Town of Ancram

Columbia County, New York

Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan

Adopted May 2011

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations Used in Plan

Ag – Agriculture
AAC – Agriculture Advisory Council
AFPB – Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board
AML – Agriculture and Markets Law
BOCES – Board of Cooperative Education Services
CAC – Conservation Advisory Council
CAFO – Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation
CCE – Cornell Cooperative Extension
CLC – Columbia Land Conservancy
CSA – Community Supported Agriculture
FFA – Future Farmers of America
IDA – Industrial Development Agency
LDR – Lease of Development Rights
LEED – Leaders in Energy and Environmental Design
LESA – Land Evaluation and Site Assessment
NYS DAM – New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets
NYS DEC – New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
NYSERDA – New York State Energy Research and Development Agency
PDR, TDR – Purchase/Transfer of Development Rights
USDA – United States Department of Agriculture
ZRC – Zoning Revisions Committee

Agriculture & Farmland Protection Plan
Summary

The Town of Ancram Agriculture & Farmland Protection Plan, an addendum to the Comprehensive Plan, is designed to help ensure that long-term:

- Ancram's farms become more profitable and productive, and
- farmlands are preserved for active farm uses.

This Plan provides a comprehensive analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats facing agriculture in Ancram. In order to address the issues, the Plan outlines specific goals to be reached by 2030:

- establish Ancram as an attractive place for new and expanded farm ventures,
- preserve farmlands with "no net loss" of acreage,
- build a community that is supportive of our farmers,
- create opportunities for new or expanded local markets, and
- partner with agencies and organizations to reach these goals.

Agriculture plays an important, highly valued role in Ancram. It is the major land use, 62% of the acreage, a major employer, and contributes positively to the region's economy, quality of life, open spaces, and wildlife habitats.

In addition, agriculture helps keep *everyone's* real property taxes lower because open spaces, such as farmland, generate greater municipal tax revenue than the value of services required by these lands. *(Source: NYS Controller's Report March 2010.)* Or as some say, "Cows don't go to school!"

This Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan identifies serious challenges for Ancram's farmers going forward:

- decreased land availability,
- low profitability,
- high property taxes & land prices,
- shortage of local labor,
- sufficient water quality & quantity,
- lack of processing facilities,
- lack of distribution networks
- an aging farm population.

Land availability. Over past decades, Ancram has lost farmland through a slow, steady conversion to individual residences on both large and small farm fields throughout the Town. Since our terrain is hilly and rocky, and because most fields are small, single residences, sited without concern for agriculture, can eliminate an entire field from production.

This trend pressures agriculture as farmlands become more fragmented, nuisance complaints by non-farm residents rise, and land values increase to the point where farmers can no longer afford to farm them.

The Town of Ancram committed to supporting agriculture when it adopted its Comprehensive Plan in April 2010. The Comp Plan recommends revising zoning to require 60% open space in major subdivisions. To bolster this, this A&FP Plan suggests that information about Ancram's support for agriculture and rural siting guidelines to preserve farmland and natural resources be provided to *all* building applicants. The Zoning Revisions Committee has already begun work on these and other important changes.

The "conservation subdivision technique" recommended in the Ancram Comprehensive Plan can help protect farmlands as illustrated below: (1)

Water. Ancram's farmers require an adequate supply of high quality ground and surface water to flourish. Most livestock farmers rely on wells, while ground water is vital for the irrigation needs of fruit and vegetable farmers. In 2008, a study of Ancram's ground water resource was conducted by the Rural Water Association, the findings and recommendations of which were adopted in the Comprehensive Plan. We extended that work by mapping our farmlands with aquifers and regions of hydrogeologic sensitivity, areas where the local geology and topology put water quality at greater risk. This Plan supports best farming practices for protecting water quality as outlined by the NYS Dept. of Ag & Markets (see p.26 and Appendix 12).

Improving profitability. The most reliable way to protect farmland is to operate profitable farms. Unfortunately, only 20% of our farmers said they were profitable in 2009, and 40% were just about breaking even. Several approaches can help on a case-by-case basis. Two are land-based:

- Leasing, rather than owning, the land, and
- Selling of development rights.

Another two are marketing-based:

- Consumer "branding" and better quality to justify higher prices, and
- Shortening the distribution chain by selling direct to the end consumer.

This plan recommends programs to assist in these four areas.

(1) From the Dutchess County Greenway Guide: Fitting Into the Landscape, Dutchess County Planning and Development, Poughkeepsie, NY and Randall G. Arendt, Conservation Design for Subdivisions: A Practical Guide to Creating Open Space Networks. 1996.

New farmer and new business development. Preserving our farmland, water resources, and improving profitability are only part of the solution. Our farm population is aging, and while agricultural jobs are available in Ancram, the younger generation is not as interested in farming as their parents. So, we need to attract new farmers to Ancram. At the same time, our current farms would have better opportunities with the addition of processing resources nearby and a better distribution infrastructure.

While recognizing challenges, this Plan also leverages opportunities. "Eat local" is a strong trend in the Hudson Valley. Ancram has good soils and a strong and varied farming experience. Finally, and importantly, 95% of Ancram residents highly value the role agriculture plays in the community.

This Plan offers strategies that the Town, Columbia County and NY State can use to enhance agriculture in Ancram:

- Integrate agriculture into local planning efforts with farm-friendly land use regulations,
- Develop a comprehensive agricultural economic development and promotion program for Ancram,
- Seek funding offered through state and federal agencies
- Coordinate and collaborate with agencies and organizations throughout the Hudson Valley.

Major Ancram initiatives include:

- Create a standing Agricultural Advisory Council to implement the various programs recommended, including developing funding.
- Develop a communications program to inform the Ancram townspeople about the role agriculture plays in the community's economy, culture, and quality of life.
- Increase the variety and accessibility of local farm products to residents with the proposed Ancram Market at the historic Simon's General Store.
- Develop options for local processing of fruits and vegetables to sustain a diversity of farm operations and support business development in Ancram.

History of Agricultural Planning In New York

New York State has had a long history of promoting and planning for agriculture. In 1971, the State introduced agricultural districts through Agriculture and Markets Law 25-aa. This program allows farmers to voluntarily commit land in special areas called agricultural districts that encourage and protect commercial farming. In return, agricultural districts provide farmers with protections and safeguards (such as the right-to-farm law) from outside intrusions.

Landowners may also be eligible for agricultural assessments to reduce the tax burden on farmlands (both inside and outside of agricultural districts).

In 1992, the State adopted the Agricultural Protection Act which strengthened farmers' right to farm, placed greater scrutiny on state projects that could negatively impact agriculture, and authorized development of county farmland protection plans. Article 25-aaa of this act helps to sustain the farm economy and promotes local initiatives to protect agriculture and farmland in New York State. This section authorized the creation of county Agriculture and Farmland Protection Boards (AFPB). These boards advise their county legislatures on actions that impact farms located in county agricultural districts.

County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Boards are authorized to:

- Advise their county legislature about agricultural districts
- Review notice of intent filings
- Make recommendations about proposed actions involving government acquisition of farmland in agricultural districts
- Request review of state agency regulations that affect farm operations within an agricultural district
- Review and endorse applications for New York Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) funding.

In 1994, New York State initiated funding for counties to develop agricultural strategic plans with a focus on education, agricultural development, and land protection. Columbia County does not currently have a county-wide agriculture and farmland protection plan but they have recently initiated a planning process to develop one.

Agriculture and Farmland Plans identify important county farmland, analyze the agricultural and environmental value of these farmlands, and highlight

threats to their agricultural use. They also describe activities, programs, and strategies to keep land in agriculture.

In 2006, State legislation modified Article 25-aaa to specifically authorize towns to develop agriculture and farmland protection plans (Section 324-a). The law requires that local plans include identification of land areas proposed to be protected, analysis of those lands related to their value to the agricultural economy and open space value, consequences of possible conversion, level of conversion pressure, and a description of actions intended to be used by the municipality to promote continued agricultural use.

Ancram applied for and received a grant in 2009 to help develop this plan which includes all these requirements.

Agriculture in Ancram: The Planning Approach

Role and Value

Agriculture and farmland protection were identified as among the most important issues in the Town of Ancram Comprehensive Plan (adopted April 2010). As part of that planning process, a survey was conducted and about 90% of the survey's 434 Ancram residents indicated that the Town should take an active role in encouraging agriculture:

Top four Issues identified by Ancram residents as important to them:	Important	Not important	No answer
Protecting ground water (for drinking)	94%	3%	3%
Protecting streams, ponds, wetlands	92%	4%	4%
Encouraging agriculture	90%	3%	7%
Maintaining open space	90%	4%	6%

The Comprehensive Plan recognizes that agriculture is the traditional economic base of the community and that it creates the "rural character" that everyone so highly values in Ancram. Agriculture is also recognized as being a primary contributor to open space and scenic environments.

Protecting ground and surface water are vital to agriculture as well as conservation interests. Agriculture is one of the major topics addressed in the Comprehensive Plan and its importance is evidenced by inclusion of an agricultural-related vision statement, goals, and sixteen major strategies.

Ancram's Planning Process

From November 2008 to the present, the Agriculture & Farmland Protection Planning Committee carried out the following steps:

1. Documented the current conditions of farms and farmland in Town. This included inventorying farms and farmland, developing a comprehensive set of maps of farms, farmland and environmental conditions related to agriculture, and analysis of this data.

2. Identified farmer and farmland owner attitudes towards agriculture through a survey, Ancram Farming Inventory 2009.

3. Identified trends and issues facing agriculture.

4. Identified needs and opportunities to promote agriculture in Ancram, and wrote a vision statement and a set of goals for agriculture.

5. Developed specific strategies to help the Town reach its agricultural vision and goals.

6. Developed a priority ranking system to identify farmlands that are critical to continuing agriculture in Ancram.

7. Developed maps to integrate findings from the 2008 Ancram Water Study with the specific farmlands ranked in this plan, highlighting areas with an abundance of groundwater and others with hydrogeologic sensitivity.

8. Developed a full plan document that meets the statutory requirements of Section 324-a of Article 25 aaa of the New York State Agriculture and Markets Law.

9. Conducted a public meeting to present the plan and hear comments from the public and farmers.

The Town and its residents recognize that agriculture plays several important roles in Ancram, specifically:

- Agriculture is the essence of the community: It has been a major part of our history and our identity and continues to be so.

- Agriculture contributes to the quality of life in Ancram.

- In the future, people will depend on the local farmland for local, healthy food as well as sources of fuel.

- By encouraging environmentally-responsible "best farming practices", agriculture can contribute to habitat diversity and environmental health.

- Agriculture has an important economic role. Farmers not only support local businesses, but they pay more in property taxes than they receive in public services. Decades of research done by the American Farmland Trust, and more recently, by the New York State Comptroller (See Resources, Appendix 7), show that open space, including farmlands tends to generate greater municipal tax revenue than the value of services required by these lands. *As excerpted from the Comptroller's Report:*

"A common misperception is that open space protection translates into a loss of revenues for municipalities. While replacement of farming or forestry land with residential, commercial or industrial uses can produce an increase of gross revenues, that increase can be more than offset by an increase in the demand for services. In addition, conversion of land from less intensive uses to more intensive uses can come at the expense of adjacent urbanized areas, as shown by a Brookings Institution study of upstate New York.

Studies have shown that open space demands fewer municipal services than lands in other use. Consequently, open space tends to generate greater municipal tax revenue than the value of services required by these lands. In comparison, lands in residential use typically consume services of greater value than the property tax revenues generated by these lands. Protected open space that remains on municipal tax rolls can produce a net profit for the municipality when the cost of services consumed by the property is compared with revenues generated.

Although the net revenue gain from residential development may be negative, residential development does increase land valuation for property tax purposes. This increased valuation may lead municipal officials to approve development projects that are either inconsistent with municipal planning or improperly sited. These decisions, when coupled with the higher demand for services generated by residential development, can actually increase tax rates and overall tax bills for individual properties.

A review of studies of the costs and benefits of open space protection conducted by the Office of the State Comptroller finds that:

- *Open space supports industries that generate billions of dollars in economic activity annually;*

- *Open space protection can be financially beneficial to local governments by reducing costs for public infrastructure and programs, lessening the need for property tax increases;*

- *Open space preservation can support regional economic growth; and*

- *Well-planned open space protection measures need not conflict with meeting other vital needs, such as economic development, municipal fiscal health and affordable housing.*

Decision-making that explicitly considers and values the positive economic effects of open space, as well as environmental and quality-of-life implications, will best serve a community's long-term interests."

-NY State Controller's Report, March 2010

Ancram's Definitions

Agriculture: Any land use activity that produces or supports food, crops, fiber, animal husbandry and products, timber, and other goods and services from the land.

Farm: Any agricultural land and operation that qualifies for a New York State Agricultural Assessment, or any land or operation, whether owned or rented by the farmer that produces or supports food, crops, or an agricultural product for sale in excess of the grower's family needs.

The Town of Ancram recognizes that there are different kinds of farms that are desirable to have:

> ***Commercial Farm:*** Farms that produce agricultural goods or services as a primary occupation and business.
>
> ***Small Farm:*** Farms that produce agricultural goods or services not as a primary occupation or business.

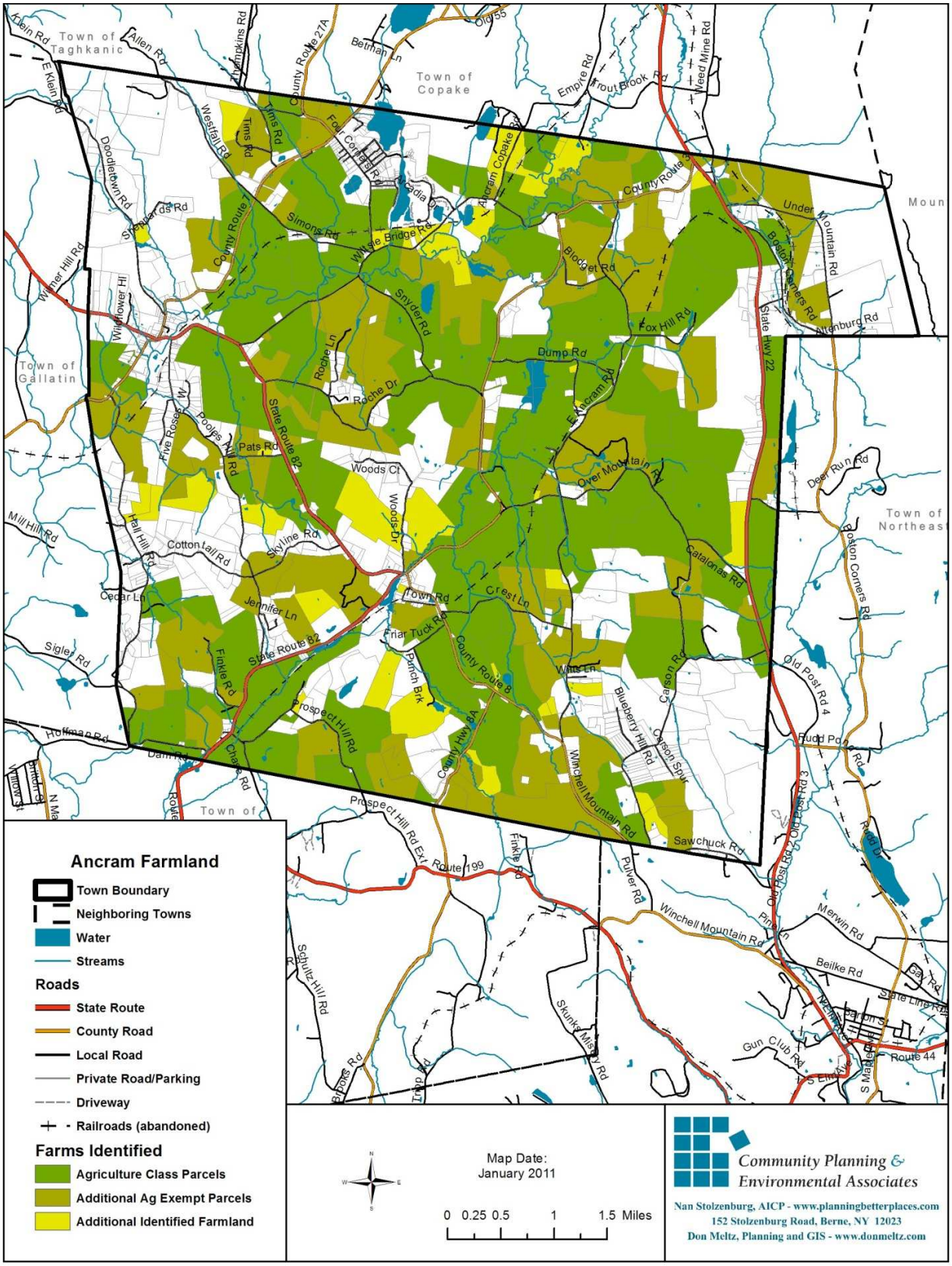
Prioritizing Farmland for Protection

Identifying critical or priority farmland in Town is one step to help Ancram attain its long-term vision. This Plan aids Ancram in answering questions such as:

- What lands are most appropriate to designate for long-term continuation in agricultural uses?
- Which farms should be given the highest priority for use of limited funding available for purchase of development rights?
- How can farmland protection programs be targeted for optimal results?

First, we had to identify the farmland, parcel by parcel. Unfortunately, no one classification system is adequate. Using GIS, we started with the parcels in the Agricultural Class, and then added parcels that have Agricultural Exemptions, but are not designated Agricultural Class. Finally, through the knowledge of committee members – all Ancram farmers - other parcels that were being farmed or could be farmed were added. All together, 217 parcels have been identified as "Ancram Farmland", accounting for 17,017 acres, 62% of Ancram's total acreage. Please see the map on the following page.

Map of Ancram Farmland



Once the Ancram farmlands had been identified parcel by parcel, an analytical assessment tool could be applied to help Ancram prioritize agricultural lands that should be protected from conversion to non-agricultural uses.

This tool, called **LESA, Land Evaluation & Site Assessment**, was developed by the United States Natural Resources Conservation Service and has a long history of use in New York and throughout the United States.

LESA is a systematic, objective rating system to evaluate farmland and provide a community-developed and unbiased method of identifying priority farmlands suitable for farmland protection programs. This helps local and state officials to make better decisions on where to target funds that may be available for such purposes if local landowners want to pursue farmland protection programs.

LESA is easily modified to take local conditions and needs into consideration.

How LESA was Carried Out in this Plan:

The LESA system was used to incorporate the most important factors determining how well a particular parcel may sustain continued agriculture.

The Ancram LESA establishes a variety of characteristics that the Town feels help define priority farmlands. Each characteristic is given points based on the actual features present on the land.

The major factors included here in Ancram were:

- soil quality,
- size of parcel, and whether it is currently being farmed,
- nearness to other farmed parcels,
- environmental resources, and
- development pressure.

The following table **"Criteria Used to Help Define Priority Farmland"** was developed by the Agriculture & Farmland Protection Plan Committee. The process followed was:

- First, each member individually developed his/her own points and rankings to prioritize farmlands.
- Second, these were discussed in several open meetings.
- Third, committee individuals made whatever changes they decided.
- Finally, all were averaged together to obtain the final points and rankings.

As a result, this table represents a community-based definition of the factors that determine the critical farmlands in Ancram and the importance of each.

Four major criteria were used. As the table illustrates, 70% of the weighting was given to key farming criteria:

- **Soils** and
- **Farm Resources**.

The remaining 30% was split between:

- **Development Pressure** and
- **Environmental Resources.**

Criteria Used to Help Define Priority Farmland	Weighting Between Criteria (Total = 100)	Weighting Within Criteria (Total = 100)	Weighting Within Features (Total = 15)
1. Soils Criteria	35		
a. Feature: Percent of parcel in prime soils		50	
>75% of parcel			6
50 to 74% of parcel			5
25% to 50% of parcel			4
b. Feature: Soils of Statewide Importance		50	
>75%			7
50 to 74% of parcel			4
25% to 50% of parcel			4
2. Farm Resource Criteria	35		
a. Feature: Size of parcel		40	
100+ acres			5
49.99 to 99.99 acres			4
24 to 49.99 acres			3
7 to 23.99 acres			2
< 7 acres			1
b. Feature: Compatibility of surrounding uses		20	
75%+ compatible within 500'			7
50 to 74%			5
25% to 49%			2
<24%			1
c. Feature: is land being farmed now?		40	
a 100 class parcel or Identified as farmland			15
3. Development Pressure Criteria	16		
a. Feature: Land in a NYS Ag District		12	
Yes it is.			15
b. Feature: dist. to major highway (State/Cty)		15	

Criteria Used to Help Define Priority Farmland	Weighting Between Criteria (Total = 100)	Weighting Within Criteria (Total = 100)	Weighting Within Features (Total = 15)
0 to 1/4 mile			6
1/4 to ½			5
> ½			4
c. Feature: Distance to a hamlet		18	
0 to 1/2 mile			3
1/2 to 1 1/2 mile			5
1 1/2 to 3 miles			7
d. Feature: Length of public road frontage		25	
>600 feet			8
300 to 600 feet			4
<300 feet			3
e. Feature: Proximity to Protected lands		30	
within 300 feet			7
within 600 feet			5
> 1/4 mile			3
4. Environmental Resources/ Other Public Values	14		
a. Yes, Wetlands exist on property		20	15
b. Yes, Streams/Stream Corridor exist (100')		22	15
c. Yes, feature is within Scenic Corridor Overlay		12	15
d. Yes, it is part of a critical habitat identified by Town, DEC, or Biodiversity Report		18	15
e. Yes, Floodplains exist			15
f. Yes, Known Historic Structure or Site		5	15
g. Yes, Ridgeline exists on site		8	15

December 2010, A&FPP Committee

Note: Farmlands may also hold other important wildlife habitat value, but there are no data to measure those at this time. The Town may consider other important values that a particular parcel of farmland may contribute to this feature.

Ancram Farmland Mapped with Priorities for Protection

The farmlands identified in the first step were put through the LESA GIS analysis and mapping software program, using the weighted criteria developed by the A&FPP Committee. Points and ranks were calculated for each parcel of land.

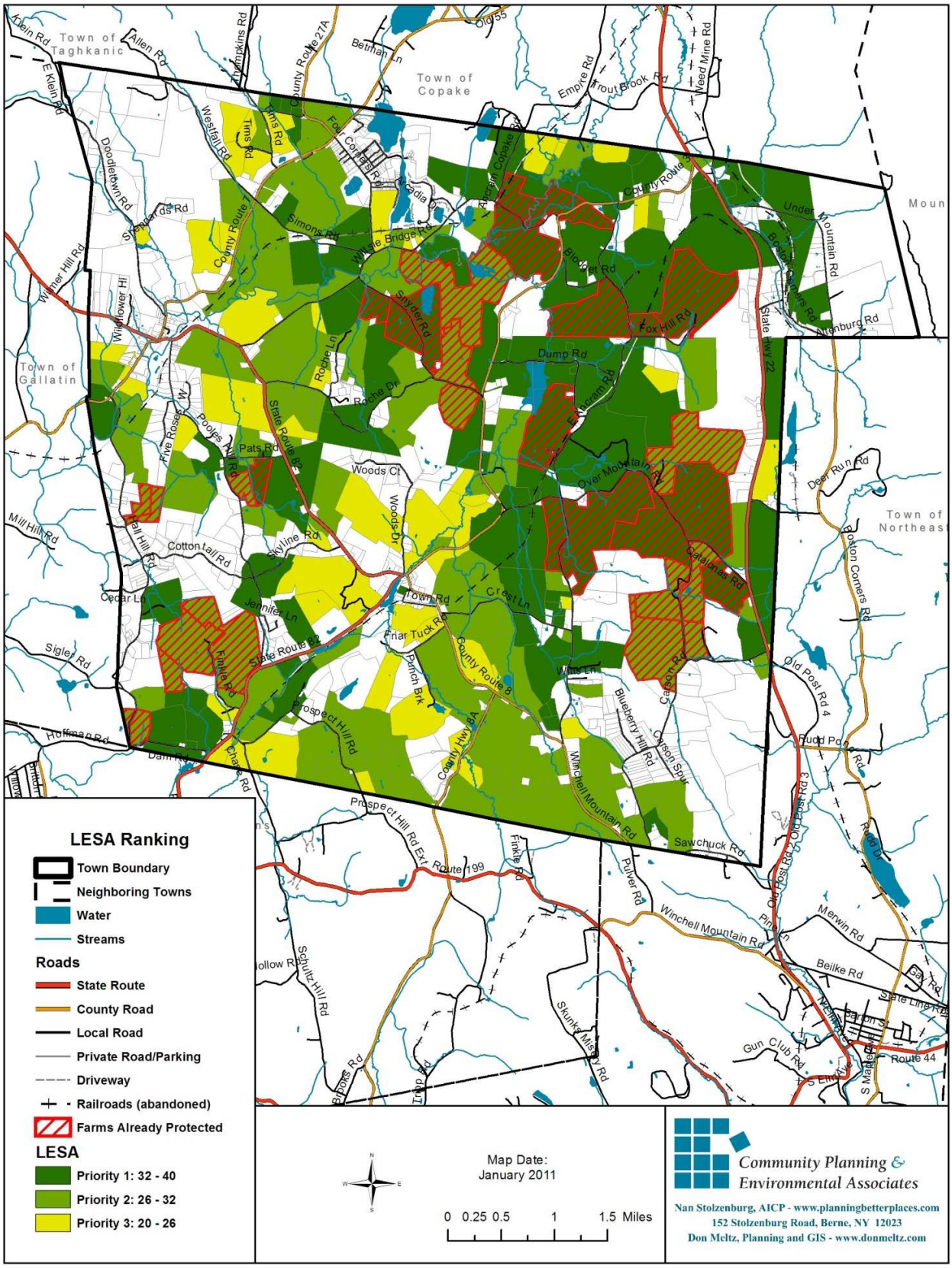
After the LESA scores were calculated for each parcel, the parcels were grouped according to their score into three different priorities for protection:

Priority 1: LESA score 32-40
Priority 2: LESA score 26-32
Priority 3: LESA score 20-26

All the parcels are displayed on the map "LESA Ranking", shown on page 19, facing. Each parcel is color-coded according to its Priority for Protection. In addition, the parcels that already protected through easements from the Columbia or Dutchess Land Conservancies were overlaid on the farmland to give a more precise view of the task that remains to be done.

Ancram Farmland is 17,017 acres, 62% of Ancram's total acreage. Twenty-two percent (22%) of the farmland is currently protected. The data are summarized below:

Highlights - LESA Analysis	Number of Parcels	Acres	Percent of Town	Percent of Farmland
Town Total	1,291	27,475	100	n.a.
Ancram Farmland Total	217	17,017	62	100
Priority 1	73	7,630	28	45
Priority 2	93	6,910	25	40
Priority 3	51	2,477	9	15
Farmland Already Protected	23	3,768	14	22
Priority 1	11	2,132	8	12
Priority 2	12	1,636	6	10
Priority 3	-	-	-	-



Ancram: Historic Farming Community Moving Forward

To test the reasonableness of the Priority level definitions, we analyzed some key factors by Priority level, shown in the table below. We found these results to be very logical. For example, Priority 1 parcels are:

- larger, an average of 105 acres, 40% bigger than Priority 2 parcels.
- much higher percentage of soils of statewide importance, almost twice as much as Priority 2 and five times as much as in Priority 3 parcels.

High priority parcels must also be considered to be more vulnerable to traditional development for two reasons:

- much more road frontage, about seven-tenths of a mile for Priority 1
- closer proximity to already protected parcels, which makes the property more desirable for residences.

Select Criteria	Priority 1 Parcels	Priority 2 Parcels	Priority 3 Parcels
Farmland Acreage	7,630	6,910	2,477
Percent of Farmland	45%	40%	15%
Average size of parcel	105 acres	74 acres	49 acres
Average percent of parcel with Soils of Statewide Importance	56%	32%	10%
Average road frontage	3,666 feet	2,057 feet	1,355 feet
Average distance to already protected properties	1,223 feet	2,545 feet	3,880 feet

Interestingly, Priority 1 parcels were almost twice as likely to be located on a floodplain, presumably due to the long term benefits to farming of the more level terrain and soils.

Other environmental features such as wetlands, streams, ridgelines, are probably more evenly distributed among the parcels because they did not appear to differentiate the three priority levels.

In addition, whether the parcel was located within a NYS Agricultural District did not seem to influence the priorities. This was not surprising as we found at the start of our definition of farmland that no current system of classification encompasses all farms in Ancram.

Water Study Related to Ancram Agriculture

As part of Ancram's Comprehensive Planning process, Steven Winkley of the New York Rural Water Association (NYRWA) prepared a Groundwater Protection Plan, presented in February 2008. Ancram adopted his recommendations as part of the town's Comprehensive Plan in April 2010.

> *The plan maps the groundwater resources and aquifers of Ancram, identifies potential sources of contamination, evaluates the susceptibility to contamination and future growth, and outlines potential protection strategies.*

The study contains numerous maps showing features of the land, soils and bedrock as they pertain to groundwater quantity and quality, critical factors to continued success of farming in Ancram. (Full report in the Comp Plan on the town's website www.townofancram.org). First, regarding water quantity:

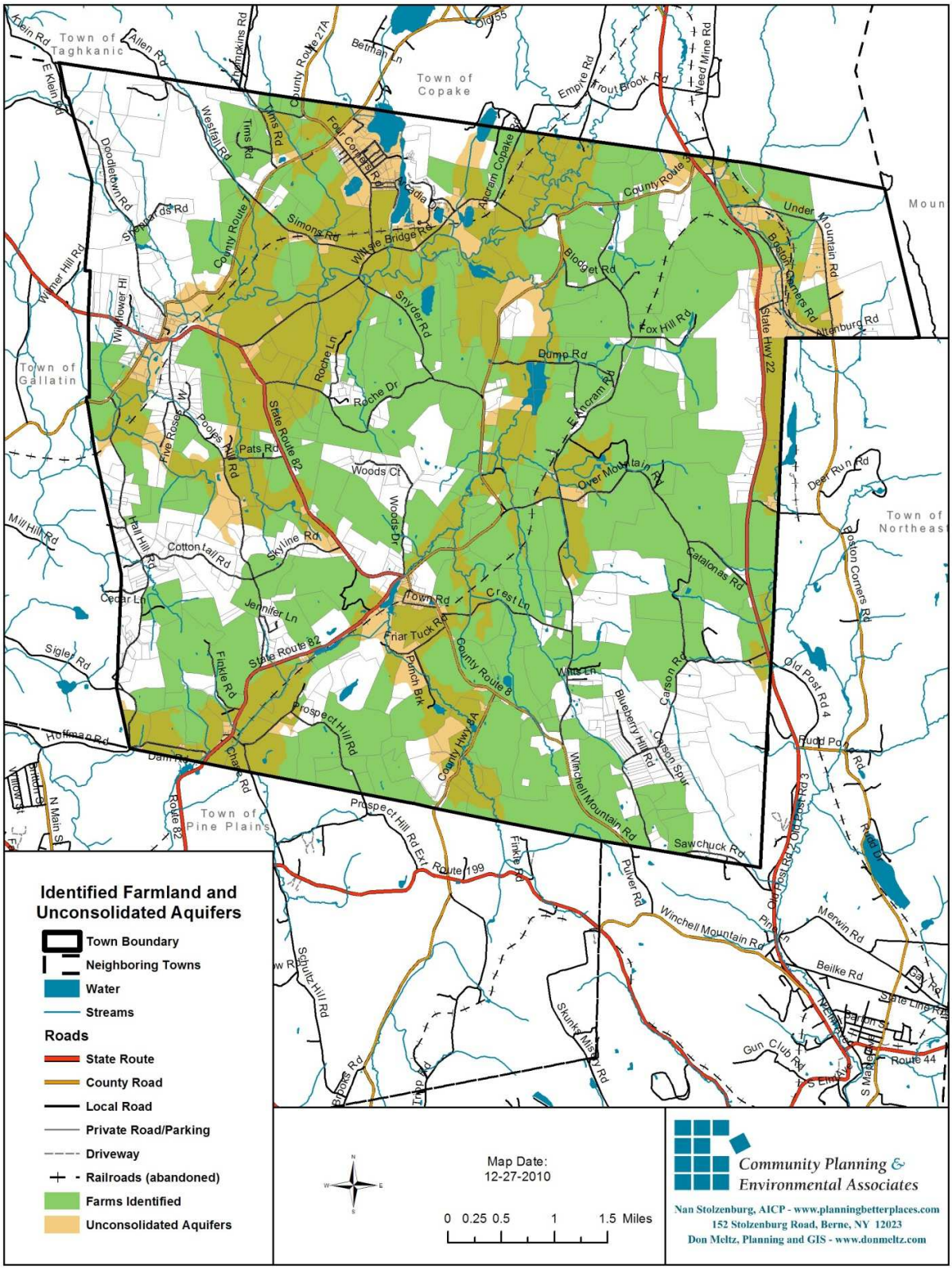
> *Ancram straddles two distinct physiographic regions. The western two-thirds of Ancram is located in the Hudson Valley section of the Valley and Ridge physiographic province and is drained principally by the Roeliff Jansen Kill and its tributaries. The eastern one-third of Ancram lies within the more rugged Taconic section of the New England physiographic province. A significant portion of this area is part of the Tenmile River watershed.*
>
> *Over ninety percent of residences and businesses in Ancram…* (which would include our agricultural businesses)… *utilize bedrock wells. These wells have a median depth of 259 feet and a median depth of casing of 28 feet. Nearly one-half of all Ancram bedrock wells (46%) yield less than the 5 gallons per minute...*

Concluding that water quantity might be stretched, Winkley recommended that the town decrease its average density for development from 3 acres to 3.5 acres. While Ancram's water quantity has been sufficient over past decades to support its agriculture, relatively small population, and economy, the Water Study and some anecdotal evidence from summer 2010 when several large farms had wells run dry, suggests the importance of attending to this matter in the revisions to Zoning currently underway.

The map on the following page shows the Unconsolidated Aquifers overlaid on the farmlands identified for protection in this plan. As Steve Winkley noted in a recent letter:

> *Farm lands often overlie unconsolidated aquifers. Good farming soils are often the result of coarse-grained underlying material that make up the aquifers.*

Map of Identified Farmland and Unconsolidated Aquifers



The unconsolidated aquifers (in sand and gravel) near the Lower Rhoda Pond-Long Lake area and in and around Ancramdale are shallow:

> *Wells in these areas produce high quantities of water (in excess of 30 gallons per minute), but are vulnerable to contamination…*
>
> *Deeper sand and gravel aquifer deposits have been documented in the hamlet of Ancram and a few other areas. These deposits are better protected from contamination due to the presence of overlying silt and clay…*

Water quality can be affected by both natural and manmade conditions. The risks from natural causes seem limited to hard water thus far:

> *Over 70 percent of households in Ancram report water quality problems, largely the nuisance of hard water. Hard water is particularly common in wells tapping the carbonate rocks. Odor problems are more commonly associated with the Walloomsac Formation. This is likely from sulfide minerals associated with the rock type...*

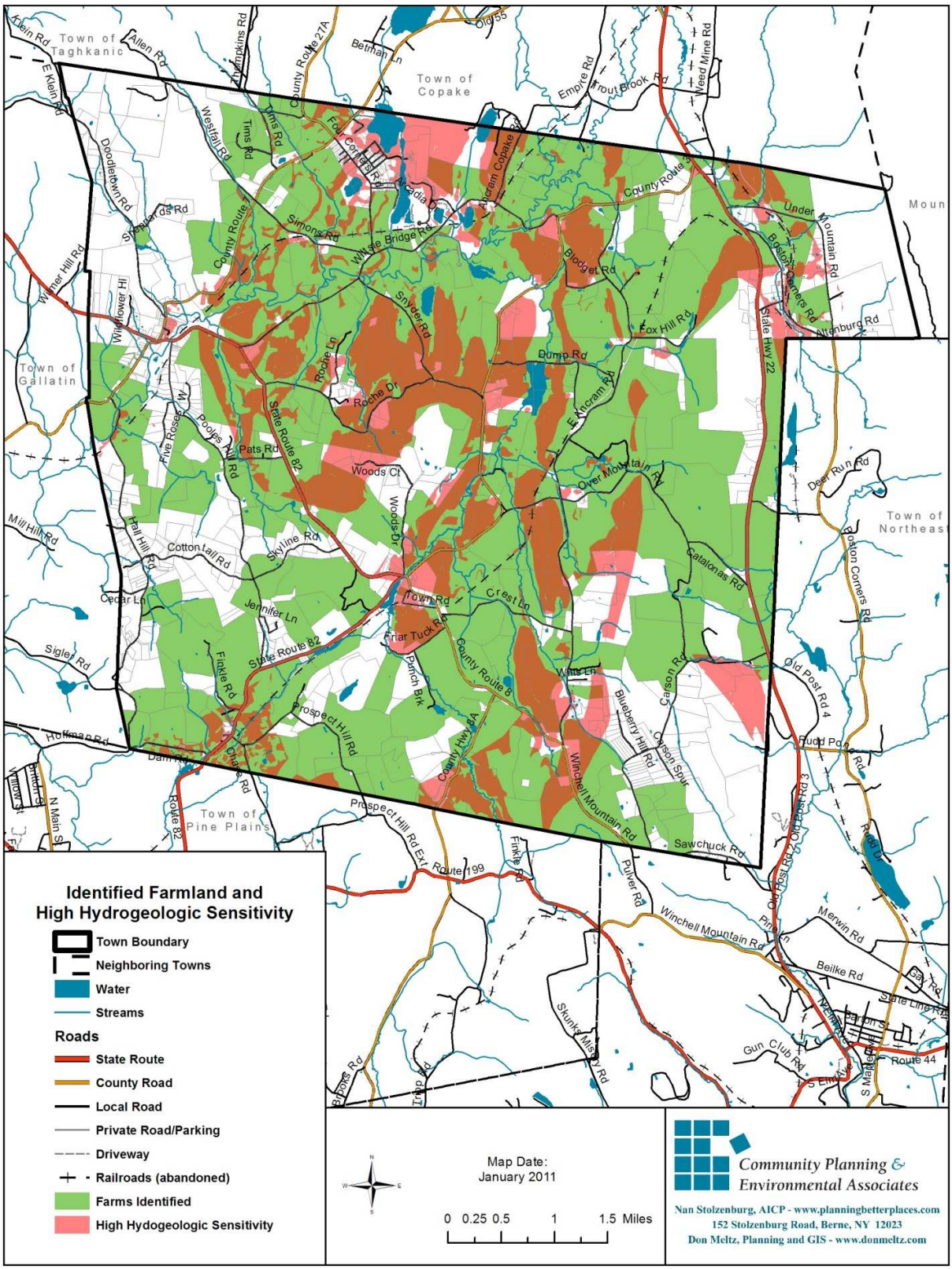
Groundwater resources are susceptible to contamination from a variety of manmade sources that can be associated with present or future land uses. Winkley identifies three primary potential sources of groundwater contamination in Ancram:

- wastewater discharges from both individual systems and "regulated facilities", i.e. development
- sand and gravel mining operations
- agriculture, as Winkley noted November 16, 2010:

> *In terms of agriculture and groundwater, the largest impacts are seen where manure and fertilizer application in sensitive hydrogeologic settings is not done in an agronomic manner. In other words, too much nutrient loading occurs such that plants cannot take up all that is applied. This is sometimes a seasonal issue. In Columbia County, groundwater quality impacts are seen where this occurs in sensitive hydrogeologic settings. In Ancram, these are topographically higher areas where coarse-grained or thin soils overlie sand and gravel aquifers or carbonate bedrock. Careful application rates and timing should be encouraged in these sensitive areas.*

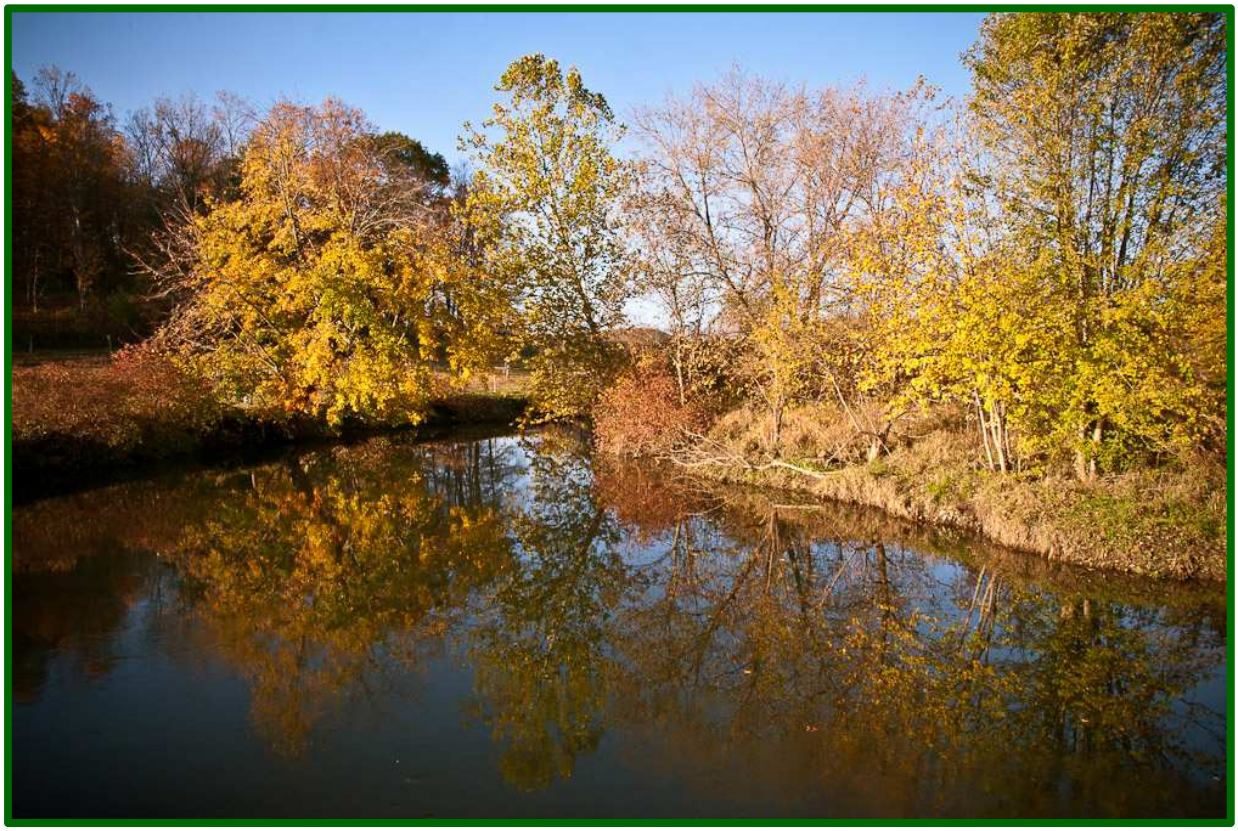
The map on the following page shows Ancram farmland overlaid on areas of high hydrogeologic sensitivity. To protect the groundwater in these areas, special attention to all 3 potential sources of contamination is indicated.

Map of Farmland and High Hydrogeologic Sensitivity



The original Water Study concentrated on groundwater, important for residential and commercial development. But agriculture depends on *both* groundwater *and* surface water, so the picture is more complex, e.g:

- Larger scale fruit and vegetable farming is more dependent on surface water pumped from ponds or streams. Most wells cannot produce the amount of water under the pressure needed for larger scale irrigation. On the other hand, small vegetable farms can be easily handled by wells drawing on groundwater.
- Livestock, when managed according to best practices to protect water quality (see following page), are watered from stock tanks or watering systems supplied by either well water or pumped from ponds or streams. Special care is needed to ensure pastures are adequately buffered or fenced off from streams and do not get too wet, both in order to prevent manure contamination.



Ancram's Conservation Advisory Council (CAC) has a multiyear project to map Ancram's surface water and habitats. We are one of the few towns in the county capable of this effort. CAC has collected about 20% of these data, which are intended to be added to our GIS base so that we can further understand how our water and farmland resources interact.

NY AG & MKTS- BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR WATER QUALITY PROTECTION

Source: **Agricultural Management Practices Catalogue for Nonpoint Source Pollution Prevention and Water Quality Protection in New York State, NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets, 2007.**

Access Road Improvement	**Jul 1991**
Alternative Water Supply	**Jul 1995**
Barnyard Runoff Management System	**Jul 1991**
Conservation Tillage	**Jul 1991**
Constructed Wetlands	**Jul 1991**
Contour Farming	**Jul 1991**
Cover and Green Manure Crop	**Jul 1991**
Critical Area Protection	
- **Vegetative Crop**	**Jul 1991**
- **Streambank and Shoreline Protection**	**Jul 1991**
Crop Rotation	**Jul 1991**
Diversions	**Jul 1991**
Fencing	**Jul 1991**
Filter Strip	**Jul 1991**
Integrated Pest Management (IPM):Overview	**Jul 1995**
- **Biological Controls**	**May 1994**
- **Cultural Practices**	**May 1994**
- **Resistant Crop Varieties**	**May 1994**
- **Scouting**	**Jul 1995**
- **Trap Crops**	**Jul 1995**
Irrigation Water Management	**Feb 2007**
Milking Center Wastewater Treatment	**Feb 2007**
Mulching – Vineyards/Cropland	**Feb 2007**
Nutrient Management: Planning	**Feb 2007**
- **Anaerobic Digestion**	**Jul 1995**
- **Composting**	**Apr 1998**
- **Feed Ration Evaluation and Balancing**	**Apr 1998**
- **Manure Storage System**	**Apr 1996**
- **Sequence Batch Reactor**	**Apr 1998**
Nutrient/Sediment Control System	**Jul 1991**
Pathogen Management	**Apr 1996**
Pasture Management: Prescribed Grazing System	**Jul 1995**
Pesticide Management:Overview	**Feb 2007**
- **Agrichemical Mixing Facility**	**Feb 1991**
- **Calibration and Application**	**Feb 2007**
- **Evaluation of Site-Specific Leaching and Surface Loss Potential**	**Sep 1991**
- **Pesticide Applicator Education and Training**	**May 1994**
- **Read and Follow the Label Directions**	**Sep 1991**
Petroleum Product Storage Spill Prevention and Containment	**Apr 1996**
Riparian Buffer	**Jul 1991**
Silage Leachate Control	**Jul 1995**
Stripcropping	**Jul 1991**
Terraces	**Jul 1991**
Waterway	**Jul 1991**

http://www.agmkt.state.ny.us/SoilWater/aem/forms/Agricultural%20BMP%20Catalogue%20June%202007.pdf

The Business of Agriculture in Ancram

Farming Inventory: 2009 Snapshot

For a more concrete picture of Ancram agriculture, we surveyed our commercial farmers; i.e. those that produce agricultural goods or services as a primary occupation and business. Results were published in May 2010, the Ancram Farming Inventory; detailed findings are provided in Appendix 1-b.

The survey profiles commercial farming in Ancram and the farmers' attitudes toward the challenges and opportunities they face. Respondents represented 60% of farmers surveyed and 80% of the acreage surveyed, accounting for half of all the farmland in Ancram.

Key Findings

Commercial farmers are dependent on leased land for over half the total acreage they farm (57%).

Town	Total Acres Owned	Total Acres Leased	Total Acres
Ancram	3,982	4,374	8,356
Pine Plains	407	1,230	1,637
Copake	0	1,041	1,041
Gallatin	653	50	703
4 Town Total	5,042	6,695	11,737

This underscores the significant role non-farm landowners already play in Ancram's agricultural economy. Fortunately, relations between farmers and non-farm neighbors are generally good in Ancram; it is important to farming that this cooperation continues.

Agriculture is Ancram's largest employer. Each farm provides on average:

- 5 year-round jobs, plus
- 4 seasonal jobs, and
- support for 4 households

Extrapolating to the group of commercial farmers in Ancram implies about 150-200 jobs. Ancram's population is about 1650, and this employment represents about 15% of households. Ancram farm businesses are also major providers of housing, as 8 out of 10 full time, year-round employees live in farm housing.

Individual farms typically conduct 2 or 3 different businesses, as illustrated below:

Farming Activities	% Respondents
Hay	54
Dairy	40
Beef & Livestock	40
Fruits, Vegetables	27
Cash Crops	27
Horses	18
Dairy Products	14
Organic	14

Over half of Ancram farmers are selling direct to consumers, as seen in the table below. (Total is greater than 100% because many farmers use multiple channels.)

Channel of Distribution	**%**
Direct to Consumer	54
Farm Stand	18
Farmer's Market	18
Milk Company, COOP	40
Other Retail	18
Restaurants	14
Direct to farmers	5

Food products generally have complex channels of distribution, selling "retail" through farm stands or markets while also selling "wholesale" through retail stores and restaurants. Some ag businesses sell *only* to

consumers, such as the small vegetable and horticultural operations and the horse farms. Dairy farmers sell principally to dairy coops.

Low profitability is the single largest challenge to Ancram farming. Agriculture everywhere is a low margin business, and Ancram is no different. Only 20% of respondents said they were profitable. Forty percent said they were losing money, with the rest just breaking even in 2009. As a result, 70% of Ancram farmers rely on off-the-farm income to make ends meet. (It should be noted that 2009 was a recessionary year in general.)

Within this overall picture, according to our survey, larger farms appear to be more profitable as do crop farmers.

In addition, Ancram farmers have, in some respects, been more successful in meeting the challenge of growth and development than other towns in Columbia County. (See Appendices 1-4.) For example, Ancram has attracted more new farmers and has bigger farms on average than other towns in Columbia County. Also, we have not lost as much farmland as some other towns.

Ancram Agriculture in Transition

Perhaps the biggest change in Ancram farming over the past 20 years has been the decline in the number of dairy farmers from 15 to four. What is remarkable is that most of these farms are still operating in one form or another, contributing to Ancram's economy and the open space so prized by our residents.

What did the ex-dairy farmers do? Many retained the crop production side of their business, and developed new markets for their products. Part of their crop production went to remaining dairy farmers who could now support bigger herds without having to produce more feed themselves.

Also, these crop farmers recognized the growth of horse farms in New York State and developed totally new customers. Today, much of Ancram crop farmers' hay production is "exported" to other parts of the state with high horse populations and no farmland. This strategy appears to have been successful, not only in keeping our farmers farming, but also in improving their profitability.

Some of the other ex-dairy farmers exited completely and sold their land and facilities. While some of these properties were subdivided into large acreage residential plots, others were sold to new farmers.

What did the four remaining dairy farmers do? Their approaches are summarized below:

Dairy #1	Historic, family-owned/operated milking herd and feed production, sells to coop and local processer, leases land to expand herd
Dairy #2	Family-owned/operated milking herd and feed production, integrated forward to branded dairy products sold to retailers, milk purchased from other local dairy farms to expand production
Dairy #3	Family-owned/operated milking herd selling high quality, award-winning milk at higher prices to coops; facilities and land leased, feed purchased
Dairy #4	Farm Owner leases facilities to dairyman, and leases land to cash crop farmer

As can be seen, these dairy farmers have used a variety of approaches to improve their management and cash flow. The thrust has been to increase profitability by growing to sufficient size. In general, key strategies have been:

- Land strategies:
  - Generate cash by selling land – increases one-time cash inflow through sales proceeds, and reduces annual expenses through property tax elimination
  - Increase use of leased land – increases production capacity with little or no additional investment required
  - Sale of development rights – generates one-time cash inflow while retaining ownership of land
- Production strategies
  - "lease rather than own" facilities to reduce capital requirement
  - as owner, lease out facilities to generate some cash return on existing investment
  - "buy rather than make" feed
- Marketing strategies to increase margins
  - Produce higher quality product which commands higher prices
  - Create consumer brand and increase value added through processing, develop channels of distribution

What do other farms do in Ancram? Other farming businesses unrelated to dairy are increasing in size and number in Ancram. For example:

- One historic, 5-generation family farm, has focused on growing organic produce - mostly fruits, some vegetables – maintains a NOFA certification, and sells to consumers, including u-pick, and to some retail stores, schools, etc. This farm operation leases the land and has used its free cash to grow its business.
- About 8 years ago, a former dairy was sold to new livestock farmers who are building a business featuring grass-fed Beef and Lamb and pasture-raised Chicken and Pork. Products are sold to the restaurant trade as well as at their farm store, and at farmers' markets. This farm has leased some land to a vegetable farmer who has organized a CSA (Community Sponsored Agriculture) which is distributed through the farm store.
- A long-standing, grass-fed beef and organic egg operation concentrates on sales to consumers. This farm uses "heritage beef breeds" which are bred specifically to be raised on pasture.
- A new farm business in Ancram, a distillery, has completed its business plan and received its permit. It too, will follow a path toward organic and sustainable farming, raising the grain on its own fields, distilling and bottling on premises, feeding solids left from the process to its own cattle.
- Breeding and boarding horses is an important segment of Ancram farming. One farmer imports a special breed for raising and sale in the U.S. All these farms pasture their animals, and several also make their own hay. By the nature of these businesses, sales are all direct to consumers. It should be noted that horses are a major factor in New York's agricultural economy, being the second largest "commodity."

Agricultural businesses in Ancram are listed on pages 33 and 34.

Growth Capital Requirements Go Beyond Ancram

As mentioned above, even though agriculture is not a very profitable business in general, it is very significant in Ancram's economy today, helping to support 15% of households and create the beauty and rural character our townspeople wish to maintain.

Ancram's larger farmers have done well adapting to changes in the market. But in doing so, many have already tapped their readily accessible capital, e.g. selling land and leasing it back, leasing more land to seek economies of scale without more capital investment. And still, 70% depend on outside income to make ends meet.

On the positive side, the movement to "eat local" is strong in the Hudson Valley. As for production, Ancram is well positioned to take advantage of this trend because it has:

- Knowledgeable farmers and good soils
- Farms suitable for fruits and vegetables are located near good sources of surface water
- Fields well suited for grazing livestock could easily be put into production with fencing and watering
- Small farms already producing vegetables for domestic consumption have land to expand

So, the challenge will be getting the food to market, not producing it. Unfortunately, because Columbia County has not historically been an area of large food production, the infrastructure – both processing and distribution - is very limited or non-existent. What is needed to capitalize on "eat local":

- Small to medium food processing – e.g., slaughterhouses, smoke houses, community kitchens, canning operations
- Distribution networks for food products, e.g. wholesalers, transportation

Toward this end, this plan proposes an investigation in Ancram of opportunities for private kitchens (possibly leading to a community kitchen) and a retail store to sell local products. These will depend on volunteers and donations to get started. More can be done with capital from the outside, e.g. a non-farmer wants to invest, or if grants or development funds become available.

However, neither individual farmers nor small towns like Ancram can start anything big enough to function regionally, which is what is required. That will require County action to attract investors.

AGRICULTURAL BUSINESSES IN ANCRAM

V = visits welcome - published hours or call *S = sales at farm*

A Horse Drawn Affair *V,S*
Riding, driving, breeding Morgan horses, demonstrations
Bill & Nancy Broe 518-329-5249
258 Crest Lane, Ancramdale
ahorse@taconic.net
www.ahorsedrawnaffair.com

The Amazing Real Live Food Co., LLC *V,S call*
Farmstead production of a variety of raw, pasteurized, and probiotic cheese and ice creams
Rory Chase
96 Chase Rd,Pine Plains, NY 12567
518-398-0368, Fax: 518-398-0340
Rory@amazingreallive.com
www.amazingreallive.com

Beaver Mountain Farm
Hay, straw, & shavings for sale; Registered Black Angus cattle for sale, farm equipment dealer & dispersal
Don Duksa
1820 County Rte 7, Ancram
518-329-1321 Farm
518-929-3480 Cell
518-329-3792 House

Cricket Hill Farm *V,S*
Horse boarding, horseback riding academy, horse training, showing, garden plants, hay
Sue & Art Bassin
115 Snyder Rd, Ancramdale
518-329-6166
www.crickethillfarm.org
sue@crickethillfarm.org

Dencinjo *Hay*
Dennis Sigler
51 Hall Hill Rd, Ancram
518-329-2025
dencinjo@taconic.net

Fox Hill Farm Grassfed Beef *V,S call*
Grassfed beef, YaYa's organic eggs from pastured hens
Larry & Erna Lampman
887 E. Ancram Rd, Ancramdale
518-329-2405
Lampman1@fairpoint.net
www.foxhillfarmgrassfedbeef.com

Fred & Henry Harasymczuk
Hay
93 County Route 3, Ancramdale
518-329-3006

Herondale *V,S*
Grass fed beef and lamb, pasture- raised pork and chicken
Jerry & Iva Peele
90 Wiltsie Bridge Rd, Ancramdale
518-329-3769 518-329-2611
Fax: 518-329-4009
Info@herondalefarm.com
www.herondalefarm.com

The Horse Institute *V call*
Team building, leadership devlopmnt.
Marie-Claude Stockl, Exec.Dir.
518-398-6300
Cell: 518-929-7202
www.thehorseinstitute.com

Lo-Nan Farms, LLC
Dairy/crop farm
Lloyd Vaill, Jr.
172 Mt. Ross Rd
Pine Plains, NY 12567
518-398-1376, Fax: 518-398-6073

Maple Tree Farm
Vegetables, farm stand, sweet corn, hay
Bill Lutz
109 E. Ancram Rd, Ancramdale
518-329-1326

Jacob L. Meiller
Trucking, excavating, land mgmt
17 Doodletown Rd, Ancram
518-329-0914
jacobmeiller17@fairpoint.net

Mill Farm *Icelandic horses*
Dan Slott 518-329-0185
281 County Route 3, PO Box 63, Ancramdale
dslott@icesport.com

Millerhurst Farm *Dairy*
The Miller Family
3201 State Route 82, Ancramdale
Mike & Emily 518-329-2280
Jim & Janice 518-329-1474
millerhurst@taconic.net

Millerhurst Gardens *V,S*
Greenhouse, sweet corn, fall produce
Emily Miller 518-329-2280
3201 State Route 82, Ancramdale
millerhurst@taconic.net

Mountain Top Farm, Inc
Miniature horses, llamas
3438 State Rte 82, Ancramdale
518-329-1458
Cell: 518-488-4484
Fax: 914-793-8915
info@mountaintopinc.com
www.Mountaintopinc.com

Pleasant View Farm *V,S*
Greenhouse – heirloom tomatoes, herbs, flowers, perennials, vegetables
Linda Pulver, 715 County Route 8
Millerton, NY 12546
518-789-3922

Punch Brook Farm
Highland cattle, hay
Judith & Roy Sloane
35 County Rte 3, Ancramdale
518-329-0102, Fax: 718-624-3029
Cell: 917-864-5282
roysloane@earthlink.net

Ronnybrook Farm Dairy
V, S (Sat. 10-3)
Dairy, ice cream, yogurt, butter, cheeses

Ron Osofsky
310 Prospect Hill Rd, PO Box 267,
Ancramdale NY 12503
518-398-MILK (6455)
info@ronnybrook.com
www.ronnybrook.com

H. Rothvoss & Son
Certified organic hay; brush hogging
Dan Rothvoss
508 Co. Rte 3, Ancramdale
518-329-5555
drothvoss@fairpoint.net

Sol Flower Farm, CSA
Vegetables; cut flowers; Community Supported Agriculture; crop shares
Andy Szymanowicz
90 Wiltsie Bridge Rd, Ancramdale
518-567-1951
solflowerfarm@gmail.com
www.solflowerfarm.com

Thompson-Finch Farm *V,S*
Pick-Your-Own organic fruits & vegetables
Don & Marnie MacLean
750 Wiltsie Bridge Rd, Ancramdale
518-329-7578
www.thompsonfinch.com

Thornhurst, LLC
Grass-fed beef & pork freezer orders
Bob Wilcox
88 Roche Dr., Ancramdale
518-329-4439, Fax: 518-329-2099
rbwilcox@hotmail.com

Toll Gate Farm *V, S (hay)*
Dairy cattle; Members Hudson Valley Fresh Milk & AgriMark Coop; Nat'l Quality Award winning milk
Jim Davenport
136 Fox Hill Rd, Ancramdale
518-329-4174
Karenddavenport@yahoo.com

Challenges Facing Agriculture in Ancram

Current Situation

The Appendices starting on page 59 offer many details about farms and the farm economy in Ancram. Based on analysis of the farmer/farmland owner survey, maps, and other data contained in this Plan, the following trends and conditions characterize agriculture in Ancram:

a. **The number of farms in Ancram has increased** according to Agricultural Census Data (see Appendix 3) Most are in the 50 to 999 acre range; very few exceed 1000 acres. This compares favorably to other locations in New York where there are more farms, but most are smaller than 50 acres. Farm fields in Ancram are often small and on hilly ground which makes access for farm equipment difficult.

b. **Dairy farms have dropped from 15 to four** over the last 20 years**.** Fortunately, much of this land was taken on by other farm operations, and so has remained in active farming.

c. **Over 70% of Ancram farmers rely on off-the-farm income.** The number of farmers who still consider farming their primary occupation is stable. However, about half the farms are operated by people who also work more than 200 days off the farm and do not consider farming to be their primary occupation. It appears that the new farms added in Ancram are either "start-ups" or part-time farms that need the support of "off-farm income".

d. **However, Ancram *has* experienced a slow, steady conversion of farmland to residential uses**; about 4-5% of the acreage was lost over the past two decades.

   In order to identify these losses, the Historic Building Map was developed (Maps are listed in Appendix 6, page 85, and provided on a CD.) and shows all the parcels in town classified as:

   - "Unbuilt Farmland",
   - "Built on, but remains Farmland", and
   - "Possible Former Farmland"

   with the year when it was built indicated. Using aerial photographs available from past years, these "possible former farmland" parcels were identified as probably not farmland now, but probably farmland before they were built, hence lost to agriculture. The number of

parcels and total acreage of the "Possible Former Farmland" is summarized below by decade:

Decade Built	# of Parcels	Total Acreage
Pre-1900	38	503
1900-1960	29	300
1960's	16	170
1970's	31	457
1980's	30	280
1990's	19	206
2000 or later	24	275
Total	187	2,191

This analysis showed that there has been about a 2-3% loss of farmland (measured by today's acres of ag exemptions) each decade. And from the 1970's to the present, the loss implied is about 12%.

Since only one large development has taken place in Ancram in that time frame, (Long Lake) this change is due primarily to individual parcels changing hands and the development of single residences rather than housing developments.

Of the 140 building permits for new residences issued between 2000 and 2009, 24 were identified as becoming "possible former farmland" or 17% of the projects.

e. **Almost half of Ancram farmers are concerned about loss of farmland.** Negative interactions between farmers and non-farm neighbors were not an issue.

f. **Farm activities in the area are diverse**, including beef, dairy, chickens/eggs, sheep, corn for silage and grain, forage hay, fruit, grains, orchard crops, potatoes, soybeans and vegetables. Hay is the most common crop. Many farms have more than one farming activity. These include pick-your-own crops, horse boarding and training, nursery, custom services, greenhouse, alternative energy sales, retail beef, and gravel. At least three farms in Ancram are organic and at least half the farms sell direct to consumers.

g. **Ancram farms add significantly to the economy** by employing over 100 workers (over half of which are full-time year round). Farms support over 95 households (15% of the town's total households) with an average of 4 households per farm. Based on the farmer survey,

Ancram farmers have sales of about $5 million, estimated conservatively. The fact that over 70% of Ancram farmers rely on off-farm income in order to make ends meet and that only one year in three is considered profitable, attests to the difficulties farmers have.

h. **Ancram farmers rely on leased land**, both within Town and in surrounding communities, for over half the land they farm.

i. **Most farms participating in the survey had a positive long-term outlook** and most plan on remaining in farming or even expanding or diversifying their operations.

j. **Ancram has more, younger people operating farms** compared to other New York State locations. 25% of surveyed farmers were aged between 25 and 44 while 44% were between 45 and 64. Although this is positive, the fact remains that many farmers are approaching retirement age and lack of interest in the next generation is already an issue for Ancram farms.

k. **Housing growth outpaces population growth in Ancram.** Population levels are expected to increase at a slower rate than housing (Appendix 1, 2, page 59, 69). Development has been slow, but steady. Many new homes are built on or near farmland, often leading to a loss of farmland. Negative farm/non-farm interactions could increase as residential development continues.

l. **Barriers to more successful agriculture in Ancram include:**

- Low margins and profits with high costs for fuel, machinery and production, and low sale prices for farm products
- Shortage of labor and staff; few new farmers
- Limited availability of farm housing
- High property taxes
- High land prices
- High Estate Taxes
- Lack of processing facilities
- Scarce land availability (leased or owned)
- Possible complaints from neighbors on smells, noise;
- Access to agriculture support services
- Access to marketing or business support
- Lack of local customers
- Concerns about water quantity and quality (see following page, m)

m. **During the summer of 2010, several farmers had wells run dry** and needed to import water to their farm and dig new wells. This brought to light the immediate and long-term concern about the adequacy of both water quality and water quantity available to support agricultural activities in Town. Ancram's Comprehensive Plan, which was adopted in April 2010, underscores the importance of water quantity and quality to the entire town, not just farmers. It recommends the adoption of the strategies to preserve groundwater identified in the separate 2008 Water Study done by the New York Rural Water Association as part of the Comp Plan. This Plan also supports the recommendations of the Water Study.

n. **As fuel costs rise, demand for local food will increase.** The "eat local" movement stimulates the farm economy and will likely promote more, but smaller, farms to meet future demand. Fuel costs are likely to change the type and manner of farming that takes place. The future of dairy farming in Ancram is uncertain, but Ancram's farmland is good, so there is likely to be a transition to other types of farming in the future. Ancram's mid-Hudson location will place the Town in a position to be critical for growing food while at the same time, movement of people out of New York City may put more pressure on farmlands to convert to non-agricultural uses.

o. **Columbia County trends seem more negative than in Ancram.** Between 1997 and 2002, the number of farms throughout Columbia County (as a whole) has decreased as has the acreage of land being farmed. Market values of farms, equipment, and products have increased except for livestock (where values remained stable between 1992 and 2007). There are fewer, big farms and more, smaller farms.

In the county, many more farms have very small sales (less than $2500). At the same time, expenses have increased. More farm operators do not consider farming their principal occupation. There has been a decrease in dairy and hogs/pigs but increased numbers of beef, sheep, chickens, and horses. There are more vegetable farms, but fewer acres devoted to vegetables, and a loss of orchards (See Appendix 4, page 79, for more county-wide data). In comparison to county trends, agricultural conditions in Ancram appear to be stronger and more stable.

Further Development Will Pressure Agriculture

Ancram has done an analysis of the impact of current zoning on land use, called the Buildout Analysis, summarized in Appendix 2, page 69. This study showed that current zoning in Ancram offers a full development potential of about 5,300 new houses (4,500 if water, wetland, and flooded areas are not considered eligible for development). Even If the Town implements the density change recommended in the Comprehensive Plan (change to a 3.5 acre density in the agricultural district), the total potential development capacity is about still about 4,600 (4,000 if water, wetland, and flooded areas are not considered eligible).

Up to this point in time, development has been principally single residences on large and small parcels, former farm fields and wooded areas, and scattered throughout Town. Maps (on accompanying CD) showing dates of development and historical patterns illustrate a slow but ongoing pattern of rural sprawl with no concentration of new homes in or near the traditional hamlets of Ancram, Ancramdale, and Boston Corners. Continuation of this trend will lead over time to the loss of agriculture in Town as farmlands become fragmented, more likelihood of negative interactions between farmers and non-farmers developing, and increased land values that make it impossible for farmers to afford to keep land in farming.

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats

The following list of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats was developed from the 2009 Ancram Farming Inventory (Appendix 8, page 91); committee member input; and analysis of trends, maps, and data.

Agricultural Strengths: resources or capabilities that help agriculture be successful.

1. Loss of farmland in Ancram has not been large.
2. Soils are good and can support farming and open lands still exist.
3. More farms exist now than in the past decade. Land used for dairy farms is relatively stable, but the number of dairy farm operations have decreased from 15 to four.
4. Agriculture in the Hudson Valley is seen as a very positive and important land use.
5. Agricultural activities are diverse in Ancram.
6. Agriculture is a large employer in the area and contributes to the economy.

7. People in Ancram highly value the role agriculture plays in the community, landscape, and natural environment. Through its planning efforts, Ancram has committed itself to maintaining farming as a primary land use in Town.
8. Proximity to New York City could provide new markets for produce grown in Ancram.
9. Farms offer fiscal benefits to Ancram by not costing as much as residential land uses. (NYS Controller's report, page 9)
10. Demand for locally produced foods is growing.
11. Farmers' market opportunities exist.
12. The basic agricultural infrastructure (vets, machinery, ag services, ag educational opportunities, etc.) still exist in the region but is under pressure.
13. Ancram currently has adequate annual rainfall for its agricultural enterprises, although in recent years, the timing of the precipitation has become less predictable and so, less beneficial for some crops.
14. Availability of clean, abundant water in some areas of Ancram presently being farmed.

Agricultural Weaknesses: Internal deficiencies in resources or capabilities that hinder agriculture from being successful.

1. Labor/staff are in short supply.
2. High school taxes and property taxes make farms less competitive compared to other locations.
3. Farmers are aging and there is a reluctance of the "next generation" to go into farming.
4. Scarcity of farm worker housing could limit farm operations.
5. Low margins and profits are a critical problem.
6. The cost of entry is high and the availability of funds is low, preventing start-up of many new operations.
7. Some areas of Ancram have relatively low water availability which creates limits for certain agricultural needs.
8. It is difficult to sustain farming – rising costs, especially related to fuel, will force change in farming types and methods.
9. Sale of farmland to non-farmers has increased, and more farmers depend on rented land for their farm operations. While this often improves profitability, it has higher risk.
10. Complaints from neighbors on smells and noise can make it difficult for farmers to continue operations.
11. Public education and support are needed to address perceived abuses related to agricultural assessments.
12. Marketing challenges are considerable, such as how to best sell farm

products locally and regionally, promoting local food outlets, advertising products, etc.

13. New home construction continues at a slow pace but cumulatively can negatively impact farm operations and remove important farmland from active agricultural use.
14. Farming is not recognized as the economic force that it is within the County overall. Consequently, business development programs often overlook agricultural business development.
15. County-level programs to promote and sustain local agriculture are few.
16. No local processing facilities that farmers need exist, e.g. small slaughterhouses, milk processing, community kitchens, etc.
17. The agricultural industry is still not sufficiently "local-oriented".

Agricultural Opportunities: Factors that can affect agriculture in a positive way.

1. Farms can diversify to other types of farms using alternative methods.
2. The "eat local" movement can promote more farming operations.
3. More "farm-friendly" land use regulations can work to protect existing agricultural operations and assist in promoting and encouraging new agricultural operations. Development patterns that maintain good soils, land suitable for farming, and that minimize conflicts between farmers and non-farmers can be promoted. Ancram, through its Comprehensive Plan, and the initiating of a zoning update process, has already demonstrated a willingness to make land use regulations farm-friendly.
4. Trucking/transportation co-operatives could improve efficiency of transport of agricultural products to local markets.
5. Numerous grant opportunities exist, although there is a general lack of understanding of how to successfully obtain those funds.
6. Opportunities to better market and promote local farm products are available.
7. "Best farming practices", adapted to each farm's unique circumstances, can create important benefits to farm profitability and

the environment.

8. Market trends provide better opportunities for higher margin organic farm products.
9. There are opportunities to better educate and involve the public in agriculture and to promote the role agriculture plays in Ancram.

Agricultural Threats: Factors that can affect agriculture in a negative way.

1. Development could result in loss of farmland.
2. Development could result in increased conflicts between farmers and non-farmers.
3. There is financial instability for dairy farming. While land is still available, prices for basic milk keep the pressure on remaining farms.
4. A lack of a next generation of farmers could threaten sustainability of agriculture in the area.
5. Residential development could result in high land sale prices that make it harder for farmers to purchase or even rent land.
6. Long-term, global warming and rising sea levels may place more development pressure on the Hudson Valley.
7. Climate change may impact the hydrology of the region and lead to changes that could have a negative effect on availability of water and/or poor water quality.

Vision and Goals

Vision for Agriculture in Ancram
(from the Comprehensive Plan, April 2010)

In 2030, agriculture is healthy, thriving, and is the predominant land use in Ancram. New farmers and farming activities exist alongside family farms which have been operating here for generations.

Ancram and the entire region have experienced a resurgence of agriculture, driven by our proximity to major markets and consumers' demands to "buy local", healthier foods that use less energy to produce and transport.

A few family dairy farms continue to operate successfully, benefiting from innovative new approaches and marketing strategies. In addition, a variety of specialty livestock, fruit, and vegetable operations are well established, as are several large scale crop farms. Horse activities continue to be important. Most of Ancram's farmland is protected from development.

Goals

Goals describe future expected outcomes, focusing on ends rather than means. Ancram's Agriculture and Farmland Protection goals are:

1. Farms will be profitable and productive, and Ancram will be an attractive place for new and expanded farming ventures.

2. Farmlands will be preserved for active farm uses and will continue to play critical roles in contributing to open space, scenic views, and the rural and small town character in Ancram.

3. Farm and non-farm interactions will be positive, and the citizens of Ancram understand and support our farming community.

4. Ancram will partner with regional, county, State and Federal agencies and organizations to promote agriculture.

5. Local markets for agricultural products produced in Ancram will be available.

The specific actions recommended to achieve these goals are detailed on the following pages.

Actions Suggested to Implement the Plan

This section details a variety of actions that should be taken to implement this Plan. Each of the goals has specific objectives and actions that are presented. Objectives are measurable, specific, and time-framed statements of action which when completed, will move towards goal achievement. (Please note that although the plan is organized into goals, objectives, and actions, there is also much interaction between each. Some actions, when implemented, will achieve multiple goals.)

Ancram Actions

Goal 1. Farms will be profitable and productive and Ancram will be an attractive place for new and expanded farming ventures.

Objective A: Increase the capacity of the Town to provide leadership, funding, and community involvement to implement the agriculture and farmland protection programs outlined in this Plan.

Action 1: Adopt this plan as an addendum to the Town of Ancram Comprehensive Plan adopted April 2010.

Action 2: Create a standing Agricultural Advisory Council (AAC) to aid implementation of the plan. Approved by the Town Board December 2010, the AAC will be responsible for:

- Representing the farming community;
- Encouraging the pursuit of agriculture;
- Promoting agricultural-based economic opportunities; and
- Preserving, revitalizing, and sustaining the communities' agricultural businesses and lands
- Advocating at state and federal levels,
- Matching farmers with available land and helping the landowner and the farmer promote sustained use.
- Coordinating where possible with Ancram's Conservation Advisory Council and the Columbia Land Conservancy, both important local resources, on specific projects to improve farmer profitability and positive environmental impacts.

Action 3: Work with Columbia County and neighboring towns to find mutually beneficial ways to carry out the objectives and actions as called for in this plan.

Action 4: Seek alternative mechanisms for funding actions as called for in this plan. Some alternatives to consider include:

- Ancram has community support for "best farming practices", and will support farmers who seek grant aid for changes that will benefit the health of the community and the environment.
- Consider establishing funds to support agricultural promotion and communications through town budget allocations, grants, and community contributions.
- Explore the feasibility of a local "impervious surface tax". Other communities in the United States establish this fee system that penalizes and discourages excessive creation of impervious cover where monies are dedicated to funding farmland preservation.
- Advocate to New York State to pass the real estate transfer tax so that the Town could access additional funds for farmland protection. Work with the Columbia Land Conservancy or other similar organizations for assistance in application of and implementing New York State farmland protection program grants as they become available.
- Encourage New York State to initiate development impact fees.
- Explore use of equity mortgage and insurance programs with Columbia County and New York State (See Box 1 below).

Box 1. About Equity Insurance.

The concept of applying equity insurance in farmland protection programs is attracting more interest across the United States.

In the case of equity insurance, the state or local government would pay a willing landowner 20% of the development value of the land up front and then purchase an insurance policy on the owner that would pay the remaining 80% of the development value of the land plus interest when he/she reaches age 65 or dies.

In the equity mortgage approach, the state or local government buys the development rights to a parcel of land (from a willing seller) through a third party. The third party holds a mortgage for the development rights. The farmer receives 100% of the development rights value up front, and the state makes the installment payments over the life of the mortgage.

Both methods have been analyzed to result in a potential cost savings of 41% and 47%, respectively, over traditional PDR programs. These figures exclude other additional savings that would accrue if capital gains taxes on proceeds from farmland preservation are avoided or reduced.

Action 5: Support programs, organizations and agencies that assist farmers and farmland owners. These include but are not limited to Cornell Cooperative Extension, Columbia Land Conservancy, Columbia County Soil and Water Conservation District, and Natural Resource Conservation Service.

Action 6: Use every opportunity to convey the importance of agriculture to Town residents and officials. Effectively use the Town website, Town Hall, town events, and newsletters (and e-newsletters) to keep agriculture in the forefront of public consciousness.

Action 7: Consider establishing a town (or multi-town if an inter-municipal agreement is reached) local development corporation oriented to promoting farm and agri-business retention and expansion.

Objective B: Local regulations support agriculture and are farm friendly and integrate agriculture into local planning efforts.

Action 1: Develop and adopt new zoning and subdivision language related to agriculture as called for in the Town of Ancram Comprehensive Plan. These will limit negative impacts on agriculture by adopting Town policies on growth and development consistent with the Ancram Comprehensive Plan. See Appendix 5 page 83 for specific details. The major changes to be incorporated into the zoning law are:

- Update definitions to include all ag-related terms.
- Update purpose statements to enhance the role of agriculture in the purpose of land use regulations.
- Update the use table to ensure a diversity of agricultural land uses are allowed, and review/update use table to allow for ag-support businesses (such as processing facilities). Determine which ag uses are acceptable as a permitted use and which ones need site plan review or special use permits. Allow for agriculturally-related home or on-farm occupations and farm stands.
- Allow additional farm-related business uses in the Agricultural Zoning District, subject to size limitations consistent with the rural character of the town.

- Require special use permits and site plan review for certain new, high intensity agricultural uses but apply the New York State Ag and Markets recommended site plan review process guidelines (See Appendix 10, page 103).

- Establish adequate buffers between new agricultural businesses and residential areas in the agricultural zone to protect the residential areas. These buffers should be the responsibility of the new agricultural-related businesses.

- New agriculture-related business uses should also be evaluated during the site plan review process based on supplemental regulations to ensure the nature, intensity, scope, size, appearance, and type of proposed use conform to existing ag structures and uses; that the use is located in a way that does not interfere with ag operations or expansion; and that the use benefits agriculture, forestry or open spaces.

- Town regulations need to be consistent with State law related to use of setbacks and lot size restrictions for agricultural land uses. Update the dimension table and/or text to establish the average density technique.

- Establish an average density of one dwelling per 3.5 acres and allow for a variety of lot sizes as small as ½ acre, subject to adequate water and septic.

- Revise the Density Control Schedule to make it applicable to the variety of smaller lots permitted under an average density concept and open space development design guidelines.

- Allow for reduced road frontage requirements and modify setbacks to allow for creatively siting new houses.

- Require that 60% of parcel be preserved as open space in major subdivisions; recommend abbreviated site plan review to encourage preservation of farmland in all residential projects. This will be reflected in any zoning and subdivision amendments. The conservation subdivision technique recommended in the Ancram Comprehensive Plan could be useful to protect important farmlands as illustrated below (2):

- Establish development standards related to Ag for the Agricultural zone. This includes steering new buildings away from prime farmlands and active agricultural areas, creating buffer zones between farm and non-farm uses, and use of rural siting guidelines.

- Include the right-to-farm provision in the zoning law. (See model law in Appendix 9, page 95).

- Include AML ~25-AA requirements for the Ag Data Statement in all local land use laws and apply to projects within 500 feet of any farm. (See model statements in Appendix 9). The Ag Data Statement is provided to the Planning Board to identify negative impacts of the project and to identify and notify all adjacent farm landowners that may be affected by the development.

2 From the Dutchess County Greenway Guide: Fitting Into the Landscape, Dutchess County Planning and Development, Poughkeepsie, NY and Randall G. Arendt, Conservation Design for Subdivisions: A Practical Guide to Creating Open Space Networks. 1996.

- Include AML ~25-AA requirements for the Ag Disclosure Notice in all local land use laws. (See model statements in Appendix 9). This notice is used to let prospective and new owners of land know that they are buying land located within a New York State certified agricultural district and that agricultural activities are taking place that may produce noise, odor and other nuisances. Currently, real estate agents are required to give the ag disclosure notice when a sale of land is pending, but it is recommended that the Town of Ancram require this notice to be placed on all approvals and plats for new residential lots created within the ag district.

- Enhance site plan review to ensure that ag-related data is collected on the application form, that adequate detail is added so that the Planning Board can review the impacts of that application on agriculture.

- Rename the RR District to Agricultural District.

- Offer density bonuses to landowners who preserve farmland. Develop a density bonus section in zoning for landowners who permanently preserve farmland and open space above the 60% required open space for major subdivisions and for those minor subdivisions that preserve land for agriculture on a voluntary basis.

- Clarify and simplify procedure for obtaining approvals for farm worker housing.

- Establish a voluntary Transfer of Development Rights option within zoning.

- Prepare rural siting guidelines that are given out before all building permits for new dwellings within the agricultural district. As a starting point, use the Dutchess County Greenway Connections "Greenway Guides" (See Resources in Appendix 7, page 87).

- Support best farm practices that minimize negative impacts to the environment by encouraging individual farmers to select applicable techniques that also improve profitability.

- Promote use of solar or small wind turbines to provide clean energy for farm use.

Action 2: The Fire District Commissioners should consider applying agricultural assessments on farms for fire district taxes.

Action 3: Evaluate feasibility of initiating a real estate transfer tax to fund agricultural land protection programs. This would require a petition of the New York State legislature to implement.

Objective C: Develop local or regional processing facilities that will support a diversity of farm operations and agri-businesses and allow farmers to be more effective in marketing their products.

Action 1: First, survey area farmers to determine the kind of processing facilities that are needed. Then, map and inventory these farms and identify locations in town (or towns, if working with neighboring municipalities) that may be suitable for establishing these facilities. Suitable locations would include, but not be limited to, those that a) have access to County or State highways, and b) are easily accessible to farms and farm equipment, and c) do not negatively impact critical environmental features as outlined in the Ancram Comprehensive Plan.

Action 2: Consider developing and supporting a local or regional community kitchen. Patterned after the Hudson Valley Food Works (http://hudsonvalleyfoodworks.org), a community kitchen can offer processing facilities available for rent (usually they have kitchens, bakery, bottling, and cool package facilities), as well as dry storage, refrigeration and freezing. Such a facility is crucial to support expanded agricultural operations.

Action 3: Allow for small on-farm slaughter facilities. Consider supporting a larger slaughterhouse in Ancram (such as the USDA Mobile Slaughterhouse promoted by the Glynwood Center).

Action 4: Improve accessibility to affordable state-of-the-art communication and technology systems. Aggressively seek methods to provide up-to-date telecommunication services.

Action 6: Investigate formation of a local agricultural cooperative so that farmers can share labor, equipment, and also to bring together their collective buying power on supplies. One idea generated by farmers is to develop a cooperative trucking system to help farmers

work together to get produce to market.

Action 7: Promote agri-tourism and localization of food. Work to increase local markets for locally produced food to promote farms that produce value-added goods and niche products.

Action 8: Market and attract to our Town young farmers and farm entrepreneurs.

Objective D: Maintain roads in a manner that support farm equipment.

Action 1: Review the Ancram Comprehensive Plan and all Town highway specifications and standards. Review and develop amendments that implement both Comprehensive Plan goals for low volume rural roads as well as to ensure that farm vehicles can still feasibly travel over roads and bridges.

Goal 2. Farmlands will be preserved for active farm uses and will continue to play critical roles in contributing to open space, scenic views, and the rural and small town character in Ancram.

Objective A: Protect farmland resources such as prime soils and soils of statewide importance.

Action 1: Implement actions recommended in the Town of Ancram Groundwater Study in order to help ensure water quality and quantity for agriculture activities.

Action 2: Use the Priority Farmland Map included in this plan as a tool to target areas for farmland preservation programs. This Plan includes a process that ranked farmlands using criteria to identify priorities for farmland preservation. Farmlands were scored based on a set of criteria organized into four broad categories: 1) soils, 2) farm resource, 3) development pressure, and 4) environmental resource values. By identifying farmland that scores high in these categories, Ancram can identify a farmland preservation strategy and targets that will achieve the Town's vision for agriculture as stated above.

Action 3: Consider initiating a local farmland protection program in conjunction with the County, adjacent communities, and organizations, e.g. the Columbia Land Conservancy, using purchase of development rights (PDR), lease of development rights (LDR), and transfer of development rights (TDR). (See Box 2, following page).

Action 4: Work with the County and other organizations to seek alternatives for funding PDR, LDR, and TDR programs. Funding sources include federal and state grants, foundations, land trusts, and public money donations. Funding sources could include general obligation bonds (voted on as a referendum by the general public), establishment of development review fees where the funds are dedicated to the program, Town real estate transfer taxes (must be approved by the State Legislature), Federal funding (USDA Farmland Protection Grants, Farmland Protection Programs of the Farm Bill), or State funding (NYS Farmland Protection Grants). For TDR programs, consider using a "TDR Bank". This is an entity officially authorized by the community to buy, hold and resell development rights. The bank can acquire these development rights from sending area landowners who cannot find private buyers. A TDR Bank can establish and stabilize land prices, facilitate transactions, market the program, create a revolving fund for buying development rights, selling them, and then using the proceeds to buy more development rights.

Box 2: Establishing PDR, LDR, and TDR Programs.

Under any of these programs, a landowner voluntarily sells (or with LDR, leases) his or her rights to develop a parcel of land to a public agency or a qualified conservation organization. The landowner retains all other ownership rights attached to the land, and a conservation easement is placed on the land and recorded on the title. The buyer (or Leaser) of the development rights essentially purchases (or leases) the right to develop the land and then extinguishes that right, thereby assuring that development will not occur on that particular property. A PDR and TDR program results in permanent protection of the land. A LDR results in temporary protections. These programs should be based on the following principles:

1. *The Farmland Priority map should be used to identify critical parcels so that the program can be targeted.*

2. *These programs will succeed in promoting agriculture only if implemented in tandem with other farmland protection strategies. Protection of the land is not the sole answer as farming still must be viable and profitable for long-term resiliency.*

3. *All these programs are voluntary in terms of landowner participation.*

4. *In order to make a PDR program a reality, the Town should establish a Board or Committee to oversee the implementation of the program and to ensure that program dollars are spent wisely to acquire properties that meet the goals and objectives of the program. Committees consisting of local governments, land trusts, and members of the public work best.*

5. *For a TDR program, sending areas should be priority farmlands in the Ag district and receiving areas should be in or near the hamlets. Receiving areas should have adequate infrastructure, be politically acceptable, compatible with existing development, be clearly designated ahead of time, and in a location where developers perceive a market for higher density. Sending areas must have strict regulations and densities. Too high a density in the sending area will make the TDR option not favorable. A TDR program should be designed as simple as possible with a process that results in certainty and efficient review.*

6. *Work with Columbia Land Conservancy for assistance.*

Objective B: Provide incentives to maintain land in farming.

Action 1: Institute a density bonus program to offer additional development density in return for protection of farmlands in excess of 60% on major subdivisions.

Action 2: Explore feasibility of enacting a local tax abatement program in exchange for term or permanent conservation easements. This kind of program provides a percentage reduction in property taxes

as part of the agreement between the landowner and the Town. (Chapter 125 of the Code of the Town of Clifton Park offers an excellent model for a term easement program). This would be enacted and authorized pursuant to NY State General Municipal Law 247.

Objective C: Stabilize the rented farmland base by encouraging non-farm landowners to rent their land to farmers for active agricultural use.

Action 1: Promote establishment of a "Come Farm With Us" program either within Ancram alone, in partnership with the Columbia Land Conservancy, or advocate such a program at the county-level. This is a program that seeks to connect people who have farmland with people who are seeking farmland to use for agricultural purposes. (For examples, see the program in St. Lawrence County, the Jefferson County program www.comefarmwithus.com, the Columbia Land Conservancy database.

Action 2: Promote use of land leases that protect both landowner and farmer. (See model lease from the Town of Chatham at http://www.chathamkeepfarming.org/Farmer-Landowner.html).

Goal 3. Farm and non-farm interactions will be positive, and the citizens of Ancram understand and support our farming community.

The following actions are designed to accomplish several objectives collectively. Objectives are:

Objective A: Increase the non-farm community's understanding of the role agriculture plays in Ancram's economy, culture, and quality of life by developing strong partnerships, improving communication, and increasing public participation in Ancram's agriculture.

Action 1: Create a "Farming in Ancram" packet for distribution to new town residents. This can also be made available to farmers wishing to further educate their neighbors on farming operations.

Action 2: Create an annual farm tour for town residents, local and county officials.

Action 3: Encourage the Ancram Preservation Group to continue to include working farms in their biannual "Working Landscapes" Tour.

Action 4: Establish a mechanism to deal with farm-neighbor disputes through the right-to-farm law (See Appendix 9).

Action 5: Engage the NYS Department of Ag & Markets and the Columbia County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board when reviewing applications, and developing and revising local ordinances.

Action 6: Develop a public education campaign to connect consumer support of local agriculture with the benefits of open-space, clean water and air, and enhanced wildlife habitat that working farms and forestland provide. Include input from the Cooperative Extension, Soil & Water Conservation District, and Columbia Land Conservancy on specific farm-related conservation projects they have worked on. Tie the education campaign to specific initiatives under this plan to build public political support for protection tools.

Action 7: Continue efforts to keep members of the agricultural community involved in local government and planning.

Action 8: Investigate the opportunity to participate in the County Fair.

Action 9: Hold a county-wide annual farmer symposium at which farmers have the opportunity to network with farmers.

Action 10: Encourage local farms to offer tours to school students, and make schools and teachers aware of available educational tours for students by distributing materials to area schools at the beginning of each school year.

Action 11: Coordinate with the New York Farm Bureau's *Ag in the Classroom* program.

Action 12: Encourage school administrators (and school board) to purchase local produce for schools (Farm to School Project has been successful in many other parts of New York State).

Action 13: Ensure notice requirements under the NYS Agricultural District Law are followed. Provide real estate brokers and lawyers with Agricultural District maps, the above "Farming in Ancram" packet, and printed disclosure notices of agricultural operations. Educate them on the New York State Agriculture and Markets requirement for the disclosure statement and encourage them to share these materials with their clients (See Appendix 9, page 95).

Goal 4. Ancram will partner with regional, county, State and Federal agencies and organizations to promote agriculture.

Objective A: Develop and promote countywide, regional, and state-level programs that support Ancram's agricultural goals and objectives.

Action 1: Work with New York State, Columbia County, and local organizations (such as Cornell Cooperative Extension and Columbia Land Conservancy) to create a clearing house of information that includes websites, training and seminars, staff, and funding opportunities for ag businesses and farmers. This should be tied into all new farm start-up programs. There are many materials and programs already in existence but they are not consolidated in any "one-stop-shopping" resource. Each agency or organization has its own list and programs. A single portal for information on agricultural programs should be developed.

Action 2: The County should ensure that town tax assessors have knowledge of the state's agricultural assessment program and offer continuous training as necessary. The County should also undertake opportunities to educate farmland owners on the program, and how to apply and comply with ag assessment requirements for their farmland.

Goal 5. Local markets for agricultural products produced in Ancram will be available.

Objective A: Increase the variety, accessibility and availability of farm products to local residents.

Action 1: Develop and promote an "Eat Local" campaign so that area residents are aware of the benefits of eating local as well as where local farms are and what products are available. Develop a brochure, map and/or website to help.

Objective B: Market and brand local farm products.

Action 1: Develop a local brand for local agricultural products.

Action 2: Explore establishing "A Taste of Ancram", a local retail operation to sell local products.

Action 3: Create a local farm directory website that lists location, products, availability, prices, etc. Work with local farms and encourage them to be listed in this and other similar websites. Inform area farmers about the New York Marketmaker website, an interactive mapping system that locates businesses and markets of agricultural products in New York and provides a link between producers and consumers (www.marketmaker.uiuc.edu). Coordinate and work with the Chamber of Commerce, Cooperative Extension, and Columbia Land Conservancy on the farm map "Columbia County Farms and Farm Markets" to make sure that all appropriate farms in Ancram are included.

Action 4: Examine the approach and materials of the Columbia County Bounty, Grow NY, Pride of NY, and Hudson Valley Fresh. Determine how Ancram farms might increase their involvement. Advocate support for and expansion of these programs with the County and New York State.

Action 5: Explore opportunites to sell local produce to schools.

Objective C: Work regionally to promote localization of food and fiber products.

Action 1: Use existing resources such as the Agricultural Marketing Resource Center (www.agmrc.org) and the Small Scale Food Entrepreneurship program (www.nysaes.cornell.edu) to promote value-added farming, CSAs, niche farming and agri-tourism opportunities.

Ancram: Historic Farming Community Moving Forward

Columbia County Actions

Ancram recognizes that the Town alone can only address certain aspects of the issues facing agriculture. In addition to those actions previously presented, the following action items need to be carried out by Columbia County and New York State in order to ensure that the state remains viable for agriculture.

1. Agriculture must be a critical component of county economic development policy and programs, and receive the same government attention as other commercial and industrial businesses.

2. Complete and then implement a county-wide Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan.

3. The County Plan should have a strong focus on developing farm infrastructure, both distribution and small to medium processing operations. The "Eat Local" market in the Hudson Valley is regional in scope and needs County activity; small towns like Ancram cannot do this. Infrastructure should include community kitchens, cold storage facilities, slaughterhouses, and regional distribution networks. The County should work with NY State to tie into distribution networks required to implement Governor Cuomo's plan to revitalize the Hunt's Point Market and provide produce for all income levels in the city.

4. Complete a county-level ground- and surface-water study which incorporates analysis of water quality and quantity needs for agricultural activities. Develop programs to ensure water quantity and quality.

5. Provide technical and grant writing assistance to town governments as they implement local comprehensive and agriculture plans.

6. Continue support of Cornell Cooperative Extension, Columbia County Soil and Water Conservation District, the Columbia Land Conservancy, and other agencies and organizations that support agriculture.

7. Columbia County should explore other agricultural economic development programs to recruit and retain agricultural businesses. These economic development programs should be on par with other Columbia Partnership and IDA efforts in terms of funding, effort, and staff. This could include formation of a county-wide local development

corporation oriented to agricultural businesses, establishment of an agri-business revolving loan fund. Currently, the Hudson Valley Agribusiness Development Corporation acts in this capacity.

8. Establish mechanisms to aid in the protection of farmland such as PDR, LDR programs, equity insurance or mortgage programs, and a county-wide Transfer of Development Rights program.

9. Columbia County should build the capacity of existing education and training institutions to provide on-the-job training and fostering of agriculture-related skill development. County support for ag-skill development at the high school level, community college level, and through Cornell Cooperative Extension is critical. For example, an intern program that matches students with famers or a rotating internship program that exposes students to different kinds of farm operations would be beneficial for both farmers and student.

10. Columbia County should consider investing in this critical infrastructure by creating a fiber optic network within the County for farms, residents, schools, and businesses.

11. In the Columbia County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan, include a comparison of tax assessments and rates for County farmers by Town compared to other counties in the State.

12. Support state-wide real estate transfer tax legislation.

New York State Actions

1. Provide additional incentives to landowners who rent their land for farmland to maintain the rented land farm base.

2. Create additional funding streams to assist towns and counties to implement the ag and farmland protection plans the State has already sponsored. Explore innovations in funding such as use of an impervious surface tax (that could discourage excessive creation of impervious surfaces and use the funds to promote farmland preservation), or use of rural revolving loan funds.

3. Encourage New York State to develop programs and incentives that encourage small farms and new small farm start-ups. For example, lowering the ag assessment requirement of $50,000 income for farmers having less than seven acres for a few years would help farm start-ups. Another example would be to allow for tax incentives or ag exemptions on all farm building that exist, whether currently used or not. This may help preserve existing agricultural buildings for future agricultural uses. Offer other agricultural exemptions to reduce taxes on farm structures.

4. Increase the Farm to School initiatives. Create policies that require state agencies and organizations (such as the SUNY system) to include local agricultural products in their procurements.

5. Expand local options for raising funds for PDR and LDR programs including passage of the real estate transfer taxes, use of impact fees, and other alternatives.

6. Provide funding to reduce farm production costs such as on-farm methane digesters and use solar or small wind facilities to reduce energy costs for farms.

7. Allow local governments to use the penalty dollars that are collected when land that has received ag assessments is taken out of production for local PDR funding and other new farm incentives.

8. Create county by county information on cost of services, cost/benefit analyses, economic multipliers, and fiscal impacts of land conversion. This information is important to help local governments understand the implications of farms and farmland loss to their communities.

9. Develop mechanisms to help local communities bring their local planning to be more consistent with the NY Ag Districts program.

10. Provide additional information and training for local officials and landowners about the NYS Ag District Program, its purposes, and its requirements.

11. Provide a mechanism, possibly through Cornell Cooperative Extension, to provide specific business plan development and marketing support for direct sale, niche farming, and value added operations.

12. Change state level policies that require creation of new jobs as part of the ranking criteria for economic development project proposals.

13. Provide more training for local officials using up-to-date technology such as webinars on a variety of topics including:

    - Valuation of farm properties (assessors), to support local efforts to encourage regular review of agricultural exemptions
    - Provisions of NYS Ag District Law
    - Operational details of farmland protection
    - Farmland protection techniques for towns and their attorneys.
    - More tools and models for local leaders to help them effectively incorporate agriculture into their plans, codes and ordinances. Create a real toolbox that the average volunteer local official can easily and readily adapt to their situation.
    - Assist in the development of a standard model for application of a transfer of development rights program.

14. Initiate state level programs to plan for local "foodsheds" to ensure that New York can "feed itself" in the future.

15. In Governor Cuomo's plan to revitalize Hunts Point Market in New York City, include development of cross-county distribution networks to connect producers in Columbia County to this program, working with those in Columbia County developing the distribution networks within the county.

Implementation Steps for Ancram

The chart on the following two pages outlines an action plan to implement the strategies recommended in Ancram's Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan. Leadership from the Town Board is critical to put this plan into effect. The Town Board has the ultimate responsibility for implementing this plan, but to be successful, they will need assistance from various boards, agencies, organizations as well as support from Ancram residents.

The Plan calls for a variety of actions:

- policy decisions,
- program initiation and management,
- regulatory changes,
- coordination with regional organizations and agencies, and
- seeking and securing funding.

The chart summarizes all the actions identified in this Plan, but does not detail each strategy. As such, it is not a substitute for the details contained in the rest of the Plan.

Key to Action Priorities

A = Highest priority, to be implemented immediately following plan adoption

B = High priority, to be implemented within 2 years following plan adoption

C = Priority, to be implemented within 2-5 years of adoption

D = Important, but not a critical priority, to be implemented within 5-7 years following plan adoption

Ongoing = An action item that starts immediately and continues throughout the plan timeframe

Implementation of Ancram Agriculture & Farmland Protection Plan

Recommended Strategic Actions	Priority	Responsibility	Plan Reference
1. Adopt this Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan as an addendum to the Town of Ancram Comprehensive Plan. Follow procedures as per NYS Town Law 272-a.	A	Town Board	Goal 1, Action 1
2. Create an Agricultural Advisory Council (AAC) and charge them with implementing this Plan.	A	Town Board	Goal 1, Action 2
3. Initiate and implement a business development program for Ancram farm products as identified in this Plan. Initial projects to be pursued: - farm store and product brand "A Taste of Ancram" - processing local farm produce through local kitchens - farm tour brochure	Ongoing	Agricultural Advisory Council (AAC) with Town Board support as needed	Goal 1 Actions A (5-7), C (1-2), Goal 2 Actions A 1, A 4,and C (1-2), Goal 3 Actions 1-12, Goal 4, Action (1-2), Goal 5 all actions
4. Identify and work with individual farmers on specific development programs for their farm. Seek funding where possible – grants, available PDRs: - specific farm projects to improve profitability & environmental impact, CAC - explore bringing new farmers to Ancram with large landowners, CLC	Ongoing	AAC with CAC, CLC and Town Board support as needed	Goal 1, Action 4
5. Adopt a right-to-farm law.	A	Zoning Revisions Committee, Town Board, with Planning Board and ZBA input	Goal 3, Action 5
6. Review and adopt farm-friendly zoning regulations as called for in this Plan.	B	Zoning Revisions Committee, Town Board, with Planning Board and ZBA input	Goal 1, Action B (1)
7. Develop incentive programs as outlined in this Plan to promote farms and protect farmland.	B to C	Zoning Revisions Committee, Town Board, with Planning Board and ZBA input	Goal 2, Action B (1-3)

Recommended Strategic Actions	Priority	Responsibility	Plan Reference
8. Provide Columbia County with "County Actions" as identified in this Plan, and convey the critical importance of county-involvement in agricultural promotion and protection programs as identified.	B, after Agricultural Advisory Council is formed	Agricultural Advisory Council with support of CAC, CLC	County Actions (1-7)
9. Provide New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, as well as state and federal legislators, the "New York State Actions" as identified in this Plan, and convey the critical importance of State-involvement in agricultural and protection programs as identified.	B, after Agricultural Advisory Council is formed	Agricultural Advisory Council with support of CAC, CLC	State Actions (1-14)
10. Review and amend Town Highway Standards to ensure maintenance of existing, and development of new roads are consistent with rural road standards.	C	Town Supervisor, Highway Superintendent, with Planning Board and ZBA input	Goal 1, Action D (1)
11. Communicate with surrounding towns and work to develop an inter-municipal agreement to collaborate on implementing agricultural protection and promotion programs. Use assistance of County and county-based organizations for assistance.	C	Agricultural Advisory Council	Goal 1, Action 3
12. Consider establishing and funding Town-based PDR and LDR programs.	D	Agricultural Advisory Council	Goal 2, Action A (2-3)
13. Study and establish on a regional basis an inter-municipal TDR program.	D	Agricultural Advisory Council	Goal 2, Action A (2-3)

Appendix 1: Farms and Farm Resources

1-A. Farm Operations and Farmland

Feature	Acres
(100) Agricultural	22.3
(105) Productive Vacant Land	3,376.5
(112) Dairy	1,218.2
(113) Cattle	357.7
(117) Horse Farm	1,235.8
(120) Field Crops	3,540.6
Non-Farm class properties, but identified as farmland through planning process	6,689.2
Total Farmland Acres and (Average Size of Farm)	16,457
Number of parcels rented for farmland (estimate)	133
Average Size of Farm Parcel	77.5

Source: Town of Ancram Assessor, Committee, and field observation
*Each parcel of land is assigned a property class code by the Town Assessor. All agricultural land uses are coded between 100 and 200. The codes presented in this table represent the different types of parcel classifications given to agricultural operations by the local assessor.

Farmland Soils	Acres
Prime Farmland in the Town	4,127
Soils of Statewide Importance in the Town	7,844
Prime Farmland Soils on farms	2,827
Soils of statewide importance on farms	4,858.2

Source: Columbia County Soil Survey

Farm Employment for Residents 16+ yrs	1990	2000
# with Farming, Fishing and Forestry as Occupations	69	41
# in Farming, Fishing and Forestry Industry	78	83

Source: US Census, 1990 and 2000

1-B. Snapshot of Ancram Farms and Farmland Owners

In preparation for conducting a survey of farms and farmland owners, the Farmland Protection Plan Committee developed a list of farm operators in Ancram. The following represents the diversity of agricultural operations known to exist in the Town of Ancram:

Beef Cattle
Chicken and Eggs
Dairy
Dried Flowers
Field Crops
Goats
Hay
Highland Cattle
Horses/Horse Boarding
Ice Cream
Organic Fruit and Vegetables
Organic Meat
Plants
Sheep
Vegetables

Results of Survey

During the Fall of 2009, all farmers and farmland owners in Town were included in a farm survey. A summary of the results are as follows:

1. The survey represents 22 farm operations, together which account for about 80% of the acreage farmed in Ancram. Hay is the most common farming activity (on 10 farms), followed by dairy (9 farms), beef (7 farms), cash crops (6 farms), and then horses (4 farms), vegetables (4 farms), dairy products (3 farms) and other activities take place on those farms. There were no Christmas tree or forestry operations that participated. One farm also listed they do custom services for other farms. Comparing the type of farm with profitability (see Cross-tab Analysis, below), fruit and cash crop farms had the highest percent of operations considered profitable of all the farms that participated. Horses, other livestock, beef, vegetable, and hay farms had the highest percentage of operations that considered themselves unprofitable. About one-third of dairy farms considered themselves unprofitable.

2. The survey represents a total of 65 year round workers and 42 seasonal workers. There were more full-time workers employed on these farms than part-time, and more year-round, than seasonal workers. The average number of workers was two or three. These 22 farms represent 57 full-time (year-round) workers. Compared to other industries in the Town of Ancram, farming contributes the most employment opportunities (other than perhaps the paper mill).

3. The average number of hours each week spent on the farm was 60 hours for full-time year round workers, 43 for seasonal full-time workers, 16 for part time year round workers, and 18 hours for part time seasonal workers.

4. A total of 48.5 workers live on these farms, with an average of 2.6 persons per farm.

5. A total of 36 housing units are provided for farm workers, with an average of 2 per farm.

6. These farms support a total of 76 households with an average of four per farm. Farms help support any number of households, ranging from 1 to 13. There was not a correlation between the number of households supported and profitability (See cross-tab analysis below).

7. These farmers own land in Ancram, Pine Plains, and Gallatin. No land was owned in Copake. However, these farmers rented land in all towns including Copake. A total of 5,042 acres of land are owned by participating farms. More land was rented than owned. In Ancram, 4,374 acres were rented. A total of 6,695 acres of land are rented by farmers in Ancram, with the most being in Ancram.

8. Most of the land is used for cropland and pasture, although about 634 acres are owned woodland (with an additional 423 rented woodland acres). Farmstead complex land uses are both owned and rented (80.5 acres owned and 33.5 acres rented). About 98 acres of land is considered idle. About 2,515 acres are owned cropland, and 3,027 are rented cropland.

9. Secondary farm activities were quite diverse and included caretaker, pick your own, horse training, nursery, custom services, Holstein replacements, greenhouse, alternative energy, retail beef, and gravel sales.

10. Three farmers indicated they operated an organic farm. Of those three, one was profitable, one breaks-even, and one was unprofitable. Non-organic farms had fewer operations that were profitable, and slightly more that were unprofitable compared to farms that were organic.

11. There was no strong opposition to any of the agriculture and farmland protection strategies offered in the survey. One or two people indicated opposition. All strategies had some level of strong support. The

strategies with the highest level of "strong support" was farm friendly zoning, followed by the Ancram Comprehensive Plan agricultural strategies, information to town residents on the ag assessment program, discussions with non-farmer landowners. Overall, there was majority support for all ideas presented in Question #11.

12. When asked to rank the strategies, farm friendly zoning, followed by education were the top ideas participants felt the town should pursue. Attracting new farms and farmers, implementing the Comprehensive Plan, reducing taxes, and providing ag assessments were other important strategies for Ancram to pursue.

13. Other farm-related businesses desired included organic farming, grain storage, milling, value-added products, farm equipment sales, more vegetable and fruit farms, community kitchen as part of the town center, store for local dairy products, cooperative markets, USDA slaughterhouse, smoke house, repair businesses and other businesses oriented to service ag.

14 and 15. There were many different opinions on challenges facing farms. Very challenging issues include machinery and production costs, fuel costs, land prices, property taxes, availability of farm labor, and low sales prices for ag products. Access to adequate financing, water availability, environmental regulations, and residential encroachment/nuisance complaints were not challenges to over half of participants. All issues included in the survey had some farmers who thought they were challenges and those that felt they were not challenging at all.

16. A variety of opportunities are recognized for Ancram farms. However, taking advantage of the proximity to markets such as New York City and building on the desire for local foods was the most common response. Value added products, riding schools, more horse boarding, and developing breeding stock were other opportunities identified by participants. One participant suggested development of an Ancram Rural Preservation Center to organize visits to local ag enterprises, develop eco tourism, and provide a focus for sustainable development.

17. A wide range of sales took place in 2008 on Ancram farms. Seven farms indicated their sales were between $200,000 and 499,999. Four farms were between $50,000 and $99,999. Three were under $10,000 and three were between $10,000 and $24,999. One farm had over $500,000 in sales in 2008. Overall, 64% of participating farms had sales over $50,000 however. The average sale listed was $148,000 (averaged over 6 farms who offered that information). 100% of the farms with sales less

than $50,000 indicated they broke-even or were unprofitable. Eighty-three percent of farms with sales between $50,000 and $200,000 broke-even, or were unprofitable. Thirty-eight percent of farms with sales greater than $200,000 were profitable and 63% were unprofitable or broke-even. This indicates that the larger the farm, the more likely they were to be profitable (see Cross-tab Analysis, below).

18. A wide range of operating and capital expenditures took place on Ancram farms in 2008. Overall, 59% had expenses over $50,000. Five had expenses in the range of $50,000 to $99,999, four had between $100,000 and 199,999, three between $200,000 and $499,999 and one had expenses over $500,000. The average expenditures offered (by five farms) was $188,000 (in all cases the expenditures were greater than the sales). This question illustrates the economic difficulty facing many of Ancram's farms.

19. Eight farms indicated they were unprofitable over the past three years (42% of those that answered this question). The same number said they break even and 19% said they were profitable (4 farms).

20. 71% of farms said they had off-farm income to help make ends meet. Four farms did not have off-farm income, and two farms sometimes use off-farm income. Farms indicating they had more off-farm income also indicated they broke-even or were unprofitable (see Cross-tabs Analysis, below).

21. The major trend felt to be most likely was farm diversification. There were many different feelings about likely trends: some felt that there would be fewer, but larger farms, some felt there would be a larger number of smaller farms, and about an equal number of participants also felt that there would be a movement of farms out of the area. Significantly, few felt that there would be no significant change to farming. Although the direction of the future is unsure, there was a significant number of participants that felt some change would be taking place.

22. Eleven farms sell their products retail and direct to the consumer. Nine are part of a coop or milk company. A smaller number of farms retail through farm stands (4), through a farmers market (4), through other retail outlets (4), and through restaurants (3). One farm has a CSA. Farms with retail sales (direct to consumer, farm stand, or farm market) had less profitability. None indicated they were profitable.

23. This question explored farmers plans for the future. Eleven farms

indicated they plan on staying the same size over the next ten years. Six plan on expanding their farm operation within 1 year and two plan on expanding within 5 years. Six plan on diversifying their farm operation, and six will be transferring their farm to a family member (five within 5 years). One farmer said they would be decreasing the farm operation within 5 years, 2 will be selling their land for farm use, 3 plan on selling the land for non-farm use, one may relocate and farm elsewhere, and one plans on starting a new farm operation on their land. Overall, this question shows that most farms participating have long-term plans to remain farming or expand/diversify their operations in the future. This is a very positive outlook especially in light of the income information explored earlier in this survey related to profitability.

24. 54% of participants said they were very concerned about the loss of farmland in Ancram, while 40% said they were somewhat concerned. One was not very concerned at all. Most of the concerns related to the high cost of doing business with a low return, and loss of available land to farm.

25. 36% of participants said they have excellent relationships with their non-farm neighbors and 59% said they were good. Only one farm indicated their relationship was poor. Negative interactions with non-farm neighbors do not seem to be a big issue in Ancram.

26. Communication and education were recognized as the most important strategies to improve and strengthen the relationship between farms and non-farm neighbors.

27. Ages of family farm-workers were wide-ranging. The median age range was between 45 and 64, and these 28 accounted for 44%of the total. 16 family members were between 25 and 44, 25% of the total. Ten were aged 65 to 74 and two were over 75 years of age. Eight family farm-workers were under age 25.

28. Farmers have operated their farms ranging from new start-ups (two years) to over 75 years. The average age of farm operation was 27.7 years.

29. Farms have remained in farm production a long time. Many long-standing farms participated in the survey. Years in farm production ranged from four years to 230 years. The average was 122 years.

Cross-Tab Analysis of Ancram Farming Survey 2009

	19- Profitablity				
6 - Number of Households	1 - Profitable	- Break Even	3 - Unprofitable	Not Answered	Grand Total
0			1	NA	1
0.25			1	NA	1
1		1	1	NA	2
2		1	1	NA	2
3	1	3	1	NA	5
4	1	2	1	NA	4
5	1		1	NA	2
6		1		NA	1
10			1	NA	1
13	1			NA	1
Grand Total	4	8	8	NA	20
10 - Organic	1 - Profitable	2 - Break Even	3 - Unprofitable	Not Answered	Grand Total
1 - Yes	1	1	1		3
2 - No	3	5	7	1	16
3 - Becoming		1	1		2
Grand Total	4	7	9	1	21
17- 2008 Sales	1 - Profitable	2 - Break Even	3 - Unprofitable	Not Answered	Grand Total
1 - Under $10,000		1	2	A	3
2 - $10,000-25,000		2	1	A	3
4 - $50,000-100,000		3	1	A	4
5 - $100,000-200,000	1		1	A	2
6 - $200,000-500,000	2	2	3	A	7
7 - Over $500,000	1			A	1
Grand Total	4	8	8	A	20
20 - Off Farm Income	1 - Profitable	2 - Break Even	3 - Unprofitable	Not Answered	Grand Total
1 - Yes	1	6	8	A	15
2 - No	2	2		A	4
3 - Sometimes	1		1	A	2
Grand Total	**4**	**8**	**9**	**A**	

1 - Farm Activities	1 - Profitable	2 - Break Even	3 - Unprofitable	Not Answered	Grand Total
dairy	2	4	3	0	9
beef	0	2	4	1	7
horses	1	0	3	0	4
other livestock	0	0	2	0	2
dairy products	0	2	1	0	3
fruits	1	0	0	0	1
vegetables	1	1	2	0	4
horitculture	0	1	0	0	1
xmas tree	0	0	0	0	0
hay	1	4	6	1	12
cash crop	3	1	2	0	6
forestry	0	0	0	0	0
other	1	1	2	1	5
22 - Marketing	1 - Profitable	2 - Break Even	3 - Unprofitable	Not Answered	Grand Total
Retail to Consumer	2	5	5	NA	12
Retail Farm Stand	0	1	3	NA	4
Retail Farm Market	0	2	2	NA	4
Milk Co-Op	3	4	2	NA	9
CSA	1	0	0	NA	1
Other Retail	1	1	2	NA	4
Restaurants	0	1	2	NA	3
Other	1	0	0	NA	1

1-C. Highlights of US Census of Agriculture by Zip Code

Appendix 3 and 4 details data from the US Census of Agriculture by zip code. This census is completed every five years. Note that the zip code data does not match the borders of the Town of Ancram. This data extends into other areas as well. However, this data can be very useful to illustrate general trends from farms in the Ancram area.

The following summary table and chart compares highlights of the 1997 to 2007 data for Zip Codes 12502 and 12503:

	# Farms	# 1-49 Acres	# 50 to 999 Acres	# Where Farming is Principal Job	# with Cropland Harvested	# with Cattle-Calves	# with Beef Cows	# with Milk Cows
1997*	24	4	20	15	19	11	2	7
2002	31	10	21	20	22	8	1	5
2007	31	6	23	18	23	11	8	7

Source: US Census of Agriculture, 1997 and 2002.

This chart shows that farming is relatively stable in Ancram. There are more farms, and the other indicators show gains and not losses.

1-D. County Trends

Understanding the agricultural trends facing Columbia County assists in identifying changes or issues that may be influencing farms in the Town of Ancram. US Agricultural Census data from the 1992 and 2007 were used to compare these trends. Unlike in the Ancram area, overall, the County shows several significant trends in agriculture. This includes a loss of farms, farmland, and cropland. There were fewer large farms and more, smaller farms. On the positive side, net incomes and market values have increased. Expenses were stable but still high. There are many farms (about 34%) that earned less than $2500 in 2002 compared to 16% in 1992. The difficult economy is reflected in many more farm operators have off-farm occupations. Dairy farming decreased significantly but the number of beef, sheep and other livestock increased.

1-E. Ag Districts

Description	Acres
Land in a NY Certified Ag District	20,637 acres
Farmland in a NY Certified Ag District	20,190 acres
Number of farmland parcels in a NY Certified Ag District	570
Total Acreage in the Town of Ancram	27,474.8 acres

Source: New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets

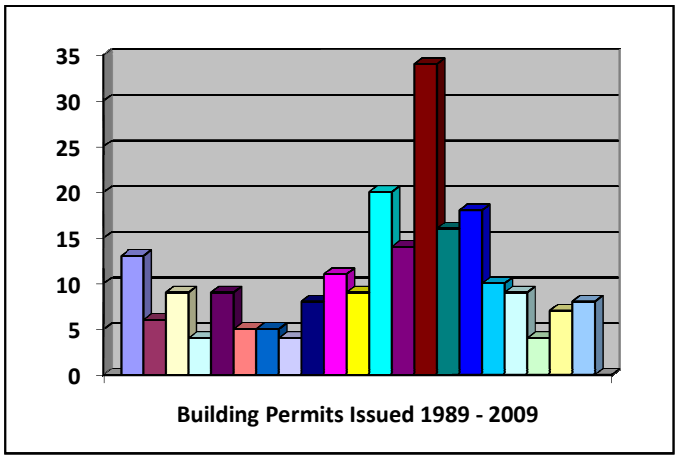
1-F. Economic and Fiscal Conditions

Agricultural Class Parcels Included in 2007 Town Assessment Roll					
Property Use Code	**Category**	**Number of Parcels**	**Number of Parcels with Ag Assessments**	**Average Land Value ($)**	**Total Market Land Value ($)**
100	Agricultural	1	1	112,000	112,000
105	Productive Vacant Land	49	42	124,418	6,096,486
112	Dairy	9	9	278,316	2,504,840
113	Cattle	1	2	291,700	1,987,329
117	Horse Farm	9	9	220,814	1,987,329
120	Field Crops	28	22	196,330	5,497,240
Land with Farm use, but not in Farm Property Class		114	86	120,397	13,725,237
Totals		212	170	143,719	30,468,432

Source: Town of Ancram Assessor

Appendix 2: Housing, Development and Demographic Trends

2-A. Housing and Development Trends



Year	# Building Permits Issued for New Residences
1989	13
1990	6
1991	9
1992	4
1993	9
1994	5
1995	5
1996	4
1997	8
1998	11
1999	9
2000	20
2001	14
2002	34
2003	16
2004	18
2005	10
2006	9
2007	4
2008	7
2009	8

Source: Town of Ancram Building Inspector

In the past 20 years, 223 permits have been issued for new homes in Ancram. Over the years there has been much variation in the number of new housing permits issued. The peak was between 2000 and 2004 when about 32% of all building permits for past 20 years were issued. Since 2005, about seven to 10 new homes per year have been built. The ten-year average number of new homes was about 8 per year for the 1990's and about 14 per year during the first decade of 2000. The table above illustrates that the peak year new home starts increased 15% per year and "average years" showed about 3.5% to 4% increases.

Between 1997 and 2007, 36 minor and 7 major subdivisions were approved in Ancram. By definition, a minor subdivision creates four or less lots and a major creates 5 or more.

2-B. Demographic Trends

Demographic	1990	2000	% Change	Estimated 2010	Projected for 2015
Persons	1510	1513	0%	1629	1606
Households	559	595	6.4%	657	653
Housing Units	825	823	0%*	NA	NA
Occupied housing units	559	595	6.4%	657	653
Vacant housing units	266	228	-14%	NA	NA

Source: US Census for 1990 and 2000.

*Note that while the US Census did not record any increase in new housing units between 1990 and 2000, we know from Town data, 90 building permits were issued for new homes (an approximate 11% increase) during that time frame. This discrepancy may be due to many of those new homes being classified as secondary residences and not counted in the Census in the same manner.

A 90 unit increase coupled with no population growth represents a common demographic seen in Upstate New York. Many places have increased new home development that does not result in population gains. A difference between population growth and housing growth is an indication of sprawl without growth. While some aspects of an unchanging population are beneficial (no immediate added demands on schools, for example coupled with an increased tax base from secondary homes), other aspects could negatively impact farming (conversion of farmlands to residential use).

The population change estimated for 2010 is 1629 persons and for 2015 is 1606. That is about an 8% increase in population over the 2000 level. The number of households and housing units is estimated to increase by 58 – almost a 10% increase.

2-C. Buildout Analysis

A build-out analysis is an exercise designed to estimate the amount of development that can possibly occur if all developable land in a Town, Village, or County is built according to that municipality's current land use regulations. The buildout analysis applies current land use regulations, considers environmental constraints that would limit development in certain areas, and calculates the total residential density allowed at full buildout of the municipality. It does not predict when this would occur, at what rate it would occur, or where it would occur first. It only predicts the possible end result.

The general process followed to calculate full buildout conditions is:

- Identify areas that already have residential development and therefore would not allow new development.
- Identify properties subject to conservation easements, or are owned by government entities not likely to allow development.
- Identify areas in the Town having environmental constraints that would not support new residential development.
- Calculate the amount of new residential development allowed by the current land use regulations in the remaining undeveloped areas of the Town.

A geographic information system (GIS) software program is used to conduct the analysis. In essence, the analysis calculates the total land base of the Town, subtracts all lands having environmental constraints and completely built areas, and then applies the various development rules to calculate the number of allowable new residences. For purposes of this analysis, the buildout assumes that all new development would be single-family homes.

These calculations are estimates. The GIS layers are only representations of what is actually found in the real world, not exact replicas. The processing of the data also introduces a certain amount of error, and can increase the inaccuracy of the data layers. The only way to get an accurate count of allowed residential uses on a particular property is to do an on-site survey of existing conditions.

The following table summarizes the results of the Buildout analysis. See also Buildout Maps in Appendix 6 for illustrated results. These results show that there is a potential of between 4,533 and 5,337 new homes in Ancram. The difference is whether wetlands, floodplains, and water areas are allowed to be included in the calculation used for determining how many lots could be created on a parcel. Even with changes to the zoning that establishes rules that prevent "counting" of environmentally constrained lands when calculating development density, 2,483 homes could be built in Ancram. Comparison of these locations with priority farmlands (See Appendix 6) shows that a majority of these homes would result in conversion of ag land to non-farm use.

With Current Minimum Lot Size Requirements as Estab'd in Zoning						
Zoning District	R Rural Residence	R-1 Low Density Residence	R-2 Hamlet Residence	B-1 General Business	I-1 Light Industrial	**Total**
Existing Residences	629	91	137	12	0	**869**
Minimum Lot Size	3 acres	2 acres	1 acre	1 acre	No Residential Development Allowed	
Potential New Residences (No environ. constraints considered)	5,035	130	166	6	0	**5,337**
Potential New Residences (Water, Wetland, and Flood Hazard constraints considered	4,287	119	141	6	0	**4,553**
PotentialNew Residences (All environ. Constraints considered	**2,277**	**83**	**119**	**4**	**0**	**2,483**

Using the Proposed Minimum Lot Size Requirements as Recommended in the Town of Ancram Comprehensive Plan							
Zoning District	A Agriculture	R-1 Residential	R-2 Residential	C Carson Road	B-1 Business Residential	I-1 Light Industrial	**Total**
Existing Residences	588	104	83	31	6/R	0	**869**
Minimum Lot Size	3.5 acres	1 acres	2 acre	3 acres	1/2 acre	No Residential Development Allowed	
Potential New Residences (No environ-mental constraints considered	4,259	85	83	131	105	0	**4,663**
Potential New Residences (Water, Wetland, and Flood Hazard constraints considered)	3,645	67	68	119	86		**3,985**
Potential New Residences (All environmental constraints considered)	1,943	55	46	51	53	0	**2,148**

Appendix 3: US Agriculture Census Zip Code Level Data

Every five years, the United States carries out an agricultural census. That data is available at the national, state, county and zip code level. While it is not available at the township level, looking at some of the major zip code areas within Ancram offers more detailed information about the type of farming going on and its characteristics as well as trends. The chart below illustrates ten years of Agricultural Census data for zip codes 12502 (Ancram) and 12503 (Ancramdale).

	Year	**1997**	**2002**	**2007**	**1997**	**2002**	**2007**
	Zip Code	**12502**	**12502**	**12502**	**12503**	**12503**	**12503**
	Place Name	**Ancram**	**Ancram**	**Ancram**	**Ancramdale**	**Ancramdale**	**Ancramdale**
Farms by size	All farms	6	7	12	18	24	19
	1 to 49 acres	0	0	1	4	10	5
	50 to 999 acres	6	7	10	14	14	13
	1,000 acres or more	0	0	1	0	0	1
Value of all agricultural products sold	Total farms	6	7	12	18	24	19
	Less than $50,000 (farms)	2 (<10K)	7	9	6(<10k)	16	12
	$50,000 to $249,999 (farms)	1(10K to 100K)	0	2	6(10K to 100K)	6	4
	$250,000 or more (farms)	3(>100K)	0	1	6(>100K)	*	3
Value of all crops sold, including nursery and greenhouse	Total farms	2	*	11	10	12	12
	Less than $50,000 (farms)	0	*	8	0	9	10
	$50,000 to $249,999 (farms)	0	0	3	0	*	2
Value of sales grains, oilseeds,	Total farms	0	*	1	0	*	1

	Year	1997	2002	2007	1997	2002	2007
	Zip Code	**12502**	**12502**	**12502**	**12503**	**12503**	**12503**
dry beans and dry peas	$50,000 or more (farms)	0	0	0	0	0	1
Value of sales fruits, tree nuts, and berries	Total farms	0	*	1	0	0	0
Value of sales cut Christmas trees and short rotation woody crops	Total farms	0	0	0	0	*	0
	$50,000 or more (farms)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Value of sales other crops and hay	Total farms	0	*	0	0	8	0
	$50,000 or more (farms)	0	0	0	0	*	0
Value of all livestock, poultry and their products sold	Total farms	4	0	5	13	7	9
	Less than $50,000 (farms)	0	0	4	0	*	5
	$50,000 to $249,999 (farms)	0	0		0	*	1
	$250,000 or more (farms)	0	0	1	0	*	3
Value of sales hogs and pigs	Total farms	0	0	2	0	*	1
	$50,000 or more (farms)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Value of sales milk and other dairy products from cows	Total farms	2	0	1	6	5	6
	$50,000 or more (farms)	0	0	0	0	5	3
Value of sales cattle and calves	Total farms	2	0	3	10	5	6

	Year	1997	2002	2007	1997	2002	2007
	Zip Code	**12502**	**12502**	**12502**	**12503**	**12503**	**12503**
	$50,000 or more (farms)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Value of sales sheep, goats and their products	Total farms	0	0	2	1	*	2
	$50,000 or more (farms)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Value of sales horses, ponies, mules, burros and donkeys	Total farms	2	0	7	3	*	7
	$50,000 or more (farms)	0	0	0	0	0	1
Value of sales poultry and eggs	Total farms	0	0	4	0	0	0
	$50,000 or more (farms)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Farms by tenure	Full owners	4	*	10	10	9	10
	Part owners	0	*	1	7	14	8
	Tenants	2	*	1	1	*	1
	Farms with principal operator living on the farm operated	4	*	12	17	24	15
	Farms with principal operator reporting primary occupation as farming	3	*	6	12	20	12
	Farms with principal operator reporting working off the farm for 200 days or more	3	*	6	2		6
Cropland harvested	Total farms	6	7	11	13	15	12
	1 to 49 acres (farms)	4	5	5	4	5	4
	50 to 499 acres (farms)	2	*	5	8	5	7
	500 acres or more (farms)	0	0	1	1	5	1
	Cropland used for pasture or grazing, total farms	3	7	6	11	13	12
	Cropland idle or used for cover crops or soil-improvement but NOT harvested and NOT pastured or grazed, total farms	0	*	1	0	5	3

	Year	1997	2002	2007	1997	2002	2007
	Zip Code	**12502**	**12502**	**12502**	**12503**	**12503**	**12503**
	Cropland on which all crops failed or were abandoned, total farms	0	0	1	0	0	4
	Cropland in cultivated summer fallow, total farms	0	*	2	1	0	0
	Total woodland, total farms	3	7	9	10	13	15
Permanent pasture and rangeland	Total farms	2	0	6	9	6	3
	100 acres or more (farms)	0	0	0	3	0	0
All other land	Total farms	5	7	0	10	16	0
	100 acres or more (farms)	0	0	0	3	*	0
	Cattle and calves inventory, total farms	2	*	3	9	7	8
	Beef cow inventory, total farms	0	0	3	2	*	5
	Milk cow inventory, total farms	2	0	1	5	5	6
	Cattle and calves sold, total farms	2	0	2	10	5	6
	Hogs and pigs inventory, total farms	0	0	2	0	*	1
	Hogs and pigs sold, total farms	0	0	0	0	*	1
	Sheep and lambs inventory, total farms	0	0	2	1	*	0
	Layers 20 weeks old and older inventory, total farms	0	0	4	1	0	0
	Horses and ponies of all ages inventory, total farms	4	0	3	6	8	3
	Horses and ponies of all ages sold, total farms	2	0		3	*	3
	Broilers and other meat type chickens sold, total farms	0	0	4	0	0	0
Corn for grain	Total farms	1	*	9	5	*	2
	1 to 49 acres (farms)	1	0	3	0	*	0
	50 to 249 acres (farms)	0	*	5	5	*	2
	250 acres or more (farms)	0	0	1	0	0	0

	Year	1997	2002	2007	1997	2002	2007
	Zip Code	**12502**	**12502**	**12502**	**12503**	**12503**	**12503**
	Corn for silage, total farms	2	0	0	1	5	3
	Oats, total farms	0	0	0	4	*	0
Soybeans for beans	Total farms	0	0	1	1	*	1
	1 to 49 acres (farms)	0	0	1	0	0	0
	50 to 249 acres (farms)	0	0	0	1	*	1
	250 acres or more (farms)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Potatoes	Total farms	1	*	1	0	0	0
	0.1 to 14.9 acres (farms)	1	*	1	0	0	0
Forage - Land used for all hay and all haylage, grass silage, and greenchop	Total farms	5	7	9	11	13	12
	1 to 49 acres (farms)	3	5	3	2	*	4
	50 to 249 acres (farms)	2	*	5	5	*	2
	250 acres or more (farms)	0	0	1	5	6	6
Vegetables and melons for sale	Total farms	0	0	3	0	0	0
	0.1 to 14.9 acres (farms)	0	0	3	0	0	0
	15.0 to 99.9 acres (farms)	0	0	0	0	0	0
	100.0 acres or more (farms)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Land in orchards	Total farms	1	*	1	0	0	0
	0.1 to 14.9 acres (farms)	0	*	1	0	0	0
	15.0 to 99.9 acres (farms)	0	0	0	0	0	0
	100.0 acres or more (farms)	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Berries, total farms	1	*	1	0	0	0
	Maple trees tapped, total farms	0	0	0	0	*	0

Source: US Agricultural Census.

Appendix 4: US Agricultural Census County Level Columbia County Data

Census of Agriculture: Columbia County	1992	1997	2007
Farms (number)	570	464	554
Land in farms (acres)	123,100	114,883	108,574
Land in farms - average size of farm (acres)	231	248	192
Land in farms - median size of farm (acres)		115	91
Estimated market value of land and buildings average per farm (dollars)	606,857	627,489	823,806
Estimated market value of land and buildings average per acre (dollars)	2,867	2,586	4,282
Estimated market value of all machinery/equipment: aver per farm (dollars)	71,642	86,319	103,984
Farms by size: 1 to 9 acres	31	41	61
Farms by size: 10 to 49 acres	103	103	159
Farms by size: 50 to 179 acres	160	150	171
Farms by size: 180 to 499 acres	127	108	110
Farms by size: 500 to 999 acres	46	47	36
Farms by size: 1,000 acres or more	17	15	17
Total cropland (acres)	83,700	79,237	63,704
Total cropland, harvested cropland (farms)	416	396	447
Total cropland, harvested cropland (acres)	60,244	62,876	63,704
Irrigated land (farms)	47	74	61
Irrigated land (acres)	1,308	3,126	2,011
Market value of agricultural products sold ($1,000)	55,665	72,675	65,770
Market value of agricultural products sold, average per farm (dollars)	115,011	156,627	118,718
Market value of ag prod sold-crops, incl nursery and greenhouse crops ($1,000)	15,375	18,923	25,166
Market value of ag products sold - livestock, poultry, and their products ($1,000)	40,291	53,752	40,603
Farms by value of sales: Less than $2,500	95	93	192
Farms by value of sales: $2,500 to $4,999	42	49	42
Farms by value of sales: $5,000 to $9,999	55	33	61
Farms by value of sales: $10,000 to $24,999	80	91	84

Census of Agriculture: Columbia County	1992	1997	2007
Farms by value of sales: $25,000 to $49,999	44	42	36
Farms by value of sales: $50,000 to $99,999	49	47	47
Farms by value of sales: $100,000 or more	119	109	93
Total farm production expenses ($1,000)	49,296	55,894	55,458
Total farm production expenses, average per farm (dollars)	101,432	119,687	100,104
Net cash return from agricultural sales for the farm unit (farms)	486	467	554
Net cash return from agricultural sales for the farm unit ($1,000)	5,696	18,803	15,876
Net cash return from ag sales for fm unit, average per farm (dollars)	11,719	40,264	28,658
Operators by principal occupation: Farming	298	290	287
Operators by principal occupation: Other	186	174	267
Operators by days worked off farm: Any	233	201	353
Operators by days worked off farm: 200 days or more	141	120	219
Livestock and poultry: Cattle and calves inventory (farms)	201	189	165
Livestock and poultry: Cattle and calves inventory (number)	22,683	24,063	17,164
Beef cows (farms)	85	81	111
Beef cows (number)	1,391	1,498	2,250
Milk (Total Production, million pounds)	108	82	51
Milk cows (number)	10,582	11,822	7,105
Cattle and calves sold (farms)	198	176	127
Cattle and calves sold (number)	9,395	9,379	6,078
Hogs and pigs inventory (farms)	28	20	31
Hogs and pigs inventory (number)	1,161	383	332
Hogs and pigs sold (farms)	27	13	35
Hogs and pigs sold (number)	1,447	894	668
Sheep and lambs inventory (farms)	41	35	57
Sheep and lambs inventory (number)	1,502	3,373	2,355
Layers and pullets 13 weeks old and older inventory (farms)	31	26	99
Broilers and other meat-type chickens sold (farms)	5	2	13
Broilers and other meat-type chickens sold	132		4,336

Census of Agriculture: Columbia County	1992	1997	2007
(number)			
Corn for grain or seed (farms)	101	81	57
Corn for grain or seed (acres)	9,127	11,427	7,296
Corn for grain or seed (bushels)	1,110,910	1,288,872	1,122,081
Corn for silage or green chop (farms)	123	98	62
Corn for silage or green chop (acres)	8,872	10,718	6,387
Corn for silage or green chop (tons, green)	134,328	153,272	121,756
Oats for grain (farms)	40	25	14
Oats for grain (acres)	1,346	616	332
Hay-alfalfa,other tame,small grain,wild,grass silage,green chop,etc(farms)	284	256	275
Hay-alfalfa,other tame,small grain,wild,grass silage,green chop,etc (acres)	33,711	36,111	31,573
Hay-alfalfa,other tame,small grain,wild,grass silage,green chop,etc(tons,dry)	73,428	70,943	81,434
Vegetables harvested for sale (farms)	50	48	69
Vegetables harvested for sale (acres)	1,065	1,150	975
Land in orchards (farms)	103	79	64
Land in orchards (acres)	4,754	3,647	2,679

Source: US Agricultural Census

Appendix 5: Agriculture and Ancram's Land Use Laws

1. Local Land Use Regulations and Agriculture

A. Review of Relevant Strategies from Ancram Comprehensive Plan

The following table lists major zoning changes recommended in this plan.

General Description of Zoning Change	Section in Zoning to be Changed
Update definitions to include all ag-related terms.	Section XI (Definitions)
Update purpose statements to enhance the role of agriculture in the purpose of land use regulations.	Section I, (C) Enactment and Purposes
Update the use table to ensure a diversity of agricultural land uses are allowed, and review/update use table to allow for ag-support businesses (such as processing facilities). Determine which ag uses are acceptable as a permitted use and which ones need site plan review or special use permits. Allow for agriculturally-related home or on-farm occupations.	Section III (A) Permitted Uses
Update the dimension table and/or text to prevent lot size or setback restrictions on ag uses. Update the dimension table and/or text to establish the average density technique.	Section IV (B), (D), Table Area and Bulk Regulations
Create language that results in 60% of parcel preserved as open space for major subdivisions; recommended for minor subdivisions. This will include provision of the conservation subdivision language.	Add this to Section IV (Area and Bulk Regulations) or a new section
Establish development standards related to Ag for the Agricultural zone. This includes steering new buildings away from prime farmlands and active ag areas, creating buffer zones between farm and non-farm uses, use of rural siting guidelines.	Add to Section V (Supplementary Regulations) a new sub-section on Supplementary Regulations for the Agricultural District
Include the right-to-farm provision in the zoning law.	Include with new sub-section of Section V, above.

Include AML ~25-AA requirements (Ag Data Statement, Ag Disclosure) in zoning for site plan and special use.	Develop new site plan section in entirety. For special uses, update Section VIII (E) Zoning Board of Appeals.
Enhance site plan review to ensure that ag-related data is collected on the application form, that adequate detail is added so that the Planning Board can review the impacts of that application on agriculture.	Add new site plan section
Rename the RR District to Agriculture District.	Map
Develop a density bonus section in zoning for landowners who permanently preserve more than the 60% required open space (in major subdivisions) or for those minor subdivisions that preserve land for ag on a voluntary basis.	Add new section to Supplementary Regulations (V) or add to Section IV (Area and Bulk Regulations)
Clarify and simplify procedure for obtaining approvals for farm worker housing.	Add to Section V (Supplementary Regulations)
Establish a voluntary Transfer of Development Rights option within zoning.	Add new section

B. Recommended Language for Land Use Laws

Ancram adopted its Comprehensive Plan in April 2010. Since that time, the town has had an active committee appointed by the Town Board to prepare new zoning consistent and supportive of the Comp Plan.

All parts of the proposed zoning law concerning agriculture have been reviewed by the Agriculture and Farmland Protection Planning Committee to be sure they are consistent with this plan and the needs of Ancram's farming community. Comments regarding the 80+ pages of zoning regulations have already been forwarded to the Zoning Revisions Committee.

Three members of the A&FPP Committee also continue as members of the Zoning Revisions Committee to ensure that considerations for farmland protection and the encouragement of a healthy agriculture segment are a significant part of Ancram's new zoning regulations.

Appendix 6: Maps

1. Agricultural Uses Receiving some form of Tax Exemption
2. Property Class
3. Agriculture (Agriculture Districts, Agricultural Class Parcels)
4. Farmland (Prime Soils and Soils of Statewide Importance, Agricultural Class Parcels)
5. Ancram Farmland (Agricultural Class Parcels, Additional Ag Exempt Parcels, Additional Identified Farmland)
6. Preserved Properties
7. Aerial Photos – 2004
8. Environmental Features in Ancram (from Comprehensive Plan Buildout)
9. LESA Ranking (Farmland Prioritization, All Parcels, with Farms Already Protected
10. Identified Farmland and Unconsolidated Aquifers
11. Identified Farmland and High Hydrogeologic Sensitivity
12. Zoning Concept Map (from Comprehensive Plan)
13. Buildout with Zoning Concept Map
14. Ancram Parcels Categorized by Year Structure Built
15. Buildout Results Showing Clusters (60% Open Space Concept)
16. Built and Un-built Parcels of Land by Year (Historic Buildout)

* Maps provided on accompanying CD

Appendix 7. Resources

There are many resources available through federal, state, county, and private agencies. The following is a partial list of organizations and agencies that provide information, assistance, funding, or other support for farming and agriculture related activities. Many of the organizations listed below have multiple programs that are available, and each website should be thoroughly explored. The following are resources that may be most relevant to farms in Columbia County:

Agricultural Marketing Resource Center (www.agmrc.org)

Columbia County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD): www.ccswcd.org

Columbia Land Conservancy (www.clctrust.org)

Come Farm With Us In Jefferson County (www.comefarmwithus.com)

Cornell Center For Food Entrepreneurship At The New York State Food Venture Center (www.nysaes.cornell.edu/cecfe) see also A Technical Guide For Food Ventures: www.nysaes.cornell.edu/necfe/pubs/booklet.html)

Cornell Community and Rural Development Institute Toolbox: (www.cdtoolbox.net)

Cornell Community and Rural Development Institute (CaRDI): www.cardi.cornell.edu/

Cornell Small Farms Program (www.smallfarms.cornell.edu)

Cornell Cooperative Extension: www.cce.cornell.edu

DiNapoli, Thomas. New York State Comptroller

The Role of Agriculture in the New York State Economy, February 2010
Economic Benefits of Open Space Preservation. March 2010.
www.osc.state.ny.us/reports/environmental/openspacepreserv10.pdf
Bet on the Farm: Farmland Protection as a Strategy for Economic Growth and Renewal, October 2010

Dutchess County Greenway Guides:
http://www.co.dutchess.ny.us/CountyGov/Departments/Planning/17331.htm

Environmental Protection Agency: www.epa.gov

Farm New York, The New NY Agenda, Andrew Cuomo, 2010

Farmer-in-Chief. A letter to President-Elect Obama from Michael Pollan. New York Times Magazine. October 12, 2008.

Federal Grants: www.grants.gov

Market Maker (Food Industry Linking Agricultural Markets) (www.bational.marketmaker.uiuc.edu). The New York Market Maker is (www.marketmaker.uiuc.edu)

National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service: www.attrancat.org/field.html

New England Small Farm Institute: Http://www.smallfarm.org

New York Agricultural Innovation Center (www.nyaic.org)

New York Business Development Corporation, Agribusiness Division: www.nybdc.com/agriculture.htm

New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets (Http://www.agmkt.state.ny.us) and
(http://www.agmkt.state.ny.us/RelatedLinks.html) and

New York Farm Bureau: Http://www.nyfb.org/

New York Farm to Fork (www.nyfarmtofork.org)

New York Farm Viability Institute (www.nyfvi.org)

New York Farmlink: www.nyfarmlink.org

New York State Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (NYS CREP)

CREP rents land connected to waterways and helps prevent damage from agricultural use by providing about 90% compensation for upgrades directly related to the preservation of waterways.

New York State Department Of Agriculture And Markets:
www.agmkt.state.ny.us

New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA):www.nyserda.org

New York State Farmers' Direct Marketing Association: www.nysfdma.com

New York State Organic Resource Center: www.agmk.state.ny.us/ap/organic

New York State Small Scale Food Processors Association: www.nyssfpa.com

Northeast Organic Farming Association: www.nofa.org and
Northeast Organic Farming Association – New York: www.nofany.org

Northeast Region SARE (Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education) Program: www.nesare.org

Northern New York Agricultural Development: www.nnyagdev.org

New York Farm Net: www.nyfarmnet.org

Open Space Institute: www.osiny.org

Organic Alliance: www.organic.org

Otsego County Reap the Benefits Website: www.reapthebeneftis.com

Small Business Administration: www.sba.gov/

Small Cities Program - Community Development Block: www.nysmallcities.com

The Farmers' Market Federation of New York: www.nyfarmersmarket.com

The Town that Food Saved: How One Community Found Vitality in Local Food. 2009. Hewitt, Ben. Rodale Press.

United States Department Of Agriculture (USDA): www.usda.gov

University of Vermont's Women's Agricultural Network: *uvm.edu/wagn*

USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA): www.fsa.usda.gov

USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service: www.nrcs.usda.gov/ or in New York: www.ny.nrcs.usda.gov

NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) pays 75% of the incurred costs or estimated loss of income due to changed practices for up to 10 years with a limit of $300,000 over 6 years. Technical assistance available.

NCRS Conservation of Private Grazing Land provides technical assistance.

NCRS Agricultural Management Assistance program pays up to 75% of the incurred costs or up to 100% of estimated lost income to farmers who change practices - up to $50,000.

USDA Rural Business Programs: www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs

Value Added Producer Grant (Contact Is the Local Rural Development Office at 225 Dolson Ave. Suite 104, Middletown, NY 10940 At 548-343-1872, X 4)

Interns and internships may be located at a variety of web sites and organizations, especially through universities that offer agricultural programs. See also www.agcareers.com, www.attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/internships, or www.idealist.org.

Appendix 8: Farmer Survey

Ancram Farming

Inventory 2009

Agriculture contributes both to maintaining open space and to creating jobs. Because of its importance, Ancram applied for and got a state grant to develop an Agriculture & Farmland Protection Plan. For this, we need an inventory of all Ancram Farm Operations. ***Your responses will be anonymous, tallied by independent consultants. We need 100% participation!*** *Please take 15 minutes to complete and return it in the postage paid envelope ASAP. Thanks in advance!*

1. What are your farm activities?
(Check all that apply and indicate type or other relevant details.)

☐ a.Dairy _____
☐ b.Beef _____
☐ c.Horses _____
☐ d.Other Livestock _____
☐ e.Dairy Products _____
☐ f.Fruits _____
☐ g.Vegetables _____
☐ h.Horticulture _____
☐ i.Christmas Trees _____
☐ j.Hay _____
☐ k.Cash Crops _____
☐ l.Forestry _____
☐ m.Other _____

2. How many workers (including family) does your farm employ?

Number of Workers	*Year-Round*	*Seasonal*
A. Full-Time Workers		
B. Part-Time Workers		
C. Total Workers		

3. How many hours a week does each type of employee typically work?

Hours Worked/Wk	*Year-Round*	*Seasonal*
A. Full-Time Worker		
B. Part-Time Worker		

4. How many of your farm workers live on your farm? _____

5. How many housing units do you provide for your farm workers? _____

6. How many households (including your own) does your farm help support? _____

7. Please list the number of acres that you farm in each town, including both land that you own

Town	*Total Acres Owned*	*Total Acres Rented*
*Ancram		
Pine Plains		
Copake		
Gallatin		

8. For your land in Ancram, how many acres are used for each of the following?

Town	*Total Acres Owned*	*Total Acres Rented*
Farmstead complex		
Cropland		
Pasture		
Open, idle land		
Wooded		
*Totals should equal Ancram in #7		

9. What secondary farm and non-farm activities are you engaged in, to diversify your farm? (e.g., farm stands, alternative energy, agritourism, etc.)

_____

_____

10. Is your farm organic?
☐ Yes ___ ☐ No ___ ☐ Becoming organic ____

11. Please rate your level of support for the following agriculture and farmland protection strategies on a scale of 1 to 4, with1 being STRONGLY SUPPORT and 4 being STRONGLY OPPOSE.
(circle the appropriate number)

	STRONGLY SUPPORT		STRONGLY OPPOSE		NO OPIN.
A. Farm Friendly Zoning *Local regulations that support agricultural activities. Zoning laws that are farm friendly simplify regulations and standards for farms and agricultural businesses, and allow flexibility in agriculture related businesses on the farm.*	1	2	3	4	0
B. Open Space Subdivisions *A development design technique that concentrates buildings on a portion of the site to allow the remaining land (minimum 60%) to be used for farming, open space, or recreation.*	1	2	3	4	0
C. Information Program for Townspeople on Agricultural Assessment Program *Explanation of the state property tax exemption program for farmers.*	1	2	3	4	0
D. Information Program for Townspeople on Farming Basics *Educational program on basics of farming.*	1	2	3	4	0
E. Promotional material on Ancram farms and farm products *Information for consumers on local farms, farm products for sale, and farm tours.*	1	2	3	4	0
F. Attracting New Farms and Farmers *Promote and encourage new farmers to locate in the town by offering information, incentives and programs to help them get started.*	1	2	3	4	0
G. Sale or Lease of Development Rights *The voluntary sale or lease of the rights to develop a piece of property by the landowner to a government agency or land trust. The price is determined by appraisal. The land is restricted to farming or open space.*	1	2	3	4	0
H. Transfer of Development Rights *Development rights from one parcel may be permanently sold to be used on another designated parcel in Town. Landowner selling the rights agrees to keep the land farmed or in open space, undeveloped.*	1	2	3	4	0
I. Discussions with non-farmer landowners *Forum for farmers and landowners to discuss opportunities to make more land available for farming.*	1	2	3	4	0
J. New slaughterhouse in the area — USDA approved	1	2	3	4	0
K. Ancram Comprehensive Plan Agricultural Strategies *Strategies and action plans to promote agriculture in Ancram, including recommendations of zoning changes to better support agriculture.*	1	2	3	4	0
L. Encourage Farm-related Businesses	1	2	3	4	0
L. Other *please describe::*	1	2	3	4	0

12. Please list the top 3 strategies, either from the above list or others, that you feel the Town should pursue to help keep farming viable.

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

13. What Farm-related businesses would you like to see in the area?

_____

_____

_____

2

14. Please rate the following challenges on a scale of 1 to 4 with 1 being VERY CHALLENGING and 4 being NOT CHALLENGING AT ALL to the future success of your farm (circle the appropriate number).

	VERY CHALLENGING		NOT AT ALL CHALLENGING		NOT APPLICABLE
A. Availability of farm labor	1	2	3	4	O
B. Property taxes	1	2	3	4	O
C. Land prices	1	2	3	4	O
D. Loss of productive farmland	1	2	3	4	O
E. Rental costs of land	1	2	3	4	O
F. Availability of rental land	1	2	3	4	O
G. Fuel cost	1	2	3	4	O
H. Residential encroachment/ nuisance complaints	1	2	3	4	O
I. Limited succession plans for the farm (few new farmers)	1	2	3	4	O
J. Estate taxes	1	2	3	4	O
K. Environmental regulations	1	2	3	4	O
L. Land use regulations (zoning & permitting)	1	2	3	4	O
M. Water availability (quality & quantity)	1	2	3	4	O
N. Availability of farm housing	1	2	3	4	O
O. Access to adequate financing	1	2	3	4	O
P. Access to agri-services	1	2	3	4	O
Q. Access to marketing or business support	1	2	3	4	O
R. Lack of local customers	1	2	3	4	O
S. Lack of processing facilities	1	2	3	4	O
T. Lack of local dairy processing	1	2	3	4	O
U. Lack of commercial kitchen	1	2	3	4	O
V. Sales Prices of your farm products	1	2	3	4	O
W. Machinery costs	1	2	3	4	O
X. Production costs	1	2	3	4	O
Y. Other: _____	1	2	3	4	O

15. Of the above challenges, what are the top three greatest challenges facing your farm?

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

16. What are the 3 greatest opportunities for your farm?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

17. Please list your 2008 actual sales from your farm in Ancram $_____ or check a range:

☐ Under $10,000 ☐ $10,000 – $24,999 ☐ $25,000 – $49,999 ☐ $50,000 – $99,999
☐ $100,000 – $199,999 ☐ $200,000 – $499,999 ☐ $500,000 +

18. Please list 2008 operating & capital expenditures on your farm in Ancram $_____ or check a range:

☐ Under $10,000 ☐ $10,000 – $24,999 ☐ $25,000 – $49,999 ☐ $50,000 – $99,999
☐ $100,000 – $199,999 ☐ $200,000 – $499,999 ☐ $500,000 +

19. Looking back over the past 3 years, has your farm been …

☐ profitable ☐ at break even ☐ unprofitable

20. Do you, or a member of your household, have off-farm income to help make ends meet at the farm?

☐ Yes _____ ☐ No _____ ☐ Sometimes _____

3

21. What trends do you see in agriculture in Ancram and nearby? (Please check all that apply.)

☐ a. A smaller number of large farms
☐ b. Farm diversification
☐ c. A larger number of small operations
☐ d. Movement of farms out of the area
☐ e. No significant change
☐ f. Other:_____

22. How do you market/distribute your goods or services? (Please check all that apply, list memberships and indicate what percentage of your sales are through each channel of distribution (Total equals 100%).

☐ a. Retail, direct to consumer _____
☐ b. Retail, through farm stand _____
☐ c. Retail, through farmer's market _____
☐ d. Milk Company or Coop _____
☐ e. CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) _____
☐ f. Through other retail outlets _____
☐ g. Through restaurants _____
☐ h. Other _____

23. Indicate which of the following you plan to do, and within which timeframe. (Check all that apply.)

	Within 1 year	… 5 years	…10+ years
A. Expand your farming operation	☐	☐	☐
B. Decrease your farming operation	☐	☐	☐
C. Diversify your farming operation	☐	☐	☐
D. Stay the same size	☐	☐	☐
E. Sell all or a portion of your land to another farmer for farm use	☐	☐	☐
F. Sell a portion of your land for non-farm purposes	☐	☐	☐
G. Sell all of your land for non-farm purposes	☐	☐	☐
H. Relocate and continue to farm elsewhere	☐	☐	☐
I. Transfer the farm to a family member	☐	☐	☐
J. Begin a new farming operation on your land	☐	☐	☐
K. Other, please explain: _____	☐	☐	☐

Add a sheet if necessary.

24. How concerned are you about the loss of farmland in Ancram?

☐ Very concerned ☐ Somewhat concerned ☐ Not very concerned ☐ Not concerned at all

Why? _____

25. How are your relationships with your non-farm neighbors?

☐ Excellent ☐ Good ☐ Not very good ☐ Poor

26. What can be done to improve/strengthen the relationship between farms and non-farm neighbors?

_____

_____

27. Please give the ages of all family members, including yourself, who work on your farm.

☐ Under 25 No. _____ ☐ 25 - 44 No. _____ ☐ 45 - 64 No. _____ ☐ 65 - 74 No. _____ ☐ 75 + No. _____

28. How many years have you operated your farm? _____

29. How long has your land been in farm production? _____

Thanks for your participation! Please include additional comments on a separate page.

4

Appendix 9: Model Ag Disclosure Notice, Ag Data Statement, and Right to Farm Law.

A. Agricultural Disclosure Statement. Agriculture and Markets Law 25-aa (§ 310) requires that people be informed about farming practices before they purchase property in an agricultural district. Since most of Ancram is in the Agricultural District, for simplicity, all prospective purchasers in Ancram should be informed. The requirements are:

1. When any purchase and sale contract is presented for the sale, purchase, or exchange of real property located partially or wholly within an agricultural district (now, required for all of Ancram) established pursuant to Article 25-aa, the prospective grantor shall present to the prospective grantee a disclosure notice which states the following:

   "It is the policy of this state and this community to conserve, protect and encourage the development and improvement of agricultural land for the production of food, and other products, and also for its natural and ecological value. This disclosure notice is to inform prospective residents that the property they are about to acquire lies partially or wholly within an agricultural district and that farming activities occur within the district. Such farming activities may include, but not be limited to, activities that cause noise, dust and odors. Prospective residents are also informed that the location of property within an agricultural district may impact the ability to access water and/or sewer services for such property under certain circumstances. Prospective purchasers are urged to contact the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets to obtain additional information or clarification regarding their rights and obligations under article 25-AA of the Agriculture and Markets Law."

2. The disclosure notice shall be signed by both the prospective grantor and grantee prior to the sale, purchase or exchange of such real property. And the receipt of such disclosure notice shall be recorded on a property transfer report form prescribed by the state board of real property services as provided for in section three hundred thirty-three of the real property law.

3. It is recommended that the Town of Ancram require the above statement to be included on all plats, site plans, and special use permits when the project is located in a New York State Agricultural District in Ancram so that all parties are informed.

B. Agricultural Data Statement. According to the New York State Agricultural Districts Law (Article 25-aa, Section 305-a),

> "Agricultural data statement" means an identification of farm operations within an agricultural district located within five hundred feet of the boundary of property upon which an action requiring municipal review and approval by the planning board, zoning board of appeals, town board, or village board of trustees pursuant to article sixteen of the town law or article seven of the village law is proposed, as provided in Section 305-a of this article."

When to Prepare As per Section 305-a and NYS Town Law 283-a, any application within an agricultural district containing a farm operation or on property with boundaries within five hundred feet of a farm operation located in an agricultural district, to be considered all of Ancram, shall include an agricultural data statement. The application may be for a:

- special use permit,
- site plan approval,
- use variance, or
- subdivision approval.

Neighbors are Notified

The board reviewing the request must mail a description of the proposed project and its location to all owners of land as identified in the Agricultural Data Statement. This may be sent in conjunction with any other notice required by state or local law, ordinance, rule or regulation for the project. The cost of that mailing can be borne by the applicant.

Further, the Town must refer all applications that require an agricultural data statement to the County Planning Board as required by Sections 239-m and 239-n of the NYS General Municipal Law.

Information

The agricultural data statement shall include the following information:

- name and address of the applicant;
- description of the proposed project and its location;
- name and address of any owner of land in Ancram which land contains farm operations and is located within five hundred feet of the boundary of the property upon which the project is proposed; and
- tax map or other map showing the site of the proposed project relative to the location of farm operations identified in the agricultural data statement.

What is Evaluated

The local reviewing board must evaluate and consider the Ag Data Statement to determine the possible impacts the proposed project may have on the functioning farm operations.

They should also determine present and future farming conditions to ensure the proposed land use does not conflict with current or future farming activities. A farmer's knowledge of local agricultural conditions is fundamental for the local review board's evaluation and determination of appropriate mitigation measures and whether the action proposed will conflict with farming practices.

A draft of an Agricultural Data Statement for use by Ancram is provided on the following page.

Agricultural Data Statement

Instructions: This form must be completed for any application for a special use permit, site plan approval, use variance or a subdivision approval requiring municipal review that would occur on property within 500 feet of any farm operation located in Ancram. County Planning Board review is also required. A copy of this Agricultural Data Statement must be submitted along with the referral to the Columbia County Planning Department and all persons identified below shall be notified about any public hearing held in conjunction with the proposal.

1. Name and Address of Applicant: _____

2. Type of application (Check one or more):

☐Special Use Permit ☐Site Plan Approval ☐Use Variance ☐Subdivision approval

3. Description of proposed project to include (1) size of parcel or acreage to be acquired and tax map identification number of tax parcel(s) involved; (2) the type of action (single-family dwelling or subdivision, multi-family development, apartment, commercial or industrial, school, non-residential use, etc., and (3) project density (Please provide this information on the reverse side of this application and attach additional description as necessary).

4. Is this parcel within an Agricultural District? ☐Yes ☐No

5. If yes, what is the Agricultural District Number? _____

6. Is this parcel actively farmed? ☐Yes ☐No

7. List all farm operations within 500 feet of your parcel. Attach additional sheets if necessary.

A. Name: _____
Address and Telephone #:_____
Type of Farm: _____

Is this parcel actively farmed? ☐Yes ☐No

B. Name: _____
Address and Telephone #:_____
Type of Farm: _____
Is this parcel actively farmed? ☐Yes ☐No

C. Name: _____
Address and Telephone #:_____
Type of Farm: _____
Is this parcel actively farmed? ☐Yes ☐No

D. Name: _____
Ad#:_____
Type of Farm: _____
Is this parcel actively farmed? ☐Yes ☐No

8. Signature of Applicant: _____

9. Reviewed by: _____ Date:_____

Address and Telephone _____

C. Right to Farm Law. The following sample (from the Town of Eden and advocated as a model by the American Farmland Trust) is an example of a Right-To-Farm Law that could be used as a model for Ancram. Parts have been suggested as added language in the town zoning law.

(Draft) Town of Ancram Right to Farm

1. Legislative intent and purposes.

A. The Ancram Town Board finds, declares, and determines that agriculture is vital to the Town of Ancram, New York, because it is a livelihood and provides employment for agri-service; provides locally produced, fresh commodities; agricultural diversity promotes economic stability; agriculture maintains open space and promotes environmental quality, and agricultural land does not increase the demand for services provided by local governments. In order to maintain a viable farming economy in the Town of Ancram, farmers must be afforded protection allowing them the right to farm. When nonagricultural land uses extend into agricultural areas, agricultural operations may become the subject of nuisance suits. As a result, agricultural operations are sometimes forced to cease operation or are discouraged from making investments in agricultural improvements.

B. It is the purpose of this article to reduce the loss to the Town of Ancram of its agricultural resources by limiting the circumstances under which farming may be deemed to be a nuisance and to allow agricultural practices inherent to and necessary for the business of farming to proceed and be undertaken free of unreasonable and unwarranted interference or restriction

2. Definitions.

A. As used in this article, the following terms shall have the meanings indicated:

AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES -- All activities conducted by a farmer on a farm to produce agricultural products and which are inherent and necessary to the operation of a farm and the on-farm production, processing, and marketing of agricultural products, including, but not limited to, the collection, transportation, distribution, storage, and land application of animal wastes; storage, transportation, and use of equipment for tillage, planting, harvesting, irrigation, fertilization, and pesticide application; storage and use of legally permitted fertilizers,

limes, and pesticides all in accordance with local, state and federal law and regulations and in accordance with manufacturers' instructions and warnings; storage, use, and application of animal feed and foodstuffs, construction and use of farm structures and facilities for the storage of animal wastes, farm equipment, pesticides, fertilizers, agricultural products, and livestock, for the sale of agricultural products, and for the use of farm labor, as permitted by local and state building codes and regulations, including the construction and maintenance of fences.

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS -- Those products as defined in § 301(2) of Article 25-AA of the Agricultural and Markets Law.

FARM -- The land, buildings, farm residential buildings, and machinery used in the production, whether for profit or otherwise, of agricultural products.

FARMER -- Any person, organization, entity, association, partnership, or corporation engaged in the business of agriculture, for profit or otherwise, including the cultivation of land, the raising of crops, or the raising of livestock, poultry, fur-bearing animals, or fish, the harvesting of timber or the practicing of horticulture or apiculture.

GENERALLY ACCEPTED AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES -- Those practices which are feasible, lawful, inherent, customary, necessary, reasonable, normal, safe, and typical to the industry or unique to the commodity as they pertain to the practices listed in the definition of "agricultural practices."

RESOLUTION COMMITTEE -- Shall be made up of the Chairman of the Conservation Advisory Council or designee, Chairman of the Agricultural Committee or designee, and a member of the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals as designated by the Town Supervisor.

B. Unless specifically defined, above words or phrases used in the article shall be interpreted so as to give them meanings they have in common usage, and to give this article its most reasonable application.

3. Authority to engage in agricultural practices.

A. Farmers, as well as those employed, retained, or otherwise authorized to act on behalf of farmers, may lawfully engage in agricultural practices within the Town of Ancram at all such times and in all such locations as

are reasonably necessary to conduct the business of agriculture. For any agricultural practice, in determining the reasonableness of the time, place, and methodology of such practice, due weight and consideration shall be given to both traditional customs and procedures in the farming industry as well as to advances resulting from increased knowledge and improved technologies.

B. Agricultural practices conducted on farmland shall not be found to be a public or private nuisance if such agricultural practices are:

- Reasonable and necessary to the particular farm or farm operation.
- Conducted in a manner which is not negligent or reckless.
- Conducted in conformity with generally accepted agricultural practices.
- Conducted in conformity with all local, state, and federal laws and regulations.
- Conducted in a manner which does not constitute a threat to public health and safety or cause injury to health or safety of any person; and
- Conducted in a manner which does not unreasonably obstruct the free passage or use of navigable waters or public roadways.

C. Nothing in this article shall be construed to prohibit an aggrieved party from recovering damages for bodily injury or wrongful death.

4. Duty of Town officers and boards to consider impact of farm operations on certain applications.

The legislative intent and purposes of this article shall be taken into consideration by each Town officer and/or board in processing any application requesting rezoning, site plan approval and/or special use permit approval when the property which is the subject of such application is located within one mile of an existing farm. Such Town officer and/or board shall, as part of its review of such application, determine whether appropriate and reasonable conditions may be prescribed or required, which would further the purposes and intent of this article as part of an approval of the application. Such appropriate and reasonable conditions shall be determined on a case-by-case basis and may include, but not be limited to, requiring declarations, deed restrictions and/or covenants which run with the land which would notify future purchasers and owners of the subject property that owning and occupying such property might expose them to

certain discomforts or inconveniences resulting from the conditions associated with agricultural practices and operations in the Town.

5. Informal resolution of disputes.

A. Should any controversy arise regarding any inconveniences or discomforts occasioned by agricultural operation, including, but not limited to, noise, odors, fumes, dust, the operation of machinery, the storage and disposal of manure, and the application by spraying or otherwise of chemical fertilizers, soil amendments, herbicides and/or pesticides, the parties may submit the controversy to the resolution committee as set forth below in an attempt to resolve the matter prior to the filing of any court action.

B. Any controversy between the parties may be submitted to the resolution committee, whose decision shall be advisory only, within 30 days of the date of the occurrence of the particular activity giving rise to the controversy or of the date a party became aware of the occurrence.

C. The effectiveness of the resolution committee as a forum for resolution of grievances is dependent upon full discussion and complete presentation of all pertinent facts concerning the dispute in order to eliminate any misunderstandings. The parties are encouraged to cooperate in the exchange of pertinent information concerning the controversy.

D. The controversy shall be presented to the committee by written request of one of the parties within the time limits prescribed above. Thereafter, the committee may investigate the facts of the controversy but must, within 30 days, hold a meeting to consider the merits of the matter and within 20 days of the meeting must render a written decision to the parties. At the time of the meeting, both parties shall have an opportunity to present what each party considers to be the pertinent facts.

Appendix 10. New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets Modified Site Plan Review Guidelines

The following is excerpted from the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets Guidelines for Review of Local Zoning and Planning Laws (http://www.agmkt.state.ny.us/AP/agservices/agdistricts.html).

"Site Plan Review for Farm Operations within an Agricultural District"

Many local governments share the Department's view that farm operations should not have to undergo site plan review and exempt farms from that requirement. However, the Department recognizes the desire of some local governments to have an opportunity to review farm operations and projects within their borders, as well as the need of farmers for an efficient, economical, and predictable process.

In view of both interests, the Department developed a model streamlined site plan review process which attempts to respond to the farmers' concerns while ensuring the ability to have local land use issues examined. The process could be used to examine a parcel's current characteristics and its surroundings in relation to any proposed activities on the farm and their potential impact to neighboring properties and the community.

For example, municipalities could specify that farm operations located within specific zoning districts must submit to site plan review. Municipalities may also elect to exempt farm operations, located within a county adopted, State certified agricultural district, from their site plan review process.

The authorizing statutes for requiring site plan review are quite broad and under "home rule" municipalities retain significant flexibility in crafting specialized procedures (e.g., the selection of a reviewing board; uses which trigger submission of site plans; whether to have a public hearing and the length of time to review an application). Town Law §274-a and Village Law §7-725-a define a site plan as:

> *"a rendering, drawing, or sketch prepared to specifications and containing necessary elements as set forth in the applicable zoning ordinance or local law which shows the arrangement, layout and design of the proposed use of a single parcel of land… ."*

These sections of law further outline a list of potential site plan elements including parking, means of access, screening, signs, landscaping, architectural features, location and dimensions of buildings, adjacent land

uses and physical features meant to protect adjacent land uses as well as additional elements.

Many municipalities have also added optional phases to the site plan review. While a preliminary conference, preliminary site plan review and public hearings may assist the applicant earlier in the review process and provide the public an opportunity to respond to a project, they can result in a costly delay for the farmer.

For the sake of simplicity, the model site plan process and the following guidance presume that the planning board is the reviewing authority.

Site Plan Process

The applicant for site plan review and approval shall submit the following:

1. Sketch of the parcel on a location map (e.g., tax map) showing boundaries and dimensions of the parcel of land involved and identifying contiguous properties and any known easements or rights-of-way and roadways.

2. Show the existing features of the site including land and water areas, water or sewer systems and the approximate location of all existing structures on or immediately adjacent to the site.

3. Show the proposed location and arrangement of buildings and uses on the site, including means of ingress and egress, parking and circulation of traffic.

4. Show the proposed location and arrangement of specific land uses, such as pasture, crop fields, woodland, livestock containment areas, or manure storage/manure composting sites.

5. Sketch of any proposed building, structure or sign, including exterior dimensions and elevations of front, side and rear views. Include copies of any available blueprints, plans or drawings.

6. Provide a description of the farm operation (existing and/or proposed) and a narrative of the intended use and/or location of proposed buildings, structures or signs, including any anticipated changes in the existing topography and natural features of the parcel to accommodate the changes.

7. Include the name and address of the applicant and any professional advisors. If the applicant is not the owner of the property, provide authorization of the owner.

8. If any new structures are going to be located adjacent to a stream or wetland provide a copy of the floodplain map and wetland map that corresponds with the boundaries of the property.

9. Application form and fee (if required). If the municipality issues a permit for the structure, the Code Enforcement Officer (CEO) determines if the structures are subject to and comply with the local building code or New York State Uniform Fire Prevention and Building Code prior to issuing the permit. Similarly, the Zoning Enforcement Officer (or the CEO in certain municipalities) would ensure compliance with applicable zoning provisions.

The Department urges local governments to take into account the size and nature of the particular agricultural activity, including the construction of farm buildings/structures when setting and administering any site plan requirements for farm operations.

The review process, as outlined above, should generally not require professional assistance (e.g., architects, engineers or surveyors) to complete or review and should be completed relatively quickly. The Department understands, however, that in some cases, a public hearing and/or a more detailed review of the project which may include submission of a survey, architectural or engineering drawings or plans, etc., may be necessary. The degree of regulation that may be considered unreasonably restrictive depends on the nature of the proposed activities, the size and complexity of the proposed agricultural activity and/or the construction of buildings or structures and whether a State agricultural assessment applies.

Appendix 11: About Agricultural Tax Assessments

The following information is excerpted from the American Farmland Trust's *"Agricultural Landowner Guide to Tax, Conservation and Management Programs"*. This guide offers general information on the various tax programs that farmers may be eligible for. See www.farmlandinfo.org for a pdf copy of the guide.

Agricultural Districts

New York's Agricultural Districts Law was enacted in 1971 to help keep farmland in agricultural production. Interested landowners (who collectively own at least 500 acres or 10 percent of the land proposed for a district) submit a proposal to their county to create a district. A county legislative body must approve and forward the petition to the Commissioner of Agriculture for formal review and designation. As of December 2008, the state had 251 agricultural districts that represent about 8.5 million acres of land.

Farms in agricultural districts receive important "right-to-farm" protections, such as protection from nuisance lawsuits. For farmers, enrolling land in an agricultural district—and keeping the land enrolled when the district comes up for review—provides several other benefits:

Farmland Protection Programs

- *The taxation of farmland within agricultural districts for certain municipal improvements (sewer, water, lighting, non-farm drainage, solid waste disposal and other landfill operations) is limited.*
- *When requested, the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets can decide whether land uses are agricultural or if farm practices are "sound agricultural practices." Such determinations can help defend farmers in zoning disputes or private nuisance lawsuits.*
- *The NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets has the authority to intervene when local governments enact laws that unreasonably regulate farm operations in agricultural districts.*
- *Additional measures—such as agricultural impact statements, notice of intent filings and real estate disclosure notices—are required for new developments and public projects in agricultural districts.*

Tax relief is an important issue for farmers. Farms need land to operate, and property taxes on farmland often are a considerable expense. Not only do property taxes add significantly to business costs for farmers, farms tend to pay more in property taxes than they require in public services. As farmers often say, "Cows don't go to school and corn doesn't dial 911." Increasingly, state and local governments are recognizing that keeping farmland in production may help control the cost of providing expensive community services. The programs listed below offer property and sales tax relief for New York's farmers.

Agricultural Assessment

Agricultural assessment provides "use value" assessment for eligible farmland. This allows farmland to be taxed for its agricultural value, rather than its market (i.e., non-farm development) value. Any owner of land used for agricultural production may qualify if the land meets the requirements or is rented to an eligible farm operation.

To qualify for agricultural assessment:

- *Enrolled land generally must be a minimum of seven acres and farmed by a single operation.*
- *Land must have been used in the preceding two years for crop production, commercial boarding of horses or livestock production.*
- *Farm operation must gross an average of $10,000 or more in sales per year.*
- *Land of fewer than seven acres may qualify if the operation has an average gross sales value of $50,000 or more per year.*

Support land, land set aside in federal conservation programs or farm woodland (up to 50 acres per eligible tax parcel) may qualify. Non-farmers who rent land to farmers are eligible to receive agricultural assessment if the rented land satisfies the basic eligibility requirements described above. If the rented land does not satisfy the average gross sales requirement, but does satisfy the other requirements, it may still be eligible if it is farmed, under a written rental agreement of at least five years, with other farmland that satisfies the eligibility requirements.

Landowners must file for agricultural assessment annually. Land

placed under agricultural assessment and then converted to nonagricultural use is subject to conversion fees.

Farm Building Exemptions

Several provisions in New York's Real Property Tax Law exempt farm buildings or structures from property taxes. To claim each of these exemptions, owners must apply to their local assessors. Section 483 exempts new or reconstructed agricultural buildings, such as barns or farm worker housing, from any increase in assessed value that results from the improvement.

The application must be made within a year following the completion of construction work. The exemption continues automatically for 10 years, as long as the building continues to be used for farming.

Sections 483-a and 483-c exempt entirely certain agricultural structures from taxation.

Some of the structures that qualify for the exemption include:

- *Silos*
- *Grain storage facilities*
- *Bulk tanks*
- *Manure facilities*
- *Temporary greenhouses*

Structures used for processing, retail merchandising, personal use or residences of applicants and their immediate families do not qualify for the exemption. The owner of the building or structure for which the exemption is sought must file application form RP-483 (available from the local assessor or the County Director of Real Property Tax Services) with the city/town or county assessor.

Forest Land Exemption

To encourage the long-term ownership of woodlands, Section 480-a of the Real Property Tax Law allows eligible owners of forest land to receive reductions in tax assessment. Landowners must own a minimum of 50 acres of contiguous forestland and be willing to commit the land to forest crop production. In addition, landowners must follow forest management plans that have been prepared by qualified foresters and approved by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). Owners of tracts certified by DEC

must apply annually to their local assessors for the exemption. Landowners must comply with the program for nine years following the last year of commitment. Penalties may be imposed if a landowner fails to follow the approved management program or converts the land to a use that prevents continued forest crop production.

Historic Barns

A relatively new state program helps owners of historic barns restore and preserve their structures. The New York State Barns Restoration and Preservation Program provides funding for a variety of capital repairs on agricultural buildings that are at least 50 years old and are in need of substantial repair. Eligible improvements include repairs to roofs, foundations, walls, sills and overall stabilization. Repairs must be compatible with the historic nature of the building. Applicants are expected to provide a matching share, ranging from 10 to 50 percent of total project cost (determined on a sliding scale according to income). The applicant's share may be in the form of cash, in-kind services or labor.

Replanted or Expanded Orchards and Vineyards

For owners of orchards or vineyards, a partial exemption now exists that applies to newly replanted or expanded orchard and vineyard land. Land eligible for agricultural assessment and used solely for the replanting or expansion of an orchard or vineyard is exempt from taxation for up to four successive years. Land eligible for the exemption cannot exceed 20 percent of the orchard or vineyard's total acreage (unless the land is located in a disaster emergency area).

Sales Tax Exemptions

New York tax law now exempts certain items used in farm production from state and local sales and use taxes. The items must be used "predominantly" (more than 50 percent) for farm production in order to qualify. Some of the exempt items include personal property used for production/operation; building materials used for farm buildings or structures; services to install, maintain or repair farm buildings or structures; motor vehicles used predominantly for production/operation; and fuel, gas, electricity, refrigeration or steam used for production/operation.

Appendix 12: Definitions

Agricultural Assessment: The value per acre assigned to land for assessment purposes determined pursuant to the capitalized value of production procedure prescribed by section three hundred four-a of Article 25-AA of the Agriculture and Markets Law.

Agricultural Zoning District: A district defined in the Town of Ancram Zoning Law.

Average Density: The number of buildings or housing units allowed on a particular area of land.

Buildout: A technique used to estimate the total number of homes and people that would result if all developable parcels of the Town were built on.

Best Agricultural Management Practices for Water Quality Protection New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets provides a catalogue of currently acceptable best management practices to protect water quality in New York State. (See table on page 26.) http://www.agmkt.state.ny.us/SoilWater/aem/forms/Agricultural%20BMP%20Catalogue%20June%202007.pdf

Agricultural management practices prevent or reduce the availability, release, or transport of substances which adversely affect surface and ground waters. They act generally to diminish the generation of pollutants from specific sources, in this case, agriculture. While a management practice can have standards associated with its installation, operation or maintenance, it does not impose effluent limits for specific substances. Rather, it provides an effective means of reducing or preventing the impact of nonpoint pollutants from a specific source category.

Agriculture management practices are means of achieving desired results, whether they are implemented by a private, commercial or governmental entity, and whether through voluntary action, financial incentives, or regulatory requirements. They can have a broad, generic application or can be highly specific to certain geographic, climatologic, hydrologic and chemical factors.

Comprehensive Plan: A document that details an underlying purpose to control land uses for the benefit of the whole community based upon consideration of the community's problems and applying a general policy to obtain a uniform result and adopted pursuant to NYS Town Law 272-a.

Conservation Subdivision: A residential subdivision where the dwelling units that would result on a given parcel under a conventional subdivision plan are allowed to be placed on the parcel in a flexible manner, where lot sizes, road frontages, and other bulk dimensions are allowed to be relaxed and where a majority of the remaining land is left in its natural open space condition in perpetuity. Conservation development results in a flexibility of design and development to promote the most appropriate use of land, to facilitate the adequate and economical provisions of streets and utilities, and to preserve the natural and scenic qualities of open lands.

Density Bonus: An applicant can receive an increase in the allowable density that a parcel can have if they supply something desired by the town, such as preserving open space, a scenic view, or other public amenities.

Density Control Schedule: That section in the Town of Ancram Zoning Law that establishes the allowable density of development by district.

Easement: The right to use the land of another, obtained through the purchase or other acquisition of use rights from a landowner, for a special purpose consistent with the property's current use.

Foodshed: A defined area from which food is grown, processed, purchased, and consumed.

Impact Fee: A fee imposed on a development to help finance the cost of improvements or services required as a result of that development.

Impervious Surface: A surface that has been compacted or covered with a layer of material so that it is highly resistant to infiltration by water.

LDR (Lease of Development Rights): A temporary, voluntary lease of the rights to develop a piece of property by the landowner to a government agency or a land trust. The sale price is determined by an appraisal. The land is restricted to farming or open space for the term of the easement. Also known as a term easement.

Major Subdivision: A subdivision not classified as a minor subdivision, including but not limited to subdivisions of more than four (4) lots, a planned development, or any size subdivision requiring any new street or extension of utilities, or the creation of any public improvements, or any other subdivision classified as major by the Planning Board because of its probable major impact on the surrounding areas.

Minor Subdivision: The subdivision of land into two (2), three (3) or four (4) lots fronting on an existing road, not including any new street or road, or the extension of utilities, or the creation of any public improvements, and not adversely affecting the remainder of the parcel or adjoining property, and not in conflict with any provision or portion of the Comprehensive Plan or Official Map of the Town.

New York State Agricultural District: An area designated pursuant to Article 25-AA of the New York State Agriculture and Markets Law.

PDR (Purchase of Development Rights): A permanent, voluntary sale of the rights to develop a piece of property by the landowner to a government agency or a land trust. The sale price is determined by an appraisal. The land is restricted to farming or open space.

Prime Agricultural Soils: Prime farmland is land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops and that is available for these uses. It has the combination of soil properties, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce sustained high yields of crops in an economic manner if it is treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods. In general, prime farmland has an adequate and dependable water supply from precipitation or irrigation, a favorable temperature and growing season, an acceptable level of acidity or alkalinity, an acceptable content of salt or sodium, and few or no rocks. Its soils are permeable to water and air. Prime farmland is not excessively eroded or saturated with water for long periods of time, and it either does not flood frequently during the growing season or is protected from flooding.

Right-to-Farm Law: A State, County, or local law passed that states that an agricultural practice used on land subject to an agricultural assessment shall not constitute a private nuisance, when an action is brought by a person, provided such agricultural practice constitutes a sound agricultural practice pursuant to an opinion issued upon request by the Commissioner of the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets.

Scenic Overlay: An area designated in Local Law # 1 of 2003 and designed to protect significant scenic resources along NYS Route 22 and the Harlem Valley.

Site Plan Review: The review of a site plan for any public or private project by the Town Planning Board. This process evaluates use of a single parcel of land and is oriented to review of the arrangement, layout, and design of the proposed use.

Soils of Statewide Significance: This is land, in addition to prime and unique farmlands, that is of statewide importance for the production of food, feed, fiber, forage, and oil seed crops. Criteria for defining and delineating this land are determined by New York State. Generally, additional farmlands of statewide importance include those that are nearly prime farmland and that economically produce high yields of crops when treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods. Some may produce as high a yield as prime farmlands if conditions are favorable. In some states, additional farmlands of statewide importance may include tracts of land that have been designated for agriculture by state law.

Special Use Permit: A land use which is deemed permissible within a given zoning district or districts, but which may have the potential to exhibit characteristics or create impacts incompatible with the purposes of such district. The special use shall, therefore, be subject to approval by the Planning Board in accordance with conditions set forth for such use, as well as other applicable provisions of this law.

TDR (Transfer of Development Rights): The voluntary sale and purchase of development rights between two private parties which shift development rights from one parcel to another parcel under a Town approved plan to encourage growth in certain designated areas and to discourage growth in other areas. When TDR's are sold, the land they came from is then restricted to farming or open space.