



WHOLE FARM PLANNING

Well-managed farms are vital to the protection of water and environmental resources. By becoming a participant in the Watershed Agricultural Council's East of Hudson Program, you will partner with the Council to reduce nonpoint, or indirect, sources of agricultural pollution such as pathogens, nutrients, and sediment in the New York City watershed. Farms that earn at least \$5,000 in average gross annual sales and are located within the watershed are eligible for this program.

To reduce existing and potential sources of pollution on your farm, Council staff, using the Agricultural Environmental Management Review (AEM), will work closely with you to create a Whole Farm Plan. The plan considers all aspects of your farm and business operation to constructively apply solutions that mitigate water quality concerns. This process is a five-tiered approach to whole farm planning ensuring thorough and effective consideration of both water quality and farm business viability at every step. The AEM approach entails:

Tier 1 involves a preliminary survey that gathers basic farm information such as acreage, type of farm, numbers and types of animals and/or crops.

Tier 2 enlists an environmental assessment that includes a visit to the farm by a conservation planner and a discussion with the farm operator. This point-based assessment focuses on gathering information about farm topography, farm management, farm activities, and potential areas of water quality concern.

Tier 3 outlines the Whole Farm Plan, detailing a strategy for water quality protection and farm viability improvement. This plan includes a series of Best Management Practices (BMPs) to address water quality and farm operation issues. Some BMPs are structural improvements to the farm, such as fencing and drainage installations; others are management adjustments such as nutrient management and grazing plan.

Tier 4 implements the Whole Farm Plan. With technical and financial assistance from the Watershed Agricultural Council, the Whole Farm Plan BMPs are implemented. Funding and implementation priority for each plan correlates with the point accrual determined in Tier 2.

Tier 5 is the periodic evaluation of the Whole Farm Plan's success in reducing agricultural pollution and ensuring the viability of farm operations. Depending on the results of these evaluations, a Whole Farm Plan may be revised to address new or persistent problems.

All farm information shared with the Watershed Agricultural Council is confidential and will not be shared for any purpose without landowner permission. For more information or to get started on your Whole Farm Plan, contact us:

East of Hudson Program

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Serving the Croton Watershed in portions of
Westchester, Putnam, Dutchess, and
Fairfield Counties

Watershed Agricultural Council

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