

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.

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 Fishkill. The largest segment (by acreage) is *Other*, with farm operations on 262 acres of property. *Buffer* properties comprise another particularly large agricultural segment in Fishkill, consisting of 144 acres. *Horse* farms make up the last significant segment, totaling 49 acres.

Table 1. Farms and Acreage in Fishkill

Number of Farm Parcels	20
Average Size of Ag Parcel	23 acres
Land in Farms	455 acres
Total Land in Fishkill	19,991 acres
Percentage of Town in Agricultural Use	2%

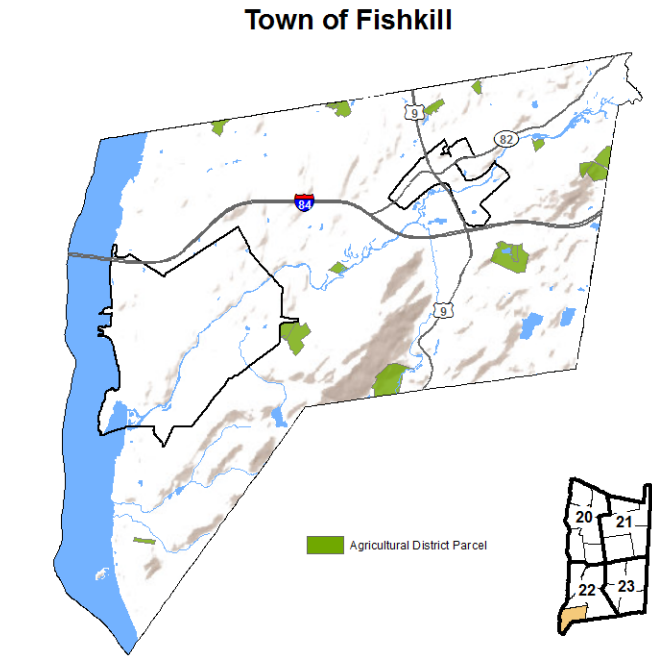


Figure 1. Map of Town of Fishkill in Agricultural District 22



Stony Kill Farm. Photo credit Sean Carroll

Agriculture in Fishkill

Fishkill has little remaining land in the Agricultural District. From 2000 to 2008, there was a decrease from 522 acres to 421 acres - representing a significant 20% decrease that occurred simultaneously with a large increase in population. Ideally located for commuters to the metro area, Fishkill is fielding a continuous series of major residential development proposals. The master plan adopted in 2001 calls for development in most of its Districts but includes an Active Farm Overlay zone, which is intended to protect the current active farmlands in the region. Fortunately, between 2008 and 2022, Fishkill saw a small (1%) increase in its farmland, as it gained 34 acres.

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

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

The high number of farms in Fishkill with less than \$10,000 in annual capital investment may be somewhat skewed by the *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 very small number of Fishkill's farm parcels (1) had capital investments between \$10,000 and \$200,000, while 5 invested \$200,000 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.

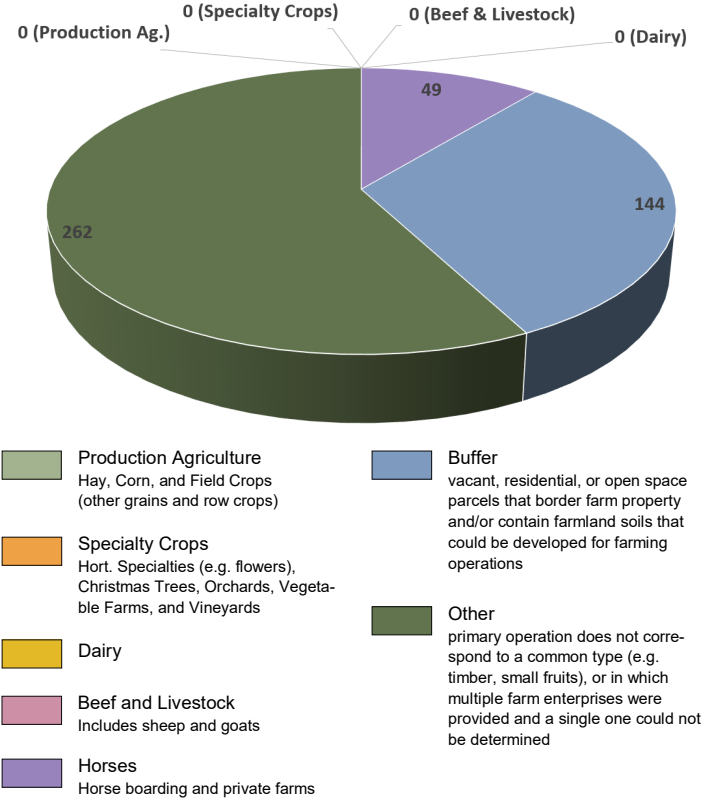


Figure 2. Acreage Distribution and Number of Farms by Enterprise Category

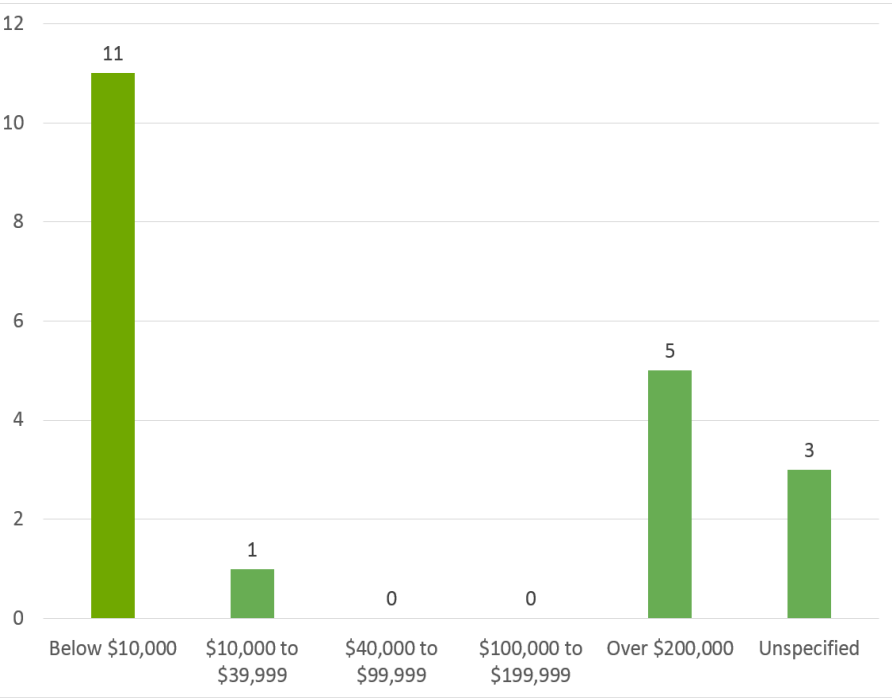


Figure 3. Number of Farms by reported Capital Investment



Common Ground Farm. Photo: 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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