

PRESS RELEASE

Jefferson County Annual Thirty Day Period for Landowners to Request the Addition of Viable Agricultural Land to Existing Agricultural Districts

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 an existing NYS Certified Agricultural District in the County. The Jefferson County Board of Legislators has set June 1st through June 30th of each year for this purpose. There are three NYS Certified Agricultural Districts in Jefferson County comprising over 200,000 acres.

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.

The purpose of NYS Certified Agricultural Districts is to encourage the continued use of farmland for agricultural production. The Agricultural District Program is based on a combination of landowner incentives and protections, all of which are designed to forestall the conversion of farmland to non-agricultural uses.

Possible benefits to FARM OPERATIONS, as defined, within NYS Certified Agricultural Districts include: potential eligibility for a special agricultural assessment; support of farming through state agency policies; limitations on the exercise of eminent domain; limitations on benefit assessments in certain improvement districts; and limitations on the enactment of local regulations that unreasonably restrict or regulate a farm operation.

Landowners who wish to submit a request to add land to an existing NYS Certified Agricultural District may download the form from the Jefferson County web page, www.co.jefferson.ny.us under IN THE SPOTLIGHT or you may call the Jefferson County Department of Planning (785-3144) and ask for the 2016 Agricultural Annual Inclusion Form.

All requests must be submitted on the form provided by the Planning Department and can be hand delivered, mailed or faxed to the Jefferson County Department of Planning, 175 Arsenal Street, Watertown, NY 13601. Fax number (315) 785-5092. Regardless of method of delivery, all requests must be received no later than June 30th, 2016.

As required by the State Agricultural Districts Law, only whole parcels may be included within an Agricultural District.

THE REQUEST FORM TO ADD LAND MUST BE SIGNED BY THE CURRENT LAND OWNER.

Further information may be found on the Planning Department’s web page under NYS Certified Agricultural Districts.