

# Local Planning for Agriculture

## *Where to Get Started?*

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# A few guiding principles...

- NJ agriculture is remarkably diverse...and constantly changing
  - Off-the-shelf solutions may not work
- It may be challenging...but it will be worth it
  - Public conceptions of agriculture may not be consistent with today's realities
  - True integration of agriculture into local plans will take some work

# A few guiding principles...

- Agriculture is influenced by many factors beyond local control
  - Weather, disease, pests, global markets
  - Let's focus on what we can control
- ***Agricultural retention*** is more than farmland preservation
- Participatory planning!
  - Engagement of the farm community is critical

# NJ Farming very diverse...

Conceptions of agriculture drive our understanding  
*(or what we think we know)* and thus policy

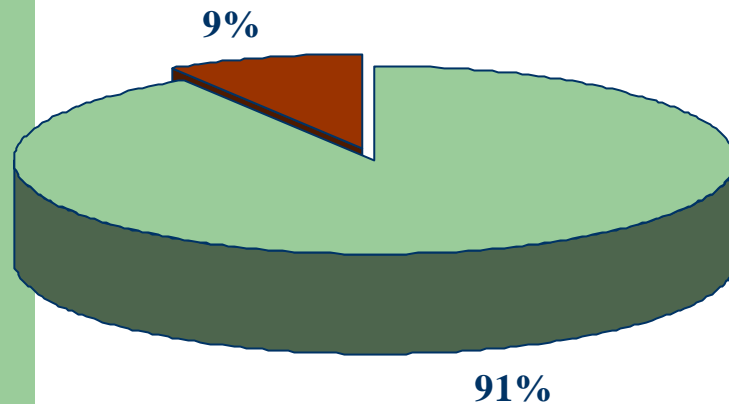
***There is no such thing as a “typical” farm***

- Scales of operation
- Sales volume
- Products & services
- Operators (age, ethnic, primary occupation, etc.)
- Production methods
- Marketing methods
- Supplemental activities
- Motivations for farming

# ...and always changing.

## 2002 Ag. sales

(approx. \$750 million)



■ Crops ■ Livestock

Source: 2002 Census of Agriculture.

	2002	1982
Nursery, greenhouse, floriculture & sod	48%	21%
Vegetables, melons & potatoes	22%	22%
Fruits & berries	12%	15%
Grains	4%	11%
Dairy	4%	15%
All other sectors	11%	16%

# Adaptability of New Jersey farmers

<b>Total Farm Sales</b>	<b>39<sup>th</sup> in U.S</b>
<b>Total Net Cash Income from Farming</b>	<b>39<sup>th</sup></b>
<b>Land in Farms (acres)</b>	<b>45<sup>th</sup></b>

<b>Total Farm Sales per acre</b>	<b>4<sup>th</sup> in U.S.</b>
<b>Direct-to-Consumer Farm Sales*</b>	<b>12<sup>th</sup></b>
<b>Total Net Cash Income from Farming per acre</b>	<b>5<sup>th</sup></b>

Source: 2002 Census of Agriculture.

\* Products sold for human consumption.

# Agriculture is Dynamic

*The only thing constant is change!*

- Farmers are responding to pressures and opportunities
  - Direct marketing
  - Value added
  - Agritourism
  - Changing ethnic composition
  - ***What will tomorrow bring?***

# 4 steps will get you well on your way

1. Know what you have
2. Know what you want
3. True integration of agriculture into local plans
4. Specific agricultural retention and development policies

(And, yes, **PROCESS MATTERS!**)

- Active engagement of the local farming community, agricultural leaders & experts will:
  - promote greater understanding of agriculture & key issues
  - create cross-exchanges and bring new ideas to the table
  - encourage buy-in



# Understand What You Have

## *Conduct an agricultural resource inventory*

- Number, type, size & location of farms
- Farmland acreage
- Preserved farmland
  - Preservation goals & priorities
- Agricultural support businesses (input & output side)
- Land tenure (owned versus leased)
  - Who are the largest farmland owners?
- Current issues faced by farmers
- Key farm leaders

# Know What You Want

*It begins (or ends) with the master plan...*

- What is your **vision** for agriculture?
- What are specific agriculture-related **goals and objectives** for the community?
  - Preserve farmland?
  - Preserve rural character?
  - Preserve a vital agricultural industry?

# Integrate agriculture – truly – into local planning

*A farmland preservation element is a good start (and is required for PIG participation)*

## What's included?

- Inventory of farm properties
- Map of “significant areas of agricultural land”
- How municipality is supporting agriculture as a business
- Plan for preserving farmland

**...but you can go much further!**

# Agriculture can be integrated into **ALL** master plan elements

- *Land use element*
- Housing plan element
- Circulation plan element
- Utility service plan element
- Community facilities plan element
- Recreation plan element
- Conservation plan element
- Economic plan element
- Historic preservation plan element
- Recycling plan element
- Transfer of development rights element
- Relationship to other plans
  - I.e., State Plan

# Example: Land Use Element & Ordinance

- Is agriculture a permitted use in all zones?
- How are accessory uses defined?
  - I.e., Farm markets? Greenhouses? Housing for workers?
- Are there buffer provisions to protect farmers from residential neighbors (and vice versa)?
- What are site plan requirements for farms?

Adapted from presentation at *Farmers and Farms in South Jersey: Planning for Agriculture in Your Community* by H. Heinrich (Oct. 14, 2004).

# Customize programs & policies to local needs & opportunities

## Examples

- Right to farm ordinance
- Farmland preservation funding (adequate for goals and priorities)
- Support for local marketing/consumption
- Public outreach and education about farming
  - Country code

# Example: Right-to-Farm Ordinance

- Can be more permissive than state law (but not less so)
  - SADC Model Ordinance
  - Country Code ordinance (i.e., Upper Freehold Twp, Monmouth)
- Heinrich-Schilling (2005): evaluated townships in northern Burlington County against 28 possible right-to-farm elements
  - Key agricultural definitions
  - Permissible activities
  - Conflict resolution (i.e., “mandatory notice” provision)

# Example: Code of Country Living

*Living in the country can be a wonderful way of life - if your expectations are in-line with reality.*

*Reality seldom measures up to the romanticized version of almost any idea or ideal- as is frequently discovered by those who move from an urban setting to the country.*

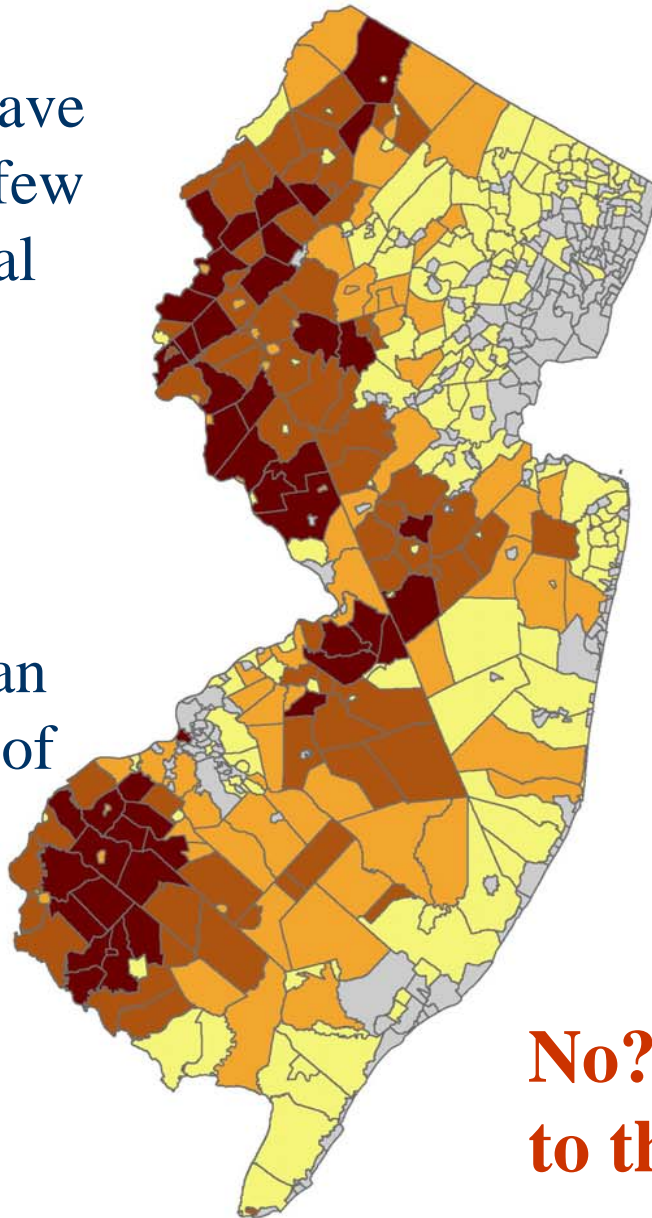
Illinois Farm Bureau *The Code of Country Living*





Most towns have agriculture...few are agricultural towns.

Do you know enough to effectively plan for the future of agriculture in your community?



**No? Then go to the source!**

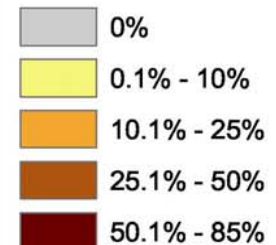


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## New Jersey Land Under Farmland Assessment

### Legend

#### Pct. Land Under FA



# Process, Process, Process

***Convene a balanced and representative agricultural advisory committee.***

- Scale of operation
- Commodity
- Production methods
- Marketing method
- Demographics of farmer
- Local experts (i.e., RCRE)
- Full/part-time farmers
- Others?

***Did you know?***

You need an AAC to participate in the Planning Incentive Grant program.

# How Do I Know if My Town is Farm Friendly?

- Complete the New Hampshire checklist
- Speak to and engage your local farmers!

# Other resources to get you on your way!

- NJDA Agricultural Smart Growth Plan
- NJDA Agricultural Smart Growth Tool Kit
- State Plan (23 policies for agriculture)
  - NJDA Plan Endorsement thresholds
- SADC model Right-to-Farm ordinance
- Upper Freehold Township's Country Code
- Burlington County agricultural viability studies (2005)

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Thank You!

