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Cooperative Extension
ULSTER COUNTY

News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Notice of 30-Day Period For Inclusion of Land Within a Certified Ag District

In accordance with a resolution passed by the Ulster County Legislature on December 4, 2003, Ulster County will accept requests from March 1st to March 30th from landowners desiring to have their predominately viable agricultural lands to be included within a certified agricultural district. Landowners seeking inclusion into a certified ag district must submit their requests along with the tax map identification number, relevant portion of the tax map, and a description of the land within this thirty-day period to Lydia Reidy, Chair, Ulster County Agricultural Farmland Protection Board, 10 Westbrook Lane, Kingston, NY 12401.

This notice complies with amendments adopted in September 2003 to the NYS Ag & Markets Law establishing a new *Section 303-b*. This section now requires every county containing *certified agricultural districts* to designate an annual 30-day review period for landowners to request that their predominately viable agricultural lands be included within a certified agricultural district. In the past landowners had to wait until an Ag District "opened up" for review to have their land included within the district. Typically this occurred every eight years from date when the district was first created.

Ag districts were created by an act of the New York State Legislature in 1971 to protect and promote the availability of land for farming purposes. They are intended to counteract the impact that non-farm development has upon the continuation of farm businesses by providing a framework limiting unreasonable local regulation on farm practices. The Ag Districts Law also limits a public agencies' ability to acquire farmland through eminent domain, as well as the ability to advance public funds to construct facilities that encourage non-farm development. Additionally, land used in agricultural production and within an agricultural district is not subject to special

assessments, *ad valorem* levies, or other rates and fees for the financing of improvements such as water, sewer or non-farm drainage. Ulster County has four certified agricultural districts containing over 72,000 acres of farmland. For more information about ag districts or about having predominately viable agricultural lands included into agricultural districts, please contact Teresa Rusinek, Horticulture/Ag Issue Educator, 845-340-3990.

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