

Engaging the Public

Introduction

In Chapter 2 we discussed the fundamentals of visioning and building a strong collaborative partnership—especially among key local agencies and organizations. But members of the public at large also need and increasingly *want* to reconnect with their community through food and agriculture—whether as voters, tourists or farm neighbors. In this section we describe some strategies for engaging the public in local food and agriculture system development.

Agriculture-Based Public Education Campaigns

Engaging the Public

Public education campaigns are events or activities designed to inform a community about a specific issue with the goals of increasing residents' awareness—and ultimately changing their behavior. A basic principle is that an informed and empowered citizen will act on his or her own and the community's best interests. Public education campaigns attempt to address the root cause of problems in our food and agriculture system, dealing with improving farm-neighbor relations, and educating the community about agro-environmental issues such as open space and water quality. A buy-local campaign is a public education campaign with a more limited scope.

Public Education Campaign Case Studies

Cayuga County Interconnections (CCI), Cayuga County, New York: The impetus for CCI came in 1992 when the beach at the north end of Owasco Lake (near Auburn, N.Y.) was closed due to high coliform bacteria counts. An unproductive period of finger-pointing followed. As a result, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cayuga County, in collaboration with the Farm Bureau, New York State Electric and Gas (NYSEG), farmers, the county legislature, Aurora Rotary, and lay citizens started CCI. The coliform issue was addressed, but the process promoted thinking about the county as a whole and encouraged the county's residents to articulate a shared vision about its future landscape. The campaign's approach was to highlight the interrelationships among rural, suburban and urban people and different land uses. Issues addressed included farmer-community relations, agritourism development, youth agriculture education, public policy, farmland preservation and economic vitality.

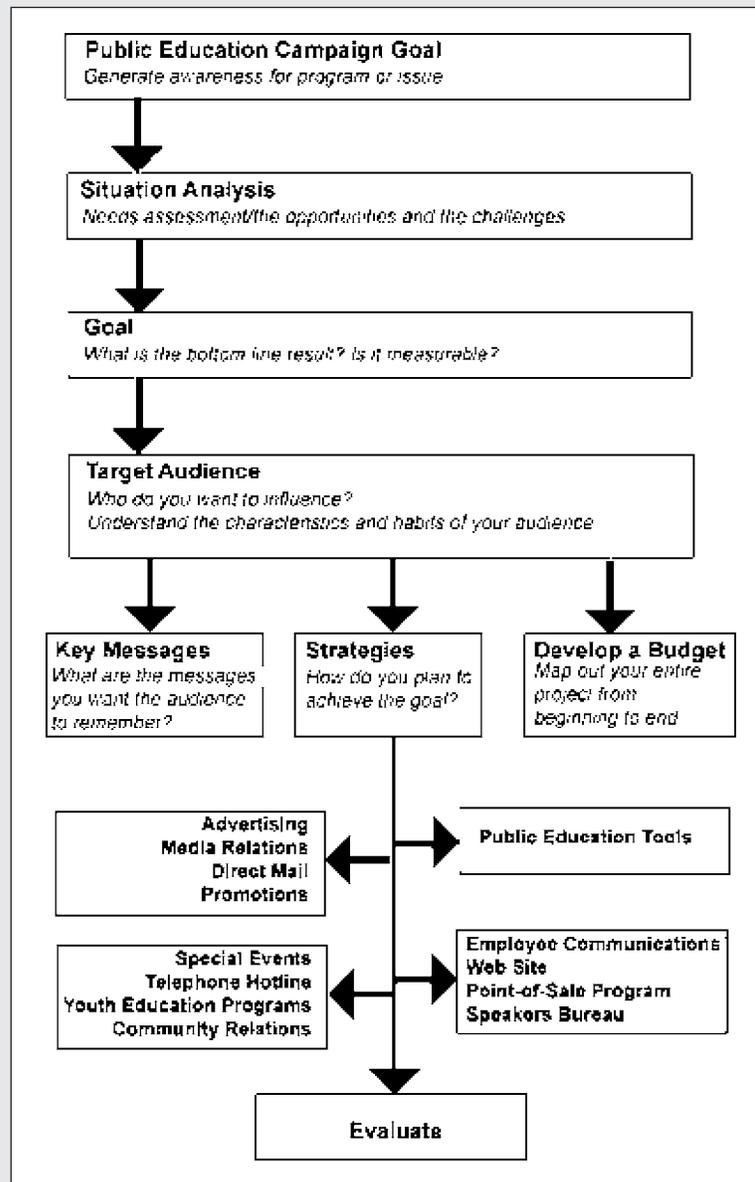
CCI Projects

- Hosted conferences on sustainable agriculture and small-business enterprises;
- Developed a Farm Trail/Rural Heritage brochure;

- Promoted the Agriculture in the Classroom curriculum;
- Supported rural landowners who were considering starting agricultural enterprises; and
- Hosted a multitown cluster meeting on economic development.

CCI’s tour for local officials was very successful, but its attempt to create a “farm-city exchange” with individual families failed due to the time commitment required of participants. Families were asked to work out their own schedules, arrangements and transportation.

Figure 15. Elements of a public education campaign



Source: H₂O Home to Ocean Workbook: Outreach and Education on Pesticides and Water Quality. California EPA; www.home2ocean.org/workbook/index.html.

Then—campaign coordinator Rod Howe of Cooperative Extension recalls, “the public’s perception of agriculture’s negative impact on the environment was a major challenge.”

Contact: Rod Howe, Assistant Director, Community and Economic Vitality, 43 Warren Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14850; (607) 255-9510; e-mail rlh13@cornell.edu.

Hudson Valley “Harvest Ambassador” Program, Dutchess County, New York:

With concern about today’s urban consumers being several generations removed from agriculture, the vision of the Hudson Valley Harvest Ambassador Program is a local public program that actively supports Hudson Valley farmers, farming and the protection of productive farmland. The approach used in the Hudson Valley Harvest Ambassador Program is to recruit and train urban and suburban volunteers to provide agricultural education for consumers to ensure that wise decisions are made regarding Hudson Valley agriculture and local food systems. The Ambassador Program is training 20 to 30 volunteers to be able to present a 30-minute informative talk, including slides, about Hudson Valley agriculture. The training takes place in four, three-hour sessions. Local agricultural specialists as well as Cornell faculty will teach the classes. Topics include:



- Today’s agriculture and its economic impact in the Hudson Valley;
- The changing face of agriculture in the Hudson Valley;
- The role agriculture plays in watersheds and environmental protection;
- Exploring the local food system;
- Efforts to protect farmland in the Hudson Valley; and
- A tour of Hudson Valley farms.

Contact: Les Hulcoop, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Dutchess County, 2715 Route 44, Suite 1, Millbrook, NY 12545; e-mail lch7@cornell.edu; Web site www.cce.cornell.edu/Dutchess/hvh.htm.

Resource tip

H₂O Home to Ocean Workbook: Outreach and Education on Pesticides and Water Quality is an excellent resource guide for how to conduct public education campaigns. It is currently out of print, but free CDs of the workbook are available from the California EPA by contacting Veda Federighi at vfederighi@cdpr.ca.gov. A PDF file of the workbook can also be printed from www.home2ocean.org/workbook/index.html.



References and Resources for Agriculture-Based Public Education Campaigns

Patton, David B. (lead author). August 2001. Public issues education: Exploring Extension's role, *Journal of Extension*. 39(4). Ohio State University Extension, Columbus, Ohio; author e-mail patton.4@osu.edu; Web site www.ag.ohiostate.edu/~pie/linkread.html.

Agritourism	Engaging the Public
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The marriage of agriculture and tourism—“agritourism”—has become a very popular food and agriculture systems development strategy at both the farm and community levels. Farmers with “people skills” can add significant income to their operations through farm tours, petting zoos, hay rides, corn mazes, and bed and breakfasts. Many Americans with

Many Americans are yearning for experiences that help them to explore their roots.

growing nostalgia and patriotism are yearning for immersion experiences that help them to explore their roots. Cornell research shows that the core customers for tourism are families with children, although tour groups of seniors also visit farms. Most visitors to farms come from the host county or adjacent counties. Exceptions include wineries and farm bed and breakfasts, which can draw from several states in a region.

Communities are supporting agritourism operators with farm-trail maps and other promotional materials, as well as organizing festivals, coordinating multifarm activities, and sponsoring special events that celebrate agriculture. However, before encouraging farmers to engage in agritourism activities, the farmers and community support organizations should learn about the opportunities and challenges of agritourism.

Agritourism opportunities

- Potential for additional income.
- Increased use of underutilized resources (such as talents, facilities, equipment, land).
- Keeping interest and attention of family members on their farm.
- Increased opportunities to meet other people and educate them about rural lifestyles.
- Promoting the food or agriculture industry.
- Creating a new occupation for a spouse or child.

Agritourism challenges

- May interfere with production aspects of the farm operation.
- Loss of privacy.

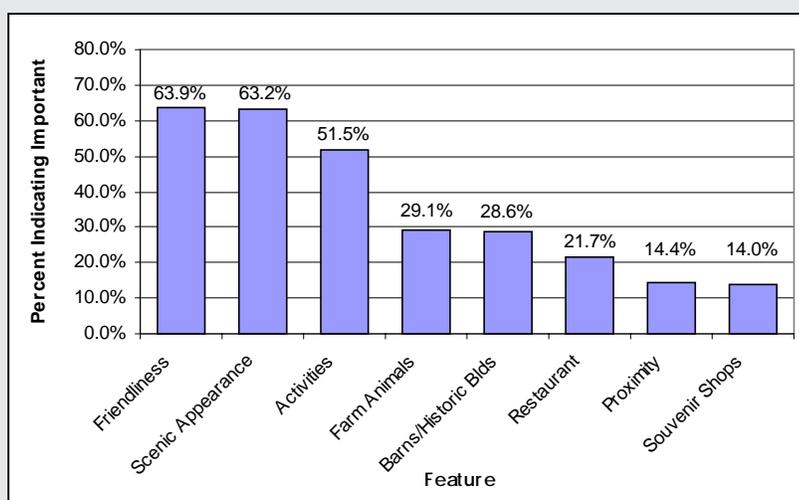
- Adds work and responsibilities.
- Low financial return.
- High liability risk.

In addition to understanding the opportunities and challenges of agritourism, prospective operators must be fully aware of a myriad of management considerations, including:

- Does the family have the right kind of social skills?
- Is the farm aesthetically pleasing, but authentic?
- Is the farm location easy to find, near a large metropolitan area or major tourist area?
- Does the farm have adequate liability insurance?
- Does the farm have adequate family labor to commit, or is appropriate hired labor available?
- Is the farmer willing to cooperate with other agritourism operations?
- Are government regulations surmountable (e.g., zoning, zoo permit, food handling license)?
- Can biosecurity risks be managed adequately to prevent transmission of disease between humans and animals?
- Can humane treatment of animals be assured and communicated to customers?
- Will the operation be profitable, given the labor and other inputs required?

Figure 16. What is important to agritourists

In a survey of tourists visiting farms in New York state in 1999, respondents reported that “friendliness” and “scenic appearance and activities” were the most important features of agritourism businesses. Note how much less significant “proximity to other attractions, hotels, and restaurants” is than the first three attributes.



This corroborates other findings that markets for agritourism businesses in general are very local and independent of other attractions and services nearby.

Community-Based Agritourism Programming Opportunities

The following are some of the strategies communities can employ to establish and grow the agritourism businesses in their communities:

- Establish farmers' markets on interstate highway rest stops as well as downtown.
- Design "Stop, Visit, Stay" farm trails (auto-tours).
- Conduct historic barn tours.
- Organize agricultural fairs and festivals.
- Facilitate multibusiness collaboration (see Agri-cluster Concept, below).
- Promote Regional Identity Marketing (see page 57).
- Establish strategically located information kiosks, downtown and on highways.
- Develop special highway signage that identifies where U-pick, farm stands, farmers' markets, and agritourism businesses are located.
- Encourage motor-coach tours of groups of farms.
- Conduct agritourism educational workshops for farmers and tourism bureau staff.

Agri-cluster Project, Town of Candor, Tioga County, New York: The South Central New York Resource Conservation and Development Council (SoCNY RC&D) spear-headed the development of the "Agri-cluster Project," a three-phase, rural economic-development strategy that is centered around a cluster of food and agriculture and related rural attractions. It was piloted in the small dairy-farming community of Candor, New York. The general approach was to bring together a motivated group of agritourism enterprise operators who would cooperate to satisfy mutual goals. Eventually a core of businesses was recruited in the community, including a dairy farmer who offered tours, a produce farmer who had hayrides, haunted houses and other agri-entertainment, a deer farmer, a masseuse, a craft and gift shop operator, a bed and breakfast proprietor and, interestingly, a nudist colony.

The organizers made sure that the project fit the goals of the county tourism and economic development agencies. The project also relied on the collaboration of many local agencies, including Tioga County Cooperative Extension, Candor Chamber of Commerce, Tioga County Economic Development and Planning, and Tioga County Tourism.

The first phase, funded by an Appalachian Regional Commission grant, included a tourism assessment of the county and region, followed by the implementation of an 11-week business planning course using Fasttrac[®] (see page 83 for details on this type of program). The Agri-cluster businesses participated in workshops and prepared their business plans. They also discussed how the group of businesses would work together, especially in terms of cooperative marketing and making referrals to each other.

A recent evaluation of the Agri-cluster program showed that by the completion of the second phase, 87 microenterprises in the county and in neighboring counties had received direct and indirect assistance. Individual businesses increased sales and revenues by 15 to 75 percent, including an overall 65 percent increase in local customers.

The completion of the final phases of the Agri-cluster project is slated for 2002, including the establishment of a formal association. For more information on the Agri-cluster project, contact Linda LaRosa-Mosner, Marketing/Education Coordinator, SoCNY RC&D, at (607) 334-4715; Web site www.AgriCluster.org.

References and Resources for Agritourism

Alternative Enterprises and Agritourism (tool kit), Natural Resources Conservation Service. Portions may be reviewed at the NRCS Web site, www.nhq.nrcs.usda.gov/RESS/econ/altenterprise/Contents.html; contact Jim Maetzold at jim.maetzold@usda.gov for further information.

For information on the following agritourism publications, contact the Community, Food and Agriculture Program, Cornell University, (607) 255-9832 or www.cfap.org.

- Hilchey, D. 1993. *Agritourism in New York State: Opportunities and Challenges in Farm-Based Recreation and Hospitality*, Farming Alternatives Program.
- Kuehn, D., D. Hilchey, D. Ververs, K. Dunn, P. Lehman. 1998. *Considerations for Agritourism Development*. New York Sea Grant. SUNY Oswego.

Resource tip

Agritourism 2000: Two Fact Sheets on Management and Marketing Considerations for Agritourism (based on a recent study of agritourism businesses and customers in New York State). \$1.00 each. To order, contact the Cornell Community, Food and Agriculture Program at (607) 255-9832 or e-mail gcg4@cornell.edu.

Improving Farm-Neighbor Relations	Engaging the Public
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Urban areas and farms are too often on a collision course as sprawl comes face to face with larger-scale, modern, industrial agriculture. When subdivisions spring up near farming areas where crops are sprayed, manure is spread, and dust and flies occur, the urban immigrants can become disgruntled. Results from a 1997 survey of almost 500 dairy farmers in New York indicate that 15 percent of respondents had received complaints about odors and 9.6 percent had received complaints about roadway manure spills during the last five years.

Fifteen percent of New York dairy farmers have gotten complaints about odors.

Sometimes the complaints become more than mere grumbling. Manure-contaminated wells seem to be making the papers with increasing frequency. A few have become lawsuits that last for months, complete with courtroom drama and expert witnesses. Sometimes accused farmers are exonerated because the plaintiffs were not able to conclusively demonstrate causal links between the actions of the farmer and the tainted well. Farm organizations may herald the farmer's success and he becomes the poster boy for production agriculture and the right-to-farm in his state (despite the fact that right-to-farm laws are not legal defenses in negligence cases).

But do "exonerated" farmers or the agriculture community really win? The answer depends on how you define *win*. Prevailing in court is not necessarily a victory. People on both sides spend lots of money during the lawsuit, and lose sleep and work productivity. Neither wins a moral victory, and the farm community and the urban community become even more divided than before. Often, only the attorneys walk away with tangible rewards for their efforts.

There are alternatives to litigation, and even a number of strategies for preventing these kinds of problems from cropping up in the first place. Farmers, neighbors, community leaders and educators can improve farm-neighbor relations to mitigate conflict outright, or at least minimize its impact should an issue arise.

What Farmers Can Do: Farmers can do three basic things to ensure respectful relationships with neighbors: (1) implement responsible and defensible farm management practices; (2) get involved in their communities; and (3) promote benefits of their farms to neighbors and the community at large (see sidebar).

Neighborhoodly things farmers can do

Here's a sampling of things a farmer can provide for neighbors. Keep in mind some reflect higher costs and risks than others. What a farmer provides should be carefully considered in risk-management planning.

- Provide community garden plots.
- Host annual community picnics.
- Offer farm visits (from a limited number of school classes).
- Share farm products (a basket of goodies from "the garden" to each of the neighbors).
- Make composted manure available for gardens.
- Mow brush and roadsides.
- Donate mulch hay.
- Sponsor a sports team.
- Provide recreational access (such as hunting privileges).
- Plow snow from driveways.
- Tow stuck cars.
- Loan tools.

(Source: Hilchey, D. and N. Leonard. 1995. *Cultivating Farm-Neighbor Relations*. Farming Alternatives Program, Cornell University.)

Also, some farmers near developments publish a newsletter that talks about what's going on at their farms, including rough schedules of when crop spraying or manure spreading might occur.

What Community Leaders and Educators Can Do: A progressive community will recognize that it also has responsibilities in cultivating good farm-neighbor relations. Here are some examples of strategies or activities communities can employ to rely less on lawsuits, right-to-farm laws, zoning ordinances, etc., and work more informally with farmers and other local residents to mitigate or mediate conflict.

- Conduct an annual public meeting on the future of food and agriculture in the community. Generally take stock of the amenities farms provide to the community, and, with the cooperation of farmers, capitalize on these amenities (for example, open space, wildlife habitat, tax revenue, jobs and healthy food).
- Sponsor farmers' markets, farm tours, farm trails, farm festivals, agricultural fairs or monthly socials which provide opportunities for community interaction (see Agri-tourism section, page 75).
- Recognize that, compared to non-farm residences, farms generally contribute a disproportionately large share of local property taxes relative to services required.
- Support agricultural education for youth (e.g., Ag in the Classroom; Vocational Agricultural Education; Future Farmers of America; 4-H programs).
- Encourage farmers to use practices which protect neighbors' ability to use and enjoy their property, and support the farmers who do this.
- Consult with County Extension offices or state Departments of Agriculture prior to passing any municipal ordinances which might affect local farmers.
- Encourage problem-solving that satisfies the interests of both parties, such as third-party mediation and alternative conflict-resolution strategies, when farm-related land-use concerns do arise (see resources listed below for more information on these techniques).

References and Resources for Improving Farm-Neighbor Relations

Bellows, B., J. Wright, T. Robertson and M. Edid. 1998. *Farm-Neighbor Relationships: Guidelines of Resolving and Mediating Conflicts*. Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering, Cornell University. Ithaca, NY.

Bellows, B., J. Wright, L. Telega and C. Crispell. *Managing Good Farm-Neighbor-Relations: An Essential Component of Manure Management*. Cornell University. Available at www.ctic.purdue.edu/Core4/nutrient/ManureMgmt/Paper73.html.

Hamilton, Neil D.. 1991. *Livestock Producer's Legal Guide to: Nuisance, Land-Use Con-*

trol, and Environmental Law. Environmental Law Center, Drake University. Available from the American Farm Bureau, 225 Touhy Avenue, Park Ridge, IL 60068; (312) 399-5844.

Hilchey, D. and N. Leonard. 1995. *Cultivating Farm, Neighbor, and Community Relations.* Farming Alternatives Program, Department of Rural Sociology. Cornell University, Ithaca, NY. Available from www.cfap.org.

Raymond, Lyle S. Jr. 1995. *Watershed Conflict Resolution: Some Guiding Principles.* Cornell Cooperative Extension, Local Government Program, and the Center for the Environment, Cornell University.

Resource tip: Dispute resolution programs

County-based Community Dispute Resolution Centers (CDRCs) are popping up throughout the country. They provide alternative conflict-resolution services, such as third-party mediation, to the local community with the goal of keeping disputes out of the legal system. While most CDRCs specialize in dealing with landlord-tenant, buyer-seller, and domestic disputes, a few are beginning to develop expertise in dealing with farm-neighbor conflicts.

Check your local directory's white pages under "dispute resolution" to locate the nearest CDRC.

Transitioning to the New Food and Agriculture System

Introduction

Are your farmers and allied businesses prepared for the dramatic changes taking place now and in the future? What can you do to assist them in making the transition? In this section we offer examples of educational programs and support services that can help prepare members of the local food and agriculture industry for the future.

Preparing Farmers for the Future

Transitioning to the New Food and Agriculture System

Local agencies and organizations can employ many strategies to promote *Growing Home* strategies in their community. The long-term strategy is to begin teaching entrepreneurship and stewardship skills very early, such as in 4-H, FFA or vocational-

The principles of the New Agriculture need to be taught during the formative stages in a young farmer's development.

agricultural education. Most educators and consultants will agree that teaching adults such entrepreneurial skills as cooperation, marketing skills, interpersonal communication and relationship-building can be a very tall order. Technical farming skills are easily adopted or adapted at any time in a farmer's life, but the principles of the New Agriculture probably need to be taught during the formative stages in a young farmer's development.

But in the short term, we now have many existing farmers who must rethink how they do business, and it is in a community's best interest to nurture those traditional farmers who want to make the difficult transformation. The following is a partial list of ways in which local agencies and community-based groups can encourage "agriprenurship" and the new agriculture.

Farmer-to-farmer networks: "F2F networks" are informal groups of local farmers who want to share their knowledge and experience. The idea is that unique local circumstances (in climate, soils and production traditions) make

Resource tip

Farmer-to-Farmer Mentoring: Building Sustainable Farms through Peer Relationships by Tracy Frisch, Executive Director, Regional Farm & Food Project (Albany, N.Y.). A booklet based on a year's experience creating a farmer development program. Produced with support from the Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program. Copies are available for \$2.00 from Regional Farm & Food Project, 148 Central Avenue, 2nd Floor, Albany, NY 12206; (518) 427-6537; e-mail farmfood@capital.net; Web site capital.net/~farmfood.

these farmers more knowledgeable than the usual institutional educators. In some cases farmers may not feel that local agencies are serving their particular interests or are interested in their challenges (e.g., sustainable-agriculture practices or marketing strategies). However, in most cases F2F networks can complement more formal Extension training workshops. The Practical Farmers of Iowa is a statewide grassroots organization (divided into regional groups) that specializes in F2F networking. Contact Practical Farmers of Iowa, 2035 190th Street, Boone, IA 50036-7423; president is Dave Lubben, (319) 465-4717; e-mail dave_lubben@jemm.com.

Entrepreneurship training programs: Several prepackaged agriculture business training programs have been developed in recent years (among them Fasttrac[®] and NxLevel[®]). Generally, these are multisession workshops with teaching materials, handouts and trained instructors who specialize in working with food and agriculture businesses. Recognizing the need to adapt to the changing economy, some County Cooperative Extension Associations and nongovernmental organizations are utilizing these programs to build the entrepreneurial capacity of their local farmers. Also, a number of local and regional agencies might be able to provide business-training services to farmers, including small business development centers (SBDCs), which are multicounty technical-assistance arms of the Small Business Administration. Many Chambers of Commerce offer Senior Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) programs which provide one-to-one counseling on general business matters (e.g., planning, accounting, marketing, human resources) to any type of business. See the town of Candor “Agri-cluster” project (page 77) for an example of how this type of training program can fit into a *Growing Home* food and agriculture system development project.



Examples of entrepreneurship support networks and organizations in New York

Other community-based means of supporting agricultural entrepreneurship include encouraging farmers' markets to develop entrepreneurial skills, and helping entrepreneurs access the capital necessary to implement their new farm plans. In New York state we are fortunate to have several regional or community-based organizations implementing these types of strategies.

Center for Agriculture Development and Entrepreneurship (CADE)

The Center for Agriculture Development and Entrepreneurship is a nonprofit organization formed in 1991 to address the decline of agriculture in central New York state. CADE's

(continued)

Examples of entrepreneurship support networks and organizations in New York *(continued from previous page)*

mission is to increase the number of successful farms through research, education and marketing assistance. CADE's emphasis is on small farms that use environmentally sustainable methods and seek to develop and market high-quality, specialty products. CADE believes family farms will thrive if new markets are developed for their products. This requires developing entrepreneurial practices. For more information, contact CADE, 250 Main Street, Suite 218, Oneonta, NY 13820; (607) 431-6034; e-mail cadefarms@cadefarms.org; Web site www.cadefarms.org.

Regional Farm and Food Project

The Regional Farm and Food Project is a 10-county, nonprofit membership organization of farmers and consumers that promotes vibrant, sustainable agriculture in the region and beyond. Its activities build community, skills and awareness through education, networking, organizing and farmer-to-farmer mentoring. Intensive and introductory workshops assist farmers in pursuing unconventional paths. Favorite topics include organic systems, grass farming (management intensive grazing), Holistic Management, and farm-based entrepreneurship. 148 Central Avenue, Albany, NY 12206; (518) 426-9331; e-mail farmfood@capital.net; Web site capital.net/~farmfood.



Rural Enterprise Association of Proprietors (REAP)

REAP was founded in Cattaraugus County, N.Y., by Cornell Cooperative Extension. In addition to workshops and individual counseling, the group established a network of five farmers' markets, which REAP members use to launch new products. Contact Chuck Couture, Rural Enterprises Association of Proprietors (REAP), 5790 Fox Valley Road, West Valley, NY 14171; (716) 942-3710; e-mail cpcouture@hotmail.com.

Farm transfer assistance: Many states have established programs to help retiring farmers transfer their farms on to family members or others in the next generation. A comprehensive list of state programs is made available by the National Farm Transition Network (www.extension.iastate.edu/Pages/bfc/national/homepage.html). State programs can work with both individual farm families and communities wishing to plan and implement educational programming on farm transfer assistance. For a good primer on this subject see:

- Fact sheets from the University of Minnesota entitled *Transferring the Farm*, at www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/businessmanagement/DF6317.html.
- A fact sheet from the American Farmland Trust entitled *Farm Transfer and Estate Planning*, at www.farmlandinfo.org/fic/tas/tafs-ftep.html.

Beginning farmer assistance, apprenticeship and mentoring programs: Some states and communities experience a critical shortage of farmers as farmers retire and are not replaced. In collaboration with a number of other agencies and organizations throughout the Northeast, the New England Small Farm Institute has provided leadership in establishing a number of innovative regional programs to help new farmers get started. These include the Beginning Farmers Initiative and the Northeast New Farmer Network. For more information, contact Sue Ellen Johnson, NESFI, 275 Jackson Street, Belchertown, MA 01007; (413) 323-4531; e-mail sejohnson@smallfarm.org; Web site smallfarm.org/nenfn/bfi.html.

References and Resources for Preparing Farmers for the Future

Competitive Advantage (Alberta, Canada): www.oldscollege.ab.ca/extension/CAPA/CAPA_Home.asp.

Fasttrac: www.fasttrac.org.

Fasttrac for Agriculture (Maine): www.mint.net/HOMRCD/fasttrac/forag_curriculum.html.

NxLevel Training (*Tilling the Soil of Opportunity*): www.nxlevel.org/Pages/ag.html.

Service Corp of Retired Executives: www.score.org.

Small Business Development Centers: www.sbaonline.sba.gov/sbdc.

Agriculture Workforce Development	<i>Transitioning to the New Food and Agriculture System</i>
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The *Growing Home* approach requires a savvy, well-trained and well-treated workforce. Long gone are the days when good farm employees were high school drop-outs. The new agriculture requires flexible labor that can switch from hand-picking specialty produce to calibrating equipment, to making correct change, to speaking intelligently about the farm operation or about agriculture in general. To make the transition to the new agriculture, farmers need help in dealing with the frequent issues of ongoing shortages of skilled employees, high turnover, increasing labor costs and communication problems.

Workforce Development Examples

Here are some cutting-edge programs in the Northeast that are putting these principles into action.

The Vermont Farm Youth Corps School-to-Work Transition Program: Borrowing from European models, Vermont Farm Youth Corps (VFYC) has developed specialized agriculture employment training programs and is working with local school districts to implement them. These programs help 16-to-21-year-olds find quality employment in the food and agriculture industry. The VFYC encourages self-confidence, career-skill development and a strong work ethic in young adults.

One recent challenge the program faced was that most farmers could not afford to provide workers compensation insurance for school-to-work participants. The Vermont Farm Bureau stepped in and now serves as the primary employer for the youth, providing workers compensation insurance as well as handling payroll. This provides great relief for host farmers, who now only pay roughly half of each worker's wages.

For more information, contact Helm Nottermann, Vermont Farm Youth Corps, University of Vermont, 590 Main Street, Burlington, VT 05405-0059; (802) 223-2389; e-mail hnotterm@sover.net.

Utica Green Team: With over 800 acres of parks, the city of Utica in upstate New York is steward to the largest urban parks system in the state outside of New York City. At the same time, Utica is an old industrial city struggling with a poor local economy and high unemployment. Keeping up with its public open spaces has been a challenge. However, in cooperation with city and county agencies, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Oneida County established the Utica Green Team program to simultaneously address youth unemployment and park deterioration.



A Utica Green Team success: Proctor Park in Utica, N.Y.

The program provides career-oriented summer internships for youth 16 to 21 years old through agency-sponsored landscape and gardening projects. During the program the youth also learn how to search for a job and the value of a firm work ethic, preparing them for employment in the local "green industry."

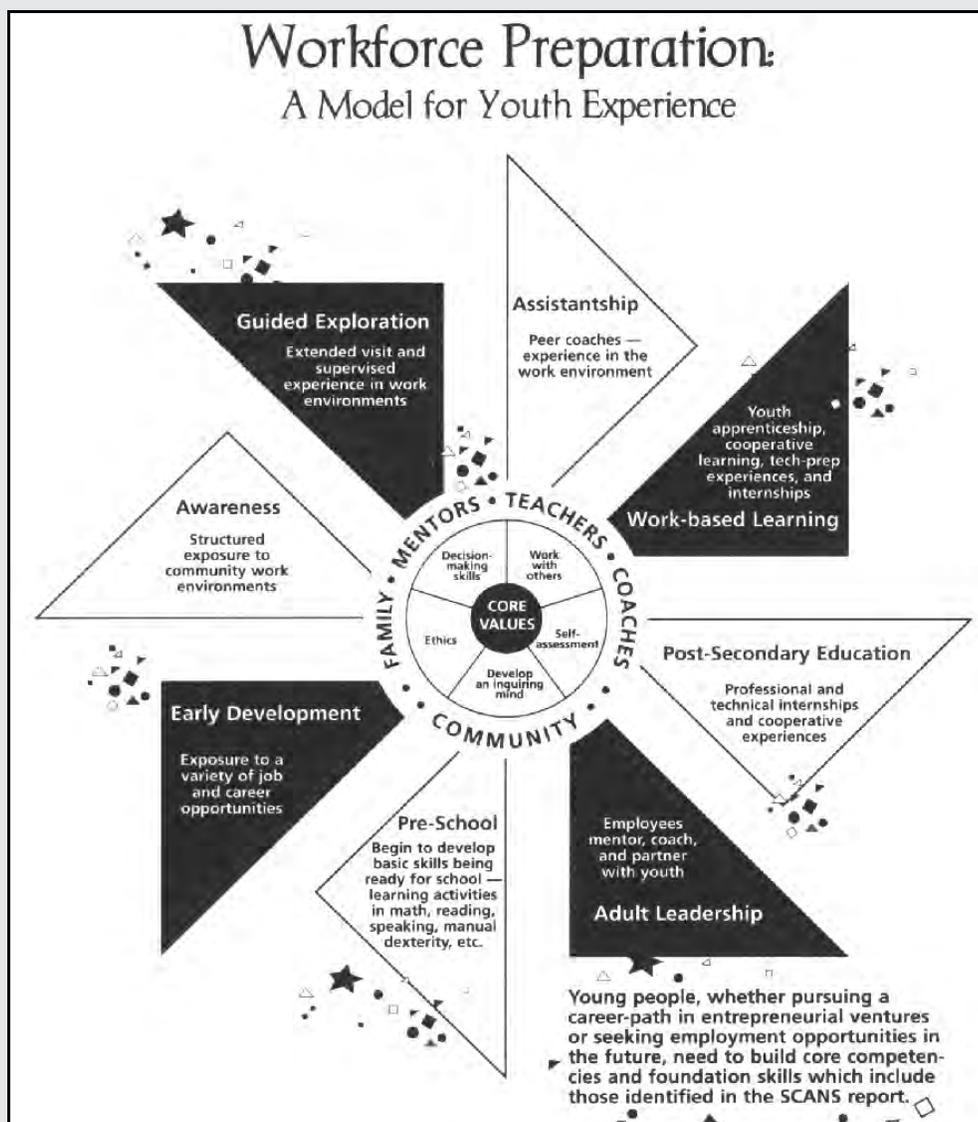
For more information, contact the Utica Green Team, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Oneida County, 121 Second Street, Oriskany, NY 13424; (315) 736-3394; Web site www.cce.cornell.edu/oneida/cce/greenteam/greenteammp.htm.

Figure 17. Workforce development basics

Doug Bowne of the Cornell Workforce Development Program says “today’s farm manager can no longer view labor as a disposable commodity following harvest. We are stressing that to be effective, a workforce program must include the following educational and experiential elements:

- Technical training relevant to the work area;
- Soft-skill development and emphasis;
- Mentoring, apprenticeship or job placement;
- Hands-on work opportunity;
- Coaching, team building, clear communication;
- Training for supervisors.”

As a comprehensive, conceptual framework for workforce preparation, the figure below depicts the multiple points of opportunity to introduce agriculture employment or careers to youth and young adults.



Source: Wood, Benjamin (lead author). 1997. *Leading the Way: How to Build a Workforce Preparation Effort in Your Community*. National 4-H Council.

Brockport Ecumenical Outreach Committee helping migrant worker communities:

Rural communities are currently doing many things to support migrant farm workers and integrate them into the local community. The Brockport (N.Y.) Ecumenical Outreach Committee, in the heart of the fruit and vegetable belt along Lake Ontario in upstate New York, has sponsored many projects and programs, including:

- Welcoming dinner: A “bienvenida” or welcome dinner for new and returning migrant workers as a way to increase the visibility of migrant workers, recognize their contribution to the community, and celebrate diversity.
- Migrant Information Night for the community, where a panel of migrant workers share their thoughts about the challenges of living in the community.
- Clothing center and blanket collection and distribution.
- Survival Spanish for Growers: A basic course to improve communication between farmers and their workers.
- Motor vehicle workshops: To teach migrant workers about New York driving laws and assist them in filling out Department of Motor Vehicles paperwork.
- Building bus shelters at migrant camps.

For more information of how BEOC supports migrant workers, contact Barbara Deming, BEOC chair, at (716) 637-7504.

References and Resources for Agriculture Workforce Development

Agricultural Personnel Management Program, University of California-Berkeley:
are.berkeley.edu/APMP

Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs: www.afop.org.

Cornell Migrant Program: Contact Kay Embrey, P.O. Box 181, Alton, NY 14413;
(315) 483-4092; e-mail ke20@cornell.edu.

Farm employment state rules and regulations: www.usda.gov/oce/oce/labor-affairs/statempl.htm.

National Center for Farmworker Health: www.ncfh.org/org-labor.htm.

Ohio State Farm-Labor Relations Program: ohioline.osu.edu/~abe/farm/farm.htm.

Wood, Benjamin, lead author. 1997. *Leading the Way: How to Build a Workforce Preparation Effort in Your Community*. National 4-H Council.

Agency Support Activities

Introduction

Growing Home should not be seen as a one-time or short-term project. We have emphasized that food and agriculture system development is a process, and in this section we highlight several activities communities can engage in to ensure the institutionalization of change that will foment long-term success.

Integrating Food and Agriculture with Mainstream Planning and Economic Development

Agency Support Activities

Agriculture has a substantial economic impact in many communities. Local farms provide livelihoods both for farm families and for farm and farm-related business employees. Farmers purchase inputs and services from local businesses, and provide raw products for food processing firms. Local farms often produce a large “economic multiplier effect” by recirculating dollars in local economies. In addition to these direct economic impacts, local farms have many benefits that indirectly enhance a local economy. As independent small businesses, they provide that basis for a strong middle class and a healthy civil society. They preserve open space and beautify the landscape, maintain rural character, and make their communities more attractive to tourists and to employers. Farms can also benefit the environment by protecting watersheds, enhancing wildlife habitat and fostering biodiversity. They provide fresh, wholesome foods with superior taste and nutrition. In short, they contribute to community quality of life.

For all of these reasons, communities are recognizing that they need to include agriculture in their plans for the future. They are coming to see that agriculture needs the same access to economic-development resources, such as grants, tax incentives and loans, that other sectors of the local economy already enjoy. One of the most basic agriculture-development strategies, then, is to ensure that agriculture is fully integrated into the community’s general planning and economic-development efforts.

Benefits of connecting agriculture with economic development and planning

Experience in several Northeast communities indicates that significant benefits accrue to agriculture when it is effectively integrated with local planning and development processes:

- Community leadership becomes much more knowledgeable about agriculture, its importance and its needs.

- Local policies and programs become more supportive of agriculture and potential negative impacts on agriculture are taken into account.
- Agriculture comes to have an established seat at the table where it is always considered during decision-making.
- The agriculture community develops more effective leadership, building its capacity for directing its own future.
- Agriculture gains access to new financial resources, including tax and financing incentives, loans and grants, and often the local communities increase their own investments in agriculture development.

Challenges and pitfalls

The challenges involved in building any collaborative partnership are described in Chapter 2. In addition, agriculture-economic development partnership strategies have some specific pitfalls:

- The usual measures of success in economic development, such as number of jobs created, may not apply very well to food and agriculture systems development.
- Economic-development agencies often want to finance only very large projects, which is not necessarily what the agriculture community needs most.
- Agency “turfism” is frequently a problem, and local agricultural agencies and organizations may balk if they perceive other agencies as taking the lead in agriculture development.

A solid connection between agriculture and other economic-development spheres requires: (1) active leaders from a diverse cross-section of the agriculture community; leaders who are knowledgeable about a broad range of community issues; and (2) active leaders from other sectors who are knowledgeable about agriculture and supportive of its needs. The specific approach needed to build this kind of collaborative lead-

Agricultural Industry Development, Enhancement and Retention (AIDER) is a local, community-based program for agriculture and food systems economic development. AIDER’s focus is the implementation of high-profile, action-based projects that strengthen and expand the agriculture and food sector of the local economy. AIDER achieves its goals by integrating agriculture into comprehensive economic development strategies at the local level.

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ership will vary by community. In some cases, economic developers and planners are already quite interested in agriculture, but they need help figuring out how to get farmers and agribusiness people to the table. In other cases, developers and planners are deaf to agriculture, and the agriculture community needs help in figuring out how to get into the game. Intermediary organizations, such as county Cooperative Extension offices, can play essential roles in bridging the gaps between the agriculture community and economic-development and planning circles. The principles and processes of developing a collaborative partnership (described in Chapter 2 of this guidebook) apply directly to this situation.

Steps that communities can take to strengthen agriculture's presence in overall economic development and planning include the following:

- Ensure that agricultural constituencies are represented on community boards, committees, task forces and legislatures.
- Ensure that economic-development, planning, local government, community organizations, etc., are represented on agricultural boards, committees, and task forces.
- Ensure that food and agriculture systems are addressed and integrated into any proposed comprehensive planning processes. If no comprehensive planning activities are underway, take the lead by initiating an agriculture-focused planning process. This is a good way to get the attention and involvement of community leaders, and the results can later be incorporated into broader processes.
- Create a countywide Agriculture Development Specialist position to facilitate and support the collaborative network, and to provide leadership for specific projects.
- Demonstrate the impact of agriculture on the local economy by providing data on multipliers, total employment and tax revenues from the county planning department or a consultant using input-output analysis software (e.g., IMPLAN). Other sources of data which can be used to measure the economic contributions to a local economy include the Regional Economic Information System and County Business Patterns. See the section on secondary data sources starting on page 114.

References and Resources on Integrating Food and Agriculture with Mainstream Planning and Economic Development

Agriculture-Based Economic & Community Development (AECD) Information Clearinghouse, Cornell University. Includes *AECD Case Studies* on New York communities and an *Annotated Bibliography*. Web site www.nyagdev.net.