



SULLIVAN COUNTY
DIVISION OF PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT
SULLIVAN COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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Sullivan County Accepting Agricultural District Applications

Sullivan County is accepting applications from property owners seeking to be included in New York State Agricultural Districts 1 and 4, for a 30-day window beginning April 1st and ending April 30th. New York State Agricultural Districts are geographic areas that consist predominantly of viable agricultural land. Agricultural operations within the districts are afforded benefits and protections to promote the continuation of farming and the preservation of agricultural land. These benefits include protection of farm operations from unreasonably restrictive local laws, limitations on assessments for newly formed benefit districts, and notification to local governments of projects that could adversely affect farmland.

There are two New York State Agricultural Districts in Sullivan County. Agricultural District 1 encompasses towns in northern and western Sullivan County, and Agricultural District 4 covers the County's eastern and southern towns.

For parcels to be included in an Ag District, they must be predominantly viable agricultural land. New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets Law, defines "viable agricultural land" as land highly suitable for agricultural production and which will continue to be economically feasible for such use if real property taxes, farm use restrictions and speculative activities are limited to levels approximating those in commercial agricultural areas not influenced by the proximity of non-agricultural development.

During this thirty-day window, property owners may request the addition of their land into an Agricultural District. Applications are available by calling Melinda Meddaugh, at Cornell Cooperative Extension Sullivan County at 845-292-6180 x116, or by emailing her at mm2592@cornell.edu. Applications will be reviewed by the Sullivan County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board, who will then make recommendations to the County Legislature regarding property to be added to the districts this year. The County Legislature will hold a public hearing and then vote on the approval of each recommended addition. Subsequent to County approval, an updated district map with a report showing the new parcels for inclusion in the districts will be submitted to the State Department of Agriculture and Markets for State approval. Upon approval by Agriculture and Markets, each property owner will be notified by mail and the real property tax records for each parcel will be updated. Applicants will receive notification by the winter.

More information on the benefits of agricultural districts, as well as access to maps of Sullivan County's agricultural districts, is available at www.sullivanccce.org/agriculture/farmland-protection-ag-districts-vs-assessments