

New York State Certified Ag Districts in Jefferson County

New York's Agricultural Districts Law (Article 25-AA), enacted in 1971, establishes the framework for protecting farmland and supporting the long-term viability of agriculture across the State. Certified Agricultural Districts are a central component of this framework, providing a structured approach to maintaining working farmland and sustaining a stable agricultural economy.

Jefferson County currently contains three Certified Agricultural Districts encompassing more than 200,000 acres. These districts represent a significant portion of the County's rural landscape and serve as the foundation for local agricultural protection efforts. To ensure their continued relevance and effectiveness, the County administers two core processes: a periodic Eight-Year Review of each district and an annual inclusion process for adding eligible parcels.

The Eight-Year Review is required by State law and evaluates whether a district continues to consist predominantly of viable agricultural land. Complementing this effort, the annual inclusion process provides an opportunity for landowners to request that additional parcels be incorporated into an existing district. The New York State Agricultural Districts Law requires counties to designate a 30-day window for these requests, and the Jefferson County Board of Legislators has established **June 1 through June 30** as the annual inclusion period.

Eligibility for inclusion is based on the presence of viable agricultural land. This includes land that is actively farmed, as well as idle or non-farm acreage that remains highly suitable for agricultural production. A parcel is considered predominantly viable if at least 51 percent of its acreage meets this standard.

Certified Agricultural Districts provide a coordinated set of incentives and protections intended to support active farming and discourage the conversion of farmland to non-agricultural uses. These include reduced property tax assessments for eligible agricultural lands, limitations on unreasonable local regulation of accepted agricultural practices, Right to Farm protections against private nuisance claims, and adjustments to certain state and local policies that support ongoing agricultural operations.

Participation in a Certified Agricultural District does not alter underlying zoning or land use regulations, nor does it automatically change property tax assessments. Agricultural landowners must apply annually to their local assessor to receive an agricultural assessment.

Maps & Resources:

- [Summary of Agricultural Districts Law Section 303-B](#)
- [Jefferson County Ag District Parcels](#)
- [Town Ag Districts with 2025 Inclusions](#)
- [Village Ag Districts with 2025 Inclusions](#)