

## Rhinebeck, New York

### 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.



Sepascot Home Farm. Photo credit Sean Carroll

### Agriculture in Rhinebeck

The Town and Village of Rhinebeck saw a large decrease in Agricultural District acres between 2006 and 2008, but saw a reversed trend and a 12% increase from 2008 to 2022. At the same time, a population growth rate of 5% and development activity in the Town and Village has been steady and in line with the overall County average.

The Town of Rhinebeck's Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 1989 and currently undergoing revision, primarily calls for low density residential uses in the agricultural areas of the town. However, there are two areas in the Agricultural Districts that are planned for industrial, commercial or medium density uses, a possible conflict in a community widely recognized for its scenic assets. The proposed revisions focus on the Centers and Greenspaces concept that would conserve open space and agricultural assets by concentrating development around existing population and business centers.

### 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 (and village) of Rhinebeck. The largest segment (by acreage) is *Production Agriculture*, with farm operations on 4,216 acres of property. *Beef and Livestock* is another particularly large agricultural segment in Rhinebeck, consisting of 1,346 acres.

Most farms in Dutchess County are small farms, grossing less than \$10,000 in annual sales. These farms typically make fewer capital investments. Rhinebeck is not an exception. There are far more farms with annual capital investments in the 'Below \$10,000' category than there are in any of the other 4 categories (see Figure 3).

Table 1. Farms and Acreage in Rhinebeck

Number of Farm Parcels	203
Average Size of Ag Parcel	43 acres
Land in Farms	8,761 acres
Total Land in Rhinebeck	25,337 acres
Percentage of Town in Agricultural Use	35%

### Town of Rhinebeck

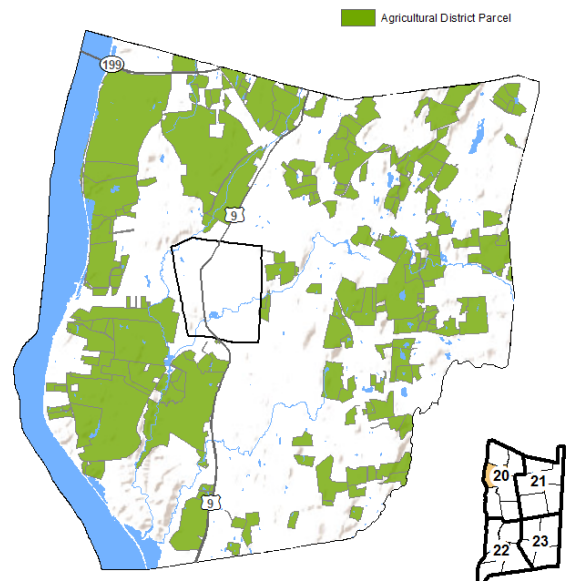


Figure 1. Map of Town and Village of Rhinebeck in Agricultural District 20

The high number of farms in Rhinebeck 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 Rhinebeck’s farm parcels (46) had capital investments between \$10,000 and \$100,000, and 45 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.

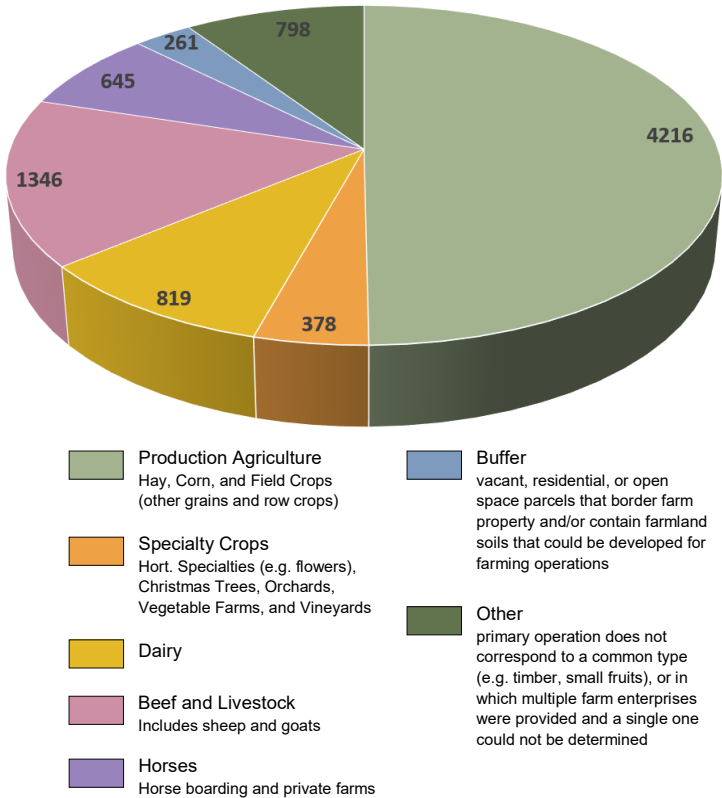


Figure 2. Acreage Distribution and Number of Farms by Enterprise Category

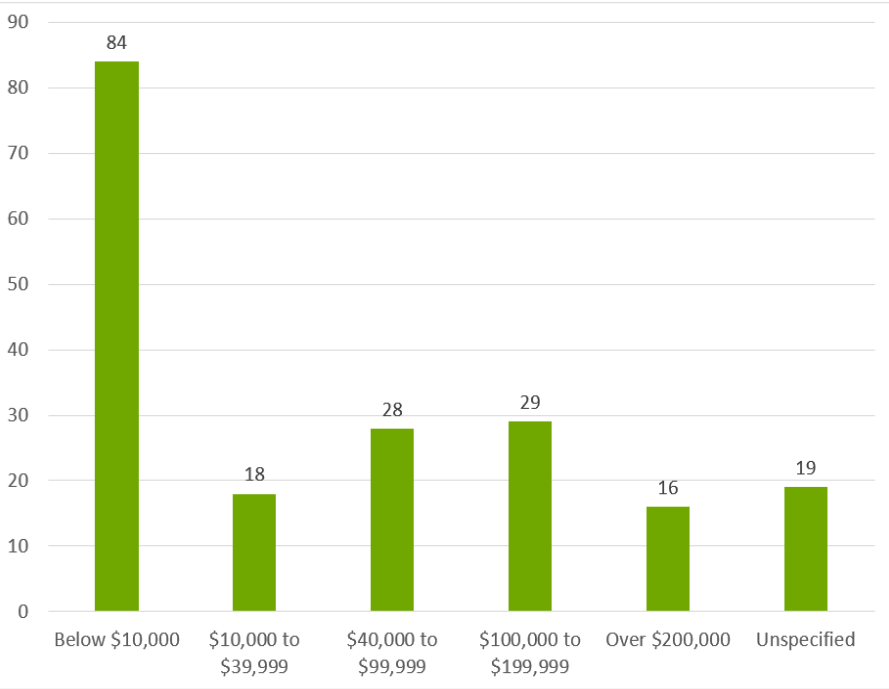


Figure 3. Number of Farms by reported Capital Investment



Wonderland Florist & Garden Center. 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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