



Agriculture Work Group

August 16, 2011

Strengths

1. Good academic foundation
2. Land
3. Well established people/business owners in the Southern Tier
4. Well established support network
5. Water
6. Agriculture is very diverse
7. Good local market, proximity to NYC and major markets
8. Transportation corridors to major metro areas
9. Diversity Niche farms
10. Entrepreneurial agricultural sector
11. Diversity of agriculture
12. Strong agricultural education in the region
13. Access to transportation to metro areas
14. Breadth and depth of agricultural teaching and outreach
15. Access to large markets
16. On the farm operations – you-pick, agribusiness
17. Organic dairy niche
18. Maple sugaring niche
19. Forest products
20. Brewery, Hops growing
21. Farmer markets
22. Production geared to the local community
23. Number yogurt brand housed in the region
24. Using all the milk from Chenango county for the yogurt company – limited growth because can't get milk from other counties
25. Expansion plans unable to get milk locally
26. Agri-tourism
27. Research to farm pipeline – technology transfer
28. Able to leverage and connect to existing industry cluster
29. Food processing and development laboratory at Cornell University
30. Existing proposal to develop food processing value added facility – planet value added line
31. Well organized soil and water conservation districts

32. Cooperative extensions

Weaknesses

1. Don't have direct control over local milk distribution
2. Need more young farmers, experiencing a farming brain drain
3. Agriculture pricing issues, esp. milk
4. Lack of marketing and entrepreneurship mentality in agribusiness
5. Lack of infrastructure to support value added agriculture products, e.g., meat processing
6. Few USDA inspected facilities
7. Shortage of large animal vets
8. Lack of money to support agriculture
9. Start up financing is a real problem
10. Financial institutions have stopped lending for agricultural purposes
11. Little labor availability for harvesting, apples, berries, etc.
12. Limited tax base
13. We're looking to attain top dollar for our products, but 25%-30% population are low income, need to price to make a profit yet serve the population
14. Educating people that home grown/organic is worth the added price
15. People look for lowest prices
16. Wet region, therefore growing organic is difficult
17. Size and organization of our farms make it difficult to market to large retail outlets
18. Lacking infrastructure
19. High populations of deer herd

Opportunities

1. Growing trend for USDA certified mobile slaughtering units
2. Participate in the organic movement with the retail markets
3. Agriculture economic developers to organize distribution and marketing, business model – relationship with the producers and the end market
4. Biomass and other types of bio-energy opportunities, waste streams as source of bio-energy, methane production from manure, bio-digesters
5. Natural gas will generate money for farmers
6. Reuse manure as nutrient source for other fruit and vegetable growers, will cut back on imports
7. High tunnels techniques
8. Separated solids out of the manure before shipping to PA to mix with drilling fluid/mud before land filling it
9. More value added processing within the region to make other products
10. Educating chefs about NYS maple products; demand currently exceeding supply but opportunity to grow new markets

11. Need to find the combination of lots of little things and niches, e.g., potatoes, cheese, vodka, beans, flowers,
12. Establish and market the Finger Lake brand for multiple products - maybe collaborative effort with other Regions and their strategic plans
13. Take advantage of deer hunting on agricultural lands
14. More locally marketing products are the more connected the buyers feel to the agricultural sector

Threats

1. Aging farming population
2. Business transfer difficulties
3. No way to help farmers help move their business to the next generation
4. Little capital to take over, start a farm
5. Rising cost of property
6. Gas drilling, concerns for organic farmers
7. FFA, 4H branches gone from high schools
8. Agricultural population has diminished
9. Animal rights causes negatively influencing public perception
10. Public not as involved in farming, don't understand farming, change in culture
11. Regulatory agencies definitions make it difficult
12. DEC, Army Corp of Engineers, other agencies not on the same page
13. Cost of water is going to change
14. Pre-vet students concerned about paying off loans and it is more difficult in large animal specialty, moving toward small animal
15. Food safety issues
16. In urban markets – there is a perception that agriculture has negative connotations
17. Government regulation, e.g., immigration laws,
18. Lack of labor