



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Phoebe Schreiner, phoebe@cadefarms.org / (607) 433-2545

New York Farmers invited to participate in statewide Vision 2050 plan through survey

ONEONTA, N.Y. – On December 2, 2021, the Center for Agricultural Development and Entrepreneurship (CADE), the Dyson School of Applied Economics and Management at Cornell University, the Cornell Small Farms Program, faculty from Columbia University, Hartwick College, and SUNY Cobleskill are pleased to launch a statewide farmer survey asking what farmers want to see for the future of New York State’s food system by 2050.

CADE Executive Director Phoebe Schreiner states, “This is a historic moment for New York State, and for all food system leaders. We are using a democratic process to gather input to create Vision 2050--a document that will be used as an advocacy tool to set agendas for our State political leaders. We are asking stakeholders, especially farmers, to identify barriers to be overcome and areas of opportunity and growth, so that we can encourage the adoption of a New York State strategic plan to strengthen agricultural development and our food system for the long term, inform policy, resources, and State programs and services.”

Schreiner emphasizes, “Farmers are the central pillar of our food system, and their perspectives are essential when it comes to guiding us towards an equitable, resilient, profitable, and healthy future.”

The survey represents the second phase of CADE’s data collection process, built on the results of 17 focus groups which were conducted between March and October, 2021 in partnership with Cornell University, SUNY Cobleskill, and other researchers. Structured as roundtable discussions, the focus groups brought together a total of 90 stakeholders from all sectors of the food system. This project follows a similar course chartered by Food Solutions New England, who released a 2060 Food Vision document produced by six partner states in 2014.

One of the themes that emerged in the roundtables from a sample of farmers who participated was the need to bolster farm profitability. Brian Reeves from Reeves farm in Baldwinsville, NY

remarks, “New York is an expensive place to do business. The profitability gap for farms is closing. If it continues to shrink, you will continue to see farms disappear or aggregate into fewer larger farms, which isn’t necessarily a good thing for the resiliency of our food system. If you make farming profitable, you’ll have more farmers.”

Discussions during the roundtables indicated several potential pathways to profitability. Jim Barber of Barber’s Farm in Middleburgh, NY, suggested that we need to explore “More community and state partnership with farms, including payment for ecosystem services, since agriculture will have a huge impact on the future of our climate. We also need to invest in infrastructure including transportation and processing.”

This approach, Barber continued, is most successful when tied to food access. “The entire community has an interest in ensuring everyone has access to nutritious food. We need to figure out how as a state and as a community we can address that while simultaneously tackling climate change.”

Jeff Williams, the Director of Public Policy of the New York Farm Bureau stated, “New York residents depend upon a safe, affordable and local food supply. Investment is needed to ensure that the necessary on-farm research is conducted, livestock health is protected and markets are established to foster a beneficial economy for farms and provide food access to consumers across the state.”

Bethany Wallis, Executive Director of NOFA-NY, added “The way I see New York agriculture, our water resource is tremendous and is being watched globally. Practices implemented on farms should protect our soil, protect our water, and our people.”

Farmers can give input on these issues and many more by taking 15 minutes to complete the survey identifying their food system priorities at cadefarms.org/vision-2050.

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The Center for Agricultural Development and Entrepreneurship (CADE) is a 501(c)3, not-for-profit organization whose mission is to increase the number and diversity of successful farm enterprises and related businesses in upstate New York. CADE seeks to build a vibrant food system in which locally owned agricultural businesses thrive and consumers are nourished by healthy, sustainably produced food. www.cadefarms.org

For more information or for sources of verification, contact:

Phoebe Schreiner, Executive Director, CADE

Contact: phoebe@cadefarms.org / 607-433-2545

Carlena Ficano, Ph.D., Hartwick College Professor of Economics; Board Member, CADE

Contact: ficanoc@hartwick.edu / 607-287-3398

Anu Rangarajan, Director of the Cornell Small Farms Program, Cornell University

Contact: ar47@cornell.edu / 607-255-1780

Miguel I. Gomez, Robert G. Tobin Professor of Food Marketing, Dyson School of Cornell University

Contact: mig7@cornell.edu / 607-351-7241

Jeff Potent, Adjunct Professor of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University, School of International and Public Affairs

Contact: jeffrey.potent@att.net / 917-922-9120

Curtis Ogden, Senior Associate, Interaction Institute for Social Change

Contact: cogden@interactioninstitute.org / 617-584-3211