STATE OF NEW YORK
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND MARKETS
10B Airline Drive, Albany, New York 12235
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www.agmkt.state.ny.us

Eliot Spitzer
Governor

Patrick Hooker
Commissioner

June 12, 2007

To: Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board Chairs
County Legislative Clerks
County Planners
Cornell Cooperative Extension Agents
Town Supervisors
Other Interested Parties

Re: Request for Proposals for Farmland Protection Implementation Projects

I am pleased to announce the availability of the Request for Proposals (RFP) to solicit State assistance payments for Farmland Protection Implementation Projects.

Eligible applicants include counties with State approved agricultural and farmland protection plans and other municipalities that have adopted a local farmland protection plan. Municipalities must include a current letter from their county agricultural and farmland protection board endorsing the proposed project for which State cost-share funding is requested. The cost-share ratio has been established at a maximum of 75 percent State and 25 percent local.

NOTE: Federal Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP) funds will NOT be allowed as a local match. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will no longer grant a statewide exemption to the two percent (2%) impervious surface limit that they require for all conservation easements that are purchased using funds from the FRPP, nor will they grant a waiver allowing more than 6% impervious surfaces. The impervious surface limit can potentially impede a farm operation's flexibility to change the size or nature of its enterprise. As a result, the FRPP impervious surface limitation conflicts with the State Agricultural and Farmland Protection Program's stated purpose of conserving farmland as part of viable farming operations and maintaining the economic viability of the State's agricultural industry.

The proposals must be received (not postmarked) by the Department no later than 4:30 p.m., Monday, September 17, 2007. It is the Department's intention to conduct a visual survey of each project site prior to ranking all proposals. Consequently, proposals should contain enough information to allow Department staff to identify the exact location and approximate boundaries of each property.

The RFP (including all associated application forms) and the Department's Standard Agricultural Conservation Easement are available for printing from the Department's website at www.agmkt.state.ny.us under "Funding Opportunities." In addition, our staff can provide these documents to you via e-mail. To receive any or all of these documents in digital form, or if you require a printed paper copy of the RFP or Standard Agricultural Conservation Easement, please contact:

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Thank you for your interest in farmland protection in New York State. I look forward to receiving your proposals.

Sincerely,

Patrick Hooker

Patrick Hooker
Commissioner