

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.



Why Not Farm. Photo credit Sean Carroll

Agriculture in Stanford

Despite population growth on average with the rest of the County, the Town of Stanford's Agricultural District acreage decreased 13% from 2006 state certified acreage. From 2008 to 2022, however, the trend reversed, and Stanford saw a 5% increase in its Agricultural District acreage. The Town has taken steps to protect its scenic roads and is currently updating the Master Plan adopted in 1980.

Stanford's Master Plan is unique in that it has three scenarios on the way the town could develop. The first two scenarios illustrate what could happen if development continues in an unrestrained, haphazard fashion. The third scenario offers a method for guiding development, outlining a way that allows for the compatible relationship of the built systems with the natural systems. This third scenario promotes development that is agriculturally compatible and recognizes that Stanford's economic base is agriculture. For example, the plan encourages industrial uses be sited off prime agricultural soils and out of conflict with farms or farm operations.

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.

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

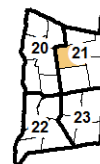
example, one farm could have one or several parcels. Farm property includes all the property tax parcels owned and/or operated on by a farm operation. Actual cropped or pasture area may be less than the area of the entire farm property.

Figure 2 (reverse side) illustrates the relative acreage distribution of farm enterprises in the town of Stanford. The largest segment (by acreage) is *Production Agriculture*, with farming on 8,213 acres of property. *Buffer properties* and *Horse Farms* are two other particularly large agricultural enterprises in Stanford, comprising 3,164 and 3,156 acres, respectively.

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 Stanford is not an exception. There are far more farms with annual

Table 1. Farms and Acreage in Stanford

Number of Farm Parcels	464
Average Size of Ag Parcel	46 acres
Land in Farms	21,228 acres
Total Land in Stanford	32,056 acres
Percentage of Town in Agricultural Use	66%



Town of Stanford

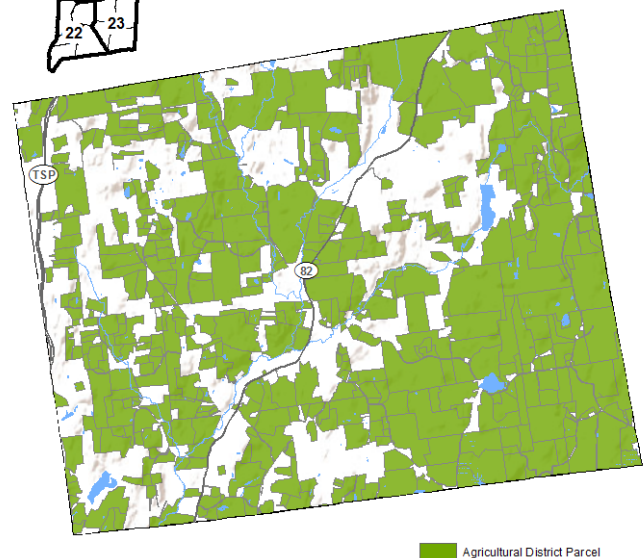


Figure 1. Map of Town of Stanford in Agricultural District 21

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 Stanford 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, 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 significant number of Stanford’s farm parcels (78) had capital investments between \$10,000 and \$100,000, and 59 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.

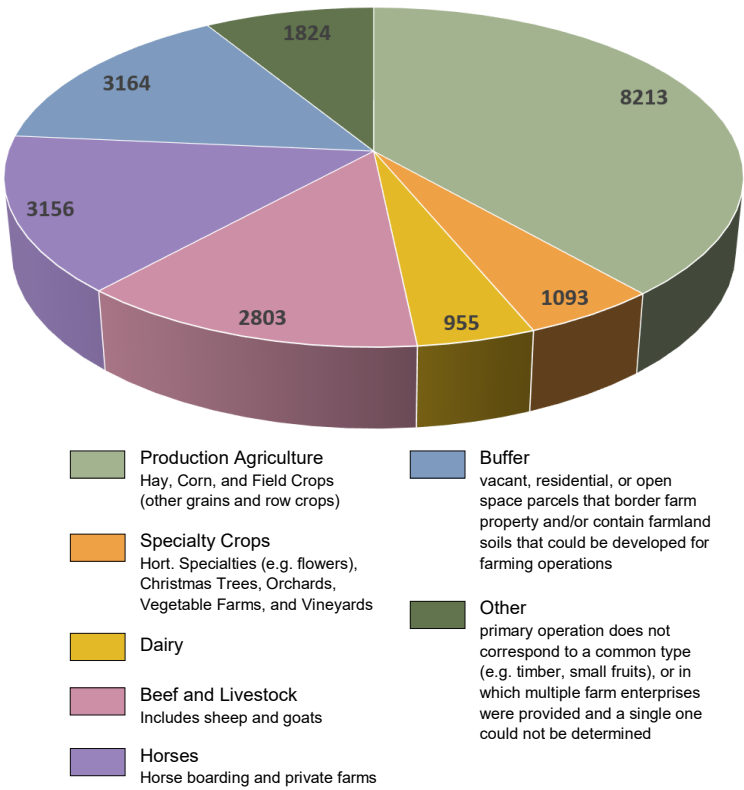


Figure 2. Acreage Distribution by Farm Enterprise Category

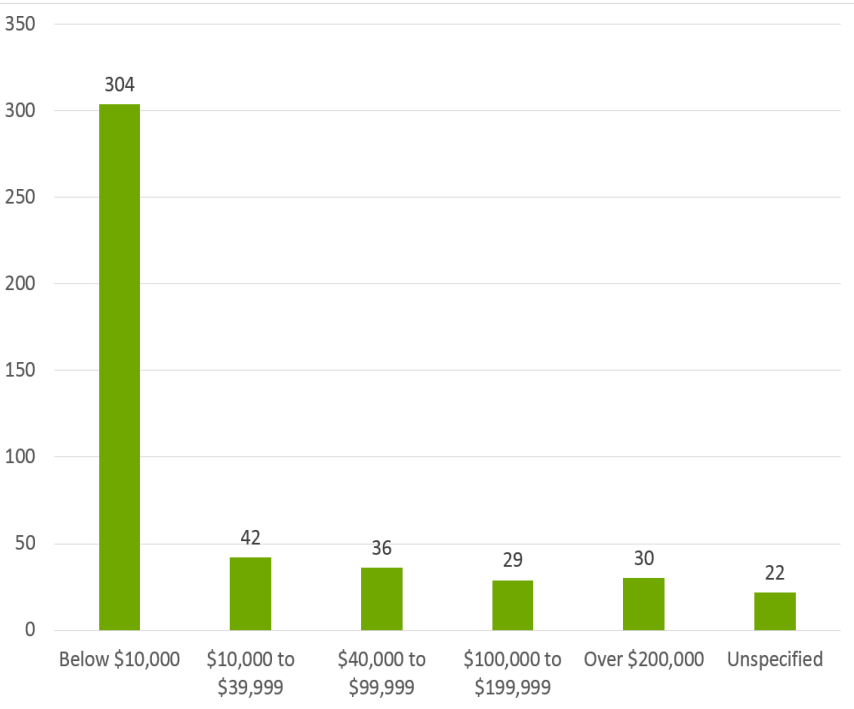


Figure 3. Number of Farms parcels by reported Capital Investment



Sisters Hill 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.