

New York Department of Agriculture and Markets
Application for State Assistance Payments for
Municipal Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan
Development
APPLICATION FORM A

Municipality: Town of Ancram

Address: 1416 County Route 7, Ancram, NY 12502

Supervisor: Thomas Dias

Applicant Principal Contact:

Name: Mr. Art Bassin

Address: 107 Snyder Road, Ancramdale, NY 12503

Phone/Fax: 518-329-0921

E-Mail: abassin@aol.com

Name and address of the County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board Chairperson: **Marion Dunbar, 479 Route 66, Hudson NY 12534; 518-392-2385**

Amount of State funding requested: \$25,000

Anticipated time frame for completing all tasks resulting in the preparation of or revision to a municipal agricultural and farmland protection plan: 12 months

1. Project Narrative: **The project goals are to develop a Plan that 1) identifies farmlands to be protected, 2) develops strategies and programs to protect farmland and encourage agriculture in Ancram, 3) build a consensus among Town Officials, farmers and landowners about how to implement farmland protection strategies and encourage agriculture in Ancram, and 4) to update land use and zoning regulations to become consistent with protecting farmland and encouraging agriculture. The Town's Comprehensive Planning effort, which began in April 2007, has identified the protection of farmland and the encouragement of agriculture as the two of the most important Town priorities. In a recent survey of the town's residents and property owners, over 90% of the respondents identified encouraging agriculture and maintaining open space as the most important issues facing the Town.**

Using these grant funds, the Town will gather input from Town residents, landowners, farmers, Town and County officials, and County and State agricultural experts about what Ancram should do to support agriculture, protect farming and encourage farmland

preservation. We expect to conduct a through analysis of farmland and farming in Ancram, inventory, map and prioritize important farmland soils and active farmlands, and identify strategies and tactics to make sure the Town's agricultural sector continues to thrive.

Application Form A -- item # 1 "Project Narrative"

b) Identify opportunity for collaboration with other agencies or groups. Please list organizations committed to assisting the municipality in developing the plan.

It is anticipated that collaboration will occur between the following agencies and groups: Columbia County Farm Bureau, Columbia County Soil and Water Conservation District, Natural Resource Conservation Service, NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets, Columbia Land Conservancy, Dutchess County Land Conservancy, NYS DEC, Cornell Cooperative Extension in Columbia County.

c) Summarize the trends and economic conditions in the municipality that reflect the importance of agriculture to the municipality and which warrant agricultural and farmland protection measures.

Agriculture is the dominant land use in Town. Unfortunately, prime agricultural land is threatened by development. Major residential developments have already taken shape in adjacent Towns. Farmers with large landholdings are struggling to maintain profitable operations and have been selling off farmland to generate cash to maintain their farming operations. The trend to sell off land for development purposes could accelerate as several large farms have recently sold to non-farming interests, and others are on the market. Ancram is also facing a situation where large tracts of farmland are owned by non-farmer landowners, causing agriculture in Ancram to become dependent on fewer, but larger farm operators using more leased land

The expansion of residential construction and maintenance activities as a result of increased development pressure is a growing source of employment in the area, and draws from the same employee base as farmers, causing farms to have difficulty hiring employees. And the appreciation of residential

home values in the area makes it very difficult for farm families and farm employees to find affordable places to live.

In the face of these trends and economic conditions affecting agriculture, the Town wishes to direct development away from prime agricultural areas and to implement strategies which encourage and protect agriculture while accommodating development which avoids or minimizes the elimination of productive farmland. The Town's residents, participating in workshops and surveys, have identified agriculture and rural character as among the most positive features of Ancram. The community recognizes the value of the farms and open land used for farming, believes that a viable agricultural base exists, appreciates that there is fresh organic produce and organic dairy products, beef, poultry and pork available locally, and feels positive that farming opportunities exist for the future as long as we can reserve and protect a critical mass of land for farming.

d) Provide a brief description of the agricultural setting in the municipality along with the approximate number and type of farms within the land area which is the subject of the plan.

In addition to the traditional dairy and livestock operations, farm activities include two organic farms, flowers, and other niche operations. Horse farming has become more prevalent as some previous dairy farms have gone out of business. At least six large horse farms are found in Ancram, including the Horse Institute, and farms that breed Arabians, Icelandic horses and registered Morgans. The majority of farm acreage is used for commodity crops, often on leased land. According to town data, there are 8151 acres of land used for agricultural purposes -- 3,540 acres of field crops grown, 1,235 acres devoted to horse farming, 1,575 acres used for livestock, and 3,376 of productive but vacant land. This is out of a total 20,435 acres comprising Ag District #1. Ancram has over 3,000 acres of prime farmland soils, and 7,844 acres of farmland soils of statewide importance.

e) and f) Summarize the present and future prospects for farm viability in the municipality, and provide a summary of other indications of the economic conditions and importance to the municipality.

The future prospects for farm viability in Ancram appears strong. This is evidenced in part by the demonstrated commitment to farmland protection already in place. Five farmers have implemented successful PDR programs and at least five others have privately protected farmland. In addition, several of the large farms in Ancram are now operated by the next generation of farmers. This indicates that there is both the desire and ability to carry these farms into the future. Often, when one farm is sold to a non-farmer in the area, other farmers quickly move to rent that land. Some dairy farms have successfully changed to horse farms. There is a very strong market for niche farms and a keen desire for a local food base in the Hudson valley. We have seen investments in an organic meat farm and an organic fruit operation in the area, and the market for locally produced organic fruits, vegetables, beef, pork and poultry is strong. There are many new landowners in the area who have purchased farmland with the intent to keep it available for farming. Our challenges include lack of affordable farm family and farm worker housing, an over-reliance on leased land, and need to educate new landowners on farm and farming practices. We need to ensure that the critical mass of farmland is maintained long-term.

g) Key project personnel. Please list the individuals who will be directly responsible for developing the agricultural and farmland protection plan. For each person listed, include education and relevant background experience in such planning activities, particularly in developing agricultural protection sections of municipal comprehensive plans and associated land use regulations.

The project will be overseen by the Comprehensive Plan Committee, chaired by Mr. Art Bassin. Mr. Bassin and four other members of the nine person Comprehensive Planning committee are actively engaged in farming – two operate dairy farms, one operates an organic fruit and vegetable farm, one raises beef and one operates a horse farm. The Town’s planning consultant, Nan Stolzenburg of Community Planning and Environmental Associates will participate in the project. Key project personnel will include:

Nan Stolzenburg, AICP, Principal Planner, MS in environmental biology and an MRP in Regional Planning. Nan has 15 years of experience as a consultant for small, rural towns and has written 3 county-wide Ag and Farmland Protection Plans, one of which one a State planning award (Putnam County). Nan

has been principal consultant for planning efforts throughout central and eastern New York State and most of these efforts (except for some villages) have included strong components of agricultural planning.

Don Meltz, GIS Specialist with Community Planning & Environmental Associates has 10 years of experience in doing planning and GIS analysis for small and rural communities. He has extensive experience in mapping and analyzing soils, water patterns, land use trends, and in doing build-out analysis. Don also develops LESA studies to help communities identify and prioritize lands needed to be protected for agriculture. The LESA program is based on the USDA, NRCS program for farmland protection.

Application Form A --- item #2 "Scope of Work/ Work Plan"

Please see the attached Circular 1500 section 324-a "Municipal agricultural and farmland protections plans" for plan requirements.

| Scope of Work, In order of Tasks Needed to be Accomplished | Time Frame |
|---|-------------------|
| 1. Review Zoning and land use regulations and GIS database of information developed for the Comprehensive plan pertaining to farm activities, farmlands, soils, and environmental features that may influence farming | Month 1, 2, 3 |
| 2. Conduct LESA analysis to identify and prioritize farmlands based on the USDA model | Month 2, 3, 4 |
| 3. Form and hold focus groups on Agriculture with farm operators, farmland owners, county and state experts and the general public | Month 4 and 5 |
| 4. Review and fine tune agriculture vision and goals as needed from Comprehensive Plan; review and identify zoning and land use regulation changes necessary to support agriculture vision and goals. | Month 4,5,6 |
| 5. Develop alternative strategies and model language to protect critically identified farms and farmlands. This will include model easement, zoning and other land use tools as well as ag-economic development programs and use of fee simple purchases and easements. After review by Steering Committee and Town Council, a strategy will be selected that will protect agriculture. | Month 6 and 7 |
| 6. Reconvene Farm Focus Group to discuss recommendations | Month 8 |
| 7. Develop Draft Ag and Farmland Protection Plan, action plan and timetable for implementation. | Month 9 |

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|--|----------|
| 8. Post online, in public places, and convene public hearing on plan | Month 10 |
| 9. Finalize plan based on public input. Develop Summary of Plan and communicate the Summary of Plan to entire Town via mail, email etc. | Month 11 |
| 10. Town Board to consider and adopt plan (may need to hold additional public hearings and SEQR) | Month 12 |
| 11. Adopted plan to be submitted by Town Supervisor to Columbia County Ag and Farmland Protection Board | Month 12 |
| 12. After County Ag and Farmland Protection Board approval, adopted plan then to be submitted by Town Supervisor to the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets | Month 12 |
| 13. Finalize plan and include as a supplemental chapter to the Town of Ancram Comprehensive Plan; | Month 12 |

FORM B-1

MUNICIPAL AGRICULTURAL AND FARMLAND PROTECTION STATE
ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
Proposed Project Budget

PROJECT TITLE: **Protection and Preservation of Farms and Farmland in the Town of Ancram, Columbia County, New York**

PROJECT APPLICANT: **Town of Ancram**

| <u>Expenditure Category</u> | <u>Grant Funds</u> | <u>Applicant Match Cash In-Kind</u> | | <u>Total</u> |
|--|--------------------|-------------------------------------|--|--------------|
| Salaries and Wages (Personal Services) | | | | |
| Fringe Benefits | | | | |
| Consultant Services | 25,000 | | | 25,000 |
| *Travel (at state rate) | | | | |
| Public Hearings | | 800 | | 800 |
| Supplies and Materials | | 2,533 | | 2,533 |
| Communications | | | | |
| Printing | | 5,000 | | 5,000 |
| Other (Specify) | | | | |
| Total | \$25,000 | \$8,333 | | \$33,333 |

* Mileage reimbursement rate for 2007 calendar year is 48.5 cents per mile. Refer to: U.S. General Services Administration's Privately Owned Vehicle Mileage Reimbursement Rates.
http://www.gas.gov/HP_01Trvl_povmilege

Application Budget Form B-2 Budget Summary

Total State Funds Requested: \$ 25,000

a.) applicant cash match: \$ 8,333

b.) applicant in-kind match: \$ 0

Total Cost of Project: \$__33,333_____

Please provide a brief description of in-kind services to be used for up to 80% of the required match:

The Town of Ancram has already committed the cash match. These funds will come from the existing budget for the Comprehensive Plan.

List Sources (name and sector) and Amount of Applicant Match:

Town of Ancram - \$8,333

(Some applicants may have obtained match funds from outside sources: if so, fill in below)

Source of Match Sector (circle one) Amount

Public Private \$_____

Public Private \$_____

Please attach documentation such as resolution or letter from an authorized municipal official obligating the cash match.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND MARKETS
REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS
for State Assistance Payments for
MUNICIPAL AGRICULTURAL AND FARMLAND PROTECTION PLAN
DEVELOPMENT

Checklist for Application Completeness

(Please fill out this checklist and submit it with your application and budget forms. Please fill in all information requested. Failure to provide all requested information may result in approval delay. Since priority of funding is determined by the date an application is deemed complete, this may result in a delay in funding.)

MUNICIPALITY **Town of Ancram, Columbia County, NY**_____

APPLICATION

- Proposal submitted by eligible applicant, as described in the "Applicant Eligibility" section on page 2 of the RFA.
- Four (4) paper copies of proposal submitted.
- All information requested on the first page of Application Form A is provided.
- Name and address of municipality applying.
- Name of the Town Supervisor.
- Identification of the County AFPB Chair (name, address, and telephone number).
- Identification of an individual to be contacted concerning information contained in the application.
- Amount of the state funding request.
- Estimate of the time frame for completing the plan.
- 1. Project Narrative
 - a. Summary of the overall goal and anticipated project outcome.
 - b. List of organization committed to assist in developing the plan.
 - c. Summary statement of the economic trends and conditions in the municipality that warrant agricultural and farmland protection measures.
 - d. Description of the agricultural setting in the municipality along with the approximate number of farms and type of farms within the land area which is the subject of the plan.
 - e. Summary of the present and future prospects for farm viability in the municipality.
 - f. Summary of other indications of the economic conditions and importance of agriculture to the municipality.
 - g. List of key personnel including experience in developing agricultural sections of municipal comprehensive plans and land use regulations.

2. Scope of work/ work plan.

- () Scope of work/work plan that reflects the required plan elements as outlined in Circular 1500 section 324-a.
- () a. The required public hearing is included within the scope of work.
- () b. The application includes an authorizing resolution which includes the signature of the chair of the municipal legislative body.

BUDGET AND COSTS

- () Budget (Budget Form B-1 & Budget Form B-2) is complete.
- () Proposal does not request more than \$25,000 in state funding.
- () Evidence of availability of cash match.
- () Matching funds or in-kind services for project equals or exceeds twenty-five percent (25%) of the TOTAL project costs and at least twenty percent (20%) of that match is cash.
- () Description of in-kind services to be used for up to eighty percent (80%) match.
- () Funding request is for eligible costs only, as described on pages 2 and 3 of the RFA.
- () Matching project expenses do not include work performed prior to announcement of awarded projects.
- () New York State funds not used for any of the match.
- () Indirect and overhead costs are not used for matching in-kind.

REMINDERS:

- () Application is for agricultural and farmland protection planning activities that will result in the preparation of a municipal agricultural and farmland protection plan.
- () Planning activities resulting in the preparation of a municipal agricultural and farmland protection plan are to be completed within the twenty-four (24) months comprising the contract period.

Signature of principal

contact _____ Date
