

Country Living

A quiet, rural life appeals to many people, as evidenced by the continuing growth of residential homes in what has traditionally been open farmland.

As more and more non-farm families build or move into homes adjacent to actively farmed land, conflicts are bound to arise.

This brochure provides tips to keep you, your family and your farm neighbor safe; help you enjoy your farm neighbor; and avoid making your farm neighbor's life more difficult or dangerous.

Farmers provide the stewardship that results in the beauty of the rural landscape. One way non-farm residents can help farmers sustain that beauty is to educate themselves about what it means to live in farm country.

New York State Agricultural Districts

When a home is purchased in an Agricultural District, notification is given at closing to expect farm activities and that water and/or sewer access may be limited.

New York State Agricultural Districts, which include many non-farm residential properties, help protect farmland. It provides for property tax assessment based on farmland's productive value and limits local regulations that would unreasonably restrict farm practices. Agricultural District law includes a Right to Farm section, which states that sound agricultural practices shall not constitute a private nuisance.

“Cultivate” a Good Relationship with your Farm Neighbor

A good relationship with your farm neighbor will result in a friend you can turn to; there is almost always someone around on a farm if you need immediate help. It also offers a wonderful opportunity for your family. Farms are a great place to visit, especially if there are baby animals on hand. A request for a visit during a quiet time of the year will result in a valuable learning experience.

Good communication is essential to developing and maintaining good relationships between farm and non-farm neighbors. Farmers are typically willing to notify neighbors when they expect to be engaging in activities you might want to prepare for, such as spreading manure or spraying pesticides, if they know how to reach you. Remember that the weather is often a factor, so you may get a time frame of when activities are expected to occur, not a specific date.

Farmers are also often willing to discuss practices that may concern you. Be aware that even though something bothers you it may be a sound, accepted agricultural practice. Farmers are required to be trained and licensed to apply pesticides and Environmental Protection Agency regulations require farms to have a manure management plan to protect water quality.

This brochure was developed on behalf of the Tompkins County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board. For more information on farming in your community, contact:

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Living In the Country



What to Expect from your Farm Neighbors

Life on the Farm

Noise, dust and odors are all part of farming and therefore part of living near farms.

Farms are active places, driven by the change of seasons and dependent on the weather. Farmers plow, plant, fertilize, treat for pests and harvest crops. This means that when the season and weather are right, farmers spend long hours on their machinery in the fields.

Smells from animal manure should be expected.

Many farms raise livestock of one type or another. In this area you'll find dairy and beef cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, llama, alpaca and poultry—and their manure—in pastures. The manure is typically spread in farm fields as fertilizer.



Livestock often have access to pasture year around.

Livestock are built for outdoor living. They have fur or feathers to keep them warm and don't require heated barns or constant protection from the elements; they are fine in the rain or on winter pasture.

Sometimes livestock get through a pasture fence and into the road or your yard or garden.

Pasture fences are often electrified, but can short out in the rain or if growing grass touches them, allowing livestock to get through. If you see livestock out of their pasture, report this to your farm neighbor to avoid property damage or livestock injury.

Keep Safe on or near a Farm

Farming is one of the most hazardous occupations. There are many opportunities for injury on a farm, for farm workers as well as for non-farmers who have no knowledge of farm operations. Be aware:

- *Livestock fences are often electrified and can give quite a jolt if brushed against or touched*
- *Some livestock do not like people in their pasture and will charge*
- *Livestock have teeth and can bite*
- *Always wash hands after touching farm animals to avoid the possibility of bacteria-borne illness*
- *Plowed ground is soft, uneven and frequently stony; walking on it can be hazardous*
- *Farm fields may be treated with pesticides*

Keep Farms Safe

Don't touch farm animals without permission of the owner.

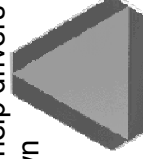
Just as you can get sick from an animal's germs, animals can get sick from yours. Also, if you've been on another farm recently, you can spread illness from one farm to another on your clothes and shoes.

Dogs should be leashed or under owner's command in areas that include livestock.

Farm animals, especially smaller ones, are at risk from family pets. Dogs can chase large livestock and cause injury and can kill smaller animals like chickens and lambs.

Slow Moving Vehicle Emblems should not be used to mark mailboxes or driveways.

Slow Moving Vehicle Emblems help drivers recognize the need to slow down when approaching a vehicle bearing them. It is illegal to use them on stationary objects.



Share the Road

Expanding residential areas have interrupted once contiguous farm fields. As a result, farmers must often use public roads to get from barns to fields and from field to field. Here are some tips to help keep you and your farm neighbor safe:

- *Farm vehicles are slow; reduce speed when approaching from either direction*
- *Farm machinery is BIG; it often needs more than one lane, especially when crossing a bridge*
- *Visibility on farm machinery is limited; leave plenty of room between you and a farm vehicle*
- *Passing farm machinery can be dangerous for you and for the farmer*
- *"Horse and Buggy" signs mean watch for these conveyances; slow down and give them space*



Respect Farmers and Farmland

Do not trespass on farmland. Ask for permission to use farmland and, if granted, abide by all use requirements.

Living near farm fields does not convey a right to use this land for personal recreation. ATV's, 4-wheel drive vehicles, snowmobiles and horses cause permanent damage to crops.