along with updates is provided on the following two pages in outline form. The basic goals, which are unchanged, are as follows:

- 3.1 Goal: Preserve a critical mass of both farmers and agri-businesses to support competition and provide a foundation for a sound agricultural economy, maintaining a base of 60,000 acres of Schuyler County land in farming (including 30,000 acres in active use for cultivation) and preserving a minimum of 20,000 acres through purchase or lease of development rights and other farmland protection mechanisms.**
- 3.2 Goal: Increase the economic returns associated with farming by generating at least 20% higher prices at the farm gate, increasing net farm incomes by 2% per year to achieve parity with the typical non-farm wage earner (approximately \$20,000/year) and produce a rate of return of at least 8% on farm investments so as to be able to attract private capital.**
- 3.3 Goal: Diversify and broaden the agricultural economic base to provide new income opportunities, increasing agricultural sales in greenhouse, fruit, vegetable, poultry, sheep, goats, beef and other diversified products by 5% per year.**
- 3.4 Goal: Increase public recognition of the value of agriculture and farmland and develop a better understanding of farm issues by non-farmers.**
- 3.5 Goal: Attract new entrepreneurs and younger households to farming ventures and expand the availability of capital to finance such enterprises.**
- 3.6 Goal: Protect farmers from development and regulatory intrusions that threaten their ability to operate in a normal competitive fashion as agricultural enterprises.**
- 3.7 Goal: Integrate agricultural development into town and County economic strategies and land use plans so as to take advantage of the farm opportunities which will inevitably result from growth of the community as a whole.**

# Schuyler County, New York

## Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan

### Schuyler County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Goals and Objectives Progress Report and Update

No.	Goal/Objective	Progress Made	Revisions/Updates
3.1	Preserve critical mass of farmland (60,000 acres total, 30,000 acres in active use and 20,000 acres permanently preserved)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 73,865 acres total in 2002, up 4.7%</li> <li>• 37,782 acres cropland in 2002, up 0.4%</li> <li>• 0 acres permanently preserved</li> </ul>	Focus preservation efforts on prime vineyard areas that otherwise could be lost to second-home development
3.1.1	Identify Schuyler County's most valuable farmland	• Partially mapped but not digitized	Complete digitization
3.1.2	Develop a PDR or LDR program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning another meeting for interested parties</li> <li>• Working with Finger Lakes Land Trust</li> </ul>	Attempt to start a program with donated easements
3.1.3	Create agricultural zoning incentives	• Town of Dix explored and adopted some provisions	Prepare model provisions and <i>Ag Planning Guide</i>
3.1.4	Develop a tax abatement program for ag support industries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopted by County IDA in 1999</li> <li>• SCOPED initiatives include ag economic development</li> </ul>	Continue program and promote benefits available
3.2	Increase economic returns associated with farming (20% higher prices, 2% annual gain in farm income and 8% rate of return)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Average farm net income up 107% (inflation adjusted)</li> <li>• Average rate of return in 2002 was 2.7%</li> </ul>	Continue Cooperative Extension focus on building farm management skills, employment of latest technology and focus on development of marketable niches
3.2.1	Identify new product lines and opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Worked with dairies to establish cheese operations</li> <li>• Developing ag tourism initiatives with one farmer</li> </ul>	Continue technical assistance with establishment of new niche lines of agri-business
3.2.2	Provide marketing and promotion training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Website development program initiated</li> <li>• Cheese study completed - led to new operations</li> <li>• Wal-Mart agreed to sell local products</li> <li>• Have grown some of the Farmers Markets</li> <li>• Working with Finger Lakes Culinary Bounty</li> </ul>	Continue existing program of activities
3.2.3	Provide farmers with research on alternative farm practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hosted numerous farm tours for niche products</li> <li>• Working with Cornell Small Farm Program</li> <li>• Worked with vineyards on new practices</li> </ul>	Continue existing program of activities
3.2.4	Encourage best management practices for woodlands	• Approved for grant to promote forest stewardship	Continue existing program of activities
3.2.5	Form dairy marketing groups	• No progress	Organize meeting of dairies to evaluate feasibility
3.2.6	Educate farmers on legislation	• Farm Bureau and Wine & Grape Foundation does this	Continue existing program of activities
3.2.7	Train farmers on Dairy Futures Program	• No progress	Develop training program
3.2.8	Provide farmers with farm tax training	• Some farm tax classes but need to do more	Conduct annual program
3.2.9	Provide farmers with CAFO technical assistance	• Soil & Water Conservation District provides	Continue existing program of activities
3.3	Diversify and broaden agricultural base by increasing sales of specialized lines by 5% per year (e.g. sheep, goats,	• Fruit, nut and berry sales up 23.5% (inflation adjusted)	Continue focus on wine industry and development of other niche agricultural sectors (e.g., sheep, dairy-processing)
3.3.1	Promote "Reasons to Farm in Schuyler"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote Right to Farm legislation</li> <li>• No specific brochure or program as yet</li> </ul>	Employ <i>Why Agriculture is Important to Schuyler County</i> section of this Plan to develop brochure
3.3.2	Work with local food stores to promote local products	• Wal-Mart agreed to accept local products	Continue existing program of activities
3.3.3	Build on Wine Trail to add other products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Now selling cheese and other products</li> <li>• Assessing potential for other "trails"</li> </ul>	Continue existing program of activities
3.3.4	Expand agri-tourism offerings to complement wine trails	• Secured grant to expand and working with one farmer	Continue existing program of activities
3.3.5	Package products for Raceway patrons	• No progress	Meet with Raceway management to explore potential
3.3.6	Develop a Finger Lakes label	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working with Finger Lakes Culinary Bounty</li> <li>• Exploring label ("Schuyler – World Class with a Twist")</li> </ul>	Continue existing program of activities
3.3.7	Develop a quality Farmers Market in Watkins Glen	• Operating	Continue existing program of activities
3.3.8	Develop a meat marketing program	• No progress	Using dairy processing success as a model, develop similar initiative for meat

# Schuyler County, New York

## Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan

<b>Schuyler County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Goals and Objectives Progress Report and Update</b>			
No.	Goal/Objective	Progress Made	Revisions/Updates
3.4	Increase public recognition of the value of agriculture and farmland	• More interest in agriculture apparent from anecdotal evidence, press releases issued	Continue existing program of activities
3.4.1	Increase level and frequency of communications and increase events	• Events planned for high school students and others, Pro-Ed Committee active with farm visits	Continue existing program of activities
3.4.2	Increase participation of farmers in local government and conduct training on agricultural planning issues	• Progress not measured	Use <i>Ag Planning Guide</i> as tool to reach out to local government and pursue this objective
3.4.3	Conduct training and ag awareness sessions for students	• Ag in classroom proposal made	Continue existing program of activities
3.4.4	Promote farm tours and address lack of ag knowledge	• Events planned for high school students and others, Pro-Ed Committee active with farm visits	Continue existing program of activities
3.4.5	Expand and train supply of agricultural workers	• Ag in classroom proposal made, Ag Careers course developed	Continue existing program of activities
3.5	Attract new entrepreneurs and younger households to farming and expand	• Progress generally limited to promotion	Continue existing program of activities
3.5.1	Promote Schuyler County as location for ag businesses	• Dairy industry has consolidated and grown with one 2,200 cow enterprise now operating in County	Continue existing program of activities using the brochure discussed above
3.5.2	Develop capital financing programs for agriculture	• No progress	Assemble information on existing programs and work with SCOPED and Southern Tier Central to develop tailored program
3.5.3	Encourage formation of new generation cooperatives	• One CSA formed and another planned	Continue existing program of activities
3.5.4	Promote intergenerational farm transfers with training and assistance	• Some training materials distributed, no assistance	Continue existing program of activities and expand to include technical assistance
3.6	Protect farmers from development and regulatory intrusions that threaten ability	• Promoted agricultural planning	Continue existing program of activities, using <i>Ag Planning Guide</i> as a tool
3.6.1	Streamline land use regulations to accommodate and protect agriculture	• Promoted agricultural planning	Continue existing program of activities, using <i>Ag Planning Guide</i> as a tool and offering technical
3.6.2	Promote hamlet development and discourage sprawl	• Promoted agricultural planning	Continue existing program of activities, using <i>Ag Planning Guide</i> as a tool and offering technical
3.6.3	Develop agricultural zoning districts in towns with zoning	• Promoted agricultural planning	Continue existing program of activities, using <i>Ag Planning Guide</i> as a tool and offering technical
3.6.4	Encourage all towns to adopt Right to Farm Laws	• Most towns now have RTF laws	Continue existing program of activities
3.7	Integrate agroicultural development into town and County economic strategies and land use plans to take advantage of farm opportunities.	• County Comprehensive addresses agriculture	Encourage development of local comprehensive plans and/or ag and farmland protection plans to focus implementation on the local level
3.7.1	Execute cooperation agreements with other agencies	• No progress	Continue joint programs of work with agencies such as the Soil & Water Conservation District
3.7.2	Integrate Ag Plan into County Comprehensive Plan and economic strategy	• County Comprehensive addresses agriculture	Continue existing program of activities
3.7.3	Establish ag economic development staffing arrangements	• Extension staff serves in this role	Continue existing program of activities
3.7.4	Establish an ag revolving loan program	• No progress	Assemble information on existing programs and work with SCOPED and Southern Tier Central to develop tailored program
3.7.5	Develop site plan review criteria that protect agriculture in major towns	• No progress	Use <i>Ag Planning Guide</i> as a tool for offering technical assistance, develop local models
3.7.6	Consider change in taxing strategies to shift burden to non-residents and visitors	• No progress	Continue to evaluate

# Schuyler County, New York

## Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan

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### 4.0 Major Recommendations for Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection

The Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board should make implementation of the major recommendations that follow its primary mission over the next decade.

#### 4.1 Financing Programs

Schuyler County should continue working with SCOPED and Southern Tier Central Regional Planning and Development Board (STCRPDB) to establish an Agricultural Revolving Loan Program. It should be targeted specifically to agricultural and forestry processing projects, financing innovative manure management systems and similar ventures and promoted through the use of descriptive brochures. Candidate projects will typically need to be identified for the initial round of funding but could include a mini-dairy processing facility or winery expansion.

A "Funding for Farm and Agri-business Projects," brochure should also be developed to identify all the various funding sources which SCOPED and/or the Schuyler County Industrial Development Agency (SCIDA) can assist agri-businesses and farms in obtaining. This would differ from existing handouts in that it would be more focused on agriculture and also identify additional programs not available to non-farm entities.

**Implementation Period:** 2009-2010

**Responsible Parties:**

- 1) SCOPED
- 2) STCRPDB
- 3) Cornell Cooperative Extension
- 4) SCIDA

#### 4.2 Solicit New Farm Enterprises

Schuyler County has a great deal of vacant farmland that can be put back into production. A new farm solicitation is warranted. It should include a professional brochure built around *Why Agriculture Is Important to Schuyler County* and include a DVD video for easy distribution.

The brochure can be used to target the Amish and Mennonite communities who have been moving into adjoining counties in large numbers already. These communities have helped maintain a strong agricultural base and demonstrated the benefits of diversification by establishing small sawmills and assorted other niche enterprises. They

# Schuyler County, New York

## Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan

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help maintain a critical mass of farmers and agri-businesses.

**Implementation Period:** 2009-2012

**Responsible Parties:** 1) Ag & Farmland Protection Board  
2) Cornell Cooperative Extension

### 4.3 Agricultural Planning Guide

Local officials and, particularly, planning board members, require continuous education on planning issues in general and agricultural law. Many planning board members often come from non-farm backgrounds and are unaware of farm issues and the law as it pertains to agriculture. An *Agricultural Planning Guide* is, therefore, recommended. and a draft document of this nature has been appended to this *Supplemental Revision*. Planning schools, seminars and resource materials for local officials should be prepared and/or conducted to help them use the *Agricultural Planning Guide* and understand the considerations they should give to development adjacent to farms.

**Implementation Period:** 2009-2010

**Responsible Parties:** 1) Cornell Cooperative Extension  
2) Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board  
3) Municipal planning boards

### 4.4 Farmland Preservation

The County should, together with the NY Agricultural Land Trust and Finger Lakes Land Trust, establish a program to acquire conservation easements on the most valuable farmland in the County, provided the program is strictly voluntary and limited to high-value farmlands threatened by development (e.g. Seneca Lakes tracts well suited to growing grapes). Prime areas for consideration include the Towns of Hector and Orange.

The program will require funding for easement purchases, administrative assistance and an organization to receive and hold the easements or development rights. The primary areas to be protected may be described as those farms that lie within a New York State Certified Agricultural District.

Priorities should be established using the recommended “Guidelines for PDR Program “ found as Appendix 5.3 of the original *Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan*. Funding for the program could come from many sources including the New York State Agricultural and Farmland Protection Program, land trusts and/or private individuals. A landowner might, for example, donate a portion of the easement value for

# Schuyler County, New York

## Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan

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a tax write-off and to provide the match for New York State or other funding. This could work particularly well with wealthier owners of rented farmlands and should be the starting place for developing a program.

**Implementation Period:** 1) Start-up 2009  
2) Acquisition 2010-2018

**Responsible Parties:** 1) Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board  
2) Cornell Cooperative Extension  
3) Finger Lakes Land Trust

### 4.5 Agriculture Education

The County should continue to implement and expand upon Cornell Cooperative Extension's proposed Agricultural Careers Short-Course program in cooperation with local high schools. The Pro-Ed Committee, which is made up of Farm Bureau members, SWCD and Cornell Cooperative Extension has been active on this and related matters. Recently the committee has been working with the sixth grade classes of Odessa Montour and taking them out on farms in both the Spring and Fall and doing in-class sessions in the winter. Pro-Ed also took the Leadership Schuyler group to farms in the past and may do this again, but mostly the focus is on youth and teaching them about agriculture and job possibilities on farms.

The objective should be to expose interested students to a variety of agricultural businesses and professions, with the hope of inspiring them to choose a career in one of these fields. The program should continue on an annual basis.

**Implementation Period:** 2008-2018

**Responsible Parties:** 1) Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board  
2) Cornell Cooperative Extension

### 4.6 Labor Recruitment

The County should develop a program to solicit legal immigrants for the agricultural workforce, working with legitimate labor suppliers who avoid the illegal immigration issues, simultaneously cooperating with Farm Bureau and New York State Department of Ag & Markets to lobby for increased legal immigration and a guest worker program. This effort should include training programs, cooperation agreements with workforce agencies and providers and educational materials for farmers and others regarding the needs and responsibilities involved.

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## Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan

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**Implementation Period:** 2008-2010

**Responsible Parties:**

- 1) Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board
- 2) Farm Bureau
- 3) Workforce Development Board

### 4.7 Grape Marketing Initiative

The County should establish a grape marketing initiative to address overproduction of certain varieties by reaching out to adjacent wine regions (e.g. Long Island, Pennsylvania) and other developing wine areas to meet their needs. This will require a study to identify wine regions with grape shortages, specific wineries in those regions requiring additional supplies and types of grapes needed to match up with local suppliers.

**Implementation Period:** 2009-2012

**Responsible Parties:**

- 1) Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board
- 2) Cornell Cooperative Extension
- 3) Finger Lakes Grape Program

### 4.8 Local Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plans

The County should promote the development of local agricultural and farmland protection plans and implementation projects using funding from the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets to launch new entrepreneurial ventures. The Town of Hector and Orange should be targets for such planning, due to their growth.

**Implementation Period:** 2009-2012

**Responsible Parties:**

- 1) Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board
- 2) Cornell Cooperative Extension
- 3) Schuyler County Municipalities

### 4.9 Winemaking Seminar

The County should establish an annual winemaking seminar program intended to attract top-level expertise from other wine regions or nations. This annual program would not only teach winemaking but also draw attention to the Finger Lakes (and Schuyler County) as the place to go for knowledge about the industry thereby broadening the pool of resources available to local wineries.

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## Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan

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**Implementation Period:** 2009-2018

**Responsible Parties:**

- 1) Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board
- 2) Cornell Cooperative Extension
- 3) Seneca Lake Wine Trail Association
- 4) New York Wine and Grape Foundation

### 4.10 Agricultural Infrastructure

The County should address the infrastructure needs of agriculture by inventorying needs for particular facilities and services, for the wine industry in particular, but also others,. It should also develop capital funding programs to address these needs, establishing sources of financing for this purpose. This could include development water sources, a proposed grape warehouse as well as other infrastructure needs.

**Implementation Period:** 2010-2015

**Responsible Parties:**

- 1) Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board
- 2) Cornell Cooperative Extension
- 3) SCOPED

### 4.10 Environmental Compliance Training

Environmental compliance issues (e.g., CAFO) too often pit farmers against other residents. The County should continue to have a holistic and proactive approach to on-farm resource management. The AEM Program is the comprehensive approach to addressing agricultural and environmental issues on New York's farms. Farmers have long been regarded as the original stewards of the land because a farm's livelihood directly depends on the health and vitality of the soil and water resources. They know that to remain economically viable they need to be vigilant about protecting natural resources and AEM is designed to help farmers do this. This program coordinates the delivery of the technical support and financial incentives needed to implement the conservation practices critical to protect water quality and other natural resources.

Over 150 farmers in Schuyler County are participating in the program and the goal is to have every farmer participate at some level. Agricultural public relations, including the 'Farmers Partnering to Protect Our Environment' Signage Recognition Program, to be started in 2009; the education of non-farm neighbors about sound farm practices; and Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) compliance are part of this program.

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## Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan

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The Schuyler County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) coordinates the AEM program but works with other agencies such as Cornell Cooperative Extension, and the Schuyler County Farm Bureau to promote and implement the program.

The Schuyler County AEM Strategic Plan written in 2005 will be updated in 2009 with input from farmers and relevant agencies.

**Implementation Period:** 2009-2018

**Responsible Parties:**

- 1) Schuyler County SWCD
- 2) Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board
- 3) Schuyler County Farm Bureau
- 4) Pro-Education Committee

### 4.11 Agricultural Economic Development

It is recommended Schuyler County, create an Agricultural Marketing Specialist position. Steps in this direction have already been taken by SCOPED and others. This person should lead a coordinated effort by the Schuyler County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Schuyler County, the Industrial Development Agency and SCOPED to implement the recommendations of this Plan. He or she should help to identify new markets for agricultural products and services and be assigned to provide technical assistance to farmers and agri-businesses in selling to those markets.

The person should have responsibilities to SCOPED, SCIDA and Cornell Cooperative Extension as resources. The shared responsibilities are essential to highlighting the value of agriculture and forestry to the local economy and further integrating agriculture into the County's economic development program. Funding for this position could come from a variety of sources including the County but, initially, this endeavor should be approached as a demonstration project. Grant funds should be available from State and/or Federal sources to help launch it. Potential sources include USDA Rural Development and the Community Development Block Grant program. The position should, however, be designed to be at least partially supported by producers and agri-businesses.

**Implementation Period:** 2008-2018

**Responsible Parties:**

- 1) Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board
- 2) Cornell Cooperative Extension
- 3) SCOPED
- 4) SCIDA

# Schuyler County, New York

## Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan

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### 4.12 Agricultural Tourism

The County launched an agricultural tourism initiative in 2007 that needs to be implemented over the next decade on a continuing basis. Both Watkins Glen and the Finger Lakes Region offer tremendous name recognition and the efforts made to build upon the area's auto racing and wine credentials have been quite impressive. Nevertheless, the market is still only beginning to be tapped and continued professional marketing is needed to package such varied attractions as the racetrack, Finger Lakes National Forest and Seneca Wine Trail with local Bed & Breakfast offerings, vineyard/winery tours and farm markets.

One of the most important assets in this regard is the fact most of the wineries and other farms are family operations. Family history is a great marketing device of much interest to visitors who like to take home wine, cheese and fruits they tell others they purchased at a little family-owned farm or vineyard in the Fingers Lake. Some of the wineries have begun to take advantage of this but others have not and need to become more receptive to bus tours and other organized group visitation. Professional marketers, therefore, are required to sell the tours at both ends - to visitors and to the businesses who could benefit from their visits.

This process has begun with planning and technical assistance provided to interested farmers. It should continue along the lines laid out in that program.

**Implementation Period:** 2008-2018

**Responsible Parties:**

- 1) Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board
- 2) Cornell Cooperative Extension
- 3) SCOPED
- 4) Chamber of Commerce

**Schuyler County, New York**  
**Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan**

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## **5.0 Appendix - Ag Planning Guide**

Attached is a first draft of a proposed Ag Planning Guide as recommended herein.