

*Ancram
Farming*



2009 Inventory

Commercial Farm Operators

Agriculture & Farmland Protection Planning Committee
May 2010



Agriculture & Farmland Protection Planning Committee (A&FP)

Participating Members

Art Bassin, Sue Bassin, Barry Chase, Larry Lampman, Don MacLean,
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Consultants & Advisors

John Brennan, NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets
Nan Stolzenberg, Community Planning & Environmental Associates



Mission of A&FP Planning Committee

To support the Ancram Comprehensive Plan, develop a detailed Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan:

1. Understand the current picture of Ancram farming
2. Prioritize farmland for protection
3. Identify threats & opportunities to farms and farming
4. Develop strategies for future improvement
5. Provide input for “farm-friendly” zoning

2009 Inventory of Commercial Farm Operators is Step 1



Why do a Farm Inventory?

- 90% Ancram Townspeople want to preserve Agriculture & Open Space
- Obtained NYS Grant to develop Plan for Agriculture & Farmland Protection
- Need information to better understand Ancram Farming to develop protection plan

Agricultural Businesses

1. Commercial Farms: def. "eligible for, or getting, Agricultural Exemptions"; sales \geq \$10,000
2. Small Farms: def. "no Agricultural Exemptions", Start-ups; Sales $<$ \$10,000

Farmland

3. Parcels 5+ acres; "suitable" for farming or farm businesses

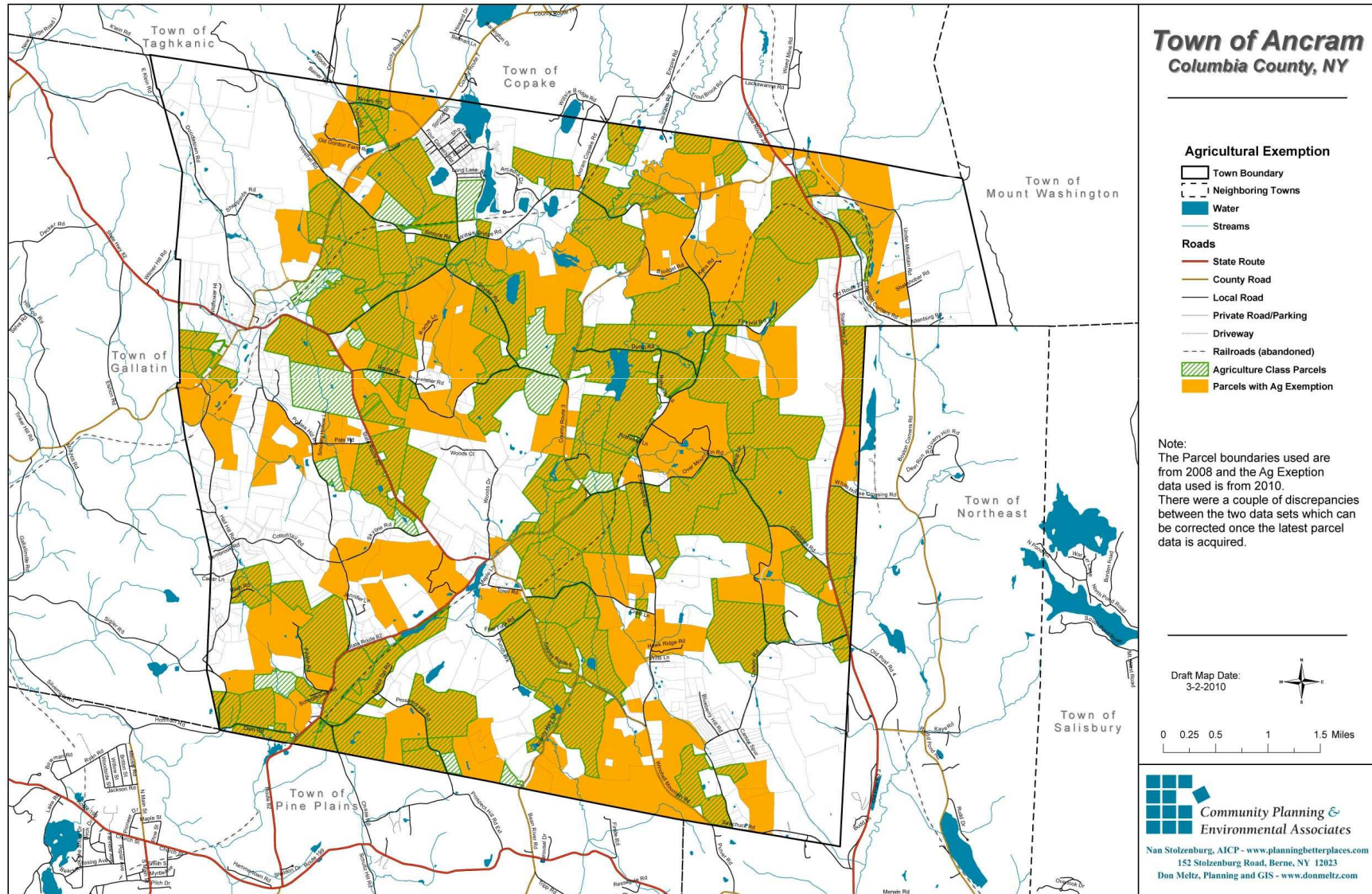
A&FPP Committee identified 36 Commercial Farms working Ancram Ag Exempt land to survey:

	ACRES	% TOT
Ancram	27,475	100
Ag Exempt	10,409	38
Ag Property Class	9,751	35

Map on following page

Ag Exempt Parcels - 10,409 acres

Ag Property Class - 9,751 acres



Excellent response rate -60% Accounts for 80% acreage

- Survey hand delivered by Committee
- 22 returned to CP&EA for tallying –
60% return
- Respondents farm 8,346 acres –
80% of Ag Exempt acreage

Findings & Conclusions include:

- Types of Farm Businesses
- Sales & Distribution
- Economics
- Priorities, Challenges, Opportunities
- Next Steps for Ag & FPP Committee

Town	Total Acres Owned	Total Acres Rented	Total
Ancram	3,982	4,374	8,356
Pine Plains	407	1,230	1,637
Copake	0	1,041	1,041
Gallatin	653	50	703
4 Town Total	5,042	6,695	11,737

- 60% response rate accounts for 80% exempted land
- Very dependent on rented land – 53% of total
- Importantly, relationships with neighbors very good

Hay	54 %
Dairy	40*
Beef & Livestock	40*
Fruits, Vegetables	27
Cash Crops	27*
Horses	18*
Dairy Products	14
Organic	14

*** Hay included**

Channel of Distribution	%
Direct to Consumer	54
Farm Stand	18
Farmer's Market	18
Milk Company, COOP	40
Other Retail	18
Restaurants	14
Direct to farmers	5

<u>2008 Sales Reported</u>	<u>#</u>
< \$25,000	6
\$25,000-99,999	4
\$100,000 +	10

- **\$3.8 Million Sales est. for 20 respondents**
- **Suggests 2008 sales of about \$5 million by Commercial Farmers in Ancram**
- **Chatham reported the same in 2007**

Each farm supports many workers...

Jobs	Year Round	Seasonal	Total
Full Time	3	2	5
Part Time	2	2	4
Total	5	4	9

- **Each farm provides on average:**
 - **5 year-round jobs**
 - **4 seasonal jobs**
 - **support for 4 households**

Estimated Ancram Farm Jobs

Workers	Year Round	Seasonal	Total
Full Time	71	30	101
Part Time	10	22	32
Total	81	52	133

- **about 95 households supported**
- **about 15% of Ancram households**
- **8 out of 10 Full time, year-round employees live in farm housing**

“Looking back over the past 3 years,
has your farm been...

	#	%
profitable	4	20
at break even	8	38
unprofitable	9	42

**Over 70% of farms
rely on off-farm income
to make ends meet**

Influences on Profitability:

- Larger farms more likely to be profitable – sales > \$100,000
- High fixed costs – land, equipment, animals, housing – reduce flexibility
- Cash crops appear to be profitable for farms in Ancram
- Hay profitability not clear, and over half of farms make hay

1. Biggest challenges are cost-related

- Taxes, fuel, wages, etc., like everybody
- Farm-specific costs – equipment, animals, housing

2. Positive directions suggested

- Buy/eat local
- Close to NYC
- Improve sales prices through Quality
- More Direct Sales to consumers
- Access to marketing & business support

3. Opportunities for new farms & farmers



Solutions favored by Ancram Farmers...

- Implement the Comp Plan
- Farm-friendly zoning
- Education & communication about Ancram Farming for the town
- Develop programs to attract new farmers & farm-related businesses, especially processing



New Business...

- **Farmers have positive outlook**
 - 40% plan to expand
 - 55% stay the same
- **Business Development wanted/suggested**
 - Processing – slaughterhouse, smoke house, community kitchen
 - Discussion with non-farm owners for more rental land (90% respondents concerned about loss of farm land)
 - Encourage more vegetable and fruit farmers to take advantage of trends
 - Encourage retail/coop activities

- 1. Communicate Inventory findings to Ancram townspeople**
 - Post on Website, Brochure to be developed
 - Develop materials/events for Community Days
- 2. Complete Agriculture & Farmland Protection Plan using grant**
 - Define "priority farmlands" for NYS
 - Work on farm-friendly zoning with ZRC
- 3. Work with Revaluation Review Committee to communicate information about NYS Ag Exemption program**