

**COLUMBIA COUNTY
AGRICULTURAL & FARMLAND
PROTECTION PLAN**

**DISCUSSION DRAFT
NOVEMBER 2005**

**PREPARED BY:
COLUMBIA COUNTY
AGRICULTURAL & FARMLAND
PROTECTION BOARD
2004-2005**

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 COUNTY AGRICULTURAL & FARMLAND PROTECTION PLANS

The New York State Agricultural Protection Act (Article 25-AAA) was adopted in 1992 and authorizes counties, through their Agricultural & Farmland Protection Boards (AFPB), to develop a plan which identifies local initiatives for agricultural and farmland protection. This state law builds upon the New York State Agricultural Districts Act (Article 25-AA), adopted in 1970, which authorized the creation of agricultural districts through local farmer and landowner initiative, county government approval, and NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets (NYS DAM) certification.

1.2 PURPOSE OF AN AGRICULTURAL & FARMLAND PROTECTION PLAN

In the statement of legislative findings and intent, the Agricultural Protection Act identified the value of linking the State's constitutional directive to protect agricultural lands with local initiatives in agricultural protection policy. Viewed from the local government level, the purpose of a county agricultural & farmland protection plan (AFP plan) is to organize, develop, and formally adopt goals and strategies to support the continuation of agriculture in the county. County AFP plans are not mandatory, but are encouraged through technical and state financial support (requires county match) through the NYS DAM. The Agricultural Protection Act recognizes that county level government can play a key role in furthering state goals by identifying appropriate programs which work best for each individual county. While there are certain minimum requirements for the content of an AFP plan, the NYS DAM views counties as "being in the driver's seat" for the identification of local agricultural and farmland protection efforts.

1.3 STRUCTURE OF THE COLUMBIA COUNTY AFP PLAN

In the preparation of this plan, the Columbia County (CC) AFPB decided that a successful plan should meet the following criteria:

A) CONCISE AND USER FRIENDLY

The CC AFPB wanted to produce a brief document that would be easily maintained and updated. Therefore, a premium was placed on brevity. A concise presentation also is user friendly, making it more likely that the document will be consulted. Making the plan available via electronic means (website) also provides an efficient and increasingly popular method for accessing information and provides a means to link to other agriculturally-related organizations through their websites. This should ensure that the plan will be updated regularly.

B) FLEXIBLE

In recognition of the reality of unpredictable and unforeseen change in all aspects of society (e.g. demographics, social trends, economic cycles, technology), the CC AFPB wanted the plan to convey broad principles to guide implementation rather than micro-manage down to minute and narrow issues. This approach permits flexibility in responding to changing circumstances.

C) REALISTIC

The breadth of resources devoted to some aspect of agriculture at the county level is extensive. They range from federal (US Department of Agriculture) and state (NYS DAM and Cornell Cooperative Extension) to

local government agencies (soil & water conservation districts, county planning and economic development agencies) and increasingly include many non-governmental organizations (e.g. land trusts, Farm Bureaus, community supported agriculture programs, and regional and national organizations with agricultural programs).

The CC AFPB is an advisory body constituted at the county level. The CC AFPB believes that a county based plan should be limited in scope to the authorities and responsibilities given to counties under NYS law, rather than attempt to coordinate all of the above agencies and organizations and their activities on behalf of agricultural and farmland protection. The CC AFPB further believes that the role of a county AFPB is one of advice and cooperation, consistent with NYS Ag & Markets Law.

D) FREE-MARKET ORIENTED

The CC AFPB recognizes the virtues of the free market system in producing wealth, goods, and services. Government does not produce our nation's food and fiber, the private sector does. In the long run, the only consistent and rational assurance of the continuation of agriculture is its profitability. The CC AFPB further recognizes that the actions of government can have both positive and negative impacts on agricultural businesses. It is very important for government, at all levels, to identify how their actions impact farm profitability.

1.4 DEVELOPMENT OF A COLUMBIA COUNTY AFP PLAN

Since 1992, the CC AFPB has met regularly to address its responsibilities, which include advice and recommendations pursuant to the New York State Ag District Program (e.g. agr. district review and notices of intent) and agricultural and farmland protection activities (e.g. review and endorsement of agricultural conservation easement/purchase of development rights projects, continuing education on matters impacting the health of agriculture in the county, and discussion of the value and best approach to county agricultural and farmland protection planning). Over this time period, the CC AFPB has heard presentations by many of the local stakeholders and individual board members have attended conferences and reviewed studies and reports. In 1996, NYS DAM started to offer limited funding for the preparation of county AFP plans. By 2001, many counties had initiated or completed their planning processes and at this time the CC AFPB was encouraged by some local stakeholders to do so as well. In responding to these recommendations, the CC AFPB examined 23 county AFP plans in 2003 and concluded that many valuable initiatives were already in place or completed in Columbia County, even in the absence of a county AFP plan. In 2004, the CC AFPB began the preparation of an AFP plan, relying on the expertise represented by the board members themselves, with support from the Columbia County Planning Department and Cornell Cooperative Extension of Columbia County.

1.5 MISSION

The mission of the CC AFPB is to assist in the retention, growth, and promotion of Columbia County's agricultural industry and the natural resources on which it is based.

As an advisory body, the CC AFPB is committed to working with farmers; local, state, and federal government agencies; agribusinesses; non-governmental organizations; educational institutions; and community residents to achieve this Plan's purposes, mission, and goals.

This Plan is intended to provide a framework for actions that will both guide and galvanize local initiatives to enhance the economic stability, vitality, and growth of Columbia County's agricultural and natural resource-based businesses.

CHAPTER 2

COUNTY AGRICULTURAL GOALS

2.1 FOUNDATIONS FOR COUNTY AGRICULTURAL GOALS

The foundations of Columbia County government's agricultural goals rest on the following findings:

A) VALUE OF AGRICULTURE

A strong and vibrant agricultural sector in Columbia County contributes to: meeting basic human needs for employment, goods, and services; offering locally produced agricultural goods and services; and maintaining a privately owned, working landscape which delivers environmental and aesthetic amenities.

B) COUNTY GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR AGRICULTURE

It has been and should continue to be the policy of Columbia County government that agriculture is a welcome and beneficial land use and business enterprise with multiple benefits for society. This support for agriculture is documented in such programs as: support for Article 25AA agricultural districts (10 currently exist within the county); official county plans and budget; Columbia County Local Law No. 1 of 1993 (Right to Farm); and county government funding of local agricultural agencies (e.g. Columbia County Soil & Water Conservation District and Cornell Cooperative Extension of Columbia County.)

C) FACTORS CONTROLLING THE LOCATION FOR AGRICULTURE

The location of land to be used for agriculture in Columbia County has been and will continue to be determined by forces such as the free-market and government policies. Economic factors coupled with private property owner decisions will determine whether lands which government designates as allowable for agricultural uses will in fact be used for agriculture. Actions by government (laws, regulations, programs, and policies) should be carefully examined for their impact on agriculture.

D) PARTNERSHIP

The Columbia County government recognizes the efforts of other governmental agencies, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector to address agricultural issues and will emphasize partnerships and avoid duplication of efforts.

2.2 COUNTY AGRICULTURAL GOALS

The problems facing agriculture in the 21st century are economic problems, not land use problems. Saving land for agriculture, privately or by government fiat, does not guarantee that the land will be economically viable for agriculture. Therefore, the CC AFPB has always focused on economics as the key determinant for the continuation and future viability of agriculture.

Furthermore, Columbia County government is only one of numerous local, state, and federal government entities with responsibilities and missions on behalf of agriculture. There are also numerous non-governmental organizations with similar or related missions. The CC AFPB recognizes the mission and responsibility of these distinct government and non-governmental agencies and the work being done by them on behalf of agriculture. The CC AFPB further believes that Columbia County government is a partner with these organizations, not a coordinator, overseer, or director of their unique programs. Consequently, the

appropriate role of Columbia County government is to undertake only those activities, programs, and strategies on behalf of agriculture which are within the statutory powers of the County.

Based upon this view, the CC AFPB believes that the most effective approach for Columbia County government requires a focus on two fundamental goals; Economics and Education.

2.2.1 ECONOMIC

TO PROMOTE THE PROFITABILITY AND ECONOMIC VITALITY OF FARMS, AGRIBUSINESSES, AND NATURAL RESOURCE BASED BUSINESSES IN COLUMBIA COUNTY.

2.2.2 EDUCATION

TO PROMOTE A GREATER AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING OF ALL AGRICULTURAL ISSUES FOR FARM OWNERS/OPERATORS, NON-FARMERS OWNING PROPERTY SUITABLE FOR AGRICULTURAL USE, LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC WHO ARE NOT FARMERS.

CHAPTER 3 LAND OR AREAS TO BE PROTECTED

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In keeping with the principles found in 2.1(C), this Plan avoids any specific identification and delineation of land or areas to be protected. In recognition of the dynamics of farming, it is important to promote flexibility and to encourage the pursuit of agriculture anywhere it is appropriate. To define “appropriate” we take into account three fundamental dimensions:

A) GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS:

The presence of a wide variety of government regulations, in particular local government land use guidance, statutes, and regulations as to the use of land within the community, and

B) PHYSICAL CONDITIONS:

The physical characteristics of the land and prevailing climatic conditions, and

C) ECONOMIC FACTORS:

The complex interaction of farm location; entrepreneurial and management skills; demographics; markets; cost of land, labor, and capital; commodity produced; and government policies and regulations.

Together, these three dimensions determine the location of land or areas to be protected.

3.2 SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

While this Plan wishes to retain the greatest flexibility for the identification of land and areas to be protected, the location of prime farmland and farmland of statewide importance and land within Article 25AA agricultural districts can serve as a starting point. A general soils map of the county reveals that nearly every community in the county contains some prime farmland and/or farmland of statewide importance. As of the late 1970s, ten Article 25AA agricultural districts were created in the county and as of 2005, all ten continue in existence, although there have been minor boundary modifications to these districts over the last 30 years. Equally comprehensive is the extent of Article 25AA agricultural districts. As of 2005, such districts are located in 20 of the county’s 23 municipalities.

CHAPTER 4

FACTORS CONCERNING AREAS AND LANDS TO BE PROTECTED

4.1 VALUE TO THE AGRICULTURAL ECONOMY OF THE COUNTY

Physical land resources have always and will continue to play a crucial role in the support of a thriving agricultural economy. Even the development of new ways to produce food and fiber, such as hydroponics, aquaculture, and biotechnology, continue to require space (land) for their success. Therefore, an agricultural economy is not possible without agriculturally viable farmland. Historically, agriculturally viable farmland is a function of two primary factors: a) physical factors (the physical characteristics of the land and prevailing climatic conditions), and b) economic factors (the complex interaction of farm location, entrepreneurial and management skills, demographics, markets, cost of land, labor, and capital, commodity produced, and government policies and regulations). Both factors are important. Possession of the best prime farmland in the world is no guarantee of profitability without the right combination of management and economic factors. Conversely, it is possible to have a profitable farm operation on less than prime soils due to superior managerial inputs. Columbia County begins with an impressive variety of physical conditions which can be quantified (See Appendix). Less easily quantified are the economic factors listed above which will change with time.

4.2 OPEN SPACE VALUE

Privately owned and managed farmland provides a working landscape with unique and variable consequences, dependent on many factors. How these consequences are seen depends on the opinions and values of individuals and these viewpoints can change over time. Consequently, there is no one right answer for a community. The CC AFPB believes that the open space values and working landscapes derived from farming are important, but, nonetheless, secondary benefits. In other words, we support agriculture in the county because of its primary benefits. It is a welcome and beneficial land use and business enterprise, in and of itself, providing valuable goods and services to consumers and economic sustenance to the farm owner and farm employees.

4.3 CONSEQUENCES OF POSSIBLE CONVERSION

Land has been converted from one use to another from the very beginning of colonial settlement in this region, almost 400 years ago, and this trend and reality continues to the present. Agriculture in Columbia County has changed dramatically over that time in terms of commodities grown or raised, the extent of the land base devoted to agriculture, and the technology used in farming. Each land use change or conversion brings new consequences; some options for land use are closed while others are opened. Assessing the consequences of farmland conversion should involve examining not just the options foreclosed, but also the new opportunities which are made possible for individuals and the community impacted by those changes. Therefore, the CC AFPB acknowledges that there are consequences to farmland conversion, but this Board does not believe that an assessment of those consequences with incomplete information (e.g. a snapshot in time) is particularly useful. It is clear that the consequences of change in our communities are a function of the opinions and values of individuals.

4.4 LEVEL OF CONVERSION PRESSURE ON LANDS OR AREAS PROPOSED TO BE PROTECTED

Conversion pressure is not defined by the NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets, but certainly it is made up of a myriad of factors which culminate in a property owner's decision to change land use or sell farmland for non-farm use. Factors contributing to conversion pressure are also likely to vary from one area to another and from one owner to another. Consequently, it is difficult, if not impossible, to quantify a level of conversion pressure on farmland in an area the size of Columbia County. Identification of the factors which reduce the economic viability of farming and then determining what can and cannot be done to improve the economic viability of farming would be more valuable. Popular literature and academic studies have sought to identify these pressures, especially in the last ten years or so. In general, these pressures include those created by natural forces (e.g. weather and the land resource conditions), the farmer and his/her family (personal and family dynamics), the neighborhood and larger community (how farm-friendly), actions of government (laws, regulations, taxes), and business and market factors (agribusiness infrastructure and demographics). Ultimately, all these pressures are reduced to some form of economic impact which determines the fate of the farm. The CC AFPB believes that all of these pressures are at work to one degree or another in Columbia County.

CHAPTER 5 COUNTY AGRICULTURAL STRATEGIES

Within Columbia County government, the Economic and Education goals of the plan can be achieved via legislative, regulatory, budgetary, and policy & program approaches. The County Board of Supervisors will consider funding from general appropriations, dedicated funds, and grants to finance these strategies.

5.1 ECONOMIC STRATEGIES

5.1.1 THE GOAL:

To promote the profitability and economic vitality of farms, agribusinesses, and natural resource-based businesses in Columbia County.

5.1.2 LEGISLATIVE STRATEGIES:

Maintain the Agriculture Committee of the Board of Supervisors whose purpose is to:

- 1) examine the impacts of state and federal actions on agriculture,
- 2) recommend full Board of Supervisors action on behalf of agriculture,
- 3) monitor existing County government actions for their effectiveness on behalf of agriculture, and
- 4) develop recommendations for new County government initiatives on behalf of agriculture.

5.1.3 REGULATORY STRATEGIES:

Examine the impacts of proposed County government regulation on the agricultural industry before final Board of Supervisors action.

5.1.4 BUDGETARY STRATEGIES:

Appropriate funds for operation of both county government agencies (e.g. Real Property Tax Office, Planning, Tourism, etc.) and non-county government agencies (e.g. Cornell Cooperative Extension of Columbia County, Columbia County Soil & Water Conservation District, Columbia Economic Development Corporation, etc.) which work on behalf of agriculture.

Identify direct county government purchasing practices which support agriculture (e.g. purchase of local agricultural products for use in county government facilities such as Pine Haven Nursing Home, Office for Aging senior nutrition program, and county jail).

5.1.5 POLICY & PROGRAM STRATEGIES:

Support the NYS Agricultural Districts Program in Columbia County.

Provide local government officials with agricultural data and maps to assist them with local government comprehensive land use planning.

Encourage the active participation of county employees, who are statutory members of the Columbia County Agriculture & Farmland Protection Board, in this Board's work.

Encourage Columbia County farmers to participate in local government through elective and appointive office.

Investigate new county government sponsored programs to promote economically viable agriculture such as electricity aggregation to reduce energy cost for producers and/or programs to strengthen the agr-support service businesses (e.g. farm equipment, farm feed & fertilizer, veterinary, and farm financial services) currently located within the county.

5.2 EDUCATION STRATEGIES:

5.2.1 THE GOAL:

To promote a greater awareness and understanding of all agricultural issues for farm owners/operators, non-farmers owning property suitable for agricultural use, local government officials, and the general public who are not farmers.

5.2.2 LEGISLATIVE STRATEGIES:

Provide legislative recognition for the benefits and contributions of Columbia County agriculture such as proclamations, awards, or sponsoring of events.

Consider entering into formal and informal partnerships such as endorsements, sponsorships, etc. with other governmental and non-governmental agencies.

5.2.3 BUDGETARY STRATEGIES:

Develop and fund appropriate agricultural education programs which derive from the responsibilities of Columbia County government and avoid duplicating educational programs administered by other government or non-governmental agencies.

5.2.4 POLICY & PROGRAM STRATEGIES:

Provide technical assistance to local governments about the options available to be pro-agriculture at the local government level.

Continue county government-based agricultural education for county based agricultural programs (e.g. Agricultural Districts Program or county sponsored economic development programs).

Support the establishment of an agricultural heritage and education center to convey the past, present, and future of agriculture in Columbia County and the Hudson Valley region.

CHAPTER 6 OTHER LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS AND THEIR IMPACT ON THE COUNTY PLAN

The CC AFPB recognizes the home rule authority and tradition of New York State which grants land use planning and regulatory powers to local governments (towns, cities, and villages). Therefore, the Columbia County government should respect the rights of the 18 towns, four villages, and one city located within Columbia County to enact (or not to enact) municipal planning and land use programs. The CC AFPB understands that the key to the future of agriculture in our communities is determined in large part by a combination of the economics of the free market and local government land use regulation. Consequently this plan avoids the designation of land which should be used agriculturally. Therefore, the CC AFPB does not intend that this AFP plan reach conclusions about the merits of local government decision-making which is a part of a community wide process with access to information on the consequences of those local land use choices.

Traditionally, local government comprehensive planning in Columbia County has identified agriculture as a beneficial land use and, generally, the preservation of rural character is an important goal in comprehensive plans and land use regulations. Local government comprehensive planning initiatives since the mid-1990s have shown a growing interest in preservation and support of agriculture. For example, an increased public awareness of and desire for environmental values and open space preservation has generally translated into broader support of the continuation of agriculture at the local government level. These broad policy themes are viewed as pro-agriculture and fully consistent with the intent of this plan.

As described in Chapter 5, this plan envisions that the County Government will play a cooperative and supportive role toward local government comprehensive planning by providing technical assistance so that local government officials will make informed decisions about matters impacting agriculture in their communities. A key part of this outreach will be to help local government officials understand their responsibilities on behalf of agriculture pursuant to state laws (e.g. Ag District Law, Town, Village, and General City Law). The County Government further believes that public participation contributes to the success of public decision-making and strongly supports outreach to the agricultural community in each municipality.

County government entities with agricultural elements include the programs of the Agriculture & Farmland Protection Board, the Planning Department, the Tourism Department, and the Columbia-Hudson Partnership (economic development). These agencies recognize the importance of agriculture for the County and are working toward a sustainable agriculture through programs such as the Ag Districts Program, agri-tourism, and economic development initiatives to both farmers and agribusinesses.

With a goal toward more informed decision-making, new initiatives, whether proposed at the local government level or the county government level, will be measured against the goals and objectives of this plan to promote a consistent and supportive environment for agriculture.

**AFP PLAN
PROPOSED ATTACHMENTS & LINKS
11/05**

ATTACHMENTS

County Agriculture Policy (Columbia County: 1982-2000)
Columbia County Local Law No. 1 of 1993 (Right-To-Farm)
Duties of CC AFPB (from Ag & Markets Law)
Benefits of an Ag District (from DAM brochure)
Map of Prime farmland soils and soils of statewide importance
Map of CC's 10 Ag Districts

**LINKS FOR AFPB PLAN:
(as of November 2006)**

New York Farm Bureau was formed to Serve, Strengthen, Promote, and Protect Agriculture and the rural economy. A grassroots, non-profit agricultural non-partisan lobbying and educational organization formed by farmers for farmers. www.nyfb.org

Bambi Baehrel
518-634-7852
bbaehrel@nyfb.org

Community Agriculture of Columbia County is an educational nonprofit dedicated to the development of a more localized food system. We work in all areas of food system development, providing education and consultation, and encouraging and initiating practical projects to support production, processing, distribution, sales, and marketing of local food. Our objective is to strengthen our rural community, and to work toward a healthy land-based economy in our county. The Columbia County Real Food Network is one of our initiatives.

www.realfoodnetwork.org

Marcie Gardner
P.O. Box 76
Chatham, NY 12037
518-392-3494
realfoodnetwork@taconic.net

The **Columbia County Planning Department** maintains three distinct agricultural program responsibilities. On behalf of the Columbia County Board of Supervisors, the Department administers many aspects of the Article 25AA Agricultural Districts Program, including ag district reviews, preparation of ag district maps, and providing technical assistance and education on the program. The Director is a statutory member of the County's Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board (AFPB) and provides information, recommendations, and staff support services to further the work of the Board. Finally, technical assistance and education focused on agriculture is provided regularly as part of the Department's collaboration with local governmental officials.

Roland Vosburgh
401 State St.
Hudson, NY 12534
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vosburgh@govt.co.columbia.ny.us

The **Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)** provides leadership in a partnership effort to help people conserve, maintain, and improve our natural resources and environment.

www.ny.nrcs.usda.gov (New York State)

www.nrcs.usda.gov (National Site)

District Conservationist

1024 State Rte. 66

Ghent, NY 12075

518-828-4386 ext 3

The **Columbia Land Conservancy (CLC)** is dedicated to protecting farmland and is strongly committed to the region's agricultural economy. CLC accepts conservation easements on working farmlands, drafts and administers state farmland protection program grants on behalf of farmers and municipalities, sponsors agricultural awareness and educational tours, assists with estate planning seminars and workshops, sponsors events that promote the county's agriculture, and publishes the Farm and Forest Landowner Bulletin, which outlines conservation, management, and tax incentive programs available to rural landowners in the county.

www.clctrust.org

Peter Paden

Executive Director

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Chatham, NY 12037

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The purpose of the **Farm Service Agency (FSA)** is to aid farmers and ranchers as it works to stabilize farm income through our efforts to conserve resources, provide credit and relieve farmers and ranch operations from the effects of natural disasters.

www.fsa.usda.gov

1024 State Rte. 66

Ghent, NY 12075

518-828-4386 ext 2

First Pioneer Farm Credit's mission is to be the leader in agricultural financial services and credit. This will be accomplished through the delivery of high value products and services as defined by our customers. We are an organization of highly qualified teams committed to the success of our Northeast agricultural and natural resource industries. Our motto is "Your first choice for financial solutions." We can provide loans and almost every financial service needed by farmers and farm related businesses, other than checking and savings accounts or credit cards.

www.firstpioneer.com

Paul C. Herrington

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Claverack, NY 12513

paul.herrington@firstpioneer.com

The goal of **Chatham Keep Farming** is to maintain a sustainable agricultural community in Chatham, New York. This means that we are making a long-term commitment to being a farm community.

www.chathamkeepfarming.org

Mary Gail Biebel

Coordinator

MGBiebel@chathamkeepfarming.org

The **Scenic Hudson Land Trust** works to ensure that a critical mass of viable farmland is protected within agricultural communities in the Hudson River corridor. To that end, Scenic Hudson has protected over 3,000 acres of working farmland in Columbia County by paying farmland owners to permanently conserve their land. Our work to date has focused principally on farms in the Town of Stuyvesant, but we also have protected farms in Stockport, Greenport, Livingston, and Clermont.

www.scenichudson.org

Cari Watkins-Bates

Farmland Protection Project Manager

Scenic Hudson Land Trust Inc.

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845-473-4440

cwatkins@scenichudson.org

American Farmland Trust (AFT) is a private, nonprofit farmland conservation organization founded in 1980 to stop the loss of productive farmland and promote farming practices that lead to a healthy environment. AFT's action-oriented programs include public education, technical assistance and policy development and advocacy at the local, state, and federal levels. AFT's Northeast office serves New York and New England.

www.farmland.org

Liz Brock

6 Franklin Square, Suite E

Saratoga Springs, NY 12860

518-581-0078

jcosgrove@farmland.org

The **Columbia County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD)** provides technical assistance and education on water, soil, and related natural resources to municipalities, landowners, and residents with the aim of facilitating conservation and proper land use decision-making. The District works cooperatively with local agricultural operations to promote a common understanding of conservation and environmental stewardship. Most often, we utilize New York State's Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) program as the vehicle to gain a mutual understanding of the farming operation and its business objectives. When feasible, we assist landowners in acquiring state and federal funding to implement business objective and facilities than enhance environmental quality and promote the business' economic viability.

www.ccsxcd.org

Laura Sager, Executive Director

1024 State Rte. 66

Ghent, NY 12075

518-828-4386 ext 3

laura-sager@ny.nacdnet.org

The **Hudson Valley Agricultural Partnership's** (HVAP) mission is to initiate, support, and promote efforts to protect farmland and strengthen agriculture for the benefit of the people of the Hudson Valley. Agriculture, a vital part of the heritage of the Hudson River Valley, will thrive in harmony with the natural environment. It will be recognized for its significant contributions to the region's economy and quality of life. Its innovative approaches and solutions will be well known locally, nationally, and even internationally. This vision can only be achieved through the cooperative efforts of farmers, local leaders, all levels of government, business, organizations, and a well-informed supportive public.

www.hvap.net

Michael Turton
Coordinator
% Scenic Hudson
One Civic Center Plaza, Suite 200
Poughkeepsie, NY 12601
845-473-4440

The **Cornell Cooperative Extension** educational system enables people to improve their lives and communities through partnerships that put experience and research knowledge to work. Helping people put knowledge to work and helping build strong and vibrant New York Communities. In Columbia County, Cornell Cooperative Extension employs staff with program expertise in the major program areas of Production Agriculture and Horticulture, 4-H Youth Development, and Family and Consumer Sciences. With the help of nearly 500 volunteers, educational programs, workshops, newsletters, and activities are developed and delivered to the citizens of Columbia County as individuals, groups, clubs, organizations, and communities.

www.cce.cornell.edu/columbia/

Stephen Hadcock
479 Route 66
Hudson, NY 12534
518-828-3346
columbia@cornell.edu

The **Columbia County Chamber of Commerce** is the leading voice of business in Columbia County, providing advocacy, promotional and benefit solutions for its members. The Chamber of Commerce sets the standard for excellence in member service, community collaboration, business growth and achieving a high quality of life in Columbia County.

www.columbiachamber-ny.com

David Colby, President
507 Warren Street
Hudson, NY 12534
518-828-4417
dcolby@columbiachamber-ny.com

The mission of the **Hudson Mohawk Resource Conservation and Development Council** is to promote regional, economic, and natural resource conservation development.

www.nyrcd.org/hudsonmohawk

Elizabeth Marks, Coordinator
USDA NRCS
1024 State Route 66
Ghent, NY 12075
Phone: (518) 828-4385 x105
elizabeth.marks@ny.usda.gov

The **Columbia Hudson Partnership** (CHP), formed in 1995, is the lead economic development agency for Columbia County and the City of Hudson in New York State. It is an alliance of County and City economic development partners focused on strengthening the area's tax base through new business investment and job creation. Located in the heart of the Tech Valley Region, which includes 17 counties in New York's northeast corridor, Columbia County is about a half-hour drive from Albany and a two-hour drive from New York City. CHP acts as a facilitator and single point of contact for businesses seeking to expand their current operations in the County or to locate new facilities in the area. Its mission is to assist businesses by identifying appropriate sites that meet their requirements and by providing easy access to financial and technical assistance made available through the State of New York and CHP's County and City economic development partners as well as private sector financial institutions.

www.chpartnership.com

James Galvin

Executive Director

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New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets

10B Airline Drive

Albany, NY 12235

518-457-3136

www.agmkt.state.ny.us