

What are the Key Elements of a Good County Agricultural Protection Plan?

1. **Establish an Agriculture Plan Steering Committee**
 - ✓ Invite farmers and members of agricultural support businesses to serve.
 - ✓ Hire a consultant with knowledge of rural/farmland protection planning issues.
2. **Outline a Public Participation Program**
 - ✓ Set a plan to regularly inform farmers & public regarding plan progress.
 - ✓ Develop mailing and e-mail lists; post updates on the County Web site.
 - ✓ Invite-- all farmers to-- all meetings-- all the time.
 - ✓ Establish and publish an Ag Protection Plan meeting schedule.
3. **Work out a “Tentative” Table of Contents with Steering Committee and Consultant**
 - ✓ Base plan around key local issues and NYSDAM plan grant requirements.
 - ✓ Review NYSDAM Circular 1500 section 324- “County Ag and Farmland Plans”
 - ✓ Establish a milestone table identifying key issues and proposed time frame.
4. **Some Key Content Items for the Plan**
 - ✓ Craft a vision statement for agriculture; include a listing of farming- related goals
 - ✓ Provide a brief analysis of local conditions and issues.
 - ✓ Conduct a SWOT analysis. (**S**trengths-**W**eaknesses-**O**pportunities-**T**hreats)
 - ✓ Develop a definition of agriculture for the County.
 - ✓ Interview farmers and representatives of agricultural support businesses; ID needs.
 - ✓ Develop base maps for the plan-prime soils, existing farms, rented lands, number of parcels receiving Ag assessment, Zoning, parcels in Ag Districts, identified growth areas-identified protection areas-key maps from Comp. Plan, etc.
 - ✓ Provide an analysis of zoning and subdivision regulations for key developing towns to determine if they are “Farm Friendly”. Identify specific zoning changes or other actions to mitigate impacts from growth on the agricultural industry and farmland.
 - ✓ Provide an analysis of existing and future sewer and water lines in relation to Ag.
 - ✓ Review & illustrate “Tools in the Tool Box” to protect agriculture in your County.
 - ✓ Identify agricultural land or areas proposed to be protected.
 - ✓ Document farmer and public involvement in Plan development.
5. **Plan Recommendations**
 - ✓ Develop a stand-alone Executive Summary including priority recommendations.
 - ✓ Consider a listing of Ag Protection Recommendations which identifies the implementation agent, time frame, priority level and cost estimate.
 - ✓ Describe activities, programs and agricultural economic development strategies intended to be used by the County to promoted continued agriculture use.
 - ✓ In conjunction with above, develop an “Implementation Matrix” for key plan recommendations.
6. **Plan Approval**
 - ✓ The County shall conduct at least one public hearing on the Ag Protection Plan.
 - ✓ The Plan shall be submitted to the County Legislature for approval.
 - ✓ The Ag Plan shall be submitted to the Commissioner of Agriculture for approval.