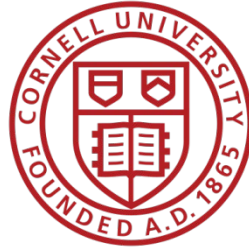


# From Soil to Supper: Understanding Local Farming in Ulster County

Eat Well Kingston June 2025



Cornell Cooperative Extension  
Ulster County

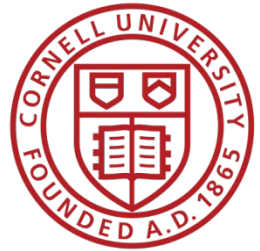
# Cornell Cooperative Extension Ulster County

## Mission

Cornell Cooperative Extension puts knowledge to work in pursuit of economic vitality, ecological sustainability and social well-being. We bring local experience and research-based solutions together, helping New York State families and communities thrive in our rapidly changing world.

Cornell Cooperative Extension  
Ulster County

[4-H Youth](#) | [Agriculture](#) | [Environment](#) | [Gardening](#) | [Healthy Communities](#) | [Nutrition](#) | [Parenting](#)



# Local Farms: Ulster County

- Ag Census overview
- Trends and Opportunities
- Current Challenges
- How to Eat Local



# Ulster County: 2022 Ag Census Overview



Total # of Farms: **486**,  15% from 2017

**89%**  
**Family  
farms**



Farmland acreage: **73,026 acres**,  24% from 2017

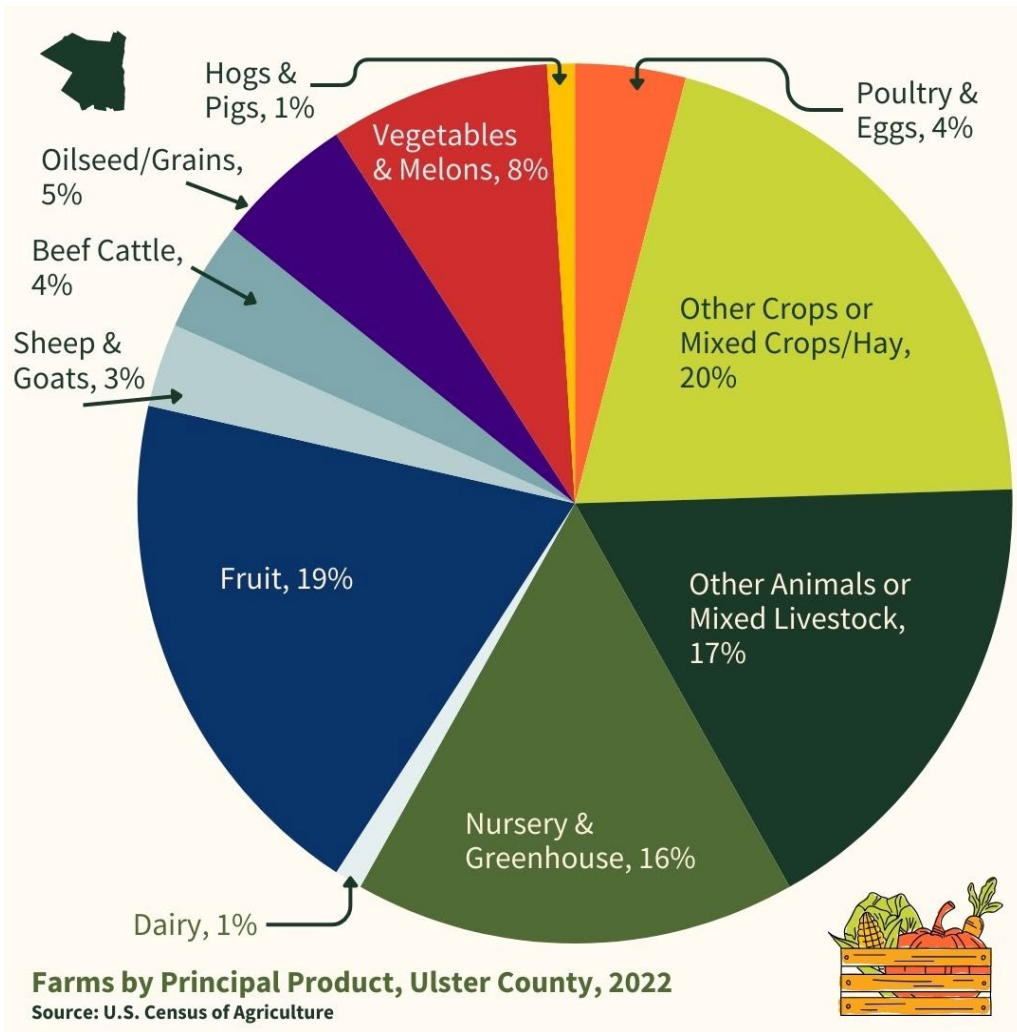
**Average  
farm size:  
150 acres**



New and Beginning farmers : **291** , out of 1,020 producers

(Numbers are representative of producers that responded)

[Census summary: Ulster-County-Profile 2022-Ag-Census.pdf](#)

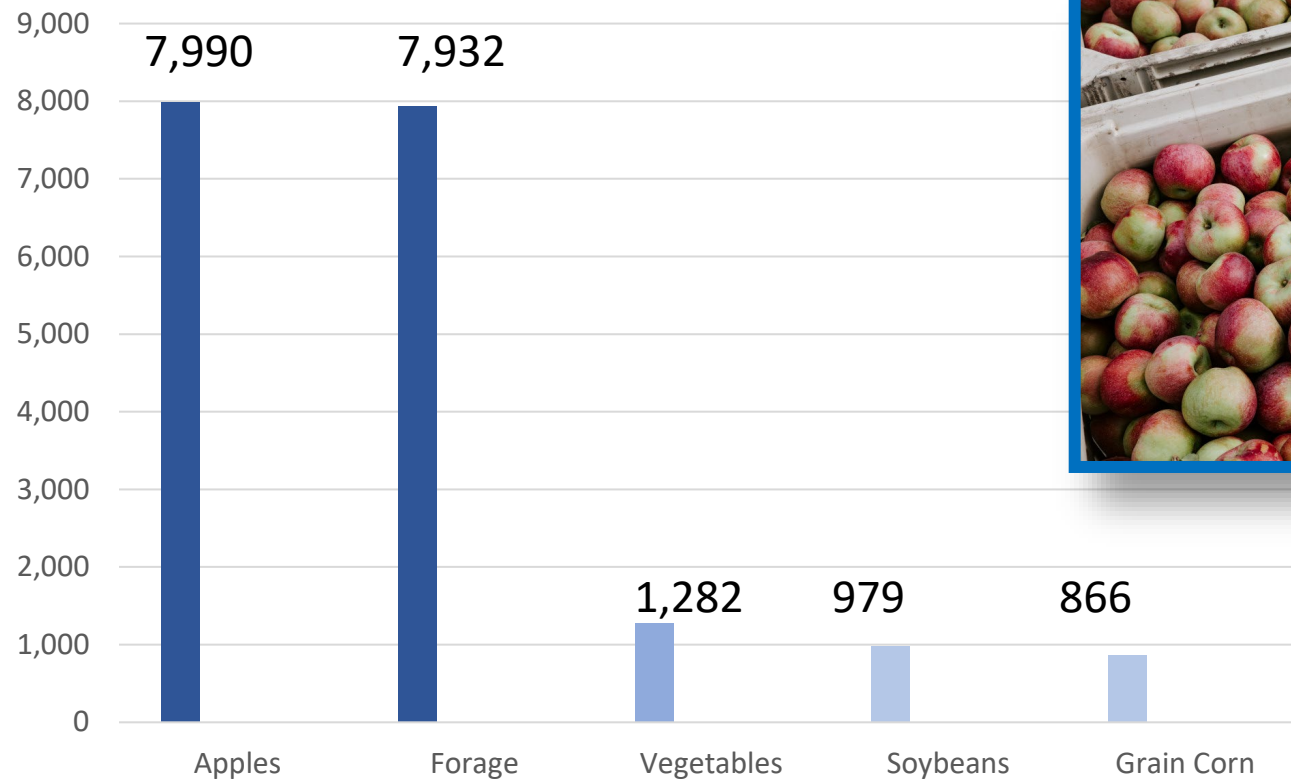


## Ulster County Farm Products:

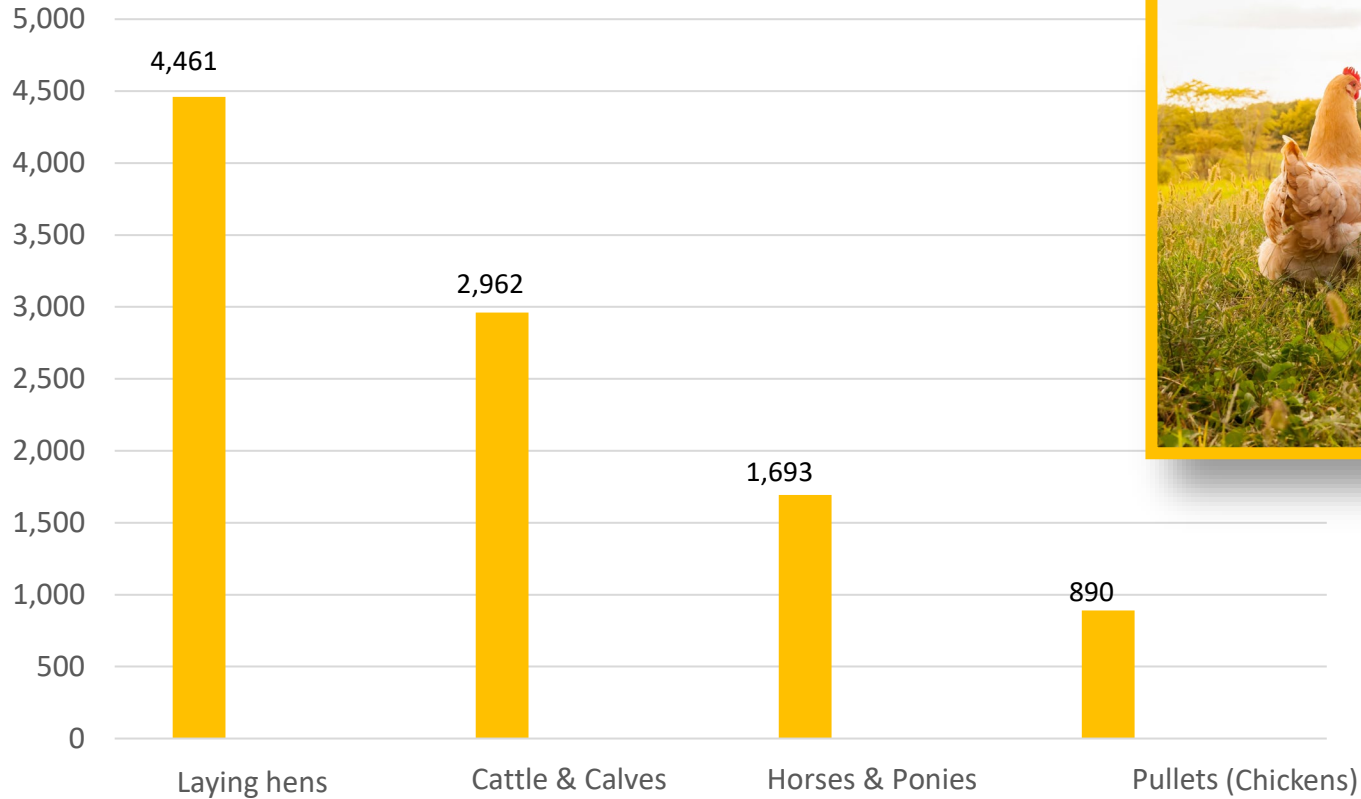
- Ulster County ranked #2 in the state in the sales of fruits (apples, grapes, peaches, plums, pears, and berries)
- Since 2002, the number of dairy farms fell 67%, and the number of beef cattle farms by about 50%.
- More farms are:
  - Producing grains / oilseeds
  - Raising chickens for their eggs
  - Growing vegetables, nursery, greenhouse, and floriculture products as their primary product

Source: [Ulster County Ag Economic Viability Interim Report](#)

## Top Crop Production in Acres



## Top Livestock Production In Units





# Ulster County: 2022 Ag Census Overview

## Ulster County Food system:

- **23 % of farms sell directly to consumers**
  - Farmer's markets: 7
  - Farmstands and on-farm markets: ~50
  - Farms offering CSA shares: 40+
  - Farms/orchards with “pick-your-own” : **Over a dozen**
  - Farms that are vendors at NYC Greenmarkets: 15-20
- **16% sell to retailers, institutions, food hubs, etc.**
- **12% sell value-added products**

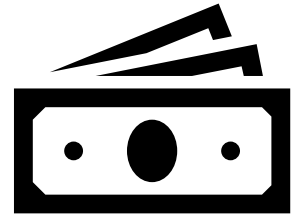




# Ulster County: 2022 Ag Census Overview

## Economic Impacts

- Jobs in agriculture: **36%** of Ulster County farms hire farm labor
  - These 174 farms directly employed **1,800 people**
- Sales of farm products generated **\$105.5 million** for the local economy in 2022.



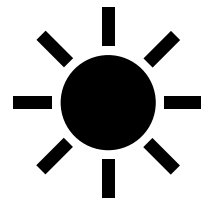
# Trends and Opportunities

- Cut flower industry
- Small grains (farm breweries, rice)
- Maple Syrup and other agroforestry
- Small, diversified operations
- Agritourism
- Fiber (wool/mohair)



# Current challenges for local farms

- Climate change – extreme heat/storms, floods, seasonal shifts, pests
- High cost of land, labor and inputs
- Labor and worker housing shortages
- Avian Influenza (HPAI) and other biosecurity threats
- Lack of local processing (meat and other value-added)
- Lack of local ag services
- Federal funding changes/freezes
- Non-farming neighbor disputes



# Ways to Eat Local & Support Local Farms

- Farm stands
- Farmers Market
- CSAs
- Direct farm bulk order
- MeatSuite

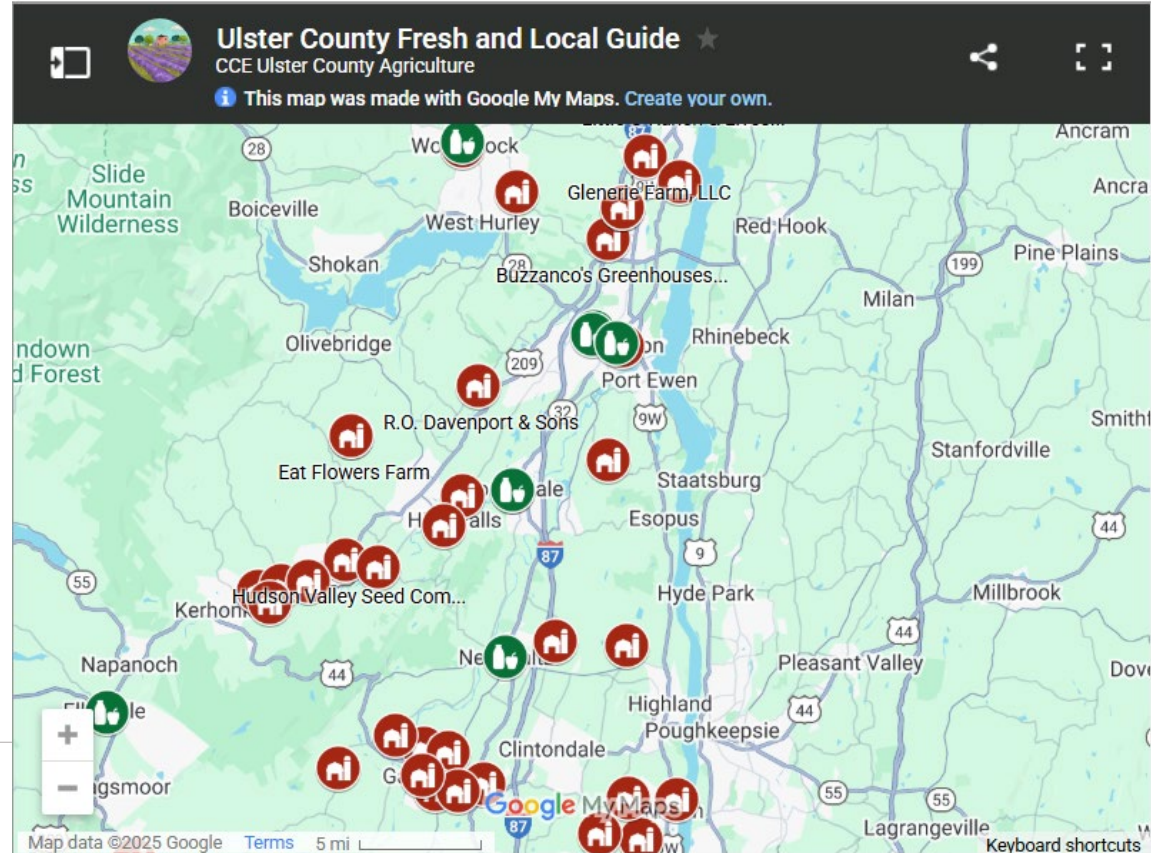


# Farm Stands and Farmers Market

## Ulster County Fresh & Local Guide

- Find it on our website:

[Cornell Cooperative Extension | Buy Local](#)





# Find Local Growers

## Rondout Valley Growers Association

- Website: [Homepage - RVGA](#)



Local growers organization for Ulster County

- Farm to School, Farm to food pantry programs
- Food & Farm Finder
- News and updates from members (events)
- Mini grants for farms

# What is CSA?

- Community Supported Agriculture
  - Helps farms with up-front costs
  - You get a share weekly, biweekly, etc. (usually changes seasonally)
  - NOT a subscription service – it is a social contract- you share the risks and bounty
  - Membership agreement and (usually) fees





# What is CSA?

## What are the benefits of CSA?

- Possible discount or sliding scale, may be cheaper than your farmer's market
- Connect to local farms- recipes, events, pick your own, and volunteer opportunities
- Try new things you won't often find in stores

## CSA Types/ Considerations

- Market style vs. Box pick up
- Vegetable or meat options available locally
- Possible add-ons: dairy, eggs, mushrooms, fruit, flowers, maple/honey, herbal products, baked goods/bread, coffee, grains, prepared foods, & more!



# Hudson Valley CSA Coalition

- Find a list of local CSA offerings
- CSA is a SNAP program
  - 50% off if paying with SNAP benefits
- Recipes- Cook Something Awesome
- [Website: Hudson Valley CSA Coalition](#)



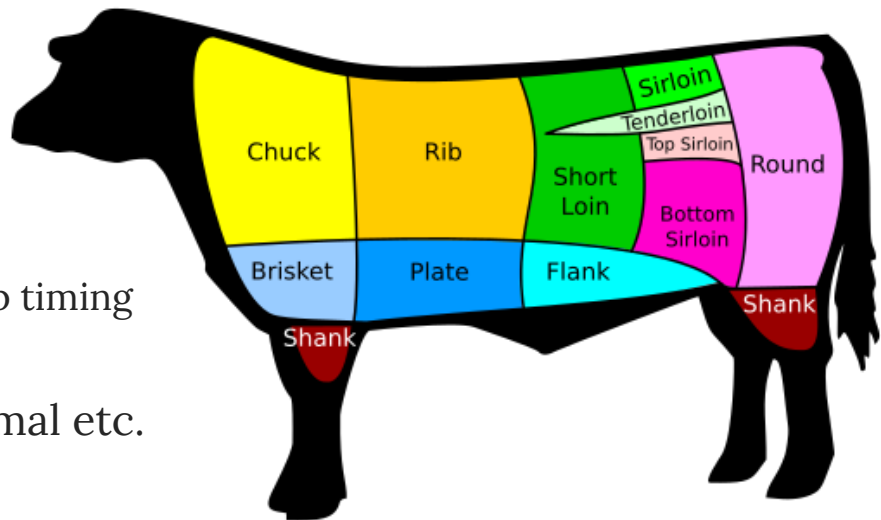
# Bulk Ordering Meat

- Direct from farms for bulk meat (quarter, half or whole animal, CSA)
- MeatSuite website to find local farms

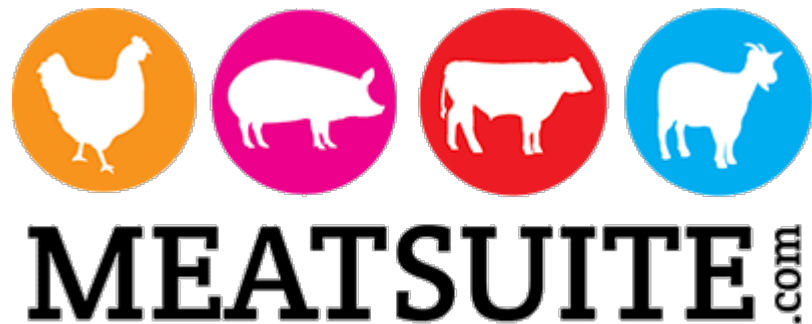


# Bulk Ordering Tips

- MeatSuite vs. direct buying vs. CSA
  - Difference in customization options and pick-up timing
- Ask for an estimate for whole, half, quarter animal etc.
  - Understand live weight v. take home weight
- Learn more about cuts of meat to help you choose
  - [Beef/ Pork Whole Animal Buying Guide \(Iowa State Extension\)](#)
  - [Lamb & Goat: Bulk buying, choosing cuts, and how to cook them | Good Meat Project](#)
- Have a plan for where to store it all properly – you may need a separate freezer!



# MeatSuite



## How it works:

- [MeatSuite](#) - “Find your Farmer, Fill your Freezer” - Buy direct a whole, half, or quarter animal to save money and support a local farm.
- Search by species or location and see everything available nearby
- Information is provided about the farm and their practices (pasture-raised, grass fed, etc)

## What can I expect?

- Generally meat is sold by the pound with an estimated range for what you can expect
- Cuts may be pre-determined or you may be able to choose; Bundles of meat are also available (family share, etc) for a specified price and number of pounds
- Inquire through the website about availability and ordering

# Local Aggregators/ Distributors/ Processors

- [Hudson Valley Fresh](#) - local milk and dairy products
- Hudson Harvest: <https://www.hv-harvest.com>
  - Wholesale local produce and other farm products; buying club option
- Milestone Mill: <https://www.milestonemill.com/>
  - Grains, flour, beans, corn products from 100% local farms
- [Farms2Tables](#) - Wholesale produce and farm products (home delivery coming soon?)
- [Red Barn Produce](#) - Wholesale (not exclusively local products)

# Resources for More Information

- CCE Ulster Website: <https://ulster.cce.cornell.edu/>
- 2022 Census of Agriculture Ulster County: [USDA 2022 Ag Census NY Ulster County](#)
- Ulster County Farmland Protection Plan: [Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plans | Ulster County](#)