

Watershed Agricultural Council

STRATEGIC PLAN FOR ECONOMIC VIABILITY OF AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY

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PREPARED WITH ASSISTANCE FROM
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INTRODUCTION

Increasing the Watershed Agricultural Council's role in enhancing the economic viability of agriculture and forestry in the watershed region was one of the primary goals identified through the Council's strategic plan completed in 2011. Toward that end, the Council convened a planning group late in 2011 to develop a strategic "sub-plan" that defines the appropriate role for WAC in regional economic development.

Planning was conducted over a six-month period and utilized data drawn from four primary sources:

- An environmental analysis assessing WAC's current internal strengths and weakness as well as external opportunities and threats related to its provision of services designed to promote economic viability within the region;
- A stakeholder survey to assess constituents' experience with and perception of current WAC initiatives as well as unmet needs related to sustaining a viable business;
- An Economic Viability Summit to solicit input from a broad range of community stakeholders about regional economic development needs and the appropriate niche for WAC; and
- Review of related planning efforts and their associated reports.

The following document summarizes the key themes and recommendations generated through the planning process and presents the specific vision, goals, and strategies that comprise the WAC's strategic plan economic viability of agriculture and forestry in the watershed region for the next five years. WAC will use the framework provided by the plan to develop annual work plans that more specifically guide both staff and board efforts going forward.

ECONOMIC VIABILITY: PROPOSED DEFINITION AND VISION

For the purpose of this plan, WAC defined economic viability as the capacity to develop and survive as an individual business.

The plan is guided by a vision for the future comprised of two distinct components: Agriculture and forestry based businesses in the watershed region will

- Be more profitable, as evidenced by
- Increased sales combined with increased efficiencies,
- Increased market competitiveness through improved product quality and stability of output, and
- Support the business owners' desired quality of life.

CURRENT OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

(Note: In the following section, the order in which bulleted points are listed is not intended to suggest their relative priority.)

STRENGTHS

WAC's strengths related to economic viability initiatives include:

- Good connections with producers throughout the watershed region;
- Wide variety and diversity of both producers and products;
- Long-standing programs that can serve as the foundation for expansion of efforts;
- An established, strong brand through the Pure Catskills initiative;
- An infrastructure (facilities, staff, technology, etc.) that provides good support;
- Established networking tools;
- Strong collaborations with other regional entities, including those focused on economic development;
- Evaluation of prior efforts that offers guidance for future growth;
- Increasing DEP support for economic viability goals; and
- Engaged stakeholders who serve as informal advisors to the Farm to Market program.

INTERNAL CHALLENGES

WAC's internal challenges related to economic viability initiatives were identified as follows:

- The lack of a unified WAC approach to economic viability results in different methods across programs—current efforts are siloed within agriculture, forestry, easement, and farm to market (FtM) programs.
- Council members are similarly specialized and frequently lack a broad WAC perspective.





- There is no shared definition of economic viability across programs and desired outcomes are not articulated.
- Deliverables based contracts target efforts toward producing outputs as opposed to outcomes—programs lack a focus based on desired results.
- Current programs lack of outcome evaluation protocols, particularly in FTM.
- There is little follow-up to training programs to assess impact—did the training have any effect on behavior?
- Varying levels of coordination exist with current subcontractors, resulting in duplication of efforts, particularly in educational programming.
- There are competing stakeholder needs, identities, and values related to farm types, longevity, etc.
- Limited staff capacity is dedicated to economic viability (EV).
- There is no objective set of criteria for prioritizing EV projects; limited EV funding and staff make such criteria essential.
- FTM and Pure Catskills initiatives primarily engage direct market farmers, not traditional commodities farmers who are more heavily involved with WAC's Agricultural Program.
- FTM struggles with how to balance outreach efforts with direct business facilitation for individual producers.

EXTERNAL OPPORTUNITIES

Several opportunities exist for deepening and expanding WAC's role in supporting economic viability, including:

- The increasing New York City interest in “buying local” supported by the City Council;
- Potential for development of new markets outside of the watershed through use of social media/Internet;
- Commonality in approach to business planning that could support integration of farm and forestry initiatives;
- Business planning could be reintegrated with Whole Farm Plans;
- Current business training programs could be enhanced with follow-up support with business plan development and implementation;
- Access to ancillary services (e.g. marketing, product distribution) would ease burden on individual producers;
- Expansion of precision feeding program can generate additional cost savings for farmers;
- Land currently not in production could be used for grazing grass-fed beef;
- The benefits of farming in the watershed region could be promoted to potential entrepreneurs;

- Some land is already protected by easements which could further the viability for ongoing agricultural or forestry production;
- Enhanced networking among producers—particularly new farmers—can help introduce and support new approaches/practices/etc.;
- Potential land buyers may benefit from assistance in assessing the business potential of property under consideration;
- Promoting leasing land for production purposes offers another mechanism for maintaining the working landscape;
- Strengthened easement requirements could help ensure that eased properties remain in production; and
- Although the Catskills has numerous economic development entities, few, if any, operate at a truly region-wide scale (most are focused at the town or county level), creating a potential WAC niche.

EXTERNAL THREATS/CHALLENGES

Environmental challenges that may serve as barriers to expansion of WAC's economic viability initiatives include:

- The current economic climate;
- Difficulties related to economies of scale—watershed farms lack sufficient size to compete with agribusiness;
- Direct market products tend to be higher cost specialty items;
- The marketing and distribution costs/systems that are necessary to establish and maintain connections with external markets;
- Territoriality may limit efforts to develop watershed-wide approaches;
- Potential longevity of current funding levels and framework is unknown;
- Long-term landowners are aging, approaching retirement;
- Declining support for agriculture education combined with decreasing interest among younger age cohorts; and
- A lack of infrastructure (e.g. tools, resources, consultants) to provide support for business planning and implementation.





STAKEHOLDER PERCEPTIONS

SURVEY RESULTS

The stakeholder survey conducted as part of the planning process was designed to assess:

- Respondents' experience with and perception of current WAC initiatives,
- Need for business training and technical assistance, and
- Marketing approach and experience.

A total of 174 responses were collected through on-line and paper surveys, of which 126 had a farm and/or food-based business and 40 reported owning a forestry or wood-based business.

The WAC initiatives rated most often by survey respondents as "very useful" include:

- Direct assistance from agriculture staff ,
- Farmer education events,
- Farm field days,
- Farm tours,
- Forestry plans, and
- Forestry cost-share programs.

The survey responses also indicated that WAC's current services are already supporting WAC economic viability goals to some extent:

- 40% of those with farm or food-based businesses and 36% of those with forestry or wood-based businesses indicated that they have changed the way that they do business as a result of participating in WAC programs.
- 40% of those with farm or food-based businesses and 47% of those with forestry or wood-based businesses indicate that these changes resulted in increased profitability.

The respondents' experiences with and interests in business planning are both limited:

- 27% reported having written business plans; two-thirds of these were developed without assistance.
- 63% of those without plans indicated that they don't believe that having one would make a positive difference.

Survey respondents reported experiences and interests in business management training are mixed:

- 40% reported minimal or no specific business training; 12% reported extensive training.

- 31% said that they “I learn as I go informally.”
- Fewer than 20% indicated interest in any of several business related training topics.
- “Achieving operational efficiencies” and “Business financing” were the topics generating the highest level of interest.

Reported experience with marketing was also limited:

- 83% sold their products through on-site/on-farm sales.
- 78% marketed products through word of mouth.
- 27% relied on a direct buyer (dairy farmers.)
- Less than 25% used other marketing mechanisms (e.g. Internet, newspaper, etc.).

ECONOMIC VIABILITY SUMMIT

Twenty-seven community representatives, including planners, service providers, and individual business owners gathered for a half day Economic Viability Summit on April 14, 2012 to provide input about regional economic development needs and the appropriate niche for WAC. Participants identified the current activities and trends that appear to offer the greatest promise for increasing the viability of agriculture and forestry based businesses in the region as follows:

- Recruitment and training of new farmers;
- Growing awareness of and demand for local food products along with an increasing demand for healthy food;
- Increased use of technology both to lengthen the growing season and to market products;
- Recent natural disasters that have mobilized the community to support local businesses; and
- Increased emphasis on protection of open space.

Summit participants also noted several barriers that continue to limit development:

- Difficulties related to scaling up existing operations to consistently respond to demand which currently exceeds supply;
- Challenges related to seeding growth and sustaining staff until business expansion generates additional revenue;
- Limited local labor pool;
- Small farmers having limited time to devote to marketing and distribution;
- The unique issues and challenges of dairy farms related to economies of scale and milk pricing; and





- A fragmented approach to planning throughout the region and lack of unified regional identity.

The Summit discussions elicited an outline of WAC's unique niche in the provision of economic viability assistance. Key components include:

- WAC's Pure Catskills branding and marketing, including the associated potential connection with an online store;
- Ongoing support for Producer Groups;
- Education and training programs;
- Leadership in the development and ongoing implementation of the Catskills Farm Link program; and
- Its regional scope in combination with neutral leadership.

RECURRING THEMES IN REGIONAL PLANNING INITIATIVES

Over the past several years, numerous studies and planning initiatives have addressed the economic viability of specific areas within the Watershed as well as some that are contiguous with or overlap the region. Several consistent themes with regard to regional priorities for economic development recur through all of the reports developed through these efforts, as follows:

- Strengthen Buy Local initiatives:
- Unify branding through regional collaboration.
- Improve access to NYC markets through:
 - Marketing
 - Distribution
 - Consistent product supply.
- Reduce burden on small producers for managing marketing and sales.
- Support landowner transitions and new initiatives, including:
 - New farmer education
 - Business training and planning
 - Seed money for land use transitions (e.g. fencing grazing land)
 - Retirement/transition planning.
- Increase profitability:
 - Provide assistance with business planning/entrepreneurship, and
 - Advocate for the dairy industry.

WAC's ECONOMIC VIABILITY GOALS

Based on the review of the current operating environment and the input of key stakeholders, WAC's approach to expanding its role in supporting the economic viability of agriculture and forestry in the Watershed region will be guided by three component principals:

- A unified approach that offers education, information, and tools that support and enhance the economic viability of individual businesses regardless of their core focus;
- An initial focus on strengthening individual businesses rather than broader regional economic development; and
- Longer term expansion of WAC's advocacy role, particularly with the support of board leadership.

Five overarching goals provide the framework for the strategic plan for economic viability:

- Develop an organizational structure that integrates farm and forestry economic viability initiatives to ensure effective program growth, lines of authority, decision-making and oversight.



- Sustain and/or enhance current programs designed to strengthen individual businesses.
- Develop additional programming designed to support the viability of individual businesses.
- Expand WAC's role in marketing both the region and regional products through Pure Catskills, a potential online store, Catskills FarmLink, etc.
- Continue to play a leadership role in facilitating regional dialogue about issues related to the economic viability of agriculture and forestry.

Specific strategies and initial activities with associated timelines are outlined in the following work plan table.

1. GOAL: DEVELOP AN ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE THAT INTEGRATES FARM AND FORESTRY ECONOMIC VIABILITY INITIATIVES TO ENSURE EFFECTIVE PROGRAM GROWTH, LINES OF AUTHORITY, DECISION- MAKING AND OVERSIGHT.

STRATEGIES	2012--2013 ACTIVITIES	RESPONSIBLE PARTY			TIMEFRAME
		STAFF	COUNCIL	COMMITTEES	
Consolidate current agriculture and forestry economic develop initiatives in a unified Economic Viability (EV) Program with its own board oversight committee.	1. Restructure existing Ag and Forestry staff and financial resources into a new EV Program.	X			To be determined
	2. Establish a new board EV Committee, potentially with separate working groups for key programs (e.g. On-line store, F2M, etc.)		X		
	3. Identify and recruit EV Committee Members		X	X	
	4. Develop EV Program Committee charge and guidelines, including specification of program's geographic boundaries, coordination with other WAC programs, etc.	X			
	5. Develop EV Program FY13 Work Plan	X			

2. GOAL: SUSTAIN AND/OR ENHANCE CURRENT PROGRAMS DESIGNED TO STRENGTHEN INDIVIDUAL BUSINESSES

STRATEGIES	2012--2013 ACTIVITIES	RESPONSIBLE PARTY			TIMEFRAME
		STAFF	COUNCIL	COMMITTEES	
<p>Seek opportunities to enhance fiscal resources and staff capacity that support economic viability initiatives.</p> <p>Evaluate effectiveness of current programs to assess best use of available resources as well as to guide future program growth and development.</p> <p>Synchronize current program activities with development of online store.</p>	<p>1. Continue to support current F2M and Forestry initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Assistance with product and event promotion ◆ Educational workshops ◆ Information and referral assistance that supports business connections to resources, markets, etc. ◆ Low cost grants that strengthen viability (equipment, marketing, etc.) ◆ Producer groups 	X			Ongoing
	<p>2. Initiate planning for evaluation of current programs.</p>	X		X	TBD
	<p>3. Complete business plan for on-line store and, pending board approval, prepare for program launch.</p>	X	X	X	Completed 2012

3. GOAL: DEVELOP ADDITIONAL PROGRAMMING DESIGNED TO SUPPORT THE VIABILITY OF INDIVIDUAL BUSINESSES.

STRATEGIES	2012--2013 ACTIVITIES	RESPONSIBLE PARTY			TIMEFRAME
		STAFF	COUNCIL	COMMITTEES	
<p>◆ Establish criteria for prioritizing program development efforts. For example, consider focusing on activities that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase business viability without WAC's continual involvement, • Businesses are ill-equipped to undertake on their own, • Provide the greatest likelihood for increasing potential profits among the greatest number of businesses possible, • Can be measured, quantified, documented and evaluated. • Assist producers in staying abreast of and responsive to changing market trends. <p>◆ Incorporate evaluation mechanisms into all new program development.</p>	<p>1. Develop criteria as part of EV Committee guidelines (see Goal #1)</p>	X		X	TBD

3. GOAL: DEVELOP ADDITIONAL PROGRAMMING DESIGNED TO SUPPORT THE VIABILITY OF INDIVIDUAL BUSINESSES.

STRATEGIES	2012--2013 ACTIVITIES	RESPONSIBLE PARTY			TIMEFRAME
		STAFF	COUNCIL	COMMITTEES	
<p>◆ Establish criteria for prioritizing program development efforts. For example, consider focusing on activities that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase business viability without WAC's continual involvement, • Businesses are ill-equipped to undertake on their own, • Provide the greatest likelihood for increasing potential profits among the greatest number of businesses possible, • Can be measured, quantified, documented and evaluated. • Assist producers in staying abreast of and responsive to changing market trends. <p>◆ Incorporate evaluation mechanisms into all new program development.</p> <p>◆ Develop partnerships in the delivery of economic viability programs with the goal of making best use of available resources.</p> <p>◆ Strengthen WAC's ability to tap the expertise of national experts and keep the region updated about new ideas, techniques, etc.</p> <p>◆ Consider for future development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Business Planning Program that provides financial support and technical assistance to develop business plans • A Marketing Assistance Program that focuses on providing regional forest and agriculture businesses access to markets and marketing techniques they would not otherwise be exposed to • An Innovation Assistance Program that will provide business owners the knowledge and skills to improve their businesses and help them stay competitive 					<p>TBD</p> <p>TBD</p> <p>TBD</p> <p>TBD</p>

4. GOAL: EXPAND WAC'S ROLE IN MARKETING BOTH THE REGION AND REGIONAL PRODUCTS THROUGH PURE CATSKILLS, POTENTIAL ON-LINE STORE, CATSKILLS FARMLINKS, ETC.

STRATEGIES	2012--2013 ACTIVITIES	RESPONSIBLE PARTY			TIMEFRAME
		STAFF	COUNCIL	COMMITTEES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Complete business plan for Pure Catskills Marketplace online store. ◆ Implement the online store concept as outlined in the business plan. ◆ Continue to serve as program sponsor for FarmLinks initiative. 	1. See Pure Catskills Marketplace work plan for detailed list of activities	X	X	X	Ongoing, with program launch targeted for May, 2013

5. GOAL: CONTINUE TO PLAY A LEADERSHIP ROLE IN FACILITATING REGIONAL DIALOGUE ABOUT ISSUES RELATED TO THE ECONOMIC VIABILITY OF AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY.

STRATEGIES	2012--2013 ACTIVITIES	RESPONSIBLE PARTY			TIMEFRAME
		STAFF	COUNCIL	COMMITTEES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Increase WAC staff presence in community venues to promote EV initiatives throughout the Watershed. ◆ Ensure Board advocacy around WAC EV initiatives. 	1. Evaluate opportunities and determine best use of staff and board time.	X	X	X	Ongoing

APPENDIX: STAKEHOLDER SURVEY RESULTS

DO YOU HAVE A FARM AND/OR FOOD BASED BUSINESS?		
ANSWER OPTIONS	RESPONSE PERCENT	RESPONSE COUNT
Yes	72.4%	126
No	27.6%	48
answered question		174

PLEASE INDICATE WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING BEST DESCRIBES YOUR BUSINESS. CHECK ALL THAT APPLY.			
ANSWER OPTIONS	PRIMARY BUSINESS LINE	SECONDARY BUSINESS LINE	RESPONSE COUNT
Raise Dairy Cows	37	5	42
Raise Meat Cows	32	17	49
Raise Dairy Goats or Sheep	4	2	6
Raise Meat Goats or Sheep	6	7	13
Raise horses	9	4	13
Agriculture: Fruits and Vegetables	16	8	24
Producer of Value added products (jam, ice cream butter, etc.)	5	6	11
Restaurant	0	1	1
Retailer	3	1	4
Other (please specify)			40
answered question			102

RESPONSE TEXT:

- pork and turkey
- eggs
- raise fish
- Sell hay (X 12)
- actually provide riding lessons, do not raise horses
- raise duck and boar (primary)
- greenhouse
- hogs
- forage for cows and horses
- hay, grain and pumpkins
- raise heifers
- pigs; chickens & eggs
- custom meat cutting
- chickens
- sell some eggs
- Elk
- u-pick pumpkins, corn maze
- farm stand gift shop
- swine chickens
- Ducks, chickens, pigs for eggs, poultry and pork.
- beekeeping
- maple syrup, pork, chicken
- tree farm
- purveyor of plants--create gardens
- Forestry consulting
- agri education programs
- raising hogs farrow to finish
- tree farm
- Pork—primary business line. Poultry primary business line. Rabbits secondary business line. B&B and Farm Stay agritourism secondary business line

PLEASE INDICATE WHETHER YOU HAVE USED OR PARTICIPATED IN ANY OF THE FOLLOWING WAC ACTIVITIES OR SERVICES AND IF SO, RATE THEIR USEFULNESS TO YOUR ABILITY TO DEVELOP, MANAGE, OR MARKET YOUR BUSINESS:

ANSWER OPTIONS	HAVE NOT PARTICIPATED	VERY USEFUL	SOMEWHAT USEFUL	NOT VERY USEFUL	NOT AT ALL USEFUL	RESPONSE COUNT
Pure Catskills Campaign	62	14	14	3	3	96
Farm Link	74	4	4	1	2	85
Farm Tours	54	21	17	0	1	93
Farmer Education Events	44	25	25	0	1	95
Farm Field Days	52	19	14	0	2	87
Direct assistance from staff	31	39	19	3	3	95
Networking events	63	11	8	1	4	87
TOTALS	380	133	101	8	16	
answered question						106

RESPONSE TEXT:

- limited time
- Place an ad on Pure Catskills
- Our forestry plan is undoable due to lack of roads; Major plans have not been implemented after many years of planning
- we don't have the usual farm products- we give riding lessons and are incorporating nature programs
- have land in CREP, planners were a big help, plus city \$
- farm to market program helped producers at farmers markets
- need to make use of the farm life and other events to better my market for the raised beef
- most important- soil testing and nutrient recommendations; keeping abreast of BMP & CREP
- we are in our first year with WAC
- no other reason than lack of time
- some educational events are very good, some are not as informative
- network event times are not feasible as I work full time off the farm
- helped with our water quality programs
- at networking we thought we would learn more about marketing- but they wanted our ideas
- we have a WF plan
- no time
- for the products we have it is most convenient to concentrate on production here at home and stay with home marketing
- dairy education courses in precision feeding, nutrient management; winter dairy seminar at Delhi
- aware of services and participate when able
- We have not yet been able to take full advantage of resources WAC has made available.
- follow up with things done in past years is poor
- most programs are geared for small insignificant operations
- Worked with staff during the whole farm planning process in mid- 90s. Not much contact regarding the plan since then
- Please explain what?
- received a grant to buy a syrup filtration system so as to increase retail marketing opportunities
- Sorry, with full time work and farm, there is little time for networking, perhaps when I retire.
- Beginning farmer.
- Pure Catskills Campaign and staff are great. Launching of CRAFT program is great as well
- Most of these activities do not closely relate to my business, plus I live in CT.
- hosting soil workshop—outreach to local farmers/growers; Construction of compost bin system; whole farm plan; soil testing
- the farmer education events are very helpful with finding new ways of developing and selling your products
- had tour of farm and toured other farms.web panel, advice and talks with staff when questions arise
- Gets your farm name and business familiar to the public.

DID YOU CHANGE ANYTHING ABOUT THE WAY YOU ARE DOING BUSINESS AS A RESULT OF YOUR PARTICIPATION

ANSWER OPTIONS	RESPONSE PERCENT	RESPONSE COUNT
Yes	40.4%	42
No	59.6%	62
Please explain		34
Answered question		104

RESPONSE TEXT:

- changed manure storage and disposal methods
- started cheese making
- have more work to do in keeping fences up and water working in winter
- cut grain to cows
- helped to expand markets
- able to use my land better
- much easier to manage beef cows and manure
- more environmentally aware
- More pasture; less equipment purchased (mostly big) more fences to fix.
- your program is going to help us maintain better pastures and water quality
- pasture management feeding
- leased additional pasture
- the staff has helped us explore new ideas to diversify our business
- compost and manure management
- established buffer zones along stream
- we use less fertilizer and have reduced vet bills, other tasks are done more efficiently
- fine tune a practice
- rotated grazing, more grass based
- cows confined in barnyard
- spread manure in spring after snow runoff; feed cows ATMR (?) mix from precision feed program
- Changes made to barnyard and manure spreading
- Our longer term plans for the ranch have been improved due to our interaction with WAC
- the way the barnyard plan was done I am no longer able to raise feeder hogs unless I buy more equipment as it keeps urine backed up within barnyard area
- I know more than they do
- see above
- Asked to be included in field trials for heritage grain after speaking with a grain specialist at your Farm to Market conference last year.
- We've met so many influential people through WAC. Whether it was visiting other farms or at conferences... the contacts we've made have been invaluable.
- compost operation;
- my client field has grown
- We pursued distribution of our value added products into downstate markets based on information from the farm to market seminars.
- Pure Catskills grants have enabled us to launch new value added products and diversify and increase our income.
- We sell mostly to restaurants; we may expand our farm stand. Milk is NA as it goes directly to a processor.

DID YOUR PARTICIPATION IN WAC'S PROGRAMS AND THE RESULTING CHANGES YOU MADE RESULT IN INCREASED PROFITABILITY?

ANSWER OPTIONS	RESPONSE PERCENT	RESPONSE COUNT
Yes	40.6%	39
No	59.4%	57
Please explain		34
Answered question		96

RESPONSE TEXT:

- Better pasture rotation
- fields are drier- better crops
- smaller pastures
- construction of heifer barn and calf hutches have been extremely beneficial- cheese making has also added value
- Annual rent payments on CREP land help pay taxes
- feed cows better but breeding suffered
- only increased my workload
- Less labor with installation of water tanks- will see increased rotation of pasture this spring.
- less time to feed and water cows/ clean up manure
- unsure if increased profit
- Not really, do things differently- maybe would have gone out of business- have stayed the same size.
- makes the farm look better and results in more customers
- too short time
- they help us to avoid mistakes through education and coaching
- barn yard improvements
- rotate animals
- that is always the goal
- harvest hay earlier, feed less grain
- increased sales
- cutting our crops earlier and more frequently has allowed for reduced feed purchase costs
- the easier the workload, better fencing and manure information has helped in many ways
- To Be Determined
- less; also can't keep round bales for sheep or steers in barnyard area
- we have received some calls as a result of our listing in Pure Catskills
- Next year, hopefully.
- faster/better finished product for sale
- Started to increase my swine operation until project funding feel through
- Pure Catskills grants have enabled us to launch new value added products and diversify and increase our income.
- Not really... management and the market place will determine profitability of a project.

DO YOU HAVE FORESTRY OR WOOD BASED BUSINESS?

ANSWER OPTIONS	RESPONSE PERCENT	RESPONSE COUNT
Yes	24.5%	40
No	75.5%	123
Answered question		163

PLEASE INDICATE WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING BEST DESCRIBES YOUR BUSINESS. CHECK ALL THAT APPLY.

ANSWER OPTIONS	PRIMARY BUSINESS LINE	SECONDARY BUSINESS LINE	RESPONSE COUNT
Tree Farm Operator	5	5	10
Forester	14	1	15
Logger	4	3	7
Sawmill	1	1	2
Biomass Producer (chips, pellets, firewood)	2	4	6
Buildings/Construction Materials Producer	1	0	1
Home Furnishings Manufacturer	0	0	0
Specialty Wood Product Artist/Artisan	1	0	1
Other (please specify)			6
answered question			33

RESPONSE TEXT:

- consultant
- survey stakes
- Tree Service
- wood procurement forester
- trade association

PLEASE INDICATE WHETHER YOU HAVE USED OR PARTICIPATED IN ANY OF THE FOLLOWING WAC ACTIVITIES OR SERVICES AND IF SO, RATE THEIR USEFULNESS TO YOUR ABILITY TO DEVELOP, MANAGE, OR MARKET YOUR BUSINESS:

ANSWER OPTIONS	HAVE NOT PARTICIPATED	VERY USEFUL	SOMEWHAT USEFUL	NOT VERY USEFUL	NOT AT ALL USEFUL	RESPONSE COUNT
Catskill Woodnet Website	15	4	3	4	0	26
Watershed Forest Management Plans (WFMPs)	7	20	5	1	0	33
New York Logger Training/Trained Logger Certification	11	12	3	1	0	27
Cost Share Programs (Forestry Best Management Practices and Management Assistance Program)	11	19	2	1	1	33
answered question						34

RESPONSE TEXT:

- we do not use the watershed for our forestry
- use with clients
- Cost share assistance for plans and practices is very helpful in convincing landowners to move forward with forest management work.
- As a Watershed Qualified Forester, I have seen an increase in the number of clients looking for management plans
- The funding available has helped a lot in accomplishing my goals, the time restraints have hindered accomplishing some other goals
- Have written a Watershed plan for a private landowner and utilized MAP for that and some TSI.
- pay incentive to certified loggers
- Most of my clients participate in WAC Forestry Programs
- learned logging safety and to hire a logger
- “funding used to improve forest for future harvests
- funding used to improve woods road for future harvests”
- Linking forest management planning to on the ground practices and assuring loggers are improving their knowledge through TLC training is very helpful. It provides a quality assurance program at minimal costs

DID YOU CHANGE ANYTHING ABOUT THE WAY YOU ARE DOING BUSINESS AS A RESULT OF YOUR PARTICIPATION

ANSWER OPTIONS	RESPONSE PERCENT	RESPONSE COUNT
Yes	36.4%	12
No	63.6%	21
Please explain		9
Answered question		33

RESPONSE TEXT:

- put logs up for bid
- change cutting technique
- just learned to keep the forest healthy
- I have utilized the Logger Training to be more efficient and safer in the woods when I am operating a chainsaw for felling, bucking, and limbing.
- again, this means I must plan much further in advance, which means harvesting for unforeseen problems is very difficult

(i.e.: wind damage, worm damage)

- Concentrated on properties in the NYC watershed.
- When the forest is finally ready for a harvest I will use the services of my forest manager to help identify the right trees to take to maximize profits and insure the forest is left in good shape.
- Plans have become much more all inclusive.
- Having WAC provide training expands our abilities to serve a wider statewide population.

DID YOUR PARTICIPATION IN WAC'S PROGRAMS AND THE RESULTING CHANGES YOU MADE RESULT IN INCREASED PROFITABILITY?

ANSWER OPTIONS	RESPONSE PERCENT	RESPONSE COUNT
Yes	46.9%	15
No	53.1%	17
Please explain		10
Answered question		32

RESPONSE TEXT:

- picked up many more clients
- dead trees removed
- More plans to do = more income
- My TSA's have been made possible with the help of WAC
- The programs help with more opportunity to do business.
- I do more Forestry TSI work and road layout which are cost-shared which landowners other wise don't want to pay for these activities

- Most of my business is in CT.
- I anticipate an increased harvest at a better price.
- Cost share and wetland mapping have increased prices received for plans on private property.
- No it actually increased our costs because of the marginal loss of market share for training at a subsidized cost by WAC. Easily resolved through cooperation.

HOW DO YOU SELL YOUR PRODUCTS? CHECK ALL THAT APPLY.

ANSWER OPTIONS	RESPONSE PERCENT	RESPONSE COUNT
On farm/on site sales	83.7%	82
Community Supported Agriculture	7.1%	7
Restaurants	17.3%	17
Farmer's Markets	21.4	21
Wholesale distributors	20.4	20
Internet	10.2%	10
Watershed retail outlets	4.1%	4
NYS retail outlets	12.2%	12
Outside NYS retail outlets	6.1%	6
Answered question		98

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN IN YOUR CURRENT BUSINESS?

ANSWER OPTIONS	RESPONSE PERCENT	RESPONSE COUNT
Less than 3 years	5.4%	7
3-5 years	3.8%	5
5-10 years	15.4%	20
11-20 years	21.5	28
21-30 years	20.8	27
31+ years	33.1%	43
Answered question		130

DO YOU HAVE A CURRENT WRITTEN BUSINESS PLAN?

ANSWER OPTIONS	RESPONSE PERCENT	RESPONSE COUNT
Yes	27.4%	34
No	72.6%	90
Please explain		21
Answered question		124

RESPONSE TEXT:

- expanding fish, beef and organic fertilizer
- 10 years old, needs updating
- had one years ago, will update
- retired and farm as enjoyment, not a business to earn a living
- Inherited the farm after retirement and am just trying to hang on
- outlines only, nothing formal
- have a plan, but unwritten
- old school

- however, we continue to diversify and thus this is a changing document
- Initially had a plan in 1999
- don't need it
- never considered it
- In process
- its not important what you write its what you do
- My partnership will be looking into a change of structure this year to a LLP or LLC and we will need a new business plan for expansion

- In brief, double production and markets each year until viable.
- This is still a work in progress.
- A forest management plan is on file with NY
- I have an out line and the rest is in my head. I'm not very good at business planning in all honesty.
- We developed a business plan when we decided to expand into the green house and vegetable business.
- Originally one was done but it has been changed and modified and recently changed.

IF YES, HOW DID YOU DEVELOP THE BUSINESS PLAN?

ANSWER OPTIONS	RESPONSE PERCENT	RESPONSE COUNT
I/We developed it in house	68.4%	26
With a consultant I/we paid directly	10.5%	4
With a consultant paid for by a 3rd party (Cornell Cooperative Extension, Watershed Agricultural Council, etc.)	21.1	8
Other (please explain)		4
Answered question		38

RESPONSE TEXT:

- I have paid my forester directly and in some instances WAC has helped to pay this
- Worked with Farm Credit
- We are working with Farm Credit East as well as the Catskill Mountain keeper farm loan program which has a business planning aspect.
- both 2 & 3

WHAT WAS YOUR MOTIVATION FOR DEVELOPING A BUSINESS PLAN?

- No business venture should be started without a feasibility study and business plan
- WAC suggestion
- WAC
- more organization, set goals and requirements
- to get a loan and monitor progress
- keep the dairy farm going
- profit
- originally to purchase the business, now to grow it
- don't believe a business can be successfully run without one
- transfer to sons
- profitability
- needed for whole farm plan
- having a financial plan

- funding for a building
- goals and direction
- to stay alive
- I think it would be a good idea
- money
- To facilitate decision making and investment plans.
- I'm not motivated
- To solidify our business mission, goals, strengths and weaknesses, financial outlay, and future sustainable growth.
- Keep everyone on task and create a blueprint for success.
- To get bank financing for an equipment upgrade
- To remember what it was I had wanted to do in the first place.
- Exploring and stating business goals and how to get there
- standard operational procedure
- TO SUCCEED
- To stay in farming.
- Need to establish quantifiable data, goals and intermediate measurement objectives.
- Learn about a new business
- Borrow money from bank, secure grants
- I wanted to create it to set goals and maintain order in how I try to expand my business. Just haven't finished it yet.
- Good business practice

IF YOU DO NOT HAVE A BUSINESS PLAN, WHY NOT (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)?

ANSWER OPTIONS	RESPONSE PERCENT	RESPONSE COUNT
Not enough time	23.3%	17
Lack of knowledge of process	32.9%	24
Don't believe it would make a positive difference	63%	46
Too expensive to hire a consultant	20.5%	15
Other (please explain)		4
Answered question		73

RESPONSE TEXT:

- no interest
- read articles and update as needed
- have a full-time job away from the farm
- retired
- PT farm
- on the to do list, time constraints push it back
- the next generation has issues (divorce and indecisive)
- still developing business
- 60 years without one, don't think it's needed now
- too old, medical problems
- age considerations
- In process
- at this time to many other issues need to be taken care of first
- I'd rather take a nap
- Don't need it for what I do.
- No need to—I am a consultant not a product producer
- On the fly—in my head...not best practices! but...we've grown organically so we constantly changes...probably didn't know enough to write one at the beginning; would do one now
- It is in the works, anticipated completion by summer 2012.
- We both have other lines of income and perhaps in the future we would consider a business plan in order to make the veg business more profitable, but at the moment our current business operates within our means.

DO YOU CURRENTLY MARKET YOUR PRODUCTS (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)?

ANSWER OPTIONS	RESPONSE PERCENT	RESPONSE COUNT
Word of mouth	78.3%	90
Farmstand	18.3%	21
Farmer's Markets	17.4%	20
Other Events (craft shows, etc.)	19.1%	22
Pure Catskills	15.7%	18
Website	22.6%	26
Email	15.7%	18
Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, Blog, etc.)	13.0%	15
Other internet advertising	4.3%	5
Newspaper advertising	24.3%	28
Chamber of Commerce	4.3%	5
No marketing- have direct buyer	27.8%	32
Other (please explain)		23
Answered question		115

RESPONSE TEXT:

- rent the farm to a neighbor
- phone book
- Market milk with DFA
- ship to auction
- Auction for livestock
- sales to son who has a feedlot business
- Auction (X 2)
- sell cattle to upstate auction market
- radio
- road signs

- cattle auctions
- milk co-op
- sell milk to DMS
- radio
- Establishing relationships with high end butchers
- some pork is sold directly to the buyer
- yellow pages--direct mailers--fliers-business cards
- Magazine ads and county guides.
- As a consultant, I do not directly market any forest products.
- big PR effort with regional media
- forester
- Will get bids for the harvest from certified loggers

**HOW MUCH TRAINING OR EDUCATION HAVE YOU HAD IN BUSINESS MANAGEMENT?
PLEASE CHECK THE ONE CLOSEST TO YOUR EXPERIENCE.**

ANSWER OPTIONS	RESPONSE PERCENT	RESPONSE COUNT
No training or education	24.8%	90
Minimal training or education (1-2 business classes)	16.0%	20
Moderate training or education (3+ business classes)	16.0%	20
Extensive training or education (business degree or program)	12.0%	15
I learn as I go informally	31.2%	39
Please explain:		11
Answered question		125

RESPONSE TEXT:

- you learn from doing it for over 50 years
- 35 years of experience, how about you?
- continuing family business operating for 75 years; degrees in accounting
- the principles of business are not that complicated
- Mostly the school of hard knocks!
- Have owned and run other businesses in the past.
- BS Degree in Business Management & Finance & second major in Animal Science from Cornell University

- We are both college educated but did not take business courses. My career prior to starting our value added on the farm required substantial business management skills.
- was management consultant for 10 years; ran lots of local non-profits in earlier years
- Self guided education with mentors, studying other models and most importantly maintaining open communication with current buyers.
- I took business courses in college and have run a dairy farm for 35 years.

**IF YOU HAVE HAD ANY TRAINING OR EDUCATION IN BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, PLEASE INDICATE WHERE.
CHECK ALL THAT APPLY.**

ANSWER OPTIONS	RESPONSE PERCENT	RESPONSE COUNT
None	38.6%	39
WAC	11.9%	12
Cornell Cooperative Extension	21.8%	22
Community College	21.8%	22
Four Year College	24.8%	25
Graduate degree or beyond	9.9%	10
Other (or please describe)		9
Answered question		101

RESPONSE TEXT:

- NYS Maple Assn
- see #20
- nonprofit
- born on a farm, didn't need it
- two years of collage and 34 years of experience
- Seminars, conferences, books, online classes.
- Classes plus I grew up in a family business
- I took a course in added value with Extension several years ago. It was a good course but again I would say that I honed many business skills during the twelve years in my previous career.
- I went to a two year Agricultural college and have taken non credit courses since from time to time.

FOR EACH OF THE FOLLOWING TRAINING TOPICS, PLEASE TELL US HOW INTERESTED YOU MIGHT BE IN PARTICIPATING?

ANSWER OPTIONS	NO INTEREST	LOW INTEREST	MODERATE INTEREST	HIGH INTEREST	RESPONSE COUNT
Achieving operational efficiencies	31	22	29	20	102
Business branding	42	21	22	14	99
Business financing	37	19	20	22	98
Capital planning and/or financing	38	23	19	12	92
Enhancing economic competitiveness by going green	37	21	23	16	97
Financial management	35	19	34	10	98
Financial management software training (i.e. QuickBooks, Excel, etc.)	42	19	26	13	100
General Business Planning	35	23	33	10	101
Networking and peer learning	35	17	31	11	93
Online marketing	35	24	28	15	102
Product development or expansion	39	15	28	14	96
Product marketing	31	20	28	19	98
Quality Control	32	22	24	16	94
Website Development	40	18	25	12	95
Other (please specify)					4

answered question **113**

RESPONSE TEXT:

- grants for small businesses
 - no interest, too old
 - Not really interested. need more money for our milk
 - most of these do not apply to my business
- PLEASE DESCRIBE ANY ADDITIONAL SERVICES, SUPPORT, OR TRAINING THAT WOULD HELP YOU STRENGTHEN YOUR BUSINESS.**
- We need real facts and figures and some guidance to help us decide if expansion of our current value added business of cheese making would be possible or wise.
 - My main problem in doing business is the constant flooding in the last few years we have had 3 floods. So it is hard to get ahead financially because of the huge expense of replacing

- equip., clean-up, etc. I would love to move the business, any financial resources out there or assistance you can provide?
- Need to know what are in real demand by consumers that farmers in this region have the ability to raise if animals or grow if crops.
 - More agri representation in NYS and Federal gov. I am sick of sending billions of dollars to countries that hate us and work against us (Pakistan and many more).
 - Want to build a new sugarhouse- could use help planning location and use of green energy. Gary Harting 845-985-2996
 - Unsure how much longer we can continue on, we are both in our 70s
 - I am interested in processing organic milk purchased from my son's dairy and distributed locally. I have questions about this market and its direction.
 - need a distribution chain
 - none

- We need to learn how to write a grant. We started our business for agritourism 10 years ago and have built it from a small roadside stand to a pick your own pumpkin patch and corn maze. However, we are consistently looked over and the grants go to other similar businesses that only started 5 years ago.
- take care of the things you have already started before you worry about spending money elsewhere
- full funding of a precision feed program
- Grant writing assistance; notification of availability of grants at least 6 months before they are due....otherwise it is impossible to meet deadlines with only 60 days notice and limited resources
- A personal secretary!
- "Mentoring. Alternatives to organic certification. Local food distribution system. Food hubs. Downstate distribution system. Regional branding provided we don't get fracked. In which case we would be marketing challenged."
- "1.) Successful advertising methods to attract landowners to doing management plans and hiring consultants. 2.) Workshop on tax information related to woodlands for foresters and landowners. This can include subjects of taxable income from timber sales, woodland property taxes, and estate taxes for woodland owners, etc."
- Going after all the illegal companies and individuals illegally doing tree work and landscaping--esp., around the reservoirs.
- More training on forestry BMP's;
- Forestry technology, both in and out of the office.
- better understanding of pricing and how to better know how to gauge my products vs. a home depot type store
- Expansion of herd and additional marketing. Lower costs of feed
- Access to distribution out of the Catskill mountain area, easier access to equipment, container/packaging/printing suppliers.
- Ideas on how to get non traditional financial support. How to get customers, distributors, community organizations and businesses engaged in financial support of our business. We believe if we can get the community INVESTED in our farm and farm related businesses then we have a better chance of success. We want to succeed not just survive.
- farm law, taxes, liabilities, cooperative buying
- Utilizing social media to build your business. I have had a crappy Facebook for my business but my only fans are my family and I am not sure how to reach out further.
- The farming community in this area needs to find a way of tapping into the New York City Market.
- We have had many members request training and updates on regulations concerning roads, environmental regulations, and local government regulations on timber harvesting.

DO YOU HAVE ANY FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR WAC AS IT BEGINS TO EVALUATE ITS ROLE IN HELPING TO STRENGTHEN THE VIABILITY OF FARM, FOOD, FORESTRY, AND WOOD BASED BUSINESSES WITHIN THE WATERSHED.

- take care of the small and large business
- When WAC comes to do a project this year don't tell us that we're way down on the list- not for 2 more years.
- Put more effort into local outlets for local foods
- Do something to prevent NYC from buying the good agricultural land within the watershed.
- Need to increase support for conventional dairy farms that are not interested in value added enterprise. Ex: fund precision feed program allocate more money for projects that would viability of conventional dairy farms.
- so far you have done a good job, thank you
- make sure you stay in business
- All this planning is great but regret nothing can be done with the lack of funding- hopefully that will change when new contract is signed.
- What can we do about the constant flooding?
- strengthening regional wholesaling to NYC area would be helpful to move more products
- Need to reexamine small farm program and the economic feasibility and common sense of proposed WAC improvements.
- "Please update your records- we no longer raise grass fed beef/ have the business: Robert Anschlowar & Martin Foster 495 MacDonald Road Haden, NY 13782"
- "Closed shop/ retired. Please remove me from mailing list: Ralph Wildenstein 21 South Street Walton, NY 13586 865-6619"
- Thank you for all you do for the small family farms- they will be ever more essential. Promote "loca-vores"!
- We need to think out of the box for products to raise and how to market them. Thee safe crop for us with our steep slopes and valley flooding is grass- which means, what do we feed it to. We need these buffer areas around the water and holding soil in place and not in the reservoir. The other areas need to be used for high income crops so we can hang onto our farms- for some the land owns us, we don't own the land.
- need to coordinate grower groups to standardize their product and continue to help find markets for these growers
- notification of government funding specific to individual needs
- do a good job as you have done in the past
- Continue what you are doing. We will be looking for someone to take over our operation in the future. Do you identify persons that would be interested in operating a farm?
- doing a great job to keep agriculture going in our community

- more programs to help with community support
- keep focus on the Catskill area (watershed) as they have in the past
- complete what you said you were going to do for the farmer and watershed areas
- Education is the key and business management is the start ten follow with production management, then marketing.
- fuel, fertilization and transportation efficiencies- be careful of burdensome regulations
- Some of your ideas were good, but I think if you asked some of the old time people they would have given you some ideas that would have benefitted you in many ways.
- more implementation, less admin cost
- If something is not done about stream and river maintenance, their will not be any soil left to farm!
- Help with setting up a marketing system for formers to sell their products- difficult for farmers to find the time to farm and market too
- You are great!
- I wish WAC could do more to help dairy farmers get a competitive edge to increase profit and ensure they stay in business.
- The economics of agriculture needs to be strengthened, need to make this a national/ global issue
- Would like to have a list of retail buyers for my beef
- get us more money for our milk and beef animals
- set up a union square Pure Catskill entity to sell products
- no
- Try to keep all loggers on the same page- they know their work, but train them to be fair to customers whose land they remove logs from. Remember mother nature- need brush piles for rabbits to be safe from coyotes. Teach recovery of the forests after cutting, perhaps jobs for people to clean up for homeowners who are aging/ physically need the help. Programs to make the forests healthy with trimming/ thinning and cleaning branches. We would welcome the help to make our forest healthy and beautiful.
- We need to further explore taking advantage of current WAC resources prior to being able to make any recommendations.
- take care of the things you have already started before you worry about spending money elsewhere
- WAC needs to stop wasting all its resources on joke farms and go back to working with the real farms that are really productive
- Integrating and fostering cooperation with local and municipal elected officials - zoning, planning, town council members - and their effect on local ag businesses. Our county and local officials need to fully understand the significance of farming not only our community, but our country and the world. Inviting all county and town officials to events (possibly even free or at a reduced rate) may close the divide. Thanks.
- It would be helpful if WAC were able to work with local governments to educate them on the need to allow responsible and necessary forestry activity with less prohibitive red tape. The cost of obtaining permits through local governments becomes excessive in the attempt to practice good forestry in today's economic climate.
- Continue to recognize the value of cost sharing Best Management Practices to protect water quality. Also to develop a local/regional system of production and marketing that is collaborative in nature, where producers have the opportunity to gain efficiencies by pooling resources. A regional thermal biomass market would support and stimulate the use of our increasingly low value woodlands. Given a sufficient market for low value trees, contractors may be able to utilize low impact harvest technologies to gain access to woodlots and implement much needed improvement thinnings.
- WAC can be very helpful, I would like to see them speed up their procedures a little bit, but overall they have been very helpful and informative.
- I feel that regional orgs need to develop a more centralized system for supporting our farms and food systems. It is my impression that, even though there is a lot going on regionally, we are not working together. Like the old, and mostly now defunct, grange system. Or a new co-op approach to sustainable farming.
- Keep up the good work! And the cost share programs are a big help.
- "Access to capital for existing farmers. Training, access to land and capital for new farmers. Cooperatively developed Ag infrastructure (e.g. processing)"
- Support legal business like mine where we are certified, etc., you need to have good solid police force, legislation etc. and go after the illegal business and individuals. Otherwise all that will be left are illegal business doing what ever they want around our precious water resources. The unfair competition is putting me out of business. They aren't legal or real businesses in the sense that they don't have real business expenses and therefore they can charge a lot less to do something. I, have to charge more because I have all the real operating costs of having as legal business. And, the expenses are many--I propose that the more legal businesses that are forced out to the unfair illegal completion the more pollution will take place by these money hungry un-educated non-certified individuals that don't care about the environment.
- You need to acknowledge that wetlands and water bodies are part of riparian systems and are very important to the watershed you are trying to protect and conserve. Reducing WAC funding for this in WAC Forest management plans is a poor move on your part. Do not reduce the incentive to include this in forest management plans. In fact, WAC should develop a new cost share program for landowners to better manage wetlands - i.e. wetland management plans.
- "Farm Partnering - we currently partner with another farm. We

raise the young stock and have a creamery. We make ice cream under our name and bottle under the other farm name. One day we may split and each have our own herds and creameries. But partnering has allowed us to start-up at least. Looking into partnerships could be great. Could there be a ""market vendor"" who brings items from several farms for farmers who just don't have the personality or desire to go market themselves?? Could there be a ""vendor"" that buys farm products for a respectable price from the farmer and then handles the sales to the public? We're looking at having someone use some of our land for berries and mushrooms. It'd be great to help link other farms up with people who may be able to use their farm land. Just thinking outside the box and perhaps having a round table discussion about these different ideas could be helpful."

- We are not currently running this as a farm/forest business but hope to in the future. Programs that can help us turn the corner would be helpful. Thank you.
- Make the connection to NYC residents via more intense marketing about purchasing home grown and sustainable agricultural products and services from growers and professionals (foresters, soils specialists, wildlife biologists, etc) in the watershed who are providing healthier food and offering services that protect their water supply and enrich the watershed environments.
- I am hearing complaints from vendors that there are too many farmer markets in some areas- people's support is scattered which makes it harder for producers to be able to count on their customer coming to them.
- We believe that the largest bottleneck is the difficulty for small but growing producers to get into the downstate/ greater NYC/tri-state food shed. It all comes back to accessible and affordable distribution.
- Increase cost share rates to make forest management plans, MAP practices worthwhile.
- Hello. I do not think that much of this applies to me in a business sense. I am an educator at the Museum of Natural History in New York City. I love the work that you do and would like to

stay on your e-mail distribution list to stay abreast of your work for personal interest. Thank you for everything and keep up the great work!

- We've been talking about this for years. We currently use Regional Access to get our food to NYC and Brooklyn. I can think of over six farms using Regional Access. We can no longer afford to sell our products at local farmers markets and local stores. We need to follow the money and that means we are doing farmers markets in the city, sending our hogs, goats, lambs to restaurants and butchers in Brooklyn. While critical to survival, it is stressful and the time away from home erodes our quality of life for our family and for our farm.
- Keep up the great work, we are all working in a slow money economy and all the steps you all are taking to strengthen our region are making a difference. Thank you very much for your tireless work and attention.
- This needs to be a discussion with representatives from the city other than DEP. There is a need for fresh locally grown food in the city. Everyone recognizes this. Working toward this end will strengthen the agricultural viability of this entire region. WAC needs to take an active role in advocacy in Albany among the downstate legislators. They see the need. I could go on but would recommend a larger discussion on this subject.
- No. I think your programs are excellent. Possibly short rotation woody crops for biomass although there is little market for it from what I understand.
- "Yes, it would be helpful to use some existing groups such as WAC has used successfully in the past to build some training, but I recommend finding ways and administrative mechanisms that both organizations find value in the partnership and it builds both groups. Some suggested approaches is us a focus group of service providers to listen and find ways that can accomplish many goals together. I would caution WAC about business planning that programs bring in expertise that has a strong track record of success. Partnering with groups such as the Sustainable Forest Futures (wood products), and Cornell Cooperative Extension (Ag) whom provide such training."



Watershed Agricultural Council

www.nycwatershed.org



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