

### 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.



Battenfelds Christmas Tree Farm. Photo credit Sean Carroll

### Agriculture in Milan

Seeing a significant decrease in agricultural land in years past, Milan has reversed this trend as of 2016, growing its Agricultural District land by 17% from 2008 to 2016. The town continues to maintain its rural character, identified by the community as a primary asset, based primarily on extensive woodlands.

Milan adopted a new town plan in 1986. It calls for low density residential land uses within the Agricultural District with either 3 or 5 acres required per unit. In the zoning codes for Milan there is also an Agricultural District (A3H), which is aimed at encouraging cluster development and maintaining traditional settlement patterns. Most of the agricultural acreage in Milan is located in the western portion of the Town.

### 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 Milan. The largest segment (by acreage) is *Production Agriculture*, with farm operations on 2,711 acres of property. *Beef and Livestock* is another particularly large agricultural enterprise in Milan, consisting of 932 acres.

Table 1. Farms and Acreage in Milan

Number of Farm Parcels	148
Average Size of Ag Parcel	43 acres
Land in Farms	6,403 acres
Total Land in Milan	23,395 acres
Percentage of Town in Agricultural Use	27%

Town of Milan

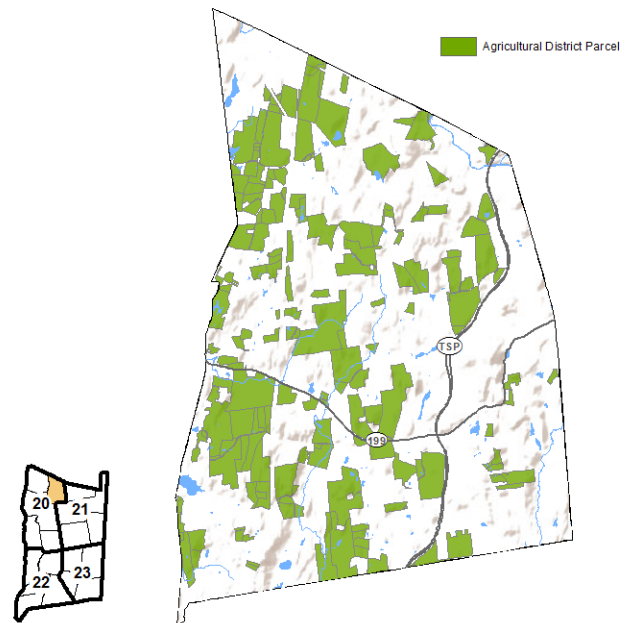


Figure 1. Map of Town of Milan in Agricultural District 20

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

The high number of farms in Milan with less than \$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.

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 Milan’s farm parcels (24) had capital investments between \$10,000 and \$100,000, while 22 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.

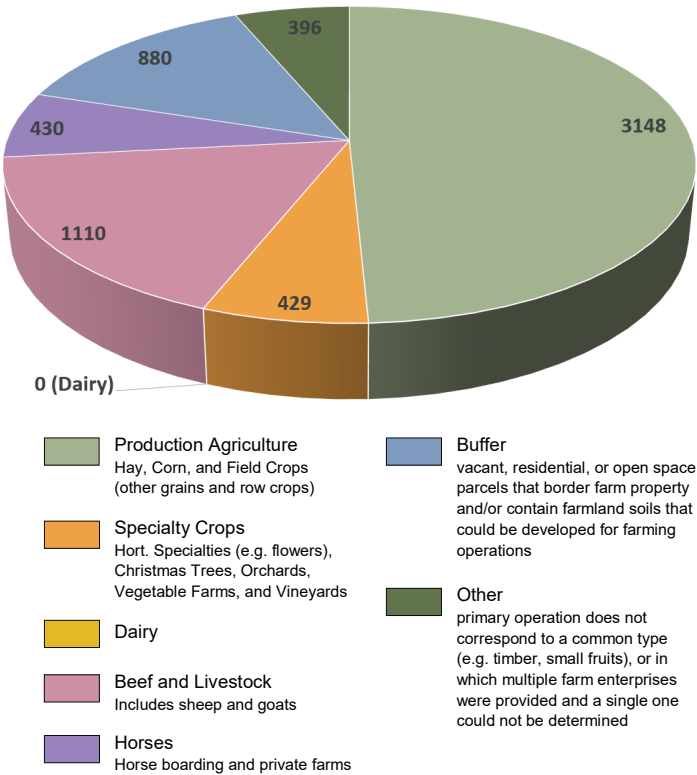


Figure 2. Acreage Distribution by Farm Enterprise Category

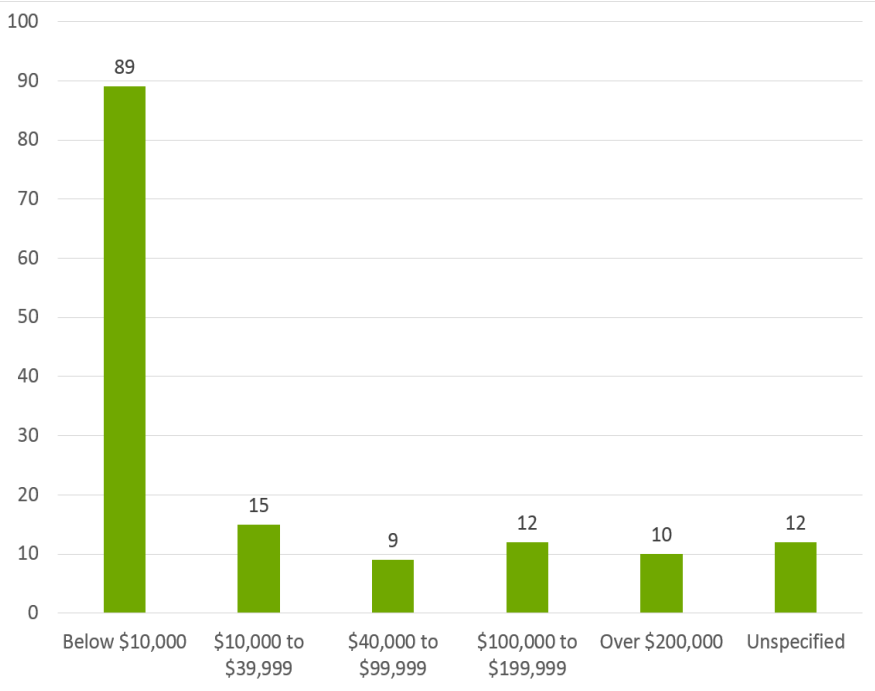


Figure 3. Number of Farms Parcels by reported Capital Investment



Briggs Hollow Farm. 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.

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