

Farm towns along the southern border of Fulton County have gained population at a rate approximately double that of New York State as a whole. Between 1987 and 1997, the County lost about 1.2 acres of farmland per day. This is partly due to new commercial and residential development. During this 10- year period, total acreage of farms has declined as well, from 199 acres to 195 acres. The general loss of farmland is likely attributed to low profitability and shifts to less land in agriculture (Fulton County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board, 2002).

Agricultural Land

Agriculture is one of the main industries in Fulton County. According to the 2007 Census of Agriculture, approximately 48-percent of farm operators reported farming as their principal occupation. The market value of agricultural products sold from County farms totaled \$9.08 million, with total sales averaging \$40,919 per farm.

Crop sales accounted for \$2.22 million (25-percent) of total sales and livestock sales accounted for \$6.85 million (75-percent) of total sales. The leading agricultural products sold were dairy products (65-percent), other products (17-percent), cattle and calves (seven-percent), fruits and nuts (five- percent), vegetables (five-percent), and grains and dry beans (two-percent) (U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2007; New York Agricultural Statistics Service, 2009).

The average value of land and buildings per farm in 2007 was \$331,316. Machinery and equipment were valued at \$71,071 per farm. The total production expenses in 2007 were \$7.8 million for an average of \$40,358 per farm (New York Agricultural Statistics Service, 2009).

The County had 222 farms and 33,841 acres of farms in 2008, with the average size of a farm being 152 acres. Between 1940 and 2008, the amount of acres of land in farms decreased by 85,713 acres (New York Agricultural Statistics Service, 2009).

Farmland is found in the towns of Johnstown, Perth, Mayfield, Broadalbin, Ephratah, and Oppenheim. Dairy farming is the lead principal enterprise in Fulton County. Almost all of the farmland is located to the south of Adirondack Park, north of the Mohawk River (Montgomery County) (Fulton County HMP, 2005).

Economy

According to the Fulton County Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan, agriculture produces a much higher economic multiplier than any other economic sector in the County.