

CED Project Contract

Agriculture & Farmland Protection

Background:

This project is centered around the farming community in Tompkins County, New York. Although some 440 part-time and full-time farms in 1992 were producing a diverse array of agricultural products and services, their numbers are fewer and the farmlands they utilize have been declining steadily since the beginning of the century. The smallest farms are those generating \$1000 (the minimum level surveyed by the Agriculture Census) or more of annual gross sales, and the largest is an artificial insemination cooperative with sales of \$25 million. These data are obtained from the Agriculture Census, U.S. Dept. of Commerce. A strong ally in this endeavor is the New York State Department of Agriculture & Markets through its Agriculture District Law. This law, which, among several provisions, authorizes local Agriculture and Farmland Protection Boards (AFPB), is rooted in the state's constitutional charge to the legislature to protect its agricultural lands. Approximately 85% of the county farms enjoy certain protective benefits within the two Agriculture Districts of the County. Some of these benefits are :

- Farmland assessments based on the agricultural productive value of the land, not potential or current market values for other uses than agriculture.
- Requirement of Notice of Intent to the State Department Of Agriculture & Markets upon action of public benefit corporation, State agency, or local government to extend funds or acquire title or interest in land in Ag districts for construction of dwellings, commercial or industrial facilities, or water and sewer facilities to serve non-farm structures.
- Commissioner of Ag & Markets can bring action to enforce provisions of Ag District law.
- Limits on assessments, levies, rates or fees in improvement districts or special benefit areas.
- Right-to-farm legislation which protects farm operators from nuisance lawsuits which seek to block normal and reasonable farming practices.
- Notification to purchasers of property within an Ag District that normal practices of farming are protected by law and may cause noise, dust, and odors.
- State support for the development of county level agriculture and farmland protection plans that include:
 - establishing guidelines for the protection plans.
 - technical assistance to local AFPBs.
 - administering a farmland protection trust fund.
 - administering planning grants to county AFP Boards.
 - disseminate information on the farmland protection program.

Long-standing loss of farmland has been a common experience in the County. In most Northeast States this has both reflected and contributed to adverse declines of rural communities, of farm families, and other rural residents interdependent upon a viable local agriculture industry.

It is the intention of this project to address these challenges by economically strengthening local farming enterprises and to retain farmland in active agricultural use.

The mission statement adopted by the AFPB states that it “shall be to encourage farming in the County through local initiatives which create favorable conditions that allow farmers to operate economically viable enterprises”.

My relationship with this group (AFPB) is as staff consultant. In 1995-96 I conducted a Phase I Comprehensive Study of Agriculture in the county under the state sponsored program of Agriculture & Farmland Protection Planning. My continuing work will be to design and facilitate Phase II: development of a Protection and Implementation Plan that will set forth specific strategies and activities. This elements of the final plan will establish strategies intended to strengthen agriculture and retain farmland in active agriculture use.

Problem Statement:

If no solution is found, continuing adverse conditions impacting farming activities in Tompkins County will further diminish the viability of its agriculture industry, diminish the amount of productive farmland acreage, and decrease numerous valuable contributions of local agriculture to the non-farming community.

Program Goal:

The goal is to develop an Implementation Plan intended to strengthen farming enterprises and retain farmland. The Plan will be based upon am set of three goals set forth in the Agriculture Study. These are:

“EDUCATION - To have a supportive climate for continuation of farming through public policies and actions on land use, regulation, and taxation that minimize disincentives for farming”.

“GOVERNMENT POLICIES - To have a supportive climate for continuation of farming through public policies and actions on land use, regulation and taxation that minimize disincentives for farming. Effective response and action is needed from various levels of government.”

“AGRICULTURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - To strengthen the profitability of farm businesses through programs of education, business retention, and expansion, and the development of diverse agricultural enterprises.”

Project Purpose:

It is the will of the New York State legislature, the State Department of Agriculture & Markets, the Tompkins County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board, the County Soil & Water Conservation Board, the Southern Tier East Regional Planning and Development Board, and an array of community interests to address the problem embodied in the Problem Statement. This project will focus on the development of strategies and actions in an Implementation Plan to strengthen farming enterprises and retain farmland in Tompkins County.

Expected Outputs:

The end product is to be a document which describes an Implementation Plan of specific actions, assigned responsibilities, and time frame for implementation.

New York Agriculture District Law requires that Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plans contain several necessary elements:

1. Goals and statement of purpose.
2. General location of lands or areas to be protected.
3. Analysis of the lands to be protected.
4. Description of the strategies to be used to maintain land in agricultural use and to implement /finance the Plan.
5. Description of other county or municipal land planning and land use programs.

Items #1, 2, 3, and 5 have been accomplished in Phase I of the Protection Plan and documented in a Report - Study of Tompkins County Agriculture, published in October 1996 by the AFPB of Tompkins County. Item #4 is the focus of attention for the work of Phase II - Strategies and Actions to Implement Agriculture & Farmland Protection in Tompkins County. Phase II comprises the work of this CED project.

Inputs:

Human resources:

Agriculture & Farmland Protection Board members
Staff consultant, Charles Schlough
Cooperative Extension Agriculture Educator
Citizen Task groups to participate with AFPB

Facilities:

The project office and staff support is established at the County Cooperative Extension Office

Funding:

State grant and County matching funds are in place through 3/98.

Information Resources:

Comprehensive Study of County Agriculture published 12/96
Statewide and national technical resources are extensive and generally available. Cornell University (Land Grant College) resources are readily accessible.
Agriculture & Farmland Protection Plans from other counties.

Authorization:

State authorized program with County legislative approval.

Conduct of the Project:

The principal work of this project will be the work of Task groups which will meet monthly or more often to address each of three sets of goals described in the "Program Goal" section. Written notes and supporting documentation will be provided to document the work of the Task Groups and lead to the final recommended Implementation Plan.

Each Task Group will first address preliminary strategy priorities established by the eleven members of the AFPB in February 1997. These preliminary strategy priorities were derived from the Phase I Study of Agriculture in Tompkins County where they were presented as options for strategies. The Task Group work is the link from the Phase I study to the Phase II Implementation Plan.

Monthly summaries of progress of the Task Groups will be made which report accomplishments, changes, problems, and resolution of problems.

The process will resolve into the end product -- the Implementation Plan. It will comply with State requirements for the AFPB's Protection Plan. Steps of the process will include at least the following activities:

Establish Task Groups

Task groups review instructions for the process and time line for completion.

Review Preliminary Strategies

Consider other important strategies and address their relevance.

Bring focus to three or four achievable and important strategies.

Involve specialized individuals from the community in focused discussions relevant to each topic.

Selection of relevant strategies and action to include in the Implementation Plan.

Preparation of an approximate time frame for the implementation of the Plan.

Assignment of responsibilities to persons, organizations, or agencies to carry out the intended work.

Timetable for Completion of the Project:

March 1997 - Establish Three Task Groups: Education, Government Policy, and Ag Economic Development. Hold orientation meeting with some 2 dozen invited citizens

along with the eleven member AFPB

April 1997 - September 1997 - Task Group meetings to develop the elements of the Implementation Plan.

September 1997 - Final reports of Task Groups to the AFPBoard.

October & November 1997 - Compilation of recommended strategies and action into a final report

December 1997 - Presentation to the County legislature for acceptance and adoption.

January - March 1998 - Unscheduled; expansion of timetable if needed.

March 1998 is the end of funding for this phase. Follow-up funding for the next phase of implementation will be applied for senior staff at the Cornell Cooperative Extension Office in the County.

Measurement of Project Performance:

The accomplishment of individual expected outputs will indicate the success of project efforts. Overall performance will be judged by the degree to which recommended elements of the Implementation Plan satisfy the three subsets of the Program Goal on page 2.

Appendix B.
Quarterly Reports of Project Activities

Quarterly Report - ARC Farmlands Program

Tompkins County Agriculture & Farmland Protection Board

April 1 - June 30, 1997

This report summarizes the work activities conducted with funding from ARC for agriculture and farmland protection planning in the second calendar quarter of 1997.

Principal activities:

1. Recruit members to serve on three Task Groups for protection planning recommendations.
2. Organize and conduct Task Group work (see below) with three committees on Education, Ag Economic Development, and Government Policies.
3. Plan Agenda with Task Group Chairs, invite guest participants, take notes and type meeting summaries for distribution, maintain communications with all members of the Task Groups.
4. Document and file relevant external information and meeting discussions by Task Group members.
5. Hold meetings with Task Group Chairs to evaluate and plan work agenda and priorities.
6. Study other County's Protection Plans.
7. Hold discussions with: Cornell Cooperative Extension faculty and support staff at Cornell Univ. on topics of land use and economic enhancement of farming operations; bankers and Empire Farm Credit personnel regarding farm lending; Town of Ithaca planners regarding its proposed Purchase of Development Rights plan; Farm Service staff in Wellsboro PA regarding Farm/City Day promotion organizing; Department of Ag & Markets regarding marketing programs and technical questions on protection planning.
8. Research rural land use planning through Internet and Pace University Land Use Law Center.
9. Review USDA funding resource guides for applicability to agriculture economic development.

Quarterly Report - ARC Farmlands Program

Tompkins County Agriculture & Farmland Protection Board

July 1 - September 30, 1997

This report summarizes the work activities conducted with funding from ARC for agriculture and farmland protection planning in the third calendar quarter of 1997.

Principal activities:

1. Continue organizing and conducting Task Group work with three committees on Education, Ag Economic Development, and Government Policies (started in second quarter).
2. Plan monthly agenda with Task Group Chairs, invite guest participants, take notes and type meeting summaries for distribution, maintain communications with all members of the Task Groups.
3. Document and file relevant external information and meeting discussion notes by Task Group members.
4. Hold meetings with Task Group Chairs to evaluate and plan work agenda and priorities.
5. Compile findings and recommendations of Task Groups into final reports to the AFPB.
6. Conduct research via Internet, agriculture publications, Department of Agriculture & Markets, NYS Office of Real Property Services, Ag in the Classroom program, NYS Farm Bureau, read literature on rural economic development, land use planning and regulation, Ag & Farmland Protection Planning list serve, discussions with peers and protection planning programs being developed in other NYS Counties.
7. Pursue implementation funding sources through the Department of Agriculture & Markets, Legislative Commission on Rural Affairs, Southern Tier East Regional Planning & Development Board, Senator R. Kuhl's office, American Farmland Trust, and Empire State Development office, New York Farms organizer, study legislative bills on economic assistance for agriculture, review federal funding literature from USDA and National Agricultural Library.
8. Discuss local funding opportunities and strategies with members of County legislature and Cornell Cooperative Extension.
9. Write a newsletter update to farmer community on Ag & Farmland Protection work.
10. Develop a work plan and priorities for the next four months (October - January).
11. Participate in AFPB In-Service Training for two days.
12. Discuss farmland preservation strategies and AFPB support of Town of Ithaca Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan with Town Planners.

Quarterly Report - ARC Farmlands Program

Tompkins County Agriculture & Farmland Protection Board

October 1 - December 31, 1997

This report summarizes the work activities conducted with funding from ARC for agriculture and farmland protection planning in the fourth calendar quarter of 1997.

Principal activities:

1. Continue organizing and conducting Task Group work with three committees on Education, Ag Economic Development, and Government Policies (started in second quarter).
2. Plan monthly agenda with Task Group Chairs, invite guest participants, take notes and type meeting summaries for distribution, maintain communications with all members of the Task Groups.
3. Document and file relevant external information and meeting discussion notes by Task Group members.
4. Hold meetings with Task Group Chairs to evaluate and plan work agenda and priorities.
5. Compile findings and recommendations of Task Groups into final reports to the AFPB.
6. Present for discussion the recommendations of the Task Groups to the Ag & Farmland Protection Board. Seek their response for approval or changes.
7. Develop full draft of the Phase II Report of the Protection Plan.
8. Develop Measurement Criteria and Success Indicators for the Strategies and Implementation of the Protection Plan.
9. Hold discussions with State Senator C. Cook, Ron Brach of Commission on Rural Resources, Department of Ag & Markets, and Assemblyman M. Luster on State agriculture policy and funding strategies.
10. Organize initial meeting of Farm/City Day Committee for 1998 implementation of key strategy.
11. Prepare and present the Phase II Recommendations to the Planning, Education, and Development Committee of the County Board of Representatives.
12. Develop a database of farmland owners in the County; initial use as a mailing list.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Tompkins County Agriculture & Farmland Protection Plan - Phase I Study of Agriculture

AGRICULTURE IN TOMPKINS COUNTY

Agriculture in Tompkins County is in transition. Structural changes in Tompkins County agriculture, as on the national level, continue to occur resulting in fewer larger farms and more diverse smaller farms. According to the last Agriculture Census (1992), there are 215 part-time farms and 226 full-time farms with combined annual agricultural sales of \$50 million. While dairy and field crop operations are fewer, their agricultural economic output has accounted for a steady increase in production and market value of dairy and commodity crops in Tompkins County. Meanwhile, farms and substantial amounts of farmland are disappearing in the mid-size range of 50 to 500 acres.

There is strong growth in the number of small part-time farms raising livestock, horses, fruits, vegetables and specialty agricultural and horticultural products. The proximity of an increasing urban population, appreciative of the rural character of the County and its farm products, has enabled the successful establishment and expansion of these smaller enterprises. Ornamental horticultural operations have also enjoyed growth due to the expanding urban/suburban population, and now represent the largest category of specialty agriculture enterprises in the County.

Given the dichotomies in County farming - traditional commodity based operations, and specialty consumer-dependent farms, the prospects for the future of our 441 full and part time farms is dependent upon a strategy that encourages and supports both types of enterprises. Traditional dairy and field crop operations are continuously challenged by low prices and rising production costs, while specialty farms struggle with challenges to diversify and develop their farm businesses.

Farmers will make decisions that affect the loss or retention of farmland. They are motivated to continue farming if they can do so profitably. To encourage this, disincentives to profitable farming have to be minimized and incentives must be provided so farmers can maintain and expand investments and extend commitments to the land.

WHAT WE STAND TO LOSE

Farming and farmland need to be protected from further economic and infrastructural pressures or the following contributions of the agricultural community enjoyed by all County residents will be diminished and opportunities for growth will be lost.

- The loss of farmland will be accelerated. Given recent and long-term trends, we will probably experience reductions of 10 - 24% per decade in both the number of farms and farm acreage.
- Reduced availability of high quality locally grown products such as: fruits, vegetables, greenhouse, and nursery products, maple syrup, poultry, horses, livestock, and others.
- Over \$40 million of annual farm exports will be threatened. The potential for expansion, retention of local jobs and dollars will be reduced. The potential for substitution of locally grown food and other products for imported products will be lost.
- Biodiversity will be diminished through reversion of field and meadow habitats to woodland. The rural lifestyle and associated cultivated open spaces that appeal to residents and tourists will be diminished.
- Future availability of farmland and farming resources will be reduced. Once converted, it is almost impossible to return lands to farming.

WHY WE SHOULD PROTECT AGRICULTURE IN TOMPKINS COUNTY

Agriculture and farmland need protection from land use and regulatory decisions which fail to adequately consider agricultural impacts and may produce unintended consequences.

Tompkins County farming is highly vulnerable to pressures from (1) land use planning that supports rural residential development and infrastructure expansion without adequate consideration of negative impacts on agricultural viability, (2) practice of assessing farmland, in part, as a use with a higher market value than farming, (3) rapidly rising property taxes, and (4) a growing and unmet need for economic development of the agriculture industry.

Agriculture in Tompkins County has the potential for greater contributions to the quality of life within the County. Strength lies with maintaining and expanding dairy and field crop operations, and the development and diversification of smaller farming enterprises. Entrepreneurial approaches to farming are expanding as the "business" of farming adopts more advanced technologies and management practices, direct-to-consumer marketing, specialized niche farming, food processing, organic production and value-added processes.

GOALS OF THE AGRICULTURE AND FARMLAND PROTECTION PLAN

This report concludes that economically viable agriculture provides a natural means for retaining farmland, and that supportive public policies are necessary to assure agriculture's continued contributions to the economy and quality of life in the County.

(1) Create general awareness and inform Tompkins County government, community leaders and the general public about:

- (a) the significance of agriculture.
- (b) stresses on area farming from conditions and trends in the agriculture industry.
- (c) impacts on agriculture from public policies.
- (d) economic potential for expanded agricultural activity.

(2) Identify agricultural resources in need of protection and present appropriate farmland protection measures.

(3) Present options to strengthen the economic vitality and viability of agriculture and retain productive farmland.

OPTIONS FOR STRENGTHENING AGRICULTURE

Tompkins County's Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan - Phase II will develop specific recommendations and an implementation plan derived from options under these broad headings:

1. **EDUCATION:** Create a high level of awareness and knowledge by community decision-makers, farmers and other county residents about economic and societal values of agriculture.
2. **GOVERNMENT POLICIES:** Provide a supportive climate for continuation of farming through public policies and actions on land use and taxation that minimize disincentives for farming. Effective action is needed from various levels of government.
3. **AGRICULTURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:** Strengthen the economic viability of farm businesses through programs of education, business retention and expansion, and the development of diverse agricultural enterprises supplying both local and distant markets.

Appendix D. RECOMMENDATIONS:
Strategies, Action Steps, and Implementation

Recommendations for AGRICULTURE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT Strategies and Action Steps

These Strategies address:

- Inadequate financial support for farming enterprises, primarily other than large dairy based operations.
- Underdeveloped access to local and regional consumer and institutional food buyers.
- Underdeveloped capacity for woodland based revenues.
- Opportunities for enhanced farm income from tourism markets.
- Economic potential from development of numerous ventures and activities related to agriculture and food production.

STRATEGY 1. AGRICULTURAL LENDING EXPANSION - Improve access to finance and credit sources for agriculture enterprises.

ASSIGNED: To AFPB and designated staff.

TIMELINE: Ongoing

ACTION:1. Create an agriculture development loan fund or revolving loan fund with a qualified loan administrator and advisory personnel to primarily serve operators of small farms and other rural enterprises that rely upon natural resources.

Measurement criteria: *Inquiries, approvals, and participation levels.*

ACTION:2. Research the region for all agricultural lending programs including banks, government agency, and not-for-profit sources.

Measurement criteria: *Completion of a directory, documentation, and distribution.*

ACTION:3. Periodically publish, update, and distribute to the farm community a bulletin on the sources of agriculture credit, the targeted programs or borrowers, rates, and terms.

Measurement criteria: *Completion of a directory, documentation, and distribution.*

ACTION:4. Provide advice to lenders when specialized knowledge might be useful in evaluating the soundness of agricultural business plans. A panel of advisors may be formed to provide this support.

Measurement criteria: *Formation of the panel of advisors, agreements with lenders to participate and utilization by lenders of the panel.*

STRATEGY 2. BUILD LOCAL FOOD SYSTEM LINKAGE TO CONSUMERS AND INSTITUTIONS - Build closer supply links between local food producers, area consumers and institutions feeding large populations.

ASSIGNED: To AFPB and designated staff.

TIMELINE: Ongoing; with periodic evaluation.

ACTION: 1. Develop farmer supportive efforts to define and overcome barriers to direct access to institutional food purveyors.

Measurement criteria: *Identify barriers and establish discussions with potential buyers for reduction or removal of those barriers.*

ACTION: 2. Work with local, regional, and state organizations and programs to develop and strengthen the local and regional food system.

Measurement criteria: *Development of agreements to introduce supportive changes for local food producers.*

ACTION: 3. Maintain and distribute a directory of institutions interested in direct access to farm products and a directory of local food producers seeking larger market outlets and information about access requirements.

Measurement criteria: *Update a current directory, distribute it to producers, and provide workshops to utilize the information.*

ACTION: 4. Provide support for Lansing School "Field to Table" program and support expansion to other schools.

Measurement criteria: *Continuation of the program at Lansing and expansion of participation to other schools.*

STRATEGY 3. DEVELOP AGRI-FOREST PRODUCTS and MARKETS - Develop and support production and market access for woodland products from farms.

ASSIGNED: To AFPB and designated staff.

TIMELINE: Ongoing.

ACTION: 1. Provide information to farmers and rural woodland owners about the income opportunities available from use of an appropriate management plan.

Measurement criteria: *Documentation of resource information, contacts and agencies; and offer workshops.*

ACTION: 2 Promote State mandated practice of assessment of woodlands at "current use" instead of highest and best use.

Measurement criteria: *Request and evaluate annual reports from County Assessment department that document changed assessments on farmland.*

ACTION: 3 Conduct preliminary research into the feasibility for development of a regional wood processing operation to capitalize on the abundance and high quality of our woodland resources.

Measurement criteria: *Completed report of preliminary feasibility.*

STRATEGY 4. DEVELOP AGRI-TOURISM OPPORTUNITIES - Establish farm income generating activities by linking tourists, attractions, and agricultural attractions in innovative ways.

ASSIGNED: To AFPB, Tompkins County Tourism Advisory Council, and designated staff.

TIMELINE: Ongoing; with periodic evaluation.

ACTION: 1. Inventory and document existing attractions such as farm stands, farmers markets, horticultural, and traditional farm operations that offer educational and entertaining attractions.

Measurement criteria: *Completion of the inventory document.*

ACTION: 2. Improve and/or create descriptive marketing brochures that promote farm attractions.

Measurement criteria: *Completion of brochures.*

ACTION: 3. Develop coordinated marketing links to area wine trails and farm trails.

Measurement criteria: *Establish working arrangements with the promoters of the existing "trails".*

ACTION: 4. Explore and develop bus tours directed to combination attractions that include farms.

Measurement criteria: *Gather information and report on similar programs elsewhere. Establish agreements with promoters of bus tours.*

ACTION: 5. Develop group interest in farm visits such as family, educational, Elder Hostel, conference, and company picnics.

Measurement criteria: *Development of a program for farm visits. Promotion of the program to targeted potential interest groups.*

STRATEGY 5. EXPLORE ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF FARMING ENTERPRISES - Additional time for evaluation should be devoted to other strategies that are effective elsewhere or merit consideration.

ASSIGNED: To AFPB and designated staff.

TIMELINE: Ongoing

[Strategy 5 continued] FURTHER ACTION AREAS TO EXPLORE:

- Expanded direct to consumer marketing.
- Value added operations such as food processing and packaging.
- Expanding access to organic markets for a wide range of products from organic seed to organic fruits, vegetables, dairy products, poultry and livestock products.
- Explore new products and uses for agricultural products with Cornell ag research efforts. USDA funded research has been developing a vast range of products to compete with paper pulp, petroleum based lubricants, plastics, and fuels, to inks, adhesives, and many products with industrial uses.
- Conversion of farm waste into methane, feed, bedding, and landscaping products.
- Seek grants to develop and/or strengthen a wide range of traditional and alternative farming enterprises.
- Provide assistance to farm operators for permits and applications for new and expanded enterprises.
- Coordinate existing financial, technical, marketing, management, and educational support for farm enterprises.
- Agricultural Economic Development zones.
- Grants to fund commercialization of agricultural research spinoffs.
- Use of commodity futures for a balanced production program.
- Bulk or cooperative energy purchases.

Measurement criteria: Documentation of research, planning, and decisions on each topic.

SUCCESS INDICATORS

- More farmers make successful efforts to invest in more efficient operations, expansion or diversification, or sale of whole farms to other farmers.
- Agriculture Census data reveals improving trends in retention of farms, farm acreage, and market values of products.
- Increase in the volume of food supplied to area institutions by local farmers.
- Increase in number of County or regional agriculture enterprises that process, package, and distribute locally grown farm products.
- Farms improve appearance of their buildings and property in response to tourism incentives and improved profitability.

Recommendations for EDUCATION Strategies and Action Steps

These strategies address:

- Opportunities to extend awareness about farming and the local agriculture industry to consumers, youth, businesses, and political leaders.
- Need to expand child and youth understanding about farming, the food system, and agricultural careers.

STRATEGY 1. SPONSOR A TOMPKINS COUNTY FARM/CITY DAY - A one day event, hosted by a Tompkins County farm family, would generate education to thousands of non-farm people through visiting a commercial farm and through extensive publicity.

ASSIGNED: AFPB, a coordinating Committee, Cornell Cooperative Extension and/or ASCS staff, paid coordinator, and community and youth volunteers.

TIMELINE: First scheduled for Summer or Autumn 1998; ongoing annually thereafter.

ACTION 1: Organize and structure a planning and coordinating committee.

Measurement criteria: *Establishment of the committee and its responsibilities.*

ACTION 2: Directly involve community participation as volunteers and as donors.

Measurement criteria: *Sign up volunteers; obtain donor pledges.*

ACTION 3: Work closely with the Tioga County, PA. Farm Services Agency and the National Farm/City Day organization as advisory resources for effective planning.

Measurement criteria: *Hold meetings and review plans with these parties*

ACTION 4: Involve farmers and knowledgeable youth as interpreters of farm activities to the visitors.

Measurement criteria: *Have commitments from farmers and youth. Train them.*

ACTION 5: Raise funds at the event through an auction and other means to benefit Ag in the Classroom

Measurement criteria: *Organize and conduct the event(s); bank the money.*

ACTION 6: Plan and conduct a multi-media tie-in to cover this event and educate the public about agriculture.

Measurement criteria: *Have media commitments in place; clarify the goals the media are to support. Publish and broadcast the stories/coverage.*

STRATEGY 2. FARMER / NON-FARMER EXCHANGE DAY - A non-farmer changes work places with a farmer for a day. Provides a media story with unusual public appeal and a high level of public education. .

ASSIGNED: AFPB Committee, coordinator, media personnel..

TIMELINE: Semi-annual ; ongoing.

ACTION 1: Organize a committee of AFPB members , staff, and media.

Measurement criteria: *Have commitments to serve in place; identify responsibilities.*

ACTION 2: Select appropriate exchange persons for maximum educational and promotional benefits.

Measurement criteria: *Names of committed persons known and later publicized.*

ACTION 3: Plan the activities for each participant's day for the opposite site and role.

Measurement criteria: *Script and timing completed, participants coached and ready.*

ACTION 4: Plan and conduct the promotional activities.

Measurement criteria: *Media schedule and content completed; interviews and speeches scheduled and prepared.*

STRATEGY 3. AG IN THE CLASSROOM - Provide financial and promotional support for the program in schools of the County.

ASSIGNED: AFPB Committee, designated staff person, Cornell Cooperative Extension.

TIMELINE: Ongoing.

ACTION 1: Provide funding to support materials costs, field trips, and other necessary expenses.

Measurement criteria: *Funds raised at Farm/City Day auction.*

ACTION 2: Solicit additional financial support from Ag organizations in the County..

Measurement criteria: *Obtain and collect pledges through a campaign to targeted donors.*

ACTION 3: Organize a pool of farmers and farm support organizations as mentors to adopt a classroom and/or support career development interests of youth.

Measurement criteria: *Have a list of committed participants and a plan for their involvement with teachers and classes.*

ACTION 4: Provide recognition of participating teachers, youth, farmers, Cornell Cooperative Extension staff, and community volunteers.

Measurement criteria: *Hold a recognition event, issue letters and certificates, and issue press releases.*

ACTION 5: Promote the program through media and special events..

Measurement criteria: *Issue a schedule of events and issue press releases; invite media to each event. Get events published and broadcast.*

SUCCESS INDICATORS

- Over three thousand people attend the first Farm/City Day Event, a dozen stories are published or broadcast in area newspapers, and radio/TV coverage, and public reaction is to ask for more access to farms.
- Public expresses interest for more access to farm experiences and sources to purchase farm products directly.
- Regeneration of interests in Future Farmers of America; increased interest in farming and agricultural careers by youth.
- Funds raised for Ag in the Classroom for several schools.
- Identity and image of agriculture and farming are elevated among non-farm population.
- Increased unity is gained among Ag groups and Ag community.

Recommendations for GOVERNMENT POLICY Strategies and Action Steps

These strategies address:

- The need to educate municipal officials and government employees about their role in supporting farming through the Agriculture District Law.
- The need to establish equitable farmland valuation practices.
- Need to promote farming interests in land use planning decisions.

STRATEGY 1. AGRICULTURE & MARKETS LAW - ARTICLE 25 AA - Educate municipal governing boards and planning boards and general public on regulations promulgated by Article 25AA.

ASSIGNED: To person knowledgeable in Article 25AA and a farmer in each town.
To staff and AFPB through other continuing education venues such as: Tompkins County Municipal Officers Assoc., a workshop in coordination with other educational programs on agriculture or related municipal topics.

TIMELINE: Ongoing, annually

ACTION 1: Educate about the following issues involving Agriculture Districts: limitations on local regulations and eminent domain, Agricultural land outside Districts, Right to Farm, Fire Tax Agriculture Exemption (possibly work with County Fire & Disaster Coordinator for support).

Measurement criteria: *Completed educational workshops with municipal officials. Resolutions by Town Boards to support the spirit of the Agriculture District Law as well as the Law itself.*

ACTION 2: Establish a recognition award for Farm Friendly Municipalities; define criteria for such an award.

Measurement criteria: *Establishment of criteria; development of a procedure for selection of candidates.*

ACTION 3: Urge supportive policy decisions which impact agricultural areas and activities.

Measurement criteria: *Evidence by decisions of each Town on relevant issues.*

STRATEGY 2. FARMLAND ASSESSMENT - Actively seek a County policy and practice to assess farmland at its current use.

ASSIGNED: To be done by AFPB participation in meetings with Director and staff of the Division of Assessment.

TIMELINE: To be done by year end 1999.

ACTION 1: Work with the Director of the Division of Assessment and staff in a joint educational process. The process should result in a balance of lowest current use valuation for farmland and open space with regulatory and professional requirements of assessment practice.

Measurement criteria: *Develop an understanding with Assessment staff about procedure and timetable for the change. Request and evaluate annual reports from County Assessment department that document changed assessments on farmland.*

STRATEGY 3. LAND USE REGULATION - Advocate for farmer and farmland owners in land use planning and regulation discussions and decisions.

ASSIGNED: To be done by Agriculture & Farmland Protection Board with staff support.

TIMELINE: Ongoing; as municipalities address land use issues that affect farming.

ACTION 1: Gain the reputation and respect of planning boards as articulate spokespersons for the farming community as to the effects of land use policy on farming.

Measurement criteria: *Requests for input on relevant policy decisions by Town Boards.*

ACTION 2: Educate municipal boards to focus on public policies with incentives for both traditional and alternative farming enterprises.

Measurement criteria: *Evidence in Town policies that the agriculture enterprises in the Town are encouraged and supported.*

ACTION 3: Educate municipal boards to focus on protecting productive prime cropland as a valuable natural resource of the town.

Measurement criteria: *Consideration by Town Boards of prime cropland protective measures.*

ACTION 4: Advocate to the Town of Ithaca for incentives to encourage continuation of active farming on farmland targeted in its Parks, Recreation & Open Space (PROS) Plan.

Measurement criteria: *Modification of the Town (PROS) Plan to provide incentives and mechanisms for continuation of farming on "preserved farmland".*

SUCCESS INDICATORS

- Town Board members attend workshops on Ag District Law.
- Right to Farm ordinances and fire tax reductions adopted in all Towns.
- Municipalities gain recognition as Farm Friendly.
- Changes of farmland assessments at "current use" value increasingly show up in County assessment records.
- Town Boards seek input from the Ag community on issues affecting agriculture and farmland.
- Municipalities consider farmland policies with incentives for farming and farmers.