AGRICULTURAL and FARMLAND PROTECTION PLAN

The Economy of Agriculture

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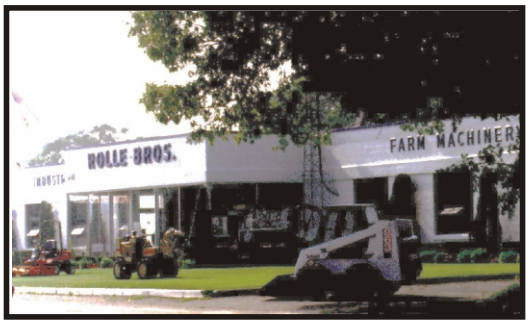
Suffolk County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board



April
-1996-

Robert J. Gaffney
County Executive

Prepared by:
Suffolk County Planning Department

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The Economy of Agriculture

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The Economy of Agriculture

Stephen M. Jones, AICP
Project Director

Roy Fedelem
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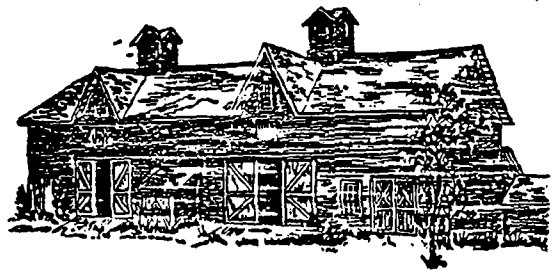
June, 1996

Suffolk County Planning Department
220 Rabro Drive
Hauppauge, New York 11788

Sponsored by: Suffolk County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board

Funded in part by an Agricultural and Farmland Protection Planning grant awarded by the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets.



Suffolk County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board
c/o Cornell Cooperative Extension - Suffolk County
246 Griffing Avenue, Riverhead, NY 11901-3086

Hon. Donald Blydenburg
Presiding Officer
Members of the Suffolk County Legislature
Veterans Memorial Highway
Hauppauge, NY 11788

Dear Mr. Blydenburg and Legislators:

We are transmitting, herewith, our plan for the protection of agriculture in Suffolk County, and request that you approve the plan and forward it to the Commissioner of Agriculture and Markets in Albany for filing and acceptance.

The plan contains numerous suggestions and recommendations to help protect and sustain agriculture as an industry in our county. While the growth and development of flowers, fruits and vegetables may seem distinct and different from the manufacture of "widgets", the economic spin-offs, jobs and other benefits, are similar in structure and, therefore, deserving of the same level of government-sponsored economic development support afforded to other industries in Suffolk County.

The County Planning Department and Farmland Protection Board have collaborated with local government, farmers, agricultural service organizations, and interested citizens and civic groups to produce a plan which is reflective of the current state of affairs in agriculture and horticulture and reflective of our best thinking as to where we need to go for the future.

We urge you to support this plan.

Sincerely yours,

Kenneth J. Schmitt
Ken Schmitt, Chairman
Suffolk County Agricultural
And Farmland Protection Board

Stephen Jones, Director
Suffolk County
Planning Department

V

SUFFOLK COUNTY AGRICULTURAL AND FARMLAND PROTECTION BOARD

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William Sanok	Cornell Cooperative Extension Agent
Penny Wells LaValle	Director, Real Property Tax Service Agency
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Southampton Planning Department

Group for the South Fork

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*Provided photographs used in this report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Suffolk County continues to see a rapid decline in farmland acreage despite its longstanding conservation efforts. From 123,000 acres in 1950, the number of farm acres is now reduced to approximately 31,000, only 7,000 of which is protected by easement. At the current rate of conversion and the current rate of development rights acquisition, only 10,000 acres of farms will remain in 2012. **To achieve the goal of 20,000 acres of protected farmland, preservation efforts must be accelerated.**

The goals of the plan are as follows:

- Preserve agriculture as an important Suffolk County industry.
- Ensure public policy is protecting, promoting and sustaining agriculture.
- Preserve farmland as an important natural resource.
- Preserve the cultural continuity of farms and farm families.
- Preserve 20,000 acres of productive farmland through the purchase of development rights.

Suffolk County still leads New York State in market value of crops, two-thirds of which is in nursery and greenhouse products. Because Suffolk County has one-third of all the irrigated farmland in New York State, the farming industry is able to sustain itself in droughts, such as the 1995 growing season. **Economically, the farm industry generates 8,000 jobs and contributes a quarter of a billion dollars to the local economy.**

Upzoning to larger lot sizes over the years has actually been damaging to farm preservation because it is based on a suburban sprawl model of single family detached homes and requires more land, more roads, more uniform development. It has also promoted sterile, cookie-cutter development and discouraged rural, farm-based commercial and industrial development as alternatives to single-family homes. Development pressure on farms has increased, and conflicts between farming practice and rural residential lifestyle has grown with each new residential incursion into farmland blocks.

The municipal finance effects of farm conversion are apparent and negative. **For every dollar an acre farmland pays in property tax, it uses $.30 cents in services. For every dollar an acre homesite pays, it uses $1.23 in services.** Loss of farms, farm jobs, economic activity and favorable property tax ratios to more homes, more traffic, less open space, puts a drain on municipal services and accelerates a decline in the quality of life.

Agricultural districts (8 year property tax reductions), better mapping of parcels, soils and parcel characteristics are helping decision-makers in the preservation of large blocks of farmland. Future programs for installment purchases, increases in public funding, both locally and on the state and national level for the purchase of development rights and other techniques hold great promise that the goal of preserving 20,000 acres can be met.

Impovements in agriculture practices, marketing of produce, community involvement, estate planning, government and institutional support are all helping to support and sustain farming and raise the level of interest in agriculture as an important element in the overall economy of Suffolk County.

IN MEMORIUM

This report is dedicated to the memory of John Wickham, a farmer who taught me thirty years ago that the soil sustains not only plants, but families and businesses as well.

S.M.J.

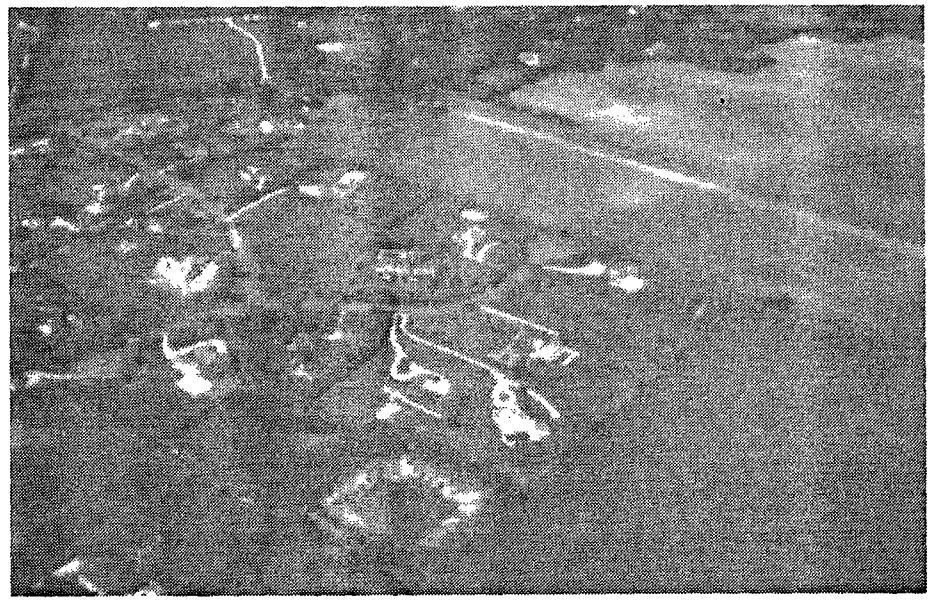
BACKGROUND

Suffolk County has had a large decline in the amount of farmland over the last several decades and continues to see a rapid decline in farmland today in spite of conservation efforts. From 1950 to 1992 the acreage of farmland in the County declined from 123,346 acres to only 35,353 acres and continues to decline at a rate of 1,289 acres per year. The number of farms also is declining rapidly. From 1950 to 1992 the number of farms in the County declined from 2,187 to 587 and over the last ten years the County has lost an average of 21 farms per year.

Development continues to put pressure on farmland for conversion. Although there are a relatively low 3,000 or so new residential units built in Suffolk County each year this represents a demand for 3,000 or more acres annually, partially due to up-zoning which requires larger minimum lot sizes. Many areas are zoned for five acre minimum lot sizes which puts added pressure on those areas that are zoned one acre, as is much of the farmland in the Town of Riverhead. Farmland is also desirable to developers because it is mostly cleared and flat. With the passage of the Pine Barrens Law there is a 50,000 acre area primarily in the Towns of Brookhaven and Southampton where residential development is not permitted. Although some of the lost potential can be transferred to other designated areas, some of these are farmed, putting added development pressure on them.

The urbanized area as defined in the 1990 U. S. Census covers up to and crosses Brookhaven's border with Riverhead and Southampton. This area is defined as being closely settled territory. The urbanized area covers one Agricultural District and is on the fringe of two others. What this means is that heavy development has reached the gateway to eastern Suffolk County and is already beginning to push into the thousands of acres of rich farmland in the Town of Riverhead.

While Suffolk County, the eastern towns, and several non-profit agencies are actively involved in farmland preservation, there is not enough money available to preserve the 20,000 acres of farmland suggested as a goal in this plan. Although there has already been nearly 7,000 acres of farmland development rights acquired to date the additional 13,000 acres called for by the plan would cost in excess of $100 million. At the current rate of $1.5 million dollars per year it will take 16 years and $24 million dollars to add another 3,000 acres of preserved farmland, by the year 2012. If conversion rates continue at their present rate there will be only 10,000 acres of farmland left in Suffolk County by that time and the goal of 20,000 acres would be only half met. It is obvious that $1.5 million dollars per year is not only insufficient but would lead to the loss of most of our valuable farmland and the loss of any chance of saving a sizable mass of it for future generations. To save a total of 20,000 acres from the onslaught of development would take a $15 million expenditure per year for the next seven years or less money if enough land could be preserved using a combination of other preservation techniques (See Appendix Table 3). Under both of these scenarios there would come a point where the County is preserving the few remaining pieces of farmland which are not necessarily the most desirable pieces to preserve. The longer the time frame the smaller the chance of preserving large contiguous blocks of farmland without residential intrusions.



Large lot zoning accelerates the disappearance of farm acreage

On June 21, 1994, County Executive Gaffney signed Resolution 468-1994 authorizing, empowering and directing the Suffolk County Planning Department to apply for Farmland Protection Funding from the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets for financial assistance in the preparation of this agricultural preservation plan. In early 1995, a grant to Suffolk County in the amount of $50,000 was awarded by the State to be matched by county funds.

The County Legislature directed that the plan be developed in conjunction with the Suffolk County Soil and Water Conservation District and the Suffolk County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board. There have been many opportunities for input into the Farmland Protection Plan, both public and governmental. The County Planning Department has been openly seeking input into the plan. Various Town officials and other agencies have been contacted asking for input. These include the Towns of Riverhead, Southampton and Southold and Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County, Long Island Farm Bureau, Group for the South Fork and the Long Island Convention and Visitors Bureau. Public meetings where the plan was mentioned include the Long Island Agriculture Forum in January of 1995 and 1996, meetings for the renewal of Agricultural Districts No. 1 & 7 and two public hearings held in Riverhead and Southampton in November, 1995 specifically devoted to plan input. (See Appendix Table 11).

The public meetings in Southampton and Riverhead were attended by 27 and 10 people respectively. The Southampton meeting had a wider range of people and therefore had more comments. The Riverhead meeting was small enough to allow for a group discussion. Many of the comments addressed what were considered unfair health department regulations. These included underground and above ground fuel tanks, nitrogen management and migrant camp permit fees. It was also suggested that there be better policing of land already in purchase of development rights programs.

Another group of comments at the public hearing dealt with taxes. One tax was the so-called Cuomo Tax on real estate transfers. It was said that PDR properties should be exempt because the County still owned the develop-

ment rights. Property taxes were a concern and a proposal for a circuit breaker tax was proposed. One of the biggest nuisances farmers are now facing is the large unchecked deer population. They are hard to control and do quite a bit of crop damage. A critical mass of farmland is very important. At least another 10,000 acres of farmland needs to be preserved.

STATEMENT OF PLANNING GOALS

■ Preserve agriculture as an important industry in Suffolk County as it provides fresh food, fiber and horticultural products for our residents. Agriculture preserves and protects important environmental resources, wildlife habitat and aesthetics that contribute to our quality of life.

■ To ensure public policy that will protect, encourage, promote, and sustain agriculture as an industry for future generations. Public policy should recognize the changes as they occur. Agriculture is a dynamic industry that constantly evolves. Farming is a way of life that strengthens our quality of life and cohesiveness of communities.

■ To preserve farmland as an important natural resource. Farmland preservation is essential for Suffolk County to retain its critical mass of land necessary to sustain a viable agriculture industry. Agriculture as an industry represents 5% of Long Island's **GNP** and is an important economic contributor. Farmland contributes to our historical fabric, community identity, Suffolk's value as a destination for tourism and provides tax paying open space.

■ To preserve the cultural continuity of farming as a link to the historical development of Suffolk County and Long Island's agriculture as a direct link between the farm families and the land from which they live and derive sustenance.

■ To develop an economic analysis of Suffolk County's agriculture industry including property tax implications, job retention and creation, statistical information as to commodities produced, economic development potential, impact on tourism, etc.

■ The Nassau-Suffolk Comprehensive Plan Summary in 1970 recommended the preservation of 30,000 acres of productive farmland. In 1975 Suffolk County received bids to buy the development rights to 17,949 acres at a cost of $116,566,770. Of those 13,819 acres were recommended at a cost of $82,318,654. To date, half that amount has been preserved through the County and Town purchase of development rights programs. Having achieved the purchase of 6,617 acres, an interim goal of 13,000 acres seems very attainable. While 30,000 acres may still be desirable, a more realistic goal of 20,000 acres should be set considering speculation and the rate of farmland conversion, the $100 million price tag to get to 20,000 acres and the voluntary nature of acquisition programs.

STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVES

■ Identify County and local government rules, regulations and policies that hinder the economic development potential of agriculture. Public policy should protect the public health, safety and welfare of the community without unreasonably restricting normal farming practices, hindering the farm economy or discouraging agricultural operations.

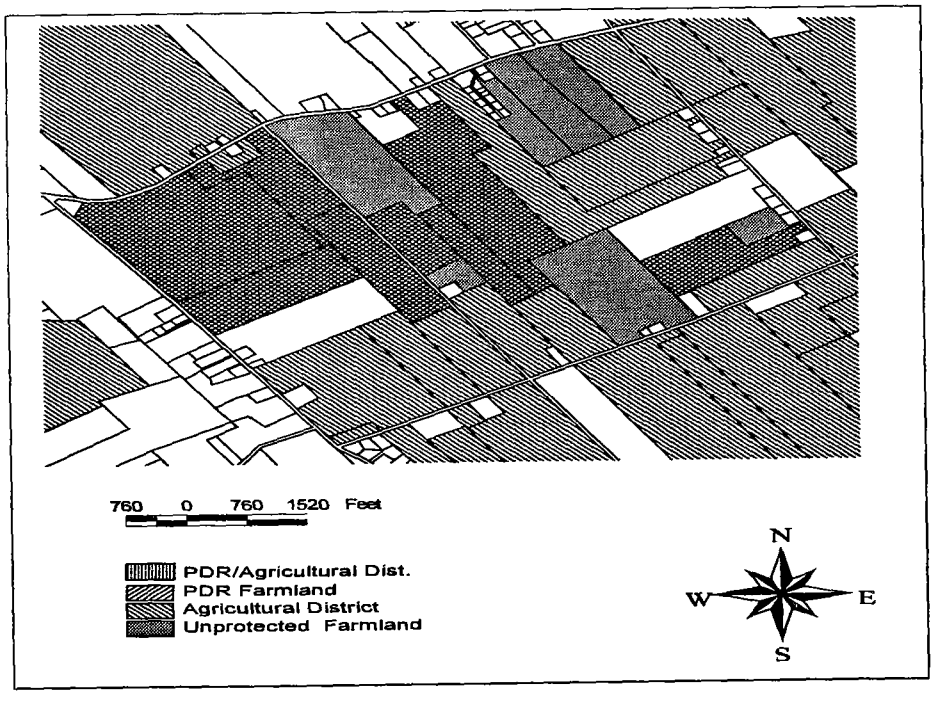
■ Continue public investment in farming by adjustments to assessment practices, estate taxes and inheritance, clustering techniques, conservation easements, income and property tax planning and consultation and purchase of development rights.

■ Provide a nurturing environment of public/private interest in diversification of produce, organic farm practice, nontraditional techniques, educational and scientific support, recycling, technologic innovation and experimentation.

INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

A number of information sources were researched and analyzed for the plan. One of the outgrowths of the plan has been the development of a Geographical Information System (**GIS**) and specifically the creation of numerous coverages or layers for this computer-based mapping and property data system. The GIS maps were a result of some cooperation between the County and Towns. Maps will be given to each Town for their use and hopefully this will lead to a partnership between the Towns and County to maintain and improve the inventories. The following is a sample of GIS maps created as part of this plan. Since the maps are large in their extent and some portions of the maps are still under construction, only a sample is shown here for publication format.

GIS mapping can assist decision makers by showing areas already permanently protected, temporarily protected and vulnerable to conversion



The following is an analysis of farmland in Suffolk County by Town. It compares the acreage of farmland in each Town in 1968 and 1996. The 1968 figures were from the Long Island Comprehensive Plan and are close to the 1969 Census of Agriculture figure of 61,520 acres. The 1996 figures were from a combination of the assessor's records, aerial photographs and field surveys. In 1996 farmland totaled 46,141 acres in Suffolk County which is significantly above the 1992 U.S. Census of Agriculture figure of 35,353. The difference may be in how farmland is defined, including what is done with fallow land. For the 1996 numbers a land was considered fallow farmland if it had been recently farmed and did not show signs of shrubs or trees in it. Also included in the 1996 figures are woodland or wetlands that is part of a large parcel that is mostly farmed. There are also several hundred acres which are owned by LILCO or New York State which are leased to farmers.

From 1968 to 1996, 18,260 acres were lost to farming for an annual average of 652 acres per year. This is a conservative figure because the U.S. Census of Agriculture numbers show an even greater loss of farmland and land recently taken out of farming may still be counted as farmland.

Changes in the amount of farmland vary on a Town by Town basis. Babylon has lost all but 7 acres of its farmland but did not have much farmland to begin with. Huntington, Islip and Smithtown have all lost over two-thirds of their farmland and Brookhaven has lost almost half of theirs. Of the remaining 1,775 acres of farmland in Suffolk's four western Towns 73% is in the Town of Huntington which still has 1,294 acres. The eastern Towns of East Hampton and Southampton have both lost close to a third of their farmland since 1968. Southampton now ranks third among Suffolk County Towns with a total of 8,617 acres of farmland. This sizable amount is under heavy development pressure as evidenced by a Town of Southampton report stating that 588 acres or 11.5% of the Town's remaining, unsubdivided farmland is in some stage of subdivision review. The Town of Southold ranks second among Suffolk County Towns with 9,820 acres of farmland which is 22% of the County total. This moved Southold ahead of Southampton because of more extensive conversion of farmland in Southampton. The Town of Riverhead has 17,662 acres or 40% of all the farmland in the County and

INVENTORY OF FARMLAND IN SUFFOLK COUNTY by Town (In Acres)

			Decline 1968-1996		
Town	*1968*	*1996*	*No.*	*Percent*	*Decline Per Year in Acres*
Babylon	370	7	363	98.10	13.00
Brookhaven	11,560	6,439	5,121	44.30	183
East Hampton	2,420	1,672	748	30.90	26.70
Huntington	4,170	1,294	2,876	69.00	102.70
Islip	640	136	504	78.80	18.00
Riverhead	19,550	17,662	1,888	9.70	67.40
Shelter Island	80	156	-76	-95.00	-2.70
Smithtown	1,240	338	902	72.70	32.20
Southampton	12,450	8,617	3,833	30.80	136.90
Southold	11,920	9,820	2,100	17.60	75.00
Suffolk County Total	**64,400**	**46,141**	**18,260**	**28.40**	**652.1**

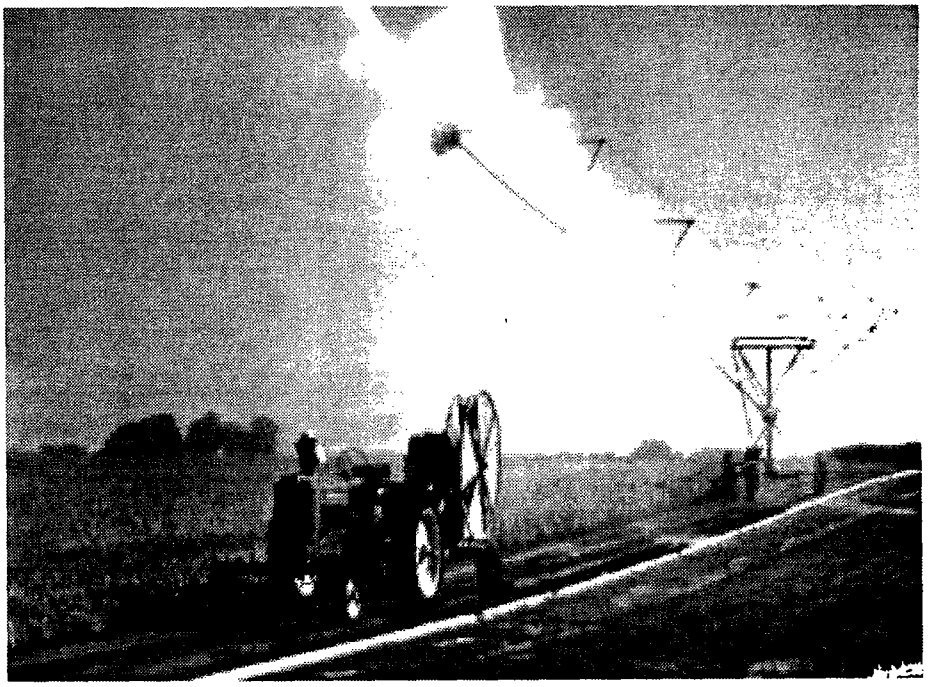
has only lost 10% of its farmland in the last 28 years. In spite of this relatively small loss, vistas which once contained farmland as far as the eye could see are now broken up by residential subdivisions.

The variation in the loss of farmland on the South Fork as compared to the smaller loss on the North Fork denote fundamental differences between the two. The South Fork has the appeal of being called the *Hamptons*, which makes it attractive to year-round and to just as great an extent development for seasonal homes. Riverhead attracts mainly year-round residents so it does not get very much development that is seasonal. Riverhead now has twice as much farmland as Southampton, so the percentage loss for the same amount of acreage will be half as much as in Southampton. Zoning in Riverhead is predominately one acre, where most other East End towns are generally two acre minimum or more. This leads to less land being converted per home in Riverhead. This has the effect of slowing the conversion of farmland but will not stop it and the end result will be development at twice the density of the other towns. The Town of Southold does attract year-round and, to a lesser extent, seasonal housing. More farmland has been lost in Southold than in Riverhead because Southold does have more of a seasonal market and Southold's predominantly two acre zoning.

1992 CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE

Statistics from the 1992 Agricultural Census show some startling things about Suffolk County Farmland. A rapid decline in farm acreage occurred between 1950 and 1974. From 1974 to 1982 the conversion of farmland declined due to a slowdown in new housing starts as well as the initiation of the Suffolk County Farmland Preservation Program. In the last ten years the loss of farmland has accelerated to an average annual decline of 1,454 acres. At this rate farmland preservation programs are failing to keep pace with conversion and cannot hope to do so unless large amounts of money are made available.

Not surprisingly, Suffolk County still leads all New York State counties in many areas. One area Suffolk continues to lead in is the market value of agricultural products sold. Suffolk's reported total market value for crops in 1992 was $133,762,000 of which two thirds was from Nursery and greenhouse products. Nursery and greenhouse product sales in Suffolk County accounted for 41.4% of the state total which was over five times more than the second highest county in the state. Other Suffolk County crops preeminent in the state are: Irish potatoes, rye for grain, cauliflower, broccoli, pumpkins and spinach. Suffolk County leads all New York State counties with an average sales per farm figure of $227,874, almost three times the state average. During droughts such as 1995, Suffolk County has one advantage in that it contains one third of all the irrigated farmland in New York State.



Suffolk County contains one-third of all the irrigated farmland in New York State, keeping drought related crop problems to a minimum.

Property taxes are a major cost to Suffolk farmland owners. Suffolk farms pay $3.4 million dollars in property taxes annually. This works out to $96 per acre, the third highest per acre tax in New York State. Property taxes per acre in Suffolk County are 5.7 times the state average and 25.8 times the United States average. In spite of these high taxes Suffolk County spends the smallest percentage of its farm expenses on property taxes than any other county in New York State. In Suffolk 3.4% of farm expenses goes to

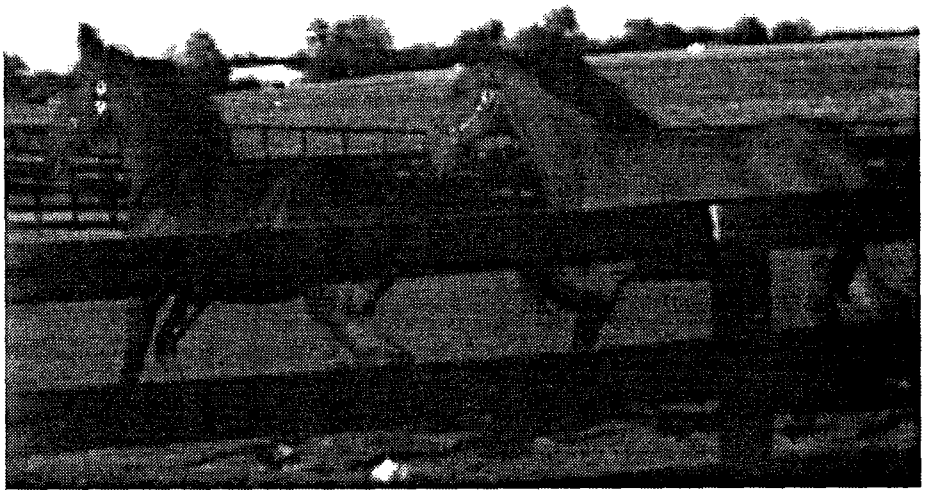
pay property tax compared to an average of 5.8% in New York State and 2.7% in the United States.

The largest production expense for Suffolk County farms is hired labor which totals $34.4 million dollars or one third of farm production expenses. The average for New York State was less than half the rate for Suffolk County.

Suffolk County has the second highest state percentage of farmland which is rented at 15%. This is nearly three times the farmland rental rate in New York State, and may be an indicator of pressure to develop farmland.

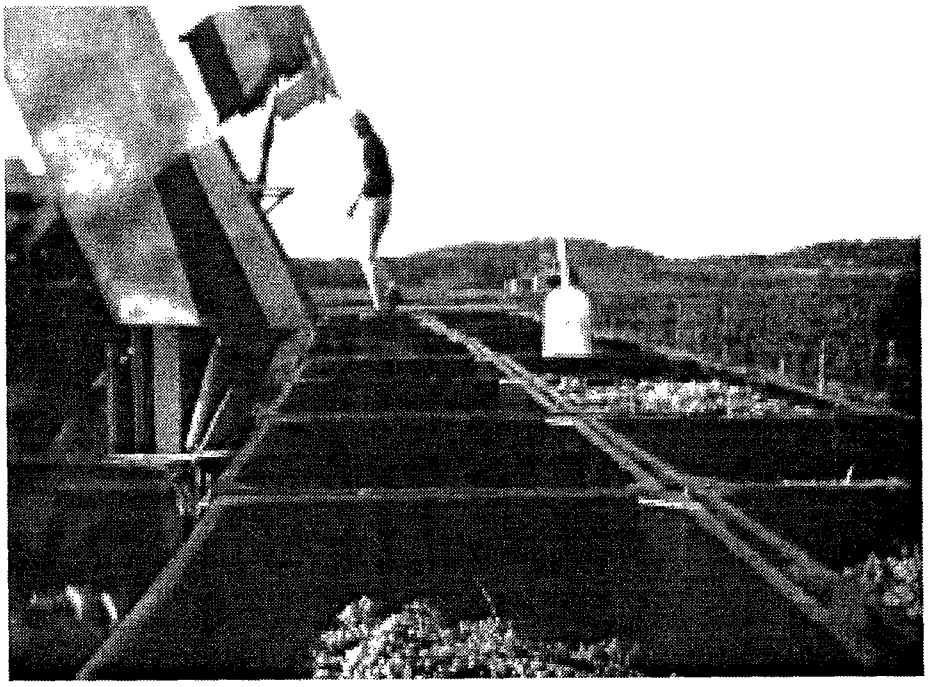
ECONOMIC ANALYSIS OF FARMING

The 1992 Census of Agriculture total market value figure of $134 million for Suffolk County in 1992 was put into an input-output model. The result indicated that the economic impact of farming in Suffolk County generates 8,000 jobs and adds another $241 million to the economy. Half of this impact is directly attributable to the nursery and greenhouse industry. This economic impact is clearly understated with some indicators pointing to agriculture having a far greater impact. The horse industry alone is said to be a $1 billion industry.



Favorable changes to tax investment laws and state agriculture laws have fostered expansion of horse farms in the county

The wine industry contributes $30 million to the economy. Suffolk County now has the largest premium wine industry of any county in the United States outside of California. With about sixteen hundred acres of viniferous grapes (wine grapes) the wine industry is still looking for further expansion. Suffolk County wines have earned a good reputation and have won many awards in the wine industry. Suffolk County has a huge market nearby for wine, nursery and greenhouse products and other agricultural products. Within a 75 mile radius of the end of the Long Island Expressway in Calverton there are 15.7 million people with a median household income of $41,000 in 1989. This location is near the center of the Town of Riverhead's agricultural area. This provides a large market with easy access for the many roadside farmstands and U-pick farms. A major attraction for this market is strawberry picking in the early summer and pumpkin picking in the fall.



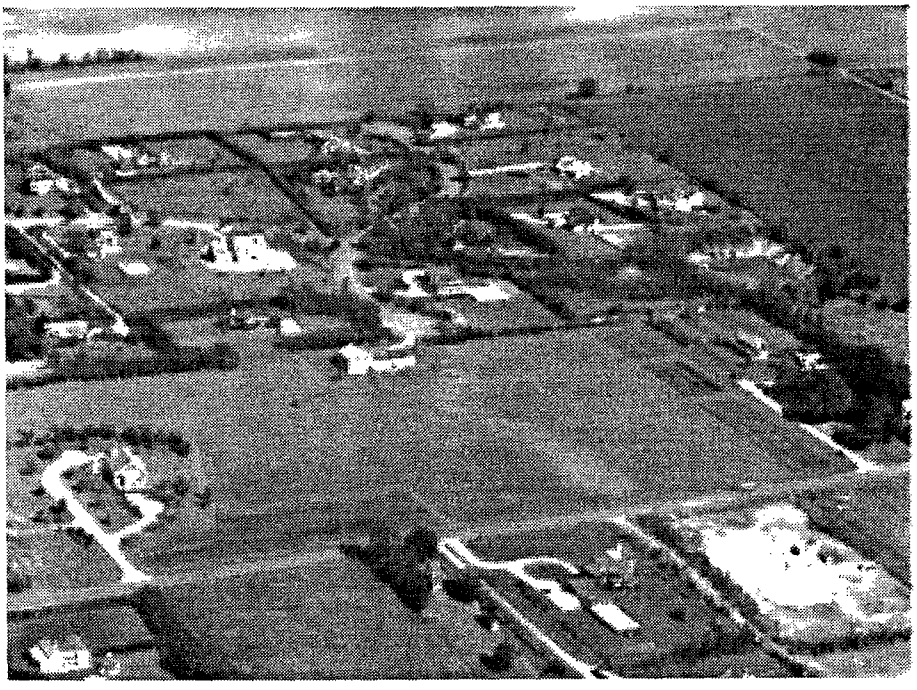
The wine industry continues to develop in product, reputation, and quality as well as cachet and tourist attraction

The wine industry is concentrated near the western portion of the Town of Southold. The population within 75 miles of that location is 11.6 million with a 1989 median household income of $43,000. This compares very favorably to the wine area near Hammondsport in upstate New York where there are only 2.6 million people with a median household income of $30,000 within 75 miles. A local study on the wine industry showed that a vineyard with a winery is two and one half times more profitable than a vineyard by itself. Add to this the massive tourism industry on Suffolk's east end, the symbiotic relationship between tourism and wine tasting tours and farmstands, and it is easy to see why Suffolk County has become so desirable for the wine industry and tourism.

DEVELOPMENT PRESSURE

The Central Pine Barrens Plan was adopted in June 1995. This plan effectively eliminates development in the 50,000 acre core area of the Pine Barrens, which is primarily the eastern middle of Brookhaven Town, the northwestern part of Southampton Town and the extreme southwestern part of Riverhead Town. Some density will be allowed to be transferred to areas outside the core. Therefore, development pressure will be increased outside the core area. Adjacent to the core are farms in Agricultural Districts 2,3 and 5. Within five miles of the core are farms in Agricultural District 7. Both Riverhead and Brookhaven have designated farm areas as so-called *receiving areas* for Pine Barrens development credits. Clearly the Pine Barrens Law will have the impact of increasing development pressure on farmland.

In the Town of Southampton, clustering has been used to create 778 acres of agriculture reserves. This approach has the advantage of costing the municipality nothing but the drawback is the creation of many five, ten and fifteen acre farms while the rest of the farmland is residentially developed causing a potential for land use conflicts between homeowners and farmers and farmland parcels too small to be farmed efficiently.



Farm land can be preserved through clustering, but small reserves can be difficult to farm and heavily invested neighbors are not always supportive

The number of building permits being issued seems to have some correlation to the conversion of farm acreage. When building activity, as measured by building permits issued, is high the amount of farm acreage lost over the same time period is also high. During the 1950's and 1960's when Suffolk County averaged 11,398 building permits per year there was an average annual loss of 3,254 acres of farmland per year. By 1970 most of the farmland in western Suffolk County had already been converted to residential uses. During the early 1970's most of the building activity was in the Town of Brookhaven, and most of that was on wooded land rather than farmland. For those reasons the rate of farmland conversion dropped to 1,225 acres per year in spite of an average annual figure of 11,597 housing units authorized by building permits.

From the early 1970's to the 1974-78 period, there was a 43% drop in building permits to 6,573 per year and a similar decline of 38% in farmland conversion which averaged 886 acres per year. For the 1978-82 time period, building permits dropped to their lowest level since World War II at 2,875 units per year. Farmland conversion also declined to the lowest level since World War II with an average of 489 acres per year being converted.

From the 1978-1982 period to the 1982-1987 period building permits more than doubled while farmland conversion more than tripled. Building permits averaged 6,868 while the loss of farmland amounted to an average of 1,620 acres per year. One reason for this jump in farmland conversion is the countywide increase in residential building activity from 1982-1987. Another reason is the escalation in building activity on the east end of Suffolk County, where most of the farms are located. From 1958 to 1981 the eastern five towns of Suffolk County accounted for an annual average of 1,169 building permits. From 1982 to 1988 building activity on the east end jumped to 1,715 units per year. (See Appendix Table 10)

Cleared flat farmland is easy to convert to residential development and places additional conversion pressure on adjacent remaining farms

One factor that is causing more land, and also more farmland, to be developed relative to the number of new housing units is changes in zoning and health department regulations which require larger lot sizes. During the 1960's and the 1970's many areas were subdivided into quarter acre or third acre lots. By the mid 1980's half acre lots were the minimum, and in the 1990's one acre lots are the norm, with many areas going to two acre minimums. The effective result is that as time passes a smaller number of housing units consume a greater amount of land. Building permits and the loss of farm acreage both declined from 1987 to 1992. Building permits averaged 4,902 units per year while the loss in farm acreage averaged 1,289 acres per year. Building activity on the east end was more than cut in half from 1990 to 1993 relative to where it was from 1983 through 1988.

Conversion of numerous farms to residential development requires widening of historical farm roads, sewer, water and utility expansions and loss of roadside vistas

TRENDS IN AGRICULTURAL DISTRICTS

Suffolk County has six State Agricultural Districts. An Agriculture District is a loosely conglomerated area within a local taxing jurisdiction where property owners voluntarily agree to farm their lands for an eight-year period. In return, they receive a reduced assessed value for their land (and resulting property taxes), exemption from special district levies based on frontage and protection via *right to farm* laws. Owners must pay penalties to remove themselves from the district prior to its eight-year term. Agricultural District #1, in Southold was renewed in 1995 for the second time, five districts have been renewed once and Agricultural District #7 has just undergone its first renewal. The trends have been declining acreage in the two Brookhaven Agricultural Districts and significant increases in the recently renewed districts in Southold and Southampton and Riverhead (see Appendix Table 9). Agricultural District #1 doubled in size at its renewal in 1995, going from 2,937 acres to 5,869 acres.

Agricultural District No. 7 is incorporating Agricultural District No. 6, with both districts totaling originally 2,608 acres. The renewed district more than tripled in size to 9,192 acres. This is very positive for continued farming because Riverhead sits at the threshold of residential and commercial development progressing from the west.

Agricultural Districts have been greatly expanded in the last year in Suffolk County. Last year there was a total of 13,217 acres in agricultural districts. When Agricultural District #7 is finalized there will be over 22,000 acres. The reasons for the increased participation in the program has been a combination of several factors. One reason is the outstanding cooperation the program received from the Town Assessors in Riverhead, Southold and Southampton, the Cooperative Extension, the Long Island Farm Bureau and members of the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board. Another reason is that farmers put aside any mistrust of government and recognized that joining the Agricultural District was to their great advantage. Other reasons farmers have cited include lowering their taxes which will help them financially to be able to continue farming, protection from nuisance complaints and an acknowledgment of their *Right to Farm*.

Of specific concern is the amount of protection agricultural districts afford in protecting farmland from conversion to non-farming uses, predominately residential. Agricultural District #2, in the northern part of the Town of Brookhaven, has gone from 1,000 acres down to 321 acres and is in danger of disappearing altogether, District #3 in the southeastern part of Brookhaven has declined from 1,085 acres to 883 and the East Hampton portion of District #5 has declined from 368 acres to 200 acres.

It is clear that agricultural districts do not preserve farmland but only temporarily protect it from development pressure. Although other means of preservation need to be used the agricultural districts are valuable in helping farmers to continue to farm through lower taxes and protection from many complaints and government regulations. In addition, the districts help bridge the gap to eventual permanent protection and preservation.

CONSEQUENCES OF CONVERSION

LOSS OF MARKET VALUE

In recent years there has been a shift from low value crops such as potatoes to high value crops like grapes, nursery and greenhouse products, resulting in an increase in market value while the amount of farmland decreases. This will continue as long as high value crops replace low value crops. At some point, when this trend stops, the loss of farmland will translate into a loss of market value.

Nursery stock along with other horticultural products, have helped to keep Suffolk County the number one farming county in New York State in market value

Nursery and greenhouse products increased in market value from $67.3 million in 1987 to $90.3 million in 1992 for an increase of 34.2%,While market value of other agricultural products sold, declined by $4.4 million or 9.2%. If not for the increased sales in nursery and greenhouse products Suffolk County would have had a net decline in market value.

LOSS OF JOBS

Accurate figures on farm employment are hard to come by. Several sources of statistics on farming occupations and the agriculture industry can be misleading. According to the United States decennial census in 1990 and 1980 the number of people employed in farm occupations and the number employed in the farming industry have both increased significantly in Suffolk County. The Towns having the greatest numerical increase were Brookhaven, Islip and Southampton while the Towns of Riverhead and Southold, where most of the farm acreage is, had declines. The reason for this is that agriculture is defined as including landscape and horticultural services such as lawn and garden services and tree services. As Suffolk County development continues to sprawl and the population ages there is a greater market for those types of services. For this reason suburban areas may see increases in agricultural employment which overshadow the decrease in actual farm workers.

According the New York State Department of Labor there has been a large decrease in estimated seasonal agricultural employment on Long Island from 1989 to 1995. At the end of August 1989 Long Island had 2,211 seasonal workers which was 21% of the New York State total. At the end of August 1995 Long Island had an estimated seasonal employment of 805 which was a decline of 64% from 1989 and now only accounts for 8% of the New York State total.

The 1992 Census of Agriculture, conducted by the U. S. Census Bureau has information on hired farm labor. In 1992, 352 farms in Suffolk County had hired farm labor, down from 400 farms in 1987. In 1992 there were 3,637 hired farm workers in Suffolk County with an annual payroll of $34,380,000. The 1987 Census does not include a number of hired farm workers but it does have the annual payroll which was $25,986,000.

Another way to look at the loss of farm jobs is to look at the change in farm ownership. Over half of the decline in farms and farm acreage between 1987 and 1992 has been due to losses in farms where the operator is also the full owner. Farms operated by full owners declined from 406 in 1987 to 346 in 1992 while the corresponding acreage declined from 13,325 to 9,904. This means Suffolk County lost 25% of all the farmland operated by full owners. The comparable decline in farm acreage in New York State was 19% for full owners.

A similar situation is found when looking at part owners and the acreage they own. In Suffolk County this declined from 10,081 acres in 1987 to 7,919 acres in 1992 for a loss of 21%.

From 1987 to 1992 there was an increase of 902 acres in the amount of farmland rented by part owners. This may be due to the renting of land which was previously owned by the full owner or part owner. Tenants farmed one fourth less acreage in 1992 than they did in 1987. This amounted to a decline of 1,765 acres in this category which was 27% of the total loss in farmland.

INCREASE IN LAND USE CONFLICTS

As subdivision of previously farmed land or land adjacent to farmland occurs there is a greater potential for conflicts between residences and farms. This is because farmers engage in activities such as plowing, irrigating, fertilizing and spraying which may be deemed annoying to the homeowners but are necessary for farming. These activities sometimes lead to nuisance complaints about noise, dust and pesticide use.

RIGHT TO FARM

A local law entitled *Right to Farm* was approved by the Suffolk County Legislature on May 10, 1982. This law declares an official County policy to conserve, protect and encourage the use of its agricultural land for the production of food and other agricultural products. The law says that agricultural activity such as irrigating, spraying, fertilizing and tractor use does not constitute a nuisance if it is consistent with good agricultural practices and was established prior to surrounding nonagricultural activities. If it is possible for Towns to adopt local laws within their police powers, right to farm laws should be encouraged for passage on the local level as well.

Long Island ducks, once preeminent in quality and reputation, have had their numbers dramatically reduced due to more strict surface water pollution laws and the high costs associated with regulatory compliance

COST OF SERVICES TO FARMS VERSUS OTHER USES

The American Farmland Trust has done many studies on this topic. The unanimous conclusion is that farmland pays more in taxes than it requires in services. It is therefore cost effective for local governments to keep land in farming rather than residential development which requires more in services than it pays in taxes.

The studies show consistently that for every dollar they paid in taxes, residential development demanded in excess of one dollar in services. Farmland on the other hand always paid more in taxes than it required in services. In almost all studies farmland received less than 50 cents worth of services for every dollar it paid in taxes and in many studies the services amounted to one third of what was paid in taxes.

A series of nine community studies were done in the New York counties of Dutchess and Schuyler by the American Farmland Trust. The median ratios of revenue versus cost of community services was 1:1.23 for residential, 1:0.27 for commercial/industrial and 1:029 for farm/forest/open land (See Appendix Table 7). Other studies in Massachusetts, Minnesota and Ohio made similar findings.Commercial and industrial properties are similar to farmland in that they pay more in taxes than they receive in services. Sometimes their ratio of taxes to services was higher than farmland sometimes it was lower but generally it was fairly similar. The difference is that commercial and industrial development generate more jobs which in turn generate more demand for residential development. Thus, residential development will consume more open space, including farmland while it demands more in services than it pays in taxes.

Other costs of commercial and industrial development include traffic congestion, pollution and infrastructure improvements. Also lost is the rural character, the open space and the views.

Often times, residential intrusion into farmland force farms to go fallow, because they can no longer be farmed in large blocks

In addition to a positive revenue flow, farmland provides jobs, a fresh food supply, open space and vistas that remind us of the rural character that is all but gone in most urbanized areas.

It is clear from extensive study that one of the most cost-effective uses of land from a municipal point of view is to use it for farmland.

LOSS OF SCENIC VISTAS

It is evident from looking at aerial photographs and tax maps showing subdivisions of farmland that scenic vistas have been lost and are in jeopardy of being lost due to subdivision. These scenic vistas help make eastern

The home owner fantasy of living in farm country sometimes results in the reality of noise, dust, and spray all of which are nesseary results of farm practice. One new homeowner complained that the seven foot high corn stalks ruined this view of the fields

Ironically, one of the strong markets for nursery stock is the new home sites carved out of unwooded farmland

Suffolk County an attractive destination for tourism. Farms are a part of the rural character of the east end that is attractive to tourists. From the inception of the automobile, people from New York City drove out on Long Island to enjoy the rural atmosphere and sometimes even purchase *farm lots*. Today people from Nassau County and western Suffolk County drive out east for some of the same reasons. Remove the scenic vistas, and therefore the rural character, and this segment of tourism would decrease.

From field observations it can be seen that what used to be large expanses of farmland are now interrupted by more and more houses. It is almost as if the farms are now growing houses instead of crops.

In some places, homes are sprouting faster than crops

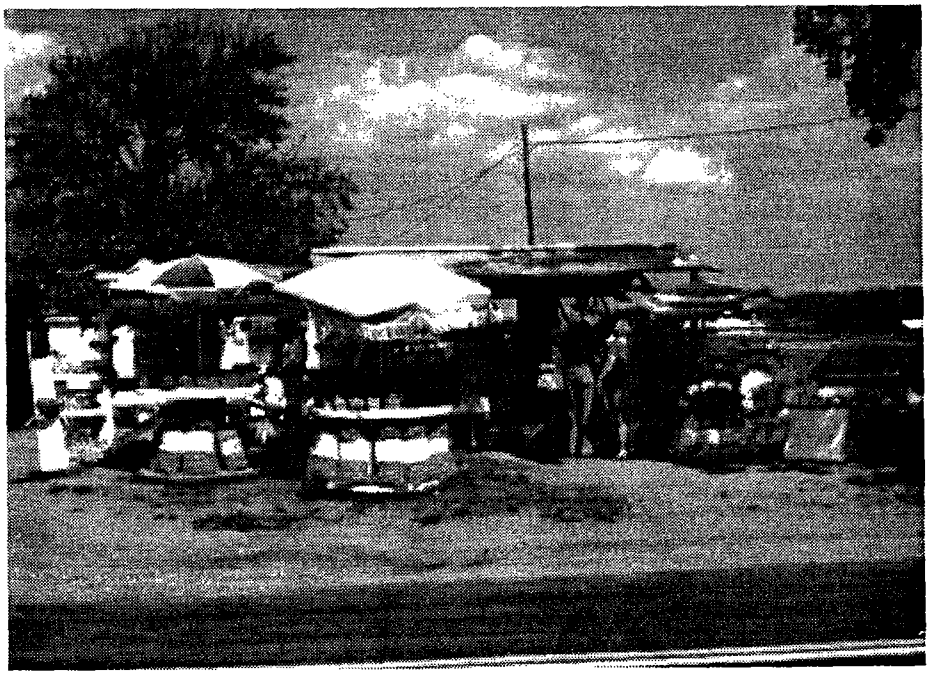
LOSS OF TOURISM

As housing densities have increased tourism has tended to decrease or move to a new location. Tourism is accommodated by second homes, hotels and day-trippers. Tourism has declined in many areas of Suffolk County like Lake Ronkonkoma, the south shore of the Town of Islip and the north and south shore of the Town of Brookhaven. Tourism in these areas is little more than a memory of olden days. The resort hotels are all gone or converted and all but a few of the second homes have been converted to year-round use. According to an update of the Southampton Comprehensive Plan, the ocean is the number one destination for tourists but ranked number three is *rural destinations*.

An important component of tourism is second homes of which there were 35,953 in 1990, in Suffolk County. These second homes can accommodate over 150,000 people which is eight times the number which can be accommodated by all hotels in eastern Suffolk and seasonal hotels in western Suffolk.

As development pushed eastward in Suffolk County second homes were pushed eastward as well. In 1960 the *other vacant* category, which is about 90% second homes, had 45,419 housing units in it and 63% of these were in western Suffolk. By 1970 this category dropped 10,554 units or 23% and eastern Suffolk then accounted for 51% of the *other vacant* category. The Towns of Babylon, Huntington and Smithtown all declined by over 50% in the *other vacant* category from 1960 to 1970.

Local farm stands provide a seasonal outlet for local produce, contribute to the tourist attraction of the area, and boost farm income



During the 1970's and the 1980's there was a continued decline in western Suffolk's second homes while eastern Suffolk was increasing in the number of second homes. From 1970 to 1990 the number of seasonal homes in western Suffolk was cut in half, going from 14,537units to 7,592 units. Eastern Suffolk more than offset the decline in western Suffolk by increasing the

number of seasonal homes there by 11,613 units or 69%. Mastic Beach seasonal units declined 82% from 1970 to 1990 and the Sound Beach area declined by 66%. The Town of Riverhead is the only east end Town to lose seasonal housing units, probably due to suburban sprawl creeping into that Town. Seasonal units in Wading River declined by 57% from 1980 to 1990. It is evident from this data that extensive subdivision of farmland will lead to a decrease in the number of seasonal homes and therefore a decrease in tourism. Furthermore, extensive subdivision would lead to a depreciation of the rural character of the area which is an important attraction for tourists.

Although there are no studies to support it, seasonal homes are probably similar to farmland in that they pay more in taxes than they require in services. This is supported by the fact that most of the property taxes go to schools, and seasonal homes do not generate school students.

CONFLICTS AND IMPEDIMENTS TO FARMING

ZONING AND SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS

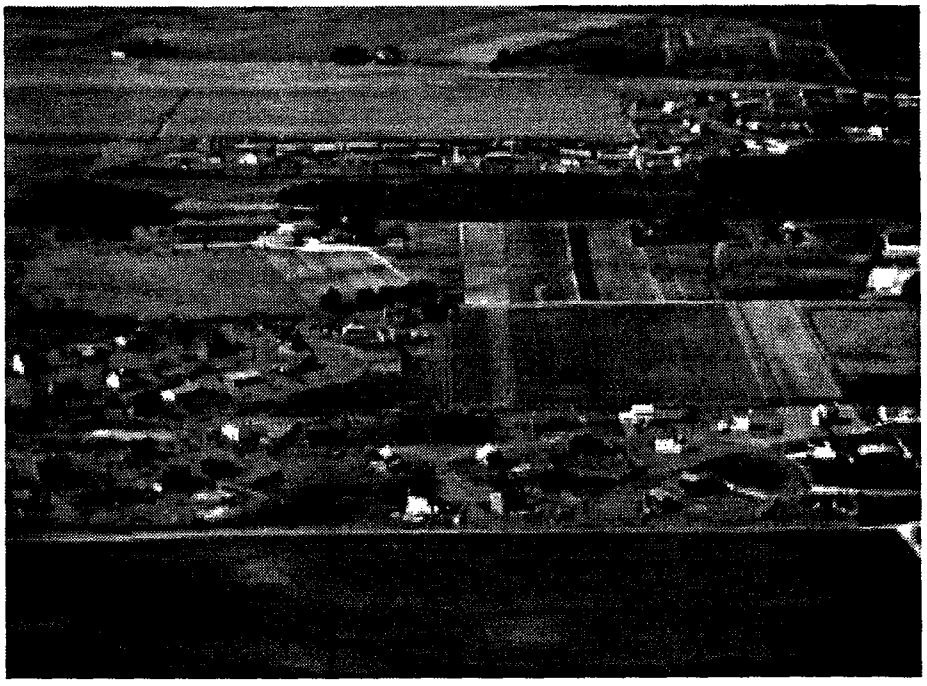
Zoning can in some cases be detrimental to the goal of continued farming. Some zoning laws present restrictions on farmstands. Restrictions on what can and cannot be sold at farmstands can cut into farm revenues. However, if too much leeway is allowed in what is sold, this could give some farmstands a competitive advantage over farmstands that only sell their own produce or stores which must pay taxes, rent and overhead. In the extreme, farmstands can become retail establishments which may cause them to be regulated through commercial zoning.

Another concern, as pointed out in the section on the trends in building permits, is that increasing minimum building lot sizes has led to greater conversion of farmland acreage per new residential unit. This concern has been expressed in a study that found large lot zoning led not to the conservation of farmland but, to the creation of mini-estates which were on oversized lots for the housing, yet too small to be effectively farmed.

Subdivision regulations can act as a detriment to farming by allowing residences to be built right up to the edge of farmland without buffers. This causes a land use conflict because people may now complain about the noise, dust and spraying of the adjacent farm. To mitigate this, deed notifications could be used and buffers could be created. The problem with densely planted buffers is that in most cases, the trees would block the bucolic vistas that some homeowners find attractive.

BUILDING PERMITS

Undue regulations or delays in obtaining the permits can lead to hardships for the farmer. Sometimes buildings or greenhouses have to be built quickly to allow farmers to fill orders or contracts. There are certain times of the year when farmers are very busy such as at planting and harvesting times.



Clustering can preserve large blocks of farmland, but houses stretched out along farm fields without buffers, instead of grouped in more compact configurations, can spell trouble for the farmers in the form of neighbor complaints

If delays push the timing of a project into those times it can create a hardship for the farmer.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT REGULATIONS

Many regulations proposed or adopted in the past have generated animosity from the farm community. These include regulations on pesticide use, discharge regulations such as those now threatening the remaining duck farms, and regulations of gasoline and chemical storage. The specific regulations that have caused problems for farmers are Articles 6, 7 and 12 of the county health code and New York State Environmental Conservation Law. These regulations can cause additional burdens in time and money on farmers. Farmers have said they would much rather spend their time farming than doing paperwork.

Article 6 regulates density through subdivision control. This article generally requires a minimum of one half to one acre lots when land is subdivided, regardless of the zoning. It is said that this reduces the value of the farm property with the adverse effect that it reduces the amount of collateral a farmer has for loan purposes. Since most open areas have been rezoned to one and two acre lot minimums this article does not have the negative impact it once had. Article 7 institutes certain nitrogen loading restrictions based on land use. A house, for example, will be allowed a certain amount of nitrogen loading presumably to support their lawn while a farm is allowed similar nitrogen loading on a per acre basis to produce a useful and marketable commodity. A problem arises when a subdivision is clustered and an agricultural reserve is created as to how nitrogen loading is allocated between the two uses.

Article 12 is an example of a regulation that was poorly instituted but has since been corrected. Initially farmers and others with underground fuel storage tanks were required to remove and replace them without benefit of approved replacement specifications. Today specifications are not only clearly defined but new tanks are generically accepted upon submission of the manufacturers specifications to the Commissioner of the Suffolk County Department of Health Services. Portable containers are now also permitted with some restrictions. In addition there is now a defined regulation outlining the Certificate of Test Completion that expedites the process.

Migrant housing is another sore spot for farmers because the fee the County health department has charged had been raised. At the same time the number of inspections have been reduced. Upon receiving complaints, the Health department lowered the fees part way but still did not increase inspections. The Suffolk County Department of Health Services receives complaints from the general public about certain agricultural practices. Unfortunately there is not any centralized complaint processing or a good record of complaints they have received. Each complaint is routed to the division that handles that specific area and once the complaint is resolved the record disappears.

NEW YORK STATE LEGISLATION - PESTICIDES

A pesticide registry law has been adopted by New York State. This new law requires pesticide sales and use reports to NYSDEC. The summaries are to be made available to the public and some specific information may be made available to health researchers. Reporting requirements will not be dissimilar to current reporting requirements for commercially certified appli-

cators. Basically the bills would require farmers to report all or only the *restricted use* pesticides that they use. On the positive side, the law will create information which will assist in breast cancer research, and provide information on trends and the use of pesticides by certified applicators. However, the law will not insure a reduction in breast cancer rates. There are other known risk factors which may have a greater impact. Further, the law does not regulate homeowners and non-certified applicators who use pesticides and who may account for up to half of all pesticide use on Long Island. No funds have been provided for the adequate collecting, handling and summarizing of the information to be collected.

In Nassau County where the breast cancer rate is highest, housing developments were built on farmland *prior* to the widespread use of pesticides. In eastern Suffolk County where pesticides were extensively used, breast cancer rates were not any higher than other areas. In a December 19, 1995 story in **Newsday** on breast cancer it was said that *Few, if any, scientists believe that environmental contaminants are the sole or even the dominant cause of breast cancer.*

In issues such as breast cancer and its relationship to pesticides more study is needed. Additional research is also needed, especially regarding on-farm use of synthetic compounds and use of chemicals by the landscaping and lawn care businesses.

The way pesticides have been and are being used has changed greatly in the last decade or so. Much has been done to protect people who handle large quantities of toxic hazardous chemicals both on farms and in other workplaces.

Farmers who purchase *restricted use* pesticides must be certified and licensed by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (**NYSDEC**) and must keep extensive records regarding its purchase and use. The NYSDEC has the authority to set its own standards and to subject all chemicals approved by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (**EPA**) to its own set of requirements. There are chemicals approved by the EPA that are not approved by the NYSDEC for use in New York State.

It is the position of the agricultural community that regulation of chemicals is best left to state and federal authorities, not to local entities. There are a host of reasons for this. Different municipalities could have different standards and what might be *labeled* in one town might not be approved in another. This might have serious ramifications for what crops might be grown where, seriously affecting the viability of agriculture. Such testing and evaluation is costly and must be accomplished by a designated agency that has the facilities and necessary funding to accurately carry out that responsibility. Pesticides are sometimes feared by the public because of past practices and a perception that because these chemicals kill insects and other small animals, they are dangerous to large animals and people. Pesticides are much safer today and better controlled. Farmers have to live and work on the land they are using pesticides on, so they are as concerned as anyone about any potential harmful effects on them, their families and their employees.

The Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County works very hard in testing, and educating farmers about pesticides and Best Management Prac-

tices (**BMP**). At their research farm on Sound Avenue in Riverhead they test different pesticides for use and effectiveness. A popular term today is **I**ntegrated **P**est **M**anagement (**IPM**). This entails a comprehensive approach to pest management including crop rotation, pest resistant varieties, and proper pesticide application. According to the Cooperative Extension pesticide use has been reduced by about 50% overall since 1985, and by much greater percentages for many crops. Pesticides today have a much better **E**nvironmental **I**mpact **Q**uotient (**EIQ**). The EIQ is measured with standards for the following:

- toxicity
- soil half-life
- leaching potential to groundwater
- plant surface half-life
- surface loss potential
- farm worker, consumer & ecological effects

It is apparent that, governmental regulations not withstanding, pesticide usage today is better controlled and safer than it has been in decades.

AGRICULTURE IRRIGATION WELLS - NYSDEC

Historically agriculture irrigation wells were exempt from **E**nvironmental **C**onservation **L**aws (**ECL**). However, in 1986 well permits were required for identification purposes in ECL 15-1527.(3). Over the next six years opposition to the permitting of wells grew among farmers because of the length of time it took to obtain well permits. Farmers claimed that crops were being destroyed while permits were being processed. In 1992 ECL 15-1527.(3) was repealed and replaced with ECL 15-1527.(7) which allows NYSDEC to define well permits as an emergency procedure during the growing season.

ANIMAL NUISANCES

As odd as it may seem, deer have become a major problem in Suffolk County. The number of deer have so overpopulated that there is now an estimated 10,000 deer in Suffolk County. Areas, including farm areas are so overrun with deer that these animals are destroying landscaping and crops. Annual damage estimates are put at between $500,000 and $1,000,000. Some farmers are being forced to abandon fields because of deer damage. Ironically, the Central Pine Barrens Core Preservation area permits agriculture as one of only a handful of permitted uses. However, few farms in these areas can sustain agriculture because of the crop desecration caused by the deer in this newly protected habitat.

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation has been helping by issuing nuisance permits to farmers so they can shoot deer but this has not been without problems. Once deer are shot the carcasses have to be disposed of. In some cases the deer problem is so bad it would not mean shooting only a couple of deer but a small herd. There is also a great deal of opposition to killing deer from people who think the deer have a right to live or people who are against the discharge of firearms in a populated area. Whether a farmer shoots deer or builds expensive fencing to protect crops there is a cost to the farmer in time and money, which would preferably be spent on farming. Deer repellents have proven ineffective.

It is clear that the State needs to implement a deer management policy and assist communities with this burgeoning problem. This could take the form of permitting more extensive deer hunting or sterilization of part of the herd. Laws against gun and bow hunting within 500 feet of homes have increased the refuge area for deer and improved their food supply with succulent gardens and residential garbage.

Canada Geese have been doing an increasing amount of damage on Suffolk County farms. Rather than migrating through Suffolk County, they have been taking up permanent residence here. To deal with the smaller migrating populations, the Federal government has instituted a hunting ban on them for the last several years which has added to the overpopulation in Suffolk County.

Canada Geese have been destroying young field crops and winter cover crops. The destruction of cover crops increase erosion and decrease the fertility of the soil, thus, requiring the use of additional fertilizers or reducing crop yield.

To deal with this overpopulation of Canada Geese, hunting should be allowed to resume, at least in areas where there is an overpopulation. Perhaps the State DEC could issued nuisance permits for Canada Geese like they do for deer.

LOCATION OF LAND TO BE PRESERVED

It is not this study's intention to restrict preservation efforts to the eastern Suffolk towns or preclude preservation in any western Suffolk towns. The study concentrates on the eastern towns because that is where most of the remaining farmland is and where land with undeveloped prime soil is. That is where a critical mass of farmland can be created which will preserve farming as a way of life and the rural character of the area. Preservation efforts in western Suffolk will have to be examined on their individual merits.

The selection criteria for Suffolk's first PDR program are still valid today. Efforts were to be concentrated in three areas: Riverhead, the North Fork and the South Fork. The criteria to be used were as follows:

- soil suitability
- present land use
- contiguity of farms
- development pressure
- price of land

LAND IN OR NEAR AGRICULTURAL DISTRICTS

Farmers with land in agricultural districts have already made a commitment to continue farming. This should be reinforced by giving them a high priority for preservation. Preserving the land adjacent to agricultural districts will also help by minimizing potential land use conflicts and creating a large contiguous block of farmland. This will also maintain attractive vistas which are very attractive to the tourist population.

LOCATION RELATIVE TO DEVELOPMENT PRESSURE

Historically there has been a west to east development trend in Suffolk County with the strongest pressure to develop in the western part of the County. For year-round residential development this is still the case. With a conversion rate of 1,454 acres per year over the last ten years all Suffolk County farmland is under some pressure to develop. High taxes are also exerting pressure on farmers to sell out.

LOCATION RELATIVE TO PRIME FARM SOILS

It is simple logic that you want to preserve the best soils for farming. People, having a certain measure of intelligence, have already found and have farmed the majority of the best soils. These we have mapped and identified. Much of the best farm soils, especially in western Suffolk, have already been lost to development. This makes the conservation of the remaining prime farm soil imperative. As development consumes more and more of the prime farm soils it forces farmers into using less productive soils that require heavier fertilization and produces less thus cutting into the farmers' profitability.

Soil is classified into Capability Classes and further broken down into Capability Units within sub-classes. Class I soils are the best soils for farming. In this group are the following soil types, which are nearly level: Bridgehampton silt loam, Haven loam and Montauk silt loam. Class I soils have few limitations that restrict their use and are well suited to all crops

commonly grown in the County. Class II soils, which are prime farm soils, include the same soil types as Class I but are gently sloping. Class II also includes Plymouth loamy sand and Riverhead sandy loam soil types which are abundant and classified as prime farm soils. It also includes Scio and Sudbury Series, but all of these total only about 3,000 acres countywide. Class II soils have moderate limitations that reduce the choice of plants or that require moderate conservation practices.

The following table summarizes the soil types which will be considered prime farm soils for the purpose of preservation efforts. Some Class III soils are used for farming but were not included as prime farm soils because they can have severe limitations that reduce the choice of plants, require special conservation practices, or both.

PRIME FARM SOILS IN SUFFOLK COUNTY

Capability Symbol	Soil Type	Slope	Unit
BgA	Bridgehampton silt loam	0-2%	I-1
BgB	Bridgehampton silt loam	2-6%	IIe-1
BhB	Bridgehampton silt loam/ till substratum	2-6%	IIe-1
HaA	Haven loam	0-2%	I-1
HaB	Haven loam	2-6%	IIe-1
He	Haven loam, thick surface	<3%	IIw-2
MfA	Montauk fine sandy loam	0-3%	IIs-1
MfB	Montauk fine sandy loam	3-8%	IIe-2
MkA	Montauk silt loam	0-3%	I-1
MkB	Montauk silt loam	3-8%	IIe-1
RdA	Riverhead sandy loam	0-3%	IIs-1
RdB	Riverhead sandy loam	3-8%	IIe-2
ScB	Scio silt loam	2-6%	IIe-1
SdA	Scio silt loam	0-2%	IIw-1
SdB	Scio silt loam	2-6%	IIe-1
Su	Sudbury sandy loam		IIw-1

Capability Unit - for more detail refer to the *Soil Survey*

I-1 Suitable to all crops commonly grown in Suffolk County

IIe-1 Suitable for forage, grain, vegetables and nursery stock (except where erosion is a hazard).

IIe-2 Suitable for forage, grain, vegetables and nursery stock (not suited to continuous cultivation)

IIw-1 Suitable to all crops commonly grown in Suffolk County

IIw-2 Suitable to all crops commonly grown in Suffolk County

IIs-1 Suitable to all crops commonly grown in Suffolk County (irrigation required)

Source: *Soil Survey of Suffolk County, New York* - U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, April 1975.

VALUE OF LAND

Strong development pressure is being exerted on farmers by the high price of land. Farmers choose to sell for a variety of reasons. When the decision to sell has been made, the price may be too high for other farmers to compete with developers or speculators to buy the farm.

The greenhouse industry has surged after the energy crisis of the 1970's, to became a major source of high value crops, which keeps Suffolk County number one in agricultural market value in New York State. Further, the greenhouse industry has been a major center of technological innovation

Cost may unfortunately be a factor in which farms are to be preserved. Farms in western Suffolk and the south fork may carry a significantly higher per acre price tag than farms in Riverhead and Southold. When Suffolk County started its purchase of development rights program cost was one of the factors which was considered in evaluating which parcels would be preserved. While it may be a difficult concept to get across to people who look only at how much can be bought with limited funds there are reasons for preserving farmland that is more expensive per acre. One reason is to preserve the last remnant of farming in an urbanized area that used to be extensively farmed. Farming was part of the history of many Suffolk County communities and to lose all the farms would be to lose a part of their historical heritage.

AGRICULTURAL LAND USE

To be eligible for the program parcels should meet the same criteria as Agricultural District parcels. That is they have to be in farm use, presently and for the last two years. Parcels should be at least 10 acres in size to allow enough space for a viable agricultural operation. With smaller parcels, the amount of development precluded by purchasing the development rights would be minimal.

Rating System

A rating system was developed to use in the evaluation of potential properties for the **p**urchase of **d**evelopment **r**ights (**PDR**) program. The system takes into account five major factors. The first two factors are related in that they both seek to reflect the desire to preserve a large block of farmland and thus protect vistas and the land itself from nonagricultural intrusions. While most of the farms considered for PDR contain prime farm soil there are some farm soil, such as Bridgehampton and Haven associations which are clearly better for farming. Slope also plays a part in the soil type and desirability of farmland. Other factors include the estimated price of the farmland and development pressure. Bonuses were also given for land

in Agricultural Districts, and a negative point or two could be given for negative impacts such as excavations or problems with ownership.

The rating system was designed to serve as a guide by which arbitrary decisions could be avoided. In a test of this system at the April 1996 meeting of the Suffolk County Farmland Committee, the system was well received. In many cases the system confirmed what were intuitively the best parcels to be preserved, and the worst parcels to preserve.

Rating System

Contiguity: Proximity to preserved farm properties

Point

5 PDR properties on three sides
4 PDR properties on two sides
3 PDR properties on one side
2 large amount of protected farmland nearby
1 some protected farmland nearby
0 no protected farmland nearby

Vistas

5 long road frontage and part of a large block of farmland (100 + acres)
4 small road frontage and part of a large block of farmland
3 long road frontage and part of a small block of farmland
2 small road frontage and part of a small block of farmland
1 less than 100' of road frontage and part of a large block of farmland
0 less than 100' of road frontage and part of a small block of farmland

Soils

5	Capability Unit I-1: Bridgehampton, Haven, Montauk	0-2%	BgA, HaA, MkA
4	Nearly flat Class II: Riverhead, Scio, Plymouth, Haven, Montauk	0-3%	RdA, SdA, PsA, He, MfA
3	Best soils but with some slope: Bridgehampton, Haven, Montauk	2-6%	BgB, BhB, HaB, MkB
2	Other Class II soils with some slope:Montauk,Riverhead,Scio,Sudbury	2-8%	MfB, RdB, ScB, Su
1	Non-prime soil that is farmed: Plymouth		PmB3
0	poor soil		Gp

Approximate Development Rights Value Per Acre

5 less than $10,000
4 $10,000-$19,999
3 $20,000-$29,999
2 $30,000-$49,999
1 $50,000-$99,999
0 $100,000 or more

Development Pressure

5 subdivision pending and two adjacent subdivisions
4 subdivision pending or two adjacent subdivisions
3 one adjacent subdivision or considering subdivision
2 subdivisions in area
1 no subdivision activity nearby

Adjustments

2 bonus for being in an Agricultural District
-2 other negative factors

ACTIVITIES, PROGRAMS, STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE AGRICULTURAL USES

FARMLAND DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS PURCHASE

This seems to be the most effective but the most costly method of farmland preservation. To date Suffolk County and the Towns of East Hampton, Southampton and Southold have spent about $40 million to purchase development rights to 6,941 acres. At the current rate of County spending of $1.5 million per year and the current rate of conversion of farmland in Suffolk County, it may be 16 more years before Suffolk only has a total of 10,000 acres of farmland left with almost all of that having the development rights purchased. While the current expenditures for purchase of development rights is a step in the right direction it is clear that it will result in reaching only about half the plan goal of preserving 20,000 acres. To meet the goal of 20,000 acres before all but that much farmland has been converted to other uses would take an estimated $15 million dollars per year for the next seven years.

One problem with the county purchase of development rights program is the procedure moves very slowly. It can take two years or more to close even on parcels at the top of the waiting list. It would take three to four years at the present rate of funding to reach parcels at the end of the list. When the County is competing with developers for specific farms the developer has a big advantage because he can close much quicker than the County can. Even if the farmer would rather sell to the County, and many do, they are sometimes forced by timing to sell to a developer. This is where not-for-profit organizations like the Peconic Land Trust and the Nature Conservancy can play an important role. They have the resources and the ability to close a purchase quicker than the County and can work with the County, as they have in the past preserving open space, to preserve farmland under severe development pressure.

INSTALLMENT PURCHASE

There are two *problems* apparent with any expansion of the County Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) Program. The first is that the purchaser, in this case Suffolk County, must have appropriations amounting to perhaps tens of millions of dollars to acquire the development rights to large amounts of acreage. Generating these sums in one or two budget cycles is impossible without a substantial tax bite.

The second involves timing. The County can continue to acquire acreage through a yearly capital appropriation of $1.5 million, but as the comparison graph in Appendix Table 2 show, this acquisition rate will not keep pace with the rate at which farmland is disappearing. To achieve the goal of 20,000 acres of protected and preserved farms, a method must be found to accelerate the rate of preservation without over burdening the taxpayers or straining municipal budgets.

One such method is installment purchase known more formally as Securitizable Tax-Exempt Installment Purchase Open Space Financing.

The advantages of this program are many. The government can now approach farmers with offers that can successfully compete with developers. Accumulated and future dedicated revenue can be combined to preserve farms now and pay for them over time. Farm owners receive tax benefits which in the aggregate exceed the benefit of a cash sale to the government or a developer. Specifically, these involve yearly interest income which is tax exempt and deferral of taxes on capital gains until payment of princi-

One goal of the plan is to preserve large unbroken blocks of farmland

pal. In addition to the tax benefits, farm owners can securitize the agreement and sell all or parts of it to others. They can realize charitable deductions against their operating income by gifting portions of the agreement or for estate planning, can place all or portions of the agreement into trust accounts. In this way, estate heirs can cash out their portion of the agreement, instead of dividing up the land itself.

The bottom line is that, hypothetically, the government can acquire the development rights to an acre of farmland for $4,500 as compared to $13,000!

The identification of the source or sources of funding to undertake installment purchases is obviously crucial. The government must pledge a revenue source for 30 years to pay the interest payments and purchase of comparable maturing treasury bonds (*zeros*) to pay the principal at the end.

Currently, installment purchases are not structured in New York State due to a lack of specific State enabling statues. The New York State Legislature has taken the matter up in the 1996 session due to the high level of interest in this technique for pine barrens preservation and passage appears likely. With the inclusion, by New York State, of matching funds for development rights acquisition to farms the possibility of specific and dedicated funds from an extended quarter cent sales tax program,; other potential tourist-related taxes or fees; participation by towns, the installment purchase concept should definitely be pursued as a mechanism to sharply accelerate preservation of farms in Suffolk County.

BARGAIN SALES

A bargain sale is the sale of land, conservation easements, or development rights to a unit of government or private, nonprofit conservation organization at less than fair market value. The difference between the fair market value and the bargain sale price is a potential charitable gift for the seller. If a purchase is structured as a bargain sale, the seller may be able to shelter a portion of the capital gain or other income from taxation. Thus, Suf-

folk County could potentially purchase development rights at 50% of their value if the seller could use the difference between the reduced purchase price and the fair market value as a charitable gift. A seller can shelter 30% of his/her adjusted gross income through a bargain sale involving appreciated property. The unused portion of the gift can be carried forward for up to five additional years.

VOTER REFERENDUM

It is apparent that to save a significant amount of farmland in Suffolk County it will take a large amount of capital and the best way to get support for this expenditure would be through a voter referendum. It is also the proper way to consider a major expenditure of public funds. If the people support farmland preservation they are the ones who should send that message through their vote.

People, knowing the importance of farmland, have repeatedly, and gladly, voted in favor of funding farmland protection programs. John Klein, Suffolk County Executive and a driving force behind the first purchase of development rights program in the country, said public reaction was 95% favorable. In New Jersey three $50 million bonds have been approved by the voters for purchase of development rights since 1981. In Rhode Island $2 million has been placed on the ballot every two years since 1982, except for 1994. These referenda have always been passed. Locally, the towns of Southold, East Hampton and Southampton have proposed and had approved a number of bond issues that acquire development rights to farms. On a county-wide level, a public referendum might be offered to extend the quarter-cent sales tax program (Drinking Water Protection) to make it a *Quality of Life Conservation program*. This program could create three separate and dedicated funds: one for farmland development rights acquisition, one for pine barrens acquisition and one for county parks acquisition and operations throughout Suffolk County. Farmland and parks programs are currently funded through the property tax so shifting then to a sales tax base will help to stabilize property taxes. Each program could be funded for a ten year period and generate sufficient money for specific and dedicated trust funds to operate in accordance with voter approvals.

STATE AGRICULTURAL DISTRICTS

These are valuable for helping farmers through reduced property taxes and protection from nuisance complaints and government intervention. This may be the deciding factor in whether or not a farm is sold and is a good interim method of protecting farmland. With local interest and assessor support, agriculture districts can be increased in size and buy time for long-term preservation efforts.

As has been seen in the Town of Brookhaven, agricultural districts do not protect farmland over an extended period of time. While these districts are a valuable tool, other alternatives to preserve farms need to be used in conjunction with agricultural districts.

TRANSFER OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS (TDR)

Transfer of development rights programs to protect farmland have been set up in the Town of Riverhead and are being set up in the Towns of Southold

Because of stricter regulation or elimination of certain pesticides, farmers are turning to practices requiring low or infrequent use of chemicals. Also farmers are trained and licensed for pesticides use, while widespread use of chemicals in nonfarm areas remains unregulated or unlicensed

and Southampton. They are still too new to see what impacts they will have on preserving farmland.

The impacts may tend to be small because of several reasons. One is they generally require the transfer to occur between parcels in the same school district. In Riverhead most of the Town of Riverhead is in one school district but efforts to upzone in the late 1980's failed. This leaves most of the Town land zoned to allow one unit per acre. Suffolk County Health Department regulations also require one acre lots in a large area of Riverhead. This all points to very little potential farmland preservation in the Town of Riverhead being able to be accomplished though TDR or clustering.

A final deterrent to TDR is local opposition to any increased density in neighborhood areas. The phrase *Not In My Backyard* is used to describe the all too common opposition to anything local people consider undesirable. Further, transferring density from farms and increasing it in built-up but still low-density areas, inflames new residents, especially those who moved into the area because of its rural qualities.

TDR is still attractive because it preserves farmland at no cost. Considering the limited funding available for farmland preservation all types of preservation methods will have to be utilized.

DONATION OF CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

A conservation easement is a voluntary agreement between a landowner and a governmental agency or a conservation organization such as the Peconic Land Trust to restrict the use of land in perpetuity. As such, easements convey a portion of a property owner's *bundle of rights* to the qualified recipient. For example, a farmer may restrict all or a portion of his/her property from subdivision, residential structures, etc. Such restrictions may protect significant agricultural soils or other natural features, yet the farmer is entitled to all other retained rights including agricultural production.

Conservation easements do not permit public access. The public has no

more right to trespass on land covered by an easement than on any other private property, unless the owner permits such access. The recipient of the easement is empowered to enforce the restrictions on the land, yet the property is retained in private ownership as is the case when development rights have been sold. As the ownership of the protected property changes, it remains subject to the restrictions of the easement.

Easements benefit both the landowner and the community at large. Since easements keep land in private ownership, it remains on the tax rolls. At the same time, the diminished value of the property due to the imposed restrictions may provide the landowner with the potential for a reduction in property taxes if the property is not enrolled in an agricultural district.

A conservation easement is a tax-deductible charitable gift, provided that the easement is perpetual and is donated *exclusively for conservation purposes* to a qualified organization or governmental agency. The value of the charitable gift is equal to the difference between the fair market value of the land before and after the imposition of the easement restrictions as determined by a qualified appraiser. If the donor of the easement owns property immediately contiguous to the protected property, the charitable gift may be reduced by the enhancement in value of the contiguous property. The Internal Revenue Code allows an itemized deduction of up to 30 percent of an individual's adjusted gross income for gifts on appreciated property and 50% of unappreciated property. Amounts in excess of these limitations may be carried forward for five additional years.

A conservation easement may also substantially reduce the value of land for estate tax purposes. Federal estate taxes are levied on the *highest and best use* of land rather than its current use. This is particularly problematic for farm families who wish to pass their land on to the next generation. Given the appreciated values of land on Eastern Long Island, large landowners are often forced to sell their land in order to pay federal and state estate taxes. Land subject to a conservation easement will be limited to its restricted value for estate tax purposes.

CLUSTERING

New subdivisions on farmland can be laid out so the houses are clustered on part of the property while part of it is put in an agricultural reserve which allows the continued farming of that part of the property. The Town of Southampton has made extensive use of clustering to create agricultural reserves. To date 778 acres of agricultural reserves have been saved through clustering in the Town of Southampton. This exceeds the amount of land in either the Town or the County farmland preservation programs within the Town and was achieved at no cost to the taxpayer. Another 170 acres of agricultural reserves is now pending in the subdivision process. One reason so much land has been preserved is the predominant two acre zoning unlike Riverhead's one acre zoning.

Clustering does have a number of drawbacks in terms of preserving farmland. First if you are preserving farmland through clustering you are conceding that as much as half, and sometimes more, of the farmland will be lost to development. Secondly, as much as half, maybe more, of the agricultural reserve land created by clustering is not subsequently being farmed. The reasons for this include, lots being too small or too irregular in shape to be efficiently farmed and confusion over who owns the land and how a farmer

The use of clustering can preserve farming areas at no cost to the taxpayer, but if not property coordinated, can also create checkerboarded land use and eliminate large blocks of farmland

can rent it for farming. Thirdly, clustering can intensify the conflicts between houses and farms by surrounding the farm with houses whose residents do not went the noise, smells and spraying associated with many farm uses. Nitrogen loading standards need to be applied evenly to insure the houses do not take the majority of the allocation and leave the farm with less than is needed for an economic enterprise. Cluster subdivision design is crucial to minimize the farm/residence conflicts. Clustering benefits the developer by reducing the amount of roads and utilities they must put in. This also reduces the future costs for maintenance and snow removal whether the road is private or dedicated to the town.

AGRICULTURAL TAX ASSESSMENTS (LAND VALUE ASSESSMENT)

Considering that farms pay more taxes than they require in services it is easy to justify why taxes should be lower on farmland. Lower taxes can be achieved through joining a State agricultural district when it is renewed every eight years or by filing an individual commitment with the Town Assessor's office.

While agricultural tax assessments lower a farmer's costs and make it more economical for them to continue farming it may also encourage speculation. The State of Maryland was the pioneer in agricultural assessment in 1956 and quickly found out that without penalties or paying back taxes their program was a boon for developers. Speculators can lease the land for farming and apply for agricultural assessments while waiting for development to reach the area. A penalty is associated with conversion of farmland getting an agricultural assessment to discourage speculation. Further disincentives like a monetary penalty upon conversion could be used. Another method to discourage speculation would be to restrict benefits to bonafide farmers. This might be counter-productive as it increases carrying costs for speculators who in turn may pass it on to tenants.

Two studies, *Untaxing Open Space* by the U. S. Council on Environmental Quality and *Farmland Retention in the Washington Metro Area* by the Wash-

ington Area Council of Governments, have shown agricultural assessment to be an inadequate preservation tool. In areas with strong development pressure tax savings and conversion penalties are likely to be too small relative to the land price to affect a decision to convert the land. These studies recommended that programs be based on a commitment to farming, otherwise a large public revenue loss would yield nothing in return. Agricultural related improvements should be considered for the Suffolk County Strategic Industry Program. These tax abatements are for industries that benefit the economy and since farmland pays more in taxes than it requires in services while it provides jobs and an essential marketable product, it should qualify.

REDUCING FARM OPERATING COSTS

Part of this is already being done through agricultural assessments for property taxes. Other direct operating costs should be addressed by means such as labor cost-sharing or energy costs. Joining a gasoline buyer's coop could save money much like the Fuel Buyers Coop, run by NYPIRG, which saves homeowners 20-25 cents per gallon on home heating fuel.

ESTATE PLANNING

Estate planning is a critical element in facilitating the conveyance of farmland from one generation to the next. Given the appreciation in value of farmland in Eastern Suffolk over the past 20 years, land cannot be conveyed without adverse estate tax consequences unless careful planning is done.

The fundamental problem is the fact that farmland is valued at its *highest and best use* for federal and state estate tax purposes. Thus, it is the development potential of land that governs its value. On the federal level, there is a provision for taxation based on an agricultural use under Section 2032A, but the conditions for such valuation are often difficult for farm families to meet and there is a limitation of $750,000 by which a gross estate can be reduced through this election.

Farm families, then, are often put in a position of identifying ways to reduce the value of their estates to a point that the next generation can afford to inherit the land while retaining enough equity to support the financial viability of the farm operation. There are a variety of tools that are being used to facilitate the transfer of land including, but not limited to, the following:

- Conveyance of land and individual interests thereof to the next generation by using the unified life time credit of $600,000 per parent and annual contributions of $10,000 to children, grandchildren, etc.

- Family limited partnerships through which land is discounted due to restrictions within the partnership agreement.

- Sale of development rights and/or donations of conservation easements that limit the development potential and value of farmland or portions thereof. Such conveyances may reduce both future estate taxes and current property taxes.

• Purchase of life insurance to provide heirs with funds to pay estate taxes.

These tools and others can be used in combination to construct estate plans that enable the conveyance of farmland to future generations. Information and counseling on different aspects of estate planning can be obtained from the American Farmland Trust, Peconic Land Trust, and Farm Family Insurance.

MARKETING

Marketing is essential to any business and farming is no exception. Efforts by the Long Island Tourism and Convention Commission, Peconic Land Trust, the Group For the South Fork and the Long Island Farm Bureau help inform people of the diversity and availability of farm products.

The farm community is joining with community based organizations to bring produce to people - a farmstand with legs! Community markets are now active from Manhattan to Riverhead

To assist farmers in selling produce on Long Island, the Peconic Land Trust has sponsored the Long Island Community Markets Program funded by both private and public funds including a grant from Suffolk County. Farmers markets are currently operating in Port Jefferson, Patchogue, Islip, Locust Valley and Riverhead. In 1995, twenty-five growers and vendors participated in the markets. The markets included a variety of educational events and programs as well.

Farmers have the opportunity to make money selling their produce and provide a visual reminder that farming is still a way of life and support for people on Long Island. These markets enhance community quality of life and bring revitalization to downtowns by bringing in more pedestrian traffic.

The concept of a Long Island Regional Food Market was examined during the 1960's, 1970's and early 1980's. Intuitively it seemed like a good idea

and one that could easily be supported by Suffolk being the leading agricultural county in New York State coupled with a regional population of 2.6 million people. A 1984 report titled *The Long Island Regional Food Market Feasibility Study* was released by the Long Island Regional Planning Board. In the report the feasibility of a regional food market was examined. It was the conclusion of the report that existing markets were adequate and a regional food market was not feasible. Conditions and crops have changed since that report was done. While the idea of a regional food market is an old one it should not be discarded if shown to be beneficial to farmers. This could work well with the Farm Bureau's Grown on Long Island Campaign. If a market were established more restaurants, supermarkets and consumers might be willing and able to take advantage of local produce. Surplus refrigerated storage warehouses at Pilgrim State Hospital in Brentwood present just such an opportunity.

Marketing can also be viewed in terms of its impact on imports and exports. Long Island, as an economic unit, is similar to a small country with its balance of trade. As the amount of farmland is reduced Long Island exports less and imports more. Increasing trade imbalance means we lose the benefit of spending our money locally and end up exporting our money elsewhere. For these reasons programs like the Long Island Farm Bureau's *Grown on Long Island* campaign are very important.

Agriculture is in essence economic development. It creates jobs, purchases high tech equipment and hopefully makes a profit, which is spent in the local economy. Suffolk should help promote and provide assistance in researching market development for the agricultural industries.

ZONING

This subject will raise the hackles of farmers faster than any other but it is a regulation that applies to all private land, farms included. Large lot zoning has been successful in other parts of the country in preserving vast amounts of farmland at very little cost to the taxpayers. In Napa Valley, California zoning was changed from one acre lots to 20 acre lots in 1968 and later to 40 acre lots. In Lancaster County, Pennsylvania almost all the towns have adopted large lot zoning. Minimum lot size requirements average 25 acres and have been responsible for the preservation of 310,000 acres. McHenry County, Illinois moved much of its farmland from a 5 acre minimum lot size to a 160 acre minimum lot size in 1979. Last spring they went in the other direction lowering the minimum lot size to 40 acres.

Most of the farmland in Suffolk County is zoned for one or two acre lot minimums. The Town of Southampton has had some success with clustering mostly two acre zoned areas and thus preserving 778 acres at no cost to the taxpayer. Most of the Town of Southold's farm acreage is zoned for two acre minimums and most of Riverhead's is zoned one acre. In 1988 a Town of Riverhead committee came out with a Farmland Preservation Plan that called for two acre zoning in agricultural areas. That Committee rejected suggestions that a 10 acre zone be implemented and recommended instead to go to two-acre zoning. Due to fierce opposition,plans for upzoning were never approved. Opposition of this sort can be expected making any attempt to upzone farms very difficult in Suffolk County.

Large lot zoning can in some cases run counter to preservation goals because it consumes more farmland per dwelling unit. In some areas this has

led to mini-estates that were too large to easily mow and landscape and too small to farm. The Michigan Subdivision Control Act of 1967 allowed subdivision of land into 10 acre lots without local review. This resulted in many 10 acre country estates.

Changes in zoning can negatively impact farming by reducing the value of farmland used as collateral for loans. Farmers' ability to continue viable agricultural operations depend on their capability to borrow money for a variety of purposes including cash-flow loans to run operations until crops can be marketed, loans to purchase or repair equipment or capital improvement loans to build needed farm structures such as barns or greenhouses. If the value of farmland is lowered by upzoning, the amount of money which can be borrowed is also lowered. An uncollaterized loan, if a farmer could get it, would carry a higher interest rate and therefore cost the farmer more. A more radical zoning approach would be to designate an agricultural zoning category which would only allow agricultural uses. This might achieve the goal of protecting farmland through zoning, but might represent an unconstitutional taking of the property.

Zoning may end up being a temporary form of protection. A decision by the Town Board, after following certain procedures like a public hearing is all that is needed, to reverse a previous zoning decision. McHenry County, Illinois is one example where zoning has been changed to allow smaller lot sizes and some people are even trying to get lot sizes reduced to the original minimum of 5 acre lots.

CONSERVATION PLANNING/LIMITED DEVELOPMENT

Farmers should take advantage of organizations which offer assistance to farmers in planning the future of their farmland. The Peconic Land Trust employs conservation planning and limited development techniques in its work with farmers and other landowners. The Trust's planning process begins with several questions. What are the goals and objectives of the farm family? Can the next generation pay the estate taxes necessary to keep the property? By discussing these and other questions, the Trust assists farm families in understanding the range of options available to meet their goals. The Long Island Farm Bureau, Cooperative Extension and the American Farmland Trust may also be of assistance in providing farmers with options. Publications can also be obtained from the Land Trust Alliance in Washington, D.C. and the Estate Planning Press in Boston.

RIGHT OF FIRST REFUSAL

This is a signed guarantee that owners will first offer their property to the County before they can sell it to anyone else. In Westchester County, two private golf courses signed *Rights of first refusal* in exchange for a tax break. The savings here were two-fold. An immediate cash outlay was avoided and the property continued to pay property tax. The same principle can be applied to farmland so money can be targeted to sites under immediate pressure, rather than spending money on a property that might never have been sold.

COMMUNITY SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE (CSA)

This is a new concept that was pioneered in Massachusetts. A farmer calcu-

Non-farmers can became equity partners on the farm, buying shares ***and sharing the crops. Community supported agriculture (CSA) can also allow non-farmers to reduce their cash investment each year by*** pitching in

lates the farm's expenses, including salaries and sells shares to the number of families the farm can support. The farmer benefits by having the income guaranteed up front without waiting for the harvest and the risk of crop failure is spread among all the shareholders. The shareholders benefit by having a supply of fresh vegetables at wholesale prices. They do not have to pay the middleman and they are protected from price fluctuations due to market conditions. The Peconic Land Trust has operated a CSA project at its Quail Hill Preserve in Amagansett for the past 5 years.

FARM LINK AND FARM ON PROGRAMS

This program matches retiring farmers with people who would like to own a farm. In many cases new farmers cannot afford the expenses of buying an operating farm. This program gives them a chance to work a farm and learn from an expert as they build up enough equity in the farm to eventually buy it. The farmers create a market for their farm and they get to sell it knowing someone will farm it and take good care of it in the future. Pennsylvania had 38 retiring farmers in the program and 250 people in the program to own a farm.

COMPOSTING

Composting has been evolving into something that may be of value to the farm community. In the past composting has been predominantly a backyard gardener's activity. More recently composting has been seen as a financially advantageous way of disposing of yard waste for municipalities who can remove it from their waste stream. For farmers this may mean a low cost source of natural fertilizer. Municipal compost has been used in the production of sod with excellent results. At present, the greatest interest and participation has been in municipal yard waste disposal on farms. There are some major concerns with heavy metals, plastics and glass in municipal solid waste (MSW) compost which will require more research, controls or regulation before MSW can become viable compost for these uses.

On farm composting can provide a ready source of soil supplement, cut down on fertilizer use and aid local government in the disposal of yard waste

The On-Farm Composting Program was started in 1995 by the Cornell Cooperative Extension and the Town of Riverhead Highway Department. It was able to divert 5,000 cubic yards of leaves from the Town landfill to growers willing to accept them. This program was beneficial to both the Town and the grower. Similar programs should be instituted for all towns.

MANURE

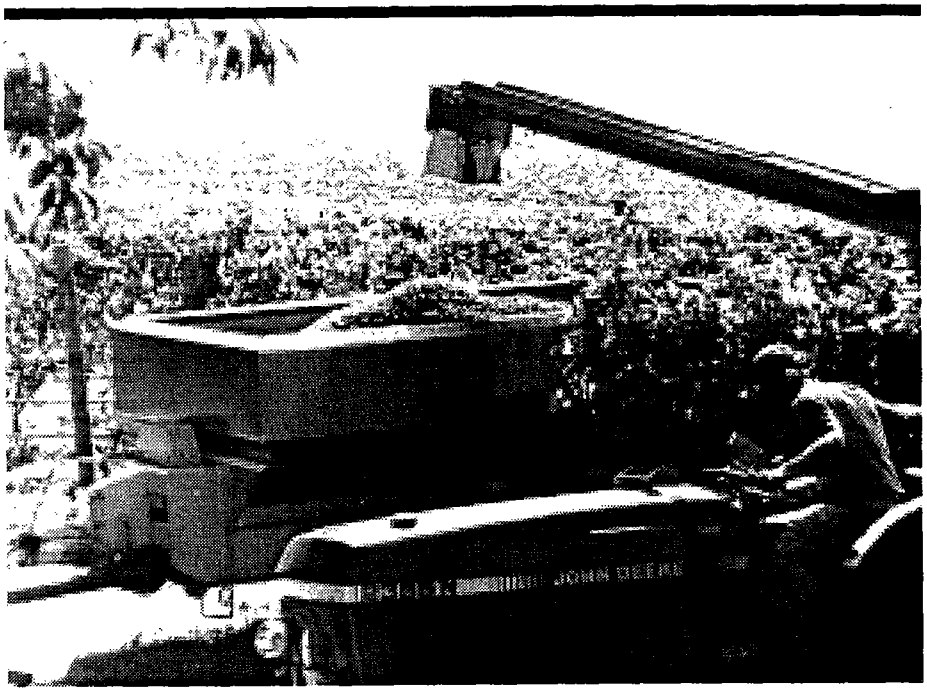
Manure is one of the byproducts of livestock requiring disposal or recycling. This represents a problem and a cost to farmers to get rid of it. Making it available to the public is an effective way of getting rid of it as there are plenty of people willing to use it for fertilizer. The Cooperative Extension keeps a list of horse farms that are willing to let the public come and take it away.

WINE INDUSTRY

The tremendous growth and development of the wine grape vineyards, especially in the Town of Southold, have provided new farming enterprises on land which was once struggling to survive economically on potatoes. The wine grape industry, the vineyards, the processing facilities have all combined to add a new direction to tourism as well, bringing a world-class cachet to the North Fork to rival the reputation of the once thriving Long Island duck industry, and the Hamptons in renown.

The nature of the wine industry is one of long-term investment and high capital costs. The purchase of Development Rights programs have assisted the industry in its infancy by providing inexpensive land for the vineyard plantings. The industry has begun to organize to promote its interests on the state level, seeking research funding, modifications to State law, and promotion of Long Island wines to consumers and especially restaurants. The East End Economic and Environmental Task Force in 1994 convened a

The wine industry has emerged, partly due to the low land prices created by the PDR programs, to be a major replacement for the struggling Long Island potato



group to make recommendations to the governor as to how the State could assist the wine industry. The task force publication, *Blueprint for our Future* provides a good overview of the wine industry and details various recommendations, all worthy of support.

RESEARCH LABORATORY

The Long Island Horticultural Research Laboratory is a valuable asset in promoting the continuation of farming and best management practices in Suffolk County. The lab works in close relationship with the farmers and the Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County on pest management recommendations and alternatives in all aspects of agricultural production. The lab researches up-to-date and cutting edge methods to maintain economically feasible enterprises. The research lab is an educational unit of Cornell University whose mission is to discover, integrate, disseminate, and apply knowledge about agriculture and environment and natural resources as a basis for the sustainable improvement in the lives of people. Their primary emphasis is on producers and consumers of horticultural products on Long Island and residents of the region.

Developments in **I**ntegrated **P**est **M**anagement (**IPM**), Best Management Practices, new cultural practices, new and alternative crops and many other methods have been identified through applied research conducted on Long Island. Many IPM programs have been developed at the lab, which are not only used on Long Island but across New York State. This has been a major asset to the industry and will play an increasingly important role as the industry evolves.

Various products have been researched and tested at the Lab. These include: fungicides, pesticides, herbicides and alternatives to using any of these. In general, the lab tries to find the most efficient, cost effective and environmentally sensitive method of dealing with numerous farm related problems such as pest control, weed control and disease control. Through the research that has been done, there are many publications farmers can obtain to help them maximize their efficiency. There are annually or bi-

Long Island Horticultural Lab, on Sound Ave. in Riverhead, provides a working resource for farmers to view the latest techniques for crop and pest control

annually updated recommendations concerning both chemical and non-chemical weed, insect and disease control which are published by the lab.

A diagnostic lab also exists at the site . Plant, insect and tick samples can be mailed to or dropped off at that lab for identification or diagnosis. If a farmer is losing a large amount of crops to a blight, the lab can help him identify it and recommend an effective way to deal with it. The lab also tests soil samples for pH and nutrients and will issue recommendations on fertilizer and limestone use.

Considering the important work the Horticultural Lab is doing, it's funding should be increased as recommended in a 1994 report to the Governor titled *Blueprint for Our Future* by the East End Economic & Environmental Task Force of Long Island, New York. The report recommends increasing the funding formula which would increase state funding for the Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County from $45,000 to $109,000. This would allow the lab to do an even better job in the future.

RESPONSIBLE FARMING PRACTICES

A number of factors have led farmers in Suffolk County to incorporate some new techniques and renew some abandoned, but time-honored traditions into their operations. Land values and resultant property taxes, new neighbors whose abstract fantasy of farming does not square with reality, increased awareness and concern about synthetic chemical compounds and the high cost of these products have all joined to put farming in a spotlight as never before.

Farmers and farming organizations have responded both in the field and in the press. Public awareness and education have increased dramatically, sponsored chiefly by the Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County and the Long Island Farm Bureau. At fairs, demonstrations and tours of private farms and the Suffolk County Farm in Yaphank, school groups and

visitors can see current farming practice in action and can see the ways in which farmers are caring for their land.

Two principal techniques of stewardship for farms include **B**est **M**anagement **P**ractices (**BMP**) and **I**ntegrated **P**est **M**anagement (**IPM**).

Best Management Practices (BMP) can include the selection of areas for farming based on soil types and topography, which would influence surface run-off, transmission of compounds into the soil and groundwater and soil characteristics which might relate to wind erosion and fugitive dust.

There are numerous practices many of which can minimize the travel of chemicals down into the soil (leaching) or the flushing of these chemicals off the land via surface run-off into adjacent water bodies or onto adjacent properties. These practices include:

- Selection of crop hybrids which might be genetically more pest or drought resistant.
- Use of soil amendments to improve *tilth* - the soils texture, nutrients and ability tohold water.
- Proper calibration and maintenance of application equipment.
- Proper training of farm personnel in the handling and application of fertilizers and pesticides.
- Proper and minimal storage of toxic and hazardous materials.
- Minimizing the use of wettable powders, dusts and micro granules more likely to runoff or leach.
- Maximize the use, where possible, of biological agents for pest control.
- Matching the types of chemicals, their timing of application and spacial extent of use with anticipated rainfalls, irrigation cycles and soil characteristics.
- Spot applications of pesticides where needed rather than blanket application as a preventive measure.

The timing of planting, harvesting and growth of cover crop have a great

A plastic-lined trench can appear as wide as the Grand Canyon and as difficult to cross for the potato beetle who has spent the winter in the woods and is ready to move back to the field for summer sustenance and reproduction. No chemicals needed here

impact on soil erosion. The planting of nitrogen-fixing crops, crop rotation, and tilling can have beneficial effects on soil tilth. Some cover crops can provide beneficial habitat for insects which prey on destructive bugs, and cover crops can also be used to hinder growth of weeds and the need for herbicides.

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is a systematic program of pest management that uses a variety of cultural, biological and chemical strategies. Rather than an extreme approach which might attempt to eliminate all pests, IPM is a contained strategy to manage pests at acceptable levels. Crop loss from pests is estimated nationally by Cornell University to be 37%.

That is the current level, which is higher than crop loss levels *before* the advent of chemical pesticides. IPM has therefore become more popular as an approach to pest control because it does not have the high social and economic costs associated with *saturation bombing* of crops. Under IPM practice, pesticides are a last resort and not a first strike measure. IPM programs choose the best alternative to pest control which pose the least threat to humans, animals and non-targeted plants. These programs make use of a deep understanding of pest life cycles and the relationship between these life cycles and action levels. The action level is the key; when is it necessary to take action based on impending economic damage which is deemed unacceptable?

Scientific research and farming practices are continually seeking ways to economically deal with pests with least harmful results to the environment, and those efforts should be encouraged and continued.

Responsible farm practices have in recent years opened up public policy discussions on what some people characterize as *sustainable agriculture.* This term is still without precise definition, but goes to the heart of what changed farm policy with the advent of petrochemicals: *Farming became a production-oriented industry like manufacturing.* Fertilizers, pesticides, fungicides and herbicides were hailed for most of this century as man-made miracle compounds which were capable of dramatically increasing crop yields. Scientific evidence continues to build that the indiscriminate use of synthetic compounds can have great negative environmental impacts. Hence the growth of BMP and IPM.

Scientific research and testing continues to show a natural selection process for insects which results in an upward spiral of dependency on new chemical compounds to battle the continuing procreation of pests resistant to *last year's* chemical compounds.

Farmers are turning consequently to BMP and IPM as principal ways to become less chemically dependent, less yield-oriented and more oriented towards responsible farming practices which seek to balance economic viability, environmental soundness and social acceptability.

ACADEMIC AND TECHNOLOGY CONNECTIONS

In 1994, the East End Economic and Environmental Task Force of Long Island recommended the creation of an Agricology Institute to assist the farming and fishing industry with applied research and the establishment of new commercial enterprises for agriculture, fishing and environment technology. Much in the same way that the University of California at Davis provides academic support, research and technology investigation for the California Wine Industry, so too could an academic/research center build on the work of the Long Island Horticultural Research Lab, the New York State Agriculture Experiment Station, Cornell Cooperative Extension, the Long Island Research Institute, the Laboratories at Brookhaven and Cold Spring Harbor.

As with any evolving industry, training in agricultural techniques and the use of new technology (and some not so new) is an important part of successful farming practice

The farming community needs assistance to respond to rapidly changing environmental concerns which are leading to further regulatory initiatives. Scientific inquiry, technological innovation, applied research, environmental monitoring all are needs of the farm community which could be helped immensely by coordinated academic and technological support.

LEGISLATION TO HELP IN THE CONTINUATION OF FARMING

ESTATE TAX

The continuation of farming can be assisted by changing the way farmland is taxed as it passes from one generation to the next in a decedent's estate. While there is a provision in the Internal Revenue Code (Section 2032A) to tax farmland at a lower rate than other real property, it is very difficult to meet the current requirements under this section of the Code. In addition, there is a limit of $750,000 by which an adjusted gross estate can be reduced under this election. Given the high value of real estate in Eastern Suffolk, this limitation hampers the effectiveness of Section 2032A.

New legislation could be initiated to improve Section 2032A. Alternatively, farmland could be made exempt from the payment of estate tax unless or until it is sold. Estate taxes could also be considered a lien against farm property to be satisfied only upon the sale of the farm. This would allow the farm to be inherited without forcing its sale to pay estate taxes or severely draining a farmer's financial resources to hold onto it. However, this type of lien must be structured in such a way that it will not affect the credit worthiness of collateralized farm loans or interfere with potential purchase of development rights.

PROPERTY TAXES

Since property taxes for funding public education have become so onerous to both homeowners and farm owners a replacement for property taxes such as a local income tax, sales tax or a real estate transfer tax should be studied. This was supported by a resolution of the Long Island Farm Bureau. In 1994 the State of Michigan restructured their tax code to shift education from property taxes to sales tax.

The Long Island Farm Bureau has proposed circuit breaker legislation that would help mitigate the high property taxes farmers are now forced to pay in Suffolk County. In this proposal property taxes would be allowed as an income tax credit . This deserves research and consideration.

STATE AID FORMULA FOR EDUCATION

Education Aid formulas need to be corrected because state aid is calculated based on assessed value without considering the impact of agricultural assessment. State aid is lower than it should be in the Towns of Riverhead and Southold where a large amount of property pays property taxes based on agricultural use rather than the assessed value used in the state formula.

NEW YORK STATE FARMLAND PRESERVATION PROGRAM

Considering the economic and aesthetic value of farming in New York State and the large amount of money that needs to be raised to protect the benefits of farmland for all New York State residents, a State matching funds program should be instituted to help Counties in their preservation efforts.

COST BENEFIT ANALYSIS AND RISK ASSESSMENT

The Long Island Farm Bureau believes these should be embodied into Suffolk County's regulatory agencies. Duplication of existing laws and regulations result in unreasonable and costly standards.

LAND SUBDIVISION AND DEED NOTIFICATION

In an effort to preempt complaints about farming activities, a deed notification system can be put in place. The justification for this already exists in the Suffolk County's 1982 *Right to Farm* law.

The deed notification could be applied to all new building lots created within 500 feet of existing farmland. This would inform owners of the nearby farm and its rights under the Suffolk County *Right to Farm* law to engage in certain agricultural activities such as plowing, irrigating, spraying, fertilizing and harvesting.

Such notification would educate new residents about farming and hopefully lead to fewer complaints about farm operations. Upon approval of the plan this should be presented for approval and implementation to the Suffolk County Planning Commission. The Commission would recommend deed notification on new building lots within their jurisdiction which include locations within 500 feet of a County or State road, a County or State park, a municipality boundary or the shoreline. For areas outside that jurisdiction, the individual towns would have to adopt the deed notification policy.

Even without formal *right to farm* policies much of the potential conflict between farmers and neighbors could be averted by a pro-agriculture attitude by local government and a general sense that farming was there first and has to engage in some activities neighbors might find objectionable. Farmers themselves have tried to be good neighbors by taking into account that they do have neighbors and trying to avoid practices which might cause a conflict.

APPENDIX

Appendix Table 1

SUFFOLK COUNTY
DECLINES IN FARM ACREAGE

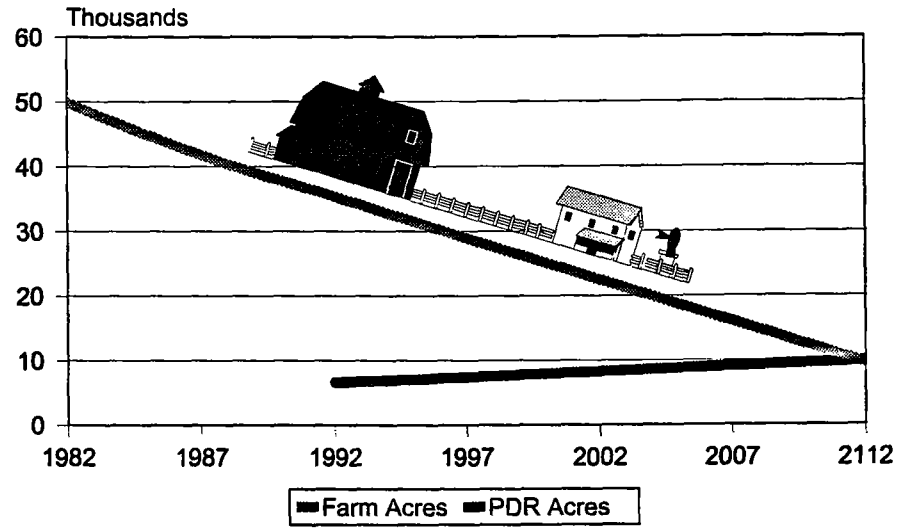
Year	No.	Acres	Farmland as a % of all land	Years between Figures	Lost Acres	Lost acres per year	Building permits per year
1950	2187	123,346	21.2				
1959	1,258	89,776	15.4	9	33,570	3,730	10,736
1969	743	61,520	10.5	10	28,256	2,826	12,210
1974	737	55,397	9.5	5	6,123	1,225	11,597
1978	777	51,853	8.9	4	3,544	886	6,573
1982	797	49,898	8.6	4	1,955	489	2,875
1987	696	41,799	7.2	5	8,099	1,620	6,868
1992	587	35,353	6.1	5	6,446	1,289	4,902

Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture, Suffolk County Planning Department

Appendix Table 2

PROJECTED LOSS OF FARMLAND

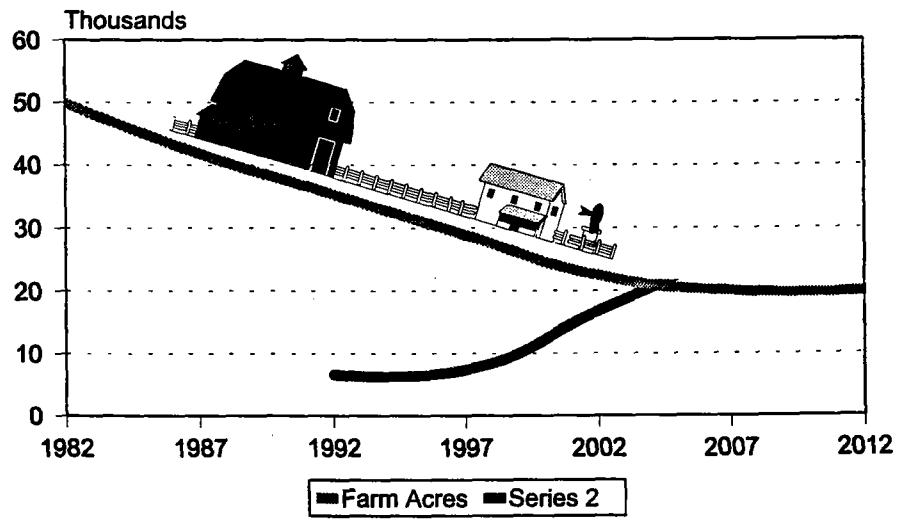
Projected PDR acres spending $1.5 million per year



Appendix Table 3

PROJECTED LOSS OF FARMLAND

Projected PDR acres spending $15 million per year



Appendix Table 4

SUFFOLK COUNTY CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE

Item	- 1987 - Data	Rank in New York State	% of New York State	- 1992 - Data	Rank in New York State	% of New York State	Change 1987-1992 No. (in Dollars)	Percent
Market Value of Agricultural Products Sold	115,150,000	1	4.7	133,762,000	1	5.1	18,612,000	16.2
Average Market Value Per Farm	165,445	1		227,874	1		62,429	37.7
Crops Including Nursery & Greenhouse Crops	97,541,000	1	13.9	119,715,000	1	14.8	22,174,000	22.7
Vegetables, Sweet Corn, Melons								
No. of Farms	219	2	7.8	172	2	6.2	-47	-21.5
Market Value	12,853,000	4	8.1	13,319,000	4	7.4	466,000	3.6
Market Value: Nursery & Greenhouse Products	67,299,000	1	40	90,306,000	1	41.4	23,007,000	34.2
Market Value: Poultry & Poultry Products	15,811,000	1	17.5	12,694,000	1	15.7	-3,117,000	-19.7
Square Footage Under Glass or Other Protection	9,506,908	1	39.7	9,199,823	1	36.8	-307,085	-3.2
Irish Potatoes in Acres	10,358	1	29	7,032	1	24.4	-3,326	-32.1
Rye for Grain Acres	2,110	1	34.3	1,377	1	14	-733	-34.7
Sweet Corn In Acres	1,296	11	2.6	1,446	11	2.8	150	11.6
Grapes in Acres	1,245	7	3.4	987	7	2.9	-258	-20.7
Head Cabbage in Acres	874	7	5.8	1,038	6	7.5	164	18.8
Cauliflower in Acres	749	1	48.3	394	1	37.7	-355	-47.4
Broccoli in Acres	667	1	52.9	154	1	23.8	-513	-76.9
Pumpkins in Acres	645	1	20.8	634	1	13.9	-11	-1.7
Spinach in Acres	413	1	22.1	289	1	17.5	-124	-30

Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture 1987 & 1992 Suffolk County Planning Department

Appendix Table 5

FARM ACREAGE BY TENURE IN NEW YORK STATE COUNTIES RANKED BY PERCENT OF ACREAGE RENTED IN 1992

	Tenants, (acres)			*Part owners, (acres)*			*Full owners, (acres)*			*Total (acres)*			*Percent Rented*		
Rank	*1992*	*1987*	*1982*	*1992*	*1987*	*1982*	*1992*	*1987*	*1982*	*1992*	*1987*	*1982*	*1992*	*1987*	*1982*
NEW YORK STATE	401,219	410,540	413,221	4,310,632	4,598,934	4,932,649	2,746,164	3,406,754	3,843,689	7,458,015	8,416,228	9,189,559	5.4%	4.9%	4.5%
1 ORANGE	18,720	14,510	19,471	52,662	62,588	69,851	31,351	37,830	40,579	102,733	114,928	129,901	18.2%	12.6%	15.0%
2 SUFFOLK	**5,313**	**7,078**	**7,328**	**20,136**	**21,396**	**24,098**	**9,904**	**13,325**	**18,472**	**35,353**	**41,799**	**49,898**	**15.0%**	**16.9%**	**14.7%**
3 ORLEANS	16,364	13,619	8,496	86,860	92,063	97,557	30,630	46,672	47,221	133,854	152,354	153,274	12.2%	8.9%	5.5%
4 SENECA	13,540	9,678	4,352	70,524	81,264	79,193	31,007	35,380	40,759	115,071	126,320	124,304	11.8%	7.7%	3.5%
5 SCHUYLER	6,652	8,696	10,318	33,061	34,034	35,824	25,610	33,141	36,675	65,323	75,871	82,817	10.2%	11.5%	12.5%
6 GENESEE	16,651	18,256	12,727	131,406	124,124	128,675	23,665	42,739	43,562	171,722	185,119	184,964	9.7%	9.9%	6.9%
7 PUTNAM	359	475	278	905	815	2,355	2,539	4,769	7,335	3,803	6,059	9,968	9.4%	7.8%	2.8%
8 MONROE	10,097	7,633	8,232	81,719	90,577	99,474	18,334	36,460	37,564	110,150	134,670	145,270	9.2%	5.7%	5.7%
9 NIAGARA	12,270	11,804	7,870	95,679	94,466	91,923	27,545	40,267	50,618	135,494	146,537	150,411	9.1%	8.1%	5.2%
10 MADISON	16,894	8,055	11,220	112,368	129,189	140,006	66,364	75,560	81,835	195,626	212,804	233,061	8.6%	3.8%	4.8%
11CORTLAND	11,117	10,625	8,992	87,638	90,753	107,222	39,865	46,775	58,786	138,620	148,153	175,000	8.0%	7.2%	5.1%
12 ERIE	10,708	11,385	15,355	91,335	97,223	103,862	43,636	57,513	71,130	145,679	166,121	190,347	7.4%	6.9%	8.1%
13 DELAWARE	13,391	16,009	15,414	103,148	108,081	141,432	75,577	103,809	140,225	192,116	225,899	297,071	7.0%	7.1%	5.2%
14 LIVINGSTON	14,110	14,985	14,518	135,567	154,718	148,270	55,428	64,368	80,853	205,105	234,071	243,641	6.9%	6.4%	6.0%

Appendix Table 5 (Cont.)

Rank	Tenants, (acres)			Part owners, (acres)			Full owners, (acres)			Total (acres)			Percent Rented		
	1992	1987	1982	1992	1987	1982	1992	1987	1982	1992	1987	1982	1992	1987	1982
15 GREENE	3,106	3,092	3,513	25,424	26,919	32,216	17,290	26,430	27,869	45,820	56,441	63,598	6.8%	5.5%	5.5%
16 ONTARIO	11,965	9,525	11,596	128,892	139,284	141,281	40,767	53,240	66,033	181,624	202,049	218,910	6.6%	4.7%	5.3%
17 WYOMING	13,279	11,615	8,786	134,302	136,130	139,456	62,308	72,447	84,695	209,889	220,192	232,937	6.3%	5.3%	3.8%
18 CHENANGO	11,544	12,523	12,258	107,567	114,978	116,376	68,897	96,392	101,435	188,008	223,893	230,069	6.1%	5.6%	5.3%
19 DUTCHESS	6,202	11,282	9,437	48,609	55,340	62,368	54,881	57,779	66,158	109,692	124,401	137,963	5.7%	9.1%	6.8%
20 SCHOHARIE	6,629	7,041	7,194	67,689	76,750	91,469	43,481	48,009	57,967	117,799	131,800	156,630	5.6%	5.3%	4.6%
21 ALBANY	3,183	4,878	4,020	32,859	32,252	42,562	21,847	30,624	36,206	57,889	67,754	82,788	5.5%	7.2%	4.9%
22 WASHINGTON	11,040	12,113	14,438	127,052	146,187	156,831	67,862	82,636	85,527	205,954	240,936	256,796	5.4%	5.0%	5.6%
23 FULTON	1,890	1,327	2,085	18,963	21,431	23,686	14,490	16,004	18,988	35,343	38,762	44,759	5.3%	3.4%	4.7%
24 MONTGOMERY	7,345	8,943	4,535	81,739	87,097	92,626	49,738	60,328	66,839	138,822	156,368	164,000	5.3%	5.7%	2.8%
25 COLUMBIA	5,838	5,796	7,867	70,222	72,986	91,013	35,914	54,841	53,517	111,974	133,623	152,397	5.2%	4.3%	5.2%
26 CAYUGA	11,948	9,252	10,182	171,901	168,905	176,745	70,153	84,297	89,243	254,002	262,454	276,170	4.7%	3.5%	3.7%
27 CATTARAUGUS	9,509	12,827	7,913	102,977	115,385	111,645	91,218	106,787	133,006	203,704	234,999	252,564	4.7%	5.5%	3.1%
28 SCHENECTADY	880	1,186	1,544	7,491	5,215	8,879	10,827	15,875	13,982	19,198	22,276	24,405	4.6%	5.3%	6.3%
29 OTSEGO	10,002	13,549	13,349	116,798	140,861	142,739	91,506	109,978	120,958	218,306	264,388	277,046	4.6%	5.1%	4.8%
30 ONEIDA	11,022	15,670	16,098	138,624	160,911	164,979	92,991	109,150	121,854	242,637	285,731	302,931	4.5%	5.5%	5.3%
31 LEWIS	7,501	4,667	3,157	62,033	57,654	67,411	99,779	130,762	135,278	169,313	193,083	205,846	4.4%	2.4%	1.5%
32 ULTER	2,907	4,081	4,438	37,248	33,731	47,439	29,488	40,625	33,326	69,643	78,437	85,203	4.2%	5.2%	5.2%

Appendix Table 5 (Cont.)

Rank	Tenants, (acres)			Part owners, (acres)			Full owners, (acres)			Total (acres)			Percent Rented		
	1992	1987	1982	1992	1987	1982	1992	1987	1982	1992	1987	1982	1992	1987	1982
33 SULLIVAN	2,324	1,839	3,941	31,217	34,413	38,588	22,461	26,724	33,134	56,002	62,976	75,663	4.1%	2.9%	5.2%
34 TOMPKINS	3,743	3,263	3,442	62,517	70,085	83,362	25,562	37,261	34,264	91,822	110,609	121,068	4.1%	3.0%	2.8%
35 TIOGA	4,656	3,959	6,832	70,169	73,129	75,515	40,034	48,750	57,958	114,859	125,838	140,305	4.1%	3.1%	4.9%
36 HERKIMER	6,610	6,128	11,364	86,765	86,685	88,207	69,697	82,990	94,792	163,072	175,803	194,363	4.1%	3.5%	5.8%
37 CHAUTAUQUA	10,369	11,705	12,762	135,848	141,514	142,864	113,323	136,511	151,234	259,540	289,730	306,860	4.0%	4.0%	4.2%
38 WAYNE	6,412	6,030	6,273	117,421	120,079	129,060	50,794	65,200	74,858	174,627	191,309	210,191	3.7%	3.2%	3.0%
39 RENSSELAER	3,393	3,795	3,902	58,013	62,536	60,599	31,277	40,228	53,111	92,683	106,559	117,612	3.7%	3.6%	3.3%
40 ONONDAGA	5,288	4,563	5,781	107,595	115,093	123,533	32,446	38,620	49,701	145,329	158,276	179,015	3.6%	2.9%	3.2%
41JEFFERSON	10,401	8,526	9,742	152,208	164,776	164,893	137,950	165,099	193,717	300,559	338,401	368,352	3.5%	2.5%	2.6%
42 OSWEGO	3,739	8,969	6,781	61,795	55,157	57,602	46,800	58,522	75,057	112,334	122,648	139,440	3.3%	7.3%	4.9%
43 BROOME	3,220	3,578	5,349	45,198	55,517	68,723	49,451	57,664	58,191	97,869	116,759	132,263	3.3%	3.1%	4.0%
44 YATES	3,352	3,241	4,980	53,013	63,679	58,329	45,659	47,002	49,035	102,024	113,922	112,344	3.3%	2.8%	4.4%
45 CHEMUNG	1,829	2,577	1,083	27,332	32,190	37,429	29,802	29,392	32,288	58,963	64,159	70,800	3.1%	4.0%	1.5%
46 ALLEGANY	4,891	5,488	7,754	82,321	100,339	116,253	74,431	87,609	91,650	161,643	193,436	215,657	3.0%	2.8%	3.6%
47 STEUBEN	10,747	10,514	9,746	207,349	197,605	210,388	145,197	180,703	192,426	363,293	388,822	412,558	3.0%	2.7%	2.4%
48 FRANKLIN	4,054	4,429	3,968	61,442	65,958	74,434	72,803	86,802	93,743	138,299	157,189	172,145	2.9%	2.8%	2.3%
49 SARATOGA	2,027	2,375	5,851	39,853	46,895	51,202	28,524	33,608	34,392	70,404	82,878	91,445	2.9%	2.9%	6.4%
50 WESTCHESTER	144	265	1,242	1,516	3,075	2,741	4,049	5,179	6,440	5,709	8,519	10,423	2.5%	3.1%	11.9%

Appendix Table 5 (Cont.)

Rank	Tenants, (acres)			Part owners, (acres)			Full owners, (acres)			Total (acres)			Percent Rented		
	1992	1987	1982	1992	1987	1982	1992	1987	1982	1992	1987	1982	1992	1987	1982
51 CLINTON	3,975	4,524	5,319	92,992	97,089	110,682	61,425	71,121	90,395	158,392	172,734	206,396	2.5%	2.6%	2.6%
52 ESSEX	1,101	2,185	2,900	26,469	25,293	33,874	27,416	32,274	34,511	54,986	59,752	71,285	2.0%	3.7%	4.1%
53 ST LAWRENCE	6,503	9,738	6,747	204,602	214,028	220,601	185,616	232,731	265,725	396,721	456,497	493,073	1.6%	2.1%	1.4%
54 WARREN	(D)	530	217	1,028	1,638	3,497	(D)	6,332	6,760	1,028	8,500	10,474	0.0%	6.2%	2.1%
55 ROCKLAND	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	687	(D)	318	(D)	363	318	687	363	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
56 NASSAU	(D)	133	(D)	(D)	167	(D)	1,588	1,171	1,398	1,588	1,471	1,398	0.0%	9.0%	0.0%

note: excludes the 5 Counties in New York City and Hamilton County because of small numbers

(D)-DATA SUPPRESSED

Source: 1992 Census of Agriculture, Suffolk County Planning Department

Appendix Table 6

1992 CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE

New York State

(by County)

	Land in farms (acres)		Property Taxes (000's)		Property Taxes Per Acre		Change	Total farm production exp ($1,000)		Taxes as a % of total farm expenses		Est mkt val land & bldg avg/acre ($)			Hired farm labor, ($1,000)			Labor as a % of total farm expenses	
	1992	1987	1992	1987	1992	1987	1987-1992	1992	1987	1992	1987	1992	1987	1982	1992	1987	1982	1992	1987
NEW YORK STATE	7458015	8416228	124566	101865	$16.70	$12.10	38.0%	2142169	1897458	5.8%	5.4%	1237	993	817	336481	277463	246022	15.7%	14.6%
ALBANY	57889	67754	1212	716	$20.94	$10.57	98.1%	13773	14363	8.8%	5.0%	2527	1356	1097	1971	2131	1888	14.3%	14.8%
ALLE-GANY	161643	193436	1841	1637	$11.39	$8.46	34.6%	25748	22917	7.2%	7.1%	621	586	576	1991	1955	2188	7.7%	8.5%
BRONX	0		0	0	0	0		0	(D)	0	0	0			0	0	(D)	0	0
BROOME	97869	116759	1557	1224	$15.91	$10.48	51.8%	19678	19620	7.9%	6.2%	961	788	691	1997	1893	1745	10.1%	9.6%
CATTAR AUGUS	203704	234999	2653	2445	$13.02	$10.40	25.2%	43787	41109	6.1%	5.9%	905	604	592	5732	5102	3683	13.1%	12.4%
CAYUGA	254002	262454	3734	2929	$14.70	$11.16	31.7%	81309	64920	4.6%	4.5%	1097	889	823	10502	6416	4346	12.9%	9.9%
CHAU-TAUQUA	259540	289730	5467	4360	$21.06	$15.05	40.0%	69950	56798	7.8%	7.7%	973	804	849	9517	7187	7852	13.6%	12.7%
CHE-MUNG	58963	64159	777	662	$13.18	$10.32	27.7%	10353	8398	7.5%	7.9%	830	766	822	1311	1536	1337	12.7%	18.3%
CHEN ANGO	188008	223893	3340	2509	$17.77	$11.21	58.5%	42936	43879	7.8%	5.7%	794	647	570	3100	3649	3140	7.2%	8.3%
CLINTON	158392	172734	1848	1514	$11.67	$8.76	33.1%	46127	34990	4.0%	4.3%	883	664	531	8694	6047	4548	18.8%	17.3%
COLUM-BIA	111974	133623	2759	2118	$24.64	$15.85	55.4%	49296	43493	5.6%	4.9%	2867	2647	1294	10774	8891	6789	21.9%	20.4%
CORT-LAND	138620	148153	2034	1545	$14.67	$10.43	40.7%	35583	33293	5.7%	4.6%	999	642	581	3918	3525	3693	11.0%	10.6%

Appendix Table 6 (Cont.)

	Land in farms (acres)		Property Taxes (000's)		Property Taxes Per Acre		Change	Total farm production exp ($1,000)		Taxes as a % of total farm expenses		Est mkt val land & bldg avg/acre ($)			Hired farm labor, ($1,000)			Labor as a % of total farm expenses	
	1992	1987	1992	1987	1992	1987	1987-1992	1992	1987	1992	1987	1992	1987	1982	1992	1987	1982	1992	1987
DEL AWARE	192116	225899	2630	2433	$13.69	$10.77	27.1%	40940	42195	6.4%	5.8%	1137	993	650	4518	4525	4563	11.0%	10.7%
DUTCH ESS	109692	124401	3707	2291	$33.79	$18.42	83.5%	30768	32450	12.0%	7.1%	4539	3122	2007	6290	6078	5780	20.4%	18.7%
ERIE	145679	166121	3356	3175	$23.04	$19.11	20.5%	61592	57769	5.4%	5.5%	1705	1175	1121	12156	10849	8852	19.7%	18.8%
ESSEX	54986	59752	518	558	$9.42	$9.34	0.9%	7975	7971	6.5%	7.0%	1227	812	614	1373	1475	1006	17.2%	18.5%
FRANKLIN	138299	157189	1884	1435	$13.62	$9.13	49.2%	36973	33815	5.1%	4.2%	783	660	541	4431	4313	3261	12.0%	12.8%
FULTON	35343	38762	662	412	$18.73	$10.63	76.2%	7899	6795	8.4%	6.1%	1024	876	761	792	709	578	10.0%	10.4%
GENESEE	171722	185119	2444	1909	$14.23	$10.31	38.0%	61647	54863	4.0%	3.5%	1008	895	824	10588	8994	7417	17.2%	16.4%
GREENE	45820	56441	951	605	$20.76	$10.72	93.6%	7044	7039	13.5%	8.6%	2667	1743	727	1053	884	1743	14.9%	12.6%
HAMILTON	(D)		(D)		0	0	0	(D)	(D)	0	0	(D)			0	0	(D)	0	0
HERKIMER	163072	175803	2350	2084	$14.41	$11.85	21.6%	38404	34778	6.1%	6.0%	812	699	644	3314	2475	3249	8.6%	7.1%
JEFFER SON	300559	338401	3087	3023	$10.27	$8.93	15.0%	60331	58380	5.1%	5.2%	609	661	503	6437	5983	4880	10.7%	10.2%
KINGS	4	4	(D)		$0.00	$0.00	0	75	145	0.0%	0.0%	(D)	73250	62400	(D)	(D)	0	0.0%	0.0%
LEWIS	169313	193083	3007	2617	$17.76	$13.55	31.0%	47996	42317	6.3%	6.2%	741	673	543	3250	2919	3265	6.8%	6.9%
LIVING STON	205105	234071	2762	2428	$13.47	$10.37	29.8%	54096	45313	5.1%	5.4%	993	867	781	7940	6705	6101	14.7%	14.8%
MADISON	195626	212804	3276	2649	$16.75	$12.45	34.5%	53098	49798	6.2%	5.3%	911	746	697	5272	5110	4679	9.9%	10.3%
MONROE	110150	134670	2494	2213	$22.64	$16.43	37.8%	35180	37650	7.1%	5.9%	2175	1529	1393	8220	7631	6049	23.4%	20.3%

Appendix Table 6 (Cont.)

	Land in farms (acres)		Property Taxes (000's)		Property Taxes Per Acre		Change	Total farm production exp ($1,000)		Taxes as a % of total farm expenses		Est mkt val land & bldg avg/acre ($)			Hired farm labor, ($1,000)			Labor as a % of total farm expenses	
	1992	1987	1992	1987	1992	1987	1987-1992	1992	1987	1992	1987	992	1987	1982	1992	1987	1982	1992	1987
MONTGOMERY	138822	156368	2753	1685	$19.83	$10.78	84.0%	39057	30084	7.0%	5.6%	919	779	682	3954	2888	2831	10.1%	9.6%
NASSAU	1890	1471	140	135	$74.07	$91.77	-19.3%	1412	2151	9.9%	6.3%	25141	8269	20286	471	633	733	33.4%	29.4%
NEW YORK	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NIAGARA	135494	146537	2432	1869	$17.95	$12.75	40.7%	38491	32730	6.3%	5.7%	1217	970	1099	7954	6673	6288	20.7%	20.4%
ONEIDA	242637	285731	3592	3053	$14.80	$10.68	38.6%	57946	54841	6.2%	5.6%	973	799	714	6283	6018	5388	10.8%	11.0%
ONONDAGA	145329	158276	2534	2495	$17.44	$15.76	10.6%	50899	42185	5.0%	5.9%	1397	1272	996	7614	5321	4661	15.0%	12.6%
ONTARIO	181624	202049	2916	2384	$16.06	$11.80	36.1%	49063	43856	5.9%	5.4%	1401	1147	1025	6886	5407	5749	14.0%	12.3%
ORANGE	102733	114928	3699	2657	$36.01	$23.12	55.7%	56640	56134	6.5%	4.7%	3959	2805	1626	13494	11742	9888	23.8%	20.9%
ORLEANS	133854	152354	2074	1864	$15.49	$12.23	26.6%	46483	42169	4.5%	4.4%	871	823	763	12383	8604	8249	26.6%	20.4%
OSWEGO	112334	122648	1843	1489	$16.41	$12.14	35.1%	27077	26611	6.8%	5.6%	992	915	794	4633	5147	3321	17.1%	19.3%
OTSEGO	218306	264388	3170	2913	$14.52	$11.02	31.8%	47286	46777	6.7%	6.2%	949	730	563	3965	4287	4045	8.4%	9.2%
PUTNAM	3803	6059	232	123	$61.00	$20.30	200.5%	1409	958	16.5%	12.8%	6475	2848	2052	369	135	187	26.2%	14.1%
QUEENS	(D)	9	(D)	2	0	$222.22	0	(D)	45	0	4.4%	(D)		55154	(D)	(D)	(D)	0	0.0%
RENSSELAER	92683	106559	1696	1322	$18.30	$12.41	47.5%	19600	19230	8.7%	6.9%	1544	1316	863	3302	2995	2454	16.8%	15.6%
RICHMOND	(D)	16	(D)	24	0		0	(D)	373	0	6.4%	(D	58250	50216	(D)	177	(D)	0	47.5%
ROCKLAND	831	1107	103	93	$123.95	$84.01	47.5%	1105	1167	9.3%	8.0%	51328	12311	9358	397	456	387	35.9%	39.1%

Appendix Table 6 (Cont.)

	Land in farms (acres)		Property Taxes (000's)		Property Taxes Per Acre		Change	Total farm production exp ($1,000)		Taxes as a % of total farm expenses		Est mkt val land & bldg avg/acre ($)			Hired farm labor, ($1,000)			Labor as a % of total farm expenses	
	1992	1987	1992	1987	1992	1987	1987-1992	1992	1987	1992	1987	1992	1987	1982	1992	1987	1982	1992	1987
ST LAWRENCE	396721	456497	3891	3618	$9.81	$7.93	23.8%	74829	60825	5.2%	5.9%	600	478	436	6390	5362	5378	8.5%	8.8%
SARATOGA	70404	82878	1262	1040	$17.93	$12.55	42.8%	20147	18228	6.3%	5.7%	2092	1329	948	2786	3009	1,699	13.8%	16.5%
SCHENECTADY	19198	22276	408	385	$21.25	$17.28	23.0%	10870	2450	3.8%	15.7%	2025	1115	951	(D)	265	318	0.0%	10.8%
SCHOHARIE	117799	131800	1753	1375	$14.88	$10.43	42.6%	24630	24934	7.1%	5.5%	1148	1055	648	2478	3006	3192	10.1%	12.1%
SCHUYLER	65323	75871	1142	992	$17.48	$13.07	33.7%	10607	11275	10.8%	8.8%	824	697	637	1371	1543	1615	12.9%	13.7%
SENECA	115071	126320	1458	1121	$12.67	$8.87	42.8%	26138	20285	5.6%	5.5%	1072	836	1037	2503	2469	2540	9.6%	12.2%
STEUBEN	363293	388822	4177	3184	$11.50	$8.19	40.4%	68886	56237	6.1%	5.7%	721	560	624	9454	7293	6351	13.7%	13.0%
SUFFOLK	35353	41799	3383	2742	$95.69	$65.60	45.9%	102983	85014	3.3%	3.2%	10260	7008	5645	34380	25986	18770	33.4%	30.6%
SULLIVAN	56002	62976	1322	840	$23.61	$13.34	77.0%	19414	19716	6.8%	4.3%	2103	1940	1387	1685	1406	3650	8.7%	7.1%
TIOGA	114859	125838	1635	1030	$14.23	$8.19	73.9%	25657	24043	6.4%	4.3%	942	652	665	2882	2497	1692	11.2%	10.4%
TOMPKINS	91822	110609	1583	1364	$17.24	$12.33	39.8%	32659	27246	4.8%	5.0%	1363	1022	849	7327	4427	5331	22.4%	16.2%
ULSTER	69643	78437	2446	2292	$35.12	$29.22	20.2%	43417	40614	5.6%	5.6%	3207	3149	1610	10741	9895	6685	24.7%	24.4%
WARREN	5811	8500	133	114	$22.89	$13.41	70.7%	1721	1169	7.7%	9.8%	2552	1345	1000	604	254	183	35.1%	21.7%
WASHINGTON	205954	240936	3199	2607	$15.53	$10.82	43.6%	67196	55496	4.8%	4.7%	1188	1006	692	10118	5697	6386	15.1%	10.3%
WAYNE	174627	191309	3524	2848	$20.18	$14.89	35.6%	75011	60183	4.7%	4.7%	1371	1063	920	16168	12830	12097	21.6%	21.3%

Appendix Table 6 (Cont.)

	Land in farms (acres)		Property Taxes (000's)		Property Taxes Per Acre		Change	Total farm production exp ($1,000)		Taxes as a % of total farm expenses		Est mkt val land & bldg avg/acre ($)			Hired farm labor, ($1,000)			Labor as a % of total farm expenses	
	1992	1987	1992	1987	1992	1987	1987-1992	1992	1987	1992	1987	1992	1987	1982	1992	1987	1982	1992	1987
WESTCHESTER	5709	8519	586	468	$102.64	$54.94	86.8%	6256	5052	9.4%	9.3%	13014	6519	5534	2294	1434	2018	36.7%	28.4%
WYOMING	209889	220192	3425	2630	$16.32	$11.94	36.6%	87165	65243	3.9%	4.0%	1008	751	820	11255	8354	6981	12.9%	12.8%
YATES	102024	113922	1687	1609	$16.54	$14.12	17.1%	25365	25076	6.7%	6.4%	1108	1037	1067	3309	4221	4157	13.0%	16.8%

(D) Withheld to avoid disclosing data for individual farms

(X) Not applicable.

(Z) Less than half of the unit shown.

(NA) Not available.

...Unpublished data.

[B] Not available due to brackets.

Appendix Table 7

SUMMARY OF COST OF SERVICES RATIOS FOR STUDY AREAS NEW YORK STATE

(in dollars)

Study Area	*County*	*Residential*	*Commercial/ Industrial*	*Farm/Forest Open Land*
Amenia	Dutchess	1 : 1.23	1 : 0.17	1 : 0.25
Beekman	Dutchess	1 : 1.05	1 : 0.44	1 : 0.31
Dix	Schuyler	1 : 1.51	1 : 0.27	1 : 0.31
Fishkill	Dutchess	1 : 1.23	1 : 0.31	1 : 0.74
Hector	Schuyler	1 : 1.30	1 : 0.15	1 : 0.28
Montour	Schuyler	1 : 1.50	1 : 0.28	1 : 0.29
North East	Dutchess	1 : 1.36	1 : 0.29	1 : 0.21
Reading	Schuyler	1 : 1.08	1 : 0.26	1 : 0.32
Red Hook	Dutchess	1 : 1.11	1 : 0.20	1 : 0.22
Median		1 : 1.23	1 : 0.27	1 : 0.29

Source: American Farmland Trust in cooperation with the Dutchess County Cooperative Extension

Appendix Table 8

SEASONAL POPULATION IN SUFFOLK COUNTY

Major Municipality	*Other Vacant 1960*	*Other Vacant 1970*	*Seasonal & Occass-ional Use 1970*	*Total 1970*	*Other Vacant 1980*	*Seasonal & Occass-ional Use 1980*	*Total 1980*	*Other Vacant 1990*	*Seasonal & Occass-ional Use 1990*	*Total 1990*
Babylon	2,691	330	818	1,148	655	510	1,165	336	324	660
Brookhaven	16,524	1,164	10,053	11,217	2,319	6,373	8,692	1,879	4,683	6,562
East Hampton	2,965	254	3,709	3,963	335	6,418	6,753	537	8,886	9,423
Huntington	2,525	385	793	1,178	461	465	926	389	272	661
Islip	5,070	539	2,505	3,044	1,163	2,383	3,546	488	2,153	2,641
Riverhead	2,016	133	1,611	1,744	270	1,117	1,387	225	1,334	1,559
Shelter Island	741	18	775	793	285	602	887	29	1,018	1,047
Smithtown	1,671	175	368	543	240	262	502	177	160	337
Southampton	7,791	427	7,993	8,420	584	10,172	10,75	731	12,971	13,702
Southold	3,425	155	2,660	2,815	219	3,185	3,404	186	4,152	4,338
Suffolk County	**45,419**	**3,580**	**31,285**	**34,865**	**6,531**	**31,487**	**38,01**	**4,977**	**35,953**	**40,930**
Eastern Suffolk	16,938	987	16,748	17,735	1,693	21,494	23,18	1,708	28,361	30,069
Western Suffolk	28,481	2,593	14,537	17,130	4,838	9,993	14,83	3,269	7,592	10,861

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 1960, 1970, 1980, 1990, Long Island Regional Planning Board

Appendix Table 9

NEW YORK STATE AGRICULTURAL DISTRICTS

in Suffolk County
April 4, 1996

No.	Creation Date	First Renewal Date	Second Renewal Date	Original Acreage	First Renewal Acreage	Second Renewal Acreage	Present Acreage	Town
1	10/9/79	10/7/87	10/7/95	3,004	2,937	5,850	5,850	Southold
2	3/17/81	3/17/89		1,000	321		321	Brookhaven
3	8/26/82	8/26/90		1,085	883		883	Brookhaven
4*	8/22/83	8/22/91		3,300	3,300		3,300	Southampton
5	8/18/85	8/18/93		2,455	3,168		3,168	Total
				2,087	2,968		2,968	Southampton
				368	200		200	East Hampton
6**	8/18/85	8/18/93		545	545		0	Riverhead
7	3/27/88	3/23/96		2,063	9,192		9,192	Riverhead
Total				**13,452**			**22714**	

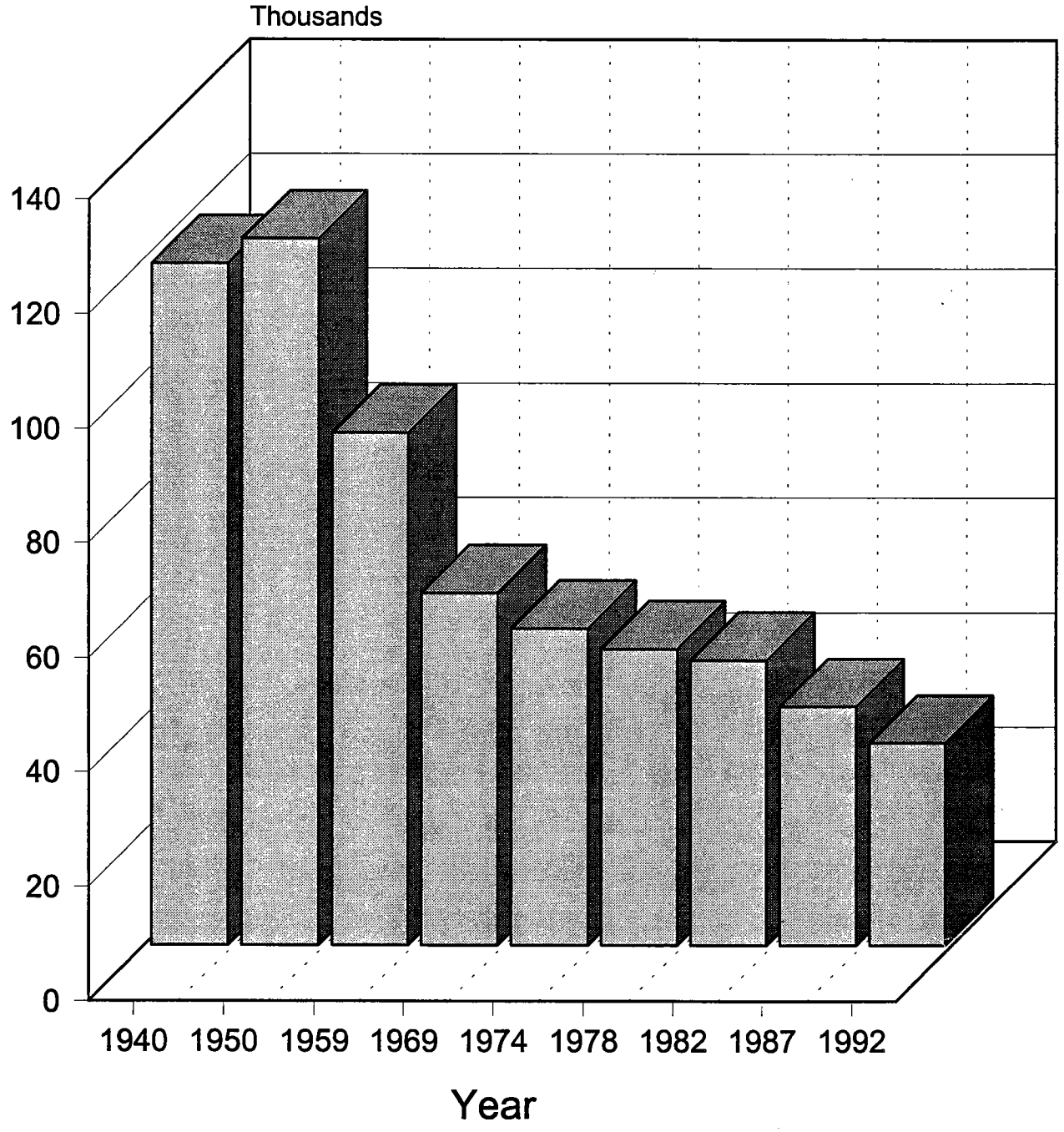
* - Includes non-farm parcels

** - Agricultural District #6 was merged with Agricultural District #7

Source: Suffolk County Planning Department

Appendix Table 10

SUFFOLK COUNTY FARMLAND
(in Acres)



SUFFOLK COUNTY AGRICULTURAL AND FARMLAND PROTECTION BOARD

The Suffolk County Planning Department is at work on a Farmland Protection Plan.
This plan is funded by Suffolk County and the State Department of Agriculture and Markets.

Who better to give advice on the plan than the farming community?

Some Considerations:

- Public policy should support and sustain agriculture as an industry, **not discourage it.**

- The economy of farming needs to be better understood. The taxes farms pay; the connection to tourism and to other businesses; the jobs farming sustains.

- Financial, regulatory and development pressures need to be identified,

Please help out by:

Attending one of the public meetings or sending your comments to.

The Cornell Cooperative Extension c/o William Sanok, or
The Long Island Farm Bureau c/o Joseph Gergela III

Public Meetings are scheduled for:

Monday, November 27, 1995 Southampton Town Hall 7:00PM
Wednesday, November 29, 1995 Riverhead Town Hall 7:00PM

Please join us in assuring Suffolk County's farming future.

Ken Schmitt
Board Chairman

Stephen Jones
County Planning Director