

Attention Farmers and Agricultural Land Owners:
Orange County Annual Agricultural District Review
Annual Application Period Ends March 31, 2024

What the Agricultural District Review Means to You



The Agricultural Districts Law seeks to create an economic and regulatory climate which encourages farmers to continue farming. Every year the County allows interested property owners to apply for inclusion into its agricultural districts. Relying primarily on the initiative of landowners and local governments with state oversight, the law provides agricultural landowners with a number of benefits and protections which are outlined below.

Requirements and Benefits

Any owner of land within an agricultural district that meets the requirements of a "farm operation" as defined in the Agriculture and Markets Law, receives these benefits:

- ◆ protection against the enactment and administration of laws or ordinances by local governments which would unreasonably restrict or regulate farm structures or farming practices within an agricultural district;
- ◆ notice to assure a full evaluation of the potential effects of a government sponsored acquisition or construction project on farms and farm resources within the agricultural district;
- ◆ limitation on benefit assessments; and
- ◆ notification when an application for a special use permit, site plan approval, use variance or subdivision approval requires municipal review.

Any owner of at least seven acres of land which produces a minimum of \$10,000 annually or less than seven acres of land which produces a minimum of \$50,000 annually, on average, in the preceding two years from the sale of crops, livestock, or livestock products (or in the first year for beginning farmers), is eligible to receive:

- ◆ an agricultural assessment and
- ◆ protection from nuisance lawsuits.

Oversight

Agricultural districts are adopted by the County Legislature. As such these districts should not be confused with municipal zoning districts created by municipalities. The New York Department of Agriculture and Markets assures that district plans conform with the requirements of the Law. The Department is also responsible for administering the farm protections and benefits provided under the Law.

Annual Orange County Agricultural District Enrollment forms are due March 31. The forms are available on-line at www.orangecountygov.com or through the Orange County Planning Department (845-615-3840). Applications should be mailed to the Orange County Planning Department, 124 Main Street, Goshen, NY 10924.

For More Information Contact the Orange County Planning Dept. at

(845) 615-3840 or planning@orangecountygov.com