

WAYNE COUNTY Ag Development Specialist

2003 ANNUAL REPORT

1) The following Grant Applications were prepared:

- a) Assisted 1 farmer with preparation work for USDA alternative energy grant proposal, the farmer did not develop a full proposal.
- b) Developed a \$20,000 proposal for a feasibility study for Cluster development enhancement to GTC UPWP. Three-town participation with Wayne County Plan at \$1,000 per participant
- c) Worked with Tourism and 12 farm markets to submit a \$3000 Pride of NY marketing proposal for a Wayne County farm markets map
- d) Town of Macedon PDR (2-farms, 313 acres, \$619,580)
- e) Town of Walworth PDR (2-farms, 254 acres, \$354,859)
- f) Town of Ontario PDR (1-farm 252 acres, \$554,159)

2) NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets Farmland Viability Program.

- a) Nothing in 2003

3) Wayne County Master Plan

- a) Initial meeting
- b) First economic development meeting
- c)** 4-AFP public meetings
 - i)** 30 people attendance
- d)** Farm Bureau Board meeting
- e)** Attended 3 Economic Committee meetings
- f)** Took 120 pictures for “Built Environment” slide show

4) Governor’s Office of Small Cities Community Development Block Grant Program.

- a) The Planning Department is overseeing the \$600,000 Wayne County Agribusiness Microenterprise Program. The environmental review record was completed and the program may now request the release of funds as needed. The program includes Technical Assistance in the form of class room training for business planning, one-on-one business planning assistance from Farm Credit or NYFarmNet, and a \$500,000 below-market loan pool. Wayne County Industrial Development Agency is administering the Loan portion of this program.
- b) The program began initially with a classroom training in Business Plan development by Cornell Cooperative Extension of Wayne County in March of 2002. To date, the program has been successfully progressing toward its stated goals for maintaining agricultural jobs in the County. In October of 2003, a seminar was held with businesses representing 9 fulltime, 7 part-time, 3 seasonal and 23 migrant workers. The program is scheduling a business planning workshop for landscapers in January 2004, with a “Transferring the Farm” workshop in February.
- c) The loan portion of the program has been less successful. There are three major reasons for this. First, the County did not receive notice of approval for release of funds until April 4, 2002. Second, most farmers have their financing in place for the upcoming year before April and after the spring work starts, most farmers are going full speed until November. Third, very few farmers have existing business plans, so anyone interested in applying for a loan probably needs to stop and develop a business plan.
- d) In an effort to increase loan participation, the criteria are changing to allow qualifying non-farm businesses to receive program benefits. For farms, the loan cap was raised from 40,000 to 60,000, create stock closing documents for small loans,
- e) In the first half of 2003 the program received 16 calls requesting technical assistance and loan applications. Only 4 loan applications were received as of 12-31-2003, and two of those were sub-standard and not approved. At least four farms currently are in the process of developing a business plan with the intention of applying for a loan.
- f) The program is quickly reaching its goals for impacting low to moderate income job retention. One of the surprises has been the significant “new farmer” interest in the program. Of the 55 people representing business enterprises, twenty-nine have either been planning a new farm business, or designing an inter-generational transfer of the existing business.

- g) Attended two IDA loan committee meetings as Board-resource for ag applications under review.

5) Agricultural and Farmland Preservation

- a) Provided draft grant proposal to Macedon for submission to USDA NRCS farm and ranch lands protection program. The Town completed, submitted and received ~\$295,000 for 460+/- acres.
- b) Prepared grant proposals for the Towns of Macedon (2-farms, 313 acres, \$619,580) Walworth (2-farms, 254 acres, \$354,859) and Ontario (1-farm 252 acres, \$554,159) for a total request of \$1,528,598 in projects totaling \$2,038,131 on 819 acres. None were awarded.

6) New and Beginning Farmer

- a) Scheduling (February 26) and designing farm transfer workshop with NYFarmLink and CCE Wayne.
- b) Developed Farmer workbook and website for Growing New Farmers program

7) General Ag Economic Development

- a) Prepared a performance review for Cathy Sheils, Director NY FarmNet
- b) Assisted Cliff DeMay and US Grown about 10 hours.
- c) Spoke with Lagoner about zoning issues related to farm markets, 4 hours
- d) Spoke with Dave Feindel about ag ec dev issues 2 hrs
- e) Spoke with Linda Phillips about AED 1 hr.
- f) Presented to Tioga AFPB about PDR
- g) Worked on Consolidated Ag District #1- maps, survey data, reports
- h) Had 16 meetings with farmers
- i) Attended 13 Town Board meetings
- j) Attended 4 Wayne County Farm markets meetings

8) Outreach

- a) Developed Ag Development web page for County website
- b) Helped organize Wayne County AFPB portion of Fun on the Farm tour for Supervisors (cancelled)

9) Continuing Education- Attended:

- a) NYSERDA ag conferences
- b) ESD ag conference
- c) Farmer to farmer workshop by Cornell Small Farms
- d) Beginning farmer workshop in Skaneateles by GNF
- e) US Federal Reserve Bank seminar on New Markets Tax Credit program
- f) Ag development seminar by CCE in Syracuse

10) Organizational Representation

Wayne County is represented by the Ag Development Specialist on the following boards and organizations:

- ◆ Wayne County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board (5 meetings 2003)
- ◆ Finger Lakes Culinary Bounty (Board of Directors) (6 meetings in 2003)
- ◆ NY FarmNet (Board of Directors) (3 meetings in 2003)
- ◆ Lake Plains Resource Conservation and Development Council (did not attend in 2003)
- ◆ Cornell program work team for Agricultural Community Economic Development
- ◆ Growing New Farmers Consortium professional development committee