

## 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.)

- 8 Dairy
- 6 Livestock horse, alpaca
- 0 Horticulture
- 0 Christmas Trees
- 1 Cash Crops
- 0 Vegetables
- 1 Fruits
- 0 Forestry
- 0 Beekeeping
- 1 Maple Products
- 4 Other: [eggs, hay, rent to farmer](#)

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

[Syrup, teaching, forestry, eggs, holiday vendors, alternative energy, pottery, trucking, solar, compost, hauling, beef cows, topsoil](#)

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

2 Yes      11 No

If so, which ones?

[Bethel Woods, Callicoon](#)

**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	<u>120/30</u>	<u>160/53</u>
Callicoon	<u>23/6</u>	<u>0/0</u>
Delaware	<u>2,907/126</u>	<u>1,416/94</u>
Liberty	<u>2/0.4</u>	<u>0/0</u>

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

Farmstead Complex  
(house, barns, roads, etc.): 602/37 acres  
 Actively farmed: 1,335/76 acres  
 Wooded: 563/30 acres  
 Open, idle land: 75/7 acres  
 Rural residence: 35/4 acres

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

	Year-Round	Seasonal
Full-Time Workers	<u>34/2</u>	<u>0/0</u>
Part-Time Workers	<u>16/2</u>	<u>10/1</u>

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

average: 1.2

**8. How many years have you owned your farm?**

average: 24 years

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

in farm production? average: 74 years

in your family? average: 63 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

	5	4	3	2	1
<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>	5	11	2	3	
<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>	10	7	3	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>	4	5	6	6	
<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>	2	6	9	5	
<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>	14	5	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>	8	6	6	1	
<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>	5	12	4	0	
<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>	14	6	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>	11	9	1	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>	5	8	4	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>	2	3	9	2	
<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>	8	7	3	2	
<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>	10	8	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>	3	9	7	0	
<b>O. Other</b> please explain: _____	3	0	0	0	

**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)**

B (4), E (3), L (2), I (2), F (2), A (2)

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

Taxes farm friendly, boards should include farmers, none they do what they want to do, educate them on farming resources, drainage impacts on farms, get them to communicate with Cooperative Extension and SCS

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

(Check all that apply.)

- 13 Enrolled in a State certified Agricultural District  
 17 Watershed Agricultural Council Programs  
 1 5Agricultural Value Assessment on your property  
 17 School Tax Relief (STAR) Program  
 12 Agricultural Exemptions on agricultural structures  
 3 Other: 480-a forestry  
 0 Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Programs  
 3 None  
 1 Industrial Development Agency (IDA) Agricultural Tax Abatement  
 6 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>7</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>
B. Property taxes	<u>16</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
C. Land prices	<u>14</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>
D. Loss of productive farmland	<u>9</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
E. Rental costs	<u>2</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
F. Availability of rental land	<u>2</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>
G. Fuel cost	<u>15</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>
H. Residential encroachment/ nuisance complaints	<u>7</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
I. Limited succession plans for the farm (few new farmers)	<u>8</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>
J. Estate taxes	<u>10</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>
K. Environmental regulations	<u>11</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
L. Land use regulations (zoning & permitting)	<u>5</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>
M. Water availability (quality & quantity)	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>1</u>
N. Global climate change	<u>6</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>1</u>
O. Access to adequate financing	<u>3</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>1</u>
P. Access to agri-services	<u>3</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>
Q. Access to marketing or business support	<u>2</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>
R. Lack of local consumers/ clients	<u>1</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>
S. Lack of processing facilities	<u>7</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>1</u>
T. Lack of local dairy processing	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>5</u>
U. Lack of community kitchen	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>4</u>
V. Machinery costs	<u>12</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>
W. Production costs	<u>13</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>
X. Other: <u>gas drilling (one comment)</u>	<u>13</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 (6), V (6), W (6), G (4), H (3)

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

- 6 Less than 25%     
  5 25-49%     
  6 50-74%     
  3 75-100%

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

- 1 \$0 (personal use only)     
  2 \$25,000 – \$49,999     
  3 \$200,000 – \$499,999  
 4 \$1- \$9,999     
  1 \$50,000 – \$99,999     
  1 \$500,000 +  
 4 \$10,000 – \$24,999     
  2 \$100,000 – \$199,999

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

- 8 Less than 25%     
  4 25-49%     
  1 50-74%     
  6 75-100%

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

Born here, beauty of land, been in family, grew up here, scenic, rural, low land prices

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

- 10 A smaller number of large farms      10 Movement of farms out of Sullivan County  
8 Farm diversification      1 No significant change  
9 A larger number of small operations      3 Other: aging farmer, less 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>4</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>1</u>
Decrease your farming operation	<u>2</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>1</u>
Diversify your farming operation	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>2</u>
Stay the same	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>4</u>
Sell all or a portion of your land to another farmer for farm use	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>
Sell a portion of your land for non-farm purposes	<u>0</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
Sell all of your land for non-farm purposes	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
Relocate and continue to farm elsewhere	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>
Transfer the farm to a family member	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>9</u>
Begin a farming operation on your land	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Stop renting your land for farm use	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Increase agricultural sales	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>1</u>
Decrease agricultural sales	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Eliminate agricultural sales	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Sign a gas lease	<u>5</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>2</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?**

- 16 Very concerned    5 Somewhat concerned    1 Not very concerned    1 Not concerned at all

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

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

- 8 Yes 10 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?**

- 13 Help    5 Impede    5 No opinion

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

**26. How old are you?**

- 0 Under 25                      5 45 - 54                      2 65 - 74  
1 25 - 34                      5 55 - 59                      3 75 or older  
3 35 - 44                      4 60 - 64

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

- 0 5 years or less              0 6-10 years              2 11-20 years              21 more than 20 years

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

- 0 Less than 9th grade                      5 Some college, no degree                      1 Masters Degree  
1 9th to 12th grade, no diploma                      2 Associates degree                      0 Ph.D.  
11 High school graduate or GED                      3 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**

Open land makes a better environment.  
It gets sold to people who want to build and then more land is turned into concrete and buildings. We lose land to developments.  
overdevelopment  
2nd homes are sprouting like leaves- then come the complaints! Odor, noise, etc.  
dairy farmers are dwindling  
farmers are still backbone of this country- jobs- landscape- family values  
lot of work, small increase, taxes too high  
prefer it to stay rural  
Farming is the basis of life here.  
Less farm land to rent for production  
Farmland is irreplaceable  
too much building  
We need farms/ agriculture/ dairy.  
it changes the way we live.  
Land taxes are so high people want to sell land for development.  
Because land prices and taxes are so high people want to sell for development.

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

Manure does not smell good.  
I think the non farm neighbor benefits by having a farm nearby.  
my neighbors are very understanding  
perception that I am a nuisance  
I grew up on a farm and I like them.  
some- a few farmers aren't very well off and their buildings etc show this; non-farmers seem to have \$ (nice homes/estates)  
If city people want a view- just buy it.  
Most of non farm neighbors appreciate us.  
Poorly defined ag districts  
smells, noise, traffic  
non-farm neighbors are all great, old-school folks-- community fabric  
Farmers realize weekenders care about the area and (illegible) and weekenders know farmers are the best neighbors.  
Some don't understand farms.  
We try to be neighbor friendly.  
Because we are neighbor friendly.

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

Continue education

find and utilize planning/zoning board members that have a brain

Educate 2nd home owners to the needs of farmers

I feel some of the programs to help farmers seem to always go to the select few- this surely shows on farms that don't "RANK" high enough.

education about how we benefit from each other

Whatever a farmer does, city people are against it.

We have an open farm day once a year and we are open year round.

Improve zoning

Hold orientation classes for newcomers!

Invitations to home visits/ dinner.

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

What we do is farming and we should be able to work together from there.

Neighbors have to realize what farmign involves (noise, odor, hours) and we all have to work together.

People need to realize that the green fields are here because of farming.

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

Money is needed.

give the \$ to get out of debt and purchase new machinery

provide a cushion financially for expansion

I do not want to.

should pump \$ into local economy- farm update & improvements; may promote diverse to new business

It will bring money to landowners, so they can improve buildings, buy machinery, and live better.

Keep the farm going.

Loss of water affects all

money enough to continue

Land/ air quality will be poisoned. Please look at [www.waterunderattack.com](http://www.waterunderattack.com) and [www.damascuscitizens.org](http://www.damascuscitizens.org)

will help to save some who are going to lose it

It will help the business revenue.

For those that want to stay in farming it will help immensely the business revenue.

## 29. Please provide any additional comments

Noted on survey: #15 greatest challenges- lack of competitive market

Noted on survey: #11 strategies for town to pursue- (1) decrease taxes, (2) grants, (3) increase networking

Noted on survey: #11 less taxes, #15 taxes (not specific)

Noted on survey: Never received this survey in the mail, nor a call! Also noted, #4: 1 parcel owned and 1 parcel rented in Town of Delaware.

Noted on Survey #2: I am looking to create a huge community garden using county funding and setting up a system to help kids thru agriculture, help the community by providing food. Noted on survey #7: supports one household "right now";

Noted three times on Survey #14: No gas, please keep gas drilling out. Noted on Survey #15: "Again, the environment. No gas." On Survey #20: "We need to stop gas drilling."

Town of Delaware: Buildings in agriculture use should have some type of exception while in agriculture use, as well as land and house. Even if you protect the land the farmers won't be able to afford to keep the land if the County and Town taxes aren't set to support agriculture. Noted on survey #20: the word "large" is crossed out from the choice "A smaller number of large farms." This choice is checked.

Town of Delaware: buildings in agricultural use should have some kind of exemption like the land does and the house should. Even if you protect the land the farmers won't be able to afford to keep the land if the County and Town taxes aren't set to support agriculture. Note on Survey #20: the word "large" is crossed out from the choice "A smaller number of large farms." This choice is checked.

Noted on Survey #8: has owned farm 17 years partly, 10 years solely

## Summary of Delaware Farmer Survey

- Q 1 and 2. There are a wide variety of farms represented in the survey with the prevalent products being dairy and livestock (including horses and alpaca). Other farms were less prevalent but included one cash crop (hay), one fruit, one maple products, and four “other” kinds of farms. Other farms include eggs, and hay and rental land to another farmer.
- Q 3. Two farms sold goods or services at farmers markets in Bethel Woods, and in Callicoon.
- Q4. Some of the farmers who are based primarily in Delaware also own or rent land in surrounding towns. About 145 acres of land out of town are owned by Delaware farmers and 160 acres are rented. Within Delaware, 2907 acres are owned by the farmers who participated in the survey and 1416 additional acres are rented. That is a total of 4,323 acres of farmed land. The average size of owned land is 126 acres (mean of 94 acres).
- Q5. Participants categorized about 2610 acres of the total land (probably mostly the owned land) into farmsteads, actively farmed land, wooded, idle, and rural residential acres. About 51% of the land is actively farmed and 22% is wooded. Less than 3% is considered idle.
- Q6. Sixty people are employed by the farms that participated in the survey. This included 34 full time workers, 16 part time workers, no seasonal full time and 10 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 24, with an average of 63 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, lease of development rights, and transfer of development rights programs. Those techniques that were strongly supported by more than half the participants included conservation easements, purchase of development rights programs, 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, and farm friendly zoning.
- Q11. The participants ranked the farmland protection strategies and in order, chose: purchase of development rights, farm friendly zoning, conservation subdivisions, conservation easements, growing new farmers, and exclusive agriculture zones as

preferred methods.

- Q12. In order to ensure that agriculture is reviewed adequately by local planning boards, farmers felt there needed to farmers on the boards, better education, more communication with Cooperative Extension and SCS, and a better understanding of drainage issues on farms.
- 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 6 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, fuel costs, and environmental regulations. Other challenging factors included land prices, estate taxes, 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, machinery costs, production costs, fuel costs, and residential encroachments were the top challenges facing them personally.
- Q16. About 26% 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 50% of participants earn less than \$25,000 in gross sales from their farming operations. One famer considered their farm personal use only and earned no income from it. About 22% (4 farms) earn over \$200,000 in gross farm income. Eight or about 44% (18 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. Nine farmers indicated they would be

increasing farming operations within 1 to 10 years. Nine will be diversifying. Eight desire to increase their agricultural sales in that time frame. Twelve also want to sign a gas lease. More farms however indicated they would stay the same or transfer the farm to a family member. Only three famers 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 (70%) 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 44% (of 18 who answered this question) do feel there are negative relationships. 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 56% of participants feel gas leasing will help agricultural activities. 22% felt that it would help farmers and 5 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 25 and 34. Three were between 35 and 44. All others were older than 45 years and 22% of participants were over 65 years.

Q27. Two participants have lived in Sullivan County between 11 and 20 years, and 91% have lived in Sullivan County for more than 20 years.

Q28. All participants except one had at least a high school degree. Almost 48% have some college and 26% have a college degree. Among the participants was one with a master's degree. Eleven, or 29% have high school degrees.

Q29. See notes.

## What the Survey Tells Us

- There are a wide variety of farms, but dominated by dairy and livestock. 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 Delaware farmers actively own or rent farmland in surrounding towns to support their businesses. A small percentage of farmers have rental lands not owned by the farmer out of the town. However, 67% rely on non-farmer owned/rented lands within town. There is potential that this loss could be very negative on Callicoon farmers.
- The 239 farms who participated in the survey contribute to the employment of the area by employing a total of 60 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 Delaware farms is not strong, but is

perhaps stronger than in Callicoon. About 50% of the farmers have small gross sales (less than \$25,000) and many have their farms contributing less than 25% of their family income. That means that off-farm income is required and that much of the farms in Town do not contribute to a large degree to the owners income. Compared to Callicoon however, there is more income generated from the farm in Delaware.

- 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. Three 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 44% 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, slightly 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.