

**Dutchess County Agriculture**

Dutchess County agriculture comprises over 170,000 of the county’s 512,000 total acres (30%). Our farms produce a total of \$44.8 million in goods and are a large part of the county’s \$438 million. Agriculture is one of the county’s largest industries; its diversity and impact on the local economy is substantial.



Barton Orchards. Photo credit Sean Carroll

**Agriculture in Beekman**

Between the previous two 8-year Agricultural District Review periods (2000 & 2008), there was significant development pressure that occurred in the Town of Beekman, which was evident in both its 9% population increase and a 26% decrease in its Agricultural District acreage. Between 2008 and 2016 (the most recent 8-year review period) however, Beekman maintained a constant 23% of its land in agriculture, adding 90 acres of farms to the district, showing neither a significant increase nor decrease.

The 1999 Master Plan for Beekman focused on preserving open space and farmland. As one of its primary goals, the plan cited woodlands, open space and farms as key components of the town’s character and encouraged such techniques as cluster development and possible tax abatement for developers who choose to preserve open space.

The Beekman Open Space Plan, adopted in 2005, prioritized Beekman’s open space resources by identifying five key agricultural properties that the community determined should be protected. A municipal Purchase of Development Rights program was instituted in 2006 with the approval of a \$3 million bond dedicated to permanent preservation of these key resources. Beekman has recently committed \$2 million from this fund to purchase the development rights of the 305-acre MacIntosh Farm in partnership with Dutchess County. The Dutchess County Planning Board has recommended legislative approval of additional funds from the County’s Partnership for Manageable Growth Open Space and Farmland Protection Matching Grant Program.

**A Closer Look**

Communities in Dutchess County contain a diverse range of farm enterprises, from dairy, livestock and field crops to horses, orchards, and vineyards. Many of the farms produce a variety of goods as well. For example, some dairy farms also produce hay or grains. However, if the majority of the farm’s income is generated from dairy, dairy is considered the enterprise.

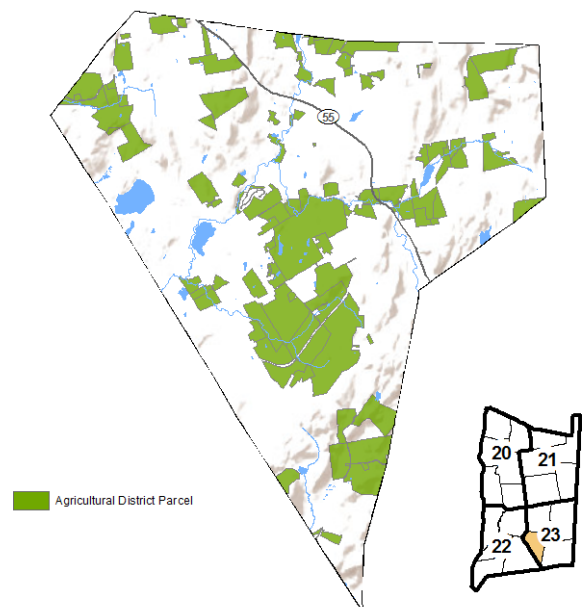
It is important first to note that this data is based on farm parcel data collected, and therefore does not necessarily reflect the number of actual farms. For example, one farm could have one or several parcels.

Farm property includes all the property tax parcels owned and/or operated on by a farm operation. Actual cropped or pasture area may be less than the area of the entire farm property.

**Table 1. Farms and Acreage in Beekman**

Number of Farm Parcels	100
Average Size of Ag Parcel	46 acres
Land in Farms	4,636 acres
Total Land in Beekman	19,653 acres
Percentage of Town in Agricultural Use	24%

**Town of Beekman**



**Figure 1. Map of Town of Beekman in Agricultural District 23**

Figure 2 illustrates the relative acreage distribution of farm enterprises in the town of Beekman. The largest segment (by acreage) is *Production Agriculture*, with farming on 2,065 acres of property. *Horses* make up the second largest agricultural enterprise in Beekman, consisting of 661 acres, followed by *Buffer* properties at 557 acres. Buffer properties are often smaller sized, single parcels as opposed to the groups of parcels on which farms may spread. Buffer properties border larger farm property parcels, and therefore can be present in fairly high numbers, as in Beekman.

Most farms in Dutchess County are small farms, grossing less than \$10,000 in annual sales. These farms also typically make fewer capital investments. The town of Beekman is not an exception. There are far more farms with capital investment in the 'Below \$10,000' category than there are in the other 5 categories (see Figure 3).

The high number of farms in Beekman with less than \$10,000 capital investment may be somewhat skewed by agricultural "buffer" properties, which are typically not in agricultural production and don't generate sales nor require large amounts of capital investment.

In terms of the economic benefits for Dutchess County and the region as a whole, small farms generate significant dollars that are then spent on investments (equipment, vet fees, etc.) that fuel the local economy. Larger farm operations, although fewer in number, generate higher gross sales and capital investment A considerable

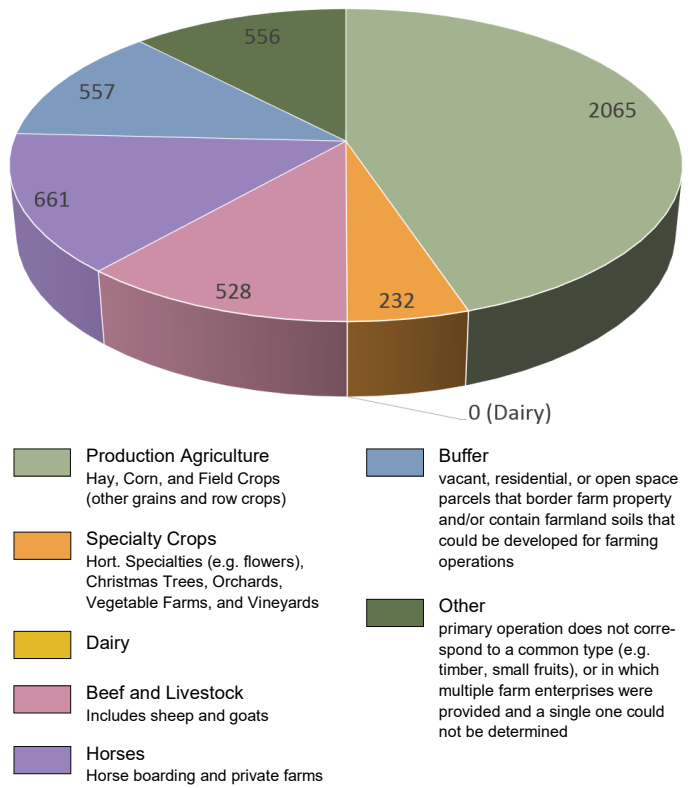
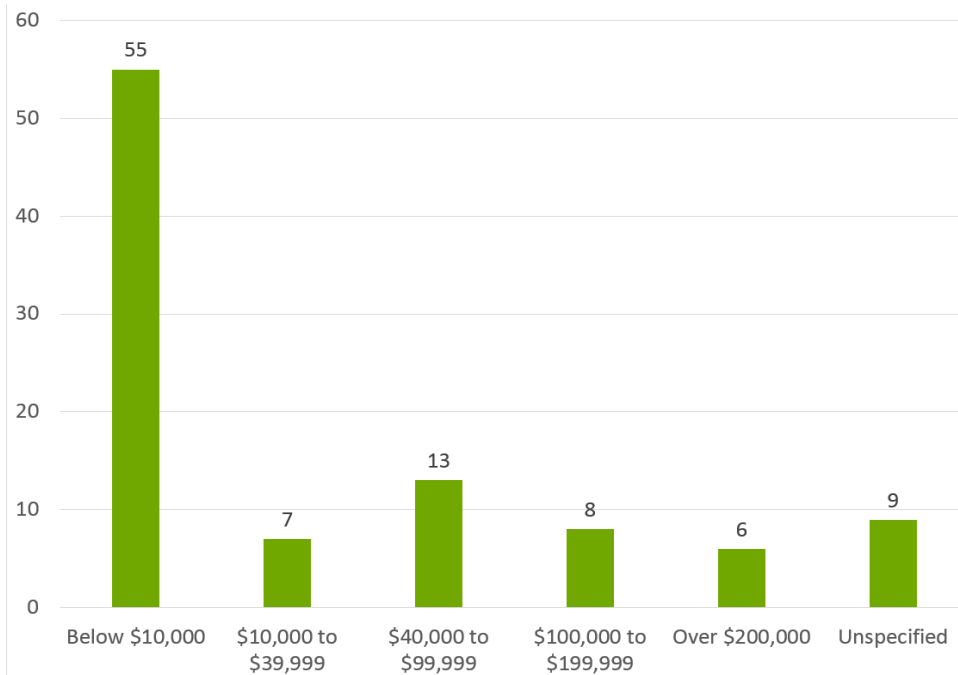


Figure 2. Acreage Distribution by Farm Enterprise Category



amount of farm parcels in the town of Beekman invested between \$40,000 and \$100,000 (13) and over \$100,000 (14; see figure 3), much of which goes back into the local economy of the county.

Figure 3. Number of Farms parcels by reported Capital Investment

**Sources:**

Agricultural District Recertification Process 2015 for 2016 Recertification. Cornell Cooperative Extension Dutchess County. April, 2016. Updated 2020.

Census and Demographics. Dutchess County Department of Planning and Development. Retrieved from <http://co.dutchess.ny.us/countygov/departments/planning/plcensus.htm>, June 2015.

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