Agricultural Economic Development and Farmland Protection in Steuben County, NY

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Steuben County Strengths

- More than $187 million in gross farm sales in 2012
- Agriculture multiplier effect is about 3 to 1.
- Diversity – dairy, wineries, others
- Value-added- Kraft, Crowley
- More than 400,000 acres of farmland
- Younger than average farmers
Challenges Farmers Face

- Profitability - Be the low cost producer or find a niche market
- Passing the Farm to the Next Generation
- Resisting the Temptation to sell land for development
Agricultural Economic Development

- Include agriculture in County economic development efforts
- Agriculture committee as part of County Chamber of Commerce
- Financing – Banks, Farm Credit, State of NY, USDA grants, Cornell Cooperative Extension
Agricultural Economic Development

- Buy Fresh-Buy Local Campaign (know your farmer)
- Direct Sales to Consumers (farmers markets, CSAs)
- Direct Sales to Restaurants
- Direct Sales to Institutions (schools and hospitals)
- Food hubs: e.g. Local Food Hub, Charlottesville, VA
- Incubators: Intervale, Burlington, VT example
- Branding – Marketing – Yates Co. Siggi’s
- Value-added – food processing
- Agri-tourism
Access fresher goods, meet your local farmers, and support the local economy.
Representative Implementation Examples

- Genesee County Agribusiness Park
- Eden Valley Growers, Erie County
- The Technology Farm, Ontario County
- Farm to Table Program, Yates County
Food Hub

From Farm to Plate

- vegetables
- fruit
- pastured meats
- fresh eggs
- value-added & specialty items

Local Supply

Local Food Hub

Local Demand

- retailers
- hospitals
- restaurants
- schools
- food banks
- nursing homes
Food Hub

Several Potential Models

Private, For-Profit
Mad River Food Hub
Mad River Valley, VT

Private, Non-Profit
Local Food Hub
Charlottesville, VA

Public-Private Partnership
Fifth Season Cooperative
Vernon County, WI
Farming is central to the region’s heritage and future.

Certify farm products as locally grown to support the county’s farms and local food economy.
Survey Results

Consumers are willing to travel far distances (some up to an hour) to buy directly from farmers or for specialty items like meat and u-pick berries/apples.

Most farmers are willing to travel 30 miles to vend at a farmers’ market.
Survey Results

To increase purchasing/consumption of local foods, consumers would like to see more farmers markets with convenient times and more local food selections at restaurants and grocery stores.
Survey Results

There is unmet demand in the county for locally produced fruits, maple syrup, and free-range/grass fed meats and poultry.
Survey Results

What gaps in the agricultural industry need to be filled to better support your business?

- Processing: 36%
- Packaging: 12%
- Distribution: 33%
- Marketing: 55%
- Access to Markets: 45%
- Support with Certification: 18%
New York Agricultural Economic Development

- Madison County, NY – revolving loan fund for agriculture
- Adirondack Grazers Cooperative
- Slaughter House
All USDA-approved livestock processing currently occurs outside of the county, resulting in long waiting lists and lengthy drive time for farmers.
Creation of new value-added products, increased profitability for farmers expanding into processing, and additional retail outlets for farm goods.
GOAL 1: Support local farmers and entrepreneurs in their efforts to create value-added farm goods that strengthen the county’s agricultural industries.
GOAL 2: Encourage the development and expansion of industries that capitalize on the county’s existing and potential agricultural resources.
GOAL 3: Promote Steuben County as an agritourism destination by marketing its locally grown wine, beer, food, and active agricultural businesses.
GOAL 4: Ensure that the county’s farmland remains available and productive for future farmers.
Draft Goals

**GOAL 5:** Capitalize on the growing local food movement by promoting the processing, marketing, and distribution of Steuben County farm goods.
Big Picture

- Climate Change – decreasing fruit and vegetable production from California
- Hops and Barley – the spread of microbreweries
- Natural gas
- Second homes, camp sites, hunting
Goals of Farmland Protection Programs

- Maintain a critical mass of farms and farmland
- Maintain affordable land prices for farming
- Reasonable cost in comparison to benefits
- Sustained public and political support
Farmland Protection Techniques

- Right to Farm Laws NY, Steuben County, Towns
- Agricultural Districts
- Town Comprehensive Plan
- Agricultural Zoning
- Purchase of Development Rights (PDR)
Agricultural Zoning Options

Agricultural Zones and Permitted Development

100-Acre Farm
Residential Lots
Large Lot Agricultural Zoning (1 lot/25 acres)
Area-based Allocation Agricultural Zoning (1 dwelling/25 acres)
Rural Cluster 1 acre minimum lot size 60% Open Space Preserved
Sale of Development Rights Example

- 250 acre Farm
  - $750,000 Appraised Fair Market Value
  - $500,000 Appraised Value Restricted to Farming and Open Space
  - $250,000 Appraised Development Rights Value and Cash Paid to Farmer
PDR Financing

- County Funds
- State of New York Funds
- Land Trust Funds
- Federal Agricultural Land Easement Program
Balance
Cooperation
Commitment