

November 1, 2007

Ag Pulse

Madison County....The Heart of New York

Dear Town Official:

This is the tenth in a series of newsletters being sent to you by Cornell Cooperative Extension of Madison County on behalf of the Madison County Farmland Protection Board.

We hope that you find the information in this newsletter helpful. We welcome your comments. Call us at either 684-3001 or 655-2075.

Sincerely,

Karen A. Baase

Karen Baase
Extension Issue Leader

April M. Winslow

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Community Educator



Owners of Idle Agricultural and Forest Land in New York State:

Results from a Mail Survey
By David Kay & Nelson Bills,
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Executive Summary

This report analyzes the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets (NYSDAM) New York State Rural Landowner Survey. The objective of this survey was to provide information on how current owners of undeveloped land view that resource, their reasons for owning the land, and their plans for its future.

Background

Very vocal and widely chronicled debates over land and water use for agriculture and forestry are deeply embedded in American history and continue today.

Though patterns of ownership and control of natural resources are closely intertwined with land and water policy issues, the information base describing the changing patterns of landownership - whether that focus is on farm

land or forestland was both fragmentary and out of date throughout the 1900s. The scope of most of these studies was a state or sub-state area and closely tailored to the shared interests of local communities, individual researchers, and their funders.

The New York State Rural Landowner Survey

According to a 2005 preliminary report, the NYSDAM statewide survey was based on the premise that "closer" management of the New York's idle and under-utilized land and forest resources can potentially contribute significantly to the economy of rural areas of the state".

The preliminary report on the New York Rural Land-owner

survey (NYSDAM 2005) included the following key findings for the entire state:

- 90% of the state's undeveloped rural land could be classified as active agriculture (41%), forest land (41%) or idle farm land (8%).
- Both the track record of recent subdivisions and the plans of current owners of undeveloped land suggest that the conversion of undeveloped and farm land to low-density residential use is and will remain common.
- Financial considerations, including the property tax burden and the desire to generate income, are the most important reason undeveloped land is sold.
- About one third of responding owners hold the land primarily because it is the site of a current or future residence or second home, with agricultural use given as the next most common reason for ownership.
- Individuals, not partnerships or corporations, own most

Farmland Protection Board Members:

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(four-fifths) of rural land, while four-fifths of owners live within the same county as the property.

- More recent owners do not appear to differ greatly from longer-term owners.

Reasons for Owning Undeveloped Land

- The two most commonly stated reasons for owner-ship, which apply across each county type, are to use the land for farming and as a place the owner currently lives.
- Compared to the metropolitan counties, open land in rural counties was more likely to be primarily used for second homes, hunting or fishing, and timber management.
- Fewer than 10% of parcel owners reported they had subdivided and sold

any part of the parcel within the past five years.

- Future sales plans of the owners varied little across the county groupings, with about 10-12% expecting to sell the entire parcel within a five to ten year period, and with the majority of these expecting to sell sooner rather than later.
- Approximately half of the sales were expected to be to individuals interested in a residence; of these, a third were expected to build while the remainder were expected to move into a house already on the site.

Two financial reasons (tax burden and need for cash) dominate reasons cited for a pending sale, with the tax burden motivating about two out of five owners considering a sale.

Access and Recreational Uses Over the years, structural changes in agriculture and shifting patterns of population settlement have led to numerous subdivisions of open-space land. Land ownership has become increasingly fragmented, with increasingly diffuse control over decisions on use. This means, among other things, that the uses of land and non-owner access to the land have become increasingly conditional, with large blocks of owners taking proactive steps to restrict land access.

For more information on the results of the survey please view the entire survey on the CaRDI Website <http://cardi.cce.cornell.edu/images/UserFiles/Issue%201%20-%20March%202007.pdf> Or contact the office to have a copied mailed out.

New Agricultural Economic Development (AED) Program.

Two months ago, Madison County, in collaboration with Cornell Cooperative Extension, embarked on its first Agricultural Economic Development (AED) Program. The Program looks at big picture initiatives that can enhance agricultural economic development including adding value to surplus agricultural products, thus ensuring a vibrant agricultural community. The AED Program is pleased to announce a number of exciting new web-based developments. We hope you and your constituents will choose to participate in and explore these FREE initiatives.

If you have any questions or comments, please call Becca Brier-Rosenfield at 315-684-3001 ext. #118 or email rb223@cornell.edu

1. www.madisoncountyagriculture.com

Madison County's Agricultural Economic Development Program has its own website with resources for farmers, retailers and consumers (including information about grants, AED programs/events, local farm/agri-business listings, farmer's markets and links to other useful websites). Please check-out the AED website and encourage those with farms or agri-businesses to register.

2. www.madisoncountyagriculture.com/ComeFarmWithUs.html

One year ago Madison County joined the Come Farm With Us Program. "The Come Farm With Us Program is an economic development initiative designed to encourage farmers from outside the region to buy and operate farms in New York, as well as helping local farmers to sell their farms to those who would keep them in operation. The program involves outside marketing of our region's farming strengths and opportunities, as well as listing services and other support for farmers wishing to buy or sell farms." Madison County's Come Farm With Us program now has its own website! If you are thinking about selling your farm we would like to list it on our site. Please call 315-684-3001 to let us know about farms for rent or sale.

3. In partnership with Kim Mills and Morrisville State College there are two exciting opportunities available for farmers and agri-businesses in Madison County. First, with funding from the New York Farm Viability Institute, Kim has created an online farmer's market. He is looking for people interested in testing the site (must have an agricultural product produced in NY state that you are able to

ship). Second, Kim and his students are creating one-page websites for farms/agri-businesses, which will be linked to the www.madisoncountyagriculture.com site. If you are interested in a basic website, this is a great FREE way to get your business on the web. Please contact Becca if you want to take advantage of either of these opportunities.

4. <http://nymarketmaker.cornell.edu>

MarketMaker is a national network of state websites connecting farmers and processors with food retailers, consumers and food supply chain actors. Please register your farm/processing/distribution/retail operation and take a few minutes to see how MarketMaker can help you and your business.



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