



SAVING WORKING LANDSCAPES:
A Campaign for Hudson Valley Farms

SAVIN

WASHINGTON

RENSSELAER

COLUMBIA



Allenwaite Farms



Gibson Farms
Keller Farm



Hanehan Family Dairy



Indian Ladder Farms

SARATOGA

SCHENECTADY

ALBANY

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NG WORKING LANDSCAPES

A Campaign for Hudson Valley Farms

● *Rose Hill Farm*



● *Cabbage Hill Farm*

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WESTCHESTER

● *Migliorelli Farm*



● *Benmarl Vineyard*

ORANGE

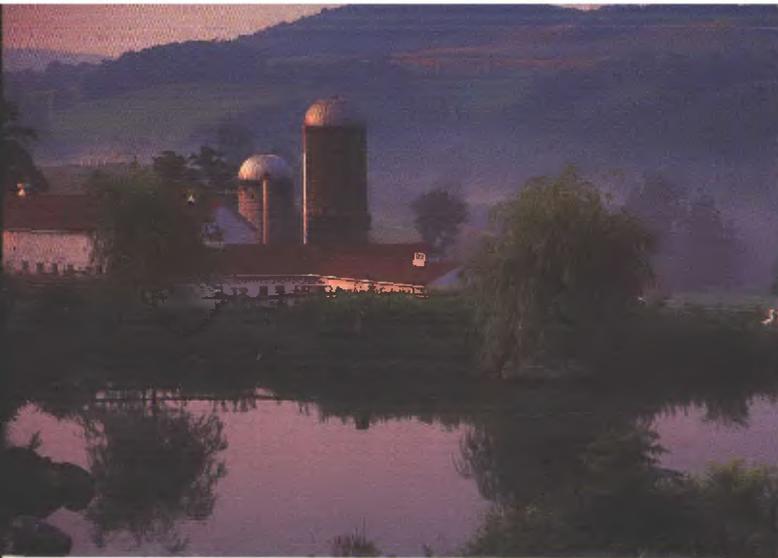
Sweetman Farm ●



ULSTER

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Dear Readers:

The Hudson Valley—designated by Congress as the “landscape that defined America”—long has inspired artists and writers. Farmed for centuries, the Hudson Valley is indeed a national treasure and one of the Empire State’s crown jewels.

Today, however, poorly planned development threatens to spoil this cherished place—destroying its agricultural heritage, scenic landscapes and productive farms. To meet this growing challenge, a coalition—the **Hudson Valley Agricultural Heritage Partnership**—has formed to protect and enhance the valley’s working farms and the quality of life they provide.

In the past 10 years, much has been done to safeguard Hudson Valley farms and farmland. New York state has launched several initiatives to confront some of the challenges facing farmers. The 1992 Agricultural Protection Act strengthened the state’s Agricultural Districts Law, set in motion the development of strategic county farmland protection plans and established a state farmland protection program that purchases the development rights on agricultural land.

Regional efforts have included the 1991 Hudson River Valley Greenway Act, which created a planning compact to preserve and promote regional assets, including agriculture. **Scenic Hudson’s** long-term regional farmland initiative has conserved critical areas of farmland in Dutchess and Columbia counties and is being expanded to other Hudson Valley communities. **The Open Space Institute** has protected historic agricultural land in Saratoga and Washington counties and developed partnerships to conserve farmland in more Hudson Valley communities.

American Farmland Trust has worked with county agricultural and farmland protection boards throughout the Hudson Valley and helped farmers explore ways to maintain their farming legacy through estate planning. Local private land trusts, such as the Columbia and Dutchess Land conservancies, have spearheaded projects that utilized state purchase of development rights funding to protect clusters of farms. Communities throughout the valley also have launched innovative farmland protection projects.

Although steps have been taken to halt the loss of our farms, much more needs to be done. The Hudson Valley Agricultural Heritage Partnership is committed to increasing government support for farms and farmland statewide. New York state’s Farmland Protection Program, as well as other initiatives that strengthen farm businesses and protect agricultural land, require dramatically augmented funding to truly make an impact.

This publication celebrates the Hudson Valley’s agricultural heritage and the farmers and communities helping to shape its future. We hope you enjoy learning more about Hudson Valley farmers and that you will join us in our efforts.

Sincerely,

Ned Sullivan
Scenic Hudson, Inc.

Joseph Martens
Open Space Institute

Jerry Cosgrove
American Farmland Trust

SAVING WORKING LANDSCAPES:
A Campaign for Hudson Valley Farms

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ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHS BY KIRSTEN FERGUSON, JIM NEWTON AND MICHAEL HOCHANADEL

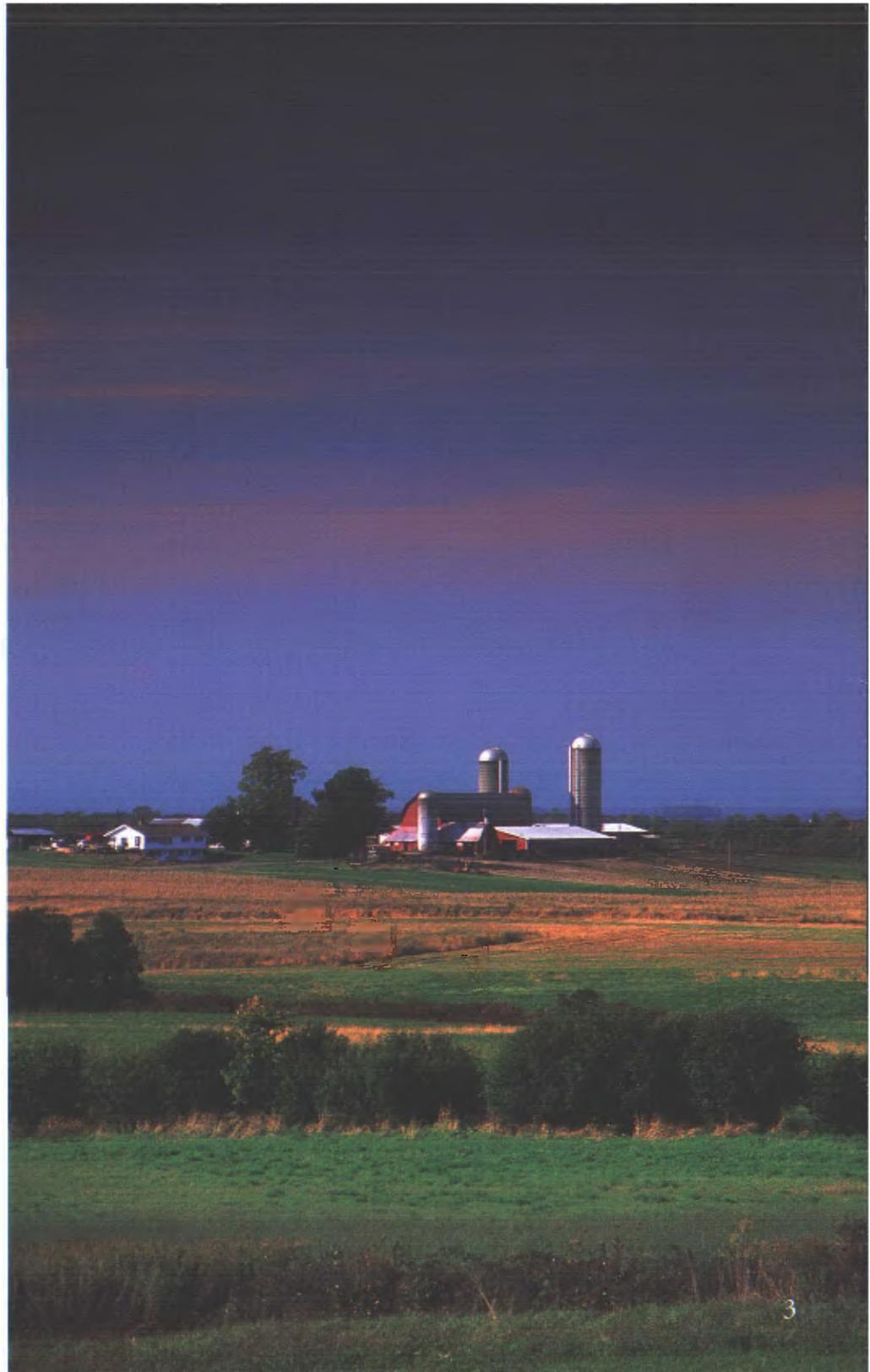


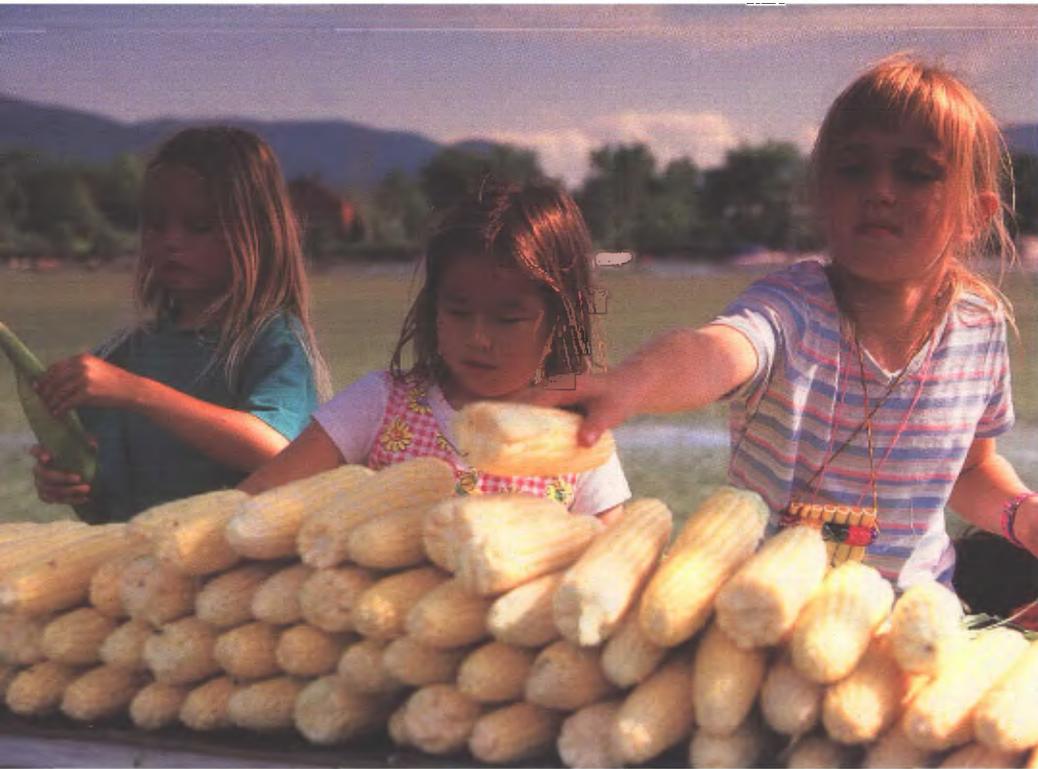
Stretching from the Adirondack Mountains to the Atlantic Ocean, the Hudson was called “Great River of the Mountains” by the Native Americans who first lived and farmed along its shores. Distinguished by scenic farmland, forest wilderness and unique cities and towns, the Hudson Valley is among the most famous landscapes in America.

The very first Europeans who gazed upon the shores of the Hudson noted the valley’s breathtaking natural beauty and productive soils. Crewmembers of Henry Hudson’s ship the Half Moon reported the lands were as “pleasant with grass and flowers and goodly trees as ever they had seen.” Many years later, the valley’s beautiful farmland and natural landscapes inspired the renowned Hudson River School of landscape artists.

Several recent distinctions have affirmed the scenic and historical eminence of the Hudson Valley. In the 1990s, the Hudson River was designated an American Heritage River and Congress named the valley—referred to in legislation as the “landscape that defined America”—a National Heritage Area. The National Trust for Historic Preservation identified the Hudson Valley as one of “America’s Eleven Most Endangered Historic Places” in response to the growing threat to its landscapes from sprawling development.

Although these designations bring attention, they carry a warning as well. They remind us what will be lost if we fail to protect this unique and productive landscape. Without increased funding and support, much of the Hudson Valley’s richest farmland may be lost forever.





horn of plenty

Hudson Valley land has been tilled for hundreds of years, producing a cornucopia of fresh foods. During Colonial times, the valley's fertile soils and favorable climate made it the "Bread Basket" for the burgeoning nation, yielding grain, vegetables, milk, eggs, livestock, tobacco, wool and more. Much of the agricultural bounty was shipped down the river to New York City. Following the Civil War, many Hudson Valley farmers began to produce fruits, wine grapes and specialty crops for the New York City market.

Today, there are more than 900,000 acres of farmland and 2,500 full-time farms in the Hudson Valley, stretching from the foothills of the Adirondack Mountains to the outskirts of the New York City metropolitan area. The upper valley supports an array of family-run dairy, livestock, horse and crop farms, while the lower valley is home to vineyards and specialty vegetable, livestock and poultry operations.

Fruit production remains a primary industry in the valley—a block of orchards stretches from Newburgh to New Paltz on nearly 13,000 acres of farmland. Counties such as Washington, Saratoga, Columbia and Orange are major dairy producers. As they have throughout history, Hudson Valley farmers increasingly must adapt to changing market conditions, both global and local.



resource at risk

Since World War II, Hudson Valley farmland has been consumed in large volume by development. Today, the region is home to some of America's most productive, yet most imperiled, farmland. American Farmland Trust's 1997 *Farming on the Edge* report ranked the Hudson Valley the 10th most threatened agricultural region in the country.

The threats to Hudson Valley farms are numerous: high property taxes, unstable commodity prices, overseas competition, disastrous weather events and the loss of young people to more lucrative industries.

One of the biggest hurdles facing Hudson Valley farmers is competition for land. Prime farmland—level, deep and well drained—is on a collision course with sprawling development. As farmland is coveted for housing subdivisions, strip malls and superstores, land values price farmers out of the market.

Urban sprawl forces many farmers out of business, and the farms that are left face new problems. As farming areas urbanize, remaining farms become more removed from the feed and equipment suppliers, veterinarians and other services they need to survive. New neighbors bring increased traffic and often fail to understand farm practices.

When farm operations fail, surrounding communities also suffer. Agriculture contributes to local economies and creates jobs. Studies show that farms actually help control municipal costs. Farms and forests may generate less revenue than residential, commercial or industrial properties, but they require little public infrastructure and few services. Farms also help make tourism a top industry in the Hudson Valley. With nearly 20 percent of the region's land in agriculture, *farming* provides the scenic beauty and rural character sought after by Hudson Valley visitors and residents alike.





crossroads

Hudson Valley farms provide many important benefits. Farms supply us with fresh, wholesome produce. Farms maintain our scenic working landscapes, rural heritage and quality of life. Farms guard our wildlife habitat and environmentally sensitive areas such as meadows, woodlands, wetlands and streams.

Yet Hudson Valley residents are at a crossroads. Will we protect our farms and natural resources—guiding new construction to appropriate places—or allow haphazard, unplanned development to decide for us?

It is not too late to make this choice. If communities, farmers, agricultural businesses, grassroots organizations and all levels of government work together to strengthen agriculture, we can maintain the Hudson Valley heritage and quality of life.

KEEPING THE HUDSON VALLEY GREEN

ways you can help

If we act now, we can safeguard the Hudson Valley's farms and rural landscapes. Here's how you may help:

SPREAD THE WORD

Let your friends, neighbors and elected officials know about the importance of stopping the destruction of productive farmland. Ask your state and local leaders to increase funding for purchase of development rights (PDR) programs and economic measures that promote local agriculture. Write a letter to the editor of your local paper supporting farmland protection. Support nonprofit organizations—such as American Farmland Trust, Open Space Institute and Scenic Hudson—that are dedicated to furthering agriculture.



FIGHT SPRAWL

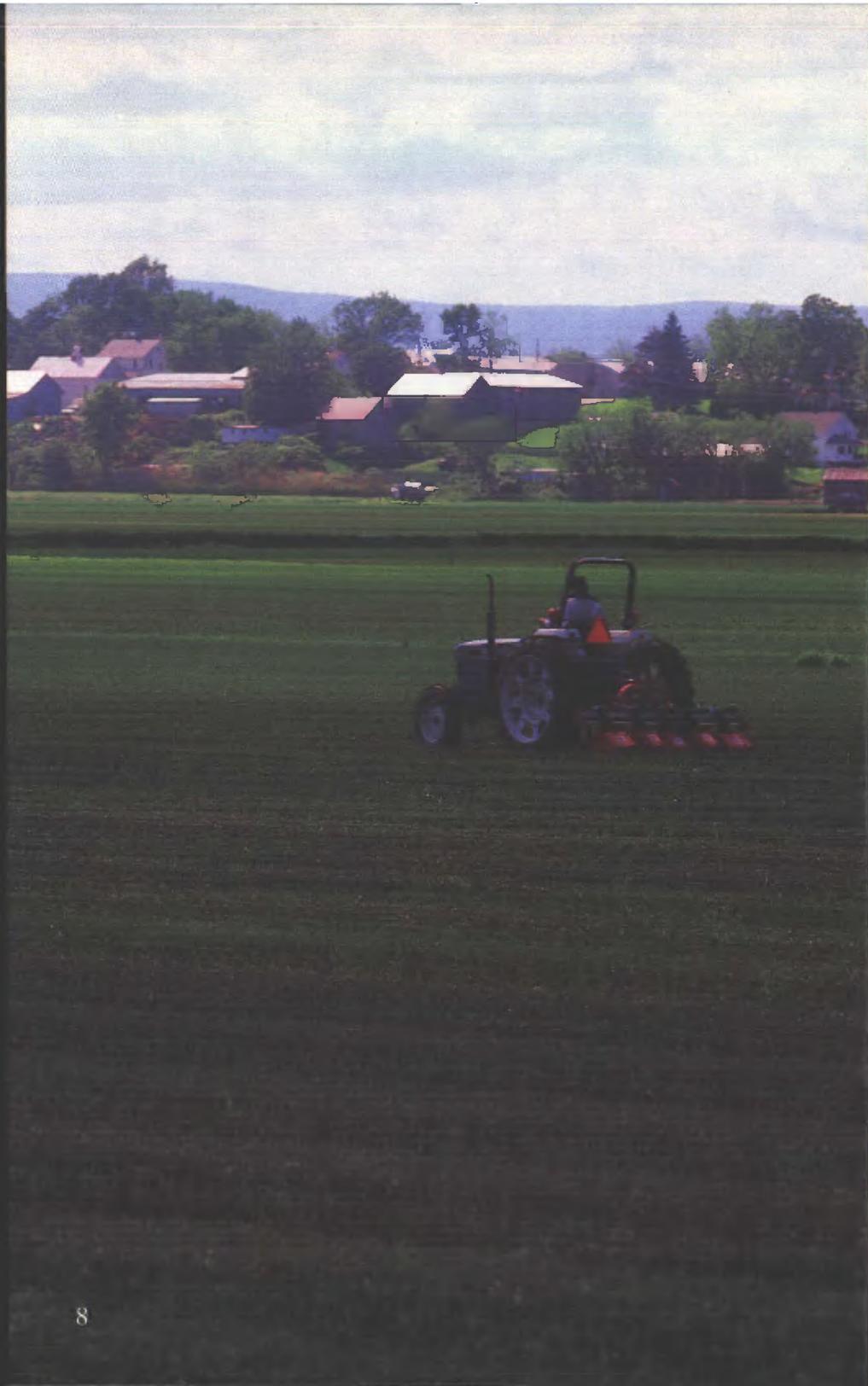
Attend meetings of your local town or county zoning and planning boards and agricultural and farmland protection boards. Call for your municipality to carefully plan development so that it does not harm farming. In addition, choose to live, work and shop in established cities, towns and suburbs.

SUPPORT HUDSON VALLEY FARMERS

Buy Hudson Valley grown farm products at farmers' markets, roadside stands and pick-your-own produce operations. Join a community supported agriculture (CSA) farm. Encourage local grocers to stock Hudson Valley produce. Support efforts to use locally grown food in schools, restaurants and other institutions. Be friendly toward farmers and understanding of farm practices. Show your children how food is produced—take them to Hudson Valley farm events.

CONSERVE YOUR LAND

If you own a Hudson Valley farm, protect it from development. A good estate plan, possibly employing a conservation easement, will ensure that your land is available for farming even after you retire.



keeping hudson valley farms growing

Several New York state programs already in place help strengthen the Hudson Valley's agricultural industry. However, these programs will need substantial increases in funding to remain viable. In the past decade, New York has been working to:

SAVE OUR FARMLAND

New York's *Farmland Protection Program* funds the purchase of development rights (PDR) on productive farmland, paying farmland owners to permanently conserve their land. Deed restrictions, known as conservation easements, prevent future non-agricultural development on enrolled land. Conserved land remains private and on the tax rolls. Demand far exceeds available funding for the highly popular program.

PROTECT OUR NATURAL RESOURCES

New York's *Agricultural Environmental Management* (AEM) program helps farmers protect environmental resources. Farmers participating in AEM receive financial and technical assistance to implement environmentally sound farming practices. AEM helps farmers comply with environmental regulations and maintain good neighbor relations.

HELP FARMERS STAY IN BUSINESS

The state's *Grow New York* program funds grants for agricultural research and development, farmland viability and farmers' markets. *Grow New York* also supports the Pride of New York program to increase consumer demand for New York agricultural products.

For more information about these programs, please contact:

New York State Department of Agriculture & Markets
1 Winners Circle, Albany, NY 12235
(518) 457-7076; www.agmkt.state.ny.us

Jim Newton



HANEHAN DAIRY

the faces of farming



Now, more than ever, it is important to tell the story of Hudson Valley farming. In 1850, 90 out of every 100 Americans were farmers. Today, farmers make up less than two percent of the nation's population, and one farmer feeds more than 100 people.

Yet in the Hudson Valley, farming shapes nearly 20 percent of the land and generates \$400 million of produce per year, helping to maintain our rural economy, scenic landscapes and quality of life.

The following profiles put faces on farming—capturing the character of Hudson Valley farmers from rural Washington County to suburban Westchester County. These are the dairy farms, orchards, vegetable operations and vineyards that characterize the region's agricultural horn of plenty. The farmers depicted have dedicated their lives to farming—whether their families have farmed in the Hudson Valley for generations, or they are relative newcomers drawn by the region's climate, soils and access to metropolitan markets.

Here are the success stories—farm businesses that succeed despite the many challenges facing the industry. Some of the farms profiled, such as the Hanehan Dairy in Saratoga and the Migliorelli vegetable farm in Tivoli, have permanently conserved their land. Others have the same hope. All the farms portrayed have found innovative ways to carry on the Hudson Valley's agricultural tradition. May these stories remind us how important our farms are—and why we must safeguard them.

Sitting on the porch of his house in Tivoli, Rocco Migliorelli ponders how the sale of his vegetables at the New York City Greenmarkets mirrors his father's agricultural livelihood from 70 years ago.

"What we're doing now in selling directly to New York City customers at the Greenmarkets, my father used to do from his Bronx farm back in the 1930s," Migliorelli explains. "During the Depression, he would go door to door with a pushcart peddling vegetables. Eventually he bought a horse and wagon and then a pickup truck."

When Rocco Migliorelli took over his father's operation, the farm was the last in the Bronx. "Land was scarce, and I couldn't make a living," Migliorelli says. Driven out of business by the high cost of renting land, he gave up the farm in 1959.

A decade later, Migliorelli and his wife Benita moved to northern Dutchess County to establish a farm of their own. Starting over was difficult, he says. "This farm had been abandoned for 20 years. When I broke ground, it was all trees. I worked until 10 p.m. with lights on the tractor."

Migliorelli and son Ken now grow more than 35 varieties of

vegetables and herbs, including squash, cucumbers, sweet corn, celery, string beans, peas, carrots, eggplant, broccoli and spinach. Ten years ago, the family was forced to reconsider how they market their crops. "One day, my wife came out into the field to tell me we got the check from the wholesaler," Rocco Migliorelli explains. "When I figured in shipping, labor and planting, I had lost money!"

"At year's end, we were broke," he continues. "I was ready to pack it in. My son mentioned the possibility of Greenmarkets. I said, 'I'm getting too old—do you want to try it?'"

Ken Migliorelli started delivering vegetables by truck to New York City markets at the World Trade Center and Union Square. He would leave at 2:30 a.m., often arriving home after 9:30 p.m. "It was a lot of work," Rocco Migliorelli says. "But the first year of the Greenmarkets, I paid all my bills. The Greenmarkets saved us."

In the late 1990s, the Migliorellis sold the development rights on their farm to Scenic Hudson. "It's going to be always rural like this," Rocco Migliorelli says, waving out at the fields from the porch of his house. "What I saw in the Bronx won't happen here."



LAST MAN STANDING:
once the last farmer in the
bronx, rocco migliorelli now
farms secure soil

"When I was a kid in the Bronx, there were lots of farms. After the war, they started building houses. They pushed the farms out. Now they can't do that here."

— Tivoli vegetable farmer Rocco Migliorelli



BENMARL VINEYARD: birthplace of american viticulture

"We never tire of this view. The changing light and weather reveal the many moods of the Hudson Valley — still and soft at dawn, gray and brown in winter or cloaked in brilliant snow, vibrant green and blue in summer. It is never the same twice."

— Mark Miller, in the introduction to his book *Wine — a Gentleman's Game*



An ascent up a winding dirt road in Marlboro leads to Benmarl, America's oldest vineyard. With a name that is Gaelic for "rocky hill," the vineyard sits atop a knoll, providing a stunning view of the Hudson River. Rows of terraced vineyards stretch down the hill toward the river's banks.

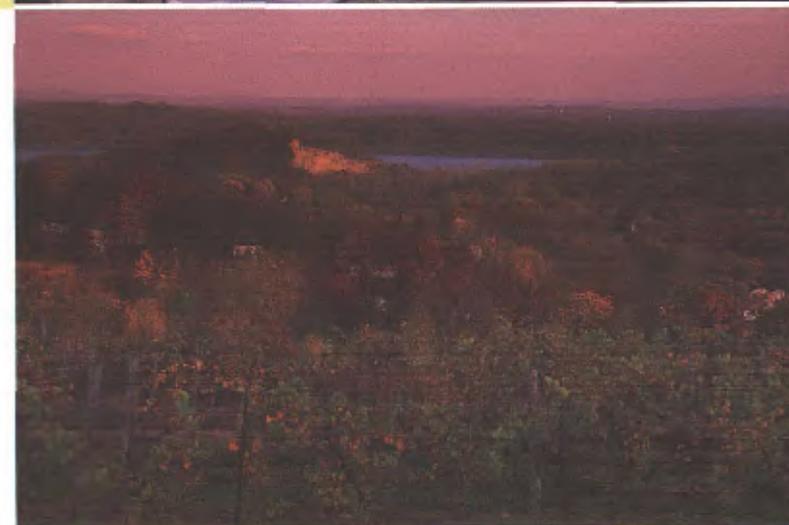
Benmarl's winemaking operation, gallery and museum are open to visitors seven days a week for most the year. Grapes have grown for centuries in this part of Ulster County, its rocky soils and climate naturally suited for viticulture. "When Henry Hudson went up the river in 1609, he noted wild grapes growing," Benmarl owner Mark Miller explains.

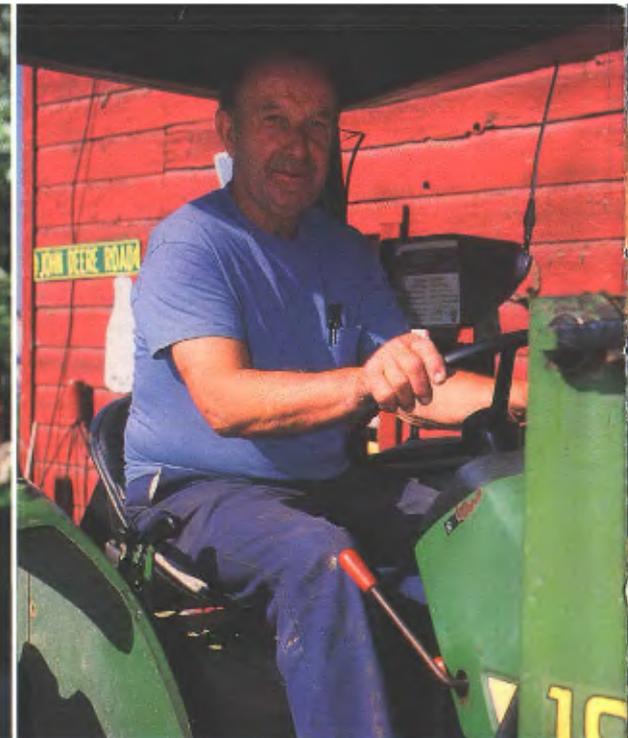
Early American settlers cultivated grapes here in the 1700s. By the end of the Civil War, grape growing was one of the Hudson Valley's most promising agricultural industries. By 1900, the region boasted 13,000 acres of vineyards. "The grape and wine industry of the United States started in this valley," Miller says.

Although most of the area's grapes were grown for fruit, some Hudson Valley growers began to cultivate grapes for wine in the 1700s. After the Civil War, the original owner of Miller's vineyard, Andrew Caywood, became an authority on hybrid wine grapes that can prosper on American soil. The region became known as "the birthplace of American viticulture."

When Miller purchased Benmarl in the mid 1950s, most Hudson Valley farmers had turned to apples. He was convinced, however, that wine could catch on in America. "In the early 1970s, America's wealthy drank wine, but only European," Miller says. "I was able to convince New York City liquor storeowners that we could get the public interested in domestic wine."

In the mid 1970s, Miller helped engineer the emergence of small farm wineries in New York state. A photo on the winery wall shows him at the signing of the Farm Winery Act in 1976. The act allowed New York wineries to sprout from Suffolk County to the Finger Lakes region. Miller received Farm Winery License number one. "We then could sell directly to the customer—the only way we could make money," he says. "These farm wineries were pioneers. We created an industry."



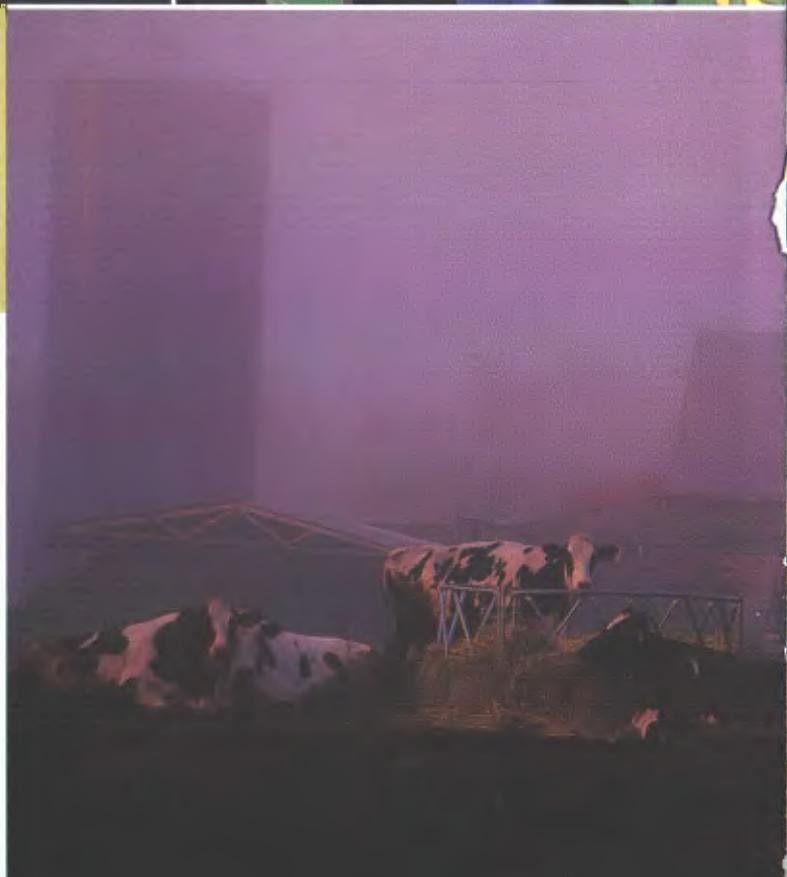


CONNECTICUT YANKEES IN THE HUDSON VALLEY: the keller family transplants hollyrock farm

In the early 1980s, dairy farmer Bob Keller made the hard decision to relocate his family's farm from Fairfield County, Connecticut to the Hudson Valley. "We were the last operating dairy farm in town," Keller explains. "Urban sprawl was coming." Though there once were farms nearby, Hollyrock Farm had become surrounded by houses. "It got so we were in people's way," Keller says. Local farm dealerships were gone, and the farm had to rent land in three different towns.

In 1984, the Kellers had sold their Connecticut farm, and the self-described "Connecticut Yankees" settled on a scenic 500-acre dairy farm in the Columbia County town of Stuyvesant. Their 250-cow operation now supports three generations of Kellers.

The Kellers plan to sell the development rights on their land to Scenic Hudson as part of a project that is conserving a block of 2,200 acres of farmland and open space in Stuyvesant. Referring to the lack of available land that has driven farming out of many areas in the Northeast, Kellers says, "That was part of the problem where we lived in Connecticut. You've got one farm here and one farm there."





Kristen Ferguson



Kristen Ferguson

DIRECT SALE:

indian ladder welcomes its customers to the farm

"There's a special relationship created when a farmer sells directly to customers. No chain store can step in there."

— Altamont orchard owner Peter Ten Eyck

On a Monday morning in October, children run through the barnyard at Indian Ladder Farms in Altamont clutching bags for apple picking. Orchard owner Peter Ten Eyck describes the day before, with 6,000 visitors, as one of the "busiest days in the history of the farm." The farm receives more than 400,000 visitors every year.

For Ten Eyck, opening the farm's doors to the public offers financial benefits and more. "Having a place where people can observe and participate in the process of growing food is worth doing," he says. Sixty years ago there were more than 50 fruit farms in Albany County; today there are only two.

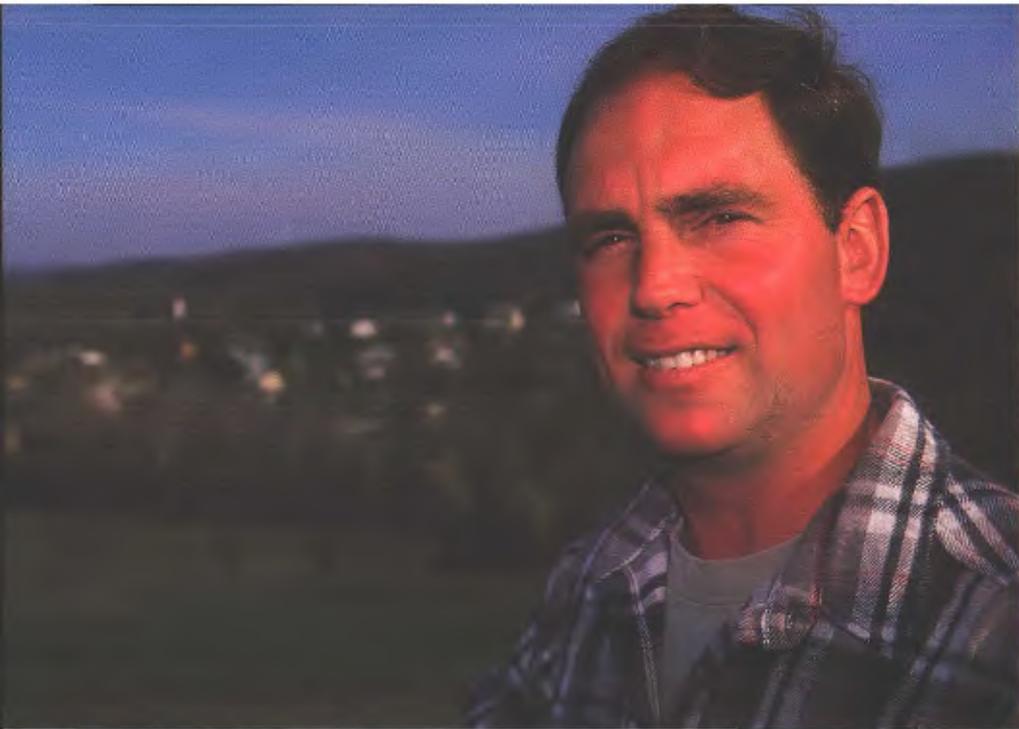
With his daughter Laurie in charge of retail sales, Ten Eyck can focus on the orchards. Working with Cornell University, he grows trial varieties of apples to study ways to reduce pesticide and fungicide spraying. One experimental apple, bred for disease resistance, likely

will never reach the general public despite its appealing taste. "Chain stores only take certain kinds of apples," Ten Eyck says. "People should have the chance to decide."

Other parts of the farm could be a museum of apple history. Ten Eyck still grows 18th century varieties such as the Spitzenberg, a favorite apple of Thomas Jefferson. "I keep the historic varieties so that people can stay in touch with apples other than Red Delicious," he says, referring to the common Washington state apple sold in stores across the United States.

Peter Ten Eyck's grandfather started Indian Ladder Farms in 1914, taking the name from the nearby Indian Ladder Trail, thought to have been a Mohawk trade route. In 2001, Ten Eyck sold the development rights on Indian Ladder Farms to New York state, helping conserve farmland that also provides habitat for countless species of birds, reptiles and amphibians, as well as coyote, mink, weasels, otter, black bear and deer. "This area is teeming with wildlife, and the animals cross the farm to breed," says Ten Eyck.

Ten Eyck's farm provides a major part of the scenic overlook from Albany County's Thacher Park. By protecting Indian Ladder Farms, the state has created a large continuous strip of undeveloped land with a unique mix of park, nature preserve, protected farmland and state-owned wetland.



ONCE A FARMER, ALWAYS A FARMER: tunis sweetman continues an agricultural tradition

“At a young age, I became aware of what happens when there are no more farms. I felt it was worth fighting for — and it has been a fight.”

— Warwick dairy farmer Tunis Sweetman



“The records describe how families came here from Connecticut because they heard about this fertile valley,” says Warwick dairy farmer Tunis Sweetman Jr.

Sweetman’s family relocated to this part of Orange County from New Jersey when he was in high school. His father was a dairyman on a major New Jersey farm that was sold to developers. “It really hurt to see that farmland destroyed and the pasture I used to play in become roads and houses,” he says.

In the late 1990s, Sweetman and his wife Sharon realized a dream of owning their own farm when Orange County, utilizing state and federal funds, purchased the development rights on the farmland they had been renting. The removal of development rights from the property reduced its value for development, allowing the Sweetmans to buy the land—at its lower agricultural value—they otherwise could not afford.

Sweetman’s efforts have not been limited to protecting his own farm. He helped the town of Warwick to establish its own farmland protection program. In November of 2000, town voters approved a \$9.5 million ballot initiative to buy the development rights to much of the town’s farmland. “The goal is to preserve 3,000 acres to give our town enough of an agricultural base to stay viable,” says Sweetman.

A BICENTENNIAL LEGACY:

the fraleighs carry on the tradition of rose hill farm

"Farmers used to be the majority, but now we're in the minority. There's more traffic, neighbors and concern about spraying. On the other hand, all these people are potential customers."

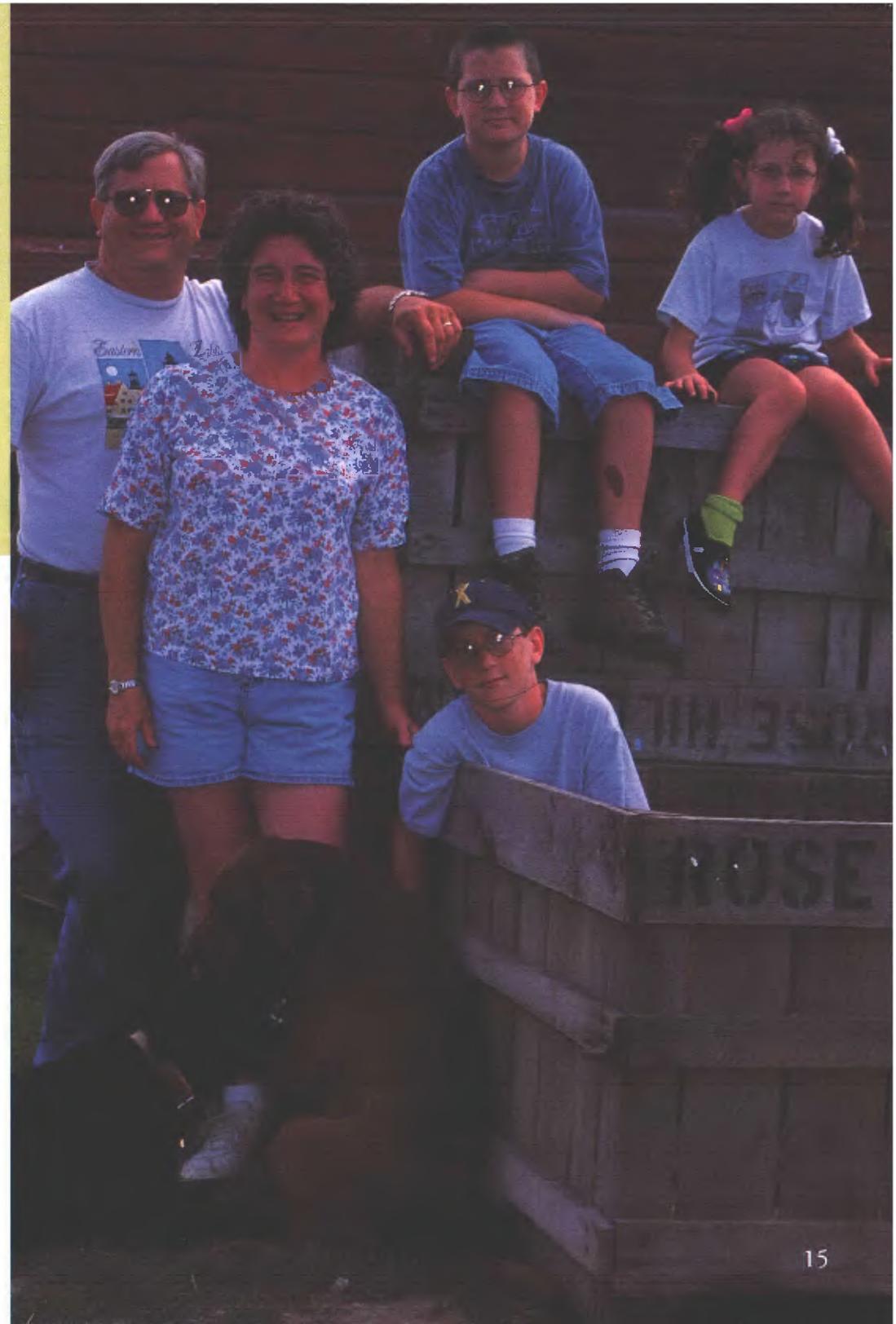
— Red Hook orchard owner Dave Fraleigh

John Adams was President of the United States when the first Fraleighs cleared land in Red Hook for their subsistence farm. More than 200 years later, Fraleighs still farm this beautiful patch of rolling land.

Dave and Karen Fraleigh and their children are the sixth and seventh generations to work the land here. The farm, which acquired its name because earlier Fraleighs planted roses, now produces peaches, cherries and more than two-dozen varieties of apples.

Their retail operation sells pick-your-own fruit during fall. The Fraleighs' autumn visitors come not only for fresh produce, but also to experience agriculture firsthand. "One of our strengths is this gorgeous place," Dave Fraleigh says. "You can't sell that at a farmers' market."

In 1998, Rose Hill Farm was involved in a three-way transaction that allowed them to expand their base of agricultural land. The Fraleighs sold the development rights on their orchard to Scenic Hudson, while a neighboring grower did the same with his own 100-acre orchard. The Fraleighs then purchased the neighboring land. "That was the only way I could have bought it," Dave Fraleigh says about the deal that reduced the cost of his neighbor's farm to its agricultural value. "Apples don't have that kind of return. We're in an area where there's not a lot of farmland. To find an adjacent piece is even more rare. It was a golden opportunity."



FAMILY MATTERS: several generations of hanehans operate their family farm

"There's no doubt that the ultimate farmland protection is strong commodity prices. Profitability keeps people on the land better than anything possibly could."

— Saratoga dairy farmer Charlie Hanehan

Throughout the Hudson Valley, and much of the Northeast, farms are predominantly family run. Nowhere is family cooperation more evident than on a stretch of road in Saratoga County, where three brothers and their families operate the Hanehan Family Dairy in fertile, rolling land between Saratoga Lake and the Hudson River. With a milking herd of 625 cows, the farm is Saratoga County's largest dairy.

The three-way partnership matches tasks with talent. David, a skilled machinist, handles equipment operation; Charlie, meticulous about nutrient management, is in charge of crops; Clifford, experienced with labor issues, manages the barn crew and dairy herd. Charlie's wife Barbara handles finances, and the spouses and children of all the families help with chores.

"Having all of us involved adds to our quality of life and standard of living," explains Charlie Hanehan. "The three-way partnership lets you go on vacation knowing things will still get done," he says.

Hanehan talks about how fortunate his dairy is to have a core group of farming neighbors. Charlie's cousins Marty and Pat, in fact, operate the dairy farm next door. Still, the Hanehan Dairy contends with development in one of the state's fastest growing counties. Several years ago, a neighboring farm came up for sale. "It was prime agricultural ground and highly developable," says Hanehan. "Deep, well-drained soils are hard to come by."

With the help of the neighboring farmer, Saratoga County, the town of Saratoga, American Farmland Trust and the Open Space Institute, the Hanehans received funding from New York

state's Agricultural and Farmland Protection program to purchase the development rights on the property. Hanehan Family Dairy was able to purchase the land at agricultural value rather than market value. "At the price it was selling for, there was no way we could have afforded it," Charlie Hanehan says.

The deal will protect 250 acres across from the nearby Saratoga National Veteran's Cemetery, protecting the cemetery's scenic entrance. The project also helps maintain scenic views from the Saratoga National Battlefield and Park.

Charlie and Barbara Hanehan talk about future challenges. The three families who operate the dairy have 11 children, all of whom have been involved in operating the farm. They are lucky. Many farms in New York—where the average age of a farmer is 54—have no heirs willing or able to take over.

"Much of our future depends on the next generation," says Charlie Hanehan. "It looks like there is interest among the kids, but how are we going to diversify enough to support the next generation?"





FROM LLAMAS TO LETTUCE: diverse ventures drive cabbage hill farm

Nestled in the hills of northern Westchester County is Cabbage Hill Farm, a rural oasis in this suburban community 30 miles north of New York City.

Neat rows of split-rail fences wind around the farm, and pastures hold a diverse mix of animals: Shetland sheep flock together, protected by a pair of llamas; free-range Gloucester Old Spot pigs root the earth near Highland cattle; Shetland geese and ducks swim in the farm pond.

The animals are historic breeds that are now quite rare. The Gloucester Old Spot pigs, for instance, are among only 50 of their kind. Cabbage Hill Farm was started in part as an “effort to save historic farm breeds from extinction,” says farm manager Annie Farrell. The farm has placed breeding animals on farms nationwide.

According to Farrell, Cabbage Hill livestock are hearty animals, raised primarily on grass and not requiring shelter or much veterinary care. “The meat is superior,” says Farrell. “Highlander grass-fed beef has about the same cholesterol as chicken.”

In one corner of the farm is the aquaponics greenhouse, where vats of flopping tilapia fish coexist with beds of lettuces, greens and herbs. The plants, grown year-round, are fed entirely with wastewater pumped from the fish tanks in a closed recirculating system.

“It’s a simple and efficient system for growing fish and vegetables,” explains Farrell. “The fish water feeds the plants, and the plants clean the fish water.” The tilapia, popular in the New York City metropolitan area for their high-protein,

low-fat white meat, are delivered live to local markets.

Cabbage Hill Farm has helped build smaller versions of its greenhouse in locations across the Northeast. “The greenhouse offers numerous opportunities for education,” Farrell says. The farm also offers tours by appointment and has received visitors from as far away as Israel and Kenya. “I’m not proprietary,” Farrell says. “We want to demonstrate feasibility in each of the niches we’re doing.”

Farrell’s newest venture is the Hudson Valley Flying Pig Café, recently opened at the historic Mt. Kisco Train Station. It serves meat and produce from Cabbage Hill Farm as well as fresh food from a multitude of local farmers.

It’s just one project through which Farrell hopes to help small farmers develop the connections they need to stay in business. “We’re all over the place,” she says. “There’s not a community anymore. My dream is there will always be a place for the local farm.”

ABUNDANT HARVESTS:
protecting the
fertile land of the
gibson farm

“Without conservation easements, the land would be fragmented. The sale of development rights almost guarantees we’ll keep this land in agriculture.”

— Stuyvesant crop farmer George Gibson

Driving past Gibson Farms in late summer, one sees fields of alfalfa, corn and soybeans, lush despite a rain-soaked summer that forced late planting of crops.

George Gibson—who farms more than 1,000 acres in Columbia and Rensselaer counties—proudly points to one of his verdant fields. Gibson’s corn yields are impressive. When asked the secret of his bountiful harvests, he credits the “soil, management and climate.”

Now 82, Gibson still tends to the fields. With no heirs, he plans to leave the farm to his managers, Ken Ellers and his son Mike. Mike Ellers has spent his whole life here, and Gibson talks about how successful farming involves a long process of learning the skills needed to keep a farm going. “He’s got it from the grass roots and up,” he says, pointing to Mike.

Gibson also has conserved much of the farm by placing conservation easements on his land. “I’d like to keep the land in farming,” he says.



Gibson Farms, part of a block of 2,200 acres of farmland and open space in Stuyvesant, protected by Scenic Hudson and the town of Stuyvesant.

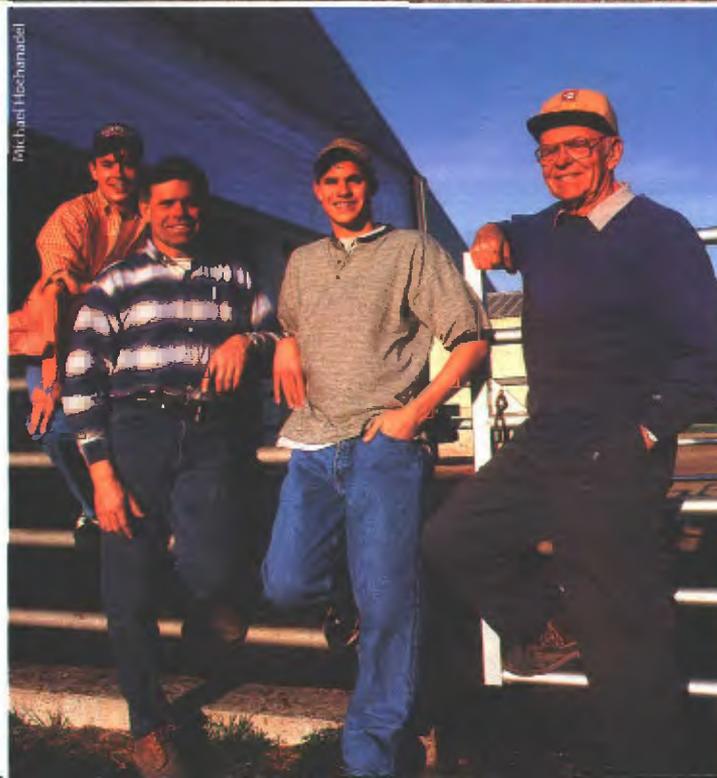
POWER PLAY:

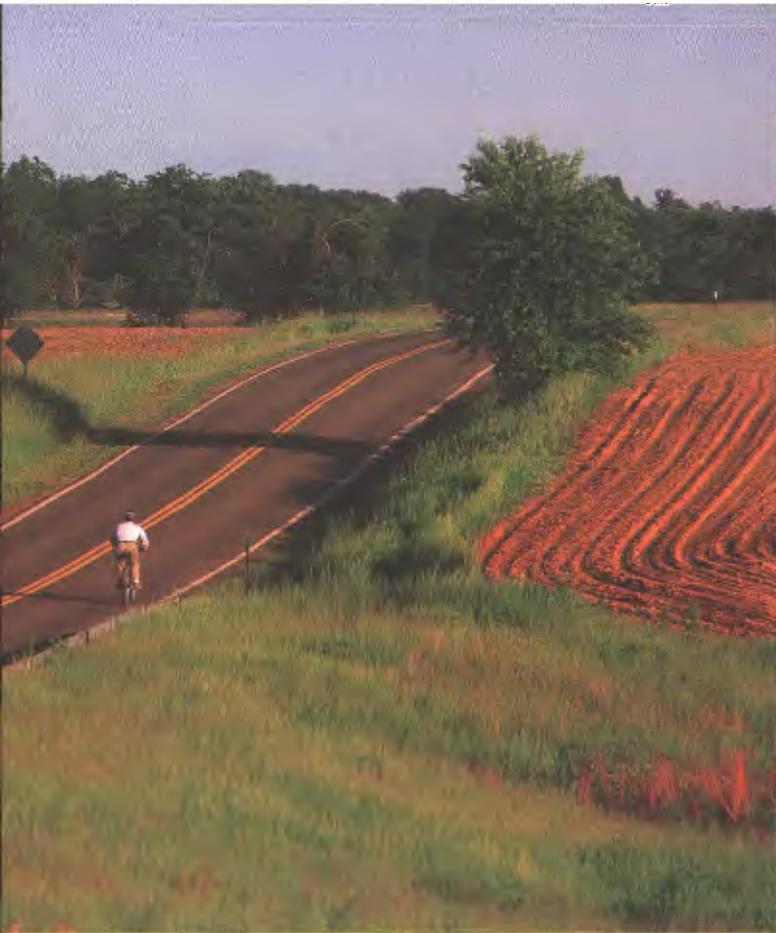
the allen family farm conserves land and history

Thanks to Washington County farmer George Allen, visitors who look east from the knolls of the Saratoga Battlefield National Park will see working farmland, not the cooling towers of a power plant.

Working with Allen, a sixth-generation Easton dairy farmer, American Farmland Trust and Open Space Institute have permanently protected 1,000 acres that were once slated for construction of a nuclear power plant. The project protects the view from the national historic site and creates a two-mile long public park along the Hudson River. Nine hundred acres of the protected land will be added to Allenwaite Farms, allowing Allen to incorporate his three sons into the business, should they decide to return to the farm.

"My ancestors gave their blood, sweat and tears for this farm," Allen says, looking out over his fields.





hudson valley communities in action

Throughout the Hudson Valley, farmers and communities are working together to protect farmland. Here is a sampling of the efforts.

DUTCHESS COUNTY

Fund Conserves Farmland

Dutchess County has a long history as a fertile farming area. In 1999, the county created an Open Space and Agricultural Protection Fund to protect its natural and farmland resources. The county legislature approved a \$1 million bond to match public and private funding available for the purchase of development rights on open space and farmland. Efforts are underway to provide greater funding for this program.

NEW YORK CITY WATERSHED

Protecting Farms and Water Quality

New York City residents obtain 90 percent of their drinking water from reservoirs and streams in the Catskill region, where much of the water flows through farmland. In 1998, New York City began funding a conservation easements program, administered by the Watershed Agricultural Council (WAC), which conserves agricultural and forest land in the Catskills to protect the city's water supply. The city also provides financial and technical assistance for watershed farms to implement environmentally sound farming practices.



THE TOWN OF RED HOOK

Conserving Critical Farms

In 1998, Scenic Hudson protected more than 1,000 acres of farmland in the Dutchess County town of Red Hook, including three crop farms and four orchards. Grants from a private charity funded the purchase of conservation easements, which safeguard more than 12 percent of Red Hook's farmland. By conserving neighboring farms in a "block," Scenic Hudson's goal was to preserve the rural character of the community, while maintaining the social and economic environment necessary to keep farms viable. The town also created an Open Space Plan and established a committee of local farmers to advise the town and planning board.

RENSSELAER COUNTY

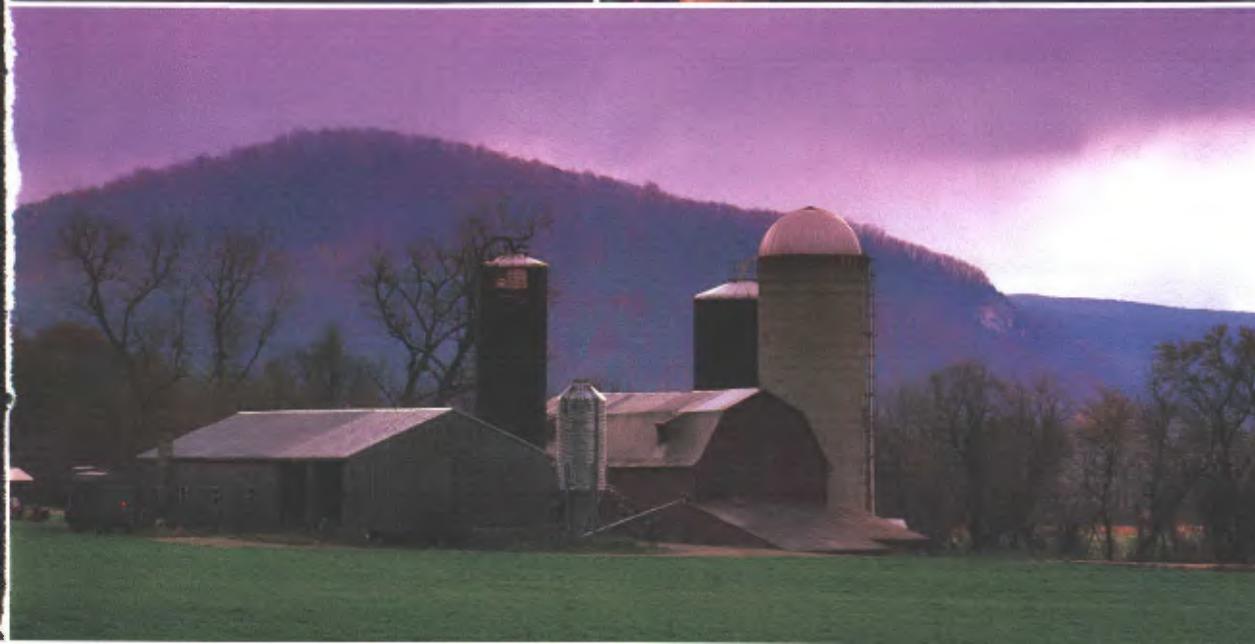
Planning for Farmland Protection

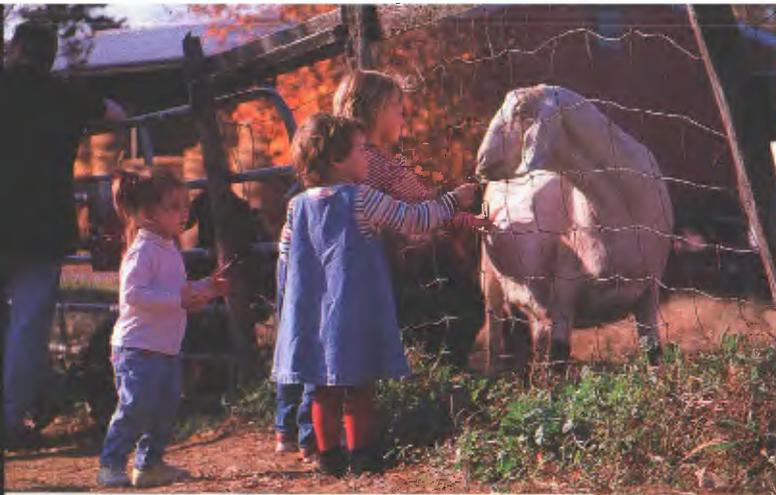
New York's 1992 Agricultural Protection Act launched the drafting of county farmland protection plans statewide. The plans identify threats to important farmland and pinpoint strategies to keep the land in agriculture. Rensselaer County, a rural county on the fringe of the Capital Region, has designed a unique plan that places special emphasis on the role of towns in protecting farmland.

ROCKLAND COUNTY

Open Space Plan Saves Farmland

By 1999, only 10 percent of the land in suburban Rockland County remained undeveloped. Facing the total loss of its farmland, the county developed an Open Space Plan and dedicated \$10 million to acquiring four properties outright, including two farms. Additional county funding will purchase the development rights on an 80-acre orchard and vegetable operation.





SARATOGA AND WASHINGTON COUNTIES

Partnership Promotes Agriculture

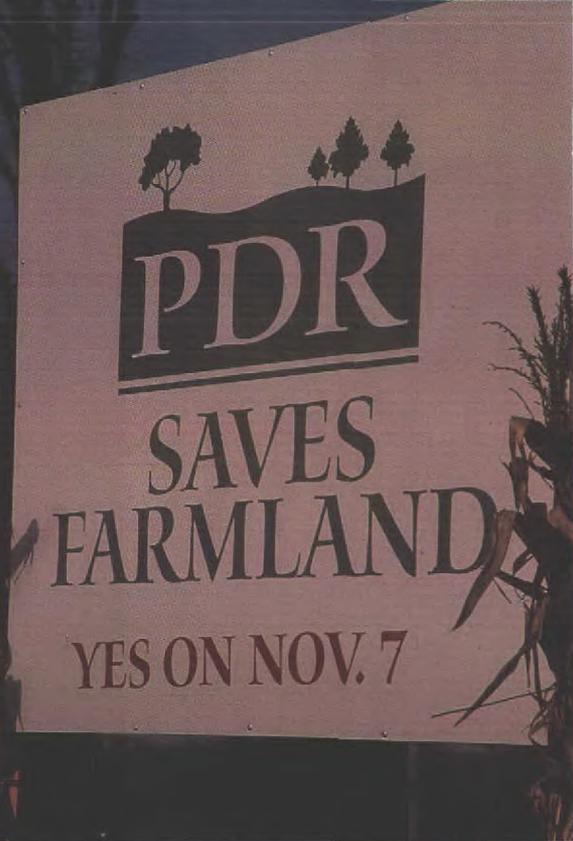
Washington and Saratoga counties, located on either side of the river in the upper Hudson Valley, have partnered on a unique initiative to strengthen their agricultural economies. In 2000, the counties received funding from New York's Farmland Viability Program to hire a specialist in agricultural economic development. The specialist will advise farmers on new products, services, marketing and management, and will help integrate agriculture into existing county economic development efforts.

THE TOWN OF STUYVESANT

A Model Community

Stuyvesant in Columbia County was one of the first towns accepted into the Hudson River Greenway Communities Council's "model communities program." The program provided funding and technical assistance for Stuyvesant to develop a comprehensive plan, which identified agriculture as the town's primary land use. The town has since implemented a right-to-farm law and a farm building tax relief program, and was awarded a state farmland protection grant to purchase development rights on Gibson Farms in partnership with Scenic Hudson.

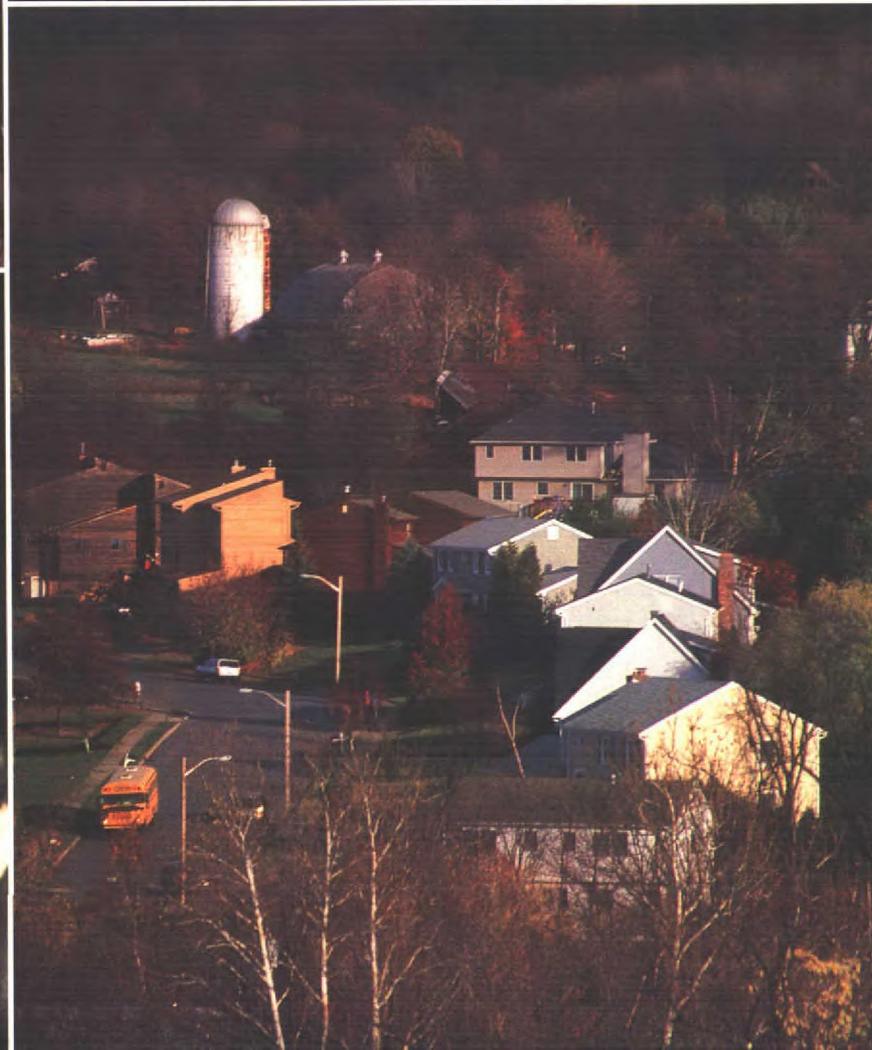




THE TOWN OF WARWICK

Residents Vote for PDR

In November 2000, residents of Warwick in Orange County voted to use town funds for the purchase of development rights on farmland. The PDR initiative protects 3,000 acres—nearly five square miles—of the town's farmland and open space, much of which is threatened by sprawl. Without the program, Warwick's continued development would cost taxpayers an estimated \$4 to \$5 million per year in additional school taxes.



WESTCHESTER COUNTY

Farmers Join Together

In response to intense development pressure, farmers in Westchester County have banded together to urge county legislators to establish an agricultural district. The district would offer farmers benefits such as agricultural property tax assessment and protection from intrusions of sewer and water lines, which often result in residential and commercial development in agricultural areas. The Westchester County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board supports the agricultural district proposal on the grounds that it will encourage farmers not to sell their land for development.





AGRICULTURAL ENTREPRENEURS— direct marketing boosts HUDSON VALLEY AGRICULTURE

The Hudson Valley provides a bounty of farm products for Northeast urban markets. It also is a destination. Residents of the New York City metropolitan areas and other cities have long enjoyed escaping to Hudson Valley farm country.

A growing number of Hudson Valley farmers take advantage of their proximity to large urban centers. Farmers' markets and roadside stands—where farmers sell fresh vegetables, fruits, meats and dairy products directly to customers—have sprouted from Yonkers to Saratoga Springs. Since the first New York City Greenmarkets opened in 1976, Hudson Valley farmers have supplied fresh produce to a growing number of New York City residents.

Many Hudson Valley agricultural entrepreneurs open their farms to the public by offering activities that attract visitors. They host harvest festivals, build crop mazes and offer “you-pick” fruits and vegetables, cross-country skiing, petting zoos, hay rides, farm tours and weekend vacations on the farm.

Some enterprising Hudson Valley farmers add value to their businesses by creating unique products. Apple growers make hard ciders, jams and apple-cider donuts. Vineyard owners craft their own distinctive wines. Some dairy and goat farmers have acquired the facilities needed to convert their milk into premium ice cream, butter and cheese.

Other farmers grow produce for specialty, organic and ethnic markets. Hudson Valley and New York City gourmet eateries now showcase locally grown produce. Chefs interested in bolstering their menus with the freshest possible ingredients go straight to the farmer. A unique multi-county initiative called Hudson Valley Harvest helps farmers connect with restaurants, retailers and customers. A collaboration of farmers, consumers and government agencies, the program has produced a Hudson Valley Harvest logo on stickers and signs to designate participating restaurants and stores.

Community supported agriculture (CSA) is another way consumers receive fresh Hudson Valley produce. At CSA farms, customers pay a set price to be “share holders.” In return, they receive a regular supply of fresh, usually organic, produce directly from the farmer, often at a fraction of the store cost. The arrangement guarantees farmers a fixed income.



Norman Greig's Red Hook farm, with year-round activities and a farm store, is the third most popular tourist site in Dutchess County.



New relationships are forming between Hudson Valley farmers and their customers. At farmers' markets, vegetable stands, local restaurants and CSAs, consumers are rediscovering freshly picked tomatoes, snow peas and sweet corn. People are reconnecting with the sources of their food. At pick-your-own operations and farm tours, residents and tourists realize the joys of visiting Hudson Valley farms.

When consumers buy directly from farmers, it helps farmers stay in business. However, direct marketing is not the answer for all farms. Farmers who sell wholesale also must be able to survive, by receiving fair and stable prices for their goods.

acknowledgments

Saving Working Landscapes was produced by Scenic Hudson, Inc., American Farmland Trust, Open Space Institute and the Hudson Valley Agricultural Heritage Partnership.

Scenic Hudson, Inc. is a 37-year-old nonprofit environmental organization and separately incorporated land trust dedicated to protecting and enhancing the scenic, natural, historic, agricultural and recreational treasures of the Hudson River and its valley. To date, Scenic Hudson has protected more than 17,700 acres of land in nine counties and created or enhanced 28 parks and preserves for public enjoyment.



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American Farmland Trust is a private, nonprofit farmland conservation organization founded in 1980 to stop the loss of productive farmland and to promote farming practices that lead to a healthy environment. Its action-oriented programs include public education, technical assistance in policy development and demonstration farmland protection projects. AFT's Northeast regional office serves New York and New England.



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The Open Space Institute is a nonprofit conservation organization that acquires significant recreational, environmental, historic and cultural properties throughout New York state, and supports the efforts of citizen activists working to protect environmental quality in their communities. Since its inception nearly 25 years ago, OSI's work has added to or created more than 30 parks and preserves and permanently protected more than 80,000 acres from the Adirondacks to the Palisades.



1350 Broadway, Room 201
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The Hudson Valley Agricultural Heritage Partnership is dedicated to protecting farmland and strengthening agriculture in the Hudson River Valley. Members of the coalition include farmers, conservation organizations, farming advocates, local government leaders, consumers and environmentalists. The partnership intends to secure greater public support and increased funding for programs that support purchase of development rights (PDR), agricultural support systems and farm viability and stewardship.

For more information,
contact Scenic Hudson or
American Farmland Trust

Current member organizations of the Hudson Valley Agricultural Heritage Partnership include *Agricultural Stewardship Association* (Washington County), *Albany County Land Conservancy*, *American Farmland Trust*, *Columbia County Farm Bureau*, *Columbia Land Conservancy*, *Dutchess County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board*, *Dutchess County Farm Bureau*, *Dutchess Land Conservancy*, *Hudson Mohawk Resource Conservation and Development Council, Inc.*, *Land Trust of the Saratoga Region*, *Open Space Institute*, *Orange County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board*, *Orange County Citizens Foundation*, *Phillies Bridge Farm Project Inc.*, *Rensselaer-Taconic Land Conservancy*, *Scenic Hudson, Inc.* and *Ulster County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board*.

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American Farmland Trust

