SOILS, TOPOGRAPHY AND CLIMATE

The soils of Cortland County vary considerably in physical properties and in suitability for crops and other uses. Soil associations dominated by high lime areas occur in the northwestern and northeastern parts of the county along county lines. Medium lime soils occupy the transitional areas between the high and low lime soils. The central, northcentral and southern parts of the county include areas of low lime soils with a strong fragipan.

The glaciated landscape in Cortland County accounts for the complexities of our soils. Ten soil associations are found in the county. The most productive soils are found in the northern plateau areas. In the southern half of the county, the hilly topography and low lime soils limit crop production

The general topography is hilly. The county is characterized by narrow deep valleys, intervening plateaus and high hills (highest county elevation - 2100 feet).

Variations in topography have significant affects on climate. The influence of Cayuga Lake on climate appears to be confined to areas adjacent to the shore. In most years, the freeze free season ranges between May 5 - 20 through September 25 - October 15. Annual precipitation totals between 30 and 40 inches.

AGRICULTURAL AGENCIES IN CORTLAND COUNTY:

CORNELL COOPERATIVE EXTENSION OF CORTLAND COUNTY
60 Central Avenue
Cortland NY 13045-2746
(607) 753-5077

USDA FARM SERVICE AGENCY
1 Main St.
Cortland, NY 13045-1369
(607) 753-0851
www.fsa.usda.gov/ny

USDA NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
1 Main Street
Cortland, NY 13045-1369
(607) 753-0851
www.ny.nrcs.usda.gov

CORTLAND COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
100 Grange Place, Room 204
Cortland, NY 13045
(607) 753-0851, ext #3
www.cortlandcountyswcd.com

Providing Equal Program and Employment Opportunities
THE AGRICULTURE COMMUNITY

The acres of farmland in Cortland County provide many benefits to county residents. Among these is the production of food and the significant contribution agriculture makes to the economy of the area.

Local government and residential services are supported through taxes on the sizeable investment in land and buildings owned by farmers.

The next time you drive through the county, think of what it would be like if there were no operating farms and open space was lost to development, brush or other uses. The unique diverse landscape in Cortland County would be reduced significantly. Cropland and pasture provide food for deer, geese, turkeys and other wildlife. The open space that operating farms preserve increases the county’s natural beauty and enhances the biological diversity of the county’s ecosystem. Additionally, tourists appreciate the contribution of attractive and cultivated fields and pastures to the rural character of the county.

Because agriculture is dispersed throughout the county, it is often overlooked relative to other sectors of the local economy. However, agricultural enterprises have a large economic multiplier (2.0-3.0) which generates $80-120 million per year in additional income for the county. As a result, agriculture remains an important economic sector in the county.

Everyone has a stake in the preservation of agriculture in Cortland County.

DID YOU KNOW THAT . . .

⇒ Agriculture in Cortland County is a 62.9 million dollar business.
⇒ There are 518 full and part time farmers in the county who own 115,024 acres of land, or about 36% of the land area in the county.
⇒ 122,086 acres of land or about 38 percent of the land area in the county is located within an established agricultural district. Agricultural districts help to maintain farms in farming.
⇒ Farming is the principal occupation on 270 farms and a part time enterprise on 248 farms.
⇒ The farms in Cortland County provide direct employment for 528 people and indirect employment for many others in agricultural support industries such as feed, seed and fertilizer dealers, machinery dealers, builders and others providing services to the agricultural producer.
⇒ The average value of farmland and buildings per farm is over $423,170.
⇒ The average market value of machinery and equipment is $104,709 per farm.
⇒ Dairy farming is the largest agricultural enterprise in the county. The average production per cow in Cortland County is 2774.7 gallons; the total annual milk production from the county’s dairies is 28.7 million gallons.
⇒ The population of milk cows in Cortland County is 10,351. There are about 1,729 beef cows. The total population of cattle and calves is 23,239. Other livestock includes 894 horses, 700 sheep and 1,112 poultry.
⇒ Milk from 108 dairies shipping milk, is marketed in New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania through cooperatives or independent handlers serving the area. Milk sales account for $41.7 million of the total agricultural sales from Cortland County farms.
⇒ 41,756 tons of hay are produced on 22,820 acres across the county.
⇒ Corn for grain and silage is grown on 13,553 acres.
⇒ Horticultural enterprises include fruit, vegetables and ornamental crops. Market vegetables are grown on a full and part-time basis on over 33 farms and fruit production occurs on 11 farms. Ornamental crop enterprises include 14 businesses producing and selling greenhouse and nursery crops.
⇒ Horticultural crop sales account for $1.04 million dollars.
⇒ Other major agricultural crops grown in Cortland County include:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crop</th>
<th>Acres</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wheat</td>
<td>131</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oats</td>
<td>537</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vegetables</td>
<td>228</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maple Syrup</td>
<td>32,853</td>
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</tbody>
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Data compiled from: 2012 US Census of Agriculture