

Summary of Plan Goals

GOAL 1: Maintain the County's valuable farmland in active agricultural use

GOAL 2: Increase the financial success and stability of farm operations

GOAL 3: Integrate agricultural economic development in County economic strategies

GOAL 4: Increase public recognition of the value of agriculture and farmland, and develop a better understanding of farm issues by non-farmers

GOAL 5: Attract new entrepreneurs and younger households to farming ventures and assist this next generation of farmers



Introduction

Based on the goals and strategies outlined in the plan, this Action Plan is designed to answer the question, "**How do we get there?**"

In this summary, the individual action items have been organized into manageable timeframes spread over a ten year implementation schedule.

For each action item, the action plan also identifies who will take the lead on implementation, partner agencies and organizations, and possible funding sources.

The table on the following page serves as a key to the abbreviations used for the various agencies and organizations referenced in the action plan.

***Vision without action
is a daydream.***

***Action without vision
is a nightmare.***

- Japanese Proverb

Action/Implementation Plan

KEY TO AGENCY ABBREVIATIONS

CADE	Center for Agricultural Development and Entrepreneurship
CMK	Catskill Mountainkeeper
CCESC	Cornell Cooperative Extension Sullivan County
IDA	County of Sullivan Industrial Development Agency
DHC	Delaware Highlands Conservancy
FCE	Farm Credit East
GW	Glynwood
HVADC	Hudson Valley Agribusiness Development Corporation
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service
SASD	Sullivan Alliance for Sustainable Development
AFPB	Sullivan County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board
AAB	Sullivan County Agricultural Advisory Board
CWD	Sullivan County Center for Workforce Development
SCCC	Sullivan County Community College
BOCES	Sullivan County BOCES
CC	Sullivan County Chamber of Commerce
SCDPH	Sullivan County Department of Public Health
SCDPEM	Sullivan County Division of Planning and Environmental Management
SCFB	Sullivan County Farm Bureau
SCFN	Sullivan County Farm Network
SCL	Sullivan County Legislature
SCFMA	Sullivan County Farmers' Market Association
SCPED	Sullivan County Partnership for Economic Development
SCSWC	Sullivan County Soil and Water Conservation District
SCVA	Sullivan County Visitor's Association
SR	Sullivan Renaissance
REAP	Sullivan-Wawarsing Rural Economic Area Partnership (REAP) Zone
FSA	USDA Farm Service Agency
WAC	Watershed Agricultural Council (Pure Catskills)



Action/Implementation Plan



Priority Initiative #1 Building Capacity, Organization, and Collaboration

Many of the problems, or lack of solution to known problems in the County, stem from not having the capacity, communication, and collaboration in place to support implementation. Agencies and organizations involved with agriculture, both within the County and the region, need to work together, efficiently use the many existing talents of staff and volunteers, find ways to eliminate duplication and fill gaps in programs, and build relationships. This initiative is a foundation for success in implementation.

**IMMEDIATE-TERM
YEAR 1: 2015/2016**

ACTION ITEMS		LEAD AGENCY/ PARTNERS	STATUS
1.1	Establish and create the Agricultural BR&E Program Coordinator position. See Priority Initiative 2 actions.	Legislature AFPB, Ag Task Force, CCE, Planning	X
1.2	Continue to support and fund HVADC, CCESC, and Sullivan County SWCD so that they can continue to provide or expand programming that supports farms.	Legislature HVADC, CCE, SWCD	In progress
1.3	Continue to promote CCESC as a major resource / one-stop shop for agricultural information in Sullivan County.	CCE Legislature, all partners listed in Key	In progress
1.4	Disseminate and coordinate information resources. Create and maintain an email/distribution list of all agencies and organizations involved in agricultural-related programs. Use a website, twitter, or blogs to share information among these entities. This should include consolidating farmer and agri-business mailing lists and email lists from agencies and organizations within the County to create a single comprehensive list that can be used.	CCE Legislature, all partners listed in key	In progress
1.5	Regularly convene a meeting of implementation partners to discuss these priority project needs and assign lead agencies to carry out specific actions.	AFPB CCE, Planning, SCVA, FarmNetwork, IDA, Legislature	In progress

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IMMEDIATE TERM YEAR 1: 2015/2016

	ACTION ITEMS	LEAD AGENCY/ PARTNERS	STATUS
1.6	Create an Agriculture Task Force to spearhead implementation and guide efforts.	AFPB CCE, Planning, Legislature	X
1.7	Schedule quarterly multi-county meetings between Planning staff, HVADC, CCE, and others as needed to facilitate more coordination between the counties in the region	Planning CCE, HVADC, Regional Planning Departments	In progress
1.8	Build staffing capacity in order to assist farmers and agribusinesses with production and technical assistance.	Legislature AFPB, Planning, CCE	
1.9	Create an executive summary and brochure of the plan	Planning CCE, AFPB	X

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Priority Initiative #2: Agricultural Business Retention and Expansion Program

Business Retention and expansion is one of the core components of economic development programs. The purpose of a BR&E program is to communicate with local businesses in order to understand, anticipate, and ultimately address their needs, challenges, and opportunities. The agricultural business retention and expansion program will be tied to, and will in fact be critical factor in the success of, many activities and projects related to agricultural economic development.

IMMEDIATE-TERM YEAR 1: 2015/2016

	ACTION ITEMS	LEAD AGENCY/ PARTNERS	STATUS
2.9	Collaborate regularly with agency partners to provide referrals, follow-up, etc.	CCE/Planning Agency Partners	In progress
2.1	Develop marketing tools, including a website with links to programs and resources for farmers (see below).	CCE Planning, Pure Catskills, SCVA, USDA, CADE,	
2.4	Develop an initial database of farms in Sullivan County	CCE Planning, Farm Bureau	In progress
2.5	Develop a business visitation program:	CCE Planning, AFPB	In progress

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SHORT-TERM

YEARS 2 & 3: 2016 - 2017

ACTION ITEMS		LEAD AGENCY/ PARTNERS	STATUS
2.2	Develop the Agricultural Business Retention and Expansion Program. Hire staff.	CCE/Planning AFPB, Legislature	In Progress
2.7	Provide farmers with general business support and assistance	CCE Planning, IDA, SC Partnership, SC Chamber, HVADC, CADE	In Progress
2.8	Work with the Center for Workforce Development to assist farmers with farm worker recruitment and connect them to people looking for agricultural employment.	CWD Planning, CCE, CADE, Glynwood	
2.11	Simplify existing agri-business loan fund programs. Revise application forms and program descriptions so that they are easier to understand and more "farmer-friendly."	Planning IDA, SC Partnership, HVADC, USDA, CCE	In progress
2.13	Work with agency partners to develop communication tools.	CCE/Planning Agency Partners	
2.14	Establish a website as a portal to programs, resources, and support for farmers in Sullivan County, preferably with a simple, easy to remember URL.	CCE Planning	In progress

MID-TERM

YEARS 4 - 7: 2018 - 2021

ACTION ITEMS		LEAD AGENCY/ PARTNERS	STATUS
2.12	Develop Farm Infrastructure Funding Programs. The program could also including the funding of shared farm equipment.	Planning SWCD, CCE, IDA, Partnership	

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Priority Initiative #3: Agritourism Enhancement

This program will entail moving agritourism to the forefront. It will include new opportunities for both farmers and visitor's, as well as leveraging existing efforts such as Pure Catskill, Made in Sullivan County Catskills, tourism marketing and promotion, mapping and wayfinding, lodging and special events. There is a need to develop new agritourism products, experiences, and events;leverage the resources of and coordinate with existing organizations involved in agriculture and tourism; and make the County more "tourism friendly". This would provide additional opportunities for farmers to diversify and increase their incomes, while bringing valuable external dollars into the County.

IMMEDIATE-TERM YEAR 1: 2015/2016

	ACTION ITEMS	LEAD AGENCY/ PARTNERS	STATUS
3.1	Create an Agritourism Task Force	SCVA CCE, Planning, Farm Network,	
3.4	Updates the Fresh from the Farm agricultural trail map online	SCVA CCE, Planning, Farm Network	

SHORT-TERM YEARS 2 & 3: 2016/2017

	ACTION ITEMS	LEAD AGENCY/ PARTNERS	STATUS
3.3	Work with CCE and other partners to provide training (and assessment) on developing an agritourism enterprise.	CCE SCVA, Pure Catskills, Farm Network, Farm Credit East	
3.2	Increase the participation of Sullivan County farms in Pure Catskills and/or Hudson Valley Bounty.	Pure Catskills CCE, HVADC	
3.5	Expand marketing of farms, farmers' markets, farmstands, distilleries and breweries, etc., through facebook, websites,	SCVA CCE, Planning, HVADC	

Action/Implementation Plan



Priority #4: New/Young Farmer Program

New farmers face barriers in four major areas including access to training, education and technical assistance, access to land, access to capital and credit and access to markets. New farmers need programs and services that enable them to acquire the information and resources they need to succeed. There is a need for an expanded effort to recruit new farmers to Sullivan County. This program represents a concerted effort to "sell" Sullivan County as a good place to farm, targeted to young farmers and the next generation of farmers.

IMMEDIATE-TERM YEARS 1: 2015/2016

	ACTION ITEMS	LEAD AGENCY/ PARTNERS	STATUS
4.7	Promote existing Sullivan County agribusiness loan programs and work to help new and expanding farmers understand and participate in these programs.	Planning CCE, IDA, Partnership, HVADC, Chamber, CMK	In progress
4.3	Adapt the Orange County New Farmer Manual for use in Sullivan County.	CCE Planning, SWCD, IDA, Partnership, Chamber, USDA,	
4.4	Create fact sheets with information gleaned from this plan, and resources from Cornell and other research that outlines market opportunities that may be viable for new farmers.	CCE Planning	
4.8	Increase programmatic support for Cornell Cooperative Extension educational programs in 4-H to build interest among youth in agriculture.	Legislature CCE, Planning	

Action/Implementation Plan

SHORT-TERM

YEARS 2 & 3: 2016/2017

ACTION ITEMS	LEAD AGENCY/ PARTNERS	STATUS
4.1	Provide technical training in farming to take advantage of emerging markets.	CCE Planning, HVADC, CADE, Glynwood, BOCES
4.6	Provide incentives, and advertise existing funding opportunities for farm start-up operations.	Legislature Planning, IDA, Partnership, USDA, CMK
4.12	Work with the real property and tax departments of the County to identify and remove farm properties from the Tax Foreclosure list. Tie this program to a requirement that the interested farmer go through a beginner farmer training program.	Planning Legislature, CCE, Glynwood, HVADC
4.18	Utilize NYFarmlink.com, Catskill Farmlink, and Hudson Valley Farm Link, an existing established site to post farms and farmland for sale.	CCE Planning, WAC, American Farmland Trust, Glynwood
4.9	Convene a meeting of school district officials to discuss mechanisms to get schools involved in agriculture.	CCE Planning, Sullivan Renaissance, BOCES, SCDPH, SCCC, CMK

Action/Implementation Plan



IMMEDIATE-TERM
YEAR 1: 2015/2016

Priority Initiative #5: Value-Added and Diversification Initiative

This program has two parts. The first is to take agricultural initiatives already underway and make them successful. This part is oriented to good organization, planning, coordination with farmers, getting the right operators, and marketing. The second part is oriented to providing farms with training, business planning, and assistance in identifying and understanding market opportunities, and helping farmers take advantage of funding that can be used for value-added processing, diversification and expansion. This initiative will work in conjunction with the Agricultural Business Retention and Expansion Program and the New/Young Farmer Program.

ACTION ITEMS		LEAD AGENCY/ PARTNERS	STATUS
5.7	Continue to develop and operate the new CCE Entrepreneurial & Teaching (EaT) Kitchen.	CCE Sullivan Renaissance, BOCES	In progress
5.2	Work with Sullivan County dairy farmers and establish niche dairy and value-added dairy products to support the dairy industry in the County.	CCE Planning, HVADC, IDA, CADE	In progress
5.3	Promote the red meat processing facility in Liberty to livestock farms in Sullivan County and other adjacent counties.	CCE IDA, Planning, AFPB, HVADC	
5.9	Tap into expertise available at Cornell University, SUNY Sullivan and other regional colleges and universities to help farmers diversify their operations and develop new products and services.	CCE/SUNY Sullivan BOCES	
5.11	Continue to work with and develop the high tunnel program at CCE, and develop a funding mechanism for farmers to purchase high tunnels after completing training.	CCE Sullivan Renaissance, Planning, IDA, Partnership, BOCES, CMK, NRCS	In progress
3.2	Support diversification or value added production/expansion through Sullivan County's Agr-Business Revolving Loan Fund.	Planning CCE, IDA, Partnership, CMK	

Action/Implementation Plan

SHORT-TERM

YEARS 2 & 3: 2016/2017

	ACTION ITEMS	LEAD AGENCY/ PARTNERS	STATUS
5.4	Determine the potential demand for other facilities or services to piggy-back on the red meat processing facility.	HVADC Planning, IDA, CCE	
5.10	Develop and publicize a catalog of potential niche/specialty crops that can be grown in Sullivan County. Create demonstration plots to showcase and allow sampling or use of niche/specialty crops.	CCE HVADC, Cornell	
5.1	Facilitate the development of specialty farm operations and products.	CCE HVADC	

MID-TERM

YEARS 4 - 7: 2018 - 2021

	ACTION ITEMS	LEAD AGENCY/ PARTNERS	STATUS
5.5	Coordinate efforts to expand processing facilities that serve County farmers. Work with regional partners to develop a mobile poultry processing unit to address this need. Coordinate evaluation and planning of food processing facilities with at least Orange and Ulster County.	CCE/Planning HVADC, IDA	
5.6	Work with livestock producers and cooperatives like the Adirondack Grazers Cooperative (http://adkgrazers.com) in other counties to market and sell meat from the processing facility.	CCE HVADC, Planning	
5.8	Through the Agricultural Business Retention and Expansion Program and other tools, identify niche, value-added, and diversification needs. Match training or technical assistance programs for farmers to these growth opportunities.	CCE Planning, HVADC, CADE, Glynwood	

Action/Implementation Plan



Priority Initiative #6: Buy Local Initiative

This initiative is aimed at improving the local sales of and demand for fresh, local foods. Project components include farm-to-table, farm-to-institution, and farm to business programs, as well as local marketing/public relations and a Sullivan Fresh initiative to highlight businesses that use or sell local produce and products. Although direct sales of agricultural products in Sullivan County increased dramatically, the amount of revenue should be significantly higher. Sale of farm products to institutions should also be strengthened. There is also a need to better educate consumers in Sullivan County about the benefits of eating fresh, local foods.

IMMEDIATE-TERM YEAR 1: 2015/2016

	ACTION ITEMS	LEAD AGENCY/ PARTNERS	STATUS
6.1	Develop a Sullivan Fresh initiative. This program reaches out to local businesses and a) works to match their needs with local products, and b) provides a "Sullivan Fresh" logo or tag line that they can use to advertise the fact that local agricultural products are sold or used.	Planning SCVA, CCE, Pure Catskills, Chamber	
6.7	As part of the Sullivan Fresh Initiative. Create a Sullivan County Buy Local initiative, message, and tag line for promotion.	Planning SCVA, CCE, Pure Catskills, Chamber	
6.8	Develop a Pride of Sullivan or Sullivan Fresh marketing/media plan to advertise these farms and farm products to the general public. Develop a campaign kit that farmers receive when they participate. These could include posters, stickers, or table tents. *MARKETING TOOL	Planning SCVA, CCE, Pure Catskills, Chamber	
6.9	Develop marketing brochures and rack cards promoting specific agricultural areas.	CCE SCVA, Planning, Pure Catskills, Chamber	In progress

Action/Implementation Plan

SHORT-TERM YEARS 2 & 3: 2015/2016

ACTION ITEMS	LEAD AGENCY/ PARTNERS	STATUS
6.2	Concentrate on expanding farmer participation in the Pride of New York and Pure Catskills branding campaigns, and continue to distribute the Guide to Pure Catskills Products throughout Sullivan County.	Pure Catskills CCE, Planning, SCVA, Chamber
6.4	Develop a local food procurement policy for Sullivan County agencies and institutions, possibly with a 10% or 20% local sourcing requirement.	Legislature Planning, CCE, BOCES, SCCC, SCDPH,
6.5	Request that the County of Sullivan IDA encourage businesses receiving IDA assistance to commit to local purchasing agricultural commodities and/or in some way supporting local agriculture.	IDA CCE, Planning
6.6	Continue existing consumer education efforts and farmers' markets to help the public understand the importance of agriculture. Incorporate cooking demonstrations and other activities as appropriate to strengthen the connection with buying locally.	CCE SCFMA, Area Farmers Markets, SCDPH, Chamber, Planning, CMK

MID -TERM YEARS 4–7: 2018–2021

ACTION ITEMS	LEAD AGENCY/ PARTNERS	STATUS
6.6	Continue and expand efforts to create a Farm-to-School Program in Sullivan County.	CCE Sullivan Renaissance, BOCES, SCDPH, Planning, CMK,
6.11	Develop educational materials in English and Spanish that explain the benefits of buying locally-grown and raised farm products and the positive effects on the local economy.	CCE Sullivan Renaissance, SCDPH, Planning,
6.12	Consider establishing a Sullivan Fresh or Pride of Sullivan Discount Card program that would provide some sort of discount or savings as an incentive for consumers to buy local farm products.	Planning Chamber, CCE, SCVA, Pure Catskills

Action/Implementation Plan



Farmland Preservation Strategies

While Sullivan County is not under intense development pressure, farmland loss still occurs due to both conversion to non-farm uses, as well as abandonment farmland. Although the best way to preserve farmland is to have economically successful farmers, the complexity of issues facing farmers today makes it imperative that farmlands remain available and cost effective to farmers, especially young and new farmers. In Sullivan County, land costs may be more of an issue than the lack of lands to farm. There is a great need for affordable and accessible land. There are many methods to address protecting farmland. Some strategies are direct land preservation techniques to promoting farm-friendly regulations and training for local officials.

SHORT-TERM YEAR 2 & 3: 2016/2017

	ACTION ITEMS	LEAD AGENCY/ PARTNERS	STATUS
7.4	Provide training for local officials: ⇒ Hold presentations for town officials to inform them of this plan and the tools it provides. Use the executive summary as a handout. ⇒ Provide training to planning boards and ZBAs about farming and evaluating project impacts on farming. ⇒ Provide information to towns about appointing an agricultural member to their planning board and encourage them to do so. ⇒ Provide a project review checklist for planning boards to use in evaluating projects that may impact farms or farmland. ⇒ Develop training and educational materials for assessors and for landowners to help them understand farm assessment practices and tax bills.	Planning CCE, HVADC	
7.5	Provide for succession and transition planning so that farms remain active during transitions and transfer to a new generation.	CCE Planning, HVADC, Farm Credit East	

Action/Implementation Plan

MID TERM-TERM
YEARS 4 - 7: 2018 - 2021

	ACTION ITEMS	LEAD AGENCY/ PARTNERS	STATUS
7.3	<p>Develop farm-friendly regulatory models for local municipalities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Develop a farm-friendly zoning guideline or tool box to be distributed to towns ⇒ Provide maps of prime farmland soils, soils of statewide importance, and agricultural districts to the community when they are writing or updating a plan. ⇒ Provide other data of agricultural activities taking place in the community. ⇒ Provide sample goals related to promoting and strengthening agriculture. ⇒ Provide a project review checklist for planning boards and zoning boards of appeals that detail the data and kinds of questions they need to ask and evaluate during a project review. ⇒ Provide language to towns so that they use the Agricultural Data Statement and Disclosure Notice ⇒ Work with municipalities in Sullivan County that do not have Right to Farm laws. 	<p>Planning CCE, Delaware Highlands Conservancy</p>	
7.6	<p>Initiate a Farm and Land Match Program.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Engage the realtor community to identify farmlands before they are converted to non-farm uses. ⇒ Develop educational materials for homeowners that help them understand farm opportunities on their properties. ⇒ Tie with a farmer attraction marketing initiative. ⇒ Promote farmland protection through use of foreclosed properties. 	<p>Planning CCE, Delaware Highlands Conservancy, Glynwood, SC Realtor's Association,</p>	

Action/Implementation Plan

LONG TERM-TERM
YEARS 8 - 10: 2022 - 2025

ACTION ITEMS		LEAD AGENCY/ PARTNERS	STATUS
7.1	Establish a PDR Program.	Legislature Planning, CCE, Delaware Highlands Conservancy	
7.2	Establish a Leasing of Development Rights (LDR) program.	Planning CCE, Delaware Highlands Conservancy	

Other Projects to Enhance Agriculture

Other projects and strategies have been identified to address the goals established in this plan. The table below lists those projects. These additional initiatives are important, but are not considered to be foundational like the six priorities. Note that some of these projects are also identified as having the potential for regional implementation and have been discussed in the agricultural and farmland protection plans of Orange and Dutchess Counties as well.

Actions Led by County Agencies			
PROJECT/STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION	PARTNER/LEAD AGENCY	
1	Realtor Education	Educate realtors and new home owners or landowners about the value of agriculture farmland, and opportunities for using their land for agricultural purposes through seminars, brochures, and outreach.	Planning CCE, SC Realtor's Association
2	Purchasing Cooperatives	Facilitate the development of purchasing cooperatives and other formal or informal alliances for farmers to reduce the cost of doing business.	Chamber SCPED, IDA, Planning
3	Renewable Energy	⇒ Provide support and education about renewable energy programs. ⇒ Facilitate a county-wide solar project that provides volume discounts for purchasing of solar systems.	SASD CCE, Planning, Legislature
4	Advocacy for Agriculture	Lobby for changes to state and federal policy that benefit agriculture including policies related to environment, labor laws and hiring requirements.	Farm Bureau
5	Farm Labor Initiative	Work with other organizations and agencies to ensure intern, mentoring and apprenticeship programs are available and linked to Sullivan County farmers.	CWD CCE, Planning
6	Enhanced Training	Work with Farm Credit East and/or other food system investors to develop new sources of capital for agricultural economic development with fewer regulatory constraints.	Planning Farm Credit East, IDA, SCPE, CMK
7	Improve Awareness about Agricultural Assessments	Develop resource materials such as a fact sheet for farmers to help inform them about agricultural assessments and how they are determined.	Planning CCE, SC Board of Assessors