

Chapter 11: Agricultural Resources

Survey Results

1. The term “agriculture” can include anything from cropland to fisheries, and even state and federal programs use different definitions. Please put a check mark next to the type of operations you feel should be included in agricultural planning for your Region?

24 Breeding/raising horses	15 CAFOs
24 Dairy Farms	14 Organic/hormone-free operations
24 Grain crops	13 Non-conventional (e.g.fisheries, fur)
23 Boarding horses	12 Pet horse grazing areas
23 Hay farms	11 Switch grass or bio-fuel crops
23 Horticultural farms/Nurseries	7 Agricultural entertainment
22 Greenhouses	7 Dairy processing operations
22 Mush. growing houses (doubles)	6 Dog/cat breeding operations
22 Orchards	6 Farm-related sewage treatment fac.
21 Christmas tree growing	5 Wind farms
21 Vineyards/Wineries	4 Ethanol production plants
20 Equestrian training centers	4 Mushroom packaging plants
19 CSA	3 Chicken processing plants
19 Livestock fields/structure	1 Other: Tobacco, vegetable crop, and deer management type farms
18 Roadside farm markets	

Note: Questions number two and three rank the answer to the question.

2. Aside from increases in taxation, what are the greatest threats to the future of profitable commercial agriculture in the Oxford Region? Please number the top five (5) issues that you and your municipality regard as posing the greatest threat:

Note: **2** of the **24** persons surveyed did not rank the items listed below for question two.

21 Conflicts between new residents and farm activities (odors, noise, etc.)

9 of 21 ranked issue 1st

2 of 21 ranked issue 2nd

1 of 21 ranked issue 3rd

1 of 21 ranked issue 4th

6 of 21 ranked issue 5th

Plus 2 unranked

21 Rising land costs

4 of 21 ranked issue 1st

3 of 21 ranked issue 2nd

7 of 21 ranked issue 3rd

3 of 21 ranked issue 4th

3 of 21 ranked issue 5th

Plus 1 unranked

18 Increasing suburban-style development

7 of 18 ranked issue 1st 4 of 18 ranked issue 2nd 2 of 18 ranked issue 3rd
3 of 18 ranked issue 4th 1 of 18 ranked issue 5th Plus 1 unranked

12 Lack of young farmers to replace retiring farmers

1 of 12 ranked issue 1st 1 of 12 ranked issue 2nd 5 of 12 ranked issue 3rd
1 of 12 ranked issue 4th 2 of 12 ranked issue 5th Plus 2 unranked

12 Traffic volume of roadways

2 of 12 ranked issue 2nd 4 of 12 ranked issue 3rd 2 of 12 ranked issue 4th
4 of 12 ranked issue 5th

10 Rising fuel costs

1 of 10 ranked issue 1st 3 of 10 ranked issue 2nd 2 of 10 ranked issue 3rd
1 of 10 ranked issue 4th 1 of 10 ranked issue 5th Plus 2 unranked

9 Difficulties finding farm labor

1 of 9 ranked issue 2nd 2 of 9 ranked issue 3rd 5 of 9 ranked issue 4th
1 of 9 ranked issue 5th

6 Municipal regulations (ordinances)

2 of 6 ranked issue 2nd 2 of 6 ranked issue 3rd 1 of 6 ranked issue 5th
Plus 1 unranked

6 Other: increased utility costs **5**

5 of 5 ranked issue 4th

increased supply costs **1**

1 of 1 ranked issue 2nd

2 Rising farm labor cost

1 of 2 ranked issue 5th Plus 1 unranked

2 Difficulties getting farm services (such as tractor mechanics, large animal medicine, etc.)

1 of 2 ranked issue 4th 1 of 2 ranked issue 5th

1 No regional marketing effort

1 of 1 ranked issue 5th

3. What will promote the continuation of profitable commercial agriculture in the Oxford Region? Please select the top five (5) resources that you and your municipality regard as the greatest assets:

Note: 3 of the 24 persons surveyed did not rank the items listed below for question three and 1 of the 24 selected only 3, while 1 of the 24 selected only 4. Also, 4 of the 24 persons selected 2 choices as 5th important, which are shown in **green**.

21 Close proximity to agricultural markets (feed grain for Lancaster County, etc.)

3 of 21 ranked asset 1st	8 of 21 ranked asset 2nd	4 of 21 ranked asset 3rd
4 of 21 ranked asset 4th	1 of 21 ranked asset 5th	Plus 1 unranked

17 Families with a strong farming tradition

3 of 17 ranked asset 1st	1 of 17 ranked asset 2nd	2 of 17 ranked asset 3rd
2 of 17 ranked asset 4th	8 of 17 ranked asset 5th	Plus 1 unranked

17 High-productivity non-irrigated soils

10 of 17 ranked asset 1st	2 of 17 ranked asset 2nd	2 of 17 ranked asset 3rd
2 of 17 ranked asset 4th	Plus 1 unranked	

17 Plain sect farmers' long-term commitment to farming

2 of 17 ranked asset 1st	5 of 17 ranked asset 2nd	1 of 17 ranked asset 3rd
1 of 17 ranked asset 4th	7 of 17 ranked asset 5th	Plus 1 unranked

16 Existing clusters of protected cropland

2 of 16 ranked asset 1st	1 of 16 ranked asset 2nd	7 of 16 ranked asset 3rd
1 of 16 ranked asset 4th	2 of 16 ranked asset 5th	Plus 3 unranked

13 Municipal regulations (ordinances)

1 of 13 ranked asset 1st	1 of 13 ranked asset 2nd	7 of 13 ranked asset 4th
3 of 13 ranked asset 5th	Plus 1 unranked	

12 Close proximity to urban markets (Philadelphia, Wilmington, etc.)

2 of 12 ranked asset 2nd	4 of 12 ranked asset 3rd	3 of 12 ranked asset 4th
1 of 12 ranked asset 5th	Plus 2 unranked	

8 Close proximity to equestrian markets (hay and feed for horse owners.)

2 of 8 ranked asset 2nd	1 of 8 ranked asset 3rd	1 of 8 ranked asset 4th
3 of 8 ranked asset 5th	Plus 1 unranked	

1 Other: commercial effort to provide fair pricing on farm generated products such as a dairy, grain, and/or animal production. **unranked**

11 Type of Operation: Horse	Average Acreage: 5 – 500 acres
10 Type of Operation: Mushroom	Average Acreage: 2 – 40 acres
5 Type of Operation: Livestock*	Average Acreage: 15 - 500 acres
3 Type of Operation: Grains	Average Acreage: 100 – 300 acres
3 Type of Operation: Orchards/ Vineyards	Average Acreage: 10 – 500 acres
3 Type of Operation: Vegetable Farms	Average Acreage: 10 – 35 acres
2 Type of Operation: Hay Farms	Average Acreage: 150 – 200 acres
2 Type of Operation: Tree Farms	Average Acreage: 10 – 20 acres
2 Type of Operation: Truck Farm	Average Acreage: 30 – 40 acres
1 Type of Operation: Greenhouse	Average Acreage: 10 – 20 acres

* (Chicken**1**, Pig/Hog**3**)

7. What is your sense of the average age range of a commercial agricultural farmer who owns land in your municipality?

Note: **1** of the **24** persons surveyed answered this question by selecting **3** age ranges, which are shown in **green**.

- 0** 18-35
- 9** **36-50**
- 8** **51-60**
- 5** **61-70**
- 1** 71+

8. Has the demographic of the commercial agricultural farmer (regardless of whether or not they own the land) changed over the last several decades? (i.e. gotten older or younger, more women farmers, more or less farmers who grew up farming/living on a farm, etc.)

18 Yes **6** No

Please explain: **YES**

- It is more difficult for a farmer for start-up due to the large amount of capital needed for land, equipment, and dairy heard.
- There are fewer of them. I do see younger men working on the larger farms, mostly family members. Successful farmers in our area rent land that may be scattered regionally, in order to maximize harvest. Also, CAFOs require land to apply large quantities of manure.
- Older owners; more Amish
- Farming has become more of a commercial business.
- Farmers are getting older due to limited income.
- Older farmers have sold to Amish younger farmers.

- Older and more affluent.
- Less farmers who grew up farming/living on a farm
- Older less land
- More Amish in Twp. More farms being rented out to other larger farmers.
- Have gotten older. English got bigger, Amish got smaller. 4
- Older and less farmers
- Older

NO

- But more Amish 2
- All young Amish

9. Do the plain sect communities in the Oxford Region significantly contribute to commercial agricultural farming?

24 Yes **0** No

Please explain:

- From providing support services to selling fresh produce to holding large blocks of land collectively. They have had a huge impact on agriculture in this area.
- Dairy farming
- Milk, dairy products, hay, straw production. In addition, veterinary services are now being hired regularly for the dairy heard.
- They grow crops that feed English horses and animals, they produce dairy products, sell vegetables, fruits, berries, baked goods, run ag support businesses such as machinery repair shops, welding, farm building construction.
- Expanding acreage; taking over English farms
- Farm Markets, Fruits and vegetables, Trees
- They are able to provide family help saving on labor costs.
- Most of the farms sold in the last decade have sold to Amish farmers.
- They rent land from others and support ag services.
- Long-term commitment to farm. continuous operation of farm from generation to generation or from family to family.

10. What, if anything, could be done at the municipal level to encourage the plain sect communities to continue farming in the Oxford Region?

- Tax breaks and creative zoning to avoid many of the conflicts that imperil the rich Amish culture and way of life.
- Write ordinances that permit them to live their lives and conduct their business the way they are accustomed. Most townships in SCC have adopted ordinances that permit multi-family homes and commercial uses on farms.
- Emphasize easements and land trusts -- they don't like dealing with government; allow animals on small lots in ag regions (e.g. horse for transportation); allow small scale accessory business; keep inspection permit fees small.

- Protect the area around them from developments.
- Amish seem to be coping well.
- Farm related business and extended family housing. 2
- Zoning allowing farm related businesses and schools and encouraging farm markets.
- Tax reduction Easy Ag building permitting Support their businesses Soil conservation Support.
- Development & subdivisions controlled Highways wider/speed limits enforced Property taxes reduced Limited regulations.
- I suggest a discussion with them to find out.
- Less Taxation 2
- Agricultural Zoning- we did stream line the sub-division ordinance for agricultural purposes. 4
- Lower taxes, allowing them to continue to setup non-conforming business uses on their properties (e.g. welding shops, greenhouse operations, and woodworking shops).
- Control land taxation and limit outside interference of their operations. Long-term sustainability of agriculture in our area will be determined by profitability and limitation of outside interference.
- Lowered school tax. Land that has been preserved freeze the tax.

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