

### 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.



Meadowland Farmstand. Photo credit Sean Carroll

### Agriculture in Clinton

The Town of Clinton's 1991 Master Plan for the land within the Agricultural District limits uses to very low density/ Agricultural Residential (5 acres) and low density residential (3 acres). This master plan, currently being revised, supports the agricultural use and promotes its conservation in very specific terms. Clinton's 1999 Zoning Ordinance includes a Conservation Agricultural Residential District that is geared toward encouraging farm uses and protecting farmlands. A recent initiative to define a "town center" would have the complementary effect of stabilizing the rural countryside around it by focusing development in more appropriate areas. The amount of land in the agricultural district in the Town of Clinton grew from 7,132 in 2008 to 8,985 acres in 2022; a significant increase of 26%.

### 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 side) illustrates the relative acreage distribution of farm enterprises in the town of Clinton. The largest segment (by acreage) is *Production Agriculture*, with farming on 4,079 acres of property. *Horse farms* are another particularly large agricultural enterprise in Clinton, consisting of 1,543 acres.

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 Clinton is not an exception. There are far more farms with capital investments in the 'Below \$10,000' category than there are in the other 5 categories (see Figure 3).

The high number of farms in Clinton with less than

Table 1. Farms and Acreage in Clinton

Number of Farm Parcels	280
Average Size of Ag Parcel	32 acres
Land in Farms	8,985 acres
Total Land in Clinton	24,846 acres
Percentage of Town in Agricultural Use	36%

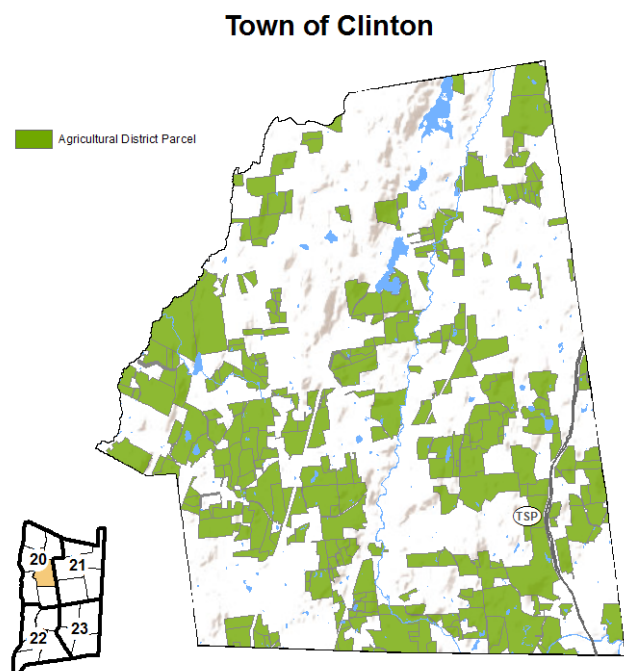


Figure 1. Map of Town of Clinton in Agricultural District 20

\$10,000 in annual sales and 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, but rather act as vacant or open space parcels that border farm property or could potentially be used for farming operations.

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 number of Clinton’s farm parcels (72) invested between \$10,000 and \$100,000, while 52 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.

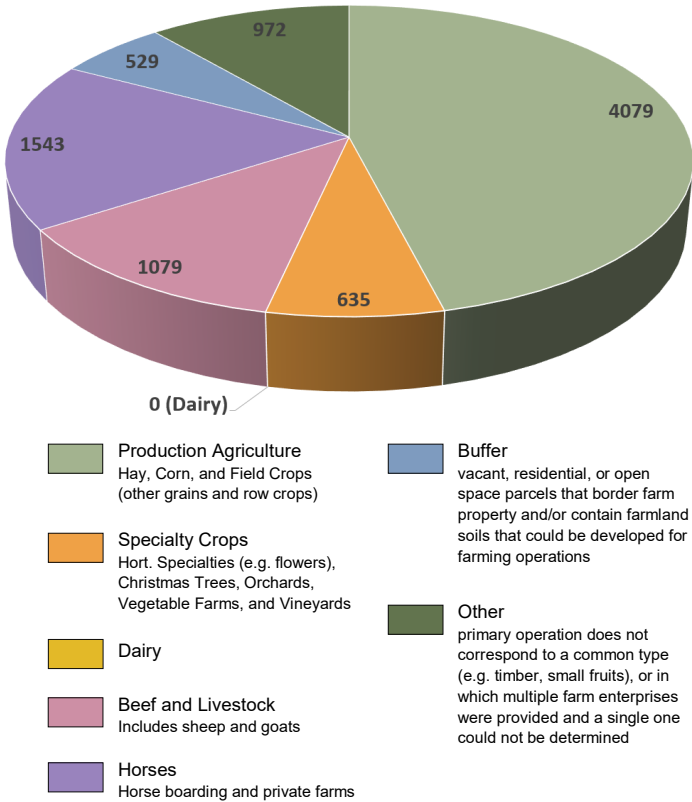


Figure 2. Acreage Distribution by Farm Enterprise Category

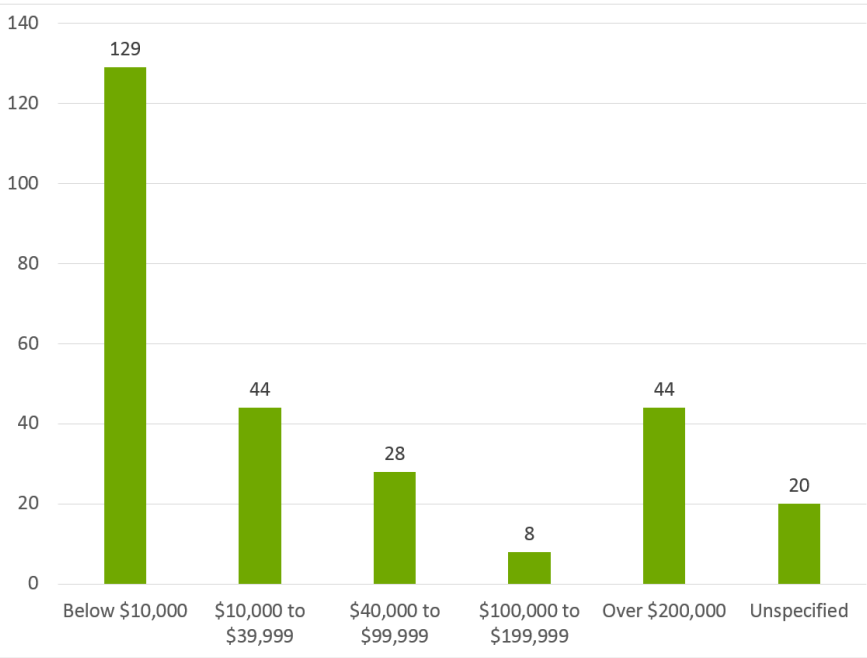


Figure 3. Number of Farms Parcels by reported Capital Investment



Cattle on a farm in Clinton. Photo credit Sean Carroll

Sources:

Agricultural District Recertification Process 2015 for 2016 Recertification. Cornell Cooperative Extension Dutchess County. April 2016. Updated 2022.

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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