

Chemung County, New York
Agricultural Economic Development Plan
(Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan)



Chemung County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board
Cornell Cooperative Extension of Chemung County
Chemung County Planning Department

Developed by the Chemung County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board through a grant from the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets with the assistance of Cornell Cooperative Extension of Chemung County and Northeast Agriculture Technology Corporation in cooperation with Chemung County Farm Bureau and presented to the Chemung County Executive and the Chemung County Legislature

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1.0 Why is it important for Chemung County to preserve and strengthen agriculture?

The American Farmland Trust (“AFT”) website notes that “every minute of every day, we have been losing more than an acre of agricultural land to development.” The AFT believes that farmland is worth saving for the sake of the national economy - “the U.S. food and farming system contributes nearly \$1 trillion to our national economy...and employs more than 17% of the labor force. World consumers of U.S. agricultural exports are expected to increase their purchases in the future...saving American farmland is a prudent investment in the world food supply and the nation’s economic future.

“Protection of the Environment - Well-managed agricultural land supplies important non-market goods and services for our environment. Farm and rural lands provide food and cover for wildlife, help control flooding, protect wetlands and watersheds and maintain air quality. They can absorb and filter wastewater and provide groundwater recharge. New energy crops even have the potential to replace fossil fuels.”

“Fresh, Healthy Food and Strong Communities – Farms closest to our cities, and directly in the path of development, produce much of our fresh food – an astounding 91% of our fruit and 78% of our vegetables. And for many Americans, saving farmland is focused on protecting the quality of life in their communities – scenic and cultural landscapes, farmers’ markets, recreational opportunities, local jobs and community businesses.’

“Fiscal Stability for Local Governments – New development requires services such as schools, roads and fire/police protection, whereas privately owned and managed agricultural land requires very few services. Cost of Community Services studies show that, nationwide, farm, forest and open lands more than pay for the municipal services they require, while taxes on residential uses, on average, fail to cover costs.”

To quote from the New York Farm Bureau, “Agriculture is New York’s most important industry. The farm economy generated \$4.45 billion in 2008...There are approximately 35,000 farms in New York State and 99 percent of those are family owned. A viable and strong agricultural industry is not only beneficial to the state’s farm and food industry, but to the economy of the state, hundreds of local communities, and to all consumers...New York has a tremendous agricultural resource base with abundant rainfall, productive soil, sufficient growing season, and proximity to the nation’s largest markets. The outlook for the future of New York agriculture is one of great potential for a vigorous and thriving industry.”

New York’s National ranking in 2008:

- 1st - cabbage and cottage cheese production
- 2nd - apples, maple and sour cream production
- 3rd - milk, grape, corn silage and cauliflower production
- 4th - pear, pumpkin, tart cherries, sweet corn, snap beans and squash production
- 5th - onion production

New York's Top 5 Commodities

1. Dairy products (\$2.3 billion)
2. Grain and silage corn (\$748 million)
3. Hay (\$363 million)
4. Apples (\$261 million)
5. Floriculture (\$202 million)

Agriculture is a critical component of Chemung County's economy. Farms are local businesses providing jobs and economic growth as they spend most of their money on local goods and services, which in turn support other local businesses. Farm expenses include feed, seeds, fertilizers, chemicals, livestock, farm equipment, trucking and transportation, fuel and utilities. Banks, hardware stores, food processors and other local establishments are supported by farmers. Farms in Chemung County represent a diversity of agriculture from dairy, poultry, sheep, horses and other livestock, to vegetables, flowers, grasses and grains. The County boasts rich timber, and its attractive landscape is the first thing visitors to the area will see.

Taking a proactive approach to developing a reasoned and attainable agriculture and farmland protection plan is of critical importance to Chemung County. The primary purpose of Chemung County's Agricultural Economic Development Plan (the "Plan") is to preserve agricultural land use while encouraging and strengthening agricultural development.

- a) A strong and productive agricultural system supports the stewardship of vast rural acreage. When agriculture thrives, the entire rural nature of a region thrives.
- b) A productive local agriculture system provides valuable fresh agricultural goods to local and regional markets. The strong trend of consumers demanding local agricultural goods requires a local production system that can meet those demands.
- c) A healthy agricultural industry provides good rural employment as well as expanded service industry opportunities and jobs.
- d) Farms and forests are a major part of the natural capital of Chemung County represented by air, water, land, flora, fauna, timber and landscape.
- e) A strong agricultural industry provides a critical backdrop for positive economic development in Chemung County.
- f) Agriculture produces vital economic multipliers that benefit the residents of Chemung County. ("Economic Multipliers and the New York State Economy" Policy Issues in Rural Land Use, Cornell Cooperative Extension, December 1996)

g) Farms lower taxes - a 1995 study of nearby 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." Data from the Costs of Community Services Study, Tompkins County by Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County, in fact, indicate agriculture typically produces \$1.00 in tax revenue for every 15¢ to 40¢ of town and school expenditures it generates, whereas residential development costs \$1.09 to \$1.56 per \$1.00 of taxes gathered. A similar analysis from the Schoharie County Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan, 2000 indicated agriculture produced \$1.09 to \$2.06 in tax revenue for every \$1.00 of municipal and school costs created.

h) Farms and forests support wildlife and sport hunting and preserve natural environments. Wildlife such as deer, turkeys and small-game abound. Hunting, fishing, hiking and recreational activities in a beautiful vista are a source of tourism for the area.

i) Farms and forests provide working self-sustaining landscapes which preserve and enhance environmental quality. Forest land, which is a part of nearly every farm, "may reduce sediment, nutrient and other pollutant loadings by as much as 85% by minimizing soil erosion and filtering watershed runoff" according to a Watershed Agricultural Council publication.

j) Farmland is an invaluable resource for future generations by providing a healthy and plentiful local supply of food products and generating new sources of farm income. Residents and visitors alike are seeking locally grown fresh fruits, vegetables, flowers, dairy and meat - both organic and non-organic.

k) The total market value of all agricultural commodities sold in 2007 in Chemung County was \$16,608,000 (up from \$14.2 million in 2005). (Exhibit F) Further information regarding the economic profile of Chemung County is available in Exhibits D & E.

l) A recent study by the Pennsylvania Center for Dairy Excellence determined that the local economic impact per dairy cow is over of \$6,600 per year. According to the 2007 Census of Agriculture (USDA, National Agricultural Statistics Service), the County's 3,118 dairy cows yield an economic impact of \$20,578,800! (Exhibit F)

Developing an Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan requires steps to gather extensive information about the current status of the agricultural industry and the challenges agriculture faces, the attitudes of county stakeholders, and suggestions for strategies to deal with the challenges. In Chemung County, the team developing the Plan scheduled several information sessions to gather input from farm operators, business and government leaders, and residents from each of the towns and municipalities in the county. A summary of the input from those meetings can be found in Exhibit A. In addition, a follow up survey of farm operators added additional insights into farmers' opinions (Exhibit B). Additional information and potential strategies were gleaned from "NYSAC Blue Ribbon Task Force on the Future of Farming in New York State" (Exhibit N).

2.0 Agricultural Inventory

About 25% of the total land area in Chemung County is active farmland. Land in farms has increased (per 2007 Census of Agriculture, Exhibit F) since 1997 partly due to the growth of small specialty farms such as sheep farms, meat goat operations, and organic farms. Chemung County and adjacent Southern Tier counties boast some of the world's most valuable hardwood forests. The forest industry is an important economic engine for Chemung County. There is a total of 177,000 acres of forest in the County, of which 26,000 acres is productive and rated as very good or plus good, according to the U.S. Forest Service. The 9 forest industry businesses in the County with over 500 employees have an annual payroll over \$12 million. Four major hardwood sawmills are located in nearby communities, and two major industries (U.S. Salt in Watkins Glen, New York and Lockheed Martin in Owego, New York) plus the Arnot Ogden Medical Center have installed biomass plants to utilize low-grade forest products as an energy source. This improves the opportunity to market forest products in this region. There is ample water for agricultural production purposes in Chemung County. There are extensive natural gas resources in Chemung County.

Statistics from the 2007 Census of Agriculture (USDA, National Agricultural Statistics Service) (Exhibit F):

- a) The County ranks 45th in the state for the number of farms and 44th in the state for land in farms - 373 farms encompassing 65,124 acres (24.9% of the total acres in the county) with a value of land, buildings and equipment totally \$145,197,000.
- b) The market value of all agricultural production was \$16.6 million – about 81% of the sales were livestock and livestock products, about 19% of the sales were crops.
- c) Average sales per farm - \$44,526 (compared to \$28,253 per farm in 2002) (Exhibit C)
- d) Average production expenses per farm - \$43,032 (compared to \$31,557 in 2002)
- e) Average age of the farm operator – 56.7 years
- f) 49% of farm operators report farming as their principal occupation
- g) Milk and dairy products represent about 64.4% of the market value of agricultural production in the County. Cattle and calves represented the 2nd highest market value with 12% of sales. Grains, dry beans and dry peas ranks 3rd at 5.5% of total sales, while hay and silage ranks 4th at 5.4% of total sales. Horses and ponies have increased significantly to 5th place at 3.9% of total sales. Vegetables represent 3.8% of total sales, followed by nursery and greenhouse products at 2.4% of total sales.

3.0 Natural Resources for Agriculture

Soil types in Chemung County vary depending on the proximity to the Chemung River, which runs west to east in the County. The majority of soils are Lordstown-Volusia-Mardin association, which includes moderately deep and well-drained soils on the lowlands and poor to moderately well-drained soils with fragipan on the uplands. The northern part of the County has extensive acreages of Volusia-Lordstown association soils that range from gently sloping to steep, somewhat poorly drained soils with fragipan on the lowlands to well-drained, moderately deep soils on the uplands. In the north-central part of the county, there is an area of Valois-Lansing association soils that are gently sloping to steep and are deep and well-drained. Soils adjacent to the Chemung River and in the populated areas of Big Flats, Horseheads and Elmira are dominated by the Howard-Chenango association and the Tioga-Unadilla-Howard association. These soils are well-drained to somewhat excessively well-drained on glacial outcroppings, alluvial fans and flood plains. (Exhibits G and J provide more information on local soils.)

4.0 Agricultural Districts

New York State's Constitution directs the State Legislature to provide for the protection of agricultural lands. To achieve this directive, the State Legislature enacted New York State's Agricultural District Law in 1971. This Law created a locally-initiated procedure for the creation of county agricultural districts and declared that it is the State government's policy (1) to conserve and protect agricultural lands as valued natural resources and open space and (2) to encourage the improvement of agricultural lands for the production of food and other agricultural products. There have been several amendments to the Law since 1971, including the Agricultural Protection Act in 1992. This Act strengthened the Agricultural Districts Law by adding various provisions addressing right-to-farm issues and by creating a statewide agricultural and farmland protection program under the direction of the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets.

In 1976, the Chemung County Legislature created the County's first agricultural district. There are now five Agricultural Districts in the County certified by the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets encompassing 40,678 acres of land and involving 320 active farms. Each November, the County holds an open enrollment period for landowners desiring to place property within a certified Agricultural District. The Chemung County Legislature every eight years thoroughly reviews, in accordance with the New York State Agriculture and Markets Law, each Agricultural District in the County. The County Legislature must authorize the continuation, termination, or modification of each district based upon the recommendations of the Chemung County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board, the Chemung County Planning Board, and any public comments submitted at a public hearing held for that purpose.

Agricultural Districts encourage the continued use of farmland for agricultural production, provide preferential real property tax treatment (agricultural assessment and special benefit assessment), protections against overly restrictive local laws, government-funded acquisition or construction projects, private nuisance suits involving agricultural practices, disclosure notices for real estate purchases, and sound agricultural practice determinations from the Commissioner of the State Department of Agriculture and Markets.

Pursuant to the Agricultural District Law, the Chemung County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board consists of 11 members: 4 active farmers, 1 agri-businessperson, 1 from an organization dedicated to farmland preservation, the Chair of the Chemung County Soil and Water Conservation District's Board of Directors, a Chemung County Legislator, a Cornell Cooperative Extension of Chemung County agent, the Chemung County Planning Commissioner, and the Chemung County Real Property Tax Services Director. The Board is charged with a number of responsibilities in the Agricultural Districts Law (Article 25AA).

District 1 – Town of Southport (5,665 acres)

District 2 – Towns of Ashland and Chemung (13,539 acres)

District 3 – Town of Baldwin, Elmira, Erin, Horseheads, VanEtten and Veteran (11,071 acres)

District 4 – Towns of Ashland and Southport (5,916 acres)

District 5 – Towns of Big Flats, Catlin, Horseheads and Veteran (4,487 acres)

A map of the Agriculture Districts in Chemung County can be found in Exhibit H.

5.0 Land Use and Development Trends

The I-86 corridor passes through Chemung County along the Chemung River valley through some of the best farmland in the County. Commercial, industrial and residential development usually occurs adjacent to interstate transportation corridors, and much prime farmland has been lost to such development. Airport and highway development and the commercial expansions in the Horseheads-Big Flats corridor demonstrate this loss to the pressures of development. Additional planned commercial development in eastern Chemung County along the I-86 corridor will also remove farmland from agricultural production. There is little indication that this development trend will diminish. Mechanisms to develop and strengthen agriculture in the remaining areas of the county that offer reasonably good resources should be considered. (Exhibit K contains a map showing land use codes for Chemung County in 2001.)

Chemung County sits on top of a portion of the Trenton-Black River and the Marcellus Shale natural gas formations that boast what some might say is one of the largest natural gas reserves in the world. There are a number of producing wells in the region that have tapped the Trenton-Black River formation. Current natural gas development is focused on the Marcellus Shale which stretches from the Appalachian mountains of West Virginia to western Virginia, eastern Ohio, western Pennsylvania and much of the western, central and eastern southern tier of New York State. At this moment in time, drilling in the Marcellus Shale is suspended while the State of New York conducts an environmental impact study. The Millennium Pipeline extends through Chemung County making the County an attractive site for natural gas industry development. Unlike natural gas development in the western states of the United States, most of the surface land over the Marcellus Shale formation in New York is owned by private landowners. In Chemung County, much of this formation is under farmland, making development both an opportunity and a concern for the local agricultural community.

The opportunity lies in the land owner revenues that can be obtained from natural gas leases and potential royalties if substantial amounts of gas are discovered and extracted. This added revenue stream to landowners could help them maintain and grow their agricultural businesses. The concerns about the natural gas development center on several issues that occur in areas where extensive drilling and development activities take place. As agricultural landowners deal with this development, Cornell Cooperative Extension, New York Farm Bureau and Chemung County Farm Bureau are providing extensive information outreach and assistance to educate these landowners.

Wind farms are being developed in upstate New York, including the Southern Tier area. These farms are usually located on open hilltop areas that include productive farmland. Developed wind farm sites include land lease agreements which can provide landowners with significant income for site leases. Farmland adjacent to windmill locations continues to be productive in most cases. Wind farm development in Chemung County could reduce productive farm acres (location of windmills and permanent service roads); however the land lease income would benefit the landowners.

6.0 Right to Farm, Local Planning and Land Use Decision Making, Farmland Preservation

Chemung County has eleven towns, and each of these towns has adopted a “Right to Farm” local law to acknowledge “...that farming is an essential enterprise and an important industry that enhances the economic base, natural environment and quality of life...” in the region.

Chemung County supports the “Coordination of local planning and land use decision-making with the agricultural districts program” as contained within Article 25-AA, Section 305-a of the Agriculture and Markets Law of the State of New York. The Chemung County Planning Board oversees the Chemung County Agricultural District program, the annual open enrollment process, and the annual eight year review of the five agricultural districts, which is done in cooperation with the Chemung County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board. Maps are updated on a regular basis and are available from the Chemung County Planning Department or on their website. A current map is included in Exhibit H in the attachments section of this plan. As of December 2010, there were a total of 40,676.09 acres included in the Chemung County Agricultural District Program. Participation in an agriculture district makes the property eligible for agricultural assessment (Exhibit Exhibit I).

The Agriculture and Markets Law provides for a Farmland Preservation Program that includes the purchase of development rights. Chemung County supports the provisions of Article 25-AAA of the Agriculture and Markets Law of the State of New York, “Agricultural and Farmland Protection Programs.” Based on a review of soil quality and existing farming activity, the areas identified in Figure #1 are areas that could be considered for protection. However, participation in the Purchase of Development Rights program is VOLUNTARY and is only one way to protect farmland. This plan advocates for the implementation of a variety of strategies and supports for agriculture, while respecting the land use rights of both the County and each landowner.

Chemung County Areas of Consideration
For Purchase of Development Rights

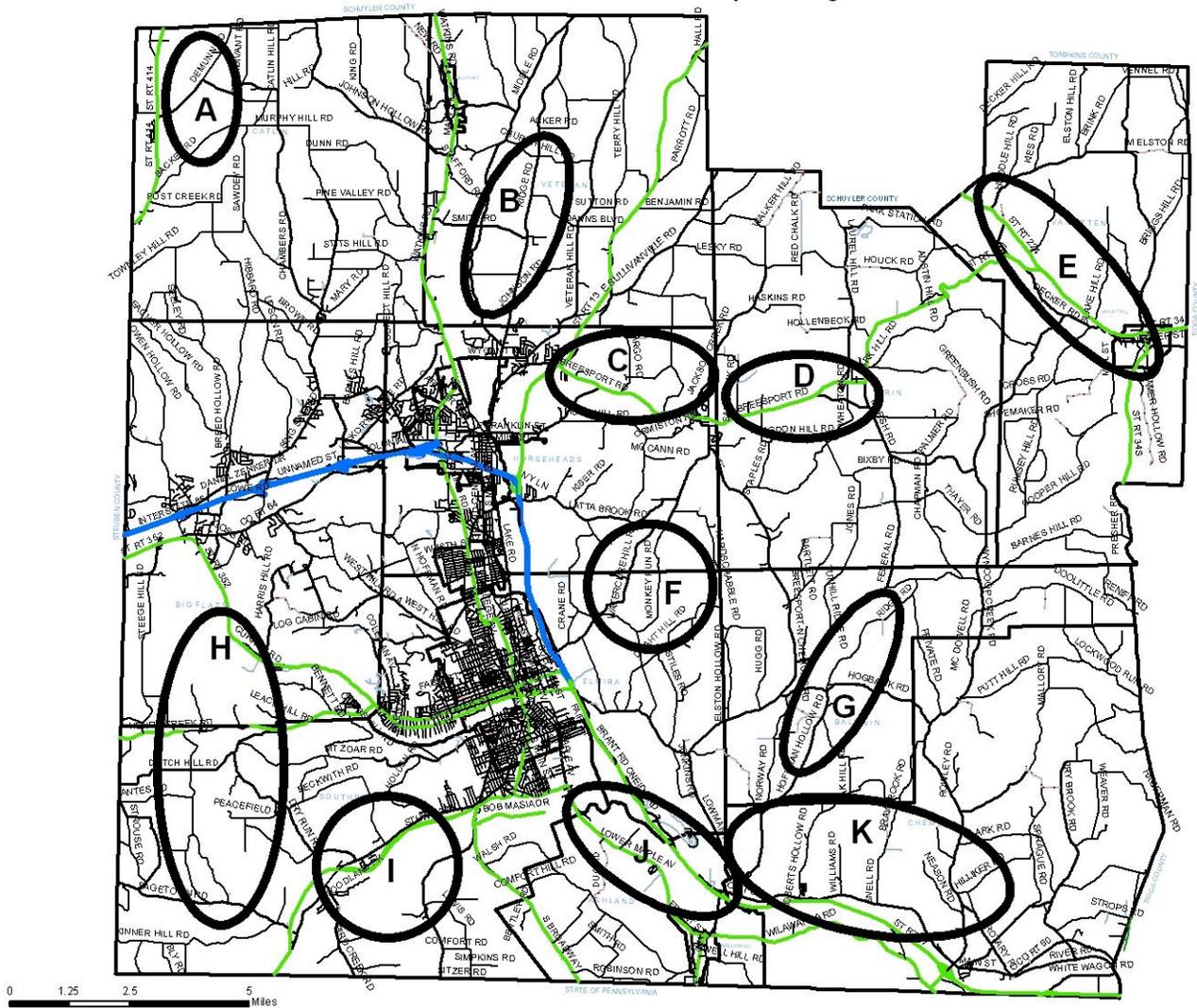


Figure #1

7. Chemung County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Recommendations

This section identifies the recommended strategies and actions that should be carried out to implement the Chemung County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan. The Chemung County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the plan and will report to the Chemung County Legislature quarterly on the progress made on each strategy. Each strategy includes a timeframe, responsible agency or agencies, estimated cost, and potential funding source(s) as well as an implementation action plan.

Recommendations:

1. Establish an Agricultural Resource Group

The Chemung County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board shall establish the Chemung County Agriculture Resource Group (CCARG), an ad hoc working subcommittee of the Chemung County Ag and Farmland Protection Board with the purpose of facilitating the implementation of the plan recommendations. The CCARG will report to the Chemung County Ag and Farmland Protection Board and the Board will report to the Chemung County Legislature. Participation in the CCARG will be open to all organizations in Chemung County that share an interest in supporting Chemung County agriculture and who support the recommendations of the plan.

Timeframe:	Immediate
Responsible Agency:	Cornell Cooperative Extension Chemung County
Estimated Cost:	Minimal to \$3,000 per year
Potential Funding Sources:	Cooperative Extension, County

Recommendation #1 Action Plan:

- a. Convene a meeting of interested individuals from the following organizations, as well as others, who support and/or are interested in strengthening the viability of agriculture in Chemung County. (Chemung County Farm Bureau, Chemung County Soil and Water Conservation District, Chemung County Farm Museum, Chemung County Agricultural Society, Chemung County Horse Council, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Chemung County, Chemung County Environmental Management Council, Chemung County Water Strategy Committee, Chemung County Stormwater Team, Farm Service Agency, NRCS, Southern Tier Central Regional Planning and Development Board, Three Rivers Development, etc.)
- b. Establish the Chemung County Agricultural Resource Group, an ad hoc working group which reports to the Chemung County Ag and Farmland Protection Board and works to implement the Chemung County Ag and Farmland Protection Plan.

- c. The CCARG will meet at least every other month and will work on implementing the recommendations in the plan and monitoring and reporting progress. The CCARG will also increase cooperation and coordination among the agriculture agencies and will work with local governments to help preserve farmland.

2. Encourage the development and use of effective land use plans and programs that protect productive farmland and that direct development to land less suitable for agricultural production.

This plan recommends a balanced approach for future development in Chemung County, one which takes into consideration the future impacts of taking land out of agricultural production as well as the overall need for business growth, housing, infrastructure, and creation of job opportunities for the community at large. It calls for educating land use planners and landowners about the benefits of preserving productive land and open space and about voluntary preservation programs. The adoption of this plan doesn't obligate the County or a landowner to any set land use decision.

Timeframe:	1-3 years
Responsible Agency:	CCARG working in partnership with Chemung County Ag and Farmland Protection Board and Chemung County Planning
Estimated Cost:	Minimum of \$10,000 or more
Potential Funding Sources:	NYS Ag and Markets, County, towns

Recommendation #2 Action Plan:

- a. Continue to support and participate in the NYS Ag Districts program.
- b. Develop criteria and a selection process for farmers interested in participating on the NYS Purchase of Development Rights program. Investigate and share information about farmland preservation programs, including conservation easements. Provide assistance to farmers as needed to take advantage of existing programs.
- c. Conduct a county-wide assessment of land use to determine the impacts of how new non-agricultural development is affecting agricultural production. Identify productive agricultural land contemplated for other uses and determine the impact of this change. Identify options to minimize conversion of land use from agricultural to non-agricultural. Encourage regional, county, and town planners to consider the results of the assessment and utilize the information when updating land use plans.
- d. Encourage members of the Ag and Farmland Protection Board and/or Ag Resource Group to participate on regional, county, and town planning Boards and to provide education to other planner Board members about the agricultural land use issues.

3. Develop focused public education programs about Chemung County Agriculture.

With 2 to 4% of the Chemung County population directly employed in agriculture, it is not surprising that the general public has a limited understanding of today's agriculture or the opportunities that exist, therefore it is important to educate the public in a variety of ways, utilizing a variety of methods, including education and outreach to schools, community events, TV and radio programs, and effective use of websites and social media, especially in order to reach young people. To help organize and lead this effort, the CCARG will seek financial support from the County and other sources to hire a professional agricultural educator and to develop an aggressive agricultural education campaign in Chemung County.

Timeframe: 1 to 2 years
Responsible Agency: CCARG working with member organizations
Estimated Cost: \$15,000 to \$50,000 annually for educator and resources
Potential Funding Sources: CCARG partners, County, Farm Bureau, grants

Recommendation #3 Action Plan:

- a. Conduct a review of existing public education programs and resources (Examples include Exhibits L and M) about agriculture that are available to Chemung County residents of all ages; including a survey of all area K-16 schools.
- b. Promote and encourage public participation at local events to educate the public on the importance of agriculture and as venues at which to purchase local products:
 1. Farmer's Markets
 2. Elmira Farm City Day
 3. "Old McDonald's Farm"
 4. Chemung County Fair
- c. Based on gaps identified from the review, develop and deliver supplemental public education programs and resources about Chemung County agriculture which should include information about agricultural production, products, processing, transportation, food safety, and careers for all audiences, including elected officials, the general public, and school students.
- d. Promote and encourage community participation in groups that support agricultural practices and encourage residents to buy locally produced products.
- e. Create and support an Agricultural Awareness Educator position for the County at Cornell Cooperative Extension.
- f. Educate elected officials about policies that impact agricultural viability.

- g. Develop and deliver radio and TV programs in partnership with local TV and radio stations to educate the general public.
- h. Utilize the internet to reach citizens of all ages, especially school aged youth, by creating effective web-based interfaces and employing social media tools such as Facebook and twitter.

4. Develop a Regional Agribusiness Retention and Development Program that will improve agricultural PROFITABILITY and enhance marketing opportunities.

The best way to support agriculture is to improve the profitability of existing farms and agricultural businesses, while supporting improvements that will enhance and encourage the growth of those farms and agricultural businesses and that will attract new ones to begin business in Chemung County. Working with Chemung County leaders, economic development and planning professionals, the CCARG will conduct a review of the agricultural industry and develop an agribusiness and retention plan; investigate and develop enhanced marketing opportunities for agricultural products; conduct a feasibility study for a year-round market at the Chemung County Fairgrounds, and investigate and support a variety of efforts at the local, state, and federal level that will help to improve the profitability of the agriculture industry.

Timeframe:	1-3 years
Responsible Agency:	Cornell Cooperative Extension Chemung County
Estimated Cost:	\$15,000 for development of the program; \$15,000 for feasibility study and business plan for year round market at the fairgrounds.
Potential Funding Sources:	NYS Ag and Markets

Recommendation #4 Action Plan:

- a. Conduct a comprehensive review of the agricultural industry in Chemung County and develop and implement a plan designed to retain current agricultural enterprises and that will help them grow as well as support the development of new enterprises. The review should include:
 - i. Survey county farm operators to determine where they purchase their production inputs and farm services.
 - ii. Identify what inputs and services are difficult to obtain, missing or are costing the farm/agribusiness too much, including the costs of meeting government regulations.
 - iii. Identify agribusinesses in adjacent counties that could easily supply inputs and/or services not available within the County and create a resource list for existing and new farm operators.

- iv. Identify agribusinesses that could establish themselves in Chemung and recruit.
- b. Investigate and develop enhanced marketing opportunities for Chemung County agricultural products. Options to consider include:
 - i. Promote farm-to-school initiatives to increase consumption of New York State foods and strengthen New York State agriculture while improving student health and promoting regional food awareness.
 - ii. Work with Chemung County school districts, St Joseph's / Arnot Hospitals, Elmira College, Corning Community College, the Chemung County Jail, nursing homes, and other institutions to include "geographic preference" within their bid specifications for agricultural products and to get commitments from them to buy more local and regionally produced agricultural products.
 - iii. Encourage local farmers to grow/produce the foods that schools, hospitals, and other institutions rely on: apples, lettuce, tomatoes, carrots, cucumbers, beans, broccoli, peppers, onions, grapes, pears, cabbage, potatoes, milk and dairy products, eggs, meat, & grains.
 - iv. Promote and encourage utilization of the Robert S. Turner Chemung County Fairground.
 - v. Conduct a scoping study and business plan for the development of a year-round market for agricultural and general products at the Robert S. Turner Chemung County Fairgrounds.
 - vi. Encourage the location of a USDA-approved slaughterhouse within the County.
 - vii. Support county farmers' markets as well as the creation of community supported agricultural opportunities (CSA's), which allow the public to create a financial relationship with a local farmer in exchange for goods produced by that farm and supports the development of new marketing avenues to increase the sale of locally produced food locally, especially in the city of Elmira.
 - viii. Support the creation of a collaborative internet marketing service to promote the sale of agricultural products.
 - ix. Explore collaborative marketing strategies to reach New York State's urban centers.
- c. Conduct a study of successful agricultural development incentive programs in New York / Northeast USA, and develop recommendations for the County Legislature to consider which may be workable in Chemung County.
- d. Work with and utilize the resources of the Chemung County Chamber of Commerce, Southern Tier Economic Growth, and NYS to assist with economic development opportunities and job creation and promotion, such as the development of processing sites for ag products and improvement of the rural transportation infrastructure.

- e. Encourage the state and/or federal government to provide low-interest loans to make agriculture business improvements.
- f. Encourage the wise development of land-based renewable energy production (ie. biomass and biofuel production, wind, solar, anaerobic digesters), natural gas, and the efficient use of energy resources, to enhance economic stability and viability of farms.
- g. Encourage the state and federal governments to address issues affecting the profitability of dairy and other farming in Chemung County including but not limited to milk pricing, taxes, fair trade, environmental laws and regulations, and market monopolies.

5. Develop and maintain support for coordinated educational programming and technical resources for local farm operators.

Like any successful business, it is essential to stay up-to-date with current technology, business management practices, and research findings. Agriculture is no different. There have been many advances in science, technology, and agriculture over the past 30 years and with the seemingly over abundance of information available for farmers and agribusiness people, it has become a challenge to sort through and decipher relevant and applicable information for our Chemung County agriculturalists. Therefore, it is important to support the efforts of organizations that work closely with our farmers and that help provide unbiased research based information and technical assistance, including Cornell Cooperative Extension and the Soil and Water Conservation District, as well as to support proven and innovative methods of disseminating timely and important information to our farming community.

Timeframe:	On-going
Responsible Agency:	Cornell Cooperative Extension Chemung County and Soil and Water Conservation District
Estimated Cost:	\$5,000 to \$15,000 per year
Potential Funding Sources:	County, NYS Ag and Markets, SARE and NYSAWG grants

Recommendation #5 Action Plan:

- a. Create and maintain an agriculture resource guide that identifies and lists all current educational programs and technical resources used by and available to area farm operators. Create a printed as well as web-based version and distribute to farmers and the greater community.

- b. Promote and support the educational programs and assistance provided by Cornell Cooperative Extension of Chemung County, the Chemung County Soil and Water Conservation District, including the New York State Agricultural Environmental Management Program (a voluntary incentive-based program that assists farmers in meeting business objectives while conserving natural resources), as well as continuing educational and coursework opportunities at colleges and universities in Chemung County (Elmira College, and the region (Cornell, Corning Community College Academic and Workforce Development Center, Mansfield, etc) in areas that would benefit the agricultural industry from production to business management to marketing and sales.
- c. Advocate for federal and state funds for research and programs to support agricultural development and viability.
- d. Develop and/or provide programs to address the current needs/issues of Chemung County farm operators.
 - 1. Educate farmers and rural landowners about programs and strategies for reducing property and estate taxes, protecting farmland and conserving natural resources.
 - 2. Promote educational and workforce development opportunities for workers and managers in the agricultural industry, especially those targeted to the next generation.
 - 3. Help farmers identify ways to comply with Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation regulations and other environmental regulations aimed at safe guarding our water resources.
- e. Support broadband internet access for all areas of Chemung County to allow the agricultural community to promote farm products and access necessary permits and documents.

8.0 Attachments

Exhibit “A” Summary of responses from residents and notice of public meetings held by the Chemung County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board to gather public input for the assembly of recommendations to be included in the Plan

Exhibit “B” Farmer Survey conducted by Cornell University Cooperative Extension Chemung County

Exhibit “C” Farming in Chemung County – snapshot based on the 2002 Agricultural Census

Exhibit “D” Chemung County Economic Profile 2010 from the Southern Tier Regional Planning and Development Board

Exhibit “E” Chemung County Quick Facts from the U.S. Census Bureau

Exhibit “F” Chemung County 2007 Census of Agriculture from the USDA including Summary Highlights

Exhibit “G” 2010 New York Agricultural Land Classification – Chemung County

Exhibit “H” Chemung County Agricultural District Summary from the Chemung County Planning Department

Exhibit “I” State Board of Real Property Services Agricultural Assessment Values per Acre certified January 20, 2010

Exhibit “J” Chemung County Prime Soils/Chemung County Agricultural District Parcels Map from the Chemung County Planning Department

Exhibit “K” 2001 USGS Land Use Codes from the Chemung County Planning Department

Exhibit “L” Farm to You Fest poster from the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets

Exhibit “M” New York Farm Bureau bulletin, “Sights, Sounds, Smells...Living in a Farm Community”

Exhibit “N” September 2010 Report from the New York State Association of Counties Blue Ribbon Task Force on the Future of Farming in New York State