ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & PLANNING | AGRICULTURE

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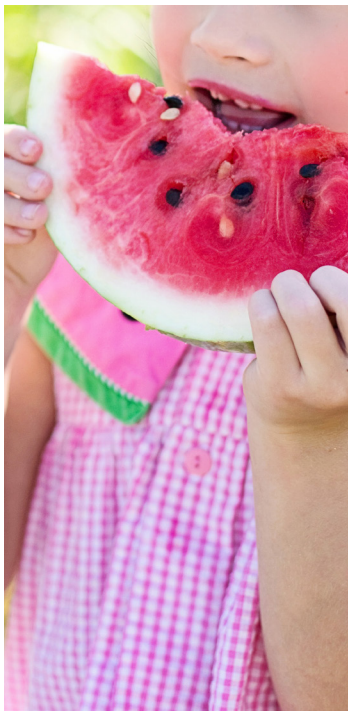
Rich Agricultural Heritage

THE BACKBONE OF THE LONG ISLAND WAY OF LIFE

Suffolk County's rich agricultural heritage serves as the backbone of the Long Island way-of-life and helps sustain our county's economic growth. Not only do our farms, farmstands and vineyards generate the tourism dollars that support our local restaurants and service industries, they also provide the fresh produce that feeds people locally...and around the globe.

The first Long Island Vineyard was planted in 1973. Now boasting more than 60 vineyards and wineries, Long Island "Wine Country" is recognized as one of the most exciting wine producing regions in the country and a premier destination for wine tasting. Many wineries offer tours of their facilities, special events hosting, food pairings with your tastings, and live entertainment. The 60 vineyards in Long Island Wine Country produce 500,000 cases of wine a year, worth approximately $100 million, and draw 1.3 million visitors who generate an additional $90 to $120 million in tourism revenues. Agriculture in general supports the $3.2 billion Suffolk County tourism industry which directly employs more than 43,000 people.



Did You Know? SUFFOLK COUNTY...

The # 4 county in New York in agricultural production - $226 million in annual sales. 560 farms employ more than 4,600 people ($89 million in payroll).

Ranks # 1 in New York State in greenhouse, nursery, sod, cantaloupe, cauliflower, mushroom, and pumpkin production.

Ranked number one in the State in the market value of aquaculture products sold in 2017 - $5.3 million which is more than 80% of all New York State shellfish aquaculture production.

Sows 30,000 acres of farmland, nearly 20,000 of which are permanently preserved. Almost 80% of farmland acreage is involved in food production.

Reaped $7,511 in agricultural sales per each acre of farmland - almost 10 times the New York State average of $782.

Agritourism is an outsized component of Suffolk County agriculture and increased 143% to $10.3 million in the last 5 years. Direct food sales at farmstands and farmers markets increased 209% to $27.7 million.

Steve Bellone - Suffolk County Executive
Natalie Wright - Commissioner, Economic Development and Planning

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GATEWAY TO VALUABLE INFORMATION

Consider the Suffolk County Department of Economic Development and Planning your gateway to valuable information, programs, and funding that can help your business succeed. If you own a farm or farm-related business, or you are an aspiring farmer, there are many government programs and non-profit organizations dedicated to preserving agriculture and its rich contribution to the high quality of life we enjoy on Long Island.

CHOOSE LI - LOCAL & INDEPENDENT

Choose LI is a collaborative initiative to raise awareness, advocate and inspire the community to support local and independent businesses by spending 10% of their weekly food allowance on local and seasonal food goods across Suffolk County, Long Island. New Yorkers spend $176 a week on food (US Bureau of Labor Statistics). Suffolk County, NY has 474,311 households. If 10% of Suffolk County households commits to spending 10% of their weekly food allowance on local food goods over a typical harvest season for Suffolk County, that spending would add $19 million into the Suffolk County economy. $19 million in direct spending will create $33 million in total economic activity and create nearly 1,000 local jobs. ChooseLI.org includes a map of every farmstand and vineyard in Suffolk County. Please contact Choose Long Island at chooseli@suffolkcountyny.gov to have your farmstand listed.

FARMLAND PURCHASE OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS

Suffolk County's Farmland Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) Program began in 1974 and is the oldest PDR program in the nation. This valuable program has protected over 10,500 acres of Suffolk farmland and ensures that rich soils and farmland will be preserved permanently for farming use. Suffolk farmers benefit from PDR funding and Estate Planning strategies that increase the likelihood that farms remain in agricultural use for future generations.

AGRICULTURAL DISTRICTS PROGRAM

Suffolk Agricultural Districts Program can help enrolled land owners with regulatory burdens and to receive property tax assessments based on the value of the land for agricultural production rather than its development value. This can save farmers a substantial amount of money and help ensure that farming in Suffolk County remains a viable and economically sustainable occupation despite developmental pressures.

CORNELL COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County (CCE) works directly with farmers who rely on their research, guidance, and assistance to protect the environment and promote the economic health of our vital agriculture industry. CCE partners with government, Cornell University, and various non-profits and community groups to help.

NY GROWN AND CERTIFIED FUNDING

The Peconic Land Trust is administering a new grant available to Long Island farmers who are interested in New York State Grown & Certified, a new certification program offered by New York State Department of Agriculture & Markets. This is a cost share opportunity established to assist farmers to meet food safety and environmental management standards necessary to enroll specific crops in the new program. 90% of costs are reimbursable, up to a maximum of $50,000, for the purchase cost of capital equipment and infrastructure.

SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

The Suffolk County Soil and Water Conservation District and the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service partnership advances on-farm conservation planning for the protection and enhancement of soil, water, air, plant, and animal resources. Farmers who consult with the District on conservation plans and best practices can receive access to USDA-NRCS funding to apply these practices and to purchase equipment.

STONY BROOK BUSINESS INCUBATOR

The Stony Brook University Business Incubator at Calverton is focused on incubating local food and technology start-ups and currently houses 75 food companies in their 25,000 square foot facility.

For more information:

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