



**PUTNAM COUNTY
AGRICULTURE & FARMLAND
PROTECTION BOARD**



KEEP PUTNAM FARMING: Report & Recommendations

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“There is a renewed energy regarding farming and through the **Keep Putnam Farming** program and the new Tilly Foster Farm Educational Institute we expect to bring state-of-the-art training to our local farmers, residents and students. We will showcase the best of Putnam County agriculture.”

MaryEllen Odell, Putnam County Executive

Introduction

The Putnam County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board was formed in 1997 to advise the County Legislature on actions that impact farms located in the County Agricultural District and develop plans to assist farmers throughout Putnam County. In the spring of 2014, the Board joined with Glynwood, an agricultural nonprofit and working farm located in Cold Spring, to launch **Keep Putnam Farming**. The goal of this alliance was to examine challenges and opportunities for strengthening and supporting the County's agricultural sector.

Keep Putnam Farming is based on Glynwood's **Keep Farming**[®] program: a community-based initiative that engages a diverse set of stakeholders in gathering and analyzing data about the current state of agriculture in order to better understand current conditions and challenges faced by local farmers. Glynwood's mission is to ensure the Hudson Valley is a region defined by food, where farming thrives. The organization works to advance regenerative agriculture that benefits the natural environment, energizes local economies, enhances human health and strengthens rural communities.

This report shares the preliminary findings of the *Keep Putnam Farming* research, which is being used to suggest actions for planning and maintaining a vibrant agricultural sector with community support. The recommended actions are intended to inform and guide the County and local municipalities so that they may prioritize specific strategies that will Keep Putnam Farming.

Background & Process

Putnam County's existing **Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan** was completed in 2004. Without updated "real time" data about farmers, farmland in active agricultural production, and residents' access to locally grown food, it had been difficult to plan and implement strategies to protect and enhance one of the County's most valuable resource: farming. Therefore, it was agreed that the *Keep Putnam Farming* process would be a useful strategy to garner updated information and offer recommendations for further support of county agriculture.

The *Keep Putnam Farming* process began in April 2014 with a Farmer Forum, a gathering to inform local farmers about the program, provide them an opportunity to meet one another, and offer a venue in which to share their concerns. Farmers reported that, prior to this meeting, they had never met as a group with one another. Thirty-five farmers attended the Forum and spoke of their economic challenges, including:

- Lack of recognition by local municipalities and the County for agriculture as an industry for economic development and tourism.
- Concerns about the costs of doing business (land & school tax, labor, land acquisition.)
- Lack of a cohesive farmers' network that could provide opportunities for farmers to collaborate locally and regionally to help make their farm operations more efficient.
- Lack of an integrated marketing plan to promote local products and benefits of agriculture.
- Limited availability of farmland for expansion of existing farms or for farmers wanting to start farm operations in Putnam County.

In May of 2014, letters were sent to the Town Supervisors letting them know that we were embarking on the *Keep Putnam Farming* endeavor, providing them with background of this concept and inviting them to our Community Kickoff to be held in June.

In June of 2014, this community-wide meeting was held for the purpose of informing the general public about *Keep Putnam Farming* and to solicit the involvement of residents in the process. More than forty residents attended the meeting. After being given an overview of the program, attendees

were led in a discussion focused on two questions, “What do farms mean to you?” and “How can we support local farmers?”

Attendees then took part in a consensus building exercise to prioritize their responses. The results are as follows:

“What do farms mean to you?”

#1 Productive land that provides fresh healthy food.

#2 Farms are part of a strong local economy and help to preserve the culture of Putnam County.

“How can we support local farmers?”

#1 Create greater awareness about the farms and where they are located.

#2 Educate local leaders and residents about the importance of the agricultural sector in Putnam County.

After informing farmers and community members about *Keep Putnam Farming*, the next step was to begin the data collection phase of the program. By gathering original data using surveys and interviews, knowledge of local farming is enhanced, and market connections can be improved. The research process included:

Putnam County Farmers

A variety of methods were used to identify farmers in Putnam County and generate a preliminary list of farms. Information was provided by Putnam County’s Soil and Water Conservation District, Putnam County’s Planning Department and the Putnam County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board. A series of articles about *Keep Putnam Farming* and Putnam County farmers were also published in local newspapers and a *Keep Putnam Farming* page was established on the County website.

This list was used to distribute surveys by mail to the farmers. Visits were made to those farmers who did not return a survey to encourage their participation in the program. Farmers were also invited to potluck dinners where they learned about the progress of *Keep Putnam Farming*, encouraged to complete a survey and given an opportunity to continue networking. A highlight of the potluck dinners included a tour of the farm where the meeting was being held to give an overview of the farm’s activities, to network, and to learn from each other.

Putnam Residents

A variety of methods were used to survey Putnam residents in an effort to better understand the degree to which local products are being purchased and where those purchases are being made. This helped to identify potential market growth opportunities for local farmers.

Surveys were made available at community events in Cold Spring, Patterson and Putnam Valley. They were also distributed at the 4-H Fair and at the Cold Spring and Brewster Farmers’ Markets. Residents could also go to the *Keep Putnam Farming* webpage on the Putnam County website to complete an online survey.

Putnam Restaurants & Institutions

Restaurants and Institutions in Putnam County were asked to complete surveys in an effort to better understand the products being used by food providers and the considerations that influence their purchases.

Surveys were distributed at the annual Food Operators Seminar conducted by the Putnam County Health Department. Restaurant owners, chefs, caterers, food service directors at local camps and recreational programs as well as staff from local schools and institutions attended this two-day event. Attendees received copies of the *Keep Putnam Farming* Food Providers Survey in their packets and time was dedicated during the meeting to having the attendees complete the surveys.

A Future Vision for Putnam County Farming:

It is the year 2025...

Putnam County has a resilient agricultural system that includes a full spectrum of economically viable farms offering a diverse range of products and job opportunities. Local communities support the farmers both as neighbors and as businesses, purchasing their products for consumption at home, in institutions, and at local restaurants. Successful farm businesses are a key part of the region's sustainable economy, keeping more money in the local economy. Farmers continue to care for the productivity and health of the land by employing best practices for soil, water, habitat and biodiversity. Eating local, healthy foods is promoted through education, networking opportunities, and economic development activities. Putnam residents with limited income or mobility are able to access healthy food at affordable prices.



Glynwood's vegetable production fields, Cold Spring, New York.

KEEP PUTNAM FARMING Recommendations: A Robust Agricultural Plan for Putnam County

Help Farmers to Network, Learn & Build Capacity

Putnam County farmers are not only divided by the diversity of agriculture, they are divided geographically into the eastern and western parts of the County. Prior to *Keep Putnam Farming*, farmers did not meet as a group to network, learn about each other's farm operation, or work collaboratively to support one another. Survey findings indicate that farmers want to continue to meet and share skills, expertise and resources. Participants in this network need additional support in the form of trainings and technical assistance.

1. Formalize the Putnam County Farmers Network
 - Designate a farmer(s) in the role of leader and outline a plan for the network.
2. Support Network Meetings & Information Sharing
 - Support the planning of regular meetings of this Network so that farmers can interact with one another informally;
 - Create and maintain an access-limited online platform through which members can post questions or announcements to one another (use of a Google group is recommended); Encourage established farmers to welcome new farmers to Putnam, support them as they establish their farms, and offer mentorship.
3. Offer Training, Education & Technical Assistance to Farmers
 - Routinely ask the Putnam County Farmers Network to identify topics in which they feel they need training/information;
 - Provide the Network with information on existing resources in the region and beyond for learning and training (to post, visit www.putnamcountyny.com/keepputnamfarming);
 - Organize workshops on topics and practices of interest. Start with these topics that were identified during Keep Putnam Farming as priority needs for farmer training and education:
 - Business Development:
 - Financing
 - Planning and Diversification
 - Marketing
 - Land:
 - Succession Planning and Farm Transfer
 - Practices:
 - Forest management
 - Developing an intern or apprentice program
 - Regulations and Certifications:
 - Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) certification Board of Health Regulations
 - NYS and County Health Department regulations for selling value-added products (i.e., jams and pickles)
 - Agriculture tax exemption

4. Respond to Existing Needs for Processing Services

Survey findings indicated that farmers want to identify and work collaboratively on infrastructure projects needed to support farming activities, in particular:

Food producers noted the need for poultry and livestock processing. Equine farmers noted the need to reduce the cost of horse manure removal.

Increase Market Opportunities within Putnam County

Greater promotion of locally grown food is needed in Putnam County. There are opportunities to increase sales of Putnam-grown products within the county – and this could significantly increase the economic viability of Putnam County farms.

Keep Putnam Farming revealed that farmers want to increase local sales. Survey findings indicated that:

- Residents want local healthy food but they don't know about Putnam County farms or their products. Putnam Farmers' Markets are important to residents –however, only two Putnam County farmers participate at a Farmers' Market.
- Restaurants and institutions also want to serve local food but don't know where the farms are located or what products are available. No Putnam County farms sell their products to local institutions, and only one farm sells some products to restaurants.
- There is an opportunity for County-owned facilities to feature Putnam products and provide leadership to other local food service programs.

1. Increase Putnam Farm Sales...

- at Farmers' Markets
 - Establish a goal for increasing number of Putnam vendors and/or sale of Putnam fresh and value added products. This could involve coordination for farmers to share tables, or to have a "Putnam County" vending table with a range of local products, staffed by the county.
- to Restaurants:
 - Identify farmers wanting to sell to restaurants and institutions and document their available local products. Share this information with restaurants and institutions. Consider holding a networking event for farmers, restaurants, and institutions.
- to Institutions
 - Identify County institutions that could incorporate local sourcing into their food service. Develop a collaborative team to support them in doing so.
- to County-owned Facilities
 - Enact a Putnam Preferential Purchasing Resolution encouraging County-owned facilities serving food to give preference to products grown or produced in Putnam County, as well as other local counties.
 - Compile resources for County owned facilities' food service staff describing available sources of regional food that will meet their needs and requirements.
 - Bring together members of the County Legislative Economic Development and Energy Committee, staff of County owned facilities and representatives of the Putnam County Farmers' Network to explore opportunities for use of fresh and value added products.
 - Use these discussions to gather information about challenges relating to sourcing Putnam products, and consider further action steps to address those challenges and costs.
 - Develop a pilot program to increase use of Putnam products by 10% in 2016.

Develop Farm Friendly Communities

A very preliminary review of municipal codes conducted by Glynwood found that many of the municipal codes are written to regulate the equine sector. These include the amount of acreage needed for livestock and restrictions on farm labor housing. The review also showed that each municipality has its own definition of what a farm is; ordinances relating to the use of signs to promote a business; land use permitting and usage regulations.

Many of the farmers responding to the surveys are food producers and are raising smaller livestock such as sheep and goats. They also own and/or lease farm acreage in multiple municipalities. Having to deal with codes and regulations not supportive of food production in different municipalities can be difficult and time-consuming for the farmers.

1. Review, Model, and Update Local Codes to Support Food-Producing Farms
 - Identify and partner with a town to model updated codes and ordinances that are farm-friendly. It is recommended to hire a consultant to work with that Town in reviewing codes and ordinances. The goal should be to address land use regulations and zoning pertaining to agricultural land and farming operations so that farming can flourish.
 - Address the challenges of farmers who own or lease land in two municipalities, or two neighboring counties by model updated inter-municipal or cross-county codes and regulations that better support farmers.
 - a. Begin by identifying the farms in this situation.
 - Use these models to update codes in other Putnam towns.



Goats grazing along Indian Brook Road, Garrison, New York.

Maintain & Expand Putnam County's Farmland

Survey findings indicate that 83% of the farmers responding are over the age of 50 years, with 63% of these farmers over the age of 60 – suggesting that farmland succession is a pressing issue for this group of farmers. Over 40% of farmers also indicated that the types of assistance they had the greatest interest in receiving relate to farmland preservation and succession planning (see recommendation #3, page 7). Productive farmland in Putnam County needs to be preserved – and expanded.

1. Update the Putnam County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan

- The Putnam County Soil & Water Conservation District along with the Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board can apply to NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets for a grant to update the 2004 County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan.
- Use this opportunity to build on *Keep Putnam Farming* by developing an action-oriented plan for agricultural economic development, agricultural business retention and farmland preservation.

2. Pursue Strategies to Expand Farmland in Putnam County

- Conduct a GIS mapping project to visualize farmland use and potential farmland expansion in Putnam County.
- Strategize to bring viable land into production:
 - Inventory potential farmland parcels currently not in production.
 - Contact owners of those parcels and discuss the prospect of leasing property to farmers seeking farmland.
 - For properties where it may be possible to introduce farming:
 - Conduct an assessment of the property for possible best use in farming.
 - Share information with existing Putnam farmers for possible expansion of their operations.
 - List those properties with the Hudson Valley FarmLink Program (<http://hudsonvalleyfarmlandfinder.org/>).

Recognize Importance & Growth of Agriculture in Putnam County

Agricultural businesses significantly contribute to the local economy, subsidize the tax base, protect natural resources and provide residents with access to healthy local food. Putnam County's farm businesses deserve recognition for their important role in the county's economy and health.

1. Coordinate and Increase County Efforts to Support Agriculture

- Proactively promote, strengthen and expand farming in Putnam County by coordinating efforts of the Industrial Development Agency, Economic Development Corporation, Tourism and County Chamber of Commerce. This effort should be led by the Office of the County Executive, with a focus on increasing awareness and collaborative support of agriculture throughout the County.

2. Communicate the Positive Economic Impact of Agriculture

- Inform county residents and decision-makers that agriculture is an important contributor to our local economy.
 - Convey that farming is an economic multiplier:
A study completed by Cornell University in May 2014¹ explains that agriculture in New York has strong multiplier or ripple effects, stating that "every additional \$1 in output in agriculture generates an additional \$0.43 in backward linked non-agricultural industries, and every additional job in agriculture generates an additional 0.80 non-agricultural jobs."
 - Explain that farmland contributes to the local tax revenue:
The American Farmland Trust has conducted Cost of Community Service Studies that explain working lands generate more public revenues than they receive back in public services: "In nearly every community studied, farmland has generated a fiscal surplus to help offset the shortfall created by residential demand for public services. This is true even when the land is assessed at its current, agricultural use."²
AFT's New York Agricultural Landowner Guide published in 2010 states that the COCS studies completed in New York "have consistently shown that farm, forest and open land generate more tax revenues than they receive in public services, compared with residences that typically require more in public services than they pay in taxes."³



This graphic illustrates information published in AFT's 2010 New York Agricultural Landowner Guide, demonstrating that farms typically generate more public revenue than they receive back in public services.

¹ Schmit, Todd. "Agriculture-Based Economic Development in New York State: The Contribution of Agriculture to the New York Economy," Cornell University, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Dyson School of Applied Economics and Management, May 2014.

² Farmland Information Center (partnership of American Farmland Trust & USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service).

"Fact Sheet: Cost Of Community Services Studies," August 2010.

³ Haight, David. "New York Agricultural Landowner Guide," American Farmland Trust, 2010.



Farm apprentices with guests at Glynwood's potluck dinner.

KEEP PUTNAM FARMING Research: The Current State Of Agriculture In Putnam County

This report highlights findings from information collected from the thirty-eight farms that participated in the *Keep Putnam Farming* research process. Data and insights into current farming activities were gleaned from surveys that described existing conditions, challenges and opportunities for farming in Putnam County. The findings have been used as the basis for the recommended actions described in pages 7 through 12.

Because of the rich diversity of Putnam County agriculture, every effort was made to gather data from each sector. These include:

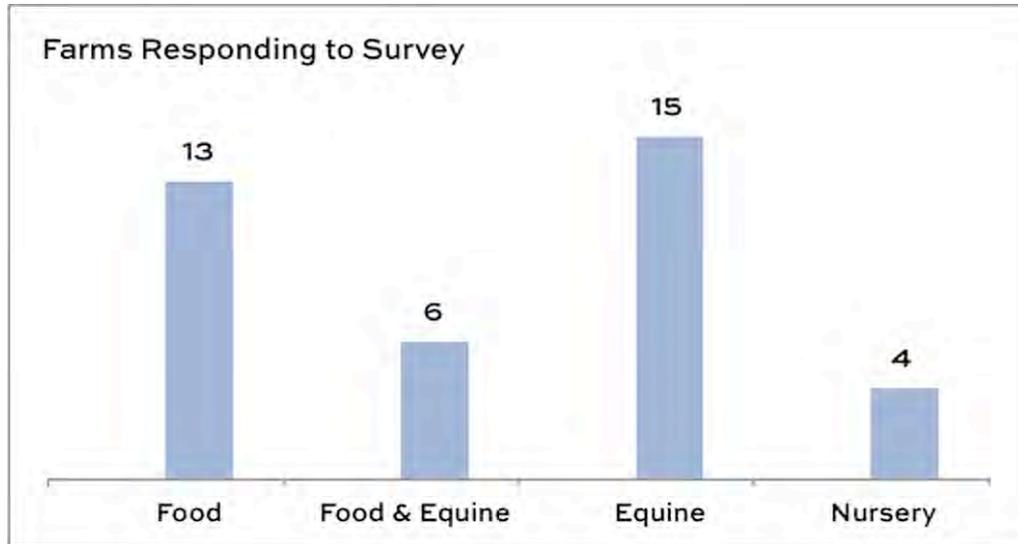
- Food – vegetables, fruits, honey, maple syrup, cheese, baked goods, poultry and livestock
- Food & Equine - vegetables, fruits, honey, maple syrup, cheese, baked goods, poultry and livestock, horses-boarding, breeding and lesson
- Equine - horses-boarding, breeding and lessons
- Nursery – plant stocks, flowers, gardening supplies



Farm store at Salinger's Orchard, Brewster, New York.

LOCAL FARMING: Snapshot of Current Production, Practices & Needs

Demographic Profile of Farmers Responding in the Survey

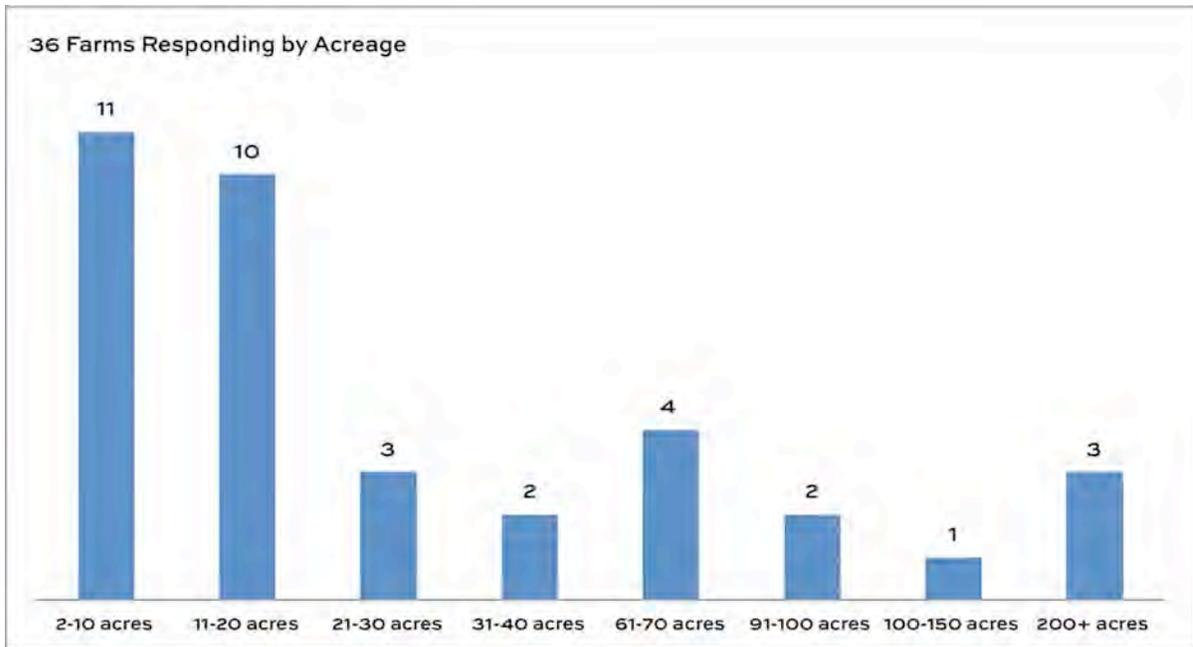


- Full Time or Part Time:
 - Fifty-eight percent of the farmers responded they work full time on the farm. However, similar to farmers in other regions, 42% indicated they work part time on the farm while also being employed off the farm. One farmer noted that in addition to working off the farm, he spends 70 hours a week farming.
- Age:
 - The 2012 USDA Census reports the average age of farmers in Putnam is 58.6 years. Eighty-three percent of the farmers responding are over the age of 50 years with 63 percent of these farmers over the age of 60. There are, however, a number of younger farmers in their 20s and 30s, most of whom are producing food products.

Years Farming in Putnam County

2 - 10	11- 20	25 - 30	37 - 54	77	100 -150	200+
12	9	5	6	1	3	1

- Years Farming In Putnam County:
 - Putnam is very fortunate to have a number of farm families who have been actively farming in the County for over 100 years. However, almost one-third of the farmers indicated they have been in the County for 10 years or less. Most are farmers growing food products and looking to build their business and take advantage of the increased demand for local products.



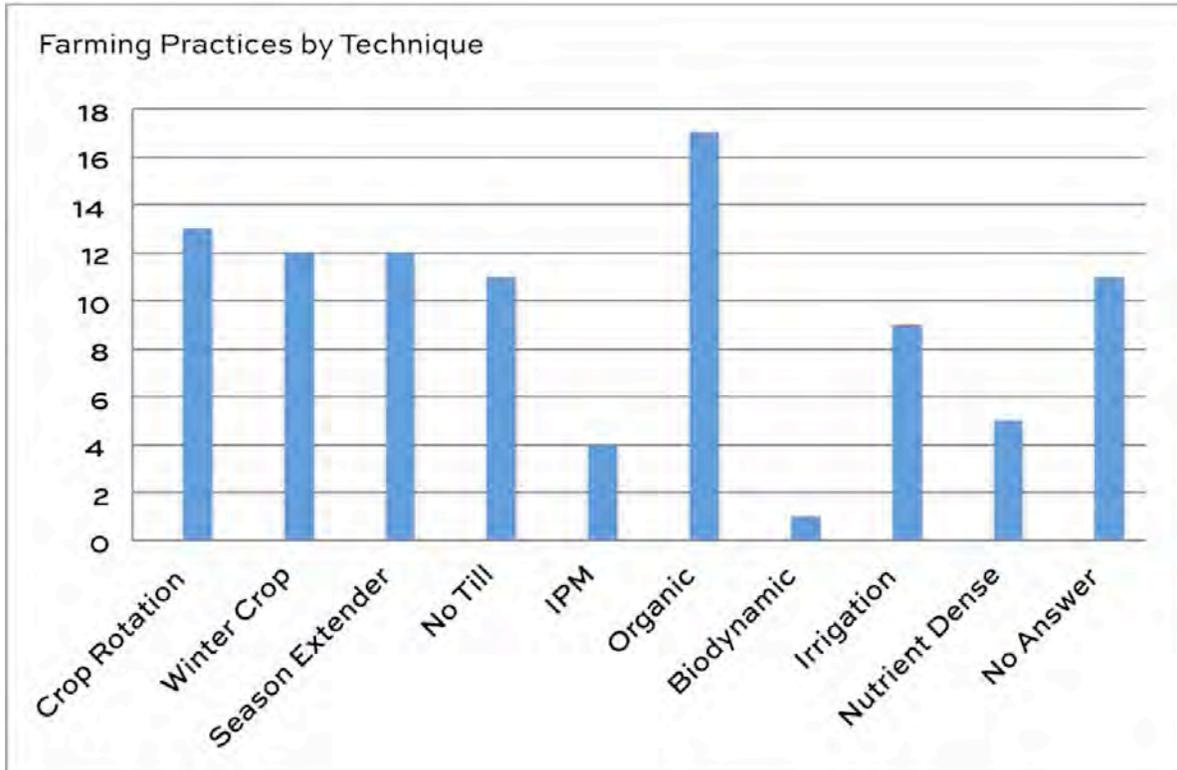
- Acreage In Agricultural Production:
 - The farms represented in the surveys range in size from very small (2 acres) to more than 200 acres, with the majority (58%) being 20 acres or less.

Total Acreage Owned	1,221
Total Acreage Leased	1,200
Total Acreage Farmed	1,594
Average Size of Farm	38 Acres

Farming Practices

Farmers are good stewards of the land and use a variety of farm techniques to protect the natural resources on their farms. Seventeen farmers indicated they use organic practices. Only one indicated they were certified organic.

Other practices noted by respondents include crop rotation, winter cover crop, season extenders, no till, integrated pest management (IPM), biodynamic, irrigation, and nutrient density.

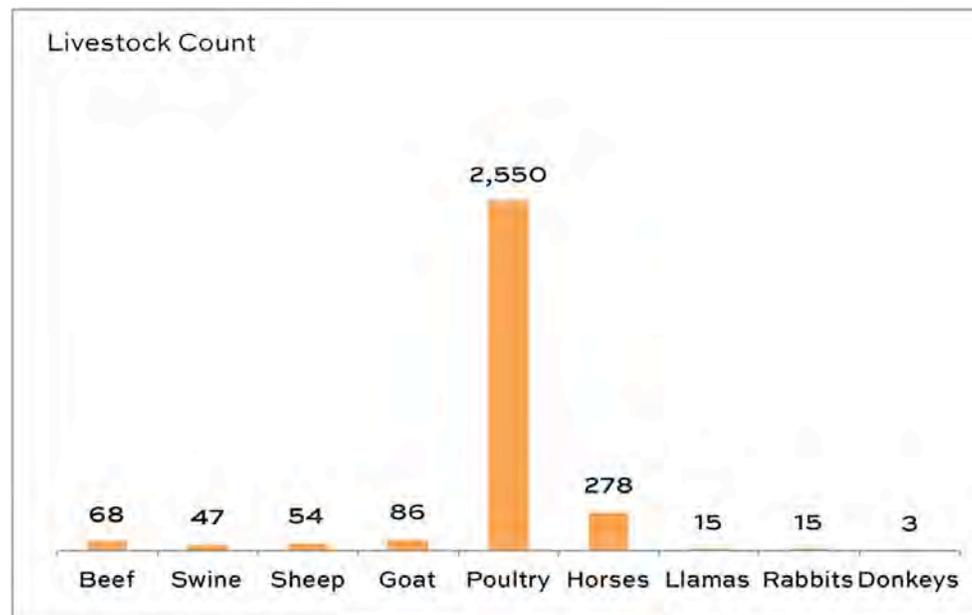
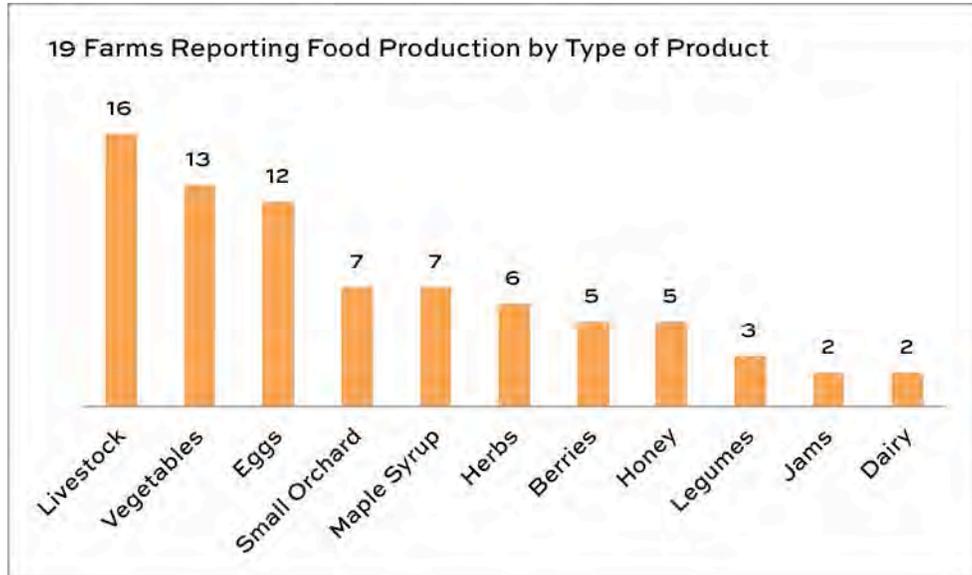


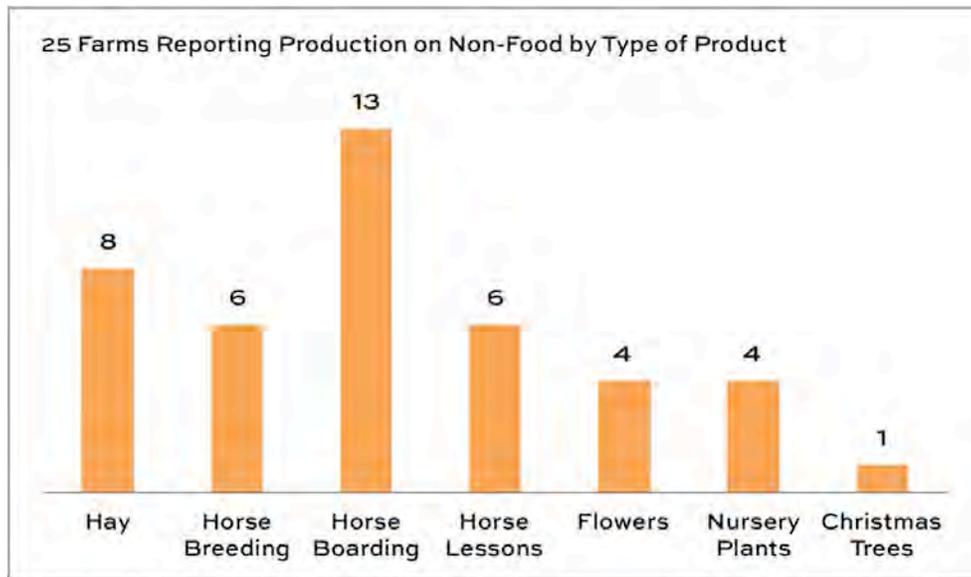
Pleasant View Farm, Brewster, New York.

Farm Products

Putnam County continues to have a strong equine sector. However, Putnam farms are also producing a variety of seasonal vegetables and fruits. Goats and poultry are increasing in numbers and value-added products such as milk, goat cheese, maple syrup and honey are also being produced in the County. The sale of fresh eggs continues to be strong.

Several equine farmers report that they are diversifying their farm operations to include other types of livestock, vegetable and fruit production. This may be due to a decline in the number of people taking riding lessons, as well as the growing demand for local products

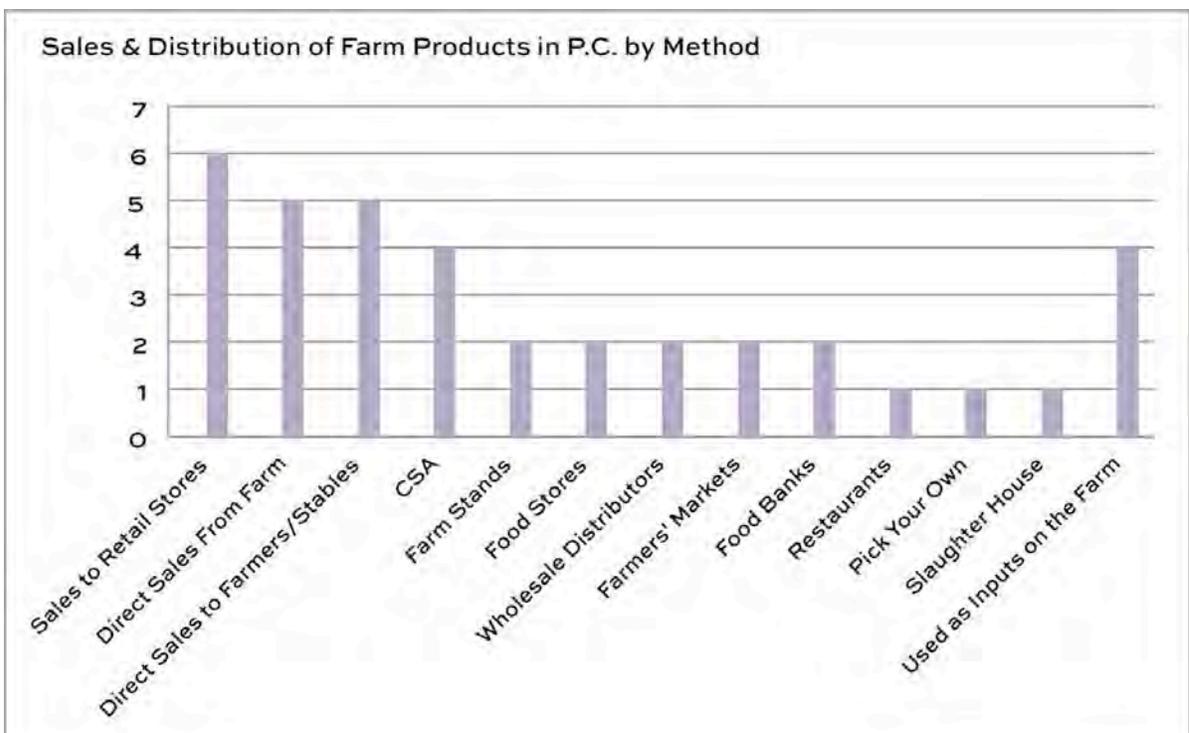




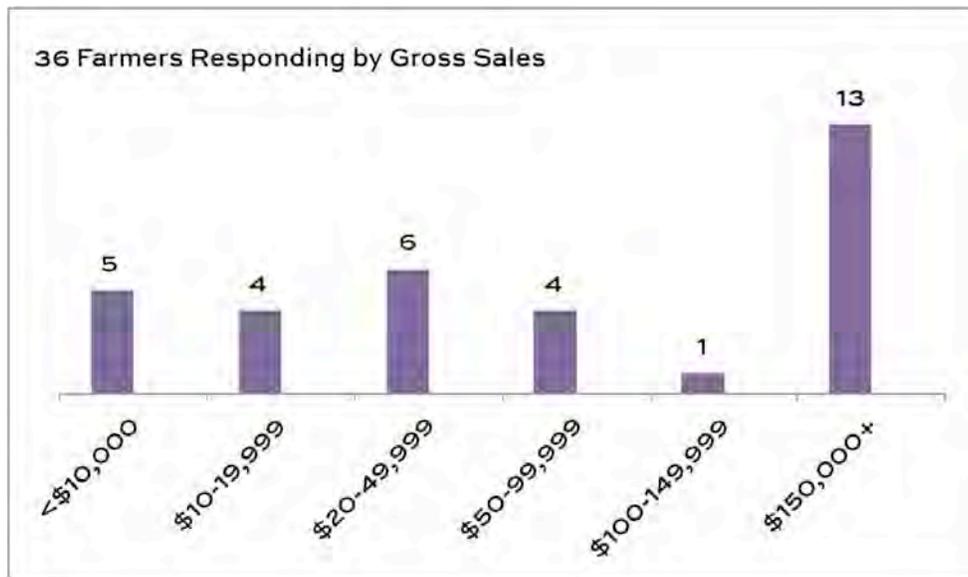
*Nurseries report increased competition from big box stores and food markets that sell horticultural products.

Farm Viability

- Sales & Distribution Methods:
 - In survey responses, 26 farmers indicated that the top three methods used to sell and distribute their products are:
 - Sales to retail stores
 - Direct sales from the farm
 - Direct sales to farmers and stables



- The majority of farmers report selling or distributing most or all of their products in Putnam County.
- Several farmers indicated they would like to increase the amount of sales in the County. Only two farmers indicated they sell at a local Farmers' Market.
- Although there is interest from the schools or institutions to buy and serve local products directly from Putnam County farmers, the farmers find this difficult due to the state regulations.
- Agritourism:
 - Fifty percent of the responding farmers indicated they provide agritourism activities on their farms. Typical activities include pony rides, farm tours, petting zoos, hayrides, maple tours and horse shows and clinics. A couple of farms are expanding their activities to include square dances and art programs.
 - The audiences for these on-farm activities include the general public, school-age groups and garden clubs.



*Of the thirteen farms indicating sales of \$150,000 or more, only one is a food producer; three are food and equine farmers; five are equine farmers; and four are Nursery owners.

- Gross Sales:
 - 45% of survey respondents reported gross sales of \$50,000 or less in the past year, indicating the prevalence of small and mid-sized farms in Putnam County.

Farmers reporting an increase in profits during the past year noted the reasons for the increase include:

- Increased direct sales
- Diversification of products and change of business plan
- Ability to contain/reduce operating expenses

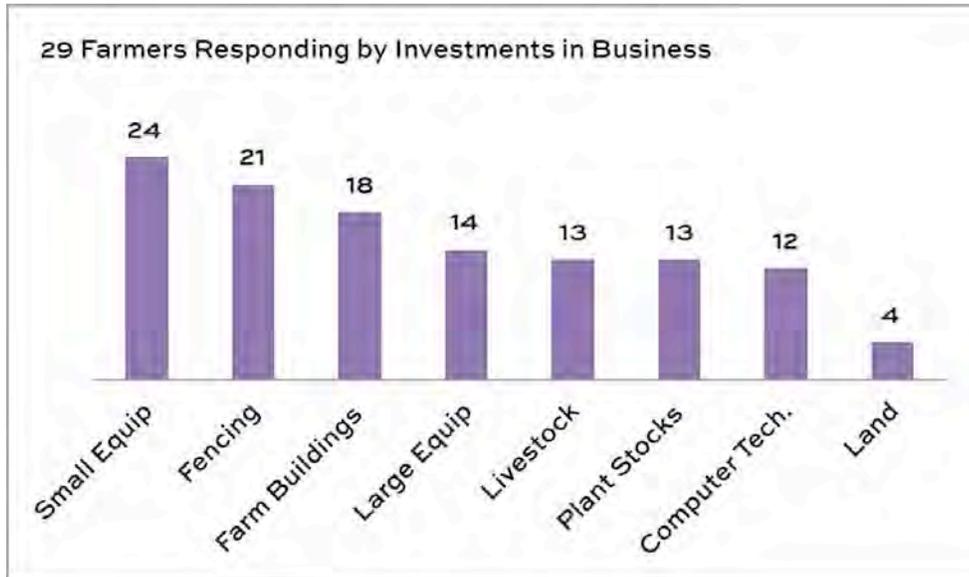
Farmers experiencing a decrease in profits noted the reasons for the decrease include:

- Taxes
- The economy – people have less money to spend
- Increases in operating expenses and reinvestment of profits in farm operations

Six farms reported similar profits as the year before.

Investing in the Farm

Over the past three years 29 farmers indicated that they have invested more than \$3 million in their farming operations. Farmers in each sector purchased land in the County. Several indicated they are interested in expanding the land they farm and are talking to neighbors about possible lease agreements. These investments indicate a long-term commitment to farming in Putnam.



- Supplies And Services:
 - Not only do Putnam farmers help contribute to the local economy by providing local goods and services for sale and consumption, they also contribute by purchasing their supplies and services locally and in the region.

Supplies and Services by Location

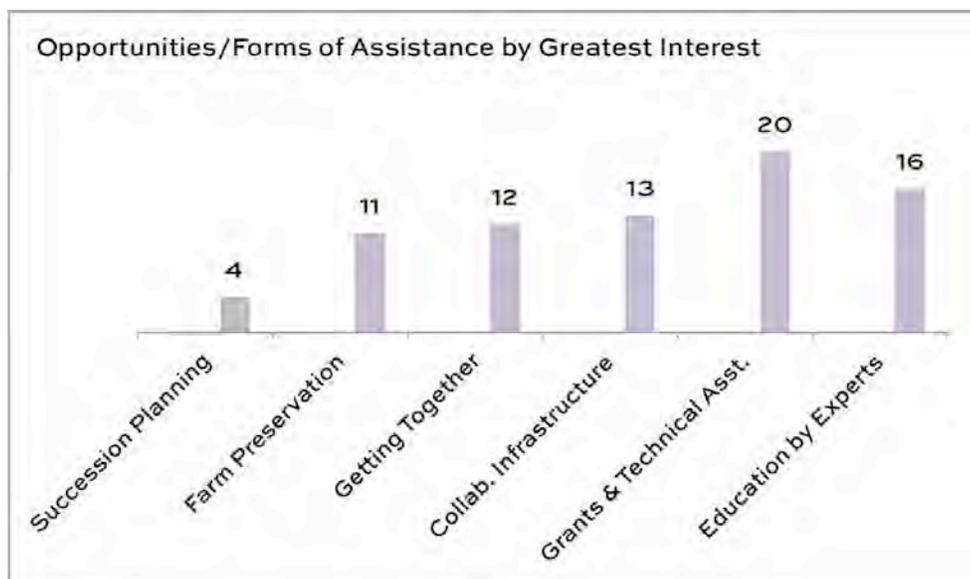
Number of Farmers Purchased	Local	Putnam County	Hudson Valley	New York State	National
Supplies:					
Fertilizers	4	4	5	2	5
Pesticides		1		2	
Seeds	2	3	6	1	8
Feed	6	12	11	7	2
Plant Stock	3	2	3	3	3
Livestock	1	4	3	3	3
Vet Supplies	4	8	6	-	5
Equipment Parts	7	11	9	1	7
Services:					
Vet	5	10	1	1	-
Farrier	4	5	3	2	1
Insurance	2	5	5	5	4
Slaughter	-	-	2	2	-
Maintenance/Repair	8	11	-	-	-

- Farm Labor:
 - Twenty-eight farms responded that they employ a total of 75 full-time staff and 61 part-time staff.
 - The lack of reliable seasonal help and well-trained full-time labor was identified as a major challenge to keeping farming successful in Putnam County. One solution noted by farmers was development of an apprentice or internship program that could help train people to work on the farms.

Issues Affecting the Farm Business

Farmers were asked to indicate what has had a positive impact on their farm, the issues that present the most problems for them and possible strategies for keeping farming viable in Putnam County (top 3 responses):

- Opportunities: What has had a positive impact on your farm?
 1. Increased interest in local products.
 2. Support of neighbors and other farmers
 3. Increased awareness of farming and farming issues
- Challenges: What has a negative impact on your farm?
 1. Lack of qualified seasonal/part-time/full-time help
 2. Taxes
 3. Cost of fuel
- Strategies: What would make it easier to continue farming in Putnam County?
 1. Access to seasonal and well-trained full-time labor
 2. More promotions/marketing for farms and products
 3. Technical assistance and business planning



- Need For Assistance:

Farmers were also asked to indicate the types of assistance they believe would be of greatest interest to them and assist them in their farming activities.

LOCAL FOOD: Demand & Potential

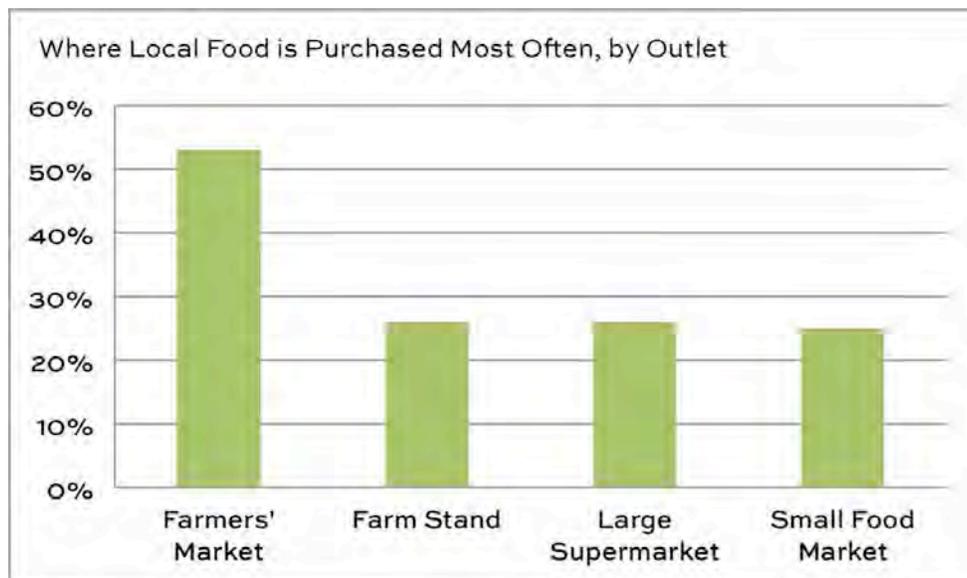
To better understand the degree to which local food is purchased and consumed in Putnam County, surveys were conducted with Putnam residents and food service providers. This information helped to identify potential market growth opportunities for local farms.

Residents

Consumer Behavior:

In an effort to obtain a representative cross section of Putnam County, surveys were made available at Community Day events in Cold Spring, the Town of Patterson and Putnam Valley. They were also available at the Annual 4-H Fair and at the Cold Spring and Brewster Farmers' Markets. Residents could also go to the *Keep Putnam Farming* page on the County website to complete an online survey. One hundred and eighty residents completed a survey.

Residents in Putnam County believe that where their food comes from is an important consideration. 75% indicated they look to see where their food is grown when grocery shopping. They most frequently shop at large supermarkets, i.e., A&P, Shop Rite, Whole Food and Trader Joe's.



When asked where they most often purchase local foods, i.e., fresh produce and fruit, Putnam residents indicated the following: Farmers' Markets, Farm Stands, large Supermarkets, and small Independent Grocers (Food Town) Only eleven residents indicated they participate in a CSA.



Residents were asked to indicate why they purchase local food. The majority believes that local food is fresher and by purchasing these products they are supporting local farmers.

When asked the reasons for not buying local food when it is available, residents indicated the following reasons in descending order:

- Too expensive
- I don't know where to go to purchase local food
- There is a lack of variety

Residents Are Purchasing:

Putnam residents purchase a variety of agricultural products available in local markets. The products most often mentioned as a favorite food include vegetables (specifically corn, tomatoes and fresh greens), fruits (specifically apples and berries), and eggs.

Seasonality does effect availability of most locally produced products, with more available in the summer and fall. Putnam County farmers also produce value-added products such as maple syrup, honey and cheese, as well as eggs, poultry and meat, which are available year round.

Residents Want More:

Putnam residents would like to have access to more locally raised meat (beef) and poultry. They would also like more berries.

Local Dollars For Local Products:

Fifty percent of residents indicated they spend between \$100-\$200 per week on their grocery expenses. Nearly twenty percent indicated they spend \$200-\$250 per week. According to the 2013 US Census Bureau data, Putnam County has 34,496 households with the median income for the County at \$95,117. If each household in the County were to spend \$150 per week on groceries this would result in over **\$5 million dollars being spent weekly on food products and over \$269 million annually.**

Capturing as much of these dollars through increased marketing and direct sales to consumers will especially benefit the small to midsized farmers who want to increase access to local markets and help to ensure that these farms remain economically viable.

Food Service Providers – Institutions & Restaurants

Seventy-two restaurant owners and chefs completed surveys at the annual Food Operators Seminar conducted by the Putnam Board of Health in March 2015. These food businesses represent a large potential market for local products.

The following are examples of this potential market:

Putnam County Office for Senior Resources:

The Office for Senior Resources is responsible for the four Senior Nutrition sites located in Putnam County and the distribution of meals to older adults living in the community through the Meals on Wheels program. Three hundred and fifty lunches are served five days a week for a total of approximately 91,000 meals annually.

The Plaza at Clover Lake:

A private assisted living center for older adults. Residents are provided three meals a day and snacks. On average, 330 meals are prepared daily for a total of more than 120,000 meals annually. Meals are prepared from fresh ingredients, and menus feature a variety of seasonal specials.

Restaurants:

While only two of the restaurant owners indicated that their establishment has a policy for purchasing local products, all indicated that they would like to purchase local food from Putnam farms. The two items they are most interested in purchasing are vegetables and eggs. They would also like greater access to local meat and poultry.

Products Being Purchased by Food Service Providers:

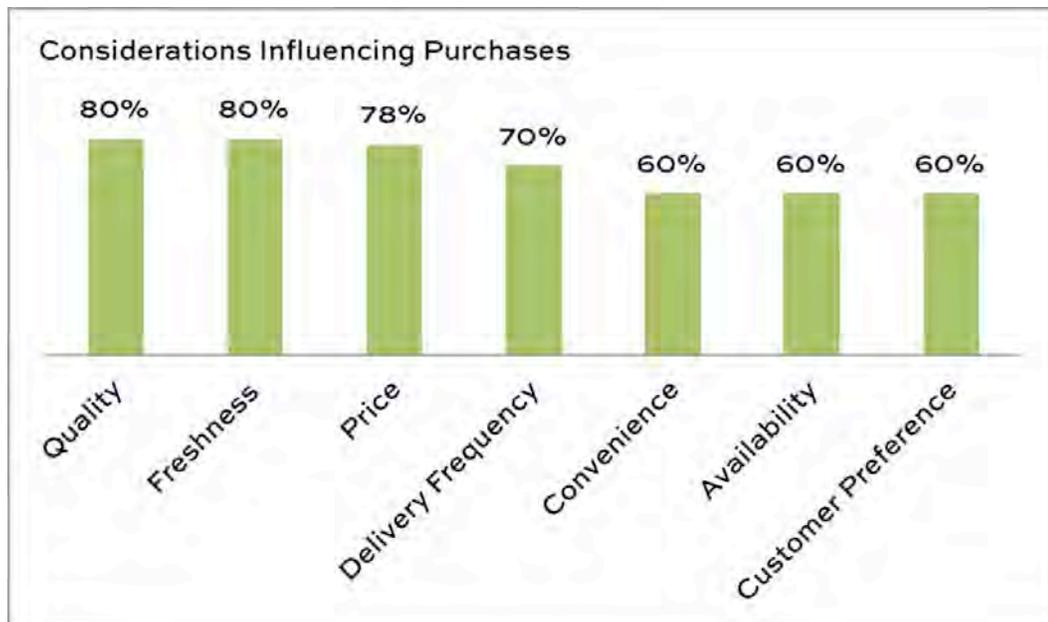
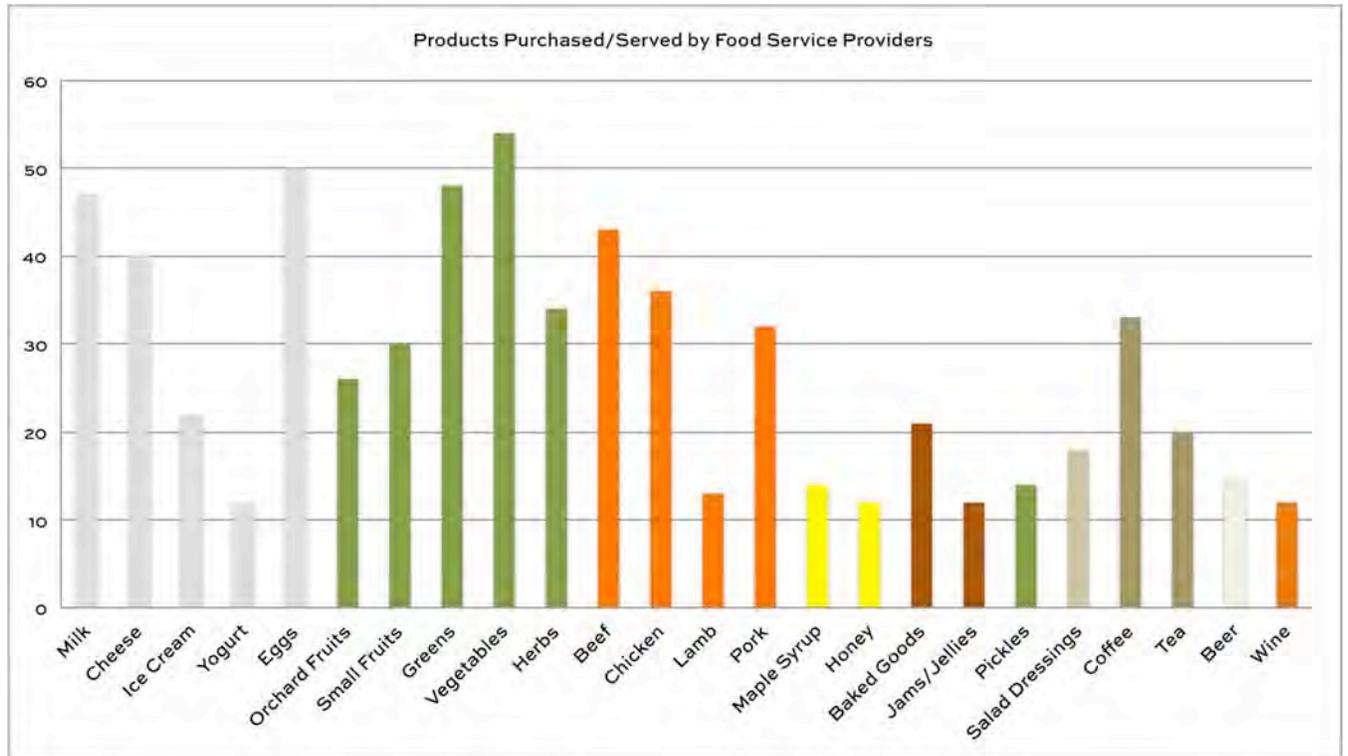
Putnam Institutions and Restaurants use a wide variety of fresh and value added products. The distributors they most often use are Sysco, U.S. Foods and Garelick Dairy. Some restaurant owners' travel to Hunt's Point in New York City and others noted purchasing ethnic products in New Jersey.

All respondents indicated that they would like to purchase local food from Putnam County farms and some noted using local producers: Hudson Valley Fresh, Ronnybrook and Sprout Creek Farm for dairy and cheese products; Crown Maple for maple syrup and the Honey Guy for honey, Ryder Farm and Hudson Valley Harvest (a distributor of products grown on Hudson Valley farms).

The two local food items restaurants are most interested in purchasing are vegetables and eggs (both available from local farms). They would also like greater access to local meat and poultry.



An assortment of Hudson Valley artisanal and farmstead cheeses.



The factors most influencing the decisions to buy local products include consistent quality and freshness of the products, price of local products compared to commercial options, delivery frequency, convenience in obtaining the products, consistent availability and customer preferences. For the Senior Nutrition Program there are also contractual restrictions.

Acknowledgements

Putnam County Executive

MaryEllen Odell

Putnam County Legislature

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William Gouldman	(District 2)	Joseph Castellano	(District 7)
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Ginny Nacerino	(District 4)	Kevin Wright	(District 9)
Carl Albano	(District 5)		

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