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# APPENDIX C– NOTES FROM PUBLIC MEETINGS

## ***Community Input and Informational Meetings***

*-Facilitated by Kathy Barrett, Cornell Cooperative Extension*

January 13, 2000--Seneca Town Hall

January 19, 2000--Farmington Town Hall

January 26, 2000--Bristol Town Hall

## ***Summary of Community Input***

### **Strengths of Ontario County Agriculture**

- Excellent to good soils.
- Favorable climate
- Abundant water supply.
- Agri-services and support businesses well established and nearby.
- Diverse land use-good nutrient management.
- Several lending institutions that still actively work with agriculture-stimulates competition.
- Proximity to good agriculture services such as Cornell Cooperative Extension and Farm Bureau.
- Industrial Development Agency supports farms by working aggressively with food processors.
- Close proximity to transportation-roads, NYS Thruway and railroads.
- Close to population centers.
- Local processors in the area provide a market for farm products.
- Some young people entering agriculture.
- Public support for agriculture--people appreciate the open space and rural character farms provide.
- Commuters from Rochester provide a viable market for some farm products.

### **Challenges to Ontario County Agriculture**

- Suburban sprawl.
- Desirable place to live so population increasing.
- Traffic increasing on roads used by farmers.
- Consolidation of agribusinesses may mean loss of service to low volume areas.
- Not enough young people coming back to the farm.
- Labor shortage-lack of availability of desirable employees. In part due to alternative non-farm jobs and the poor image farm employment traditional has had.
- Commodity input cost rising-tight profit margins.
- Perception in Ontario County that agriculture is not like other businesses.
- Production agriculture does not qualify for Industrial Development Agency programs.
- Utility costs high.
- High taxes-property taxes and other taxes and fees.
- Lack of support for organic or alternative farm growers.

### **Recommendations for Enhancing Agriculture in Ontario County**

- Best way to preserve farmland and farms is to improve farm profitability.
- Provide education and training to town boards about the impact zoning decisions have on agriculture.
- Work with the Industrial Development Agency to find ways for production agriculture to access programs.
- Attract young people to agriculture careers through career days, school to work programs,

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internships, Ag in the Classroom.

- Work with BOCES and FLCC to increase number and participation in agricultural training.
- Provide educational program to non-farm public in the form of a web site, public presentations, and on-farm programs.
- Educate public about the positive impact farmland and open space has on water quality and environment in general.
- Cost sharing for farm technology that affects community in a positive manner i.e. nutrient management/water quality technology.
- Encourage Right to Farm laws.
- Encourage town planning/land use that considers agriculture.
- Educate public about agriculture's impact on the economy and rural landscape.
- Provide incentives for agribusinesses that support farms
- County level plan to outline planned development
- Sales tax revenue sharing County wide-reallocate some revenue to agricultural areas so they do not feel compelled to compete with surrounding towns for the same businesses.
- Give agricultural land preferential tax treatment.
- Develop relationships with land trust conservancies.