

DECEMBER 2025 AG REPORT

Cornell Cooperative Extension Sullivan County

PAST WORKSHOPS

Farmer Mixer at Seminary Hill - December 11th:

Attendees had a tour of Seminary Hill Cider with the cider maker where they learned about the history of the operation and the production methods.

Protecting Your Legacy: Conservation Easements for Farmers Webinar - December 3rd.

Participants learned about how conservation easements can be tailored to protect farmland, support farm viability and preserve working landscapes for future generations.



Municipal Strategies for Farmland Preservation Webinar - December 8th. Participants learned about zoning tools and planning practices that support farmland preservation and agricultural viability.

Invasive Species Webinar: a 2 part series Webinar- December 9th. Participants learned about invasive species currently threatening Sullivan County, what ecosystems they cause damage to, and how to identify and manage them.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE:

Technical Assistance/Inquiries: 103 Soil/Hay Tests: 2 Farm Visits: 1

Technical Assistance was provided on land access, ag districts, farmland preservation, Catskills Kitchen (insurance, business structures, permitting & licensing), beginning farmer, soil tests, field crops, Business planning, poultry, soil testing, christmas trees, livestock, health and disease, whole farm planning, bulb planting, map reporting and invasive species.

17 total Hours of Technical Assistance.

UPCOMING WORKSHOPS:

Agri-Tourism Series: CCE Sullivan is partnering with the Sullivan Catskills Visitor's Association to offer agri-tourism training for farmers, food businesses and municipalities. As part of the first portion of the program, farmers will have the opportunity to participate in the following workshops:

- Know the Law: On Farm Risk Management & NYS Legal Requirements
- Biosecurity for Farm Experiences
- Creating Accessible Farm Experiences
- Designing the Farm Experience: Tours, Storytelling & Visitor Engagement
- Marketing Your Farm Experience

Ag Climate Resiliency Series Lunch & Learn Webinar Series:

- **Adapting to Changing Growing Seasons: January 5th** - Participants will learn about the different ways that you can adapt to more variable growing seasons with Brett Budde from Majestic Farm.
- **Ag Energy Efficiencies: January 12th** - Participants will learn about available funding and best options for energy upgrades.
- **Invasive Plants and Insects: January 20th** - Participants will learn about how you can plan for the impacts of invasive species due to temperature fluctuation.

FARMLAND PRESERVATION OVERALL REPORT FOR 2025:

County-Wide Farmland Preservation Project (Report from Orange County Land Trust in partnership with CCE Sullivan)

Farmland Protection Implementation Grant (FPIG) – Candidate Identification & Vetting

- Worked with the Sullivan County Agricultural Board to identify three farms for potential FPIG funding.
- Conducted site visits to all three farms to assess eligibility and landowner willingness to proceed with conservation easements.
- Held multiple calls with NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets to clarify eligibility requirements under various award categories.
- One farm was deemed qualified, and an appraisal (funded by OCLT) was ordered.
- Continued to vet the remaining farms to determine suitability for submitting FPIG applications.
- Governor Hochul announced a new round of FPIG funding on December 20, with informational webinars scheduled for January 5 and 7; attendance planned.

Farmland Preservation Outreach, Education & Municipal Engagement

- Delivered an in-person seminar on November 13 at CCE Sullivan County covering: Conservation easements, Tax implications for farmland under easement and Estate planning for farm transition
- Conducted two December webinars addressing conservation easements plus benefits of including Sullivan County in the Hudson Valley Community Preservation Act (HVCPA).
- Hosted a third webinar for municipal leaders highlighting Farm-friendly zoning techniques and HVCPA overview.

Conference Presentations & Regional Coordination

- Presented at the Upper Delaware River Coalition conference at Villa Roma on October 16 on: Farmland preservation progress in Sullivan County and HVCPA inclusion efforts.
- Engaged with attendees (30–40 participants) and Assemblymember Paula Kay regarding the HVCPA legislative process and home-rule request.
- Invited to present on HVCPA to a coalition of county conservation groups on January 10 in Monticello.

Land Trust Collaboration & Program Development

- Continued support for forming the Hudson Delaware Land Conservancy (HDLC), including the addition of a new board member representing Sullivan County.
- Met with Beaverkill Valley Land Conservancy and Sullivan County Planning regarding the Harlen Swamp protection initiative.
- Conducted community outreach to build a long-term farmland preservation program.