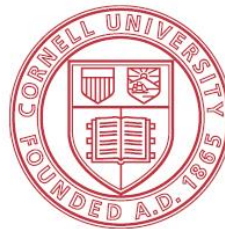


# Emerging Opportunities to Enhance Small Farm Viability and Local Food Systems in the Northeast

Anu Rangarajan, Violet Stone, Matthew  
Goldfarb, Erica Frenay and Michelle Podolec

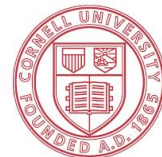
Cornell Small Farm Program



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# Small farmer needs?

- **Highly diverse group**
- **Geographically distant**
- **No unified strategy or approach**
- **Need a '10,000' foot view**



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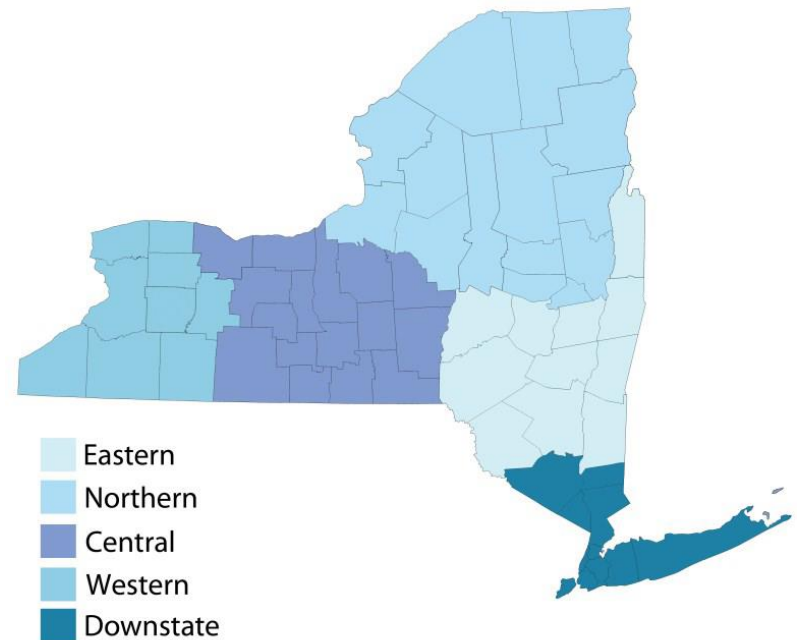
# **NY Small Farm Summit**

## **Goals**

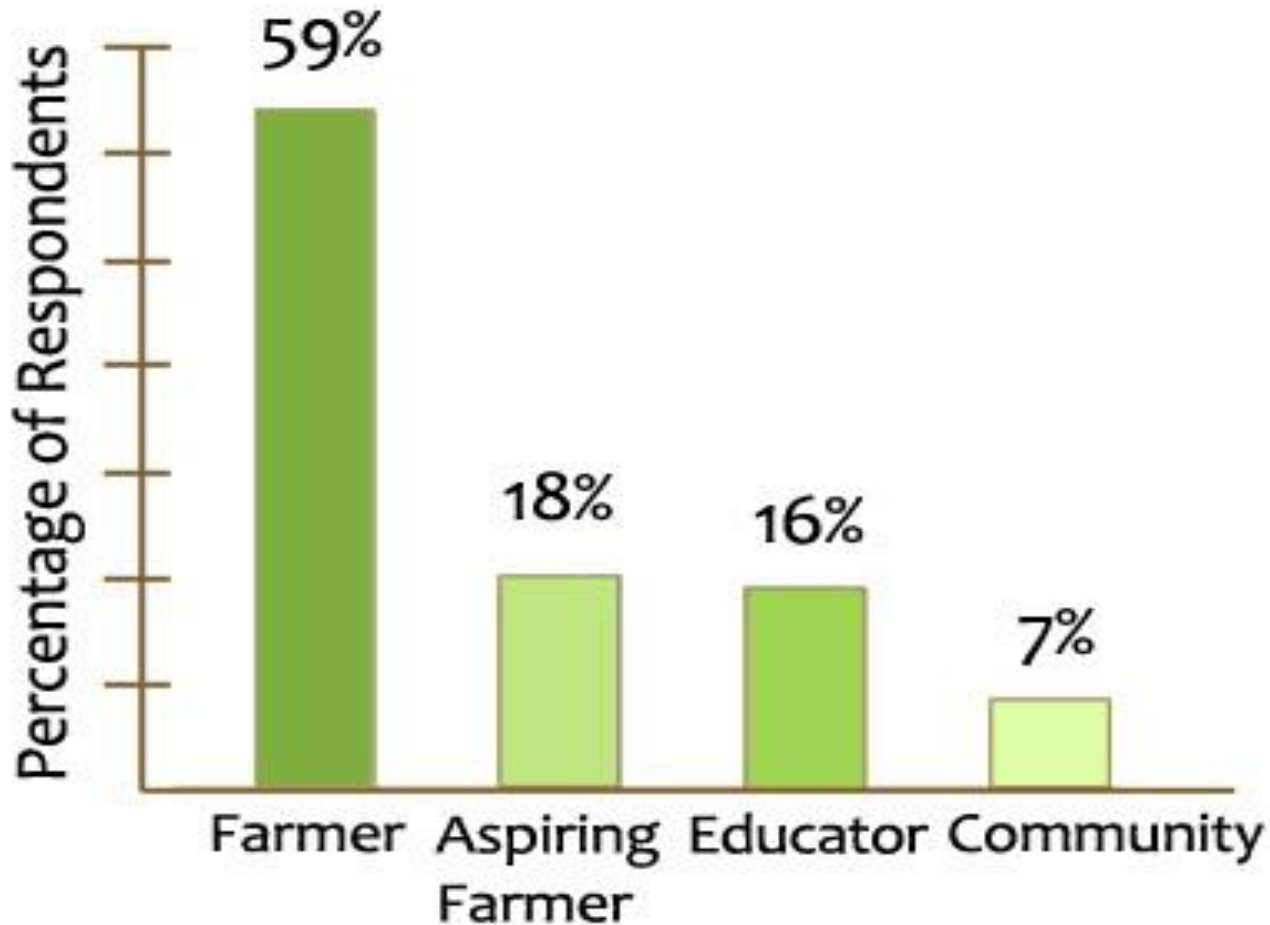
- **Increase visibility of small farm needs**
- **Encourage collaborations within and across regions**
- **Prioritize investments to enhance small farm viability**

# 2012 NY Small Farm Survey

- **Prioritize from 16 opportunities**
- **Expand SF participation**
- **Share Online**
- **Not Included**
  - **Beginning Farmer**
  - **Hydrofracking**



# 573 Respondents



# SF Survey Results

- 1. Develop food distribution strategies to expand SF access to markets**
- 2. Document economic impact of SFs on their communities**
- 3. Develop new/expand livestock processing facilities**
- 4. Identify alternative financing strategies**
- 5. Advocate for greater investment in SF services (e.g. research, extension)**



# SF Survey Results

6. Develop affordable energy conservation and renewable sources
7. Evaluate livestock processing regulations
8. Promote profitable value-added processing of milk to expand markets for small dairies
9. Develop alt. livestock production/ marketing to overcome processing bottlenecks
10. Develop strategies to expand ag. land access



# **Develop food distribution strategies (e.g. collaborative marketing, product pooling and trucking, food hubs) to expand SF access to local and regional markets**

- Identify bottlenecks in local and regional food purchasing and distribution
- Create and evaluate strategies that increase farmer/distributor/ customer connections
- Provide support and education for new distributor businesses
- Cultivate new collaborations among local food distribution, local transportation and local and regional economic development councils.



***“There is a mismatch between the productive capacities of many small operations and large segments of the market. Hopefully such strategies could help bridge those gaps--making it possible for small operators to thrive.”***

**-Farmer, Dutchess County**

# **Document economic impact of small farms on their communities to increase investment in and support of small farms**

- Collaborate with local communities to develop methods and measure SF economic impacts to inform investment decisions at the county, state and regional levels.
- Fund pilot programs on different economic impact analysis approaches to improve data collection & generate case studies
- Convey findings to both general audiences & economic development councils to attract the widest possible investment.



***“Policy makers are political creatures and need to justify their decisions to others. Documentation makes an argument much more compelling to all.”***

Farmer, Tompkins County

# **Develop new and expand existing livestock processing facilities and evaluate regulations and policy for SF impacts**

- Conduct educational programs on how to open and manage small-scale slaughter /processing facilities.
- Create new associations that include both producers and processors to improve the scheduling bottlenecks
- Clarify rules and regulations for small producers and processors, and ensure they are scale-appropriate.
- Train inspectors /regulators on farmer intent versus interpretation of regulations to reduce the confusion and lack of clarity for farmers and processors alike.

***“I started farming in Orleans County in 1983. Since that time I have watched 10 or 11 small slaughter houses close up. Sometimes we have to wait several months before we can get an animal scheduled for processing.”***

**-Farmer, Orleans County**



### About the 2012 Small Farm Summit

On February 29th, 2012, the Cornell Small Farms Program, in collaboration with Cornell Cooperative Extension, hosted the 3rd Small Farms Summit. The Summit is a statewide, interactive gathering in which participants evaluate emerging opportunities and prioritize investments to enhance the viability of small farms. 150 farmers, educators, policy makers and community members gathered at 5 locations around New York to provide feedback locally and across the state.

### Prioritizing Investment for Small Farms: The Process

To recruit a broader range of voices to the discussion, the Cornell Small Farms Program distributed a preliminary survey prior to the Summit. We asked small farmers and stakeholders to rank a list of emerging opportunities in order of importance. We asked respondents to take the 'bird's eye' view, and consider how they would prioritize investment not only for their own farm or business, but for their community and colleagues.

We received 573 responses. The demographic of the respondents is shown in Figure 1. We then sorted the results of the survey to reflect regional priorities (Figure 2) and presented the cumulative results to participants at the Small Farms Summit. We asked attendees to brainstorm together to create a realistic vision for advancing these opportunities, and any new or emerging opportunities, within a 5 year period. The following report is a culmination of the vision provided to us by the collective 720 survey and meeting participants.

### Who Should Read this Report?

Recommendations in the report are intended for anyone serving New York's small farm sector. This includes educators, researchers, policy makers, producer organizations, non-profits, agricultural service providers, farmers, businesses and community groups.

### Survey Respondents

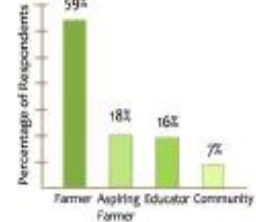


Figure 1

### Survey Regions

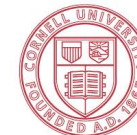


Figure 2

### 5 Ways to use this Report

- Justify grant/funding proposals
- Promote rural economic development and revitalization
- Stimulate farmer discussion
- Influence policy-makers
- Target investment to support the viability of small farms

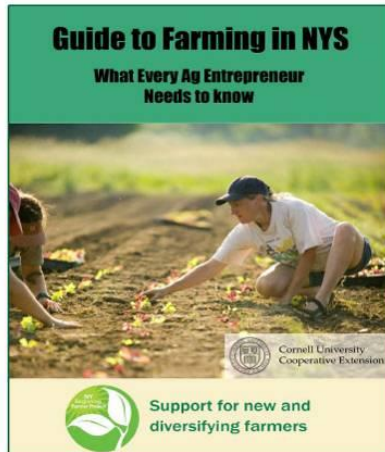
- Regional priorities
- Justifications provided by respondents on various priorities
- Presentations from Summit



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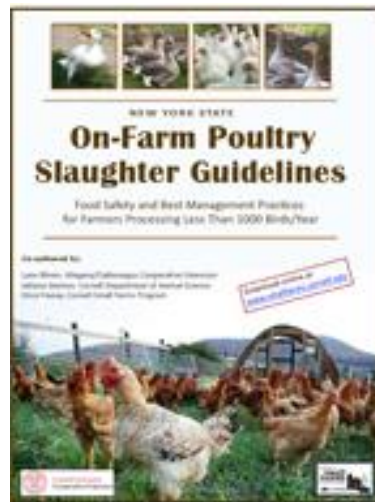
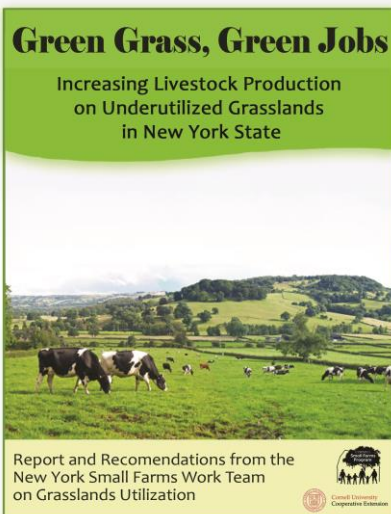
# CORNELL SMALL FARMS PROGRAM

FOR MORE INFORMATION



For more information on the  
Cornell Small Farms Program,  
visit:

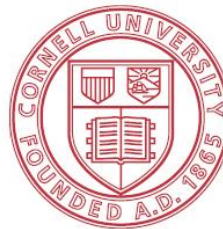
[www.smallfarms.cornell.edu](http://www.smallfarms.cornell.edu)



Cornell Small Farms Program  
607-255-9227  
135C Plant Science  
Ithaca, NY 14850

# Thank You!

## Questions?



Cornell University  
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