

### Washington, 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.



Rally Farm. Photo credit Sean Carroll

#### Agriculture in Washington

The Town of Washington, including the Village of Millbrook, has more farmland acreage than any other municipality in Dutchess County, with 24,797 acres total. This number represents a 8% increase from 2008 to 2022. The Town of Washington describes the areas within the District as agricultural, conservation, rural density and low density residential in its 1987 Master Plan. These categories range from 5 to 10 acre minimum lot sizes.

The Town of Washington also articulated its objective to preserve farmlands in its 1991 zoning code by creating an Agricultural Protection Overlay District, which covers Districts RR-10, RS-10, RL-5, RS-5 and RM-2. Among the objectives of this overlay District are protecting productive farms, maintaining a workable agricultural foundation to support agricultural processing, and preventing conflicts between incompatible land uses. The program appears to be showing some success as the town continues to see an increase in Agricultural District acreage.

In 2007 the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets announced an award to Dutchess County to secure the development rights on 270 acres of Bos Haven Farm, a key operation in an area of critical agricultural resources that extends into the Town of Union Vale. The Towns of Union Vale and Washington have committed municipal funding to the acquisition in partnership with the County.

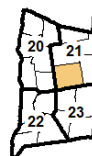
#### A Closer Look

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. Figure 2 illustrates the relative acreage distribution of farm enterprises in the town of Washington. The largest segment (by acreage) is *Production Agriculture*, with

Table 1. Farms and Acreage in Washington

Number of Farm Parcels	451
Average Size of Farm	55 acres
Land in Farms	24,797 acres
Total Land in Washington	37,634 acres
Percentage of Town in Farms	66%



Town of Washington

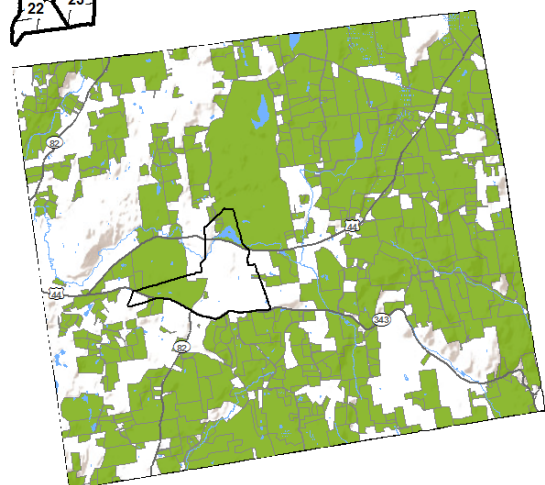


Figure 1. Map of Town of Washington and Village of Millbrook in Agricultural District 21

farm operations on 10,244 acres of property. 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. *Beef and Livestock* make up the second largest farm enterprise in the Town of Washington (5,006 acres) followed by *Horses* (3,489 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 Washington 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).

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 Washington's farm parcels (85) had capital investments between \$10,000 and \$100,000, while 91 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.

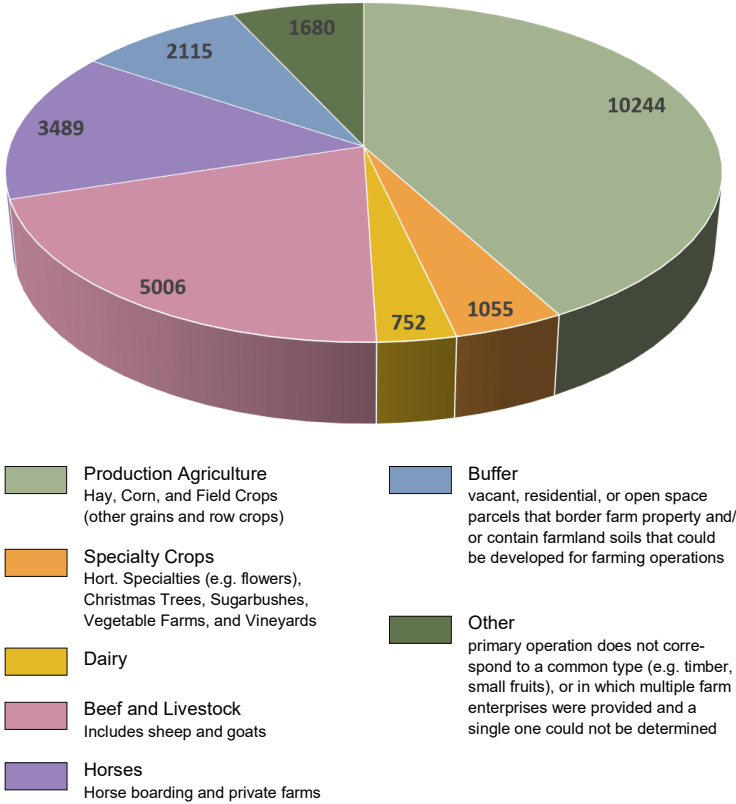


Figure 2. Acreage Distribution by Enterprise Category

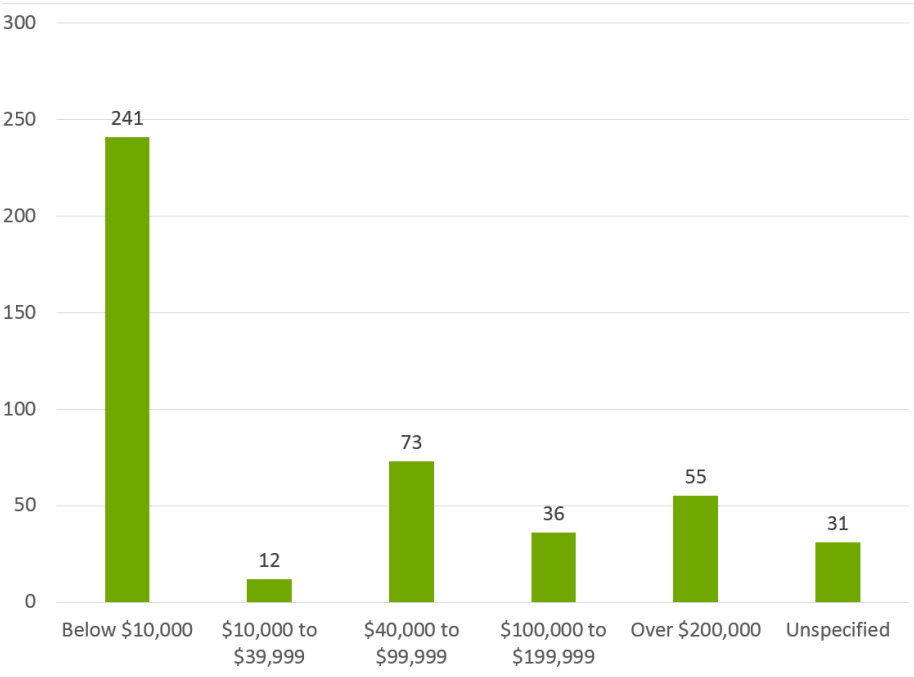


Figure 3. Number of Farm Parcels by reported Capital Investment



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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