

Securing the Future of the New York State Livestock Industry

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Livestock production is a vibrant component of New York's agriculture industry with high potential for growth. Although most livestock in New York is raised on small farms, this industry contributes **\$893 million** in sales to the rural New York economy as well as an extensive and diverse range of products to local and regional markets. With strategic investments, we can leverage our State's competitive advantages and expand supply of NY-grown livestock products.

To prioritize needs, the Cornell Small Farm Program and eight Cornell Cooperative Extension offices hosted the 2017 NY Small Farm Summit. Over 160 farmers and industry representatives participated in person, and another 440 provided priorities through an online survey.

Livestock Farmers are Optimistic about the Future

Over 85% of the farmers believe the New York Livestock sector has potential for growth. This optimism was similar regardless of farm maturity, number of species, revenue or growth in the last five years. This optimism is also driving growth of individual farms. Two thirds of responding New York livestock farmers (67%) scaled up their businesses in 2016. Most farms (73%) have seen gross revenue from sales of livestock products increase over the last five years.

Research and Extension Priorities to Grow the New York Livestock Industry

Farmers prioritized specific research and extension needs that would address constraints to scaling up production that were relevant to most species. The importance of each of these themes to the livestock industry are explored further, along with critical research questions and extension or education opportunities, in the full report.

Livestock Research and Extension Priorities:

- Advance grazing and forage systems
- Improve herd/flock nutrition, health and biosecurity
- Invest in breeding and genetics
- Optimize market channels and value-added opportunities
- Strengthen production and business management

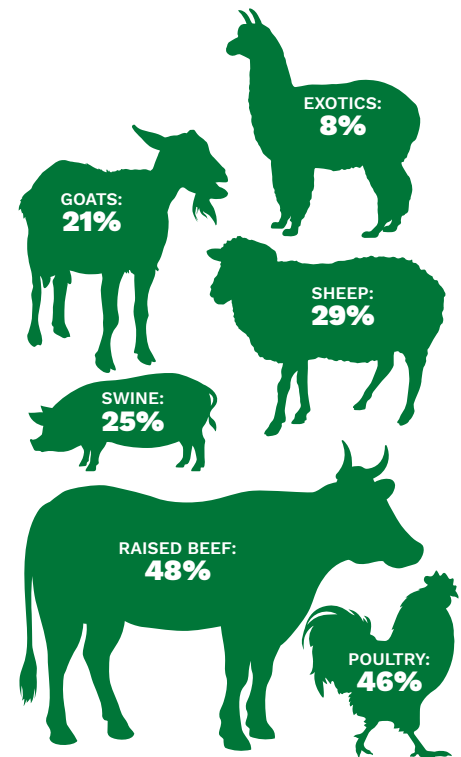
A Call to Action to Support NY Livestock Farmers

A coordinated research and extension effort is needed to further develop the New York livestock industry.

Recruit additional staff dedicated to research and extension in grazing, livestock production, health care and farm financial management –

Across the state a handful of researchers and extension professionals work hard to address challenges and provide training and timely response to livestock farmers' questions. But the demand for these services is growing while the number of professionals is decreasing. A strategic plan that engages expertise across our many educational institutions will multiply benefits.

84% of farmers were earning up to \$50,000 from livestock product sales



NY competitive advantages for livestock production:

- Proximity to markets
- Culturally diverse
- Excellent transportation
- Emerging markets
- Local meat demand
- Research and education support
- Agriculture infrastructure
- Land for grazing
- Reasonable land costs
- Access to fresh water



Formalize livestock farmer education programs – Farmers deserve the same rigorous training that supports other entrepreneurs to excel in their businesses. A cohesive curriculum in production, marketing, and business management across each species of livestock would not only improve farmer efficiency and profitability, but could also provide business benchmarks and be tied to incentives like grant and loan funds.

Increase support to commodity-based groups – Increasing participation from livestock producers on the boards of agriculture organizations, such as the Farm Bureau and New York Farm Viability Institute, will help ensure their needs are understood and funding directed to answer pressing questions.

Foster aggregation of livestock and products to improve access of our small farms to value added markets – Standardized health and management protocols can support pooling of product and stabilize supply. Food hubs or other marketing strategies can help aggregate and move products into urban markets, particularly for smaller farms that have labor and volume limitations.



These strategic investments and creative collaborations could help secure the New York State livestock industry as a vibrant and growing contributor to rural economies in the state. New York has the natural assets to support an expanding livestock industry. With directed action, these assets could be better leveraged to meet the demand for locally-sourced livestock products to feed our communities.



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The full version of this report (<http://bit.ly/2zBeeiP>) provides details by species on research and extension priorities for the non-dairy livestock industry in New York. We gratefully acknowledge the many CCE educators who supported the Summit, and especially co-authors Dr. Michael Baker, Dr. Tatiana Stanton, Nancy Glazier and Betsy Hodge. For additional information on this report, please call the Cornell Small Farms Program at 607-255-9227 or email us at smallfarmsprogram@cornell.edu.