

## FARMLAND PROTECTION PLAN SURVEY for FARMERS

Agriculture is the #1 year-round business in Sullivan County. Because it is so important, several Sullivan County towns have partnered to develop agricultural enhancement plans. Callicoon together with Delaware, and Bethel together with Liberty have received funding from New York State to support development of these plans and have formed committees to start work. This survey is our first step toward a complete understanding of the many issues, concerns and opportunities related to agriculture. The committees will use this information and other public input to establish goals for the future of agriculture, so that the final plans can help towns better enhance and promote this valuable industry. You have been identified as a person involved with agriculture because you own land with either an agricultural assessment or an agricultural exemption. We need your input in order to make this planning effort a success. **This survey is completely anonymous.** We hope you will take 15 minutes to complete it and return it to the Sullivan County Division of Planning and Environmental Management in the postage paid envelope by **November 18, 2008**. If you are no longer connected with agriculture in any way, please fill out the last page and return. **Thank you!**

### 1. What is your farm's primary enterprise?

(Please choose one and indicate type or other relevant details.)

- 9 Dairy
- 12 Livestock
- 2 Horticulture
- 1 Christmas Trees
- 5 Cash Crops
- 2 Vegetables
- 1 Fruits
- 3 Forestry
- 0 Beekeeping
- 1 Maple Products
- 9 Other: [lease land, eggs, evergreens, beef, dairy replacements, horse boarding, nursery, sell hay](#)

### 2. What secondary farm and non-farm activities are you engaged in, to diversify your farm? (For example, farmstands, lodging, alternative energy, agri-tourism, etc.)

[Farmstead, agri-tourism, lumber, lease to farmer, maple syrup, alternative energy, bees, lease animals for use in media, hay, Christmas trees, logging](#)

### 3. Do you sell goods or services at local farmers-markets?

2 Yes 27 No

If so, which ones?

[\(1\) Callicoon and Liberty  
Jeffersonville, Barryville, and Bethel](#)

### 4. Please list the number of parcels and the number of acres that you farm in each town, including both land that you own and land that you rent. **Total/Average**

Town	Total Acres Owned	Total Acres Rented
Bethel	<a href="#">600/200</a>	<a href="#">200/67</a>
Callicoon	<a href="#">3691/115</a>	<a href="#">1586/76</a>
Delaware	<a href="#">60/30</a>	<a href="#">120/60</a>
Liberty	<a href="#">900/300</a>	<a href="#">350/88</a>

### 5. How many acres of your land are used for each of the following? **Total/Average**

6. Farmstead Complex:  
(house, barns, roads, etc.): [403/17.5](#) acres  
Actively farmed: [2679/96](#) acres  
Wooded: [1630/63](#) acres  
Open, idle land: [223/16](#) acres  
Rural residence: [23/2](#) acres

### 6. How many workers (including family) does your farm employ? **Total/Average**

	Year-Round	Seasonal
Full-Time Workers	<a href="#">24/1.1</a>	<a href="#">6/0.4</a>
Part-Time Workers	<a href="#">13/0.7</a>	<a href="#">20/1.4</a>

### 7. How many households does your farm support? (Do not include hired help.):

average: 1

### 8. How many years have you owned your farm?:

average: 34 years

### 9. How long has your land been:

in farm production?: average: 87 years

in your family?: average: 80 years

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

STRONGLY SUPPORT                      STRONGLY OPPOSE

	1	2	3	4
<b>A. Conservation Easements</b> <i>A legal document that restricts the use of land to farming, open space, or wildlife habitat. A landowner may voluntarily sell, lease, or donate an easement to a government agency or private land trust and as a result may be eligible for federal tax and NY property tax benefits.</i>	17	8	2	2
<b>B. Purchase of Development Rights</b> <i>The voluntary sale of the rights to develop a piece of property by the landowner to a government agency or land trust. The sale price is determined by an appraisal. The land is permanently restricted to farming or open space.</i>	17	9	2	2
<b>C. Transfer of Development Rights</b> <i>Property rights that are not used on the land from which they come. These may be sold to be used on another designated site in a growth area in order to allow the farm or open space to remain undeveloped. It allows landowners to receive the full equity of the property.</i>	14	7	2	4
<b>D. Lease of Development Rights</b> <i>When the development rights of a property are leased to a municipality through a contractual agreement for a specified period of time in return for tax benefits or other monetary transaction. This results in land being restricted to farming or open space for that specified time period.</i>	11	12	4	3
<b>E. Farm Friendly Zoning</b> <i>Local regulations that do not restrict agricultural activities. Zoning laws that are farm friendly allow agriculture in more than one zoning district, simplify regulations and standards for farms and agricultural businesses, and allow flexibility in agriculture related businesses on the farm.</i>	21	6	2	0
<b>F. Conservation Subdivisions</b> <i>A development design technique that concentrates buildings on a portion of the site to allow the remaining land to be used for recreation, open space, or farming.</i>	12	9	6	2
<b>G. Loan Programs</b> <i>Dedicated funding stream to disburse loan funds to farms and agricultural businesses to start new businesses, expand operations and/or diversify.</i>	16	7	5	1
<b>H. Differential Assessments</b> <i>When land is assessed for tax purposes as farmland, it is based on its use-value for farming rather than on its "highest and best" use for potential development. New York State offers an agricultural exemption program which lowers the assessment of lands devoted to farming.</i>	23	5	0	1
<b>I. Growing New Farmers</b> <i>Promotes and encourages new farmers to locate in the town by offering information, incentives and programs to help them get started.</i>	20	7	2	0
<b>J. Ag-Enterprise Zones</b> <i>Designated areas that satisfy income or employment criteria that benefit businesses. For example: 100% exemption from the General Excise Tax (GET), income tax credits, and exemptions from the GET for licensed contractors.</i>	12	8	7	1
<b>K. Overlay Zoning District</b> <i>An area where certain additional requirements are superimposed upon a base zoning district or underlying district and where the requirements of the base or underlying district may or may not be altered.</i>	3	9	8	4
<b>L. Exclusive Agricultural Zones</b> <i>Zoning districts that only allow agricultural uses and prohibit any other uses unless they are related to farm use.</i>	11	9	3	4
<b>M. Sullivan County Agriculture &amp; Farmland Protection Plan</b> <i>A plan created in 1999 to specifically address the development and preservation of farmland in Sullivan County.</i>	20	7	1	0
<b>N. Town Comprehensive Plan</b> <i>A plan created at the town level that summarizes the current condition of the community, projects future needs, and develops general policy goals and objectives. The comprehensive plan is the legal basis for zoning and other land use laws.</i>	11	10	5	1
<b>O. Other</b> please explain: _____	2	0	0	1

**11. Please list your top 3 strategies, either from the above list or others, that you feel the town should pursue to help keep farming viable. Top Strategies, (Number of times picked)**

E (11), H (9), A (8), B (7), G (6), I (3), L (3)

**12. What information do you feel the local planning & zoning boards need to ensure that agriculture is considered during project review?**

Better education, impact of new project on ag, map showing where farming activities are, right to farm laws, how farming affects the overall area, regular contact with farmers, following through with ag and markets rules

**13. Which of the following programs do you currently participate in or have you taken advantage of?**

(Check all that apply.)

- 16 Enrolled in a State certified Agricultural District 2 Watershed Agricultural Council Programs  
20 Agricultural Value Assessment on your property 20 School Tax Relief (STAR) Program  
13 Agricultural Exemptions on agricultural structures 2 Other: [value added products](#)  
1 Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Programs 0 None  
0 Industrial Development Agency (IDA) Agricultural Tax Abatement  
5 New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) Programs

**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 CHALLENGING AT ALL		NOT APPLICABLE
A. Availability of farm labor	<u>10</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>7</u>
B. Property taxes	<u>23</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
C. Land prices	<u>12</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>4</u>
D. Loss of productive farmland	<u>12</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>5</u>
E. Rental costs	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>12</u>
F. Availability of rental land	<u>2</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>11</u>
G. Fuel cost	<u>18</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>2</u>
H. Residential encroachment/ nuisance complaints	<u>10</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>
I. Limited succession plans for the farm (few new farmers)	<u>9</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>6</u>
J. Estate taxes	<u>10</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
K. Environmental regulations	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>1</u>
L. Land use regulations (zoning & permitting)	<u>4</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>2</u>
M. Water availability (quality & quantity)	<u>2</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>2</u>
N. Global climate change	<u>5</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>2</u>
O. Access to adequate financing	<u>5</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>3</u>
P. Access to agri-services	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>
Q. Access to marketing or business support	<u>7</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
R. Lack of local consumers/ clients	<u>2</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>3</u>
S. Lack of processing facilities	<u>12</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>10</u>
T. Lack of local dairy processing	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>11</u>
U. Lack of community kitchen	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>12</u>
V. Machinery costs	<u>15</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>
W. Production costs	<u>13</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>
X. Other:	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>

**15. Of the above challenges, what are the top three greatest challenges facing you individually?**

**Top Challenges, (Number of times picked)** B (11), G (7), H (6), A (4), V (4), W (4), P (3)

**16. What percentage of materials/ equipment/ supplies for your farm do you buy from outside the County?**

12 Less than 25% 8 25-49% 2 50-74% 3 75-100%

**17. What were your gross annual sales last year from your farm?**

3 \$0 (personal use only) 3 \$25,000 – \$49,999 2 \$200,000 – \$499,999  
5 \$1- \$9,999 2 \$50,000 – \$99,999 1 \$500,000 +  
9 \$10,000 – \$24,999 2 \$100,000 – \$199,999

**18. About how much of your net family income came from your farm last year?**

16 Less than 25% 4 25-49% 0 50-74% 6 75-100%

**19. What attracted you to farm in Sullivan County?**

Born here, beauty of area, family ties, setting, open space, family farm, close to markets, family owned farm

**20. What trends do you see in agriculture in Sullivan County?** (Please check all that apply.)

- 17 A smaller number of large farms      16 Movement of farms out of Sullivan County  
11 Farm diversification      1 No significant change  
11 A larger number of small operations      4 Other: more direct sales, hobby farms

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

	Within 1 year	5 years	10 years or more
Increase your farming operation	<u>5</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>0</u>
Decrease your farming operation	<u>0</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>
Diversify your farming operation	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>1</u>
Stay the same	<u>8</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>1</u>
Sell all or a portion of your land to another farmer for farm use	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>
Sell a portion of your land for non-farm purposes	<u>3</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
Sell all of your land for non-farm purposes	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>2</u>
Relocate and continue to farm elsewhere	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>
Transfer the farm to a family member	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>8</u>
Begin a farming operation on your land	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
Stop renting your land for farm use	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Increase agricultural sales	<u>6</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>0</u>
Decrease agricultural sales	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>
Eliminate agricultural sales	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>
Sign a gas lease	<u>1</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>0</u>
Other, please explain:	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>

**22. How concerned are you about the loss of farmland in your town?**

- 22 Very concerned    10 Somewhat concerned    1 Not very concerned    0 Not concerned at all

**Why?** [See Attached Notes](#)

**23. Do you feel there is a negative relationship between local farms and non-farm neighbors?**

- 11 Yes 18 No    **Why or why not?** [See Attached Notes](#)

**24. What can be done to improve/strengthen the relationship between local farms and non-farm neighbors?** [See Attached Notes](#)

**25. Do you think natural gas drilling will help or impede agriculture in your town?**

- 9 Help    13 Impede    7 No opinion

**Explain**    [See Attached Notes](#)

**26. How old are you?**

- 0 Under 25                      7 45 - 54                      9 65 - 74  
0 25 - 34                      6 55 - 59                      8 75 or older  
1 35 - 44                      4 60 - 64

**27. How long have you lived in Sullivan County?**

- 4 5 years or less              0 6-10 years              2 11-20 years              29 more than 20 years

**28. What is the highest level of education you have completed?**

- 1 Less than 9th grade                      3 Some college, no degree                      5 Masters Degree  
0 9th to 12th grade, no diploma                      6 Associates degree                      3 Ph.D.  
7 High school graduate or GED                      9 Bachelors degree

**29. Please provide any additional comments on preserving local farms and farmlands, below or on a separate sheet of paper. If you have comments specific to a particular town, please be sure to indicate the town's name.**      [See Attached Notes](#)

## 22. How concerned are you about the loss of farmland in your town? Why

dependence on  
unfarmed fields convert to trash growth & forest  
higher taxes and loss of rural character  
this is what is the beauty of the county  
We are becoming an "urban area." People moving in don't understand.  
adequate farmland at a reasonable price is soon to be non-existent  
impact of loss on counties future  
farms are necessary but in our area farming is a difficult occupation because of climate, soil quality, etc.  
few properties to use for haying  
If we lose farmland now, it will be a hardship now and in future.  
People are selling because no price for milk and stack.  
It has become increasingly difficult for local farmers to survive financially, because of costs, lack of labor and weather-based losses.  
I can't picture our county without farms.  
changes character of the community  
Town of Callicoon has always been rural with small farmers- I don't want to see a house on every buildable 5 acre or 2 acre plot.  
less farmland, more encroachment and problems with non-farmers  
don't like development  
If we sell all land for development, no more farms  
Seven of my rented parcels have decreased due to homes being built  
Food prices keep climbing, farms keep disappearing.  
demise of agriculture  
it changes the way we live.

## 23. Do you feel there is a negative relationship between local farms and non-farm neighbors? Why

We love each other and appreciate and pool our resources  
the ignorance of non-farm-oriented buyers  
They don't "get it."  
There is mutual respect.  
Many people (non farmers) are unwilling to accept the by products (side effects) of farming or any other business as well.  
not in my experience  
New County residents have no connection to farms and farm families that have been here for generations. Many new residents are second home owners only.  
Second home owners don't understand farming.  
don't know  
sometimes  
Most reasonable people understand that farming activities are necessary for the farmer's livelihood and therefore accept slow traffic, odors, animals on roadways, etc.  
overall no, but very negative relations with some  
neighbors respect the farming tradition  
Noise, dirt, moving equipment  
Most want to see green fields and animals  
Most residents appreciate open spaces.  
seem to like us here  
Some don't understand farms.  
They're not realistic; they don't understand how things like fertilizer work.

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

public relations where it may be a problem

realtors should be more honest

create a buzz with farming, ie wine, horses, cows; high image farming to attract people

improve their attitude

Ban gas drilling completely to stop the conflict between farmers with large tracts leasing and others with smaller pieces suffering the consequences.

Continue to promote farm markets, educate new residents about the area.

Non-farm neighbors need to know certain farm operations are a must for farming.

don't know

have realtor inform buyers more about farming activities around the area

don't know

Educate the public that you have to keep farms viable to preserve the green fields.

agri-tourism

Hard to say. Some people don't care and don't want to know.

support the farms

## 25 Explain How Gas Drilling will help or not.

would increase income; need more info

additional income

potential disaster on soil and water resources

if done right, it shouldn't make a difference

Industrial zones and agricultural zones don't mix.

Loss of usable farmland to drilling operations.

I think it's difficult to speculate on true impact until drilling has begun.

The environmental damage or potential for environmental damage is very concerning.

Farmland will be used for gas drilling- may not be able to use for farming.

don't know

It will destroy the area- water and air quality, land pollution, high noise pollution.

If done with spacing which would minimally impact farming activities and infrastructure, and absolutely no environmental impact, gas drilling could save large tracts owned by farmers. If not, or no options exist, farming is finished, or farmers will sell to the highest bidder for development.

as long as farmers have money, they will farm

will buy up land, labor, have negative environmental impact

destroy land and values

Provide money to stay in business.

There is scientific evidence (largely ignored) that drilling and extracting gas/ oil from land creates earthquakes/ landslides.

It is dangerous.

people will keep their land

will help to save some who are going to lose it

Money from drilling will help, however drilling will impede tourism.

## 29. Please provide any additional comments

would like to lease to another farmer and keep farm in ag strategies town should pursue to help keep farming viable: additional tax benefits

Thank you for addressing this most important issue. We must preserve, support and help farmers and our land and environment prevail. (Noted on survey: Not at farmers markets at present- used to attend SEFMA, Roscoe, & Jeff. Question Mark (?) for 10 K- Overlay Zoning District. Comment- NO WAY next to #21 Gas Drilling.)

An aggressive Farmland Preservation Program which buys development rights of farms (Noted on survey: summer resident; farmland is leased)

Perhaps see how the farmland was preserved in the Hamptons Long Island. (Noted on survey: strategies for town to pursue: proximity to NYC, preservation reserve, attract farmers (high end) to the region)

Noted on survey: #15 three greatest challenge: taxes, taxes, taxes (but not specific)

Letter attached - Stephen Dreher, 43 Dreher Rd, Roscoe, NY 12776 (Town of Callicoon). Noted in survey: #11 strategies for town to pursue- (2) exclusive ag zones - "too late", (3) educate and promote agriculture in schools

Noted on survey: #10- indicated "don't know enough info" for Transfer of Dev Rights and Overlay Zoning District; noted "I rent to an active farm"; and the land is leased to an active farm, so they will answer the other questions left blank

Last time land was used for farming- farmer cut hay fields- about 6 years ago.

No information on survey

Farming is very difficult and it is easy to see that unless more is done to help people who are trying to farm, they will be forced to give up. We struggle terribly to pay property taxes just to keep our family farm land.

Noted on survey: #10- wrote in "don't know" for C and L, wrote in "got to pay more for product" next to I (growing new farmers); noted under #4 total acres rented: "cut 100 acres, not rented"

Noted on survey: #11- added Ag & Farmland Protection Plan as another choice; #15 (3) finances/costs (general, not specific)

Noted on survey: #11- limit taxes

Noted on survey: #15 (1) taxes (not specific)

Noted on survey: #15 (1) taxes (not specific)

Noted on survey: #11- decrease taxes

92 years old, lived in Sullivan County for lifetime

"Our fields are leased, not actively farmed by us."

Noted on survey: #4-- 7 parcels owned in Callicoon, 15 parcels rented in Callicoon.

Support groups, networking.

Noted on survey: #15 greatest challenges- (1) County geared toward dairy, much less support for nursery!, (2) labor, (3) financing at low interest!

Noted on survey #21: Sign a gas lease-- maybe.

Noted on survey: rents 290 acres in Town of Fremont

## Summary of Callicoon Farmer Survey

- Q 1 and 2. There are a wide variety of farms represented in the survey with the prevalent products being livestock (including horses, dairy and cash crops. Other farms were less prevalent but included one Christmas tree plantation, two horticulture, two vegetables, one fruit, three forestry, one maple products, and nine “other” kinds of farms. Other farms include eggs, evergreens, beef, dairy replacements, nursery, hay, and rental land to another farmer. Secondary farm operations included agritourism, lumber, leasing to farmers, alternative energy, bees, logging, and hay.
- Q 3. Two farms sold goods or services at farmers markets in Jeffersonville/Barryville, and in Callicoon.
- Q4. Some of the farmers who are based primarily in Callicoon also own or rent land in surrounding towns. About 1560 acres of land out of town are owned by Callicoon farmers and 670 additional acres are rented. Within Callicoon, 3691 acres are owned by the farmers who participated in the survey and 1586 additional acres are rented. That is a total of 5,277 acres of farmed land. The average size of owned land is 115 acres (mean of 78 acres).
- Q5. Participants categorized about 4958 acres of the total land into farmsteads, actively farmed land, wooded, idle, and rural residential acres. About 54% of the land is actively farmed and 33% is wooded. Less than 5% is considered idle.
- Q6. Sixty three people are employed by the farms that participated in the survey. This included 24 full time workers, 13 part time workers, 6 seasonal full time and 20 part time seasonal workers.
- Q 7 – 9. These farms typically support one household. Almost all farms have been in existence for a long time: the average number of years the farmer owned the farm was 34, with an average of 80 years in the family.
- Q10. This question explored the level of support for various farmland protection strategies. There was support for most of these techniques from most farmers. However, there was much less support for overlay zoning districts. Those techniques that were strongly supported by more than half the participants included conservation easements, purchase of development rights programs, transfer of development rights, lease of development rights, farm friendly zoning, conservation subdivisions, loan programs, differential assessments, growing new farmers, ag enterprise zones, exclusive agricultural zones, the Sullivan County Ag and Farmland Protection Plan, and the town comprehensive plan. The techniques that received the most support were differential assessments, growing new farmers, farm friendly zoning, purchase of development rights, conservation easements, and the County Ag and Farmland Plan.
- Q11. The participants ranked the farmland protection strategies and in order, chose: farm friendly zoning, differential assessments, conservation easements, purchase of

development rights, loan programs, growing new farmers, and exclusive agricultural zones as preferred methods.

Q12. In order to ensure that agriculture is reviewed adequately by local planning boards, farmers felt there needed to be more education, more communication with farmers, and a better understanding of farms issues and impacts. They also suggested having a map for the planning board to show where active agriculture and ag districts were.

Q13. A majority of farmers participated in ag value assessments on their property and structures, the STAR tax program, and were enrolled in a State certified Agricultural District. There was very little participation (0 to 5 maximum) in the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program, IDA tax abatement programs, NYSERDA programs, and Watershed Ag Council programs.

Q14. Farmers were asked to identify what their challenges were. Top challenges included property taxes, machinery costs, production costs, and fuel costs. Other challenging factors included land prices, loss of productive land, residential encroachment, limited new farmers, estate taxes, lack of dairy processing facility, and land use regulations. Factors that were not as challenging or not applicable to area farmers were availability of rental land, rental costs, water availability, access to financing, access to marketing or business support, lack of local consumers, and lack of processing facilities and a community kitchen.

Q15. Farmers felt that property taxes, fuel costs, residential encroachment, availability of farm labor, machinery costs, production costs, and access to agri-services were the top challenges facing them personally.

Q16. About 48% buy less than 25% of their supplies and equipment from within Sullivan County. Only three participants buy over 75% of their supplies locally. The remaining farms buy between 25% and 74% of their supplies locally.

Q17 - 18. Almost 63% of participants earn less than \$25,000 in gross sales from their farming operations. Three famers considered their farm personal use only and earned no income from it. About 11% (3 farms) earn over \$200,000 in gross farm income. 16 or about 62% (27 farmers answered this question) consider their farm to contribute less than 25% of their family net income. Six farms considered themselves to have the farm contribute greater than 75% of their family net income.

Q19. Most farmers indicated they were in Sullivan County because they had family roots and the farm was a family farm. Other factors that attracted people to the area included the beauty, open space, and proximity to markets.

Q20. Most farmers feel the future trends in farming will be either a smaller number of large farms or movement of farms out of Sullivan County. About half also felt there were trends towards more diversification and more operations that are smaller. The prevalent feeling however was loss of farms out of the county and creation of larger farms that remain.

Q21. This question explored farmers' future plans. Ten farmers indicated they would be increasing farming operations within 1 to 10 years. Six will be diversifying. Ten desire to increase their agricultural sales in that time frame. Six also want to sign a gas lease. More farms however indicated they would stay the same or transfer the farm to a family member. Five farmers indicated they would be selling a portion of their farm for non-farm use and three said they would be planning on selling the entire farm for non-farm use. Only one farm said they would be decreasing sales (within 10 years). For this most part, this question showed there are about half the farmers who plan on continuing and even increasing their operations.

Q22. Farmers were very concerned (76%) or somewhat concerned about loss of farmland in town. One participant was not very concerned and one was not concerned at all. The reasons for this concern included: lack of economic returns to keep farms going; non-farmers moving in that don't understand farming; land prices going up, increased development. Farmers also expressed their concern IF there is a loss of farmland and that included an impact on the county's future, fewer properties to use for haying, changes in character to the community, increased food costs, and a change in the way we live.

Q23 - 24. Slightly more farmers feel that there is no negative relationship with non-farmers. About 62% (of 18 who answered this question) do not feel there are negative relationships. Eleven indicated there was a negative relationship. Most of the reasons given for the negative relationships revolved around the lack of awareness and information non-farmers have about farming. To improve these relationships, farmers felt there needed to be more of a public relations emphasis, education, and better involvement of non-farmers in local farms.

Q25. About 45% of participants feel gas leasing will help agricultural activities. 31% felt that it would help farmers and 7 participants had no opinion. Reasons given were mixed: some felt the added income would be very helpful to keep farmers going while others felt that there are many negative environmental impacts.

Q26. There were no young farmers that were included in the survey. One farmer was between the ages of 35 and 44. All others were older than 45 years and 59% of participants were over 65 years.

Q27. Four farmers are new to the area (less than 5 years), two participants have lived in Sullivan County between 11 and 20 years, and the rest (83%) have lived in Sullivan County for more than 20 years.

Q28. All participants except one had at least a high school degree. Almost 76% have at least some college and 68% have a college degree. Among the participants were five with a master's degree and three with a PhD. Seven, or 221 have high school degrees and no college.

Q29. See notes.

## What the Survey Tells Us

- There are a wide variety of farms, but dominated by livestock and dairy. Many farmers have secondary operations that further diversify farming in the town.
- Not many farms participate in farmers markets – probably due to the nature of the farm.
- Some Callicoon farmers actively own or rent farmland in surrounding towns to support their businesses. 30% of farmland depends on rental lands not owned by the farmer. There is potential that this loss could be very negative on Callicoon farmers.
- The 39 farms who participated in the survey contribute to the employment of the area by employing a total of 63 people for at least part of the year. This is not an unsubstantial contribution to the economy.
- Farms typically support one household and have mostly been in the family for many years. There is a lot of history and experience in the community as a result.
- There is support for many ag protection methods. Overlay zoning techniques would probably not be acceptable. Programs that attracted new farmers, farm friendly zoning, PDR and use of conservation easements, and continued tax benefits for farming are all priority solutions. However, other innovative ideas do have support such as conservation subdivisions, TDR, ag enterprise zones, and even exclusive agricultural zones.
- Overall, participants felt that more education and awareness of the role agriculture plays in the town as well as the potential negative impacts to agriculture need more attention by the local planning board.
- Farmers are taking advantage of some of the tax programs, but not all. This might indicate the need for more education of the farmers about these programs.
- Taxes and operations costs (fuel, machinery, production) were among the top challenges of farmers. They feel that rental land and its cost, water, and access to marketing and business support were not problems. Some farmers who concentrate on fresh produce felt that lack of local processing facilities were a challenge to them.
- Farmers are going out of the area to purchase many of their supplies and equipment. This might indicate that not all services are available locally. It also may indicate that there may be business opportunities for some of these services to be provided locally.
- Unfortunately, the overall economic picture of Callicoon farms is not strong. A majority of the farmers have small gross sales (less than \$25,000) and a majority have their farms contributing less than 25% of their family income. That means that off-farm income is required and that most of the farms are not large contributors to the

owners income. From an income point of view, many Callicoon farms are very small.

- Farmers feel that there will be a loss of farms resulting in fewer farms (some moving out of the county) and farmland being incorporated into other farms. This would result in fewer, but larger farms. They also feel that some farm diversification will occur. Even so, many farmers hope to increase their sales, increase their agricultural operations, and maintain the farms in their families. Eight indicated that they would be selling all or part of their farm, but that means that most will be staying the same or attempting to expand.
- There is concern about loss of farmland both from an economic point of view as well as from a community character point of view. Increased development and continued loss of income were reasons why so many were concerned.
- Some farmers are clearly having difficulties with their non-farm relationships. There are still many farmers who have not had that problem, but given that 38% do have issues, it is a problem that needs addressing. Education was the key tactic felt to improve relationships.
- Although there were mixed feelings about the role gas drilling can play in maintaining farms, more people felt it would be good for farmers because they would earn additional income that could keep the farm going and the land in agriculture. Some were clearly concerned about possible negative environmental impacts.
- The farming community is aging and that means that in the next decade or two, there might be significant changes in farm and land ownership. Lack of young farmers is a potential large problem.