

Appendix 4: Public Input

The Planning process included a variety of opportunities to involve farmers and the general Meredith community in development of this Plan. Efforts included conducting a farmer/farmland owner survey, a resident survey, a planning workshop, open meetings with the Steering Committee, and public hearings. The input received from these efforts largely contributed to the identification of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats. This in turn influenced the establishment of a unified vision and set of goals for agriculture that are outlined in this Plan. This appendix details the results of all public input received.

FARMER SURVEY: SUMMARY OF RESPONSES

120 surveys were mailed, 39 were returned (33%) and are summarized as follows. See pages 38 to 54 for full results).

1. Are you (type of farmer):

- Half of survey respondents own farmland and rent to farm operators.

2. What is your farm's primary business?

- Farming in Meredith is concentrated in hay, livestock, and dairy, which were the primary businesses for 88% of respondents.
- Among livestock businesses, five respondents reported being engaged in beef cattle.

3. What secondary farm or non-farm activities diversify your farm? (53%)

- Respondents reported a higher diversity of secondary farm businesses.
- Hay, woodlot, and other constituted almost half of all secondary businesses; the other category shows that multiple respondents were engaged in the sale of eggs and wool products.

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

- Most (87.5%) respondents do not sell goods or services at local farmers markets.
- For those farmers that sell to local markets as a primary business, most sold livestock. For those that sell to local markets as a secondary business, a variety of products were sold including hay, vegetables

(one farm), fruits (one farm), forestry (one farm), and agri-tourism activities (one farm).

5. Would you be interested in providing products to

- Five respondents were interested in providing products to a Meredith Buying Club/Co-op, while five additional respondents were interested in a Meredith Co-op, farmer's market, and CSA.
- There is not a high level of interest in providing products to Farmer's Markets, Buying Clubs/Co-ops, or CSAs. The response rate to this question was 29%.

6. Approximately how many acres do you farm, including land you own and land you rent? (89%)

- Most respondents own farmland, and the average farmland holding is nearly 200 acres, although the range is quite large.
- Respondents reported renting an average of 147 acres of farmland from others, and renting an average of 43 ac. to others. From the average amounts of acreage in each category, it appears that farmers who do rent land rent from several landowners.

7. About how many acres of your land are used for each of the following?

- Respondents on average reported high amounts of both actively farmed land and wooded land, with comparatively smaller amounts of land reported under farmstead and other residence use.
- Nearly a third of respondents indicated that their farms had zero open, idle land, and an average of 36 idle acres was reported for all respondents.

8. How many people, including family members, work on your farm? (60%)

- Respondents reported higher numbers of year-round workers on their farms: 53 year-round versus 15 seasonal workers were reported.
- Farms included in this survey employ less than two people, on average, in each category surveyed; the highest averages were reported for part-time (1.7) and full-time (1.5), year-round employment.

9. How many households does your farm support?

- Farms in Meredith support an average of 1.4 households, and the number supported ranges from 0 to 6 households.

10. How many years has your land been farmed?

- The land represented in this survey has been farmed for considerable amounts of time—nearly 80 years, on average—and the length of farming ranges from 1.5 to 200 years.
- Even for farmers who have been farming for only 6 to 10 years, the land itself has been in farming for well over a generation. This indicates that new farmers are taking over and using previously farmed land.

11. How many years has the land been in your family?

- Respondents reported that their land has been under family ownership for an average of 39.3 years, with half reporting a family ownership period of over 30 years. (median = 33.5)

12. Is your farm certified organic? (82%)

- Only one respondent reported having a certified organic farming operation, although over 60% of those answering this question said they are “following natural practices.”

13. Do you consider your farm a “hobby farm”?

- Most respondents indicated they do not consider themselves hobby farms (27 said no, 6 said yes). All hobby farmers indicated that their farms share of family income was less than 25% while 61% of non-hobby farmers also indicated their farm contributed less than 25% to their family income.
- Hobby farmers were either hay or livestock farmers.

14. Please rate your level of support for the following farm enhancement or farmland protection strategies on a scale of 1 to 4, with 1 being STRONGLY SUPPORT and 4 being STRONGLY OPPOSE

- In general, more than 50% of respondents either strongly support or support each of the listed strategies.
- A Town Right to Farm Law and Agricultural Exemptions had the highest level of support (around 90%), while over 40% indicated opposition to Lease of Development Rights.

15. What strategies do you think most important to keep farming viable in Meredith.

- There is support for local laws and planning relating to farming and farm viability. Over 60% of respondents indicated that a Right-to-farm law, Farm-friendly land use laws, and an Ag & farmland protection plan are important strategies.
- There is also support for ag-related economic development strategies, although the strategy viewed as the most important (20 responses, or 25%) was Growing New Farmers.
- The survey showed broad support for tax assessment and financial aid. As shown by responses to several questions, agricultural tax assessments have strong support—here, among almost 45% of respondents.

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

- Given the broad eligibility for the STAR program, that only 24% of respondents indicated participation could reflect that many do not count their property in Meredith as their primary residence.
- Most (78%) participation in these programs is represented by the combination of certified agricultural districts, agricultural assessments, the STAR program, and agricultural exemptions.
- Limited support was expressed for WAC programs.
- Not all participants are in the NYS Ag District.
- Not all participants receive agricultural value assessments on their property.

17. Do you participate in any Federal programs?

- Most (80%) respondents do not participate in any Federal programs, although it is not clear whether the definition of “Federal program” was clear from the survey.

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

- Expenses associated with farming, in the form of taxes and fuel, production, and machinery costs, were viewed as important challenges. The greatest challenge to future farm success is high property taxes, with almost 90% indicating it is “very important”

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(74%) or "important" (16%). 77% of respondents viewed high fuel costs as "very important."

- Challenges related to the availability of and costs associated with rental land appear to be the least important challenges.
- Over 70% of respondents indicated that legal restrictions on and environmental contamination from gas drilling were each either "very important" or "important," although most thought it "very important." Further analysis of this result indicated that almost all respondents who said they felt legal restrictions were important or very important also indicated they felt possible water or land contamination was very important.

19. Of the above challenges, which are the three most troubling to you?

- Challenges associated with gas drilling, fuel costs, and property taxes ranked highest in terms of number of responses.
- Gas drilling was cited as the #1 challenge most frequently.

20. Are you interested in renting your land for farming purposes? (82%)

- Interest in renting land was almost evenly split, with 51% saying "no" and 49% saying yes. 74% of farm owner/operators were not interested in renting their land, presumably because they are still working it themselves.

21. What percentage of your farm expenditures are made within 30 miles of your farm?

- The majority of respondents (48%) reported making between 75% and 100% of farm-related expenditures within 30 miles of their farm.

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

- More than half of respondents reported that less than 25% of their expenditures were outside Delaware County.

23. What were the approximate gross annual sales last year from your farm?

- 77% of respondents indicated that gross annual sales are \$50,000 and less. 17% (n = 5) did not have any sales at all.

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- 40% of farmland owners who rent land to others indicated they have no income from that activity. The remaining farmland owners earned between \$1.00 and \$10,000 for rental.
- Dairy farmers had the highest gross sales, followed by livestock farmers, and then hay.

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

- Farming comprises less than 25% of net family income for the majority of respondents.

25. What opportunities for your farm or farming in general do you feel there are in Meredith?

- Half of the responses mentioned beef or cattle raising in some way.

26. Indicate any of the following you plan to do, or would like to do, and within which timeframe.

- Many respondents indicated that, overall, they plan to increase agricultural sales, diversify their farming operation, and increase their farming operation. Conversely, a number of respondents also said that they plan to stay the same, especially in the long term.
- The short-term plans (i.e. within one year) with the highest level of response are to increase both sales and farming operations.
- In the long term (i.e. within 10 years or more), staying the same and transferring the farm to a family member received the highest levels of response.

27. How concerned are you about the loss of farmland in Meredith?

- 83% expressed concern about the loss of farmland in Meredith.

28. Do you plan on using wind, solar, biomass or other renewable energy resources on your farm?

- Of those who responded (78% of all participants), 11 had plans on using renewable energy, 8 said no, and 16 said maybe. This indicates there is a possibility to expand knowledge of and incentives for renewable energy use on the farms. Only 23% had no plans to use renewable energy.

29. Do you think natural gas drilling will help or harm agriculture in Meredith. Please explain.

- 68% of all respondents said that gas drilling will hurt agriculture, while 16% said it would help and another 16% said they were unsure.

30. What could Delaware County do to help keep your farm active and prosperous?

- Tax reduction and gas drilling bans were among the most cited potential County roles.

31. What could New York State do to help keep your farm active and prosperous?

- Tax reduction and gas drilling bans were among the most cited potential State roles.

32. What attracted you to farm in Meredith?

- Many respondents cited beauty, environment, and pastoral landscapes as reasons they located in Meredith. Several also cited the availability of cheap land.

33. What trends do you see in agriculture in Delaware County?

- Responses were split evenly among the several categories. There does not seem to be one single trend. However, respondents all felt some change was in the future: very few respondents reported that they see "no significant change" in Delaware County agriculture as a trend.

34. How long have you lived in Meredith?

- The majority of respondents have lived in Meredith for more than 20 years, and very few reported having lived in the Town for less than five years.

35. How old are you?

- All respondents were 45 years old or older, and 58% are over 65.

FARMER SURVEY: TABULATED RESULTS

Town of Meredith Farmland Protection Plan Survey for FARMERS and FARMLAND OWNERS

Agriculture has been at the center of life in Meredith since its founding. Because it is so important, the Town has applied for and received \$25,000 in funding from New York State Agriculture & Markets to develop a plan to enhance, protect and expand agriculture. This survey is our first step toward formally addressing the many issues, concerns and opportunities that affect agriculture here. Since you have a farm operation or you own land with an agricultural exemption, your information and concerns are of primary importance to the usefulness of the Plan, and we hope you will take a few minutes to fill out this survey.

THIS SURVEY IS COMPLETELY ANONYMOUS. Please return your completed survey to the Town's consultants, Community Planning & Environmental Associates, 152 Stolzenburg Rd., Berne, NY, 12023, in the enclosed envelope, by **July 8, 2011.**

Please note: We have tried to make this survey as inclusive as possible, so there may be questions that you find irrelevant. Don't bother to answer them. Responses to the questions that are important to you are what we need to design a Farmland Protection Plan that will truly serve the farmers of Meredith.

**Thank you for participating.
Keitha Capouya, Supervisor**

I. Are you: (93%)

- 18 Farmland owner **and** farm operator
- 21 Farmland owner, not a farm operator, who rents to a farm operator
- 2 Both
- 1 Neither

Please answer any of the following questions that apply to your situation.

2. What is your farm's primary business? (93%)

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

- | | |
|---|--|
| <u>7</u> Dairy _____ | <u>2</u> Forestry _____ |
| <u>17</u> Livestock [SEE APPENDIX B] _____ | <u>0</u> Beekeeping _____ |
| <u>1</u> Horticulture _____ | <u>0</u> Maple Products _____ |
| <u>0</u> Christmas Trees _____ | <u>1</u> Corn _____ |
| <u>22</u> Hay _____ | <u>0</u> Agritourism (what kind) _____ |
| <u>0</u> Vegetables _____ | <u>2</u> Other [SEE APPENDIX B] _____ |
| <u>0</u> Fruits _____ | |

3. What secondary farm or non-farm activities diversify your farm? (53%)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <u>1</u> Dairy _____ | <u>1</u> Agritourism (what kind) _____ |
| <u>3</u> Livestock _____ | <u>1</u> Bluestone or Gravel _____ |
| <u>1</u> Horticulture _____ | <u>5</u> Woodlot _____ |
| <u>0</u> Christmas Trees _____ | <u>0</u> Farmstand _____ |
| <u>8</u> Hay _____ | <u>2</u> Lodging _____ |
| <u>3</u> Vegetables _____ | <u>0</u> Alternative Energy _____ |
| <u>3</u> Fruits _____ | <u>0</u> Billboards _____ |
| <u>3</u> Forestry _____ | <u>1</u> Farm stays, camps _____ |
| <u>1</u> Beekeeping _____ | <u>0</u> You-pick _____ |
| <u>1</u> Maple Products _____ | <u>0</u> Corn _____ |
| <u>7</u> Other [SEE APPENDIX B] _____ | |

4. Do you sell goods or services at local farmers markets? (89%) 5 Yes 35 No - If so, which ones?

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>1</u> Good Cheap Food | <u>2</u> Lucky Dog Farm Store |
| <u>0</u> Green Earth | <u>0</u> Delhi Farmers' Market |
| <u>1</u> Oneonta Farmers' Market | <u>1</u> Franklin Farmers' Market <u>3</u> Other Farmers' Market _____ |

5. Would you be interested in providing products to: (29%)

1 a Meredith Farmers' Market? 5 a Meredith Buying Club/Co-op? 1 a Meredith CSA?
5 All of the Above

6. Approximately how many acres do you farm, including land you own and land you rent? (89%)

	Responses	Total Acreage	Average	Range
Total acres you own	38	738.75	194.41	11-950
Acres you rent from others	24	2055.00	85.63	0-600
Acres you rent to others to farm	31	889.00	28.68	0-120

7. About how many acres of your land are used for each of the following? (80%)

	Responses	Total Acreage	Average	Range
Farmstead (house, barns, etc.)	33	635.50	19.26	0-160
Wooded	31	1,886.00	60.84	0-400
Other residence on home farm	18	1.00	0.06	0-1
Actively farmed	33	2,976.50	90.20	0-550
Open, idle land	27	982.00	36.37	0-200

8. How many people, including family members, work on your farm? (60%)

	Year-Round		Seasonal	
	Total	Average	Total	Average
Full-Time Workers	33	1.5	6	0.8
Part-Time Workers	20	1.7	9	1.0

9. How many households does your farm support? (56%) (Do not include hired help.)

1.44 (average); 0-6 (range)

10. How many years has your land been farmed? (62%) 78.2 (average); 1.5-200 (range)

11. How many years has the land been in your family? (89%) 39.3 (average); 3-130 (range)

12. Is your farm certified organic? (82%)

Yes	1	No	20
Becoming organic	2	Following natural practices	24

13. Do you consider your farm a "hobby farm"? (80%) 7 Yes 29 No

14. Please rate your level of support for the following farm enhancement or farmland protection strategies on a scale of 1 to 4, with 1 being STRONGLY SUPPORT and 4 being STRONGLY OPPOSE (circle the appropriate number). 1=STRONGLY SUPPORT, 4=STRONGLY OPPOSE (93%)

A. Conservation Easement 17 11 3 8

A legal arrangement 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.

B. Sale of Development Rights 12 13 4 9

The voluntary sale of the right to develop a piece of property to a government agency or land trust. The sale price is determined by appraisal. The land is permanently restricted to farming or open space.

C. Lease of Development Rights 12 9 4 11

The development rights in a property may be leased to a municipality through contractual agreement for a specified period of time in return for tax benefits or other monetary consideration. This restricts the use of the land

to farming or open space for the specified term of the contract.

D. Town Right to Farm Law 30 5 0 4

A local law that protects farmers who use standard farming practices from nuisance lawsuits and may also prohibit local governments from enacting ordinances that would impose unreasonable restrictions on agriculture.

E. Farm-friendly Land Use Laws 27 6 1 4

Local regulations that do not restrict agricultural activities. Land use laws that are farm-friendly simplify regulations and standards for farms and agricultural businesses, and allow flexibility in agriculture-related businesses on the farm.

F. Conservation Subdivisions 15 9 6 6

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.

G. Loan Programs 20 7 8 3

Dedicated funding stream to disburse loan funds to farms and agricultural businesses to start new businesses, expand operations and/or diversify.

H. Agricultural Exemptions 32 4 0 3

When land is assessed for tax purposes as farmland, it is based on its use-value for farming rather than on its highest market value for potential development. New York State offers an agricultural exemption program which lowers the assessment of lands devoted to farming.

I. Growing New Farmers 25 8 3 4

Promotes and encourages new farmers to locate in the town by offering information, incentives and programs to help them get started.

J. Farmland Protection Plan 26 6 2 4

A plan to specifically address the development and preservation of farmland in Meredith.

K. Town Comprehensive Plan 20 7 4 3

A plan created by the town 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 Town land-use laws.

L. Other please explain: 2 1 0 0

[SEE APPENDIX B]

15. What strategies do you think most important to keep farming viable in Meredith. (82%)

<u>Land preservation/land use planning:</u>	<u>Ag economic development:</u>	<u>Tax assessment/financial aid:</u>
<u>9</u> Conservation easement	<u>10</u> Ag processing facilities	<u>18</u> Ag assessments
<u>8</u> Sale or lease of development rights	<u>16</u> Ag loan programs	<u>30</u> Ag tax exemptions
<u>5</u> Conservation subdivisions	<u>20</u> Growing New Farmers	<u>18</u> Tax Reform
<u>22</u> Right-to-Farm Law	<u>16</u> Ag marketing program	<u>1</u> Other <u>[SEE APPENDIX B]</u>
<u>10</u> Town Comprehensive Plan	<u>15</u> Promotion of local markets	
<u>22</u> Farm Friendly land use laws	<u>4</u> Other <u>[SEE APPENDIX B]</u>	
<u>16</u> Ag & Farmland Protection Plan		
<u>3</u> Site plan review		
<u>0</u> Other _____		

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

(Check all that apply.) (87%)

- 18 Enrolled in a State certified Agricultural District
- 22 Agricultural Value Assessment on your property
- 25 School Tax Relief (STAR) Program
- 16 Agricultural Exemptions on agricultural structures
- 9 Watershed Agricultural Council's Whole Farm Plan/Agricultural Program
- 7 Watershed Agricultural Council's Watershed Forestry Program
- 3 Watershed Agricultural Council's Conservation Easement Program
- 0 NYC Department of Environmental Protection Easement Program

1 New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) Programs

1 None

2 Other: _____

17. Do you participate in any Federal programs? (89%) 8 Yes 32 No

If so, what are they?

Program	Number of Respondents
"CREP"	3
"Grassland Reserve, Forestry CRP"	1
"Land conservation"	1
"SCS"	2

18. Please rate the following challenges on a scale of 1 to 4, with 1 being VERY IMPORTANT and 4 being NOT IMPORTANT AT ALL to the future success of your farm (circle the appropriate number). (87%)

A. Limited availability of farm labor	9	7	6	10
B. High property taxes	28	6	2	2
C. High land prices	14	9	4	5
D. Loss of productive farmland	15	4	5	7
E. High land rental costs	4	9	5	11
F. Limited availability of rental land	3	7	5	13
G. Lack of local processing facilities (Dairy/Meat/Other)	9	5	6	11
H. Lack of local customers	9	5	8	8
I. Limited marketing or business support	13	5	4	8
J. Limited access to agricultural services	11	4	5	10
K. Limited access to financing	11	2	7	10
L. Limited water availability (quantity/quality)	9	4	6	10
M. High fuel cost	27	3	2	3
N. High production costs	19	7	1	4
O. High machinery costs	21	5	3	5
P. Limited succession plans for the farm (few new farmers)	9	10	4	8
Q. Incompatible environmental regulations	11	8	4	5
R. Residential encroachment	13	3	6	7
S. Possible water or land contamination from gas drilling (hydrofracking)	21	2	2	7
T. Legal restrictions on gas drilling	18	3	2	6
U. Other: _____	0	0	0	0

19. Of the above challenges, which are the three most troubling to you? (78%)

Challenge	Count of Challenge Rank			Total
	1	2	3	
Gas drilling	12	2	1	15
High costs of fuel	1	8	5	14
High property taxes	8	2	2	12
High production costs	1	2	3	6
Limited farm labor	3	1	2	6
Residential encroachment	1	1	3	5
High taxes	3	0	1	4
Env regulations	0	2	1	3
High land prices	1	1	1	3

Lack of local customers	1	1	1	3
Lack of local processing	1	1	1	3
Limited succession plans	0	2	1	3
Loss of farmland	1	1	1	3
High machinery costs	0	1	1	2
Hydrofracking	0	1	1	2
Legal restrictions on gas drilling	0	2	0	2
High land prices	0	1	0	1
Land and water contamination	1	0	0	1
Limited access to financing	0	0	1	1
Markets	0	0	1	1
"People on unemployment who won't work on the books"	1	0	0	1

20. Are you interested in renting your land for farming purposes? (82%) 18 Yes 19 No

21. What percentage of your farm expenditures are made within 30 miles of your farm? (69%)

2 Less than 25% 4 25-49% 10 50-74% 15 75-100%

22. What percentage of materials/equipment/supplies for your farm do you buy from outside the County? (71%) 19 Less than 25% 6 25-49% 6 50-74% 1 75-100%

23. What were the approximate gross annual sales last year from your farm? (67%)

5 \$0 (personal use only) 8 \$1- \$10,000 6 \$10,000 – \$25,000 4 \$25,000 – \$50,000
1 \$50,000 – \$100,000 4 \$100,000 – \$200,000 2 \$200,000 – \$500,000 0 \$500,000 +

24. About how much of your net family income came from your farm last year? (56%)

18 Less than 25% 3 25-49% 1 50-74% 3 75-100%

25. What opportunities for your farm or farming in general do you feel there are in Meredith? (38%)

[SEE APPENDIX B]

26. Indicate any of the following you plan to do, or would like to do, and within which timeframe.

(Check all that apply.) (84%)

	Within 1 year	Within 5 years	Within 10 years or more	Total
Increase your farming operation	9	9	0	18
Stay the same	5	4	7	16
Diversify your farming operation	5	6	2	13
Increase agricultural sales	9	2	1	12
Transfer the farm to family member	1	1	6	8
Decrease your farming operation	1	2	1	4
Sell all or a portion of your land for another farmer for farm use	1	1	2	4
Sign a gas lease	4	0	0	4
Sell a portion of your land for non-farm purposes	2	1	0	3
Relocate and continue to farm elsewhere	1	0	1	2
Sell all of your land for non-farm purposes	1	0	0	1
Begin a farming operation on your land	0	1	0	1
Decrease agricultural sales	0	1	0	1

Stop renting your land for farm use	0	0	0	0
Eliminate agricultural sales	0	0	0	0
Total	39	28	20	87

Please tell us why you plan to do these: [SEE APPENDIX B]

27. How concerned are you about the loss of farmland in Meredith? (89%)

19 Very concerned 14 Somewhat concerned 5 Not very concerned 2 Not concerned at all
 Why or why not? [SEE APPENDIX B]

28. Do you plan on using wind, solar, biomass or other renewable energy resources on your farm? (78%)

11 Yes 8 No 16 Maybe Explain. [SEE APPENDIX B]

29. Do you think natural gas drilling will help or harm agriculture in Meredith. Please explain. (71%)

Response	Number	Percent
Harm	21	68%
Help	5	16%
Unsure	5	16%
Total*	31	100%

*one respondent provided an answer of "no" and is not included in the total

30. What could Delaware County do to help keep your farm active and prosperous? (42%)

[SEE APPENDIX B]

31. What could New York State do to help keep your farm active and prosperous? (49%)

[SEE APPENDIX B]

32. What attracted you to farm in Meredith? (51%) [SEE APPENDIX B]

33. What trends do you see in agriculture in Delaware County? (Please check all that apply.) (82%)

15 A smaller number of large farms 15 Movement of farms out of Delaware County
15 Farm diversification 0 No significant change
13 A larger number of small operations 1 Other: [SEE APPENDIX B]

34. How long have you lived in Meredith? (87%)

2 5 years or less 6 6-10 years 8 11-20 years 17 more than 20 years 6 my whole life

35. How old are you? (89%)

0 Under 25 0 25 - 34 0 35 - 44 9 45 - 54 8 55 - 64 12 65 - 74 11 75 or older

Please provide any additional comments on additional sheets. (20%)

[SEE APPENDIX B]

FARMER SURVEY: SUMMARY OF OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES

2. What is your farm's primary business?¹⁰

List of "livestock" responses:

- "Beef" (4)
- "Beef and heifers" (1)
- "Grassfed beef and lamb" (1)
- "Sheep and dairy goats" (1)
- "Alpaca "(1)

List of "other" responses:

- "United wool products"
- "Hops"
- "Aquaculture (trout)"
- "Enjoyment"

3. What secondary farm or non-farm activities diversify your farm?

List of "other" responses:

- "Eggs"
- "Wool and knitted products"
- "Chickens, geese, eggs"
- "Tours"
- "Hunting"
- "Fish"
- "Wool products"

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

Responses to "other farmers' market":

- "NYC Greenmarket"
- "Direct sales through www.healthymeat.org"
- "Local harvest festivals"

14. Please rate your level of support for the following farm enhancement or farmland protection strategies on a scale of 1 to 4, with 1 being STRONGLY SUPPORT and 4 being STRONGLY OPPOSE

Responses to "other:

¹⁰ Numbering corresponds to question numbering on the survey.

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- "ban fracking (strongly support)"
- "Comp Plan depends on who is in office at the time"
- "Involve out of town landowners (strongly support)"

15. What strategies do you think most important to keep farming viable in Meredith.

Ag economic development

- "Appointed Ag Econ Dev person to coordinate assets and interests"
- "Farm/open space vacations"
- "Help to connect to the city"

Tax assessment/financial aid

- "0 tax for active farming in Meredith"

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

- "Susquehanna watershed"
- "NRCS Fed Programs"

25. What opportunities for your farm or farming in general do you feel there are in Meredith?

- "customer base is not local. Environment too harsh for farming. No longer a farming community to support one another"
- "grass based livestock, cooperative meat brand, new farmer Mecca because land prices and community support the farming lifestyle"
- "great area for hay and beef cattle production"
- "hay. I am interested in farming of vegetables for local markets and NYC"
- "I feel I can continue many years to be productive but I have been farming for 45 years and have no debt. Most farmers are not able to operate as such"
- "much is overgrown or wet, goats or sheep too expensive, soil only good for cattle or hay"
- "need a plan that integrates the entire community"
- "none"
- "not much anymore"
- "not sure"

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- "organic dairy/beef, vegetables, fruit. NYC is close, folks who own land here could use some creative ideas and a go to person to direct them to sources for financial assistance. Educating people about food sources is key. We should be able to have good food"
- "raising beef cattle, pork, etc."
- "small organic, raising produce or meat"
- "There is complete dislocation in the supply/demand curve for grass fed beef and sheep. Big demand in NYC for these, upstate farmers not getting appropriate prices"
- "We are close to NYC, very large prosperous market. We have good water and grazing land. We have a clean, green image. Every year people get more concerned about what they eat and where and how it is produced."
- "wind"

26. Indicate any of the following you plan to do, or would like to do, and within which timeframe.

Responses to "other":

- "improve wildlife habitats"
- "gas is troublesome to me. I want clean water."

Responses to "why you plan to do these":

- "old age"
- "Customer base has increased, need to expand flock, beginning to specialize in specific breed of goat"
- "will retire in 10 years"
- "I can't generate any money from land, if gas drilling is safe, I would go that way."
- "you people win I want out"
- "lower taxes"
- "I am 65 years old"
- "increase income"
- "we like things the way they are"
- "to stay profitable"
- "if gas is going to ruin the area I will have no choice but to sell and move on"

27. How concerned are you about the loss of farmland in Meredith?

Responses to "why or why not?":

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- "gas drilling"
- "hodgepodge residential planning and lack of zoning will make future farming next to impossible"
- "Life is always changing. Farming here has been on the wane for the past sixty years. Change is inevitable"
- "Not any farmers left to demand any farmland. We let them use it for free, so brush don't grow
- once it is gone you can't get it back"
- "This is the nature of the land"
- "We choose to live in this area because of the quality of life, beauty and interest in farming"

28. Do you plan on using wind, solar, biomass or other renewable energy resources on your farm?

Responses to "explain" plans to use/not use renewable energy resources:

- "Wind solar"
- "Would like to use all the above!"
- "Geothermal heating (and cooling)"
- "Residential windmill and solar panels"
- "Unnecessary"
- "Looked into wind and was told we don't have enough wind, will look into solar in the future"
- "environmentally unsound"
- "To lower the electric bill"
- "If possible, any of these would be good."
- "Possibly solar"
- "Too expensive to install - when one looks into these they are surprised by the expense."
- "Needs more info and tax breaks"
- "Offset cost of energy"
- "Small windmill for pond aeration"
- "If affordable"
- "Looking for funding opportunity"

30. What could Delaware County do to help keep your farm active and prosperous?

- "aid in marketing"

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- "appoint ag econ dev coordinator, create grant program for farm infrastructure, provide tax break for active farming, require local institutions to buy local meat/veg"
- "ban gas drilling"
- "ban gas drilling. Turn to a recreational area for hiking, biking and fishing"
- "ban hydrofracking"
- "decrease cost of electricity, be more farm friendly"
- "DEP forced farmers out. It is too late"
- "develop a long term county plan that engages all property owners"
- "Improve distribution system for sales of beef and lamb from slaughterhouses to NYC"
- "keep frackers away"
- "lower taxes"
- "promote gas drilling"
- "provide hands on available support and information"
- "reduce taxes" (2)
- "spur interest, education, finances among younger potential farmers"
- "stay out of the way"
- "support actively renewable energy and increase ag"
- "tax relief"

31. What could New York State do to help keep your farm active and prosperous?

- "ban gas drilling"
- "ban hydrofracking"
- "develop a long term plan that engages all property owners"
- "grant money for alternative energy on farm"
- "increase tax breaks"
- "keep fracking companies out of state"
- "lower taxes"
- "Mind their own business"
- "promote gas drilling"
- "provide hands on/available support and information"
- "reduce taxes" (3)
- "replace all politicians with people who have common sense"
- "same"
- "same as county"
- "same, ban gas drilling"
- "spur interest, education, finance among younger potential farmers"
- "stay out of the way"
- "tax relief"
- "too late"

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- "Water ???could do more than talk"

32. What attracted you to farm in Meredith?

- "7th generation farm here"
- "a place we could afford"
- "always been here"
- "beautiful area"
- "beautiful part of the state"
- "beauty" (2)
- "beauty and solitude of country"
- "born here"
- "cheap land"
- "clean air and water, peace and quiet"
- "family"
- "family history and my dream of owning a farm in Lancaster PA took a detour to NY as land in PA was too much \$\$"
- "grew up on a Yorktown farm"
- "I lived here"
- "love pastoral settings and quiet"
- "more space – land"
- "natural beauty and availability of land"
- "parents moved here"
- "relative remoteness"
- "rural lifestyle"
- "scenery, people"

33. What trends do you see in agriculture in Delaware County?

- "all will disappear in a few years"

Please provide any additional comments on additional sheets.

- "ban fracking or we will be another PA, Ark and Wyoming. Start promoting other ways farmers can profit from their land, not killing the rest of us"
- "I have participated in NYC Greenmarket for 17 years. People are willing to pay a fair price for a quality product. More and more people see food as a health issue and would like to support local farmers. I think local people here would do the same."
- "I lament the loss of local dairy farms. It is unfathomable to me why we cannot get the amount of money for the product. It seems to me

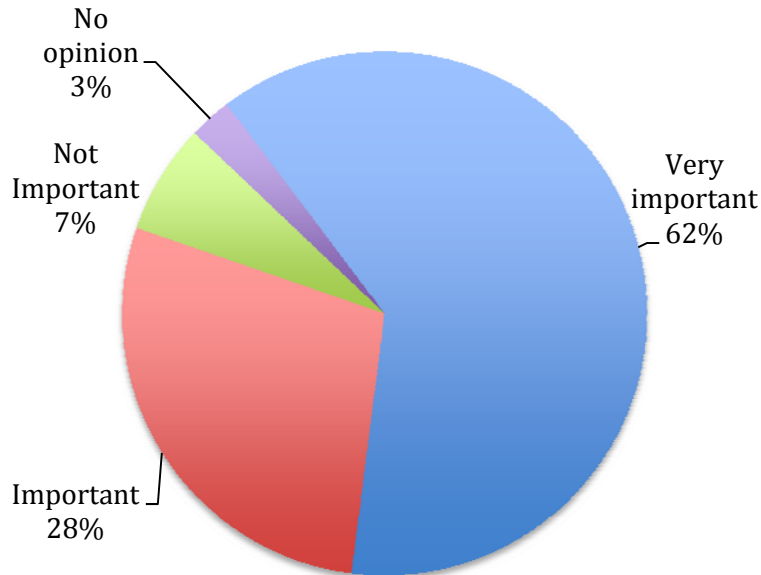
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that if they reverted to grazing instead of high cost confinement system they could be more profitable. There is still g”

- “I love Meredith. I love the scenic beauty, the clean air, the relaxed atmosphere. My vacations and weekends spent here are like a return to my childhood vacations in Lancaster PA. Gas drilling, if allowed, will destroy our bucolic town. I think we should ban gas drilling in Meredith and turn to a European system of sensitive residential development among preserved farmland and open space. We also need to ban junk in peoples yards that detracts from our town”
- “long survey with limited use. Too much request for information. Tell Keitha she needs to find employment for young folks”
- “See #13 for text”
- “Survey suggests that the "town" ie government will look out for us. Why not have the citizens of the town deeply involved with a view of having the people make decisions, not a town planning commission”
- This area is only becoming a place for second homeowners. Farm buildings have fallen down. Land for farming has overgrown. Regulations govt put on the farmers about spreading manure and other expensive costs -that’s what drove them out”
- “we worry that the town focuses only on second home owners. The town planning board is completely made up of people with good intentions, but those who do not have roots or a history to build on. We want alternative energy on our farm and wish there was support, guidance, grants, loans available”

RESIDENT SURVEY: SUMMARY

1. How important is agriculture and agricultural land in Meredith to you? (97.9%)[†]

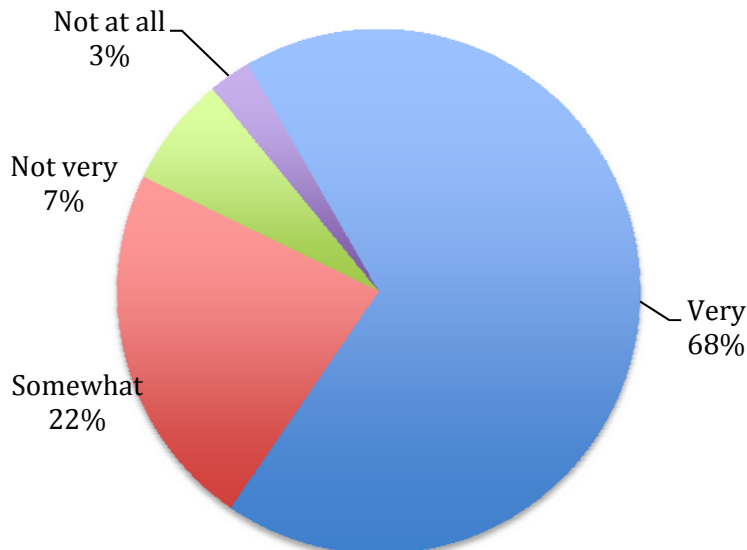


1a. Why or why not? (69.2%)

Recurring themes:

- Importance of locally grown food
- Rural character of community
- Economic importance
- Historical/cultural importance
- Development pressure
- Land preservation/protection through agricultural uses
- Born in Meredith
- Tax base
- Good place to raise a family

2. Are you concerned about loss of farmland and farm activities in Meredith? (97.4%)



2a. Why or why not? (64.6%)

(64.6%)

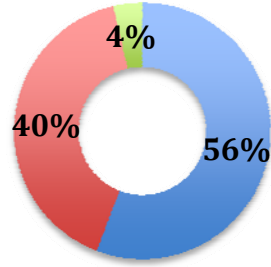
Recurring themes:

- Risk of energy development
- Difficulty of farming the terrain
- Importance of local food
- Preservation of open space
- Development pressure
- Importance of working landscape
- Economic difficulty of farming as a way of life
- Erosion of rural character through development
- Farming is not currently economically viable

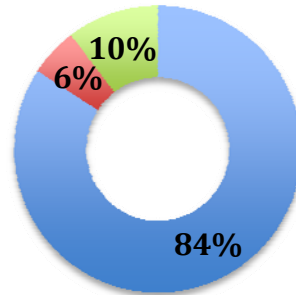
[†] Response rate indicated in parenthesis throughout and is based on a sample size of 195.

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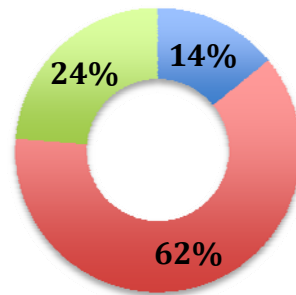
3. Do you currently buy any agricultural products directly from farmers located in the Town of Meredith? (97.4%)



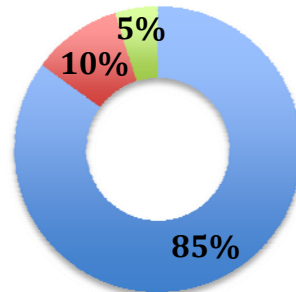
4. Would you be interested in buying more locally grown agricultural products? (93.8%)



5. Do you feel Meredith's farms and agricultural resources are adequately protected? (90.8%)



6. Should the Town encourage future development in a way that maximizes use of land for farming? (95.9%)

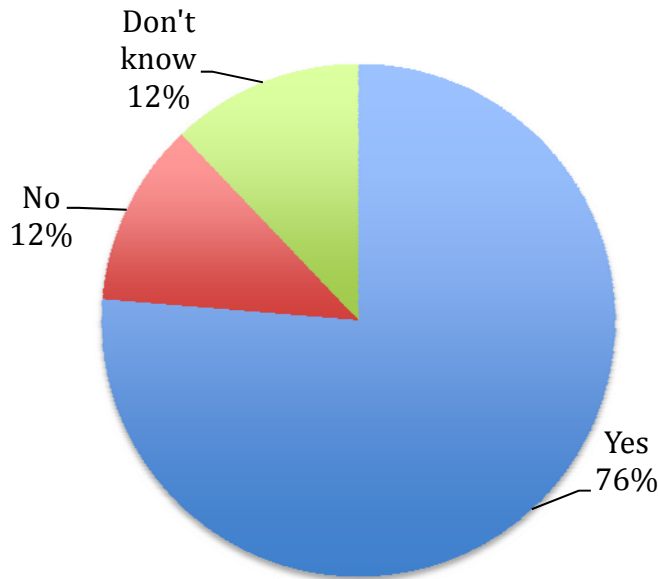


Legend

■ Yes ■ No ■ No opinion

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7. Should the Town take additional measures to protect and promote agriculture in Meredith? (97.4%)



7a. Why or why not? (54.9%)

Recurring themes:

- Historical/cultural importance of agriculture in Meredith
- Town can help to incentivize agriculture
- Town's actions may be undermined by external forces
- Good way to increase tax base
- Primacy of market forces over government action
- No place for government intervention
- Importance to local economy
- Importance of regulation to protect current land use patterns
- Small vs big farming

- Local vs non-local food

8. How do you feel about the following actions Meredith could take to protect and promote agriculture?

Potential Actions to Promote Agriculture	Strongly Favor	Favor	Oppose	Strongly Oppose	No Opinion	Total	Response Rate
Support local farmers markets	71.40%	24.30%	1.60%	1.10%	1.60%	100.00%	96.90%
Encourage and allow agri-tourism (Bed and Breakfasts, farm vacations, u-pick operations, etc)	59.00%	33.50%	3.20%	0.00%	4.30%	100.00%	96.40%
Market land in Town to attract new farmers	51.90%	34.40%	4.40%	2.70%	6.60%	100.00%	93.80%
Promote and allow small-scale, on-farm processing facilities (such as small slaughterhouse and small-scale composting)	50.50%	35.90%	4.30%	2.70%	6.50%	100.00%	94.40%
Promote agri-businesses that support farms (veterinarian services, truck farms, processing facilities, machinery dealers)	49.70%	36.50%	7.20%	0.60%	6.10%	100.00%	92.80%

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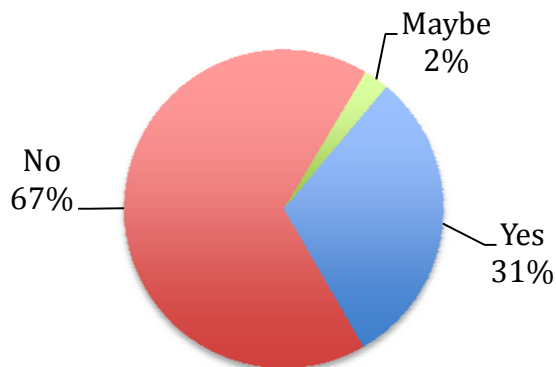
Potential Actions to Promote Agriculture	Strongly Favor	Favor	Oppose	Strongly Oppose	No Opinion	Total	Response Rate
Help establish a community kitchen that farmers could use cooperatively to process their food products	44.90%	35.30%	4.80%	2.70%	12.30%	100.00%	95.90%
Use zoning and land use laws	42.90%	28.80%	6.20%	7.90%	14.10%	100.00%	90.80%
Offer incentives to developers when farmland is preserved	42.90%	29.70%	11.00%	6.00%	10.40%	100.00%	93.30%
Offer property tax incentives beyond what New York State currently offers	42.70%	28.60%	10.30%	9.20%	9.20%	100.00%	94.90%
Use Lease of Development Rights Programs	24.40%	21.80%	5.10%	7.10%	41.70%	100.00%	80.00%
Use Purchase of Development Rights programs	24.10%	20.90%	7.00%	9.50%	38.60%	100.00%	81.00%

8a. What other ideas do you have that could protect and promote agriculture? (42.6%)

Recurring themes:

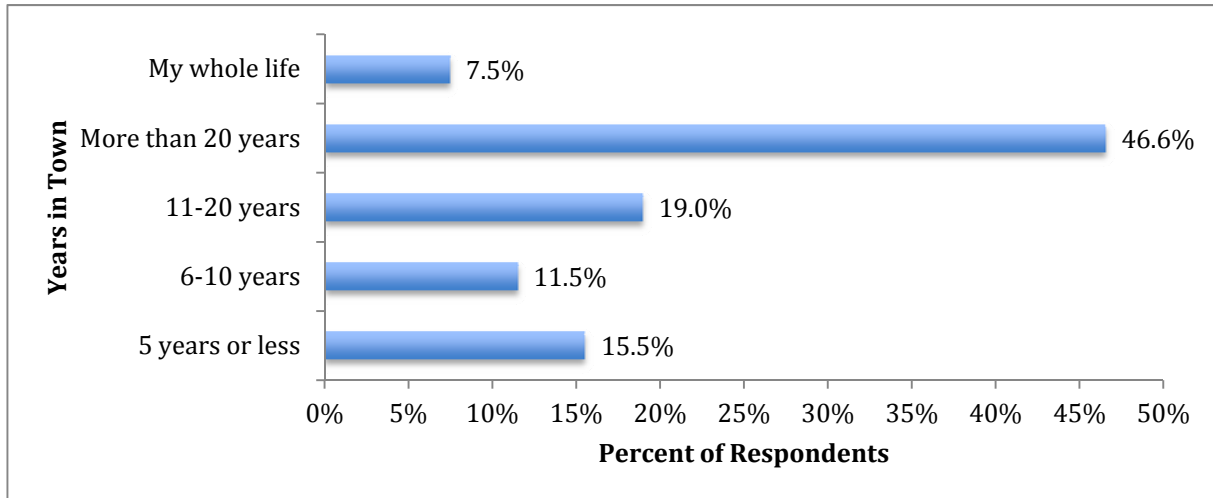
- marketing
- Local value-added processing and co-ops
- For Energy development
- Against Energy development
- Land protection
- CSA
- Local farmers market
- Tax relief
- Land use controls
- Farm-related infrastructure (e.g. transportation and slaughterhouses)

9. Are you interested in renting your land for farming purposes? (80.5%)

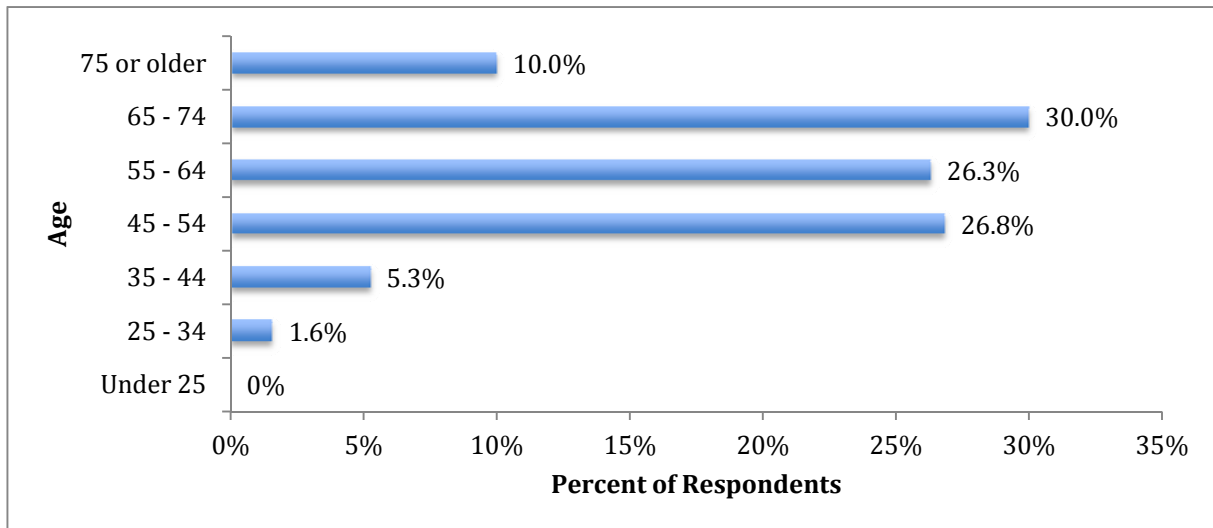


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10. How long have you lived in the Town of Meredith? (89.2%)



11. How old are you? (97.4%)



• **Demographic comparison with recent census data:**

Age	2010 census		Resident Survey	
	N	%	n	%
Under 25	378	24.7%	0	0.0%
25 - 34	154	10.1%	3	1.6%
35 - 44	188	12.3%	10	5.3%
45 - 54	303	19.8%	51	26.8%
55 - 64	243	15.9%	50	26.3%
65 - 74	170	11.1%	57	30.0%
75 or older	93	6.1%	19	10.0%
Total	1,529	100.0%	190	100.0%

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Public Meeting: Question Summary

On December 8, 2011, a workshop was held to involve the public in the planning process. This meeting, attended by about 25 residents and farmers worked to articulate the role agriculture plays in Meredith, the concerns and issues people have about agriculture now and in the future, and ideas to improve agriculture in Town. People worked in small groups. Participants also worked together to develop a vision for agriculture in the future. Participants were asked to prioritize the ideas generated and these are identified by the number of priority stickers received. Further, some ideas were generated by more than one table and the number of times the idea was recorded from different tables is also included below. Together, ideas that have both multiple tables and multiple stickers indicate areas where there was much consensus and priority should be placed.

Role Agriculture Plays in Town

Ideas Identified as Priority:

Allows us to buy local food – safe and affordable (7 tables) (9 stickers)
Provides vista's that are beautiful/aesthetic value (4 tables) (5 stickers)
It is clean and green use of land (4 stickers)
It's our livelihood and a good way of life - source of work and income (6 tables) (4 stickers)
Our cultural core and connection to history and past (2 tables) (4 stickers)
Provides water quality protection (3 tables) (3 stickers)
Provides open space and preserves the landscape (3 tables) (3 stickers)
Allows you to work where you live (2 tables) (2 stickers)
Keeps development down (2 stickers)
Provides habitat for animals/wildlife corridors preserved (3 tables) (1 sticker)
Provides stable tax base when it works as it should, keeps taxes down (2 tables) (1 sticker)
Local web of businesses connected to farming (2 tables) (1 sticker)
Encourages discipline and responsibility in young children (2 tables) (1 sticker)

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Ideas Identified by Multiple Tables at the Workshop:

It's our lifestyle/provides the culture of a farm community (4 tables)
Flavor of neighborliness (2 tables)
A family business (2 tables)

Other Ideas:

Promotes self-sufficiency
Is a healthy use of land and a low impact industry, mostly done in environmentally sound manner (3 tables)
Promotes tourism and local events (like the Dairy Fest)
Hunting and other recreation
Forestry huge economic piece of agriculture
Connects the family (everyone in family contributes)
Local pride
Has a trickle effect on economy
We sell milk, beef vegetables
Financially it is not much anymore
We are attracting new, if not young farmers
It is why we moved here
It should be important, but in reality it isn't
A strong local food system is good for everyone

Concerns and Issues Related to Agriculture

Ideas Identified as Priority:

Industrialization – gas drilling/wind turbines (10 stickers)
Loss of farmland to subdivision (2 tables) (8 stickers)
We need to find alternatives and diversification of agriculture (5 stickers)
Lack of access to market (2 tables) (4 stickers)
Lack of profit beyond living wage (4 stickers)
Cost of farmland (2 tables) (3 stickers)
Competition with corporate agriculture (3 stickers)
Lack of broadband (3 stickers)
Short growing season (2 tables) (2 stickers)
Possible use of herbicides and pesticides (2 stickers)
Aging farming community (2 stickers)
Land – lack of prime soils (2 tables) (1 sticker)
Property taxes increasing – too high (1 sticker)

Ideas Identified by Multiple Tables at the Workshop:

Cost of farmland and cost of farming has gone beyond the ability of young farmers to afford the land/Lack of capital for new farmers (start up costs too high) – hard for next generation (3 tables)
Change of focus of dairy fest (2 tables)
Transport to and coordination of products to and with the market (2 tables)
Distribution and communication problems - Farmers independent and don't work together (2 tables)

Other Ideas Generated:

Farming is being lost in Meredith
Cost of production – needs to be grain and diesel free
Farm families need two incomes to provide health insurance
Farmers need cost of production and a reasonable profit
Suppliers of farm ag businesses need to be here
Potential for affordable, local food
Possibility of fracking could ruin Ag even a possibility of it is a worry
Tax burden falls on small communities, not state
Farm children can't afford to continue farming
When it comes to selling land, people compete rather than cooperating
Often its hard for older farmers to change
Hard keeping businesses related to ag available, especially if the # of farms decrease
Lack of education re: land issues, markets, new methods
How to match landowners to farmers that need land...
Scarcity of some needed products to support farms
Lack of use of land base
Water quality
Available land
End market
Are we growing correct products for the market?

Ideas to Improve Agriculture

Ideas Identified as Priority:

Diversification (example, hops and hemp) (6 stickers)
Offer cooperative/apprenticeship and mentor/knowledge base (6 stickers)
Coordinate marketing (5 stickers)
Bring in light industry to bring in jobs (4 stickers)

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Match restaurants to farms (4 stickers)
Marketing to help small producers in marketing (3 stickers)
Local farmers market (3 tables) (2 stickers)
Greenhouse operations (2 stickers)
Cooperative dairy group like Hudson Valley Fresh – needs to market to NYC (2) (2 stickers)
More all-season growing – light tunnels and cold frames (2 tables) (2 stickers)
Have solar panels on farms to decrease costs (2 stickers)
Charge New York City for their water (2 tables) (1 sticker)
Estate planning (1 sticker)
Cooperative equipment sharing (1 sticker)
Provide local delivery service of produce, meats, milk (1 sticker)
Reduce taxes, Lower taxes for real farmers (2 tables) (1 sticker)
Encourage agri-tourism (2 tables) (1 sticker)
Land use planning (1 sticker)
CSA Farm Shares (1 sticker)
Shop local programs (1 sticker)
Incentives for young farmers (1 sticker)

Ideas Identified by Multiple Tables at the Workshop:

Bulk buying of supplies (2 tables)
Promote value added products (2 tables)
Revolving loan fund – improve availability for credit fund (2 tables)
Facility to make soil, compost (2 tables)

Other Ideas Generated:

Provide financial incentive over and above ag exemption or taxes
Town must be aware of those who should not receive an ag exemption
Broadband infrastructure
Mesh population of landowners with young farm entrepreneurs
Entice investors to support local farming
Have a clearinghouse
More advocates – local, county and state
Education – stress local education for farming, outreach and 4-H
Use other business models on existing farms
Simplify regulations for slaughterhouse

Meredith's Vision for Agriculture

Affordable food is available locally
Community supported agriculture farms exist
Farmers allowed to use vacant land, voluntarily
Lots of small scale agriculture is available for local stores and restaurants and public – at a profit for farmers
No gas drilling
No wind towers
The infrastructure for marketing and transportation exists – there is an economical way to get products to market
There are alternate agricultural enterprises
There are lots more farmers under the age of 30
There is a real sense of community – agriculture is an important part of everyone's life
There is locally owned energy for residents
There is processing of local products – grown and processed here with value added products
Town helps market farmers and brings in dollars to support farmers
Use of solar panels
We are environmentally and financially sustainable – self sustaining
We are farm friendly
We are home to the new Meridale Cooperative (lots of agriculture working together with education and cultural events)
We capitalize on land that doesn't need irrigation
We capitalize on our water sources
We have a good comprehensive plan and we use it
Whole community regains control over ourselves – over every aspect – water, food, home rule

Appendix 5: Identified Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats

Challenges to Agriculture in Town:

- If we don't make a strong case for agriculture we are going to fall towards use of land for oil and gas industrialization. We need to be, and show agriculture is possible and can be done.
- Agriculture in northeast has the chance to come back if the land is kept open.
- Farming in Meredith is not easy due to hard climate.
- So much work goes into industrial-style agriculture and that is not viable.
- Defeatist attitudes.
- Local, less intensive agriculture can't compete dollar for dollar with corporate style agriculture.
- More 'mom and pop' agriculture would be more successful in the long run.
- Mixed feelings of NYC Watershed – some feel that it creates an inequality by making some farmers eligible for the benefits of being in the watershed, while others are not eligible. Others feel that being in the watershed is not a disadvantage.
- Dairy farming not profitable.
- It is hard to start up a new ag operation.
- Lots of work for low money rewards.
- Dairy farmers are not entrepreneurs.
- There is lack of organization to make farming profitable. Need to talk about dairy farmers and all other farmers – need to concentrate on 'others' and provide more markets and promotion for non-dairy farmers. We need more outlets, someone to organize sales venues.
- Need to organize.
- Need to promote.
- Need to advertise.
- Need community processing for other non-dairy products.
- Need slaughterhouse.
- What's keeping people from farming in Meredith? No advertising to farmers, need to promote new markets, need to be better businessmen/women.
- Need marketing and distribution (create a hub where farmers can bring products for distribution, or look at going towards a "Meredith Produce" brand with catalogue or online sales.

Positive Attributes for Farming in Town:

- We have good soils.
- Local sales are possible.
- NYC is a huge market.
- We have clean air and water.
- We can build relationships with NYC.
- We have good water.
- Agriculture is economically viable here.

Role of Agriculture in Meredith

- Provides working landscape.
- Contributes to rural character and rural atmosphere.
- Part of the visual attractiveness of town and beauty.
- Offers quality of life that people are looking for.
- Offers recreation.
- Offers fresh food, local food, and safe food.
- Potential to create local jobs.
- Keeps taxes down, doesn't cost a lot of tax dollars to service.
- Protects clean water and air.
- Produces strong property values.
- Provides open lands which are better for scenic views and character than lands that are all wooded.
- A strongly identified farm community means the Town can have more successful leverage for grants and program dollars. Meredith has, and continues to need a farm-friendly community identity to give a workable base and momentum to build on.
- Farms could add to farmer's children's incomes if they leave viable agriculture for them.

Appendix 6: Sample 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 a farm operation located in a NYS Ag and Markets certified Agricultural District. 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.

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: _____

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

8. Signature of Applicant: _____

9. Reviewed by: _____
Date: _____

Appendix 7: Agriculture Disclosure Notice

"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."

Appendix 8: Model Rural Residential Siting Guidelines

One or more of the following are commonly used in rural communities to maintain rural character, promote development that is compatible with adjacent agriculture, and preserve open space. These are offered as model guidelines for Meredith to evaluate for itself and are not intended to be construed as a local law:

- a. Siting of all structures shall, to the maximum extent practicable, avoid placement on lands within the parcel that have been identified as having steep slopes > 15%, within 100 feet of stream banks, within 100 feet of any state or federal wetland, or within the 100 year floodplain. Siting should also take into consideration and plan for wetlands wildlife that also need adjacent upland habitats.
- b. Structures shall, to the maximum extent practicable, avoid being placed on lands defined by the Delaware County Soil Survey as being Prime Farmlands, or Soils of Statewide Importance.
- c. Wherever feasible, retain and reuse existing old farm roads and lanes rather than constructing new roads or driveways. This minimizes clearing and disruption of the landscape and takes advantage of the attractive way that old lanes are often lined with trees and stone walls. (This is not appropriate where reuse of a road would require widening in a manner that destroys trees or stone walls.)
- d. Preserve stone walls and hedgerows. These traditional landscape features define outdoor areas in a natural way and create corridors useful for wildlife. Using these features as property lines is often appropriate, as long as setback requirements do not result in constructing buildings in the middle of fields.
- e. Avoid placing buildings in the middle of open fields. Place them either at the edges of fields or in wooded areas. Septic systems and leach fields may be located in fields, however.
- f. Use existing vegetation and topography to buffer and screen new buildings if possible. Group buildings in clusters or tuck them behind tree lines or knolls rather than spreading them out across the landscape in a "sprawl" pattern.

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- g. Minimize clearing of vegetation at the edge of the road, clearing only as much as is necessary to create a driveway entrance with adequate sight distance. Use curves in the driveway to increase the screening of buildings.
- h. Place utility lines and driveways on less productive land. Site driveways on the edge of farm fields rather than through the middle. Use shared driveways to limit the number of roadways that bisect farm fields.
- i. Locate new development so that the flow of water to farm properties is not impeded and in ways that is compatible with existing field drainage patterns.
- j. New non-farm structures shall not interfere with natural drainage patterns.
- c. New non-farm structures shall be sited so as to maintain the largest amount of contiguous acreage for agricultural use.
- d. New non-farm structures shall be sited within woodlands or along the far edges of open agricultural fields adjacent to any woodland to reduce encroachment on agricultural soils and areas.

Appendix 9: Model Right-to-Farm Law



Model Right to Farm Law

Be it enacted by the Town Board of the Town of _____ as follows:

Section 1. Legislative Intent and Purpose

The Town Board recognizes farming is an essential enterprise and an important industry which enhances the economic base, natural environment and quality of life in the Town of _____. The Town Board further declares that it shall be the policy of this Town to encourage agriculture and foster understanding by all residents of the necessary day to day operations involved in farming so as to encourage cooperation with those practices.

It is the general purpose and intent of this law to maintain and preserve the rural traditions and character of the Town, to permit the continuation of agricultural practices, to protect the existence and operation of farms, to encourage the initiation and expansion of farms and agri-businesses, and to promote new ways to resolve disputes concerning agricultural practices and farm operations. In order to maintain a viable farming economy in the Town of _____, it is necessary to limit the circumstances under which farming may be deemed to be 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.

Section 2. Definitions

1. "Farmland" shall mean land used in agricultural production, as defined in subdivision four of section 301 of Article 25AA of the State Agriculture and Markets Law.
2. "Farmer" shall mean any person, organization, entity, association, partnership, limited liability company, or corporation engaged in the business of agriculture, whether for profit or otherwise, including the cultivation of land, the raising of crops, or the raising of livestock.
3. "Agricultural products" shall mean those products as defined in section 301(2) of Article 25AA of the State Agriculture and Markets Law, including but not limited to:
 - a. Field crops, including corn, wheat, rye, barley, hay, potatoes and dry beans.
 - b. Fruits, including apples, peaches, grapes, cherries and berries.
 - c. Vegetables, including tomatoes, snap beans, cabbage, carrots, beets and onions.
 - d. Horticultural specialties, including nursery stock, ornamental shrubs, ornamental trees and flowers.
 - e. Livestock and livestock products, including cattle, sheep, hogs, goats, horses, poultry, llamas, ratites, such as ostriches, emus, rheas and kiwis, farmed deer, farmed buffalo, fur bearing animals, milk and milk products, eggs, furs, and poultry products.
 - f. Maple sap and sugar products.
 - g. Christmas trees derived from a managed Christmas tree operation whether dug for transplanting or cut from the stump.
 - h. Aquaculture products, including fish, fish products, water plants and shellfish.
 - i. Short rotation woody crops raised for bioenergy.
 - j. Production and sale of woodland products, including but not limited to logs, lumber, posts and firewood.

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4. "Agricultural practices" shall mean those practices necessary for the on-farm production, preparation and marketing of agricultural commodities. Examples of such practices include, but are not limited to, operation of farm equipment, proper use of agricultural chemicals and other crop production methods, and construction and use of farm structures.
 5. "Farm operation" shall be defined in section 301 (11) in the State Agriculture and Markets Law.

Section 3. Right-to-Farm Declaration

Farmers, as well as those employed, retained, or otherwise authorized to act on behalf of farmers, may lawfully engage in agricultural practices within this Town at all times and 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, research and improved technologies.

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

1. Reasonable and necessary to the particular farm or farm operation,
2. Conducted in a manner which is not negligent or reckless,
3. Conducted in conformity with generally accepted and sound agricultural practices,
4. Conducted in conformity with all local state, and federal laws and regulations,
5. 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
6. Conducted in a manner which does not reasonably obstruct the free passage or use of navigable waters or public roadways.

Nothing in this local law shall be construed to prohibit an aggrieved party from recovering from damages for bodily injury or wrongful death due to a failure to follow sound agricultural practice, as outlined in this section.

Section 4. Notification of Real Estate Buyers

In order to promote harmony between farmers and their neighbors, the Town requires land holders and/or their agents and assigns to comply with Section 310 of Article 25-AA of the State Agriculture and Markets Law and provide notice to prospective purchasers and occupants as follows: "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 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." This notice shall be provided to prospective purchase of property within an agricultural district or on property with boundaries within 500 feet of a farm operation located in an agricultural district.

A copy of this notice shall included by the seller or seller's agent as an addendum to the purchase and sale contract at the time an offer to purchase is made.

Section 5. Resolution of Disputes

1. Should any controversy arise regarding any inconveniences or discomfort occasioned by agricultural operations which cannot be settled by direct negotiation between the parties involved, either party may submit the controversy to a dispute resolution committee as set forth below in an attempt to resolve the matter prior to the filing of any court action and prior to a request for a determination by the Commission or Agriculture and Markets about whether the practice in question is sound pursuant to Section 308 of Article 25AA of the State Agriculture and Markets Law.
2. Any controversy between the parties shall be submitted to the committee within thirty (30) days of the last date of occurrence of the particular activity giving rise to the controversy or the date the party became aware of the occurrence.
3. The committee shall be composed of three (3) members from the Town selected by the Town Board, as the need arises, including one representative from the farm community, one person from Town government and one person mutually agreed upon by both parties involved in the dispute.
4. The effectiveness of the committee as a forum for the resolution of disputes 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.
5. The controversy shall be presented to the committee by written request of one of the parties within the time limits specified. Therefore after, the committee may investigate the facts of the controversy but must, within twenty-five (25) days, hold a meeting at a mutually agreed place and time to consider the merits of the matter and within five (5) days of the meeting render a written decision to the parties. At the time of the meeting, both parties shall have an opportunity to present what each consider to be pertinent facts. No party bringing a complaint to the committee for settlement or resolution may be represented by counsel unless the opposing party is also represented by counsel. The time limits provided in this subsection for action by the committee may be extended upon the written stipulation of all parties in the dispute.
6. Any reasonable costs associated with the function of the committee process shall be borne by the participants.

Section 6. Severability Clause

If any part of this local law is for any reason held to be unconstitutional or invalid, such decision shall not effect the remainder of this Local Law. The Town hereby declares that it would have passed this local law and each section and subsection thereof, irrespective of the fact that any one or more of these sections, subsections, sentences, clauses or phrases may be declared unconstitutional or invalid.

Section 7. Precedence

This Local Law and its provisions are in addition to all other applicable laws, rules and regulations.

Section 8. Effective Date

This Local Law shall be effective immediately upon filing with the New York Secretary of State.

Appendix 10: 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 Delaware County:

Agricultural Marketing Resource Center (www.agmrc.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 Cooperative Extension (www.cce.cornell.edu)

Cornell Cooperative Extension in Delaware County (www.Delawarecce.org)

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

Delaware County Chamber of Commerce (www.delawarecounty.org)

Delaware County Division of Planning And Environmental Management
(www.Delaware.ny.us)

Delaware County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD)
(www.Delawarecountyswcd.com)

Delaware Highlands Conservancy (www.delawarehighlands.org)

Empire of Abundance (www.empireofabundance.com)

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Environmental Protection Agency (www.epa.gov)

The Farmers' Market Federation Of New York (www.nyfarmersmarket.com)

Farm Catskills (www.farmcatskills.org)

Federal Grants (United States Department of Health and Human Services)
(www.grants.gov)

Foodshed Utica (www.thefoodshedutica.com/pages/History.html)

Market Maker (Food Industry Linking Agricultural Markets)
(national.marketmaker.uiuc.edu)

New York Market Maker (ny.marketmaker.uiuc.edu)

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

New England Small Farm Institute (www.smallfarm.org)

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

New York City Watershed Agricultural Council (www.nycwatershed.org)

New York Farm Bureau (www.nyfb.org)

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

New York Farm Net (www.nyfarmnet.org)

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

New York Farmlink (www.nyfarmlink.org)

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

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)

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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)

Northeast Organic Farming Association – New York (www.nofany.org)

Northern New York Agricultural Development (www.nnyagdev.org)

Open Space Institute (www.osiny.org)

Organic Alliance (www.organic.org)

Small Business Administration (www.sba.gov)

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

Small Scale Food Entrepreneurship program (www.nysaes.cornell.edu)

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)

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.idealists.org.