

**2024 REPORT ON THE INCLUSION OF VIABLE AGRICULTURAL LANDS  
TO THE EXISTING NYS CERTIFIED AGRICULTURAL DISTRICTS**

JEFFERSON COUNTY AGRICULTURAL & FARMLAND PROTECTION BOARD

JULY 23, 2024

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# Proposed 2024 Agricultural District Inclusions

## Jefferson County, New York



**Legend**

- Requested 2024 Inclusion
- Agricultural Districts**
- Southeast
- North
- Southwest



Created by Jefferson County Planning Dept, July 2024

Sources: Jefferson County Office of Real Property Services, CSCIC

## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

This report presents the findings of the Jefferson County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board's (AFPB) review and recommendations to the County Legislature for the 2024 Agricultural District Inclusion Requests.

Article 25-AA of the NYS Agriculture and Markets Law was enacted in 1971 to help keep farmland in agricultural production through a combination of landowner incentives and protections that discourage the conversion of farmland to non-agricultural uses, including:

- providing reduced property tax bills for agricultural lands (agricultural landowners must apply to the local tax assessor for an annual agricultural assessment);
- providing the framework to limit unreasonable local regulation on accepted agricultural practices;
- providing Right to Farm provisions that protect accepted agricultural practices from private nuisance suits;
- modifying state agency administrative regulations and procedures to encourage the continuation of agricultural businesses;
- modifying the ability to advance public funds to construct facilities that encourage development;
- limiting the power to impose benefit assessments, special ad valorem levies, or other rates or fees in certain improvement districts or benefit areas such as water, sewer, or non-farm drainage; and
- reducing the ability of public agencies to acquire farmland through eminent domain.

Agricultural districts primarily benefit owners of land that is farmed. Being part of an agricultural district does not require that the land be used for agriculture, and it does not directly affect tax assessments (agricultural landowners must apply to the local tax assessor for an annual agricultural assessment).

There are two processes at the county level for the addition and review of these districts. Each Certified Agricultural District is required by New York State to undergo an Eight-Year Review to determine if the district still consists of predominantly viable agricultural land. There is also an annual individual inclusion process where agricultural land may be added to an existing certified agricultural district. There are three Agricultural Districts in Jefferson County comprising over 246,000 acres.

The New York State Agricultural Districts Law requires counties to establish an annual 30-day period to allow parcels of predominantly viable agricultural land to be added to existing New York State Certified Agricultural Districts. The Jefferson County Board of Legislators has set **June 1<sup>st</sup> through June 30<sup>th</sup>** of each year for this purpose.

Viable agricultural land is land that is actively farmed as well as inactive and non-farm acreage which is highly suitable for agricultural production. A parcel of land is "predominantly" viable if a minimum of 51% of the parcel meets the above definition.

There are three NYS Certified Agricultural Districts in the County. The Southeast District #1, North District #2, and Southwest District #3.

**Jefferson County NYS Certified Agricultural Districts in GIS Acres\***

<b>Southeast</b>	<b>#1</b>	<b>52,919.06</b>
Towns of Wilna, Champion, Rutland, Rodman, Worth, and parts of Watertown, Adams, and Lorraine.		
<b>North</b>	<b>#2</b>	<b>115,286.31</b>
Towns of Brownville, Lyme, Cape Vincent, Clayton, Orleans, Pamelaia, Alexandria, Theresa, Antwerp, Philadelphia, and LeRay.		
<b>Southwest</b>	<b>#3</b>	<b>77,860.04</b>
Towns of Hounsfield, Henderson, Ellisburg, and parts of Watertown, Adams, and Lorraine.		
<b>Total GIS acres in Districts</b>		<b>246,065.41</b>

\* Includes 2023 Annual Inclusions.

**LANDOWNER REQUESTS**

The County received requests from five landowners in the Towns of Lyme, Rodman, Lorraine, and Clayton to consider the addition of six parcels consisting of a total of 193.50 GIS acres.

Sam Wilson and Michael Bourcy from the County Planning Department and Jay Matteson, the County Agricultural Coordinator, conducted a windshield survey of the requested parcels. Notes from that survey are included in this report.

**1. Charlie & Maureen Caprara**

Parcel Number	Town	GIS Acres	District
30.06-1-2.71	Clayton	27.39	N: 2
30.06-1-3.4	Clayton	16.68	N: 2

The applicant is requesting to add two parcels to the North District. The applicant stated the land is proposed to have at least 10 horses within an expanded barn onsite. The horses include boarded horses and horses that are bought, trained, and then sold for profit. Observation: Staff observed an area in the front of the parcel that was enclosed with a fence for horses. In addition, it looks like there could be areas for haying.

**Charlie & Maureen Caprara 30.06-1-2.71 & 30.06-1-3.4, 37247 NYS Route 12E.**







# Proposed Agricultural District Inclusion

**2024 Inclusion Process**  
**Charlie & Maureen Caprara**  
**37247 NYS Rte 12E**



July 2024

**Legend**

-  Proposed Inclusion
-  Agricultural District



0      250      500  
 Feet

2. Kathy A. Crouse

Parcel Number	Town	GIS Acres	District
60.00-1-19.21	Lyme	44.46	N: 2

The applicant is requesting to add one parcel to the North District. The applicant stated the land is used as a dairy farm pasture. Staff observed signs of agricultural activities including haying on both sides of County Route 57. In addition, the east side of the parcel has cattle.

**Kathy A. Crouse, 60.00-1-19.21, 26274 County Route 57**





# Proposed Agricultural District Inclusion

**2024 Inclusion Process**  
**Kathy A. Crouse**  
**26274 Co Rte 57**



July 2024

**Legend**

-  Proposed Inclusion
-  Agricultural District



**3. Kenneth D. Murray**

Parcel Number	Town	GIS Acres	District
60.17-1-5.3	Lyme	5.96	N:2

The applicant is requesting to add one parcel to the North District. The applicant stated the land is for crops and hay. Staff observed the presence of agricultural activities such as haying. In addition, there are goats and miniature horses located on the parcel.

**Kenneth D. Murray, 60.17-1-5.3, County Route 57**





NYS ITS Geospatial Services, Westchester County GIS

# Proposed Agricultural District Inclusion

2024 Inclusion Process  
 Kenneth D. Murray  
 Co Rte 57



50 July 2024  
 Feet

**Legend**

-  Proposed Inclusion
-  Agricultural District



**4. Brain Scofield, 100.00-1-24.241, 13597 County Route 68**

Parcel Number	Town	GIS Acres	District
100.00-1-24.241	Rodman	74.87	SE:1

The applicant is requesting to add one parcel to the Southeast District. The applicant stated the land is leased to Hy-Light Farms. This parcel is actively cropped with corn, soybean, and hay.



**Proposed Agricultural District Inclusion**

**2024 Inclusion Process**

**Brian Scofield**

**13597 Co Rte 68**

**Legend**

- Proposed Inclusion
- Agricultural District

0    250    500  
Feet

July 2024

**5. Mark Shultz, 113.00-2-78.1, East of County Route 189**

Parcel Number	Town	GIS Acres	District
113.00-2-78.1	Lorraine	24.14	SW:3

The applicant is requesting to add one parcel to the Southwest District. The applicant stated the land is leased to a farmer. This parcel is actively cropped with corn, soybean, and hay.




**Proposed Agricultural District Inclusion**  
**2024 Inclusion Process**  
**Mark Shultz**  
**E of Co Rte 189**


**Legend**

Proposed Inclusion

Agricultural District



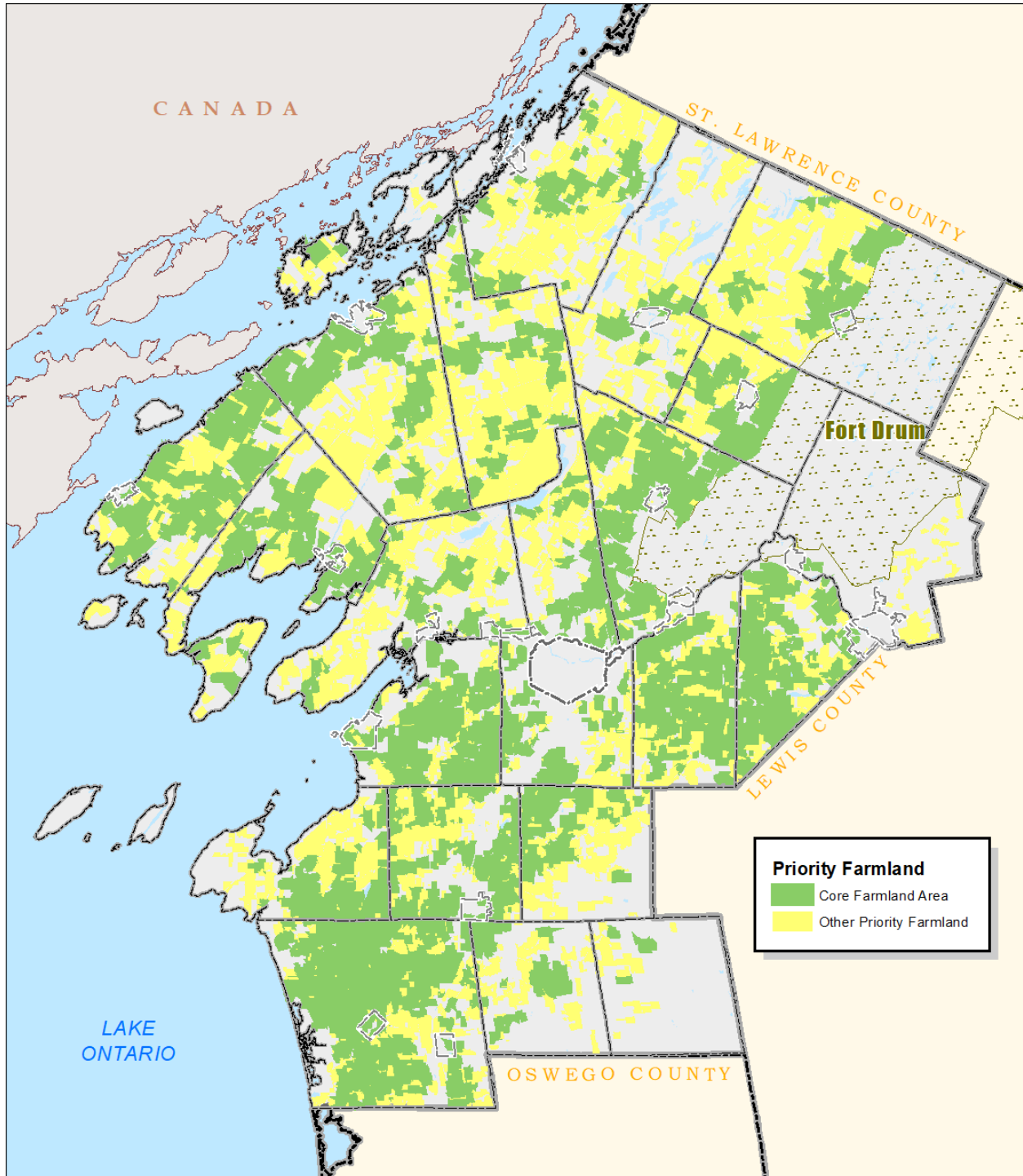
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Jefferson County  
Planning Department  
July 2024

## PRIORITY FARMLAND – JC Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan, 2016

The recently adopted Jefferson County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan indicated priority farmland in the County. The map below identifies the areas. Most of the requested additions are within one of the areas or in close proximity.



## PRIORITY AGRICULTURAL SOILS

While the identification of a specific soil type's location is not possible, this general soil map shows that all of the proposed additions contain one or more of the soils identified below.



Sources: U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Geological Survey, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency, ESRI, Jefferson County Real Property Tax Services, Fort Drum Engineering

**Recommendation of the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board  
for the 2024 Agricultural District Inclusion Requests**

The Jefferson County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board recommends that the following parcels, totaling 193.50 GIS acres, be added to existing agricultural districts:

Recommendation		Parcel Number	Landowner	Town	GIS Acres	Ag. District
Approve	Disapprove					
X		30.06-1-2.71	Caprara	Clayton	27.39	N
X		30.06-1-3.4	Caprara	Clayton	16.68	N
X		60.00-1-19.21	Crouse	Lyme	44.46	N
X		60.17-1-5.3	Murray	Lyme	5.96	N
X		100.00-1-24.241	Scofield	Rodman	74.87	SE
X		113.00-2-78.1	Shultz	Lorraine	24.14	SW

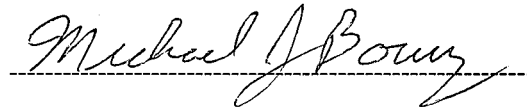
Motion made by: John Peck, seconded by Jan Martusewicz,

All in favor: Douglas Shelmidine, John Peck, Jan Martusewicz, Michael Bourcy, Michael Kiechle, Roxanne Burns, Pat Crast, and Amanda Rae Root.

Opposed: N/A.

Absent: Al Gehrke, Daniel McBride, & Steve Watson.

Motion carried.



Michael Bourcy