

### 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.



Hahn Farm. Photo credit Sean Carroll

### Agriculture in Pleasant Valley

The Town of Pleasant Valley's master plan, adopted in 1995 with a pending revision, calls strongly for the protection of the rural character for which Pleasant Valley is known. According to the 2006 Community Values Survey, those who responded claimed that the rural character of Pleasant Valley was one of their three favorite things about the town.

From 2008 to 2020, Pleasant Valley's Agricultural District acreage has increased by 7%. However, as development pressures increase along the Route 44 corridor and in the vicinity of the Taconic Parkway, these farmlands will be extremely vulnerable to infringement from surrounding development or to outright conversion to residential or commercial uses. The majority of agricultural land is located in the rural residential zone, which covers more acreage than any other District in Pleasant Valley, and which is specifically aimed at protecting farmlands in Pleasant Valley.

The goals of the Pleasant Valley Master Plan include encouraging agricultural activities such as agricultural based businesses and industries, promoting local farms through tourism, holding educational programs to inform the public, and encouraging local support of farmers markets.

### 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. Farm enterprise types were developed from documentation provided by the New York State

Department of Agriculture and Markets; they were then aggregated into larger categories for simplification.

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.

Figure 2 (reverse) illustrates the relative acreage distribution of farm enterprises in the town of Pleasant Valley. The largest segment (by acreage) is *Production Agriculture*, with farm operations on 2,763 acres of property. The farm enterprise "Horse farms" is another particularly large segment in Pleasant Valley, comprising 721 acres.

Table 1. Farms and Acreage in Pleasant Valley

Number of Farm Parcels	232
Average Size of Ag Parcel	27 acres
Land in Farms	6,268 acres
Total Land in Pleasant Valley	21,202 acres
Percentage of Town in Agricultural Use	30%

### Town of Pleasant Valley

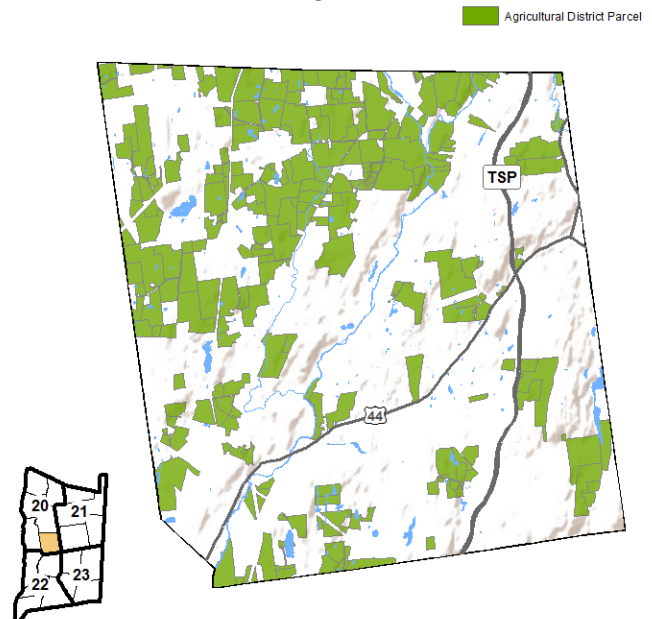


Figure 1. Map of Town of Pleasant Valley in Agricultural District 20

Most farms in Dutchess County are small farms, grossing less than \$10,000 in annual sales. These farms typically make fewer capital investments. Pleasant Valley is not an exception. There are far more farm parcels with annual capital investments in the 'Below \$10,000' category as there are in the other 5 categories combined (see Figure 3).

The high number of farms in Pleasant Valley with less than \$10,000 in annual capital investment may be somewhat skewed by agricultural "buffer" properties, which are typically not in agricultural production and don't generate sales nor require 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 significant number of Pleasant Valley's farm parcels (46) had capital investments between \$10,000 and \$100,000, while 44 invested \$100,000 or more (Figure 3). These figures are important to consider when looking at the impact of agriculture in the county, as a large portion of these capital investments go back into the local economy.

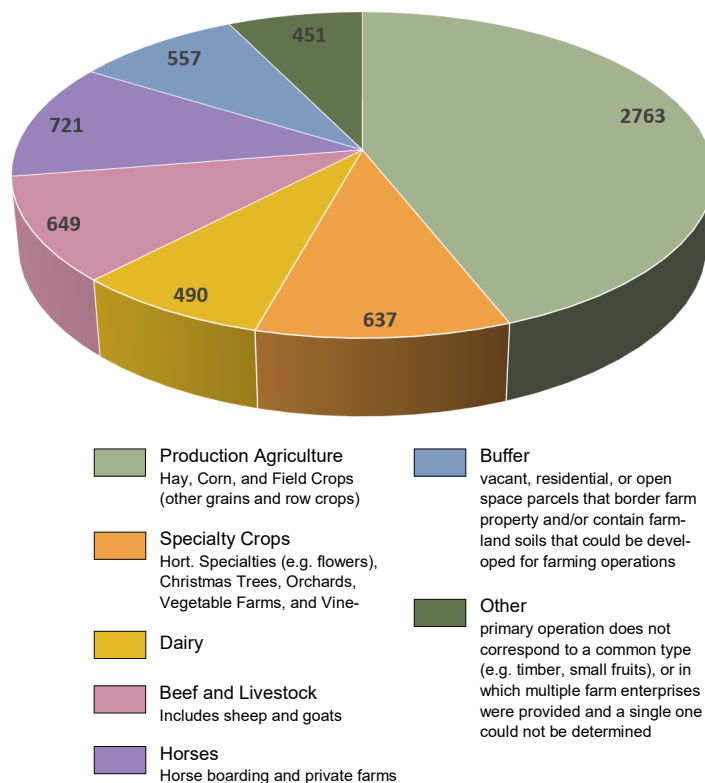


Figure 2. Acreage Distribution by Farm Enterprise Category

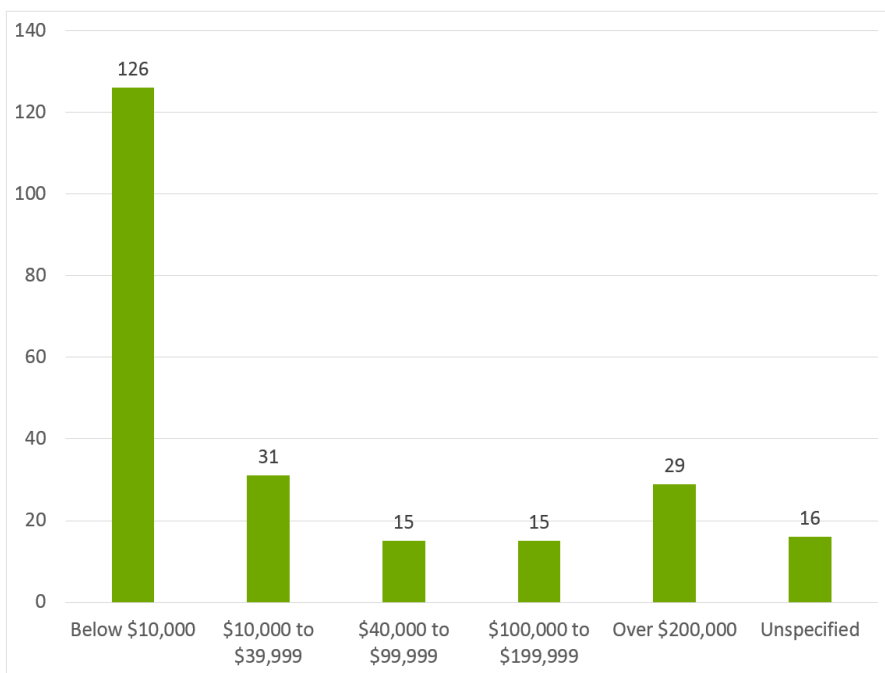


Figure 3. Number of Farm Parcels by reported Capital Investment



Bilmar Nurseries. Photo credit Sean Carroll

**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.

*CCEDC provides equal program and employment opportunities. The programs provided by this agency are partially funded by monies received from the County of Dutchess.*