

**2025 REPORT ON THE INCLUSION OF VIABLE AGRICULTURAL LANDS
TO THE EXISTING NYS CERTIFIED AGRICULTURAL DISTRICTS**

JEFFERSON COUNTY AGRICULTURAL & FARMLAND PROTECTION BOARD

JULY 31, 2025

Jefferson County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board

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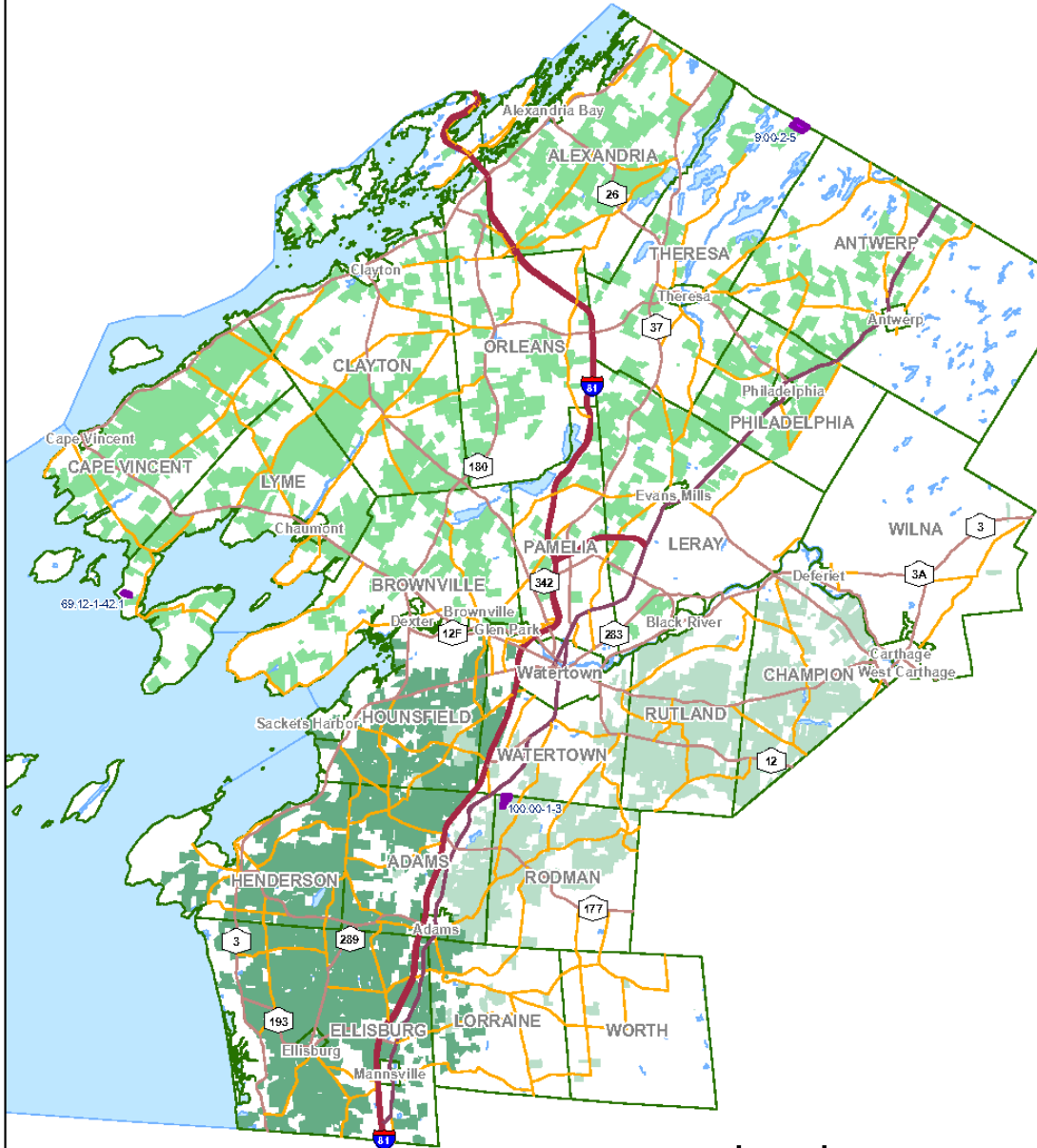
Dan McBride, Jefferson County Board of Legislators

Roxanne Burns, Real Property Director

Michael Bourcy, Planning Department Director

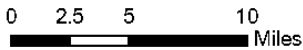
Amanda Rae Root, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Jefferson County

Proposed 2025 Agricultural District Inclusions Jefferson County, New York



Legend

- Requested 2025 Inclusion
- Agricultural Districts**
- Southeast
- North
- Southwest



Created by Jefferson County Planning Dept, July 2025

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 2025 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 246,258.91 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 1st through June 30th** 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*

Southeast	#1	52,993.94
Towns of Wilna, Champion, Rutland, Rodman, Worth, and parts of Watertown, Adams, and Lorraine.		
North	#2	115,380.80
Towns of Brownville, Lyme, Cape Vincent, Clayton, Orleans, Pamelaia, Alexandria, Theresa, Antwerp, Philadelphia, and LeRay.		
Southwest	#3	77,884.18
Towns of Hounsfield, Henderson, Ellisburg, and parts of Watertown, Adams, and Lorraine.		
Total GIS acres in Districts		246,258.91

* Includes 2024 Annual Inclusions.

LANDOWNER REQUESTS

The County received requests from three landowners in the Towns of Lyme, Rodman, and Theresa to consider the addition of three parcels consisting of a total of 209.65 GIS acres.

Sam Wilson conducted a windshield survey of the requested parcels. Notes from that survey are included in this report.

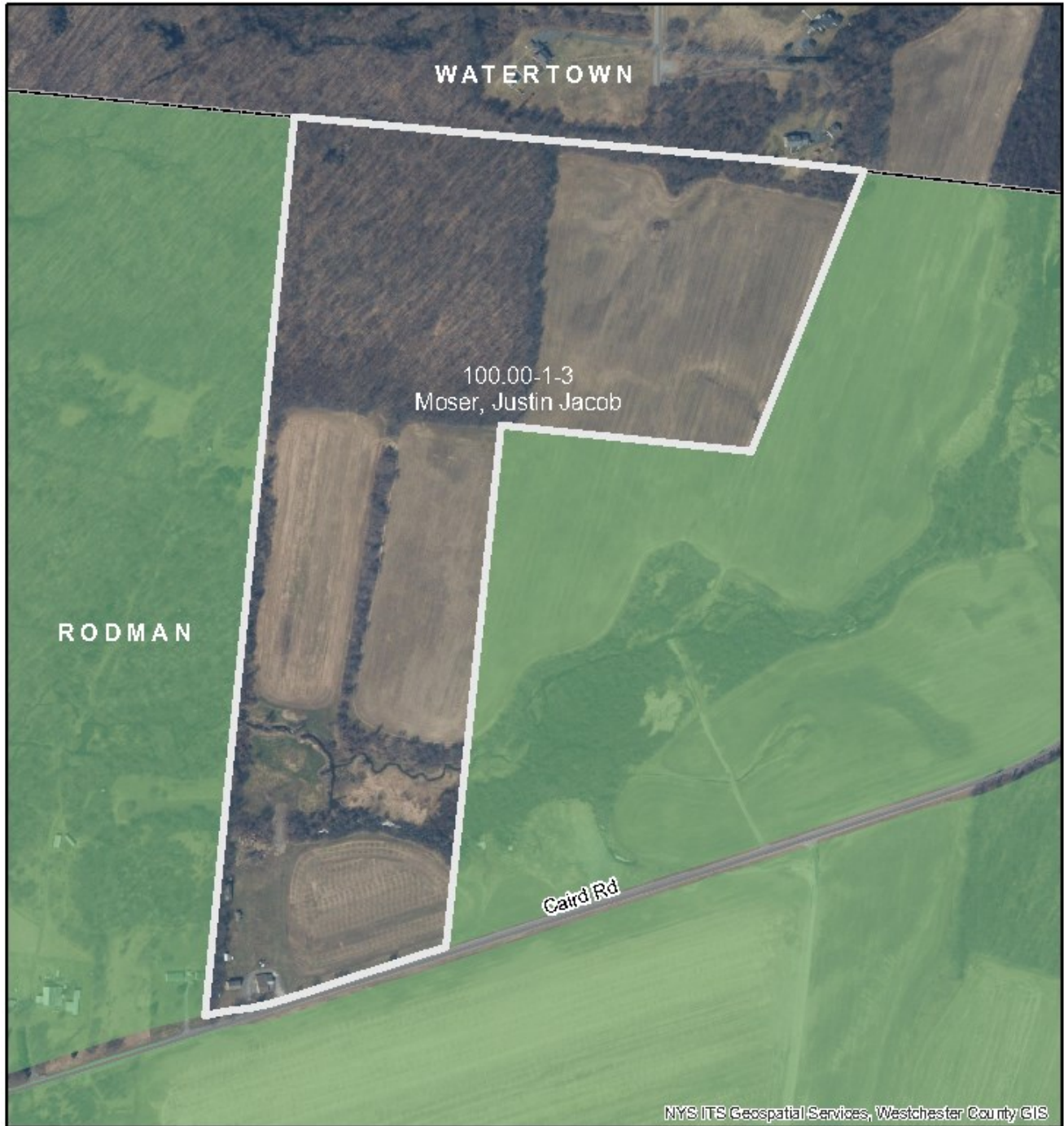
1. Justin and Diona Moser, 100.00-1-3, 20501 Caird Road

Parcel Number	Town	GIS Acres	District
100.00-1-3	Rodman	69.78	SE: 1

The applicant is requesting to add one parcel to the Southeast District. The applicant stated the land is approximately 35 acres of leased farmland, 20 acres of woods that is a maple syrup operation as well as firewood. Observation: Staff observed signs of agricultural activity with the land that appears to be farmed for hay with wood land in the back, which the applicant stated was for a maple syrup operation.

Justin and Diona Moser, 100.00-1-3, 20501 Caird Road





Proposed Agricultural District Inclusion
2025 Annual Inclusion Process
Moser, Justin Jacob
20501 Caird Rd

Legend

-  Proposed Inclusion
-  Agricultural District



Jefferson County
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 July 2025

2. Ethan R Gallagher, 69.12-1-42.1, 24808 Hard Scrabble Road

Parcel Number	Town	GIS Acres	District
69.12-1-42.1	Lyme	22.79	N:2

The applicant is requesting to add one parcel to the North District. The applicant stated the land is for hay. Observation: Staff observed signs of agricultural activity with the land that appears to be farmed for hay, which is consistent with what the applicant stated.

Ethan R. Gallagher, 69.12-1-42.1, 24808 Hard Scrabble Road





**Proposed Agricultural District Inclusion
2025 Annual Inclusion Process**

**Gallagher, Ethan R
24808 Hard Scrabble Rd**

Legend

-  Proposed Inclusion
-  Agricultural District



July 2025

3. Jeffrey Linton, 9.00-2-5, 44999 Hart Flats Road

Parcel Number	Town	GIS Acres	District
9.00-2-5	Theresa	117.08	N: 2

The applicant is requesting to add one parcel to the North District. The applicant stated the land is a hobby farm that is hay production and small fruit orchard. Observation: Due to the tree line along Hart Flats Road, staff could not make any observations on the parcel.

Jeffrey Linton, 9.00-2-5, 44999 Hart Flats Road





**Proposed Agricultural District Inclusion
 2025 Annual Inclusion Process
 Linton, Jeffrey
 44999 Hart Flats Rd**

Legend

-  Proposed Inclusion
-  Agricultural District

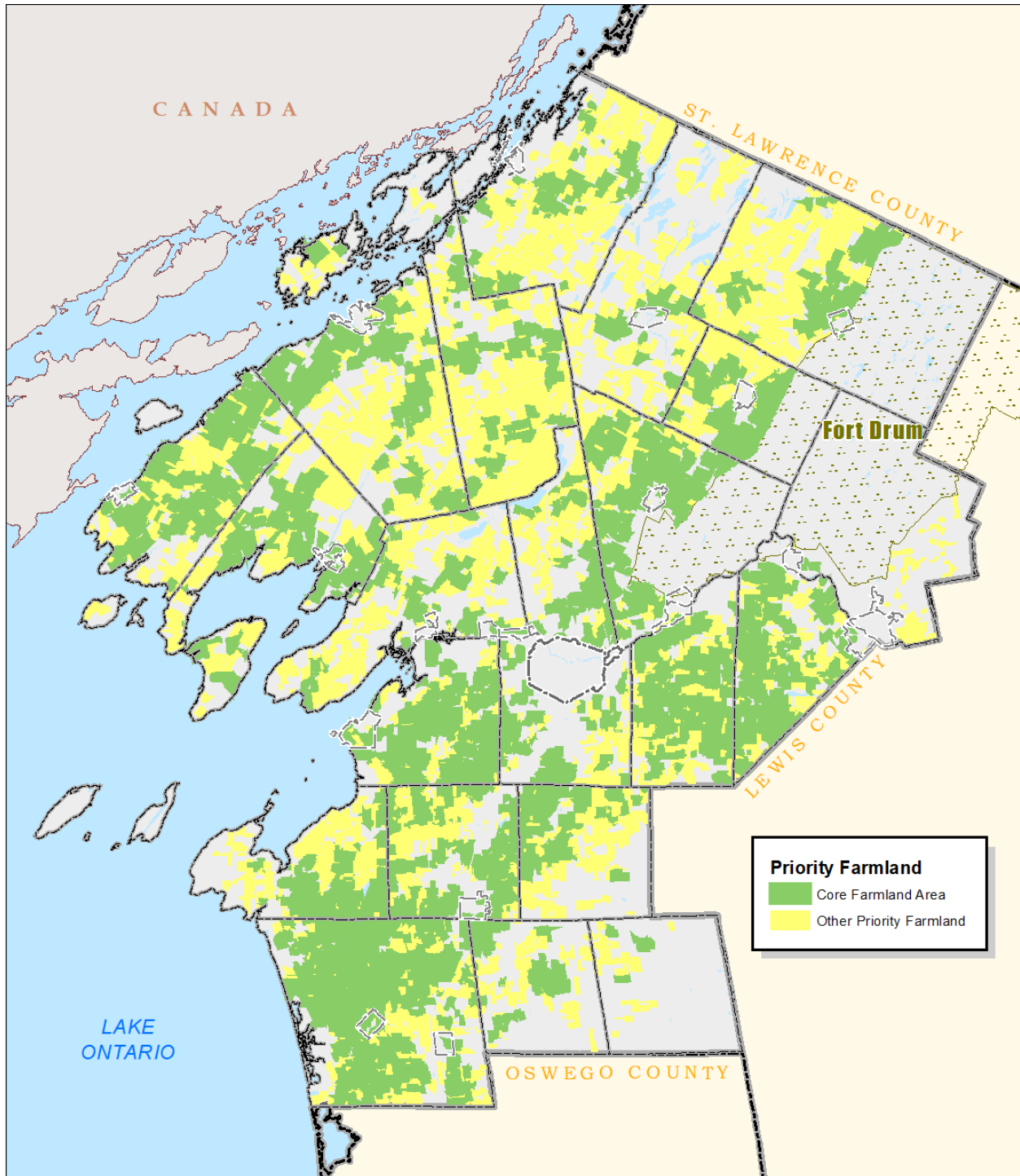


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PRIORITY FARMLAND – JC Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan, 2016

The 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.



**Recommendation of the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board
for the 2025 Agricultural District Inclusion Requests**

The Jefferson County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board recommends that the following parcels, totaling 209.65 GIS acres, be added to existing agricultural districts:

Recommendation		Parcel Number	Landowner	Town	GIS Acres	Ag. District
Approve	Disapprove					
X		100.00-1-3	Moser	Rodman	69.78	SE
X		69.12-1-42.1	Gallagher	Lyme	22.79	N
X		9.00-2-5	Linton	Theresa	117.08	N

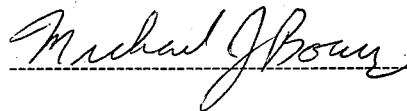
Motion made by: Justin Bach, seconded by Michael Bourcy.

All in favor: Douglas Shelmidine, Dan McBride, Jan Martusewicz, Amanda Rae Root, and Roxanne Burns.

Opposed: N/A.

Absent: John Peck, Steve Watson, Al Gehrke, and Michael Kiechle.

Motion carried.



Michael Bourcy