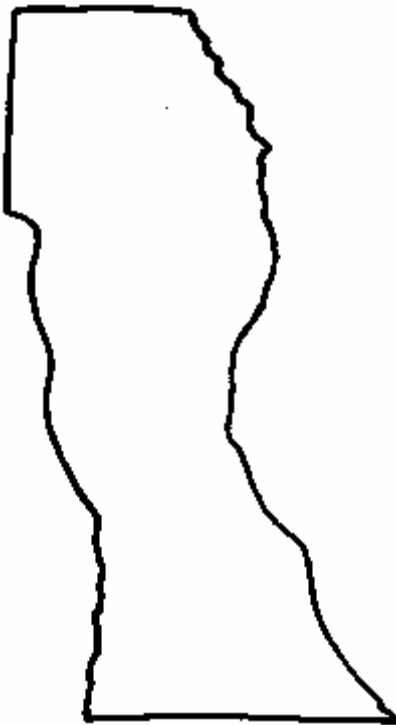


SENECA COUNTY  
AGRICULTURAL ENHANCEMENT PLAN



March 21, 2000 Adopted by Seneca County Agricultural Enhancement Board  
March 28, 2000 Adopted by Seneca County Board of Supervisors

# Seneca County Agricultural Enhancement Plan

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## Executive Summary

Agriculture is an integral component of the economic well being of Seneca County. The most recent agriculture statistics credit Seneca County farmers with contributing over \$41 million in product sales. Crop and livestock sales accounted for 43% and 57% of the market value, respectively. Seneca County is unique in New York State in that farmland has actually increased slightly, while the state and national numbers have decreased, farm numbers in Seneca County have remained fairly constant. Although there was an 11% decrease in full-time farms from 1997 to 2002, compared to a 3% decrease in the rest of the state and country within the same period of time.

Although not the sole contribution made by Agriculture, economics is probably the most important. In addition, residents of Seneca County enjoy many quality of life benefits from agriculture: the wide-open spaces, scenic views, and natural beauty of the area are maintained in large part because of farms. The diversity of the farming community adds to the texture of Seneca County's landscape. Cornfields, vineyards, and cows on pasture enhance the rural character of the County. The Mennonite and Amish farmers certainly bring their own unique character to the region. All these contributions are difficult to put a dollar value on, but to many residents and visitors they are priceless aspects of Seneca County.

None the less, agriculture in Seneca County faces considerable challenges. These include decreased profit margins, high cost of inputs, access to skilled workforce, state and federal regulations, land and property taxes, agricultural awareness among non-farmers, and farm transfer obstacles.

For these reasons Cornell Cooperative Extension of Seneca County, in cooperation with the Seneca County Economic Development and Planning Department, has developed an Agricultural Enhancement Plan (hereafter read as the "Plan"). This Plan seeks to identify the opportunities and challenges facing agriculture. The Plan describes the dairy, livestock, vegetable crops, tree fruits, grape, and ornamental horticulture industries. Conclusions and recommendations for enhancing present agricultural businesses and fostering new opportunities are given. Agriculture continues to be a tight margin industry that requires innovation, cost control, and exceptional business management expertise.

The goals outlined in the Plan were developed with input from farmers, agribusiness and the general community. These goals are: 1) Enhance the economic climate for agriculture in Seneca County; 2) Increase the awareness of the economic and social importance of agriculture in Seneca County; 3) Provide an ongoing community education program for the non-farm public; 4) Acknowledge and enhance the environmental stewardship of agricultural businesses; and 5) Preserve prime farmland.

To reach these goals, a multi-faceted approach will be needed; no single activity will provide the answer to enhancing agriculture in Seneca County. A cooperative effort by farmers, agribusiness, local and county government, agencies, and organizations will be most likely to succeed. To this end, the Plan recommends that the Seneca County Agricultural Enhancement Board provide the direction and facilitate the teamwork necessary to implement the Plan's goals.

## Status of Seneca County Agriculture Industry

### Components of Seneca County Agriculture

Seneca County's agriculture industry is composed of three sectors. The input sector provides the producers with the seed, fertilizers, machinery, fuel, feed and other products and services necessary to produce farm products. In this sector there are about twenty businesses and institutions that provide direct support to producers. Primary input businesses include: Seneca Farm and Home Supply, Keystone Mills, Empire Tractor, and Waterloo Container (suppliers of wine bottles). In addition, there are other community support businesses such as lawyers, plumbers, carpenters, and accountants that look to agriculture for about 10% of their business. Seneca County farmers spent \$43.7 million in production expenditures, clearly indicating that agriculture's economic impact does not stop at the farm gate.

The production sector includes 466 farm businesses producing \$52.5 million in gross sales. Of the 126,200 acres of land being farmed, (85,000 acres are in cropland with another 13,000 acres in crops.)??? The industry includes most types of farms, with dairy being the largest group generating \$17 million in sales, followed by grain and forage production at \$14 million.

The output sector is a diverse group of businesses (livestock and commodity auctions, produce brokers, food processors, wineries and others) that are often national in scope, functioning as buyers, processors, distributors and marketers of agricultural products.

The profitability in one of these sectors effects the viability of the other two, as do various external factors specific to each. Profitability of businesses in the input and output sectors of the industry have improved through mergers, increases in efficiencies, expansion of markets, or diversification into other products. The production sector has lagged behind the other two and has reached a plateau in profitability where businesses are stable but not growing. The results of this situation are seen most readily in farm businesses that are being assumed by the younger generation. Farm businesses that cannot generate revenue beyond that which meets operating costs fail, since the new owner cannot pass equity to the older generation.

Additionally, production agriculture businesses provide the basis for the county's tourist industry. For example, wineries and farm markets represent direct tourist attractions, while farms maintain the open landscape and scenic vistas.

### Environmental Stewardship

Farmers are inherently interested in the maintenance of their soil and water resources, as well as the preservation of wildlife habitat, ground water recharge and scenic vistas. To maintain a high quality, diverse, and plentiful food supply, and at the same time deal with flat commodity prices, agricultural producers apply crop protections or chemical fertilizers. To reduce the risk that these practices may have on the environment, producers apply these materials according to integrated pest and manure management recommendations. These recommendations are constantly being

updated based on research work at Cornell and other universities, and producers are kept abreast of these updates through Cooperative Extension programs.

### Neighbor Relations

As more people move to rural agricultural areas, there is a need to build positive and cooperative relationships between farm and non-farm neighbors. Additionally, concentrated agricultural businesses (such as livestock and field crop operations) require cooperation between neighbors and farmers to minimize annoyances, yet not hinder farm activities. Farmers who use best management practices and are environmentally responsible are valuable assets to Seneca County.

### National Perspective

The U.S. consumer has the most diverse, high quality, and plentiful food supply in the world at a cost of about 12% (the 3rd lowest in the world) of their expendable dollars. One of the major factors that contributes to this success is the diversity of our food producing areas. Agricultural producers in Seneca County are an important part of this system. They compete nationally to supply the US consumer with milk, vegetables, grapes (wine), cereal grains and meat that ensures the diverse high quality and quality food supply. In addition, farms and other agricultural businesses in Seneca County and the rest of the East coast provide "insurance" against a disruption in our food supply from natural disasters in one of the other major agricultural producing areas.

The dairy industry in Seneca County generates the largest dollar volume of sales and includes the most diverse number of support businesses. Overall, the industry includes 105 (2002) farms producing \$15.8 million (2002) in gross sales. In addition to dairy farms, the industry includes: feed supplies and services; insemination services; veterinarian services; milking and animal housing equipment supplies and services; manure handling supplies and services; milk inspectors; milk haulers and shippers, and processors. The dairy industry in Seneca County has a total economic impact of \$27.65 (using 1.75 multiplier) and employs about 350 people on farms and about an equal number in the allied industries.

Dairy production is a highly sophisticated process that requires a high degree of management. The lactation of cows during pregnancy results in the need for management of the animal being milked; those that are or are between pregnancies (dry cows); those waiting to be bred for the first time (heifers) and calves that result from the pregnancy. The typical dairy farm will sell male calves and retain the best of the female calves for inclusion into the herd. Usually, a dairy will maintain the same number of calves and heifers as they have cows in production. Calves will be fed a ration to maximize growth and will be bred when they enter heat and become heifers. Breeding is done artificially to insure success and the parentage of the offspring. Bred heifers are fed and housed to maximize the success of the pregnancy. At the birth of the calf, the cow begins to lactate and is again fed to maximize production.

The typical dairy farm will utilize the following services:

- Construction to provide feed storage, animal housing, manure handling, and milking equipment and facilities. Animal housing may include: individual “hutches” for calves, barns with pens or free stall areas to group heifers by age, and free stall barns, tie stalls or stanchions for lactating cows. Manure handling includes a number of techniques to mechanically or hydraulically clean barns. Milking equipment and facilities are designed and inspected to meet USDA/NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets specifications for cleanliness. Field-chopped hay or corn is stored in traditional cylinder type or, more recently, in “bunker” silos. Other materials are stored in bins or buildings based on their specific handling and storage requirements. The majority of these services are provided by off farm contractors, plumbers or specialists in the design, installation and management of the specialized equipment.
- Crops produced on a dairy farm usually include corn for silage or grain, soybeans, hay for ensilage or dry. (This production requires the same investment and support as described under the section “CASH CROPS”.)

- Herd nutrition is designed to maximize the health and production/growth potential of each segment of the herd. Often the feed company will provide specialist services to do this by “balancing the ration” for each segment of the herd. Producers then feed the specified ration by combining corn (silage or grain), soybeans and hay produced on the farm with other micronutrients from cottonseed meal or distillers grains. Frequently producers will buy some of the needed materials to balance the ration from a feed supply company, who will grind the constituents and mix them based on given specifications.
- An outside company who will contract to come to a farm on a regular basis provides insemination services (often a farmer cooperative). The quality of their service depends on their reliability, frequency of success, and parentage of the semen used for fertilization.
- Herd health is provided by veterinarian services. Given the large number of animals and confinement system, the opportunity for disease buildup or the incidence of difficult deliveries is great. While producers (for economic reasons) often administer medicines themselves, veterinarians provide diagnostic services or assistance in case of emergencies. Although veterinarians provide traditional herd health services, the trend is for them to provide preventive health management. They go beyond sick cow care and provide education and consulting in nutrition, cow comfort, reproductive management and even facilities. The objectives are to maximize the herds profits and minimize disease.
- Milk is marketed as either fluid milk or cheese at any of the five or so plants in New York State or one facility in New Jersey. Facilities in New York that are owned by producer cooperatives include Upstate Milk. Privately owned processors include Sorrento, Byrne Dairy and others. Brokers who also market milk include Dairylea, Agri-Mark, Dairy Farmers of America and Land-o-Lakes. The price paid to farmers for their milk is determined by a USDA formula that establishes a base price based on certain criteria. Different prices are established for different milk marketing plants.
- Business management services are provided by off-farm vendors. Accountants, lawyers, tax preparers, and financial institutions all service the dairy industry. The Farm Services Agency and the Farm Credit of Western New York are two USDA or cooperative supported groups that service the industry, as do many local lenders.

## Cash Crop Industry Overview-Seneca County

The cash crop industry in Seneca County is comprised of 397 (2002) farms (up slightly from 375 in 1992) working over 86,509 (2002) acres. The sale of cash crops contributed approximately \$18.5 (2004) million to the local economy. The number of acres has decreased slightly. The sale of cash crops adds significantly to the economic viability of Seneca County. Corn for grain or seed is the largest segment of the cash crop industry. Almost half the farms grow corn for grain on about 27,000 23,700 (2004) acres. Hay is the next largest segment of the industry with 255 farms growing hay on 18, 000 22,700 (2004) acres. Corn for silage is produced on 91 94 (2002) farms on 5,000 5200 (2004) acres. Other crops include oats, wheat, soybeans, and other small grains.

Crop production is a highly specialized and sophisticated process. Intensive management skills are necessary to successfully produce a saleable product at a cost-effective price. The ever increasing costs of inputs have outstripped stagnate commodity prices. Cost control is imperative in the cash crop business. The high cost of machinery has lead to the increase in farm size in order to spread the cost over more acres. The typical cash crop farm will include extensive planting, harvesting, and soil preparation machinery. Farm buildings will include machinery storage, farm shop, grain storage, hay storage and grain dryers.

The cash crop industry supports many agri-business enterprises. These include fertilizer and pesticide services, seed grain suppliers, machinery dealerships, machinery repair shops, crop consultants, and grain marketing businesses. Each of these businesses provides an important service to the cash crop enterprise. In addition to the agri-service businesses that are specific to cash crops, crop farmers use accountants, tax preparers, lending institutions, lawyers, and payroll services.

The Soil and Water Conservation District and the Natural Resource Conservation Service work closely with cash crop farmers. Cornell Cooperative Extension has a long history of providing educational programs to crop farmers.

Environmental stewardship is an essential component to cash crop farmers. With 97,000 86,509 acres in production, they have a significant role to play in protecting soil and water resources. Crop farmers also protect the wide-open landscape and rural character of the community. Economically and environmentally viable farms are the best way to ensure these resources are preserved. One of the most effective programs for environmental stewardship is the Integrated Pest Management Program (IPM), in which Seneca County farmers willingly and voluntarily participate. IPM seeks to minimize the use of inputs such as pesticides and fertilizers while still maintaining an economically viable crop. The crux of the program is that, through various monitoring systems, a farmer applies only the inputs necessary at the optimum time. The management involved in an I.P.M. program is significant.

## **Livestock Industry Overview-Seneca County**

Beef, sheep, swine and poultry are important components of the agriculture industry in Seneca County. In total they generate \$3,062,000 26.8 million (2002) from the sale of their products. These industries are supported by many agri-service businesses. This group includes: providers of seed, fertilizer, fuel, machinery, veterinary care, equipment, accountings, fencing, and nutritional consulting; trades people such as electricians, plumbers, and carpenters; and other products and services necessary for production. Livestock producers generate business for the output sector, which includes auctions, brokers, and others.

The beef industry is an important component of the livestock industry in Seneca County. There are approximately 69 72 (2002) beef producers in the county, down from 73 in 1992. These farms collectively carry about 1,596 1576 (2002) animals, up from 1,008. Although the remaining farms are producing more beef, smaller part-time operations are more common. The increased number of animals on each farm is a trend facilitated by economics. The range in number (per farm) is large, while the average count per farm is 23. In most cases the farm is supplemented by another farm operation or off-the-farm income.

A typical beef farm will have breeding stock that consists of females that are bred to produce calves for sale. The breeding stock are not sold each year as meat animals but instead are re-bred. The breeding animal is either bred with the use of artificial insemination or with a bull. The breeding stock is managed to maximize genetic progress and profitability. Calves produced are sold as either meat animals or as breeding stock for other beef farms.

Some beef farmers do not have breeding stock but prefer to buy calves from other beef producers and finish growing them for market. These producers are interested in using their resources for meat production rather than getting involved in the intensive reproductive management of breeding animals.

Sheep production in Seneca County includes 17 35 (2002) farms and 569 1980 (2002) animals. As with beef, farm numbers are down up slightly from 1992 when there were 23 sheep farms. Sheep farms are on the increase. Sheep producers are typically part-time operations that help a farmer make use of the farm resources and supplement the major farm enterprise. Sheep consume a predominately forage-based diet of hay pasture and perhaps silage. Grain is fed to lactating animals and growing lambs. Rotational grazing systems allow some sheep producers to maximize the farm resources with limited outside inputs. Rotational grazing systems involve dividing the pasture area into appropriate size paddocks. The animals are then rotated through the pasture on the basis of plant growth and animal consumption. This can be a very effective system but it takes intensive management on the part of the farmer.

There are 15 (2002) swine farms in Seneca County that consist of 25,484 (2002) animals. These farms sold a combined total of 98,985 (2002) market animals. Being non-ruminant animals, their diet is quite different than that of beef and dairy cows. Hogs eat a grain-based

diet of primarily corn and soybeans. They provide a market for homegrown grains as well as grain produced on neighboring farms. The number of hogs per farm has increased following the specialization trend seen with almost every aspect of agriculture.

Poultry production is the smallest component of the livestock industry in Seneca County. Approximately 31 farmers are raising layers for egg production, although the actual number of layers is not certain. There are 8 farms selling broilers for meat. Poultry eat a grain-based diet and on the whole are kept in confinement systems. The trend among small backyard producers is to produce free-range chicken and eggs to supply niche markets.

The typical livestock/poultry farm will utilize the following services:

- Construction to provide feed storage, animal housing, manure handling equipment and facilities. Housing is usually minimal wind and shade protection, often using old barns that would otherwise not be utilized. Pasture feeding during the growing season requires fencing and water. Grain, hay and fermented silage feeding closer to market requires storage, feeding and handling equipment. Bunker and trench silos are often used, as well as bins for grain storage.
- Swine facilities tend to be more substantial than the average livestock housing. Hogs may be kept in barns similar to dairy cattle but specifically designed for swine. Feeding systems and manure handling tend to be more automated. The barn environment is more closely regulated than beef or sheep.
- Crops produced on a livestock farm vary with the animal produced. Typical for beef and sheep are pasture, hay, and haycrop and corn silage, as well as corn for grain. Swine and poultry require diets that are grain-based and not forage-based; therefore, corn and soybeans are associated with these types of farms.
- Nutrition is an essential component to a healthy livestock or poultry operation. Rations for all species are formulated to insure the health and production/growth potential of the species. Feed companies often provide the technical services for ration formulation, as do consultants and veterinarians. However, none of these sources replace the expertise of the farmer/manager.
- An outside company that will contract to come to a farm on a regular basis provides insemination services (often farmer cooperative). The quality of their service depends on the reliability, frequency of success, and parentage of the semen used for fertilization.
- Biosecurity and veterinarian health services are important components of most poultry and swine operations, since the opportunity for disease outbreak rises as animal density increases. Biosecurity addresses the introduction of disease into an operation and the spread of disease between operations. Historically, beef and sheep producers have placed less emphasis on biosecurity, however, this is changing as animal concentrations increase.

Constraints for livestock and poultry mirror the rest of the agricultural industry in Seneca County. These include non-agricultural development, property taxes, environmental issues, neighbor relations, farm labor, and access to markets.

## Tree Fruit and Small Fruit Overview-Seneca County

Grapes and strawberries are the principal small fruit commodities produced in the county, however, raspberries and blueberries are also grown. Apples are the major tree fruit produced, with cherries, peaches and plums produced in much smaller numbers.

Several commercial operations and the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station in Geneva support this industry. Additionally, the NYS Agricultural Experiment Station in Geneva does extensive research in variety development for both grape and tree fruit.

There are 38 vineyards in Seneca County working approximately 1613 acres of land. These vineyards produce mainly wine grapes for sale to estate wineries and Canandaigua Brands, Inc. Through strategic acquisitions, Canandaigua Brands (headquartered in Fairport) is the second largest wine producer in the US and the largest market for Seneca County grapes. Another expanding market for local grapes is farm wineries. The number of farm wineries in our region has grown significantly over the past 10 years and with them the need for small quantities of numerous varieties. This increased demand represents a new niche for vineyards in our area to supplement level or declining sales to Canandaigua.

Grape pie sales to tourists, along with private labeled jellies, jams, and vinegars sold through local outlets, are part of the value-added products from local vineyards.

Allied to the farm winery and value-added product sales is an increased tourism business. Wine tasting along the Cayuga and Seneca Wine Trails has helped expand tourism traffic to approximately 100,000 visitors each year.

Strawberries, raspberries and other small fruit are very seasonal and highly perishable in nature. They are primarily sold through the 16 farm markets and U-pick farms in Seneca County, though some are sold wholesale to Tops, Wegmans and others. Of all berries grown, strawberries and raspberries are produced in the largest number. There are 22 farms producing berries in Seneca County, growing 26 acres of fruit with an additional 12 acres under irrigation. Farmers produce 29,725 pounds of strawberries and 5,967 pounds of raspberries.

Tree fruit produced in Seneca County includes apples, cherries, peaches, pears, and plums. Apples are by far the largest tree fruit commodity with 18 producers utilizing 162 acres of land. Cherries (tart and sweet) and peaches are the next largest commodity with 8 farms utilizing 21 acres. In total, the majority of these commodities (other than apples) are sold fresh to consumers as U-pick or through direct markets. About 50% of our apples are also sold fresh or as cider directly to consumers through U-pick, roadside stands or farmers' markets. The remainder are sold to processors located outside the County for juice and sauce.

## Areas of Concern in Fruit Production

### Seasonality of product

Tree fruit products produced in Seneca County are high quality and meet the majority of consumer demands. The difficulty produce receivers have in using the fruit is the lack of a year-round supply. In order for receivers to use this product they must find a winter source for the same produce. Our shorter growing season puts us at a competitive disadvantage with other areas in the country, since receivers like to “stick with a known source” and reduce problems that can occur in product availability, quality, and packaging. Seneca County producers have addressed this situation with apples by building “storages” that allow fruit to be harvested and stored for sale during the “off months.”

To improve our competitive advantage in apple sales, more local producers might implement controlled atmosphere and humidification storage technology that will further extend storage life. To accomplish this, much more research needs to be done to obtain an optimum environment. Also, construction, equipment costs, and utility costs will have to be adjusted to accommodate profitability in the initial stages of the operation.

### Lack of skilled labor

Customers are demanding more fresh fruit, so producers are raising fresh market crops. Because of the perishability of these fresh commodities, they must be picked by hand, creating a demand for more agricultural labor. US workers do not want these jobs primarily due to lower pay and the high degree of physical endurance required. As a result, producers may secure less-skilled, migrant labor that requires compliance with extensive federal regulations.

### Lack of markets

Seneca County producers compete for markets with producers from Wayne, Cayuga, Erie, Monroe, and Onondagua counties in New York, as well as producers from California, Florida, Texas, Georgia, and foreign countries. In order to be successful in these fresh produce markets, our producers must provide a consistent high quality product at a competitive price. Due to the high cost of production here, they may not be able to compete. Local, fresh market sales have been a good alternative for both small and tree fruit, however, these markets are not sufficient to support major growth in this area.

Fresh market fruit of many kinds is sold through 16 roadside stands and farm markets in Seneca County, as well as locations outside of the county. Wegmans and Tops stores in Geneva and other retail outlets sell local produce, while produce markets in Buffalo, Rochester and Syracuse also offer outlets for local fresh fruit.

Our producers need to establish or take better advantage of local farmers’ markets or contacts with roadside stands, or perhaps expand into new markets such as the New York State Thruway Farmers Markets.

### Neighbor Relations

Odors, pesticide use, and housing of migrant seasonal labor at harvest time are some neighbor relation issues to be addressed. To some extent neighbors close to these situations must learn to accept them as a price for the food they eat and the rural character of their community.

Seneca County producers, however, can help reduce neighbor complaints surrounding these issues by educating their neighbors. This education can extend not only to immediate neighbors but also to the community and their local officials. Enactment of Right to Farm laws on a town-by-town basis may be one way to provide this education and at the same time provide some protection against nuisance complaints.

Vegetable production in Seneca County is comprised of 28 farms, down from 35 in 1997. These 28 farms grow vegetables on 563 acres, down significantly from 1997. The combined sales of vegetables from these farms was over \$807,000.

Sweet corn, peas, green beans, cabbage and beets are sold to local processors. Curtis Burns, owned by ProFac Cooperative, processes these vegetables at plants in Shortsville, Stanley and other locations outside Seneca County. They market canned and frozen products as Blue Boy, Birdseye, Tops, Wegmans and other private labels. Seneca Foods (privately owned) markets under the Seneca Green Giant and Libby's brands as well as Wegmans, Tops and other retail and commercial private labels.

Cabbage is also sold for fresh market and cole slaw. These markets require producers, either individually or through grower shippers or brokers, to sell year-round. To accomplish this, producers harvest cabbage in October and November and market their product from environmentally controlled facilities during the winter months.

Winter squash is also produced and stored in a similar way to cabbage, however, the storage period is shorter and producers market directly to retail outlets.

Dry beans (light and dark red kidneys, pea, white, black and many other types) are sold to brokers in or out of the county and in Pennsylvania. Brokers sell 80% of the product to canners and the remainder for fresh consumption mainly in South America and the Caribbean countries.

Fresh vegetables of many kinds are sold through 16 roadside stands and farm markets in Seneca County, as well as locations outside of the county. Wegmans and Tops stores in Geneva and other retail outlets sell local produce, while Buffalo, Rochester and Syracuse produce markets also offer outlets for local fresh vegetables.

The vegetable industry has shrunk in Seneca County over the course of the last 8 years. New land and production techniques are utilized to produce vegetables (including peas, beans and sweet corn) using Integrated Pest Management techniques.

Expansion support for this industry has come from several commercial businesses in the county as well as the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station in Geneva.

## Areas of Concern in Fruit Production

### Seasonality of product

Vegetable products produced in Seneca County are high quality and meet the majority of consumer demands. The difficulty produce receivers have in using the vegetables is the lack of a year-round supply. In order for receivers to use this product they must find a winter source for the same produce. Our shorter growing season puts us at a competitive disadvantage with other areas in the country, since receivers like to “stick with a known source” and reduce problems that can occur in product availability, quality, and packaging.

Seneca County producers have addressed this situation by building storage facilities for onions, cabbage, potatoes and squash, allowing them to be harvested and stored for sale during the “off months.”

To improve our competitive advantage in vegetable sales, more local producers might implement controlled atmosphere and humidification storage technology that will further extend storage life even further. To accomplish this, much more research needs to be done to obtain an optimum environment. Also, construction, equipment costs, and utility costs will have to be adjusted to accommodate profitability in the initial stages of the operation.

### Lack of skilled labor

Customers are demanding more fresh vegetables, so producers are raising fresh market crops to meet the demand. Because of the perishability of these fresh commodities, they must be picked by hand, creating a demand for more agricultural labor. US workers do not want these jobs primarily due to lower pay and the high degree of physical endurance required. As a result, producers may secure less-skilled, migrant labor that requires compliance with extensive federal regulations.

### Lack of markets

Seneca County producers compete for markets with producers from Wayne, Cayuga, Erie, Monroe, and Onondagua counties in New York, as well as producers from California, Florida, Texas, Georgia, and foreign countries. In order to be successful in these fresh produce markets, our producers must provide a consistent high quality product at a competitive price.

Our producers need to establish or take better advantage of local farmers’ markets or contacts with roadside stands or perhaps expand into new markets such as the New York State Thruway Farmers Markets.

## Neighbor Relations

Dust, noise, odors and other unpleasant conditions are produced when vegetable crops are planted, raised and harvested. To some extent neighbors close to these situations must learn to accept them as a price for the food they eat and the rural character of their community.

Seneca County producers, however, can help reduce neighbor complaints surrounding these issues by educating their neighbors. This education can extend not only to immediate neighbors but also to the community and their elected and appointed leaders. Enactment of Right to Farm laws on a town-by-town basis may be one way to provide this education and at the same time provide some protection against nuisance complaints.

## Nursery and Greenhouse Overview-Seneca County

The nursery and greenhouse industry in Seneca County increased in farm numbers, total acreage, and total sales. This category covers a variety of farm products including vegetable and flower seed crops, bedding plants, foliage plants, vegetables for garden use, potted flowering plants, hanging baskets, cut flowers, bulbs, and christmas trees.

This area of agriculture is following a national trend of increased production and sales. In 2002 there were 22 nursery greenhouse farms in Seneca County, an decrease of 1 since 1997. Greenhouse space in 1997 covered 69,450 square feet, decreasing to 54,777 square feet in 2002. Nursery crops grown outside covered 174 acres in 1997, but decreased to 78 acres in 2002. There was a substantial increase in sales in the last ten years, from \$154,000 in 1987 to \$508,000 in 1997.

Fourteen farms produce floriculture crops such as bedding and garden plants, foliage, and potted plants. These crops are for the general consumer and not for commercial vegetable growers. Bedding and garden plants produced in greenhouses or under shade structures covered 75,260 square feet in 1997, and has decreased to 51,421 in 2002.

The nursery and greenhouse industry is a growth industry both nationally and in Seneca County. As consumers continue the trend of purchasing plants for home and backyard use, the industry will grow to meet these demands.

## Seneca County Soils, Water and Climate Overview

Seneca County is located in the Finger Lakes Region. It extends 35 miles north to south and 9 miles east to west. Seneca County has a land area of 330 square miles or 211,900 acres. The following inventory of soils is taken from Soil Survey for Seneca County developed by the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service.

There are eleven soil associations in Seneca County which are grouped according to the content of lime in the dominant soils or according to the nature of the material in which the dominant soils formed.

***Areas dominated by high-lime soils developed in glacial till*** occur on uplands in the northern part of the county and on slopes adjacent to Cayuga and Seneca Lakes. The soils range in slope from nearly level to steep and drumlins are a prominent topographic feature. The major soils formed in till derived mainly from the limestone and high-lime shale. These associations are farmed extensively. The Ontario-Ovid association is deep, well drained to poorly drained soil that has a loam to silty clay loam subsoil. This association is located only in the northern part of the county, mainly in the towns of Junius and Tyre, and extends along the west side of Montezuma Marsh (in the northeastern area of the county) to the vicinity of Seneca Falls. The soils of this association occur on drumlins and on the glacial lake plain that surrounds the drumlins. The soils in this association occupy 9 % of the county. The well-drained Ontario soils make up 50 % of the association; somewhat poorly drained Ovid soils make up 16 % and moderately to well-drained Cazenovia soils make up 10 %. The remaining 19 % of the association consists of scattered areas of Appleton, Collamer, Lakemont, Lima, Madalin, and Schoharie and muck soils.

The Honeoye-Lima association is another high-lime soil developed by glacial till. It is a deep, well-drained and moderately well drained soil that has a heavy silt to heavy loam subsoil. This association consists of long, relatively narrow strips of land along slopes adjacent to Seneca and Cayuga Lakes. These strips of high-lime soils are 1 to 2 miles wide, but widen to 3 miles near Interlaken. Along Cayuga Lake, these soils extend from the village of Fayette to Tompkins County, and along Seneca Lake they extend from near the north end of the lake to Schulyer County. This association occupies 21 % of the county.

***Areas dominated by high-lime soils developed in glacial lake sediments*** occur in the lake plain area in the northern part of the county in the vicinity of Waterloo and Seneca Falls. The soils generally are nearly level to gently sloping, although a few locations are moderately steep. The major soils formed in lacustrine clay and silt and are high in lime. The Schoharie-Odesa association can be described as a deep, well-drained to somewhat poorly-drained soil that has a silty clay loam to clay subsoil. This association consists of one large area of nearly level or gently sloping soils near Waterloo and Seneca Falls. It extends from the north end of Cayuga Lake south to a point 4 miles below Canoga. This association occupies 9 % of the county.

The Odesa-Lakemont association can be described as deep, somewhat poorly-drained and poorly-drained soils that have silty clay loam to silty clay subsoil. This association occurs

only in the north-central part of the county and includes parts of the towns of Junius, Tyre, Waterloo, and Seneca Falls. This association occupies 6 % of the county.

***Areas dominated by medium-lime soils developed in glacial till.*** These associations are located in the central and south-central parts of the county on the uplands between Cayuga and Seneca Lakes. The soils are nearly level to rolling and formed in till derived mainly from limy shale or from shale and sandstone that contain some limestone. The Conesus-Lansing association consists of deep, moderately well-drained and well-drained soils that have a heavy silt loam to heavy loam subsoil. This association consists of one area in the south-central part of the county. The soils are generally rolling and are gently to moderately sloping. This association occupies 8 % of the county.

The Darien-Angola association consists of deep and moderately deep, somewhat poorly-drained soils that have a silty clay loam and clay loam subsoil. This association consists of one large area in the center of the county. The area extends from Ovid on the south to within 2 miles of Waterloo on the north. This association occupies 22 % of the county.

***Areas dominated by medium-lime soils developed in glacial lake sediments*** are located on the lake plain in the northwestern and north-central parts of the county. The soils are nearly level to undulating to rolling. They evolved primarily from lacustrine silt and fine sand, but some of them formed in islands of shaly and clayey till. All of the soils contain some lime. The Dunkirk-Collamer association consists of one area south of the Canal, between the towns of Geneva and Waterloo. The soils of this association occupy 3 % of the county.

The Dunkirk-Cazenovia association is moderately deep, well-drained and moderately well-drained soils that have a silt loam to silty clay loam subsoil that overlies limestone. This association consists of one small area of silty, nearly level soils that is located about 3 miles south of Seneca Falls. This association occupies 2 % of the county.

Arkport-Claverack is an association described as deep, dominantly well-drained and moderately well-drained soils that are loamy fine sand and fine sandy loam throughout or that have a loamy fine sand subsoil over silty clay or clay. This association consists of one area in the northwest corner of the county along the Ontario County line. It extends from Wayne County in the north to Seneca Lake in the south and to Waterloo in the east. This association occupies 8 % of the county.

***Areas dominated by low-lime soils developed in glacial till*** are located on the higher upland areas in the southern part of the county along the Schulyer County line. These soils are nearly level to moderately steep and have uniform slopes. The Langford-Erie association is described as deep, moderately well-drained and somewhat poorly-drained soils that have a channery silt loam to channery loam fragipan. This association consists of one area along the Schulyer County line, which includes the highland between Seneca and Cayuga Lake. This association occurs in 8 % of the county.

***Areas dominated by soils developed in organic matter*** are located in the northeastern corner of the county at the northern end of Cayuga Lake. The major soils occur in the flat,

depressional areas of the Montezuma Marsh. Muck-peat-fresh water marsh associations are deep to shallow, very poorly drained organic soils. This association consists of one area in the Montezuma Marsh, and makes up 4% of the county.

### Water Supply

Rural areas of Seneca County depend on ground water to supply the needs of farms. Precipitation is the primary source of ground water, which comes from wells that are drilled or dug as well as natural springs. Seneca Falls and Waterloo, the two largest villages, use surface water from their municipal supplies, but industry in this area uses water from drilled wells. The area that was the Seneca Army Depot uses Seneca Lake as its water source. Seneca Lake, Cayuga Lake, the Seneca River and the Cayuga-Seneca Canal are additional sources of large amounts of water.

### Climate

Seneca County has a humid, continental type climate. The average monthly precipitation in Seneca County is comparatively uniform, with no well-defined wet or dry seasons. Average annual rainfall is 33 inches, with average snowfall of 60 inches. The average annual temperature is 47°F with the average January temperature being 14°-32°F and July 59°-81°F. There is an average of 160 frost-free days.

## Objectives and Goals for Enhancing Agriculture in Seneca County

Objective 1: Have the Seneca County Board of Supervisors endorse this plan as a statement of commitment to enhancing agriculture in Seneca County.

Objective 2: Enhancing agriculture in Seneca County will demand a cooperative community effort. The Agricultural Enhancement Board should provide the direction and teamwork necessary for implementing the goals of this plan. Any single activity or organization will not achieve the goals of the plan. A concerted effort by farmers, agribusiness, state and federal government agencies, environmental organizations and the public will be necessary. Key partners include: the Planning Department; the Economic Development Office; Cornell Cooperative Extension; Farm Service Agency; Soil and Water Conservation District; the USDA/NRCS and Seneca County Farm Bureau.

#### Goals for Enhancing Agriculture

Goal 1: Enhance the Economic Climate for Agriculture in Seneca County.

Goal 2: Increase the Awareness of the Economic and Social Importance of Agriculture in Seneca County.

**Goal 3: Provide an Ongoing Community Education Program for the Non-Farm Public.**

Goal 4: Acknowledge and Enhance the Environmental Stewardship of Agricultural Businesses.

Goal 5: Preserve Prime Farmland.

### **Goal 1: Enhance the Economic Climate for Agriculture in Seneca County**

#### **Recommendations:**

## **Include Agriculture in Economic Development Initiatives.**

- ◆ Agriculture is fundamental to our national well-being and security. For this reason, agriculture has traditionally been treated as a separate entity in public policy and business initiatives. Although this separate treatment is beneficial in some ways, it has also contributed to an exclusion of agriculture in local and state economic development initiatives. Very often, the regulations guiding these initiatives do not include agriculture. Agricultural businesses would be better served if (for the purposes of economic development) Cornell Cooperative Extension and the County Economic Development and Planning worked cooperatively to provide services to agriculture. The services provided to other entrepreneurs (such as consultants and business plan developers) and access to small business assistance programs should be extended to agricultural entrepreneurs.
- ◆ Cooperate with the Industrial Development Agency and Economic Development programs to include agriculture. The Seneca County IDA and Economic Development Program are interested in providing services to agricultural businesses. Presently agriculture is not strongly represented in IDA programs because of the nature of agricultural businesses and the policies which guide the IDA. Policy revisions at the state level need to be done to include agriculture in IDA programs. This would allow the local IDA to pursue and implement agricultural projects. Agricultural representatives such as the Agricultural Enhancement Board and Farm Bureau are the logical advocates for agriculture in changing IDA policy and pursuing economic development funding.

## **Promote Locally Grown Products**

- ◆ Help farmers to develop marketing plans. Farmers may be able to increase their direct market sales by researching available markets. Markets not accessed for direct sales may include farmers' markets, restaurants, supermarkets, and farm stands. In addition, market research may reveal alternative processing markets that are presently untapped.
- ◆ Expand farmers' markets in areas that are presently not served. Conduct market research to ensure locations can support a viable market. Farmer commitment to the market is essential to the success of farmers' markets. Quality products that are predictably available enable the market to build a strong customer base. Promote and advertise farm markets.
- ◆ Fully implement the New York "Buy Local" campaign for Seneca County. The logo and supporting materials are available for farmers in the region to identify their products as locally grown. Wider distribution and use of the logo will enable consumers to identify and choose their neighbors' products. The mission of the Buy Local campaign is to create awareness, support, and understanding of the importance of local farmers to our area by local consumers and businesses. It also seeks to increase the consumption of locally grown farm products to the benefit of everyone in the region.

- ◆ Increase sales of locally grown products through supermarkets. Several supermarkets in Seneca and Ontario Counties purchase directly from local growers. These stores feature the farm in the store display and promote the freshness and high quality of local products. Provide a list of local growers and products to the supermarket produce buyers to facilitate local purchases. Continue to supply consistent, high quality products while increasing the variety of products purchased.
- ◆ Develop promotion materials that list agricultural products and services that include their locations. This would include farm stands, pick-your-own operations, farm nurseries, farm tours, bed and breakfast inns and other farm products or services. Distribute through such venues as the Chamber of Commerce, the County Tourism Office, Cornell Cooperative Extension, the Soil and Water Conservation Districts and public libraries.

### **Facilitate Small Scale Food Processing**

- ◆ Small scale food processing has enjoyed resurgence recently. The trend in food processing in general has been fewer and larger processors. At the same time opportunities for small processors producing regional and specialty products has increased. The New York State Food Venture Center is located at the Agriculture Experiment Station in Geneva. The Food Venture Center assists entrepreneurs in starting new food manufacturing businesses, thereby contributing to the economic sustainability of local communities. It seeks to provide opportunities for small processors despite the trend towards larger processors. The Center is an excellent resource that Seneca County has in its own backyard.

### **Develop Agricultural Workforce**

- ◆ Continue and expand educational programs for farm owners and employees. Cornell Cooperative Extension of Seneca County provides continuing education programs designed specifically for agricultural businesses. Finger Lakes Community College has collaborated with Cornell Cooperative Extension to provide farm business and employee training programs. In addition, businesses that provide services to agriculture (such as Agway and Farm Credit) provide education and training. While these programs are often done in partnership with Cornell Cooperative Extension, more widespread participation in these programs should be fostered.
- ◆ Seek out non-traditional farm sources for information and training. Specific agricultural training is best provided by those within the industry that have expertise in the field. Sources for information and training that service other businesses can be an excellent resource for non-agriculture specific information. These resources include the Small Business Retention Program, Department of Labor, SCORE, and the Worker/Owner Resource Center.

- ◆ Support agricultural education in the school system. The current School-to-Work initiatives in the public school system emphasize career exploration and development. Agriculture can be included in these programs to introduce young people to the career opportunities available. Schools that implement internships should consider opportunities for students in agriculture.

## **Facilitate Farm Transfer**

- ◆ Transferring a farm business from one generation to the next is a considerable challenge. This is true whether the farm is being transferred within or outside the family. Fewer young people are choosing agriculture as a career and those that do need considerable equity to be able to purchase a farm even within the family. Retiring farmers express frustration in finding someone to take over the farm, and are also concerned that they will not be able to access the equity in the business to fund their retirement. Even in areas where there are non-agricultural options for a farm, farmers very often are reluctant to sell the farm for non-farm use. Farmlink is a state-funded program coordinated by Cornell University, which helps connect farmers who are planning for retirement with farmers hoping to obtain farm ownership. The program emphasizes building a farm transfer plan that will provide the entering farmer an opportunity to work into farming during a period of joint operation before the exiting farmer retires. Farmlink collects information about those interested in entering and exiting farming and serves as the conduit for the information to be transferred between parties.
- ◆ Promote Seneca County agriculture both within and outside the county. The video promoting agriculture discussed under Goal 3 could be used for this purpose. An up-to-date list of farmland availability could be used to attract prospective farmers who might relocate to Seneca County. Provide this list to real estate agents, Chamber of Commerce, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Soil and Water Conservation District, Seneca County Department of Economic Development, and Farm Bureau.
- ◆ Provide estate-planning assistance for farm owners of all ages. This service is essential for a successful transfer. Cornell Cooperative Extension provides regional farm transfer programs, and FarmNet, a state-funded program coordinated by Cornell University, also offers estate-planning information.
- ◆ Provide assistance in facilitating multiple owner arrangements. A small but increasing trend in agriculture is for a farm to have multiple owners who are not all family members. Educational and technical assistance in setting up these arrangements would facilitate the success of the transfer.

## **Encourage Agritourism**

- ◆ Tourism is a growing industry in Seneca County. The rural landscape and scenic countryside are part of the allure of Seneca County. Agritourism offers farmers the

opportunity to supplement their farm income. Cornell Cooperative Extension has provided regional workshops in the past and should continue to do so in the future. Local workshops as follow-ups to regional meetings could address issues relevant to Seneca County agritourism. These programs should include information on business planning, transitioning a business, working with the public, liability issues and presentation skills.

Seneca County already has some excellent agritourism operations. The wineries and wine trail program in Seneca County is a model agritourism program. The County Office of Tourism is committed to including agritourism in its efforts. Interactions between agritourism businesses and the Office of Tourism should include further development of a countywide identity for agritourism.

## **Goal 2: Increase the Awareness of the Economic and Social Importance of Agriculture in Seneca County.**

### **Recommendations:**

## **Provide Training for Town, Planning and Zoning Boards and Community Leaders**

- ◆ Local town, planning and zoning boards have a tremendous impact on agriculture enhancement and farmland preservation. As fewer members of these boards come from agricultural backgrounds, it becomes more important for training in farmland preservation techniques. The County Planning Office, Agricultural Enhancement Board and Cooperative Extension should develop and present a workshop on land use planning for agricultural enhancement and land use preservation. Cornell Cooperative Extension and the American Farmland Trust have prepared resource materials for this kind of workshop. These materials are called the Farmland Protection Action Kit. This curriculum is comprised of four training modules, contained on two videos. The four modules are: Agriculture and the Environment, Farmer/Neighbor Relations, Notice of Intent and Farmland Protection Planning. The videos can be integrated into a workshop or can be used by themselves.
- ◆ Encourage towns that do not have local town planning boards to form one. Include the agriculture community in making local town decisions. Training in farmland preservation techniques should be provided to new board members.
- ◆ Extend the educational component of the Farmland Protection Action Kit to other community groups. The videos combined with a live presentation should be presented to such groups as the chamber of commerce, Rotary, Lions Club, any service organization, church groups, and schools. These presentations would be most effective when made by farmers such as those who serve on the Agriculture Enhancement Board, Farm Bureau Board of Directors and the Cornell Cooperative Extension Agriculture Program Committee. Agriculture professionals such as Cooperative Extension Educators, Farm Bureau Staff and the County Planning staff will probably be the more realistic choice for these presentations.
- ◆ Provide a legislative and community leader tour of agriculture in the county. A bus tour of essential agricultural businesses would allow community leaders to see first hand the role agriculture plays in Seneca County. As part of this program, conservation and environmental activities should be highlighted. Farmers and agency staff could provide presentations on the bus as well as at each stop. The interaction between the farm business owners and the community leaders would be an important component of this program.

### **Include the Agriculture Community in Developing Local Land Use Plans**

- ◆ Encourage towns to develop local land use plans. These plans should designate which areas the community wants to remain in agriculture, identify lands best suited for development and the careful and efficient use of public infrastructure investments.

## **Goal 3: Provide an Ongoing Community Education Program for the Non-Farm Public**

### **Form an Agriculture Promotion Council**

- ◆ An agriculture promotion council for Seneca County should be formed to provide leadership in agriculture promotion. This group should be comprised of a cross section of farmers representing every kind of agriculture in the county. Agribusiness and agriservice people would also make a valuable contribution to the group. The agricultural promotion council should organize and coordinate agricultural promotion activities. One of its charges would be to insure that agriculture is represented at the numerous community festivals and events that are already available. The council would build a strong, continuous relationship with the local media to facilitate coverage of farm businesses and agriservice. Initial leadership for this group could come from agriculture agencies such as the Seneca County Farm Bureau or Cornell Cooperative Extension. The long-term goal should be that the agriculture promotion council would be an independent group operating under the leadership of farmers.

### **Develop a Seneca County Agriculture Web Site**

- ◆ Develop an educational and promotional web site for Seneca County Agriculture. The primary purpose of this web site would be to provide pertinent information about agriculture for the non-farm community. Secondly, the web site could serve as a marketing tool for attracting new farmers to the area, thereby enhancing the economic stability of agriculture in the county. A web site can be set up through the Seneca County Farm Bureau for a minimal fee. The initial cost to set up the web page is \$100.00 with a \$10.00 monthly maintenance fee. Other web site services should also be explored and it would be valuable for this site to be linked to the other community web pages in the county.

### **Produce a Video about Seneca County Agriculture**

- ◆ Develop a video geared for the non-farm public about agriculture in Seneca County. The video should address the economic and social contribution agriculture makes to the community. This video should be produced for the adult non-farm public, as there are already several well-done children's videos about agriculture. In addition, the Farmland Protection Action Kit provides videos for government officials. The Finger Lakes Interpretive Center, and especially community festivals and events would be excellent venues for viewing by a large segment of the non-farm public. The approximate cost of a professionally done video is \$1000.00 a minute. Leadership for this endeavor could come from an Agricultural Promotion Council or any of the agriculture agencies serving the county.

### **Encourage Participation in “Agriculture in the Classroom.”**

- ◆ Encourage participation in the “Agriculture in the Classroom” program in the elementary schools. Cornell University coordinates this integrative curriculum that is designed to be used in conjunction with the state-mandated curriculum, and is especially effective when presented with the assistance of a local farmer.

### **Strengthen Continued Support of “Fun on the Farm” Event.**

- ◆ “Fun on the Farm” is an excellent on-going agricultural education and promotion program for which the Seneca County Farm Bureau has historically provided leadership. On-farm activities for the non-farm public foster understanding and support for agriculture, and deserve continued and increased support among the agricultural community. The formation of an Agriculture Promotion Council is one strategy to facilitate spreading the workload of organizing this event.

## **Goal 4: Acknowledge and Enhance the Environmental Stewardship of Agricultural Businesses**

### **Recommendations:**

#### **Acknowledge the Role Agriculture Plays in Environmental Stewardship**

- ◆ Involve all stakeholders in the process of protecting the environment. Bring farmers and environmental protection organizations together to discuss and plan methods to protect the environment. While agriculture provides the rural character and aesthetic landscape that county residents and tourists value, it can often be a source of water quality degradation if not managed responsibly. For this reason it is important to acknowledge and enhance the environmental role agriculture plays.

#### **Implement the Agricultural Environmental Management Program on Seneca County Farms.**

- ◆ The Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) program is a statewide environmental stewardship program that is coordinated by the NYS Soil and Water Conservation Districts and Cornell Cooperative Extension. The AEM program coordinates partnerships among existing agricultural and environmental conservation programs to reduce agricultural water pollution. AEM helps farmers to:
  - ✓ Assess environmental concerns associated with their farming operations
  - ✓ Implement environmental practices to address identified concerns
  - ✓ Understand and comply with state and federal environmental regulations
  - ✓ Promote to continuously improve soil conservation measures
  - ✓ Reduce fertilizer and pesticide use
  - ✓ Protect drinking water from disease carrying organisms, pesticides, and excess nutrients
  - ✓ Improve relations between neighbors and communities
  - ✓ Enhance wildlife habitats
  - ✓ Maintain and improve water quality within and outside their watershed

Funding to support farmer participation should be made available from state and local sources.

## **Goal 5: Preserve Prime Agricultural Land**

### **Recommendations**

#### **Effectively Implement and Maintain the Agricultural District Program**

- ◆ Maintain the effective implementation of the Agricultural District Program. Provide educational materials and training to town officials so they have a clear understanding of the benefits of the Agricultural District Program. Cornell Cooperative Extension, Farm Bureau and the County Planning Department are excellent resources for the Agriculture District Program. The Seneca County Agricultural Enhancement Board can provide leadership in working with town officials to effectively implement Agriculture Districts.

#### **Initiate Voluntary Farmland Preservation Programs**

- ◆ Prime farmland in areas of increased development is at much risk of being removed from agricultural use. Most farmers prefer to keep their land in farming but in areas of increased development, it is difficult to transfer farm ownership because of the rising value of land. A voluntary Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) Program or a Lease of Development Rights Program can preserve farmland and its ensuing benefits for the whole community. PDR – which is voluntary and must be agreed upon by the landowner and the participating financial institution(s) - preserves open spaces and agricultural land by compensating landowners, who agree to keep their land in agriculture. The land is then restricted to agricultural use even if the land changes ownership. The restrictions take the form of conservation easements attached to land in perpetuity. Lease of Development Rights works much the same way only the rights are transferred for a set period.
- ◆ As farmland protection has been gaining attention, both the state and federal governments have established financial assistance programs for localities to purchase agricultural conservation easements. Towns developing PDR programs should give consideration to the following factors when deciding priorities for preservation:
  - ✓ Prime and unique agricultural soils
  - ✓ Participation in an agricultural district
  - ✓ Presence of other natural and/or cultural resources important to the community
  - ✓ Proximity to other farmland
  - ✓ Proximity to land uses that minimize the potential for neighbor conflicts
  - ✓ Land that provides buffering for parks or critical open spaces
  - ✓ Importance in maintaining a viewshed
  - ✓ Maintaining a base of farmer-owned farmland

## Projects Timeline

### **Summer 2000**

The Agriculture Enhancement Board should sponsor a planning meeting to review the Agriculture Enhancement Plan and begin a strategy for its implementation. This meeting should include farmers, farm agencies, community groups, environmental groups and county government representatives. The projects should be assigned to the agencies, groups, or individuals who will best be able to both implement and commit themselves to completing them.

### **Goal 1-Enhance the Economic Climate for Agriculture in Seneca County**

#### **Recommendation-Include Agriculture in Economic Development Initiatives**

##### Year 1 Action Steps

- ◆ Representatives of the farm community meet with the County Planning Office and IDA to discuss a proactive approach to including agriculture in the state program policies.
- ◆ Set up a meeting in Albany with the state-level personnel who influence these policies.
- ◆ Hold a joint meeting with Cornell Cooperative Extension, Economic Development and farmers to discuss the best method for providing Agricultural Economic Development Programs.

##### Year 2 Action Steps

- ◆ Write the revisions necessary to the state level IDA and Economic Development policies necessary to include Agricultural Economic Development
- ◆ Implement a comprehensive Agricultural Economic Development Program in Seneca County

#### **Recommendation-Promote Locally Grown Products**

##### Year 1 Action Steps

- ◆ Provide a series of workshops on direct marketing and developing marketing plans. Encourage participation in the Direct Marketing Association
- ◆ Do market research on the effectiveness of established farmers markets. Determine what farm products would be most saleable at the farmers markets
- ◆ Fully implement the New York “Buy Local” Campaign
- ◆ Contact local supermarket buyers and survey what their customers’ needs are to better facilitate the purchase of locally grown products
- ◆ Pursue funding for the development of agricultural promotional materials. Possible funding sources include The New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets and the Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program

### Year 2 Action Steps

- ◆ Publish results of farmers market survey determining what products would be most saleable
- ◆ Provide local supermarkets with information needed in order to facilitate purchasing local products
- ◆ Develop local agricultural promotion materials

## **Recommendation-Facilitate Small Scale Food Processing**

### Year 1 Action Steps

- ◆ Meet with the faculty at the Food Venture Center to outline the process of developing a small-scale food business
- ◆ Plan a regional small-scale food processing conference followed by local workshops

### Year 2 Action Steps

- ◆ Establish an ongoing discussion group of new and established small-scale processors that would meet on a regular basis to exchange ideas and resolve industry-related challenges
- ◆ Provide a revolving loan fund to facilitate small-scale start-ups

## Develop the Agricultural Workforce

### Year 1 Action Steps

- ◆ Continue and expand the workforce educational programs currently offered by Cornell Cooperative Extension and Finger Lakes Community College
- ◆ Determine who the School to Work Coordinators are in the school systems
- ◆ Determine the extent to which the “Agriculture in the Classroom” program is being utilized

### Year 2 Action Steps

- ◆ Provide an educational program for School to Work Coordinators to introduce students to career opportunities in agriculture. A farm tour of local operations coupled with presentations would be effective.
- ◆ Develop a list of farms that would be willing to host students on their farm as part of a career exploration curriculum
- ◆ Recruit volunteers to bring the “Agriculture in the Classroom” program into the schools where it is not being used

### Year 3 Action Steps

- ◆ Cooperate with the School-to-Work Coordinators by including agriculture in the career exploration curriculum. This includes job shadowing, career days, and class adoption programs.

## Recommendation-Facilitate Farm Transfer

### Year 1 Action Steps

- ◆ Promote the “FarmLink” program throughout Seneca County through farm publications and organizations.
- ◆ Provide estate-planning workshops through Cornell Cooperative Extension and Farm Bureau.

## **Recommendation-Encourage Agritourism**

### Year 1 Action Steps

- ◆ Promote and take full advantage of the agritourism programs offered by the Seneca County Tourism Office.
- ◆ Determine who will provide follow-up services to new agritourism enterprises.

## Projects Timeline

Goal 2-Increase the Awareness of the Economic and Social Importance of Agriculture in Seneca County

### **Recommendation-Provide Training for Town, Planning and Zoning Boards and Community Leaders**

#### Year 1 Action Steps

- ◆ Survey local town boards to determine where and when they would be able to attend a training on agriculture related issues
- ◆ Form a speaker's bureau among farmers and agriculture agencies to speak to community groups about agriculture's role in Seneca County.
- ◆ Plan an agricultural tour for legislators and community leaders. The planning group should include a cross section of agricultural agencies.

#### Year 2 Action Steps.

- ◆ Implement an educational program for town boards at a convenient time and location. Use the Farmland Protection Action Kit for materials.
- ◆ Provide an agricultural tour for legislators and community leaders.
- ◆ Promote and provide presentations (1 per month) on agriculture to community groups.

## **Projects Timeline**

### **Goal 3-Provide an Ongoing Community Education Program for the Non-Farm Public**

#### **Recommendation-Form an Agriculture Promotion Council**

##### Year 1 Action Steps

- ◆ Invite a cross section of the agriculture community to attend an organizational meeting of the Seneca County Agriculture Promotion Council. Develop an organizational structure and leadership team. Provide leadership for agriculture promotion and non-farm educational programs. Set the priorities for the non-farm agricultural education program, including the development of a video, web site and a “Day on the Farm” program.
- ◆ Contact Seneca County Farm Bureau and begin the process of setting up a web site.
- ◆ Investigate and secure funding for developing a video.
- ◆ Form a planning committee to organize the “Day on the Farm” program.

##### Year 2 Action Steps

- ◆ Web site should be in place, provide updated information as needed.
- ◆ Begin filming of agriculture video.
- ◆ Hold an agricultural event for the non-farm public (e.g. "Day on the Farm")

##### Year 3 Action Steps

- ◆ Distribute and show completed agriculture video to community groups, tourism venues and festivals/community events.

## **Projects Timeline**

### **Goal 4- Acknowledge and Enhance the Environmental Stewardship of Agricultural Businesses**

#### **Recommendation-Acknowledge the Role Agriculture Plays in Environmental Stewardship**

##### Year 1 Action Steps

- ◆ Through the Agricultural Enhancement Board, provide a forum/meeting where environmental protection organizations and agriculture can interact in a positive, proactive manner. This forum should meet on a regular basis to facilitate communication and build relationships.

#### **Recommendation-Implement Agricultural Environmental Management Program on Seneca County Farms**

##### Year 1 Action Steps

- ◆ Cornell Cooperative Extension and the Soil and Water Conservation District will continue to provide training and leadership in implementing the Agricultural Environmental Management Program on Seneca County farms.

## **Projects Timeline**

### **Goal 5-Preserve Prime Agricultural Land**

#### **Recommendation-Effectively Implement and Maintain the Agricultural Districts Program**

##### Year 1 Action Steps

- ◆ The Seneca County Agricultural Enhancement Board should continue to provide leadership for the Agriculture Districts program. Determine what educational needs the local towns need and work with the County Planning Department, Cornell Cooperative Extension and Seneca County Farm Bureau to deliver these programs.

#### **Recommendation-Initiate Voluntary Farmland Protection Programs**

##### Year 1 Action Steps

- ◆ The Agricultural Enhancement Board serves as the resource for information for towns, farmers and community groups who are interested in Farmland Preservation Programs. The Agricultural Enhancement Board should develop a library of resources available by request. If there is an interest in a farmland preservation program, the Agricultural Enhancement Board would provide information and referrals.

## **Agricultural Resources**

### **Financial Resources**

Community Bank, NA  
2 West Main Street  
Waterloo, NY 13165  
315 470-5441

Farm Credit of Western NY  
1450 Rte 14  
Phelps, NY 14532-9542

Fleet Bank of New York  
100 Clinton Square, Suite 107  
Syracuse, NY 13202  
315 426-4204

National Bank of Geneva  
2 Seneca Street  
Geneva, NY 14456  
315 789-2300

### **Educational Resources**

Seneca County Cornell Cooperative Extension  
308 Main Street Shop Centre  
P.O. Box 748  
Waterloo, NY 13165  
315 539-9251

#### **Cornell Cooperative Extension Regional Teams and Specialist**

Livestock  
Martha Wright  
CCE of Ontario County  
480 North Main Street  
Canandaigua, NY 14424  
716 394-3977

Dairy  
Beth Claypoole  
CCE of Genesee County  
420 East Main Street  
Batavia, NY 14020  
716 343-3040

Dairy  
Roberta Crill  
CCE of Seneca County  
P.O. Box 748  
Waterloo, NY 13165  
315 539-9252

Farm Management  
John Hanchar  
CCE of Livingston County  
158 South Main Street  
Mt. Morris, NY 14510-1595  
716 658-3250

Field Crops  
Nate Herendeen  
CCE of Niagara County  
4487 Lake Avenue  
Lockport, NY 14094  
716 433-2651

Field Crops  
Michael Stanyard  
1581 Route 88N  
Newark, NY 14513  
315 331-8415

Finger Lakes Grape Program  
Timothy Martinson  
110 Court Street  
Penn Yan, NY 14527  
315 536-5123

Vegetables  
Carol MacNeil  
CCE of Ontario County  
480 North Main Street  
Canandaigua, NY 14424  
716 394-3230

Lake Ontario Fruit Program  
Stephen Hoying  
CCE of Wayne County  
1581 Route 88 North  
Newark, NY 14513  
315 331-8415

New York State Integrated Pest Management Program  
New York State Agricultural Experiment Station  
Geneva, NY 14456  
315 787-2353

Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program  
NE Regional Office-Fred Magdoff  
University of Vermont, Hills Building  
Burlington, VT 05405-0082  
802 656-0471

NY Farm Net  
(Consulting and counseling services for farmers and farm families.)  
1-800-547-Farm

New York Agriculture in the Classroom  
408 Kennedy Hall  
Cornell University  
Ithaca, NY 14853

Northeast Regional Agricultural Engineering Service  
NRAES  
Cooperative Extension  
152 Riley-Robb Hall  
Ithaca, NY 14853-5701

**General Educational Resources:**

The Community and Rural Development Institute  
(Provides education and information addressing community and rural development issues.)  
Cornell University  
48 Warren Hall  
Ithaca, NY 14853  
607 255-9510

Finger Lakes Community College  
(Provides educational programs for farmers through a  
partnership with Cornell Cooperative Extension.)  
4355 Lake Shore Drive  
Canandaigua, NY 14424  
716 394-3500

## **Organizations**

American Crop Protection Association  
1156 Fifteenth Street  
NW Suite 400  
Washington D.C., 20005  
202 296-1585

American Sheep Industry Association  
6911 South Yosemite, Suite 200  
Englewood, CO 80112-1414  
303 771-3500

Empire Sheep Producers-local  
Jim Dunham  
315 691-6667

Farm Bureau  
(Seneca County is part of a regional program)  
12N Park Street  
Seneca Falls, NY 13148  
315 568-2658

New York State Agri-Business Association  
P.O. Box 33  
East Aurora, NY 13060  
315 689-1034

New York State Agriculture Society  
P.O. Box 14923  
Albany, NY 12212-4923  
518 457-1954

New York Beef Cattlemen's Association  
Rd1 Box 162  
Addison, NY 14801

New York Beef Council (Carol Gillis)  
P.O. Box 250

Westmoreland, NY 13490-0250

New York State Corn Growers Association  
Ann Peck  
DeWindt Road  
Newark, NY 14513  
315 331-7791

New York State Direct Marketing Association  
2859 NYS Rt. 26  
Glen Aubrey, NY 13777  
607 862-3985

New York Horse Council  
665 Woodside Ave  
River Vale, N.J. 07675

New York Pasture Association  
P.O. Box 5104  
Cortland, NY 13045

New York State Pork Producers  
12 N. Park Street  
Seneca Falls NY 13148  
315 568-2750

National Pork Producers  
1776 N.W. 114<sup>th</sup> Street  
Clive, IA 50325  
515 223-2600

New York State Vegetable Growers Association  
P.O. Box 4256  
Ithaca, NY 14852-4256  
607 539-7648

Dairy One  
730 Warren Road  
Ithaca, NY 14850  
607 257-1272

Northeast Dairy Producers Association  
Department of Animal Science  
Cornell University  
272 Morrison Hall  
Ithaca, NY 14853-4801

Northeast Organic Farming Association of New York  
P.O. Box 21  
Port Crane, NY 13833  
607 648-5557

Pastured Poultry Association  
South Central New York RC&D  
Norwich, New York  
607 334-4715

Wine and Grape Foundation  
350 Elm Street  
Penn Yan, NY 14527  
315 536-7442

## **Agricultural Services**

United Ag. Services  
(Accounting /payroll services for farm and agricultural businesses.)  
12 N. Park Street  
Seneca Falls NY 13148  
315 568-2750

New York State AgriDevelopment Corporation  
Michael Chamberlain  
2001 State Tower Bldg.  
Syracuse NY 13202  
315 477-0184

New York Farmlink  
(Helps farmers who are planning for retirement connect with those wanting to work into farm ownership.)  
1-800-547-3276

AgRESOLVE  
(Provides a timely and fair alternative to conflict resolution.)  
1-800-547-3276

New York State Venture Program  
(Assists entrepreneurs in starting new food manufacturing businesses.)  
New York State Agricultural Experiment Station  
Geneva, NY 14456  
315 787-2273

## **Local and Regional Agencies**

Seneca County Chamber of Commerce  
P.O. Box 491  
Rt. 5&20  
Seneca Falls, NY 13148  
315 568-8687

Seneca County Tourism  
116 Falls Street  
Seneca Falls, NY 13148  
315 568-8687

Seneca County Department of Economic  
Development and Planning  
1 DiPronio Drive  
Waterloo, NY 13165-1681  
315 539-5655

Seneca County Industrial Development Agency  
1 DiPronio Drive  
Waterloo, NY 13165  
315 539-5655

Seneca County Soil and Water Conservation District  
Natural Resources Conservation Service  
12 N. Park Street  
Seneca Falls, NY  
315 568-4366

Worker Ownership Resource Center  
1 Franklin Square  
Geneva, NY 14456  
315 789-5091

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Jack, Kevin, Nelson Bills and Richard Biosvert. 1996. Policy Issues in Rural Land Use Issues. Vol. 2, No. 2. Department of Agricultural, Resource and Managerial Economics. Cornell University.

Knoblauch, Putnam and Stanton. Census of Agriculture Highlights. 1997. New York State. Department of Agricultural, Resource and Managerial Economics. Cornell University.

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Soil Survey Seneca County New York. 1972. USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service.