

Callicoon and Delaware

Public Workshop Summary

Role and Importance of Agriculture

(number reflects # of priority stickers that item received from participants)

- Farms provide for open space, scenery, and productive landscapes (7) and this leads to tourism opportunities.
- Contributes to the economy (5).
- Tax advantage to towns – as farms cost less than residential services. Concerns and Issues Related to Agriculture.
- Multiplier effect is large.
- Quality of food supply – local healthy food products (5).
- Farmland is irreplaceable and farmers are the stewards. Once it is gone it is gone (3)
- Promotes stability of county (3).
- Protects water and water supplies (2).
- Adds to the physical health of children and the development of responsible children (1).
- Beauty (1) – why live anywhere else.
- Keeping rural landscape (1).
- Character of county is formed from farms.
- Roots – it is home.
- Farmers are reliable.
- Provide an informal connection for non-farmers to agriculture.
- Important habitats.
- Without farms we are suburbs.
- Quality of life.
- Second home, green tourism, as a whole provides to the economy.
- Agri-tourism.
- Giving the overall farm experience.
- Keeping up with the changing demographics by adapting the agricultural industry.
- Brings people here.
- Farmers are self-reliant and caring for neighbors.
- Farmers care of the land and their stewardship is a value: leads to education.
- Farming is essential.
- Farms give benefits to everyone – not just the farmers.

Issues and Concerns Related to Farming

- IDA and county agencies do not pay attention to farming and do not promote

farming like they do for other businesses (10).

- Development pressure (9)
- Lack of education of the Towns on farming and ag districts, etc. (4).
- Meat processing plant has no progress at county level (2).
- Lack of a local a milk processing plant (2).
- Cost of production is very high (2)
- Lack of education of kids related to ag and history of community (2).
- Lack of support for farmers who innovate and technical assistance with paperwork (1)
- Lack of visibility of farmers to public (1)
- Loss of small farms and diversity (1).
- There is a disconnect between farms and schools
- Other agencies need to reach out to farmers for grant and other funding opportunities.
- Lack of branding and local jobs
- Kids watch their parents struggle and decide to pursue other work.
- Dairy farming startup costs are extreme.
- All costs – difficult for small farms to stay alive.
- Lack of promotion of ag.
- Agricultural conditions.
- Dairy is perishable and over-regulated.
- Down on farm day – it brings no immediate income or benefit to the farmers.

Vision

In the future, agriculture in the towns of Callicoon and Delaware will:

- Be profitable
- Be sustainable economically
- Provide for self-sufficient communities
- Be attractive to young people as a career
- Be a center for learning focused on farms
- Have solar panels on every farm to take advantage of alternative energy
- Rely on wind power in each town so that 50% of electric needs are made in the town
- Have a meat processing plant
- Have a stronger agri-tourism component
- Have locally grown food in stores and restaurants and will have better connections between these businesses and the local food supply
- Have better representation on the IDA
- Get ½ to 75% of county time
- Have an agency at the county directly doing ag economic development as well as access to grants and dollars to build agriculture
- Take at-risk farmlands and purchase them, and then recruit young farmers to work that land to promote sustainable farms
- Have young famers in business and getting tax free incentives for 10 years if

- they maintain a certain amount of ag income from that land
- Have incentives for ag businesses on an equal footing with other non-farm businesses
- Have a registry for farmers who wish to sell land to others looking to buy farmland for farming
- Link farming and downtowns more so they are working together and supporting each other.

Opportunities

- Potential to use existing farms that are not being used now.
- Give 10 year tax break for young farmers to get them to start farming.
- There is potential for other kinds of farms (vegetable tunnels) and more hobby farms. These won't be a principal income source but contribute to the economy anyway.
- IDA's and partnerships must promote ag and give same incentives to ag businesses as other businesses.
- More involvement of farmers in government and community.
- Emphasize local foods, know your farmers, our geography should benefit us.
- Kosher market.
- Potential to connect home, farm and school life.

Other Notes and Comments Not Already Above

- Most people do not understand farming.
- We are a couple of zoning laws away from zoning out farming.
- Education of non-farmers is key.
- Realtors are not using the ag disclosure notice.
- ½ of participants have had issues with non-farmers.
- Labor is a big issue, and some dairies feel it is not worth it to hire anyone. This limits businesses. No one reliable, no one skilled, no good work ethics.
- Use the Workforce Development Program, FFA, and interns to help with the labor issue.
- There is no say in the milk price received.
- Farmers can't afford to get meat processed at USDA butcher out of area. This must be a priority to get the meat processing plant up and running.
- Need a local commercial kitchen for incubating new ag businesses.
- There needs to be more value-added farming going on.
- Marketing assistance is needed. People from city are very interested in niche food, but there is no idea of how to get them to come here for that food. Marketing is critical for niche farms.
- Must recruit young farmers with incentives.
- Farmers seemed to have a lack of knowledge about the town zoning and regulations.
- Towns need to increase access to the internet.
- Needs a central depository of land rentals so we can connect landowners to

farmers looking to rent land.

- Rental of land was mostly verbal and informal agreements but there was lots of concern about rented land being removed. Farmers don't pay or don't pay a lot of rental land and don't want to. This could cause problems as landowners look for ways to cover increasing land taxes. Some landowners who rent land don't want the ag exemption because it ties them up.
- There are no welcomes for new landowners to help educate them about farms and the ag district and right to farm laws.
- There needs to be a way to decrease the cost of fuel – maybe some sort of cooperative.
- Some entity needs to cover the liability insurance for those who want to do agri-tourism.
- Print brochures that link young people to farms with incentives to start new farms. Like Wayne County. There needs to be more connections between those that need farmland and those that have it but don't farm it themselves.
- Look into a county run program that trains a roving team of workers to give dairy farmers a break and vacation.
- Must get legislators here and more political involvement.
- Must do a few things positively and get farmers together regularly. Educate farmers on when the county meetings are.
- Get more people to fill out their survey.