Agricultural & Farmland Protection Plan

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Agriculture is a vital component of Steuben County’s economy. In 2012, the market value of the County’s farm products was $187 million. While Steuben County’s agricultural productivity continues to grow and diversify, there is an increasing need to capitalize on emerging market opportunities so that farming can remain a viable industry. The 2002 Agricultural and Farmland Plan laid out a series of broad goals for agricultural protection and development; however, the County recognized the need to develop an updated plan that reflects current conditions at the local and state level.

In 2013, Steuben County received funding from the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets to develop a new farmland plan that would identify key initiatives to sustain and grow the agricultural economy and protect farmland. The plan was developed under the direction of the Steuben County Planning Department and Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board in partnership with the Industrial Development Agency, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Steuben County, and the Soil and Water Conservation District. The result of this 2-year process is the 2015 Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan which is intended to promote and enhance the County’s agricultural economy, and ensure that farming continues to play a central role in the community for many years to come.

The plan is organized into four main sections with supporting maps and appendices:

- Existing Land Use Policies, Programs and Organizations;
- Agricultural Land Use Profile and State of the Agricultural Economy;
- Goals, Objectives and Strategies; and
- Action Plan and Implementation

The plan builds upon previous efforts initiated at the local and regional scale. The Southern Tier Regional Economic Development Council (STREDC) has developed a strategic economic development plan that is re-evaluated on an annual basis. The STREDC plan identifies a series of objectives to enhance the Southern Tier’s economy including rural agriculture, workforce development, and tourism. A comparative analysis was
conducted as a part of the planning process which outlines how this plan closely aligns with the STREDC strategy. This will be important secure funding for the foundational projects identified in the plan.

The Agricultural Land Use Profile and State of the Agricultural Economy analyze the County’s agriculture using two methods of data collection and analysis. The County’s Land Use Profile includes a comprehensive inventory of the natural environment, land use patterns, and agricultural land uses which are analyzed using the Office of Real Property Taxes assessment. The results from this inventory were used to prioritize lands for protection identified in the Land Evaluation and Site Assessment. The economic analysis was developed using the 2012 Census of the Agriculture. This report is to benchmark—using both economic data and information gathered from interviews—all aspects of the County’s economy as it relates to agriculture. This section helped form a complete overview of the County’s agricultural landscape from a land use and economic perspective.

Community engagement was one of the most important components of the planning process. The project team elicited feedback from over one-hundred farmers, residents, business owners and stakeholders about the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to agriculture in the County (SWOT analysis). While the process revealed several challenges to agriculture, opportunities were identified to strengthen the economic viability of the County and prepare for the next generation of farmers.

Input gathered from the public participation process, SWOT analysis and land use and economic profile resulted in five overarching goals to achieve the community’s vision:

1. **Economic Development** to support the growth of existing farms and agribusinesses;
2. **Agribusiness development** focused on new and emerging opportunities for farmers and agribusinesses;
3. **Farmland Preservation** to protect and enhance the County’s natural resources; and
4. **Agri-Tourism** which aims to attract visitors to the County to experience the local farm products and experiences;
5. **Education, Outreach and Partnerships** which is focused on community-wide efforts to inform the farming community, engage residents in the County’s agricultural community, and develop partnerships with local organizations.

Each goal is supported by a series of objectives and strategies that identify specific actions and recommendations to achieve the goal. The plan includes a detailed action plan that clearly outlines the steps and project partners necessary for implementation. This will help guide future decision-making in the community and allow the County to allocate resources where necessary to fulfill the recommendations.

The last section of the plan summarizes funding opportunities available through local, state and Federal agencies to help with project implementation. These opportunities include local initiatives targeted towards agriculture in the Southern Tier, such as the Regional Economic Development and Energy Corporation loan programs for small businesses as well as the Rural Initiative Program through the STREDC. Recent initiatives, including the NYS Southern Tier Agricultural Economic Development Initiative, will provide over $30 million to agricultural projects in the region. This will afford a significant opportunity for farmers and agribusinesses to undertake a range of projects such as barn construction, high tunnels/greenhouses, biofuel development, high tensile fencing, and long-range planning (e.g. CAFO, nutrient management plans, business plans). Capitalizing on these opportunities will help ensure the County’s agriculture continues to thrive for future generations of farmers.
Foundational Priorities & Economic Development Projects

The County embarked on the planning process with the priority of developing a strategic set of recommendations that would identify new opportunities for farmers, support existing farmers as they grow and expand their businesses, and capitalize on new and emerging markets. Additional needs identified through the process include increased opportunities to engage visitors in farming activities through new facilities; training and education for current and future farmers; and the development of new partnerships with local organizations to help plan for the next generation of farmers. The County’s vision served as the guiding framework for the plan and is interwoven into each goal, objective and strategy.

Economic Development Projects

A significant element of the overall plan is the economic development strategy that identifies projects that support the County’s vision to sustain and grow the agricultural economy. This strategy is designed to help directly connect farmers to consumers, and identify sources of funding to carry out the initiatives. Four agricultural-based economic development projects were identified and evaluated based on community input and needs assessment, and the potential for long-term success. These projects include the following:

1. Local Food Enterprise Center with a Commercial Kitchen (food hub)
2. Craft Malt House
3. Craft Potato Vodka Distillery
4. USDA Slaughterhouse

Local Food Enterprise Center with a Commercial Kitchen

The Local Food Enterprise Center with a Commercial Kitchen is designed to address the need for all farms to be able to market their products directly to consumers. A Local Food Enterprise Center (also known as a food hub) and Commercial Kitchen will help eliminate existing barriers by offering the aggregation and distribution services as well as light processing to prepare and package produce from small farms for sale to institutional purchasers. The results from the analysis indicate that the County can supply the required acreage and specialty crops to support a local food hub. The center and kitchen could employ over 40 employees, and improve access of local farmers to major customers of agricultural products by providing the goods in appropriate sizes and quantities and offering value added products. A shared commercial kitchen would be mutually beneficial for farmers and entrepreneurs seeking to establish or expand a business by creating an outlet for locally grown food to be processed and distributed. These facilities often incorporate marketing and labeling into the production process which presents an opportunity to promote and highlight a Buy Local marketing campaign.

Craft Malt House

To capture the new and emerging market opportunity for NYS malted barley and the craft brewing industry, the development of a regional malt house was explored. The results from the analysis indicate that with relatively low startup costs, the malt house has the potential to impact other related-industries such as craft brewing and regional tourism. Steuben County crop producers are well positioned to transition or add specialty crops to their rotation that would be mutually beneficial. The malt producer would have a readily available and consistent supply of barley that meets the Farm Brewery Act requirements for acquiring locally grown products while providing additional and consistent revenue for farmers.
Craft Potato Vodka Distillery

In Steuben County, farmers throw away anywhere from 10 to 40 percent of potato product because it does not meet the specifications of major potato customers, such as UTZ potato chips. To provide an outlet for these “waste potatoes”, the financial feasibility of developing a craft vodka distillery that used these potatoes as the primary input was analyzed. The results of the initial feasibility study indicate that a local distillery could potentially generate upwards of $65,000 in revenue for farmers who currently do not receive any income for this excess product. A local distillery would further contribute to the County's agricultural tourism initiatives and the region’s growing brewery attractions.

USDA Slaughterhouse

An initial economic study was conducted to determine the feasibility of developing a slaughterhouse facility to help meet the need for more localized processing facilities for the cattle/beef industry as well as other livestock (pigs, hogs, goats, lamb, etc.). It is estimated that of the 67,000 cattle in the county, over 3,500 cattle are “on feed”, meaning they are being fed to be slaughtered. There are an additional 25,000 hogs and pigs, and 4,700 sheep and lambs in Steuben County. A mid-sized facility of approximately 8,000 square feet would help meet the demand in Steuben County, greatly reducing the barriers of transporting livestock and supporting the market for locally-grown, specialty and processed meat.
Section 1. Introduction

1.1 Background and Overview

New York State Agriculture and Markets Law (AML), Article 25 AAA, encourages the development of county and town agriculture and farmland protection plans. According to the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets (NYSDAM), agricultural lands are irreplaceable state assets. External pressures on farm stability such as population growth in non-metropolitan areas and public infrastructure development are continuing to pose a significant threat to farms and farm operations. The state has recognized that local initiatives in agricultural protection policy, in partnership with state programs, have proven to be an effective means of addressing these issues, and as a result, has declared a policy to promote initiatives at the local level for farmland protection and agricultural programs.

Steuben County is undertaking an Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan update to address changing conditions in the county in order to protect the county’s highly valued farmland and capitalize on opportunities to support and grow its agricultural industry. It further serves as an update to the Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan from 2002. This plan has considered the findings, goals, and recommendations from the 2002 Plan in evaluating the challenges, opportunities, and potential strategies for Steuben County’s agricultural industry. The 2002 Plan laid out a series of broad goals to expand Steuben County’s agricultural economy and protect its valuable farmland. Achievements associated with these goals include increased tourism-driven farm experiences, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Steuben County (CCE) hosted educational workshops regarding niche production, new farmers’ markets, the Locally Grown Food Festival and the Corning Winter Market. This Plan update has taken the relevant, broad-ranging goals from the 2002 Plan and applied them to a project-based implementation strategy.

PURPOSE OF THE PLANNING PROCESS

The central focus of this plan is to determine what can be done to increase the viability of the agricultural industry and ensure that agricultural land persists in Steuben County. Specifically, the scope of this plan will focus on the economics of the agricultural industry and the protection and future viability of farming in Steuben County. In addition to providing an overview of farming in the County, this study will identify which lands require protection and identify opportunities and potential projects that can improve the profitability of the agricultural industry within the county and related industries. Each section contains relevant maps which can be referenced in Appendix D.

In 2012, the market value of Steuben County farm products was over $187 million, up 38% from five years earlier. While Steuben County’s agricultural industry continues to increase in terms of productivity, there is a growing need to capitalize on emerging market opportunities so that farming can remain a viable industry in the county. As consumers become more cognizant of where their food comes from and policymakers recognize the economic impacts of a more localized food system, Steuben County has the opportunity to diversify its agricultural products and innovate in related industries such as tourism, processing, distribution, and manufacturing to create further value for the county’s economy.

BENEFITS OF THE PLANNING PROCESS

Implementation of the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan has the potential to benefit many aspects of the County including economic development and overall quality of life for residents and visitors. In addition, the benefits of long-range planning include:
Preservation of working farms

Agricultural planning generates the regulations and policies that discourages non-agricultural development within farming communities and diminishes barriers for farm operations.

Long-term environmental benefits

Well-managed agricultural lands often result in increased wildlife habitat, flood control, filtration of stormwater, and groundwater recharge.

Fiscal balance

Farmlands typically generate more in local revenues than they demand in community services.

Health and Nutrition

Locally grown food is often fresher, more nutritious and tastes better. Communities with local farms, farmers’ markets, farm stands and Community Supported Agriculture have readily available access to local foods—a strategy in combating significant public health challenges.

Tourism and Culture

In rural communities, farms often define the landscape. They can be a catalyst for attracting tourists, recreation, and speak to the community’s history and character.

1.2 Community and Stakeholder Engagement

Community engagement was one of the most important components of the planning process. Working directly with the farmers and the greater community helped build support, develop consensus and opened a dialogue about the role of agriculture in Steuben County. Input was gathered from a variety of sources including an advisory committee, interviews, a survey, public meetings, and a project website. This provided multiple avenues for farmers, residents, agribusinesses, agencies and organizations to participate in the planning process. The public participation process is described below.

PROJECT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The development of the plan was overseen by the Project Advisory Committee (PAC) which was created through the guidance of the Steuben County Planning Department, Steuben County Industrial Development Agency (IDA), and CCE. The PAC included members of the farming community, agriculture-oriented organizations, and various county-wide agencies. The PAC met five times over the course of the plan development. Meetings were held in May, July and October of 2014 and February and April 2015. These meetings were a critical component as committee members provided important feedback and valuable information to the Project Team. See Appendix B for PAC Meeting Summaries.

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

The Project Team held stakeholder interviews on May 13, July 2, and December 1, 2014. These interviews were conducted in addition to multiple phone interviews. Stakeholders interviewed for this project included representatives from county agencies, elected officials, realtors, agriculture-oriented businesses and organizations, farmers, and tourist-related businesses including the Steuben County Conference and Visitors Bureau.
Farm Tours- December 1, 2014

The Project Team met with several of the County’s farmers- large and small to discuss the state of agriculture and current issues they are facing. The project team visited a number of farms including beef, dairy, specialty crop and produce, potato farms as well as an Amish farm. The Project Team had the opportunity to tour the farms and facilities, which provided insight into the County’s agricultural production and process. These meetings contributed to the development of the objectives and strategies identified in the plan.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

In addition to stakeholder interviews, the Project Team held public meetings and attended a series of community events to introduce the project to community members and collect feedback on the farming and food in the county. Meeting information and announcements were distributed using MailChimp which allowed the Project Team to reach hundreds of community members. These meetings and events included the following:

Public Meeting #1 – October 27, 2014

The first public meeting provided an overview of the planning process and progress to-date. The Project Team discussed the challenges of farming and the agricultural economic development tools that can be used to ensure that it is a viable industry for the county and its farmers moving forward. The presentation included a series of considerations for protecting the county’s valuable farmland and noted that there are already several effective methods of land protection in place that can continue to be utilized by farmers.

Public Meeting #2 & Open House – April 14, 2015

The second public meeting included a presentation of potential of the draft plan and potential economic development projects. In addition to reviewing the planning process and public participation efforts, the Project Team reviewed the goals and objectives. Four economic development projects were identified as having the potential to support existing farmers and grow the agricultural economy. At the conclusion of the presentation, the public was invited to review and vote on a series of proposed actions identified for each objective.

Presentation to the County Legislature

The County Legislature held a public hearing on June 22, 2015 to allow for public comments prior to plan adoption. The Legislature unanimously voted to adopt the plan following the public hearing.

COMPLEMENTARY EFFORTS

Farmers Market- June, 2014

A member of the Project Team attended a number of local farmers’ markets in June, 2014 to distribute surveys, discuss the project with farmers and market goers and collect contact information for upcoming community engagement efforts.
Southern Tier Central Leadership Conference- April 3, 2014

The Project Team attended the Southern Tier’s Central Regional Leadership Conference to lead a discussion about the importance of farmland protection and planning for agriculture. The Project Team was able to introduce the attendees to the project and collect contact information for upcoming community engagement efforts.

Locally Grown Food Festival, Corning, NY- March 21, 2014

The Project Team attended the Locally Grown Food Festival in Corning to informally introduce the project to area farmers and food advocates and to collect contact information for upcoming community engagement efforts.

ONLINE SURVEYS

In order to better understand the state of farming and food in Steuben County, two surveys were developed and distributed in an effort to capture as much input as possible from residents and farmers. The first survey was created for consumers and the second was created for farmers. The anonymous survey was distributed at the Corning Farmers Market, via various email lists, and the project website. Over 100 consumer surveys and approximately 50 farmer surveys were completed and returned between June 26th and August 1, 2014. The results of the surveys have been incorporated into the goals and objectives and considered in the development and identification of project strategies. A summary of the results can be found in Appendix B.

PROJECT WEBSITE

In order to engage a large audience and share project-related information, the Project Team developed a project website, located at: http://farmplan.steubencony.org.
1.3 Existing Land Use Plans, Policies, Programs, and Organizations

Several recent planning efforts have been undertaken to chart the course of agriculture in the Southern Tier. Since Steuben County’s agricultural industry is a major driver of the Southern Tier’s economy, a number of recent and past plans were reviewed to better understand how efforts in the Southern Tier have impacted Steuben County’s agricultural industry, to identify consistencies among efforts, and to identify future relationships and opportunities. The results of these planning efforts have informed the strategies and projects recommended in Sections 3 and 4.

PLANS AND STUDIES

The following plans and studies were included in this analysis, as they strategically link agricultural land use to the County’s overall economy. These plans provide the foundation for regional grants and funding opportunities, and will continue to be an important driver in developing the agriculture industry. Additionally, they highlight the need for education, innovation, cooperation, and infrastructure to enhance the county’s agricultural and related industries.

*Southern Tier Regional Economic Development Council’s Strategic Plan (2011- amended 2014)*

The Strategic Plan for the Southern Tier Regional Economic Development Council (STREDC) prioritizes projects for state funding based on the region’s core strengths, critical issues, and economic development opportunities. Five strategies resulted from this analysis, one of which is Revitalizing the Rural Farm and Forest-Based Economy of the Southern Tier. Agriculture was identified as a catalyst for the region’s economic development because of the industry’s potential to expand in size and technological infrastructure, the region’s accessibility to major markets and the region’s innovation in agricultural research.

The Strategic Plan is reviewed on an annual basis to reassess current conditions and determine if priority items and action strategies need to be reevaluated. The plan is strategically linked to the agricultural economy and will be a driver in implementing this plan. A comparative analysis was conducted as this plan was developed to identify specific areas where the Strategic Plan overlaps with the agricultural goals and objectives. STREDC Strategies that particularly align with agriculture include revitalizing the rural-farming and forest-based economy, tourism development, workforce development and strategies to support the manufacturing and transportation industry. The full analysis can be found in Appendix C.

As a result of this plan, the Rural Initiative Program was created. It is a regional low-interest loan fund to reduce financial risk and increase sustainability of agriculture and forestry ventures and encourage investment and job creation. Administered by the IDA, the program provides gap financing for priority activities, including development and promotion of value-added agricultural products, development of new markets, renewable energy initiatives, increased land productivity applications of new technologies, and growth in net agricultural revenue.
Steuben County Economic Development Strategic Plan (2010)

In 2010, the IDA convened the Economic Development Plan Task Force to identify the county’s industry clusters that could spur on innovation and growth in the economy. Several clusters that directly or indirectly relate to the agricultural industry were recommended for further investment within the county based on their ability to create well-paying jobs that build skills and improve the quality of life. Recommended actions to bolster the agricultural industry include encouraging tourism and hospitality, developing a site inventory system, building networks and partnerships, and supporting entrepreneurial activities.

Southern Tier Central Regional Planning Council’s Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (2013)

Annually, the Southern Tier Central Regional Planning Council (RPC) produces a comprehensive economic development strategy for the region. While this strategy is broad in scope and geography, several prioritized projects pertain directly to Steuben County or agriculture, including:

- Regional Farmers Market Building – Chemung County Agricultural Society
- Upgrade Pleasant Valley Wine Company Pressing Plant – IDA
- Wind Energy Development – IDA
- Agricultural Marketing/Distribution Plan – IDA
- Southern Tier Biomass – County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD)
- Energy Institute Project – Three Rivers Development

The relevant prioritized projects as well as the general goals of the RPC have been incorporated into goals and recommendations.

Steuben County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan (2002)

Steuben County’s 2002 Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan was the County’s first comprehensive agricultural plan. The plan outlined goals and objectives for market development, risk management, agribusiness expansion, generational planning, tourism, farmland management, smart growth, right-to-farm, forest management, and quality assurance. The 5-year plan resulted in new initiatives including the development of several new farmers’ markets which has improved access to local products for residents. The 2002 plan was reviewed as part of the planning process, and relevant goals and objectives are included in the update.

LAWS & REGULATIONS

There are several laws and regulations that govern agriculture at the local level. This section includes the relevant regulations that impact agricultural land uses and industry development. While the agriculture industry is regulated at the state level through the NYSDAM, local municipalities are able to impose additional regulations through home rule to ensure vital agricultural lands are protected. A review of the relevant laws are included below.

New York State Agriculture and Markets Law

The policy of New York State is to, “... promote, foster and encourage the agricultural industry.” This law includes regulations relating to agriculture, horticulture, farm, fruit, and dairy products, aquaculture, and the production, processing, transportation, storage, marketing and distributing of food; enforce and carry into effect the provisions of the laws of the state relative to weights and measures. The law further establishes protections for farms in Agricultural Districts and includes provisions related to agricultural land use and long-range planning.
Enacted in 2001, the Right-to-Farm Law recognizes the many practices and activities inherent in farming and agriculture-related businesses. In particular, this law permits the continuation of standard agricultural practices and the business of farming by providing reasonable noticed to prospective landowners (i.e. new residential community adjacent to agriculture land being farmed) that farming activities may occur on neighboring lands and cannot be considered a nuisance.

New York State Small Farm Brewery Licensing 2012

In 2012, Governor Cuomo passed legislation to strengthen the state’s vibrant craft beer industry. In addition to tax exemptions to make the industry more sustainable and lucrative for new and small producers, it created a Small Farm Brewery license that would allow craft brewers that use products grown in New York State to operate in a similar fashion to the state’s farm wineries, leading to increased demand for locally grown farm products as well as expanded economic development and tourism. Licensed small farm breweries are now allowed to sell New York State labeled beer, wine and liquor and other beer-related products at their retail outlets. The license also allows breweries to open restaurants on the same property.

In order to receive a Farm Brewery license, the beer must be made primarily from locally grown farm products. Until the end of 2018, at least 20% of the hops and 20% of all other ingredients must be grown or produced in New York State. From January 1, 2018 to December 31, 2023, no less than 60% of the hops and 60% of all other ingredients must be grown or produced in New York State. After January 1, 2024, no less than 90% of the hops and 90% of all other ingredients must be grown or produced in New York State. The beer manufactured under these guidelines would be designated as “New York State labeled beer.” The legislation is modeled after the 1976 “Farm Winery Act,” which spurred the growth of wine production in this state, including the creation of 249 farm wineries and tripling the number of wineries.

While the number of breweries is already increasing as a result of this legislation, the production of barley and hops in New York State is just beginning to respond to this demand. Brewery support industries including processing and bottling is lagging behind in not only Steuben County, but all of the state and represents an opportunity in this growing and lucrative industry.
AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

Steuben County's farmers and agricultural industry is strongly supported by many local public, private and non-profit entities ranging in size and scope of services offered. These organizations provide a critical resource for farmers and business owners and will continue to play an important role in the growth of the County’s agriculture. Several of these organizations are included below.

Steuben County Planning Department

The Steuben County Planning Department is responsible for overseeing the planning and development functions of the County. In addition to serving as a liaison to the County Legislature and Manager, the County is responsible for coordinating and administering the County’s GIS, conducting land use reviews under the General Municipal Law, and managing the County’s Agricultural Districts. In this capacity, the department works closely with the AFPB to review the Agricultural Districts program and make recommendations for amendments or additions to the districts. The County is an important resource for local municipalities, providing technical assistance in the areas of land use, economic development and natural resources planning.

Steuben County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board

The Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board consists of five active farmers, one agribusiness person, and ex-officio members (County Planning, IDA, SWCD, Real Property Tax Services, and County Legislators), as required by AML. The purpose of the board is to advise the County Legislature regarding Agricultural District Reviews and implement agricultural planning efforts. The board further makes recommendations for grant funding and will mediate disagreements between neighbors under the County’s Right-to-Farm law.

Steuben County Industrial Development Agency (IDA)

The IDA is focused on all aspects of economic development, including agriculture. The IDA's mission is to attract new jobs and investment to the region, provide assistance to existing businesses, and improve the overall quality of life in the County. In addition to workforce development and training, the IDA assists with business support and financially-related services. The IDA will continue to be a critical resource in targeting funding for agriculture projects, the IDA received $3-4 million from the REDC through the Rural Loan Initiative which included 10-year loans for projects at a 1% interest rate.

Cornell Cooperative Extension

CCE is a partnership among federal, state, and local governments, the national land grant system, and Cornell University. Its mission is to extend Cornell University’s land-grant programs to citizens all across New York State. With a presence in every county and New York City, CCE puts research into practice by providing high-value educational programs and university-based resources that help solve real-life problems. An integrated network of professionals including campus-based faculty and staff, regionally deployed specialists and county-based educators and professional employees provide programs in five areas:

Agriculture and Food Systems: CCE supports a New York State agriculture industry that is diverse, sustainable, and profitable, and which produces a safe, reliable, healthy and local food supply.

Community and Economic Vitality: CCE engages New Yorkers in land-use training, inter-municipal collaboration on shared municipal services, leadership training, workforce development, and community decision-making on complex issues.
Environment and Natural Resources: CCE educates on a broad range of concerns: water resources, agricultural waste and land-use management, forestry, wildlife habitat, lawns and turf, invasive species, energy conservation and development of renewable energy sources.

Nutrition and Healthy Families: CCE programs aim to reduce the prevalence of childhood obesity and chronic disease through improved nutrition and health practices, to improve child and eldercare, to reduce environmental hazards, and to increase financial and health care literacy.

Youth Development: CCE’s 4-H Youth Development Programs reach urban, suburban and rural youth in three broad areas: Science, Technology and Engineering, Citizenship, and Healthy Lifestyles.

Within these programs, CCE has undertaken a variety of projects to support local agriculture including:

MeatSuite website: CCE Agricultural Educators created the MeatSuite website (http://meatsuite.com) with the mission of increasing “freezer trade”—the sale of whole, halves, and quarters of animals and bulk bundles of meat—in Steuben County and the surrounding region. Once logged onto the website, a user can input his or her zip code to locate nearby farms where specific meat products can be purchased. The website has been instrumental in facilitating the local sourcing of meat products.

Livestock pasture walks: An informal advisory group known as the Tri-County Grazing Group hosts several pasture walks each year, on which farmers share best practices and exchange information related to livestock grazing. This collaboration has contributed to the growing interest in local meat production.

Public engagement: CCE-Steuben hosts events to educate the public on topics including dairy, field crops, livestock, farm business management, and horticulture. Farm City Day is an event used to showcase the county’s agriculture to the public.

High Tunnel grant: This grant was used to network Steuben County fruit and vegetable growers with other growers across the state. Farmers share techniques for improving quality and increasing profits.

Harvest New York: Launched in 2012 by the CCE, the goal of Harvest New York was to expand and enhance existing regional agriculture extension programs with the addition of three new areas of expertise: agriculture economic development, dairy modernization and dairy food processing. A pilot program was launched in Western NY with the specialists housed in various County extension offices. Proposal submitted to expand statewide in 2014 and add additional specialists in the following areas: Dairy Processing and Food Safety, Local Food Distribution and Marketing, Farm Brewery, Winery, Hard Cider and Distillery Development, Dairy Modernization and Profitability. Specialists work with the economic development councils to help attract manufacturers and train a qualified workforce for emerging businesses.

New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets

NYSDAM is the primary agency that promotes agriculture, administers State agricultural grant programs and long-range planning, and provides technical assistance through a range of programs including the Farm to School program. The department oversees the certification of new Agricultural Districts and review of existing districts, and confirms the districts meets the purpose and intent of the law. The department will further review proposed and existing zoning laws on a case-by-case basis to determine if the regulations unreasonably restrict farming operations.
There are several local and state programs that are specifically designed to support and enhance agriculture. In addition to funding, these programs provide technical support, training, and education to growers and producers.

**New York State Agricultural Initiatives**

Governor Cuomo’s 2014-2015 Executive Budget included several measures to expand access to the state’s agricultural products. Example programs include:

- The “Taste NY” Program ($1.1 million this year): This program continues to grow in its mission to brand and expand New York’s food and beverage industry by making the wide variety of foods and beverages grown and produced in the State readily available and recognizable to New Yorkers and the public nationwide.
- Hops: To increase the availability of locally grown hops for the State’s growing craft brew industry, the Governor is allocating $40,000 for a program to evaluate and test hop varieties in New York.
- FreshConnect: The FreshConnect farmers’ market program, benefits farmers’ and consumers through competitive grants to create and expand farmers markets in underserved communities throughout New York (received $350,000 in funding).

These programs evolve and change as funding becomes available. It is important to continue to monitor state initiatives and announcements to determine which funds best meet the County’s long-term goals.

**Cornell Small Farms Program**

The Cornell Small Farms Program (CSFP) is a collaborative program housed in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Cornell University. The program includes college faculty and staff, CCE, and other programs that support small farmers throughout the state. The program was designed for small farmers, with a particular focus on new and emerging farmers. Available resources include online courses and videos, farm planning guides, beginning farmer learning network, wholesale market training, and agroforestry outreach.
Section 2. County Profile

Steuben County is located in the Southern Tier of New York State and borders Pennsylvania. The county is bordered by Allegany, Livingston, Ontario, Yates, Schuyler, and Chemung Counties as well as Potter and Tioga Counties in Pennsylvania (Appendix D, Map 1). Steuben County encompasses 1,390 square miles and ranks 7th in the state for land area behind St. Lawrence, Essex, Hamilton, Franklin and Herkimer and Delaware Counties. In addition to the 32 towns and 14 villages, the county has two cities including Hornell (population 8,563) and Corning (population 11,183). The county is home to 98,000 residents, a 0.2% increase since the 2000 Census. 80% of the population lives outside of the County’s two cities.

Three major highways, including Interstate 86 (Southern Tier Expressway; portions of the interstate were formerly NY Route 17), Interstate 99, and Interstate 390 provide access to the County’s towns, villages and cities. The I-86 improvements and upgrades over the past decade have greatly improved access to rural areas of the County which has enhanced safety and increased the capacity to transport goods throughout the region.

The landscape is predominantly rural in nature and is characterized by its steep slopes, rich soils, and thousands of miles of rivers, lakes and streams. The health and availability of the County’s natural resources have directly contributed to the region’s strong manufacturing, tourist and agricultural economies, and provided employment for generations of farmers. The agricultural heritage of the county has positively impacted the quality of life for its residents and continues to play an important role in shaping its rural character.

Steuben County is one of 14 counties in the Finger Lakes Region and directly borders Keuka Lake. The lakes and region are renowned for its 100+ vineyards and breweries that generate over $14 million a year in sales and has an overall economic impact of $26 million. The $2.8 billion tourist industry supports attracts over 20 million tourists annually and supports 58,000+ jobs including food and beverage, recreation, lodging, retail services, transportation and second homes. In addition to the vineyards and breweries, Steuben County is home to the Corning Museum of Glass. Located in the City of Corning, the museum is an international attraction that welcomes over 400,000 tourists annually. As these attractions continue to thrive, the county is in a position to capitalize on these resources to expand its agricultural economy. Each year, millions of tourists visit the Finger Lakes Region and its many recreation, scenic and agricultural attractions.
Steuben County is well positioned to increase the role of agri-tourism in its economy. In 2012, 41 farms in Steuben County reported income from agri-tourism and recreational services, including income from hunting, fishing, farm or wine tours, hay rides, and other services. This almost doubled since 2007, when only 24 farms reported such income. However, while the number of farms with tourism-related income doubled, income itself declined from $188,000 to $149,000. The increase in farms receiving income from agri-tourism is important, as it shows an increase businesses involved in agri-tourism related activities. The decline in income is not as meaningful since reporting in this category can be difficult due to variations in reporting methods.

Many opportunities for expanding this industry can be seized through cooperative marketing efforts between farms, restaurants, bed and breakfasts, and other businesses. The County already has destinations and services marketing agriculture to visitors, which offers stays packaged with farm tours. Local restaurants have also shown an interest in farm-to-table arrangements with local farms.

2.1 Understanding the County’s Land Base

In order to plan for the continued preservation and growth of farming, the County’s land use patterns, industries, and economy were analyzed as a part of the planning process. This section provides a summary of the analysis. The full review of the County’s agricultural profile can be found in Appendix E.

Land use, in its broadest sense, means classifying how land is used. Each type of use has its own characteristic that can determine compatibility, location and preference to other land uses within the municipality. Land use considers both the physical as well as the social characteristics of the County or municipality. The data and information is often collected and compiled at the County level and used to map and analyze the current pattern of development, as well as serve as a framework for determining future uses. This section provides a brief overview of the County’s land uses and how they related to agriculture.

LAND USE OVERVIEW

As identified from parcel data provided by Steuben County, there are just under 59,500 parcels covering almost 894,000 acres in the county (note that the amount of land in parcels is typically less than that in the entire county as roads and other rights-of-way are not identified as parcels). In terms of total acres, three land uses comprise almost 90 percent of the land in Steuben County including Agriculture, Residential and Vacant lands.

Although they encompass a small percentage of all land uses (~4 percent), there are several areas within the County that contain commercial, recreation and entertainment, community, public services and industrial land uses. These uses are mainly concentrated in the cities of Corning and Bath, and the town of Hornellsville. With the exception of Hornellsville, these towns have populations that exceed 11,000—the most concentrated areas of the county. It is likely that future commercial and industrial uses will continue to be concentrated around established cities, towns, villages and nodes (e.g., business parks, industrial parks, etc.) As a result, it is anticipated that the County’s agricultural lands will experience limited development pressure from non-agricultural uses.

AGRICULTURAL LAND USES

Agricultural land uses include over 253,000 acres or 28% of the county. The Agricultural land use category is defined by the NYS Office of Real Property Services (OPPS) as property used for the production of crops and livestock.
The three largest land uses include agricultural vacant land, field crops and dairy production which account for 88% of all agricultural land uses. Within the county’s agricultural land uses, 48% are classified as Agricultural Vacant Land. Unlike the general vacant classification, land in this category is part of a productive, operating farm, but does not contain living accommodations, such as a farm house or barn. Land in this category is typically a part of a larger farming operation owned by one landowner, and is often one of many contiguous parcels.

Although found throughout Steuben County, the largest concentration of Agricultural Vacant Land is in the northwestern portion of the county particularly in the towns of Howard, Wayland and Cohocton.

The second most common agricultural land use in the county is Field Crops which accounts for 24% of all agricultural uses. The county’s most common field crops include hay, corn, oats and soybeans, which are primarily intended for livestock consumption and processed food production. These crops are known as “commodity crops” because they are usually sold to the commodities market instead of for direct consumption. Commodity crops are commonly grown by farmers in the county and nationwide because they are supported by federal agricultural subsidies and can be stored for long periods of time without spoiling. Commodity crops are typically grown in large volume on large, flat parcels that can accommodate the necessary industrial equipment. While these field crops are grown throughout the county, the highest density occurs in and around the Town of Howard due to the area’s flatness, limited development and high quality soil.

**FARM ACREAGE**

Nearly 96 percent of the 2.2 million farms in the United States are small family farms. According to the USDA, a family farm is defined as, “any farm organized as a sole proprietorship, partnership, or family corporation. Family farms exclude farms organized as non-family corporations or cooperatives, as well as farms with hired managers.”

Steuben County is primarily comprised of farms of less than 100 acres (52%). Farms of 100-500 acres comprise 44% of the county, and only 4% are over 500 acres. A detailed economic analysis based on farm size is included in Appendix F.

**Land Use Data Collection and Methodology**

This plan describes the County’s agricultural lands using two separate data sources: (1) Steuben County parcel data describes land uses for assessment purposes and (2) USDA Census of Agriculture tracks land uses for the purpose of analyzing economic trends.

These sources aggregate acreage of land using different methods of data collection and definitions to categorize land uses. Assessment data is defined at the parcel level where only one use is assigned to each parcel, regardless if there are multiple uses. Economic data, however, is compiled through surveys conducted for the Census of Agriculture. The surveys are distributed to landowners who indicate how they use the land, number of acres farmed and type of farming. Although the land use and economic data are not interchangeable, they both present a full picture of Steuben County’s agricultural landscape.
While large farming operations are located throughout the county, the largest concentration can be found in the northwestern Towns of Howard, Cohocton, and Wayland. The correlation between the northwestern section of the county having the highest concentration of large farms and field crops grown is not a coincidence since the field crops commonly grown in the county require economies of scale to be profitable. Concentrations of smaller farms are found in the towns on the southern border including West Union, Troupsburg, Woodhull, Tuscarora, Lindley and Caton, on lands directly surrounding the Village of Wayland, and on parcels adjacent to Keuka Lake.

AGRICULTURAL DISTRICTS

There are currently seven Agricultural Districts in Steuben County, down from a previous high of 25. The reduction in districts was led by the County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board (AFPB) in an effort to better streamline the administrative management of the districts. District boundaries correspond to tax parcel data and are subject to change on an annual basis as farmland is added to the nearest district.

The purpose of Agricultural Districts is to encourage the use of farmland for agricultural production and to discourage the conversion of farmland to non-agriculture uses. Authorized under AML-Article 25-AA, the Agricultural District Program provides a combination of landowner incentives including protections against overly restrictive local laws, government funded construction projects, and private nuisance suits involving agricultural practices. The County Legislature is responsible for approving the addition of parcels to existing Agricultural Districts and the required eight-year review of Districts.

2.2 Economic Profile

Agriculture has historically been a critical component of the economy of Steuben County. While changing economic conditions and consolidation of the food and agriculture industries have challenged community-based farms, 15% of Steuben County employees still work in the agricultural industry and related supply chains. The impact of agriculture on the county’s economy is significant. In order to understand the extent agriculture has on the overall economy, it is important to examine all aspects of the agriculture including farm employment, expenses, and production outputs.

As a part of the planning process, a detailed economic analysis was developed using economic data and information gathered from interviews, EMSI reports, and the 2012 Census of Agriculture. Collectively, the data provides a comprehensive assessment of all aspects of the county’s economy as it relates to agriculture (Appendix F).

The contents of the analysis include an economic base analysis which examines employment within the agriculture, fishing, forestry and hunting sectors, farm tenure, and farm earnings. It further includes a comparative analysis of land use (farm size, acreage, and number of farms) between the 2007 and 2012 Census of Agriculture, and supply chain analysis which looks at the other sectors that play a role in farm production either as suppliers or purchasers of farm goods.

The following is a summary of the key findings from the analysis:

**Historically strong growth in on-farm employment.**

Data\(^1\) show that of the 40,000 jobs in Steuben County in 2013, 741 jobs (2%) were in the Agriculture (Farming), Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting sector\(^2\), not including any of the inputs or value-added processors such as dairy processing. This sector showed strong growth between 2003 and 2013, increasing by 14%.

\(^1\) This information derived from the County Land Use data and is not interchangeable with the Census of Agriculture data.
compared to the flat growth experienced by the county economy overall. Farm job growth is expected to taper off into the future, with estimated growth of just 3% by 2023. This is compared to 4% growth projected for the county overall

Farming and agriculture related employment plays a large role in the county economy.

Farming is only one piece of the overall economy and when agriculture related industries are included the role is much larger. The impact of farming in Steuben County is not restricted to only the jobs that currently exist in these industries. The direct employees as shown above make purchases in the local economy, which in turn creates jobs in other industries such as local government, retail goods, banking, education, insurance, etc. When considering the induced impacts of the Agriculture economy there are another approximately 500 jobs that would be lost if the farms were to cease to exist.

The majority of hired farm laborers work less than 150 days out of the year.

Data from the Census of Agriculture was used to supplement EMSI data, which is known to undercount economic activity related to farming. According to the 2012 Census of Agriculture, the number of hired laborers working on farms was 1,759, although two-thirds of these employees worked for less than 150 days out of the year.

Steuben County farm workers earn less than their statewide counterparts.

Average earnings per hired farm worker rose by 18% between 2002 and 2012, from $7,667$iv to $9,068. Average earnings for county farm workers in 2012 were significantly below those of workers statewide—$9,068 compared to $11,989.

Half of Steuben County’s land is dedicated to farming.

The 2012 Census of Agriculture reports that Steuben county has the most farming acreage of any New York county, with over 420,000 acres. In fact, 47% of the county’s land area is dedicated to farming. The average farm size was 243 acres in 2012.

Most Steuben County farms are small operations, but large farms are driving growth.

Of the 1,667 farms in operation in 2012, the vast majority were small operations. Farms with sales of less than $50,000 accounted for three-quarters of all farms. Seventy-one percent (71%) of farms hired no workers in 2012. Large operations, however, have seen the greatest increases in both acreage and sales, in both percentage and absolute terms.

Overall net farm income has doubled since 2002, but many farm operations remain unprofitable.

Net cash farm income more than doubled to $52 million in 2012, up from $24 millionv in 2002. Average net income per farm also doubled, from $16,000vi to $31,000. Nonetheless, the proportion of farms with net gains stayed flat, at 42%. This is comparable to state- and national-level figures. This highlights the face that the income gains have mostly accrued to the larger operations.

Steuben County ranks among the top sellers of farm products in New York.

Over $187 million in farm product sales were reported for Steuben County in 2012, ranking 7th in the state and accounting for 3.5% of farm sales statewide. The county saw a 25% increase since 2007, rising from its 12th place ranking. Animal product sales accounted for 57% of sales, with crop sales comprising the remainder.
Dairy continues to drive farm product sales, as well as agriculture-related manufacturing.

Milk from cows is the number one agricultural product in the county by far, accounting for 42% of all sales in 2012. Steuben County ranked 11th in the state in terms of milk production. Fluid Milk Manufacturing and Cheese Manufacturing were the largest agriculture-related manufacturing industries in terms of employment, collectively comprising 75% of agriculture-related manufacturing jobs. Kraft Foods and H.P. Hood are the major players in this industry in the county.

Cattle farming is a thriving industry, but all beef processing currently occurs outside the County.

Cattle and calf production in the county was an $18 million industry in 2012, increasing by 34% from 2007 and making up 9% of all farm sales. Steuben County ranks fifth in the state in cattle production. While there are several custom butcher shops in the County to serve the freezer trade, these businesses are not USDA-Certified and have limited capacity. Without USDA certification, other market sectors cannot be supplied.

Lower volume farm products, especially grains, have shown high sales growth.

Products with relatively low sales have shown significant growth in sales between 2007 and 2012. The increase in sales of grains, oilseeds, dry beans, and dry peas accounted for 64% of the sales growth. Corn showed the greatest sales growth in absolute terms, adding $19 million in sales and rising from the fifth-place to the second-place product.

Wineries are projected to continue to expand and provide jobs for the County.

In addition to attracting spending from outside the county, wineries are key employers, supporting 162 jobs in 2013. Concentrated in the northeast quadrant of the county around Keuka Lake, more than ten wineries are in operation within the county, a number that is projected to grow.
New brewery legislation offers opportunities for expansion of the beer industry.

The Cuomo administration has announced a new initiative that introduces the Small Farm Brewery License, which provides benefits to license-holders including increasing the types of retail outlets in which they can sell and allowing them to operate restaurants and hold tastings. In order to obtain a license, a brewer must source an increasing portion of its inputs from New York State. Steuben County has the opportunity to increase production and processing of barley and hops in response to the demand for state-grown inputs.

Community-driven initiatives have helped to connect local farmers and consumers.

Several initiatives are underway in Steuben County to better connect consumers to locally produced agricultural products. Some examples include farmers’ markets, setting up a meat locker, community-supported agriculture (CSA) programs. CCE is active in promoting local agriculture.

2.3 Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA)

The Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) system was developed by the Natural Resources Conservation Service as a quantitative tool to help prioritize farmland for protection. The purpose of the LESA system is to rate and rank agricultural parcels using a series of soil quality factors, such as crop yield data, and non-soil factors, such as development pressure, to assist decision makers in prioritizing and protecting lands for long-term agricultural use. As such, there are several possible uses for the LESA system developed for Steuben County, including:

- Assisting municipalities in identifying agricultural lands for long-term continuation in a comprehensive or land use plan;
- Identifying which parcels should be given highest priority for purchase of development rights; or
- Determining how town-wide or site-specific rezoning may impact the long-term viability of neighboring farms.

The LESA system is unique in that it can be tailored to each individual community in which it is being completed for. To identify the specific evaluation factors appropriate for Steuben County, stakeholder feedback and available data types were considered. The following factors were used to identify priority farmland in Steuben County:

- **Land Capability Class**: The Land Capability Classification (LCC) system identifies the relative degree of limitations for agricultural use inherent in the soils of a given area. Based on soil characteristics, the LCC categorizes soils into one of eight classes, with classes 1 through 4 typically providing the highest productivity.

- **Farm Size**: It is often more profitable to operate a large-scale farming operation than a small one as larger farms often realize better financial returns than do smaller farms (although not always). While agricultural land uses in Steuben County include 4,458 parcels covering 253,659 acres, many of these parcels are under the same ownership. Given that parcels under the same ownership are typically part of one farming operation, it was important to identify and evaluate the size of the farm that each parcel is associated with, and not the size of the individual parcel.
• **Availability of Agricultural Support Services**: One of the primary factors influencing the continuation of farming in a given area is the close proximity of convenient and adequate agricultural support services, including equipment supply and repair, feed suppliers, veterinarian services, farm supply stores and cold storage facilities.

• **Proximity to Adjacent Farmland**: The types of land uses adjacent to active farmlands can impact the ability of a farmer to conduct normal farming operations or to change crops and practices so as to remain in agricultural use. Generally, it is more likely that farms in close proximity to other farms will be offered the most flexibility in conducting farming operations and are more likely to remain as farms.

• **Land Use Policy Designation**: The purpose of this factor is to provide a general measure of a given parcel’s potential to remain in agriculture by identifying each parcel’s general zoning designation (parcels located in agricultural zoning districts are more likely to remain in agriculture).

• **Agricultural District Designation**: The Agricultural District Program provides a combination of landowner incentives and protections developed to prevent the conversion of agriculture to non-agricultural uses, including preferential real property tax treatment and protections against overly restrictive local laws. Although voluntary, participation in this program provides additional protections above and beyond those afforded by zoning alone.

• **Distance to Urban Center**: One of the most prominent factors influencing the conversion of agriculture to non-agricultural uses is development pressure from urbanized areas – parcels in close proximity to developed lands are more likely to be developed themselves.
LESA RESULTS

Every agricultural parcel in Steuben County was assessed using the factors and LESA tool. A parcel is determined to have a high probability for being converted to a non-agricultural use or a low probability based on its final score. A low score indicates that a parcel has low quality soils for agricultural production and that it is more likely to be converted to non-agricultural uses due to the lack of support services, small overall farm size, lack of regulatory protections and close proximity to non-agricultural land uses and urban centers. An agricultural parcel that receives a high score, however, would be characterized by high quality soils and a lower likelihood of being converted to non-agricultural uses. Parcels with a high score would generally be considered high priority sites for long-term protection.

Based on the actual results of the analysis, final total scores ranged from a low of 25.2 to a high of 114.3, with an average score of 70. Additional key findings from the analysis include:

• Six (6) percent of agricultural parcels score in the highest point range and thus have the highest quality farmland with the lowest potential for conversion to non-agricultural uses.

• Twenty-two percent fall within the range of parcels representing the lowest quality farmland with the highest potential for conversion to non-agricultural uses.

Based on the location of these parcels (see Map X in Appendix X), the highest concentration of high-scoring agricultural parcels can be found in the northern portion of the county, in the Towns of Cohocton and Pultney.
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Section 3. The Future of Agriculture in Steuben County

The agricultural industry is a vital driver of Steuben County’s economy and defines its rural landscape and character. With the most farming acreage of any New York State county and ranking as one of the most profitable in farm sales, Steuben County is in a position to continue to shape a positive and vibrant agricultural economy while protecting its existing farms and welcoming the next generation of farmers.

3.1 Overview

Public participation was a key component of developing this plan. The information gathered from the farmer and resident surveys, stakeholder interviews, PAC, and public meetings was organized and analyzed to better understand the state of the County’s agriculture in an effort to more effectively plan for the future.

Using the results from the public participation process, a structured SWOT analysis was performed to identify the internal and external factors impacting agriculture in the County. Specifically, a SWOT analysis is a strategic tool used to assess the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in an effort to help the County achieve its long- and short-term goals. By performing this level of analysis, the County has been able to identify a range of strategies to protect and maintain the strengths including the internal physical, cultural, and environmental resources that strongly contribute to the County’s agricultural profile. The analysis also helped identify the weaknesses and deficiencies affecting agriculture, the potential external initiatives, programs, and resources to build from, and the external issues that could negatively influence and impact the County’s agriculture.

The SWOT analysis was developed from information gathered in surveys, stakeholder interviews, public meetings and significant public outreach. The results of the analysis revealed a detailed list of opportunities and challenges for farmland protection and economic development. Specific goals and recommendations are outlined in Section 3.2.
The SWOT analysis was developed from information gathered in surveys, stakeholder interviews, public meetings and significant public outreach. The results of the analysis revealed a detailed list of opportunities and challenges for farmland protection and economic development. Specific goals and recommendations are outlined in Section 3.2.
3.2 Goals to Support the Agricultural Industry

Five overarching goals were developed with supporting strategies to help the County implement the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan. Some of the strategies identified in the 2002 Agriculture and Farmland Plan are applicable to the updated plan and are included in this section, while others have changed to reflect current conditions, issues and opportunities. Goals were established for five key categories derived from community input and the economic and land use analysis.

**Goal 1: Economic Development**

Support local farmers and existing agricultural-related businesses in their efforts to create high quality, value-added products, increase consumer access, and develop essential infrastructure to ensure the long-term viability of the County’s agricultural economy.

**Goal 2: Agribusiness Development**

Develop and attract new agriculture-related enterprises involved in the production, storage, distribution, and processing of agri-based products and services.

**Goal 3: Farmland Preservation**

Ensure that the county’s farmland remains viable and productive for future farmers.

**Goal 4: Agri-Tourism**

Promote Steuben County as an agri-tourism destination by marketing its locally grown products and agriculturally-related businesses.

**Goal 5: Education, Outreach and Partnerships**

Develop and expand education and awareness opportunities for farmers and the greater community.
3.3 Implementation Framework

The SWOT analysis served as a framework for identifying and prioritizing the County’s goals and objectives, and the strategies to achieve them. For each of the goal areas, objectives and strategies were developed, as generally depicted in Figure 2. The goals and strategies outline the programs, projects and economic development initiatives that can be implemented to address the critical issues and capitalize on the strengths and opportunities in Steuben County. Implementation will require collaboration and partnerships among several agencies including the County, AFPB, CCE, IDA, local colleges and schools, and all members of the agriculture community. A detailed implementation and action plan is outlined in Section 4.

FIGURE 2: Relationship of Goals, Objectives and Strategies
GOAL 1: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

SUPPORT LOCAL FARMERS AND EXISTING AGRICULTURAL-RELATED BUSINESSES IN THEIR EFFORTS TO CREATE HIGH QUALITY, VALUE-ADDED PRODUCTS, INCREASE CONSUMER ACCESS, AND DEVELOP ESSENTIAL INFRASTRUCTURE TO ENSURE THE LONG-TERM VIABILITY OF THE COUNTY’S AGRICULTURAL ECONOMY.

OBJECTIVE 1: IDENTIFY VALUE-ADDED INFRASTRUCTURE AND INVESTMENTS THAT SUPPORT EXISTING FARMS AND FARM PRODUCTS.

STRATEGIES

- **Develop a regional community kitchen and packaging facility.**
  It was revealed through the planning process that farmers need additional avenues to produce value-added products for public sale and distribution, but lack the necessary commercial facilities. A shared commercial kitchen would be a mutually beneficial resource for farmers and the greater community by creating an outlet for locally grown food to be processed and distributed while facilitating business creation and entrepreneurship.

These commercial facilities provide high-quality equipment and space for food preparation, recipe testing, and product development for food service professionals, colleges and institutions with culinary arts and agricultural programs, non-profit organizations or small business owners seeking to operate or start their businesses. Commercial kitchens are licensed facilities that are often rented to members on a hourly basis, allowing for multiple community groups and individual entrepreneurs to have immediate access to the space.

These facilities can be developed as independent operations or developed as a joint venture with other organizations, such as a local food enterprise center (food hub) The financial feasibility of a joint project is presented in Appendix F. The results indicate the County should continue to explore various options to develop a community kitchen and identify partners, including non-profit organizations, to develop a business model and financing options, including grant opportunities.

- **Study the feasibility and composition of a local food enterprise center (food hub) in Steuben County.**
  Farmers in Steuben County have expressed the need for marketing assistance, easier access to consumers, and access to processing infrastructure to grow their agricultural businesses. One method of meeting these needs is the establishment of a local food enterprise center, commonly known as a food hub. A local food enterprise center is a community-based organization that partners with area farmers to increase access to local food. The center could provide aggregation and distribution as well as light processing to prepare and package fresh produce, providing an essential link between farmers and area institutions including retailers such as caterers and grocery stores, K-12 schools and after school programs, colleges, hospitals and nursing homes, as well as non-profit organizations and

A community kitchen and local food enterprise center will connect farmers to institutions while providing a space for product development and distribution, creating a dynamic and regional food system in Steuben County.
The food enterprise center could further provide support services including infrastructure, marketing, and training to farmers to directly connect consumers to local food.

A preliminary economic study (Appendix F) was conducted as part of the planning process to explore how other communities have incorporated these facilities into their agricultural economy. The initial study revealed that the supply of local produce, especially “specialty crops” (fruits and vegetables), is a major factor in the success of a local food enterprise center. In order to support a center in Steuben County, approximately 600 acres of specialty crops is required. Over 7,000 acres of agricultural land are currently producing specialty crops in the County. Farmers of any size and tenure, whether organic or conventional, could participate in the center. Preliminary findings indicate that the center could ultimately support over 60+ farmers and could bring 41 new jobs to the County. In addition to providing a reliable and fair market for farmers to market their food, the local food enterprise center has the potential to create a dynamic and regional food system for both the producer and consumer in Steuben County.

There have been a variety of business and revenue models used to develop food hubs across the country and New York State. Common business entities include:

- Agricultural cooperative (co-op);
- For profit ventures;
- Non-profit organizations; and
- Public/Private Partnerships.

The decision about the type of business entity used to establish a food center in Steuben County will greatly depend on grower needs, community wants and needs, financing options and leadership capacity. As the County considers its plans to develop a local food enterprise center, each model should be evaluated to determine which will be a best fit for the community. Funding for the project is available through Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education (SARE), as well as multiple opportunities through the USDA.

**Food Hub Business Models**

There are a variety of business models used to develop food hubs. Examples of these businesses include:

**Fifth Season Cooperative, Vernon County, WI**

Fifth season is a multi-stakeholder cooperative that was established in 2010 through a Local Buy Wisconsin grant (Wisconsin Department of Agriculture). The co-op sells over 130 products that are grown and distributed within a 150-mile radius. The success of the food hub comes from the member’s dedication to sustainable food systems, product diversity and online distribution system.

**Local Food Hub, Charlottesville, VA**

Local Food Hub is a non-profit, aggregate and packing facility that works with over 70 area farmers in a 3,800 square foot facility. The organization purchases large quantities of fruits and vegetables, generating a consistent revenue stream for farmers and providing fresh, locally grown food to area institutions and retailers. In addition to providing refrigerated deliveries and liability insurance, the organization offers marketing and sales services, website profiles, for each producer, labeling, and pre-season planning services.
• Develop a USDA-approved slaughter and meat processing facility.
Throughout the planning process, farmers indicated the need for more localized processing facilities for the cattle/beef industry as well as other livestock (pigs, hogs, goats, lamb, etc.). Currently, farmers must travel to larger facilities in Hunt, NY and Wyalusing, PA, which costs farmers time and money, resulting in a less profitable end-product and money leaving the County. Producers have noted that these facilities typically work at capacity, thus resulting in longer wait times and demonstrating a high demand for these types of services. Smaller, local facilities have begun opening but farmers interested in using those facilities often have to make appointments 6 months to a year in advance and still may have to travel several hours to the facility.

It is estimated that of the 67,000 cattle in the county, over 3,500 cattle are “on feed”, meaning they are being fed to be slaughtered. There are an additional 25,000 hogs and pigs, and 4,700 sheep and lambs in Steuben County. Because of this high concentration of livestock, Steuben County is well positioned to open a slaughterhouse. An initial economic study was conducted in the development of this plan to determine the feasibility of developing a slaughterhouse facility (Appendix F). The results indicate that a mid-sized facility of approximately 8,000 square feet would help meet the demand in Steuben County, greatly reducing the barriers of transporting livestock and supporting the market for locally-grown, specialty and processed meat.

As consumer demand for grass-fed and locally-raised beef continues to increase, a regional USDA-certified slaughterhouse could potentially allow Steuben County meat producers the opportunity to meet this demand while expanding operations and produce a wider variety of value-added products. The products could be marketed under the Steuben brand and logo, and be used as a catalyst to attract other local potential businesses including a smokehouse, commercial kitchen, or support regional programs such as CCE’s Meat Suite. The IDA should continue to work with the County to identify grant funding and other financial support to help with the initial startup costs and attract potential investors.

Agricultural Funding and Programming

There are a number of resources that provide funding for agriculture and agribusiness development. At the local level, the Rural Initiatives Program provides low-interest financing for agribusiness development. Overseen by the IDA and STREDC, this program directly helps farmers develop and expand their business.

Funding for agriculture and agribusiness development is one of Governor Cuomo’s top initiatives. Funding can be secured through a number of agencies and programs including NYSDAM, Empire State Development, and NYSERDA. The Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) makes applying to the State’s agencies a more streamlined process.

At the Federal level, funding is available through the USDA and NRCS for beginning farmers, farm and ranch land protection, and valued added agricultural product development. An overview of these programs can be found in Section 4.3.
OBJECTIVE 2: CONNECT CONSUMERS DIRECTLY TO FARMERS.

STRATEGIES

• **Market and promote Steuben County farm product outlets.**
  There is a range of opportunities in Steuben County to connect consumers directly to farm products. From CSAs, farmers’ markets, and co-ops to u-pick and family-owned produce markets and stands, each outlet provides significant benefits for both the farmer and the consumer. CCE developed a local food guide which lists the available CSAs in the county. To increase exposure to local purchasing opportunities, CCE should continue to work with vendors and municipalities to advertise opportunities through listservs, mailings, websites, and events.

• **Identify supply requirements of local supermarkets that may represent barriers to increased opportunities for retailing local produce and meats.**
  CCE and the Farm Bureau should encourage local producers to explore market opportunities, such as co-ops and distribution channels that will get their product to retail grocery stores, both local and chain establishments. CCE and Farm Bureau staff could support farmers by developing regional local-food distribution guides, which could provide information about different local food sales channels in their area.

  As local producers expand into new and larger markets, farmers face increased food safety and handling requirements. Many larger grocery chains and establishments require producers to show they have passed a Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) inspection/audit to help reduce contamination in fresh produce. CCE should partner with local retailers, such as Wegmans, to host education sessions to help inform producers of the GAP recommendations and how to prepare for an audit. The cost of the USDA inspections on an annual basis is upwards of $1,200 which can be challenging for small producers operating on limited budgets. To help small producers and packers participate, CCE, IDA, and the County should explore cost-share programs to help with certification costs.

• **Expand current efforts to connect institutions to local farmers by identifying and matching institutional needs to farmers’ production capacity.**
  Through this effort, a system can be developed for farmers to bundle produce locally to sell to local institutions, such as schools, hospitals and office complexes. While this would be challenging due to industry standards (i.e. institutions require a consistent and reliable shipment of certain products), if effective, institutions could reduce their reliance on non-regional delivery systems.

• **Establish a farmers market collaborative.**
  The STREDC identified regional farmers’ markets and regional marketing initiatives as a top priority for revitalizing the rural farming economy. A farmers market collaborative is a group of community patrons composed of market managers, advocates, residents and municipal staff dedicated to the establishment and continued support of farmers’ markets. A representative from each of the eight markets should join the collaborative to support the coordination, marketing and outreach to the community. This collaborative will be an important resource to ensure the markets are meeting the needs of the vendors, as well as the patrons.

• **Identify new and emerging niche markets, such as grass-fed meat and craft brewing, and help farmers transition their land to capitalize on these opportunities.**
  Emerging niche markets (e.g., craft brewing, organic and grass-fed meat, cidery), are providing increased opportunities for farmers to diversify and specialize in new areas of farming. The transition into specialized niches requires increased training and education to learn about all the aspects of the industry—from land use and regulations, to certification and product sales. The County should coordinate with CCE to help farmers transition to these new markets through hands-on workshops, information sessions and individual counseling.
OBJECTIVE 3: SUPPORT THE LOCAL DAIRY INDUSTRY.

STRATEGIES

• Identify innovative funding resources to support investment in specialty dairy infrastructure. Companies including Kraft and H.P. Hood are vital to the region’s agricultural economy and it is important to continue to grow and invest in the dairy- and milk-related industries. To support dairy farmers, the IDA should develop an innovative loan fund to help expand dairy infrastructure such as water systems, milking equipment, and advanced technology. This will allow for opportunities to invest in the increasing demand for specialty products such as local cheese, greek yogurt, and organic milk.

For dairy farmers interested in renewable energy, National Grid offers rebates to fund energy efficiency, renewable energy delivery and/or productivity improvements undertaken by dairy businesses, dairy farms and controlled environment agricultural facilities located within the service territory of National Grid New York. Program funding is established on an annual basis, and the applications are rolling (until all funding has been exhausted). The IDA should help coordinate the application process and review eligibility requirements with interested farmers.

The New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) also offers funding for agriculture-related energy projects including up to $2 million per project for the installation of anaerobic digester gas-to-electricity system. The County and IDA should work with dairy farmers to determine who could qualify for funding.

OBJECTIVE 4: ENSURE ADEQUATE SUPPORT SERVICES ARE IN PLACE TO ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF FARMERS.

STRATEGIES

• Complete a gap analysis to identify whether any additional services, such as machine repair or veterinary services, are missing in the County. Farmers rely on agricultural-related businesses and industries to support their operations. This includes services such as veterinarian hospitals and out-patient clinics, machine and tractor supply stores, feed suppliers, labor contracts and farm management services, among many others. In addition to supporting farms, they provide employment opportunities in off-farm activities such as handling, processing, packaging, storage, transportation and marketing of food and non-food agricultural products. The County and IDA should coordinate efforts to develop a market analysis specifically focused on identifying any gaps in services provided.
• **As needs are determined, recruit agricultural support businesses to fill identified gaps.**
  The results of a gap analysis will identify those support services and industries that are in demand from the agriculture community and are limited or non-existent in the community. Working with a marketing specialist, the County will be able to directly market Steuben County as a place for those businesses. This will create additional economic opportunities within the community while supporting existing farms and agriculture-related businesses.

• **Increase farmer and agri-business access to the Southern Tier Network, the region’s broadband telecommunications infrastructure.**
  Utilization of the Southern Tier Network (broadband) will help ensure that the agriculture community has access to the network to increase the utilization of the region’s telecommunications infrastructure. Although the network isn’t adjacent to a large number of farms, the growth in telecom providers may result in more access to the rural community.

**OBJECTIVE 5: ENCOURAGE THE USE OF RENEWABLE RESOURCES ON AGRICULTURAL LANDS.**

**STRATEGIES**

• **Develop local wind and solar power ordinances to encourage farmers to implement projects on portions of their agricultural land.**
  Wind and solar energy are compatible with agricultural land uses, and are identified by the STREDC as a strategy for making the Southern Tier New York a leader in renewable energy. Support for renewable resources including wind and solar power are increasing as energy costs continue to rise. Farmers across the country are harvesting these resources while simultaneously raising crops and livestock, and providing long-term financial stability. The County should work with each municipality to ensure local wind and solar ordinances do not restrict farmers from installing these facilities.

• **Identify and promote programs and resources that provide incentives and assistance for implementing wind and solar programs.**
  NYSERDA promotes energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy sources. Funding through NYSERDA includes solar-electric system and solar thermal incentive program, on-farm wind turbines, as well as technical support for new commercial and industrial building owners. The County should work with the IDA and prospective farmers to determine which funding resources would best meet the needs of the farmer.

• **Identify and quantify the potential for on-farm resources, such as biomass from crops and residues or biogas from manure digestion, to help meet farm energy needs.**
  The STREDC has identified renewable energy, including biomass production and processing, as a top priority for revitalizing the rural farming economy. Biomass energy has the potential to supply local energy needs, while revitalizing Steuben’s economy, increasing energy independence, and reducing pollution. Local farmers also have the potential to gain a valuable new outlet for their products or to become self-sufficient with regards to farm energy needs. Biomass energy sources on farmland includes residues, energy crops, grasses, trees and oil plants, such as sunflowers.
GOAL 2: AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

ATTRACT AND DEVELOP NEW AGRICULTURE-RELATED ENTERPRISES INVOLVED IN THE PRODUCTION, STORAGE, DISTRIBUTION AND PROCESSING OF AGRI-BASED PRODUCTS AND SERVICES.

OBJECTIVE 1: ATTRACT NEW PROJECTS THAT LEVERAGE EXISTING ASSETS AND SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF VALUE-ADDED MANUFACTURING OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS.

STRATEGIES

- Identify potential business opportunities that can take advantage of the County’s surplus commercial crops.

  With over 68,000 acres actively used for crop farming, the County is well positioned to develop new business opportunities for surplus grains, vegetables, and potatoes. Farmers should continue to partner with the County, CCE, and IDA to identify businesses and projects that could take advantage of this surplus. These mutually-beneficial partnerships could allow businesses to capitalize on the close proximity to farms with a readily available supply of surplus products, while generating additional revenue for farmers.

  One example of an agribusiness that could take advantage of the County’s surplus potatoes that was explored as a part of this planning process includes a potato vodka distillery. In Steuben County, farmers throw away anywhere from 10 to 40 percent of potato product because it does not meet the specifications of existing potato customers, such as UTZ potato chips. These vodka distillers, such as Cold River Vodka in Maine, often grow out of a need to find a use for “waste potatoes” that are too large, small, or irregularly shaped to be used for other potato products, such as chips.

  The results of the initial feasibility study (Appendix F) indicate that a local distillery could potentially generate upwards of $65,000 in revenue for farmers who currently do not receive any income for this excess product. A local distillery would further contribute to the County’s agricultural tourism initiatives and the region’s growing brewery attractions.
• **Identify potential projects stemming from the State’s targeted initiatives to grow the craft brewery industry and implement the Farm Brewery Act.**

One of the primary ingredients of both craft beer and whiskey is malted barley. As the NY State Farm Brewery and Farm Distillery Acts are implemented, brewers and whiskey distillers with farm licenses will be required to source an increasing proportion of this ingredient from within New York by 2024. Small craft malt houses have started coming online to service NY brewers and distillers. As the demand for malted barley in NY continues to grow, there are opportunities for local farmers to transition into crop production to support both the consumer demand and legislative requirements.

While a lack of crop insurance and difficult growing conditions present short-term challenges for barley, Steuben County crop producers are well positioned to transition or add new crops to their rotation in order to capitalize on the growing local brewing and distilling industry. CCE is actively working to identify the best seeds for the upstate climate and are engaging farmers on how to grow the best crop. The County should partner with CCE to identify crop producers and available lands that are vacant or actively in production to transition into hops and barley production.

Long-term economic opportunities in the County may also include a new malt house that could capture the market opportunity created by the growth of the craft beer and whiskey industry. The economic feasibility of developing a malt house was examined to determine whether the facility could be supported (Appendix F) in Steuben County. The preliminary results from the analysis indicate that a 2,400 square foot facility would be feasible with grants and preferential financing. The malt house would contribute to the interest in craft beverage tourism in the region.
OBJECTIVE 2: EXPLORE OPTIONS TO DEVELOP AN AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST POSITION.

STRATEGIES

- Identify the appropriate organization for an Agricultural Development Specialist to reside (IDA, County Planning, CCE). Determine roles and responsibilities for the position, as well as long-term funding.

The creation of an agricultural development specialist position was identified in the 2002 plan as an important component to the County’s agricultural economy. The County and its partners should continue to explore the possibilities of this position to assist in the implementation of the plan’s short- and long-term goals. The County will need to coordinate with other agencies including the AFPB, IDA, CCE and the County Planning Department in order to determine which agency could create, house and support the position.

CCE recently received funding to retain a Local Food Educator position for 2 years, which will help to support the County and local farmers with some of the education-based initiatives identified for the Agricultural Development Specialist. Until long-term funding is identified to create and support this position, key partners (as noted above) should work together to identify how they can most effectively collaborate to ensure that the activities necessary to support and grow agriculture in Steuben County are addressed. For example, CCE may continue to lead educational and programming efforts, while the IDA focuses on marketing and economic development initiatives and the County Planning Department provides technical grant writing assistance.

Activities an Agricultural Development Specialist, or other collaborative arrangement of local agencies and organizations should undertake, includes but is not limited to:
- Marketing
- Grant writing and funding
- Advocacy and Outreach
- Economic Development
- Education and Programming
- Consulting

Examples of NYS Communities That Have Created Agricultural Development Specialist Positions

Ontario County, New York

The Agriculture and Economic Development Specialist position was formed as a part of Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ontario County. This position researches new agriculture business strategies to develop new and innovative educational programs for the community or new markets for the agricultural stakeholders to pursue. In addition to business development, they assist Cornell University faculty and staff on applied research in agriculture economic development and assists with on-campus programs. The target audience that this position serves is agricultural producers, new entrepreneurs in production, processing and agriculture-related businesses including agricultural tourism, and community members that are advocates for agriculture.

Wayne County, New York

The Wayne County Planning Department created an Ag Development Specialist as a result of the 1998 Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan. The Plan outlined the specific responsibilities of this position. This position is responsible for the oversight of farmland protection initiatives, continuing education, collaboration on new and beginning farmer programs, grant writing, and serving as a liaison to County boards and regional organizations.
OBJECTIVE 3: CAPITALIZE ON THE COUNTY’S UNDERUTILIZED WOODLANDS AND GRASSLANDS.

STRATEGIES

• Work with farmers and rural landowners to identify the economic potential of woodland management for timber products.
  As the demand for locally manufactured products continues to rise, there is an opportunity for farmers and rural landowners to capitalize on their woodland and forested lands. There are opportunities to sell timber as stumpage (standing timber where the buyer is responsible for harvesting and processing) or as processed logs or other finished products, such as furniture. For landowners with larger tracts of woodlands, there are opportunities to exclusively lease their lands through a “posted lease” (the landowner leases the exclusive right to use a particular parcel). Exclusive leases may include maple tapping, hunting, camping, fishing or other recreation activities. CCE can help landowners with forestry consulting or connect landowners to a professional forester to determine the best management plan for their land.

• Identify and quantify the potential for perennial grasses and forest residues as feedstock for local biomass energy systems.
  The County and its partners should study the potential for using grasses and forest residues to support local biomass energy systems, allowing farmers to gain a valuable new outlet for their products. Opportunities for biomass energy continue to grow. Federal incentives are available through the 2002 Farm Bill to develop advanced technologies and crops to produce energy, chemicals, and other products from biomass. However, in Steuben County one of the most significant challenges is the need to identify an end user / market for local biomass products, above and beyond individual property owners.

• Determine feasibility of attracting/developing a biomass processing plant to manufacture densified fuel for commercial heat, cooling or power systems.
  The County should coordinate with CCE to work with an economic research analyst to determine the feasibility for developing a biomass processing plant. This study would involve identifying the demand for the facility and product end-users, locating potential sites, and developing an in-depth cost analysis and potential funding sources.
GOAL 3: FARMLAND PRESERVATION

ENSURE THE COUNTY’S FARMLAND REMAINS VIABLE AND PRODUCTIVE FOR FUTURE FARMERS.

OBJECTIVE 1: RETAIN VIABLE FARMLAND FOR LONG-TERM AGRICULTURAL USE.

STRATEGIES

- Identify prime farmlands eligible for New York State PDR program (Farmland Implementation Grant Program).
  Working with the AFPB, utilize the LESA results to develop a list of viable agricultural lands that are at risk, or have the potential to be at risk, of conversion to non-farm uses. Identify those farmers that are willing to sell their development rights to ensure the longevity of the farm for future generations of farmers. The County should partner with local organizations, such as the Finger Lakes Land Trust (FLLT), to manage the easement.

- Support municipalities in the establishment of local Transfer of Development Rights program.
  Another permanent form of land protection is the Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program which consists of “sending” and “receiving” areas in order to transfer (or send) development from one part of a community to another. The sending areas are the part of the community that are focused on conservation and protection efforts while the receiving areas are focused on development. Steuben County should provide educational, technical and program development assistance to local municipalities interested in establishing a TDR program in their community.

- Support municipalities’ efforts to establish local “Lease of Development Rights” programs.
  A Lease of Development (LDR) rights program is a tool used to encourage property owners to consider a permanent conservation easement. Under an LDR program, a temporary deed restriction is placed on the land for a period of 5-10 years. The landowner receives per acre payments in exchange for the deed restrictions. While these programs do not permanently protect the land, they buy time.

Farmland Protection Implementation Grants in the Finger Lakes

Over 20 farms in the Finger Lakes Region have received permanent protection status through the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets Farmland Protection Implementation Grants. The competitive process requires eligible municipalities, land trust organizations, and soil and water conservation districts to identify viable agricultural lands that are at risk, or have the potential to be at risk, of conversion to non-farm uses. The protection of these farms will help ensure the continuation of agriculture in the region. An example of recently completed easements include the Hicks Farm and Jerry Dell Farm which are both located in the Finger Lakes Region.

Hicks Farm

Hicks Farm, located in the Town of Canandaigua, completed its easement agreements in 2012. The 82-acre easement protects the farm’s vineyard, beef cattle, and farm market that features fresh fruit, vegetables and flowers. The farm overlooks Canandaigua Lake and wooded gorge. The State funded $553,000 to protect the farm. The easement is held and monitored by the Finger Lakes Land Trust.

Jerry Dell Farm

Located in the Town of Dryden, NY, Jerry Dell Farm is a NOFA-certified organic dairy farm. The farm encompasses over 2,000 acres with over 700 acres of pasture. There are approximately 950 head of cattle, 450 of which are milked. The farm store, located in Freeville, NY, features the farm’s gourmet cheeses and is a proud member of the Finger Lakes Cheese Trail. The State funded $548,000 to protect 342 acres. The easement is held by both the Town of Dryden and Tompkins County.
to develop long-range plans and explore grants/funding opportunities for permanent protection (through programs such as the Farmland Protection Implementation Grant). The County should provide technical assistance to municipalities interested in establishing a simple LDR program that would help a landowner until they withdraw from the program, the term expires or the landowner receives permanent protection status.

- **Encourage landowners to donate conservation easements to a land trust.**
  A land trust accepts donations of agricultural conservation easements, gifts of land, and may purchase easements or land with donated funds. There is often a cost associated with easements in the form of stewardship fees for future monitoring and maintenance. The County in partnership with the FLLT can help write grants to offset the easement cost, hold the easements, or assist in the monitoring process. In addition to potential tax benefits, a permanent easement allows landowners to continue to use their land, the ability to sell the land (with the easement transferring with the sale) or pass it on for future generations.

- **Encourage new and emerging farmers through the creation of a formalized program, such as the Northeast Beginning Farmers portal.**
  CCE has developed programs specifically designed for new and emerging farmers. The Northeast Beginning Farmers portal offers online courses, publications, videos and farm planning resources to help any aspiring farmer enter the industry. The County and CCE can help direct farmers to this important resource to develop a strong succession plan, understand industry standards, or to obtain general information.

- **Work with the Cornell Small Farms program to encourage and support small farms in Steuben County.**
  The Cornell Small Farms Program is a critical resource for prospective, emerging and established farmers. This program provides support services specific to small, traditional farms and includes training, guides, professional development, online resources and events. The County should collaborate with CCE to market and promote the available resources through the County’s website, print material, and events.
OBJECTIVE 2: UPDATE MUNICIPAL ZONING LAWS AND ORDINANCES TO ENSURE THEY ARE SUPPORTIVE OF THE AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY.

STRATEGIES

• Support municipalities in their efforts to update municipal zoning laws and ordinances including the definitions, uses, subdivision laws / conservation subdivisions, incentive zoning, and buffer laws.

Zoning often places significant restrictions and barriers on farming by unreasonably regulating farm operations. Often, these limits include farmworker housing, farm/produce stands, CSAs, signage, setbacks and acreage requirements, which particularly confine farms outside of agricultural districts. Each jurisdiction with a significant agricultural presence should update relevant sections of their code to ensure compliance with AML. Updates should include the following:

- Definitions to include all agriculture-related terms in compliance with Agriculture and Markets Law;

- Use tables to ensure a diversity of agricultural land uses are allowed including agriculture-supported businesses, such as meat processing facilities, barley/malt processing facilities, and farm stands;

- Developing appropriate buffers between agricultural and non-compatible land uses; and

- Identify appropriate lists of permitted uses, uses subject to Site Plan Review and Special Use Permit.

Farmland Protection through Conservation Subdivisions

Conservation Subdivisions are a land use tool used to protect valuable agricultural and sensitive lands. This type of subdivision allows for the same number of units as a conventional subdivision, however, there is flexibility in the placement of the units. The design approach is to focus on the site’s most significant cultural and natural resources. The benefits of a Conservation Subdivision include protecting viable farmland and agricultural lands, preserving wildlife corridors and habitats, reducing impervious surfaces and increased stormwater runoff, preserving scenic vistas, and maintaining the rural character of the community.

Town of Caton, New York

The town of Caton, NY adopted subdivision regulations to include a comprehensive guide for designing conservation subdivisions and cluster development. Unlike conventional subdivision laws, cluster development is required unless applicants can demonstrate that traditional subdivision plans would be most beneficial to the community. The regulations specify that at least 50% of the land remain open space. This requirement ensures that the site's most valuable natural features will be preserved for future generations.
OBJECTIVE 3: ENSURE THE FARMING COMMUNITY HAS CONTINUAL REPRESENTATION IN LOCAL PLANNING DECISIONS.

STRATEGIES

• Encourage farmers to volunteer on their local Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals. Each local board should include a representative from the farming community to help ensure that agricultural needs are being addressed through each phase of decision-making. Local municipalities could also establish an Agricultural Advisory Committee. These committees, comprised primarily of farmers and individuals involved with agriculture-related businesses, specifically advocate for and promote farming through municipal programs (such as the PDR), long-range planning, and annual events such as a Farm City Day and the local farmers’ market. Typically these committees are more locally-focused than an AFPB.

• Support municipalities as they develop local Comprehensive Plans. The County should work with the towns and villages to develop local Comprehensive Plans that will help establish farm-friendly goals in the context of land use planning. In addition to providing a unified vision for the municipality, a Comprehensive Plan will serve as the basis for any zoning updates or amendments. This will be particularly helpful for those communities that are experiencing increased growth and development.

• Provide information and training to local officials about the NYS Agricultural Districts Program and its effect on local planning and zoning decisions. The Agricultural Districts Program is an important yet often misunderstood program that was developed to protect farming operations. The County should coordinate with the NYSDAM to host a training event with local officials to review the purpose of the Agricultural Districts and how they impact their local municipalities. The County should also provide direct links to NYSDAM’s website that outlines the districting program.
GOAL 4: AGRI-TOURISM

PROMOTE STEUBEN COUNTY AS AN AGRI-TOURISM DESTINATION BY MARKETING AND PROMOTING ITS LOCALLY GROWN PRODUCTS AND AGRICULTURE-RELATED BUSINESSES.

OBJECTIVE 1: CREATE A UNIQUE BRAND FOR LOCALLY PRODUCED AGRICULTURE PRODUCTS AND BUSINESSES.

STRATEGIES

• Create an Agricultural specific logo and marketing materials that ties into the Made in Corning and Southern Finger Lakes brand.

  Having name recognition associated with quality can allow producers to charge higher prices and make a higher profit on their goods. The SCCVB is a key resource that could coordinate the hiring of a firm to develop a logo that builds on the Made in Corning brand but is specific to agricultural products and venues. The County should work with the SCCVB to develop a logo that represents the agriculture sector, sell the rights to use the logo and incorporates the logo into other marketing and promotional materials.

OBJECTIVE 2: INCREASE PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORT OF AGRICULTURE IN THE COMMUNITY.

STRATEGIES

• Establish and implement a “Buy Local” marketing campaign.

  The SCCVB could help organize and expand farmer participation in advertising their products as locally-grown. This would include increased promotion at farmers’ markets to help educate the public on how agriculture contributes to the local economy and quality of life, and highlighting agriculturally-related businesses that use or see local products.

• Continue to support the development and ongoing operations of new and existing County Farmers’ Markets. Expand the “Meat Suite” virtual market concept to include other vendors and products.

  A Virtual Farmers’ Market can be developed at the County level and provide a one-stop shop for consumers seeking the type, location and availability of local goods. In addition to promoting all of the County’s farmers’ markets, CSA’s, produce stands, and other outlets, the online portal allows families, individuals, and hobby farmers to add their information to the website, further promoting all types of farms and farming operations. The site could include an interactive map and be organized by product or farm type and location and should feature the agriculture version of the Made In Corning logo.
• Expand the calendar of annual events focused on agriculture to include Eat Local Week and consider making Steuben County Farm-City Day an annual, rather than biannual event. Working with the SCCVB, Chambers of Commerce, and area agriculture businesses and farmers, events should be planned throughout the year that allow residents and visitors to celebrate the agriculture community. Events such as “Eat Local Week” and Farm City Days are critical in promoting awareness, and let residents know what products and programs are available to them through local organizations.

The Steuben County Fairgrounds provide an additional facility for local events, such as Farm City Days, and agricultural tourism. This venue has traditionally been a showcase for agriculture and horticulture, making it the ideal location to highlight local products and efforts. The County should continue to partner with CCE and the fairgrounds to capitalize on the opportunity to host new programs and projects as the facilities are upgraded.

• Update and publish the Steuben County Farm Product Guide annually or biannually to maintain current consumer information on locally available farm products and outlets.
The Steuben County Farm Product Guide is an annual CCE publication featuring the County’s farms, farmers’ markets, u-pick farms, a range of producers (e.g. wineries, fruits and vegetables, honey) and Christmas tree farms. The County should continue to support the development of this publication and could help distribute it at County events and on the County’s website.

Virtual Farmers’ Market
Local municipalities and organizations are creating online farmers’ markets to improve access to local fresh fruits, vegetables and meat. These sites help consumers navigate the range of opportunities to purchase local food and products. Examples of two types of online markets include Schoharie Fresh and The Frederick County Virtual Farmers’ Market.

Schoharie Fresh Online Farmers’ Market
Schoharie Fresh is a collaboration between SUNY Cobleskill, Schoharie County Planning and Development, CCE, and CNY Resource Conservation and Development and area farmers. The online market allows customers to directly order from the products listed on the website (or listed by farm) and pickup from different locations throughout the County. Farmers update their inventory on a daily basis, ensuring the products are fresh and in-season. The project was funded through a 5-year NYS Department of Health grant designed to improve access to fresh foods.

Frederick County, Maryland
The Frederick County Virtual Farmers’ Market is hosted by the County’s Office of Economic Development. The online database includes information on the area’s 14 farmers markets, special events and attractions, such as rodeos, and direct links to the County’s farms. You can further navigate directly to specific types of products including organic vegetables, dairy and beef producers, and vineyards. It allows farmers to add their business to the website, making it easy to advertise their products.
OBJECTIVE 3: CAPITALIZE ON THE EXISTING REGIONAL TOURISM BASE TO ATTRACT VISITORS TO EXISTING AGRIBUSINESS ATTRACTIONS.

STRATEGIES

• Work with the Steuben County Conference and Visitors Bureau to identify marketing and promotional strategies that highlight agribusinesses, including the development of unique and specialty experiences, such as on-farm and thematic tours.

The SCCVB continues to be an important resource for promoting local agriculture. The SCCVB should reach out to bed and breakfast operators who would be interested in partnering with farms, restaurants, transportation providers, and other industries to create and market unique experiences that would be attractive to the growing segment of agri-tourists. Example packages could include:

Wine: A vineyard could invite visitors to volunteer for a day to assist with tying off the vines and changing the barrels. Participants would learn about how wine is made, enjoy a tasting and take a bottle home. In addition, an Adopt a Vine program could be established where members are invited to directly participate in the seasonal cycles of the vineyard. Members of the program participate in activities throughout the year including invitation to ‘Hands-on’ Days at the winery or in the vineyard and receive discounts on wine purchases.

Cooking: A farm could partner with a local restaurant or bed and breakfast to teach a class on how to use local in-season ingredients. Participants would be able to learn about the importance of local, quality ingredients while they cook.

• Coordinate a working group of agribusiness providers interested in “group” marketing/promotion opportunities.

Working with farmers and agribusinesses to create a marketing group to explore new opportunities and outlets to market and promote their products. This could include organizing and hosting special events such as tours, tastings, and a “passport” series where tourists visit participating businesses, farms and venues to sample local products.

Wayfinding Signage

A Wayfinding signage program will enable visitors to navigate through the County and region to their destination. The elements of the wayfinding system can highlight an industry, event, or particular facility.

Seneca Lake Wine Trail Signage

The Seneca Lake Wine Trail includes over 30 wineries that run along the 38-mile shore of Seneca Lake. The wine trail is easily identifiable by a series of green road signs directing visitors to the wineries on the east and west sides of the lake. Additional wayfinding signage can be found along the trail directing visitors to specific wineries.

Wayfinding signage for the Seneca Wine Trail help visitors navigate the region’s many vineyards.

(Photo Credit: http://winetrailtraveler.com (left), http://tudorrosebnb.com (right))
• **Coordinate with existing destinations, such as the Corning Museum of Glass, to discuss opportunities for collaborative tourism marketing.**
   The Corning Museum of Glass is an international attraction that welcomes over 400,000 new and repeat visitors annually. Working with the museum, the County and SCCVB should assist in the coordination of a local tourism program that incorporates daily and overnight trips to bed and breakfasts, farms, vineyards, breweries and other regional attractions.

• **Increase exposure to farming activities along the proposed Route 417/36 Scenic Byway.**
   The proposed Route 417/36 Scenic Byway will link together Pinnacle State Park and Stony Brook State Park, spanning approximately 63 miles. These routes are heavily traveled by sightseers, particularly during the spring and summer months. The County can piggyback on the Scenic Byway program and signage to advertise destinations that may be off the main route such as local farm and Amish stores, cideries, vineyards, breweries or a trail tour such as a beer or heritage agriculture trail.

• **Consider opportunities for agribusiness wayfinding signage consistent with local branding efforts to create a cohesive and easily identifiable experience.**
   The STREDC is committed to growing the regional tourism industry. Wayfinding signs are a set of cohesive, directional signs that are branded towards a particular event, program or facility. An agribusiness wayfinding sign program should be coordinated with local marketing efforts.

• **Identify an appropriate location in the County for a local wine and food pavilion to host special events and promote local products.**
   The County, IDA and private entities should partner to identify a venue that highlights the County’s robust and diverse agricultural industry through special and recurring events such as a regional food and beverage festival and vineyard/brewery/cidery tastings. The venue could be used throughout the year to highlight local agricultural products, provide a venue for local producers and product developers to market their goods and offer a one-stop destination for visitors to purchase locally produced goods.
GOAL 5: EDUCATION, OUTREACH AND PARTNERSHIPS

DEVELOP AND EXPAND EDUCATION AND AWARENESS OPPORTUNITIES FOR FARMERS AND THE GREATER COMMUNITY.

OBJECTIVE 1: INTEGRATE AGRICULTURE AS PART OF THE LOCAL SCHOOL CURRICULUM.

STRATEGIES

• Coordinate with the local school districts to offer on-farm experiences for school-age children.

CCE is a leader in developing programs to educate youth on agriculture in the community. CCE should continue to coordinate with local farmers to develop farm tours that introduce students and teachers to farming and the agriculture industry. At the beginning of each school year, they can develop and distribute materials to the schools so that teachers can incorporate tours into the curriculum. Additional CCE and Farm Bureau programs such as Ag-in-the-Classroom can help school districts foster relationships with local farms / farmers.

In January 2015, the state approved the new “pathways” to high school graduation program. This program was designed to provide for more flexibility in graduation requirements, allowing students to specialize in one of five areas: arts, humanities, science, technology, engineering and math (STEM), languages other than English (LOTE) and career and technical education (CTE). Current courses include agricultural mechanics. As this program continues to grow and expand into other disciplines, the County should consider working with the districts to identify opportunities to connect students to agriculture through the pathways program including technology and business development.

SUNY’s Agricultural Initiatives

SUNY institutions are committed to engaging students outside the classroom through hands-on learning. Through these programs, students studying agriculture and agriculture-related fields, culinary arts, tourism and hospitality have the opportunity to learn the technical skills to better prepare them for their career. Tompkins Cortland Community College is one example of a program that has been developed with the greater community to engaging students in sustainable agriculture while gaining real world experience.

Tompkins Cortland Community College: Farm to Bistro Program

TC3’s Farm to Bistro Program combines sustainable agriculture with culinary arts, wine marketing and hotel and restaurant management. The college operates its own organic, on-campus farm which provides the produce to its downtown Ithaca culinary center. Students experience every aspect of the farm to table process. They work on the farm, in the hoop houses and cultivate the land. The produce is transported to the culinary center where students work in food preparation, the event space and tasting room. Through this program, students gain a solid foundation in sustainable agriculture and are prepared to join a working farm, vineyard or related agribusiness upon graduation.

Tompkins Cortland Community College
FARM TO BISTRO

The Farm to Bistro program at TC3 provides a hands-on experience for students studying sustainable agriculture. (Photo: http://tc3.edu)
• **Invite farmers to speak at schools as part of the social studies and/or health curriculum.**
  It is important for the next generation to hear directly from the farming community about future opportunities and to learn about the social, economic and historical value of the agricultural industry. This could be incorporated into classroom curriculum including social studies and/or health, or be featured on career day. The County could coordinate with CCE and the public schools to coordinate efforts.

• **Establish a mentor program for high school students that includes in-class activities and on-farm experiences.**
  It is important for the next generation to hear directly from the farming community about future opportunities and to learn about the agricultural industry. This could be incorporated into classroom curriculum including social studies and/or health, or be featured on career day. The County could coordinate with the CCE and the public schools to develop a program or to match farmers with students interested in learning more about agriculture.

**OBJECTIVE 2: ESTABLISH RELATIONSHIPS WITH REGIONAL COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES TO FACILITATE MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL VENTURES.**

**STRATEGIES**

• **Meet with SUNY representatives to better understand their current agriculture-related research and development efforts.**
  The STREDC is committed to connecting local organizations and businesses to educational institutions. Many institutions are implementing farm-to-table programs that allow students to be a part of each step in the process to grow, distribute, market and serve food at an institution-run restaurant or establishment. Other programs are engaged in the research side of agriculture including genetics of food and technological advances. SUNY representatives can help match students through internships to farms and agriculture-related businesses.

• **Meet with Alfred State College to identify potential partnership opportunities.**
  As outlined in the STREDC’s Strategic Plan, a goal is to increase the number of students educated in the region who then remain in the region to start companies or join startups. Alfred State College has three associate degree programs in the applied sciences focused on agricultural business and agricultural and veterinary technology. This is a unique opportunity for local establishments to partner with the college to explore opportunities focused on the business side of farming and agriculture.

• **Meet with the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and representatives of the Agribusiness and Economic Development Program at Cornell University to identify partnership opportunities.**
  Cornell University’s program in agriculture and economic development specifically focuses on agribusinesses, agricultural marketing and business management particularly in upstate NY. This unique resource could help inform the County’s agricultural economic strategies and policies. The County should explore options to coordinate with the program staff and students to determine how the program may help meet the County’s needs.
OBJECTIVE 3: FOSTER COLLABORATION BETWEEN GOVERNMENT, NOT-FOR-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS AND FARMERS/AGRIBUSINESSES.

STRATEGIES

- **Continue to work closely and support Cornell Cooperative Extension.**
  As outlined in Section 1 of the plan, CCE is vital resource that provides educational programs and university-based resources in five key areas including agriculture and food systems. It will be important for the County to continue to build relationships with the organization to ensure these resources remain available and accessible to the community.

  CCE can also provide technical assistance and education to farmers preparing for GAP audits, as well as for farmers seeking to implement new food safety measures. CCE should continue to work with area farmers to review GAP procedures, complete the required documentation, and develop a food safety plan for their produce that meets GAP requirements.

- **Continue to work with NYSDAM, IDA, SCCVB, and the Farm Bureau to achieve and implement the actions within this plan.**
  CCE, the IDA, SCCVB, the Farm Bureau, and area chambers of commerce are critical to the continual success, stability and growth of local agriculture. These organizations are an important resource for farmers; they serve as an advocate for the farming community, engage in agriculture education and outreach with the greater community, help farmers grow their operations, and develop tools for best management practices. They can further help farmers interpret local and Federal laws and regulations that may impact future farming activities such as the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) requirements established by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

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**Chesapeake Bay Watershed**

One challenge facing farmers in Steuben County is the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) restrictions established by the Federal Environmental Protection Agency. The Clean Water Act requires a TMDL when a waterbody is identified as having significant amounts of one or more pollutants in it.

In 2010, the EPA established the Chesapeake Bay TMDL in response to continued poor water quality in the Bay and its tidal tributaries. The Watershed encompasses 64,000 square miles and includes six states. A TMDL sets pollution limits necessary to meet water quality standards in the Bay and divides that total up among all parties releasing that pollutant to water. This TMDL includes limits of 185.0 million pounds of nitrogen (25% reduction), 12.5 million pounds of phosphorus (24% reduction), and 6.45 billion pounds of sediment (20% reduction) per year.

Nearly 85% of Steuben County is in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. With opportunities to convert vacant land back into active agriculture for grazing, grass and biomass production, the community has the opportunity to expand farming efforts that do not contribute to the TMDL. The County, area farmers and the Soil and Water Conservation District will need to work together to identify ways to help meet and reduce the TMDL to limit future regulation.

For more information on the TMDL, visit: http://www.epa.gov/chesapeakebaytmdl

The Chesapeake Bay Watershed encompasses 64,000 square miles, 6 states and is home to over 17 million people.

(Map: http://nrcs.gov)
OBJECTIVE 4: ESTABLISH A CLEARINGHOUSE OF INFORMATION ABOUT FUNDING RESOURCES FOR FARMERS, BUSINESSES AND MUNICIPALITIES.

STRATEGIES

• **Provide technical assistance for individuals seeking grant monies to support agriculture-based projects and initiatives.**
  In partnership with CCE and the IDA, the County should develop a technical assistance program to help agribusinesses, farmers and related industries to identify and apply for local, state and Federal funding. This program could include a series of funding presentations, workshops and one-on-one meetings with interested parties.

• **Develop an online database of local, regional, state, Federal and private funding resources.**
  Navigating the local, state and Federal funding process can be difficult. The County should work with local and regional representatives (IDA, STREDC, NYSDAM, DEC, etc.) to establish an online database of new and recurring funding opportunities. This one-stop shop will help businesses, organizations and individuals better prepare for upcoming grant opportunities.

• **Continue to monitor the Southern Tier Regional Economic Development Council plan and priorities to align recommendations from this plan with future funding requests.**
  The STREDC Strategic Plan outlines the region’s approach to economic growth. Included in the plan are a series of strategies and action plans that project- and industry-specific. It is important for the County to review the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan annually to ensure consistency with STREDC’s strategies. This will make the County competitive for grant funding which is necessary to implement many of the goals and objectives outlined in this plan.
OBJECTIVE 5: PROVIDE FARMERS WITH ACCESS TO THE TOOLS AND INFORMATION NEEDED TO RUN A SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS.

STRATEGIES

• Establish a website that offers resources and access to key topics associated with managing a successful agricultural enterprise (regulations, zoning, labor, business plans, etc.)
Developing a strong business plan is critical to the long-term viability of farms of all sizes. The County and CCE could coordinate efforts to develop a website specifically for agriculture-related items related to municipal services (e.g. permitting) and funding. This resource will help area farmers identify grant opportunities such as the Farmland Protection Implementation Grants, assist with interpreting zoning and local laws, and help with the permitting process.

• Engage with business support organizations and identify opportunities for farmers to meet with local representatives about assistance they can provide.
The County should work with small business organizations that provide services targeted to farmers. This would include training, guides, professional development, online resources and events. The County should collaborate with CCE to market and promote the available resources through the County’s website, print material, and events.

• Coordinate educational programs and develop materials specific to farmland succession planning.
The STREDC is committed to increasing the sustainability of agriculture and forestry ventures. Future funding will support new farm startups and transfers to the next generation of farmers. The County and IDA should seek these funding opportunities to help with succession planning. Established by the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Cornell University, NY FarmNet is a resource developed specifically for farm families facing challenges with their business. A sister program, NY FarmLink, specifically focuses on generational and succession planning by providing educational resources and consulting to help plan for the transfer of farms. Together, these resources can help farmers develop succession plans so that their farms can continue to be productive for the next generation. The County should coordinate with CCE and Cornell University to develop succession planning programs specific to the County.
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Section 4. Implementation Strategy

4.1 Introduction and Overview

Section 3.3 summarizes the strategies identified within the Farmland Protection Plan, providing a framework and direction for future decision-making and activities. The objectives and implementation activities are organized under the same five overarching goals as outlined in Section 3. Implementation steps are classified as capital projects, regulatory/policy actions, plans/study and/or other. For each implementation strategy a timeframe for completion is identified as one of the following:

- **S**: Short-term (0-3 year activities)
- **M**: Medium-term (4-6 year activities)
- **L**: Long-term (7+ years)
- **O**: On-going (implementation activity is underway/ongoing)

Responsibilities for implementation are also identified to assist agencies and organizations in understanding their role in contributing to the successful implementation of the Farmland Protection Plan. The names of the agencies and organizations are abbreviated in the Implementation Tables, as follows:

- **IDA**: Industrial Development Agency
- **CCE**: Cornell Cooperative Extension of Steuben County
- **STREDC**: Southern Tier Regional Economic Development Council
- **FB**: Farm Bureau
- **CVB**: Steuben County Conference and Visitors Bureau
- **LM**: Local Municipality (Town/Village)
- **CTY**: Steuben County
- **FWG**: Farmers Working Group
- **ADS**: Agriculture Development Specialist
- **NOFA**: Northeast Organic Farm Association of New York

Potential funding resources to assist with implementation are also identified and discussed further in Section 4.3.
4.2 Implementation Tables

Implementation tables for each goal area are identified on the following pages:
# Goal 1: Economic Development Implementation Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Strategy</th>
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</table>
| 1 | Identify value-added infrastructure and investments that support existing farms and farm products. | Develop a regional commercial kitchen and packaging facility.  
Study the feasibility and composition of a local food enterprise center.  
Attract a USDA-approved slaughter and meat processing facility. |
| 2 | Connect consumers directly to farmers.                                    | Market and promote Steuben County farm product outlets.  
Identify supply requirements of local supermarkets that may represent barriers to increased opportunities for retailing local produce and meats.  
Expand current efforts to connect institutions to local farmers by identifying and matching institutional needs to farmer’s production capacity.  
Establish a farmers market collaborative. |
| 3 | Support the local dairy industry.                                        | Identify innovative funding resources to support investment in specialty dairy infrastructure. |
| 4 | Ensure adequate support services are in place to address the needs of farmers. | Complete a gap analysis to identify whether any additional services, such as machine repair or veterinary services, are missing in the County.  
As needs are determined, recruit agricultural support businesses to fill identified gaps.  
Increase farmer and agri-business access to the Southern Tier Network, the region’s broadband telecommunications infrastructure. |
| 5 | Encourage the use of renewable resources on agricultural lands.          | Develop local wind and solar ordinances to encourage farmers to implement projects on portions of their agricultural land.  
Identify and promote programs and resources that provide incentives and assistance for implementing wind and solar programs.  
Identify and quantify the potential for on-farm resources, such as biomass from crops and residues or biogas from manure digestion, to help meet farm energy needs. |
## Goal 1: Economic Development Implementation Table

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<tr>
<th>Action Type</th>
<th>Capital</th>
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</table>

**Objectives:**
- Connect consumers directly to farmers.
- Develop local wind and solar ordinances to encourage farmers to implement projects on portions of their agricultural land.
- Identify and quantify the potential for on-farm resources, such as biomass from crops and residues or biogas from manure digestion, to help meet farm energy needs.
- Ensure adequate support services are in place to address the needs of farmers.
- Encourage the use of renewable resources on agricultural lands.
- Support the local dairy industry.
- Complete a gap analysis to identify whether any additional services, such as machine repair or veterinary services, are missing in the County.
- As needs are determined, recruit agricultural support businesses to fill identified gaps.
- Increase farmer and agri-business access to the Southern Tier Network, the region’s broadband telecommunications infrastructure.
- Develop local wind and solar ordinances to encourage farmers to implement projects on portions of their agricultural land.
- Identify and promote programs and resources that provide incentives and assistance for implementing wind and solar programs.
- Identify new and emerging niche markets, such as organic meat and craft brewing, and help farmers transition into these areas.
- Study the feasibility and composition of a local food enterprise center.
- Attract a USDA-approved slaughter and meat processing facility.
- Market and promote Steuben County farm product outlets.
- Identify supply requirements of local supermarkets that may represent barriers to increased opportunities for retailing local produce and meats.
- Establish a farmers market collaborative.
- Identifying value-added infrastructure and investments that support existing farms and farm products.
Goal 2: Agribusiness Development Implementation Table

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<th>Objectives</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Attract new projects that leverage existing assets and support the development of value-added manufacturing of agricultural products.</td>
<td>Identify potential business opportunities that can take advantage of the County’s surplus commercial crops. Identify potential projects stemming from the State’s targeted initiatives to grow the craft brewery industry and implement the Farm Brewery Act.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Explore options to develop an Agricultural Development Specialist position.</td>
<td>Identify the appropriate organization for this person to reside (IDA, County Planning, CCE). Determine roles and responsibilities for the position, as well as long-term funding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Capitalize on the County’s underutilized woodlands and grasslands.</td>
<td>Work with farmers and rural landowners to identify the economic potential of woodland management for timber products. Identify and quantify the potential for perennial grasses and forest residues as feedstock for local biomass energy systems. Determine feasibility of attracting / developing a biomass processing plant to manufacture densified fuel for commercial heat, cooling or power systems.</td>
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### Goal 2: Agribusiness Development Implementation Table

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Goal 3: Farmland Preservation Implementation Table

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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Retain viable farmland for long-term agricultural use.</td>
<td>Identify prime farmlands eligible for New York State PDR program (Farmland Implementation Grant Program)</td>
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<td>Support municipalities in the establishment of local Transfer of Development Rights program.</td>
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<td>Support municipalities’ efforts to establish local “Lease of Development Rights” programs.</td>
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<td>Encourage landowners to donate conservation easements to a land trust.</td>
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<td>Encourage new and emerging farmers through the creation of a formalized program, such as the Northeast Beginning Farmers portal.</td>
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<td>Work with the Cornell Small Farms Program to encourage and support small farms in Steuben County.</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Update municipal zoning laws and ordinances to ensure they are supportive of the agricultural industry.</td>
<td>Support municipalities in their efforts to update municipal zoning laws and ordinances including the definitions, uses, subdivision laws / conservation subdivisions, incentive zoning, and buffer laws.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Ensure the farming community has continual representation in local planning decisions.</td>
<td>Encourage farmers to volunteer on their local planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals.</td>
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<td>Support municipalities as they develop Comprehensive Plans.</td>
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<td>Provide information and training to local officials about the NYS Agricultural Districts Program and its effect on local planning and zoning decisions.</td>
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### Goal 4: Agri-Tourism Implementation Table

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Create a unique brand for locally produced agriculture products and businesses.</td>
<td>Create an Agricultural specific logo and marketing materials that ties into the Made in Corning and Southern Finger Lakes brand.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Increase public understanding and support of agriculture in the community.</td>
<td>Establish and implement a “Buy Local” marketing campaign.</td>
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<td>Continue to support the development and ongoing operations of new and existing County farmers’ markets. Expand the “Meat Suite” virtual market concept to include other vendors and products.</td>
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<td>Expand the calendar of annual events focused on agriculture to include Eat Local Week and consider making Steuben County Farm-City Day an annual, rather than biannual event.</td>
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<td>Update and publish the Steuben County Farm Product Guide annually or biannually to maintain current consumer information on locally available farm products and outlets.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Capitalize on the existing regional tourism base to attract visitors to existing agribusiness attractions.</td>
<td>Work with the Steuben County Conference and Visitors Bureau to identify marketing and promotional strategies that highlight agribusinesses, including the development of unique and specialty experiences, such as on-farm and thematic tours.</td>
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<td>Coordinate a working group of agribusiness providers interested in “group” marketing / promotion opportunities.</td>
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<td>Coordinate with existing destinations, such as the Corning Museum of Glass, to discuss opportunities for collaborative marketing.</td>
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<td>Increase exposure to farming activities along the proposed Route 417/36 Scenic Byway.</td>
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<td>Consider opportunities for agribusiness wayfinding signage consistent with local branding efforts to create a cohesive and easily identifiable experience.</td>
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<td>Identify an appropriate location in the County for a local wine and food pavilion to host special events and promote local products.</td>
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## Goal 4: Agri-Tourism Implementation Table

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<th>Capital</th>
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Goal 5: Education, Outreach and Partnerships

Implementation Table

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<th>#</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Integrate agriculture as part of the local school curriculum.</td>
<td>Coordinate with the local school districts to offer on-farm experiences for school-age children.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Invite farmers to speak at schools as part of the social studies and/or health curriculum.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Establish a mentor program for high school students that includes in-class activities and on-farm experiences.</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Establish relationships with regional colleges and universities to facilitate mutually beneficial ventures.</td>
<td>Meet with SUNY representatives to better understand their current agriculture-related research and development efforts.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Meet with Alfred State College to identify potential partnership opportunities.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Meet with the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and representatives of the Agribusiness and Economic Development Program at Cornell University to identify partnership opportunities.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Foster collaboration between government, not-for-profit organizations and farmers/agribusinesses.</td>
<td>Continue to work closely and support Cornell Cooperative Extension.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Continue to work with NYSDAM, Steuben County IDA, the Visitors Bureau, and the Farm Bureau to achieve and implement the actions within this plan.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Establish a clearinghouse of information of funding resources for farmers, businesses and municipalities.</td>
<td>Provide technical assistance for individuals seeking grant moneys to support agriculture-based projects and initiatives.</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Develop an online database of local, regional, state, Federal and private funding resources.</td>
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<td>Continue to monitor the Southern Tier Regional Economic Development Council plan and priorities to align recommendations from this plan with future funding requests.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Provide farmers with access to the tools and information needed to run a successful business.</td>
<td>Establish a website that offers resources and access to key topics associated with managing a successful agricultural enterprise (regulations, zoning, labor, business plans, etc.)</td>
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<td>Engage with business support organizations and identify opportunities for farmers to meet with local representatives about assistance they can provide.</td>
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<td>Coordinate educational programs and develop materials specific to farmland succession planning.</td>
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### Goal 5: Education, Outreach and Partnerships

**Implementation Table**

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4.3 Potential Funding Resources

Implementation of the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan will be driven, in part, by the availability of funding resources. Potential funding resources noted in Section 4.2, are described in further detail below.

LOCAL

Regional Economic Development and Energy Corporation (REDEC)

REDEC and the REDEC Relending Corporation (RRC) provide a variety of loan programs to assist small business located in Chemung, Schuyler and Steuben Counties. The programs vary based on eligible uses and the maximum amount of funding which can be requested. The loan programs available include a revolving loan program (50% of a total project cost, up to $100,000; whichever is less), a micro loan program (50% of total project cost, up to $20,000; whichever is less), and the SBA (small business) micro loan program which has varying terms based on project criteria.
Website: http://www.redec.us/

Southern Tier Regional Economic Development Council (STREDC)

Rural Initiative Program
This program offers a regional low-interest loan fund to reduce financial risk and increase sustainability of agriculture and forestry ventures and to encourage investment and job creation. The program will provide gap financing for priority activities, including development and promotion of value-added agricultural products, development of new markets, renewable energy initiatives, increased land productivity, applications of new technologies, and growth in net agricultural revenue. Eligible applicants include new and existing businesses within the Region.
Website: http://regionalcouncils.ny.gov/content/southern-tier

Genesee Valley Regional Market Authority (GVRMA)

Annually, the GVRMA in partnership with NYSDAM funds the development of agriculture and agriculture-related businesses in a nine county region, including Steuben County. Funding in FY2015 included over $1.4 million in projects related to the research, promotion and development of NY’s agricultural economy. Projects included a wine and culinary center, maple production, and research development at Cornell’s New York State Agricultural Experiment Station. Eligible projects will typically focus on the promotion and marketing of eligible agricultural products; will increase production or processing of eligible agricultural products or increase the profitability of producers of eligible agricultural products; and improve systems of production, storage, distribution and marketing, and in reach advantageous markets.
Website: http://www.geneseevalleyregionalmarketauthority.com

Municipal

Implementing the projects outlined in the plan may require municipal funding. Local, state and Federal grants often require a local match which can be fulfilled through cash and in-kind / staff matches. Each municipality will need to determine priority projects and budget as necessary.
STATE

Consolidated Funding Application (CFA)

CFA funding is allows applicants to apply to 33 programs and 12 State agencies for economic development projects. Projects are funded in the areas of community development, direct assistance to businesses and other organizations, energy, environmental improvements, sustainability, education and workforce development, low-cost financing, and waterfront revitalization. Programs are subject to change annually as funding becomes available.
Website: https://apps.cio.ny.gov/apps/cfa/

Southern Tier Agricultural Economic Development Initiative (2015)

Governor Cuomo has made available $30 million for agricultural economic development in the Southern Tier. This initiative includes funding for agricultural production on farms as well as managing environmental resources. $5 million of the fund is specifically allocated for agricultural economic development projects such as farmers’ mark expansions and agribusiness job creation. Projects may receive up to $100,000 which will fund up to 75% of the project. Applicants are responsible for the remaining 25% of the total cost of the project. Eligible projects may include construction, irrigation, drainage, environmental enhancements, fencing, trellis systems and greenhouses.

New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets (NYSDAM)

Farmland Protection Implementation Grant
The state-funded grants allows for the purchase of agricultural conservation easements (development rights) to permanently restrict development and protect valuable agricultural lands. With the approval of the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan, municipalities within the County are eligible to apply for these funds. The State provides 75% of the cost to acquire the easement and a 25% match is required from the landowner or local government.
Website: http://www.agriculture.ny.gov/RFPS.html

Funding for Organic Certification
This program reimburses producers for a portion of their annual organic certification renewal costs. Producers can apply on an annual bases. The program will reimburse 75% of the costs, with a maximum of $750.00.
Website: http://www.ams.usda.gov

FreshConnect Program
This grant was developed to help connect more people to fresh food in areas with limited supermarkets and underserved areas. The program supports new farmers’ markets and existing markets, youth markets, as well as the delivery of farm products to low-income housing facilities in urban and rural areas. There are five initiatives design to meet the needs of the different communities:
1. FreshConnect Farmers’ Market Program- municipalities and non-profits can apply for up to $10,000 for new and existing farmers’ markets.

2. FreshConnect Youth Market Program- funding to support markets that are youth-staffed and participate in the planning and running of the market.

3. FreshConnect Food Box Program- funding to support pilot projects that will enable low-income communities to purchase local food in pre-packed boxes with a flexible payment schedule.

4. FreshConnect Checks- a rebate program that encourages low-income households eligible for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to use benefits at participating markets.

5. Microgrants for Capital Improvement Projects- grants awarded up to $2,500 for capital improvements at farmers’ markets to improve access to farm products.

Website: http://freshconnect.ny.gov/content/about-freshconnect

**New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA)**

**Agricultural Energy Efficiency Program**

NYSERDA provides funding for farm waste management (biogas); improved energy efficiency; solar and wind generation; and innovative business practices for energy conservation, alternative energy, and energy use. This program was developed to identify and implement electric and natural gas energy efficiency measures for eligible farms. NYSERDA will assign a Flex Tech consultant to perform an energy audit at no cost up to $2,500. Project implementation funding is available up to 75% of the project cost capped at $250,000. The farm must contribute 25% of the cash match.

Website: http://www.nyserda.ny.gov/All-Programs/Programs/Agriculture-Energy-Efficiency

**Aerobic Digester Gas-to-Electricity Program**

This program provides financial incentives to support the purchase, installation and operation of anaerobic digesters. Funding is available for up to $2 million per project (FY 2015).

Website: www.nyserda.ny.gov

**Empire State Development (ESD) / NYSDAM New Farmers Grant fund**

Empire State Development, in consultation with the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, will administer the $614,000 fund, which will provide grants from $15,000 to up to $50,000 for eligible early stage farmers who substantially and materially participate in the production of an agricultural product on a commercial farm operation within New York. Funds can be used for up to 50 percent of project costs including, but not limited to: lease or purchase of farm machinery and equipment; construction or expansion of farm buildings or systems; and, purchase of supplies such as root stock, seed, and fertilizer. Beginning farmers must not have produced an agricultural product, as defined in the AML, for more than ten consecutive years prior to application.

Website: http://esd.ny.gov/BusinessPrograms/NewFarmersGrantFund.html

**Northeast Region Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program (SARE) Farmer Grant Program**

The Northeast Region Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program (SARE) encourages commercial farmers in the northeast who want to explore innovative sustainable practices on their farms to apply for this grant. The Farmer Grant program allows farmers and growers to conduct experiments, try new approaches, and test emerging ideas about agricultural sustainability. The emphasis is on new ideas that advance good stewardship, improve farm profitability, and strengthen rural communities.

Website: http://www.nesare.org/Grants/Get-a-Grant/Farmer-Grant
**FEDERAL**

**Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC)**

This program is a Federal-state-local partnership that has provided millions to the Southern Tier region. Funded projects will relate to the key goals for the region including skills and knowledge in the 21st century, physical infrastructure for self-sustaining economic development, capacity to improve communities, dynamic local economies, and affordable, quality health care. Grants up to $150,000 are available, with preference for smaller projects. All grants require a 50% match in cash or eligible in-kind services.

Website: http://www.arc.gov/grants

**United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)**

**USDA/National Institute of Food and Agriculture Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program**

The USDA in partnership with the NIFA has developed a program in response to the projected decrease in the number of farmers through 2018 and the recognized need for education and training to help encourage and support the next generation of farmers. This program provides grants to community-based organizations, such as Cornell Cooperative Extension, for education, mentoring, and technical assistance initiatives for beginning farmers. The Agriculture Act of 2014 provided an additional $20 million per year for 2014 through 2018.

Website: http://nifa.usda.gov/program/beginning-farmer-and-rancher-development-program

**USDA-National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Farm and Ranch Land Protection Program**

This program provides matching funds to help purchase development rights to keep productive farm and ranchland in agricultural uses. Working through existing programs, USDA partners with local governments and non-governmental organizations, such as Steuben County and Cornell Cooperative Extension, to acquire conservation easements or other interests in land from landowners. The USDA provides up to 50% of the fair market easement value of the conservation easement.

Website: http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/easements/acep/

**USDA Rural Business Cooperative Service – Value Added Agricultural Product Market Development Grant Program**

This grant encourages producers of commodities to refine products to increase their value – for feasibility studies, business and marketing plans, studies to establish a new venture, and working capital for established ventures with a business plan. Planning grants for FY 2015 are available up to $75,000 and working capital grants up to $200,000. A 50% match (of total project costs) is required. Independent producers, agricultural producer groups, farmer- or rancher-cooperatives, and majority-controlled producer-based business ventures are eligible to apply for the program.

Website: http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/value-added-producer-grants

**USDA Farm Service Agency- Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)**

The Conservation Reserve Program is a voluntary program for agricultural landowners. Through this program, farmers can receive annual rental payments and cost-share assistance in exchange for removing environmentally sensitive land from agricultural production and plant species that will improve environmental health and quality. Contracts are typically 10-15 years in length and funding amounts vary. The long-term goal of the program is to re-establish valuable land cover to help improve water quality, prevent soil erosion, and reduce loss of wildlife habitat.

Website: http://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/conservation-programs/index
PRIVATE & NON-PROFILE

Food Animal Concerns Trust (FACT)- Fund-A-Farmer Project

This grant provides funds to qualifying livestock and poultry farmers who wish to improve their farm animal welfare. The projects are specifically aimed at changing on-farm management practices related to animal welfare and/or improve marketing of humane products. Grants are capped at $2,500 and are awarded on an annual basis.

Website: https://www.fundafarmer.org/apply-for-grant/grant-guidelines/
References

i. The source of this data is a proprietary data source called EMSI, Int. EMSI data are compiled from several sources, including the U.S. Census Bureau and U.S. Departments of Health and Labor using specialized proprietary processes and models to estimate current statistics and predict future trends. Visit www.economicmodeling.com for additional information.

ii. Technically this sector is known as “Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting”, for purposes of this analysis the word farming is added to distinguish between on-farm operations and agriculture-related industries.

iii. Due to different methods for reporting employment on farms, EMSI data typically does not capture all of the farm related employment. For this report, the EMSI data has been supplemented by the 2012 Agriculture Census.


Agricultural & Farmland Protection Plan