

**NORTHEAST HOOSICK AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT NO. 4 EIGHT YEAR REVIEW**  
**June 2024**

Pursuant to Article 25-AA of the Agriculture and Markets Law of New York State, the Rensselaer County Legislature and Economic Development and Planning has conducted an eight-year review of the Northeast Hoosick Agricultural District.

The Northeast Hoosick Agricultural District is located in the town of Hoosick and encompasses a total of 7,614 acres. A majority of the parcels in the Northeast Hoosick Agricultural District are comprised of both state-wide significant and prime agricultural soils, thus supporting the importance of agriculture in this area of Rensselaer County.

**The Nature of Farming and Farm Resources**

Livestock and crops are the predominant types of farm enterprises in the Northeast Hoosick District. The main crops grown in the district are corn and hay. Approximately 3,743 acres of farmland in the town of Hoosick are now protected. This contiguous block of farmland strengthens the long-term agricultural viability of the area as well as the individual farms.

Agriculture continues to be an important industry in the county. According to the 2022 Agriculture Census, the market value of products increased 51 percent from 2017 to \$61,879,000 and net cash farm income increased 23 percent. Farmers continue to invest in their operations with \$619,709 per farm for land and buildings and \$107,314 per farm for machinery and equipment. This investment is evident throughout the county, but especially in the more agricultural areas in the northern part of the county. Agricultural District Number 4 has a significant farmland base which will continue to be important to the agricultural industry in Rensselaer as well as Washington County.

In addition to land being used to support dairy farms, farmland is also being utilized for hay, livestock production and field crops. Please see the chart below.

Primary Use	Number of Farms
Beef	8
Dairy	2
Field Crops	5
Greenhouse/Nursery	1
Hay	22
Corn	10
Horses	2
Pigs	1
Poultry	1
Sheep	1

### **Original Objectives**

The original objectives of the Northeast Hoosick Agricultural District were to provide benefits and protections to agricultural operations in order to promote the continuation of farming and the preservation of agricultural land. The district has achieved its original objective to keep land in farming.

### **County and Local Comprehensive Plans, Policies and Objectives**

The Rensselaer County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board updated their Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan for Rensselaer County, which was approved by New York State in September 2017. This Plan provides a working strategy to maintain an agricultural base and enable Rensselaer County farmers to remain profitable. The Rensselaer County Master Plan supports agriculture, and recognizes it as an important part of the County's economy. The Master Plan also supports the preservation of prime agricultural soils, and incentives to maintain agricultural operations.

Hoosick's Comprehensive Plan was updated in 2004. The plan identifies farming as the most geographically significant industry in the town. One goal identified in the plan is to "promote land use policy and conservation measures that encourage agriculture and protect productive farmland. Maintain a viable agricultural economy and promote the economic development of the agricultural sector." The plan recommends adopting local land use policies which support agriculture and protect farmlands, creating an advisory committee to review existing town policies to promote the farming industry as well as farm-related events, researching funding opportunities, purchasing development rights on farmland, developing an agricultural directory for Hoosick farms and promoting agriculture through educational efforts and materials.

The Town of Hoosick adopted their Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan in 2013. Included in the plan are goals to retain agricultural land and foster a local economy based on agriculture. Specific recommendations to support agriculture include: ensure that all of the provisions of the state's Agricultural District Law are being adhered to within the town, strengthen the town's right to farm law, support use of conservation easements to protect farmland and support direct marketing opportunities for locally produced agricultural products.

### **Coordination Between Local Laws, Ordinances, Rules and Regulations**

Under General Municipal Law Section 239 l & m, certain land use actions must be referred to the county planning agency through review. This includes special use permits, site plans, or use variances on property lying within 500 feet of an agricultural operation within an agricultural district. New zoning laws, comprehensive plans and most amendments to zoning law and comprehensive plans also require referral to the county planning agency. Actions located near active agricultural lands are reviewed for their impacts on the agricultural use, and recommendations made to provide relief from possible damages from the use. County recommendations are not final and can be overridden by a supermajority

of the local board. On several occasions, the Rensselaer County Economic Development and Planning Office has made recommendations that actions, especially land use law amendments, not occur without changes, which lessen or remove negative impacts to agriculture.

The Town of Hoosick Land Use Law, adopted by the Town of Hoosick Town Board as Local Law # 2 in 2009, permits agricultural activities in all zoning districts with the exception of the Light Industrial/Commercial and Daily Mine districts.

The Town of Hoosick permits "farm occupations," which are defined as "a business run by a farmer or his family member(s) on farm property that is incidental and not necessarily related to the farm business. The farm occupation, if not located in a barn or other existing outbuilding, is limited to a new building of 5,000 square feet in area." As defined in the Land Use Law, the farm occupation permitted use provides the farm community in the town with the opportunity to supplement the income of farm operations, but on a smaller scale that would not compete for land or introduce potentially incompatible uses. The use is therefore in agreement with coordination of laws that support farming.

**Recommendation**

This office recommends that the Rensselaer County Agricultural District No. 4 otherwise known as the Northeast Hoosick Agricultural District be recertified for an additional eight-year period. This office also recommends that the boundaries be amended to include those mentioned for inclusion. As recommended, the following parcels should be added to Agricultural District No. 4:

Tax Map I.D. No.	Owners(s)	Acres	Municipality
17.-3-10	Saile W Mahoney	53.66	Hoosick
17.-2-16.1	Jennifer J Scarpulla	57.86	Hoosick
28.-1-3.2	Patrick J and Eileen Bakaitis	45.43	Hoosick
18.-2-1.2	Patrick J Bakaitis	5.05	Hoosick
17.4-3-16	Patrick J Bakaitis	20.97	Hoosick
18.-2-1.13	William Sr and William Jr Brownell	45.8	Hoosick
18.-2-1.12	William Sr and Bobby A Brownell	103.01	Hoosick

Total Acres: 331.78

# Prime Agricultural Soils and Soils of Statewide Significance

