THE INVOLVEMENT OF CORNELL'S COLLEGE OF AGRICLUTURE AND LIFE SCIENCES IN RURAL LAND USE POLICY

by

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Two large changes have occurred in land use in New York State in the twentieth century and workers at Cornell University--New York's Land Grant School--have been deeply involved in both. The first was a displacement out of farming of one-half the land in agriculture at the turn of the century--approximately 10 million acres, or 1/3 of the land area of the state.

The second change is a series of population movements, first out of the rural areas to the cities, then from the cities to the suburbs and semisuburbs, and now from the metropolitan areas back to the rural. Millions of people have been involved in these movements but counts are poor because definitons have changed. Land use studies at Cornell, however, recorded tens of thousands of vacant houses in the rural areas during the 1920s and 30s, the creation of large suburban and semisuburban developments around all major cities between World War II and 1970, and now a growth in homes in open-country areas.

Cornell Helped to Change Agriculture

The story of how the Land Grant Schools of the United States helped to change agriculture has been told many times. The triad of research, extension, and resident instruction was well suited to the aggressive young nation. Farmers were experimenting with new ideas and were ready to accept institutionalized experimentation. Experiment stations and extension teaching programs were promoted and accepted as aids to farmers, even though they produced changes that eventually displaced much land and many people from farming.

Studies of Land Displacement

Cornell started studying land displacement early. Liberty Hyde Bailey published a bulletin in 1899 entitled "The Problem of Impoverished Lands". Bailey was a biologist and approached the poor land problem as one of adapting crops to its limitations. G.F. Warren made the next major contribution through the farm business surveys he began about 1910 (Warren). Specialized surveys in land utilization were added in the late 1920s (Lewis). The work done by Warren and later by others under his general leadership produced a firm and widely publicized conviction in the 1920s and 1930s that large areas of land in New York should never have been cleared for farming (Hart 1939). Warren made an important contribution toward the creation of the state submarginal land purchase program that was inaugurated by the then governor Franklin D. Roosevelt in the 1930s and the parallel program that supplied tree seedlings free of charge for reforestation by private land holders (LaMont).

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By the 1940s the notion that submarginal land was land that never should have been turned to farming began to be replaced by a recognition that the technological changes of the immediately preceeding decades had increased farm productive potentials on all grades of land but that the demand for farm products had not kept pace with these potentials (Conklin 1949). Submarginality began to be viewed in terms of the displacement of farms on those particular kinds of land that happened not to have responded very generously to the new technologies.

Extension Programs for Rural Nonfarm Residents

The decades following World War II saw great changes in many parts of the world. Freed from a consuming commitment to destruction, people everywhere turned eagerly to building a better life. A large backlog of new technology and ideas had accumulated during the years of depression and war that was turned aggressively to making life comfortable and pleasant. In New York this included the building of the suburbs and some growth in rural living.

The displacement of land from farming rose to high levels following the war (Conklin 1964). There were rapid advances in hybridization, pesticides, fertilizer manufacture, mechanization, irrigation and drainage. Food demand was high and growing but did not keep pace with increases in farm productive potentials. Following the war land economists at Cornell turned again to the task of helping to ease the transition of land and people out of farming (Conklin and Starbird). This time, however, the shift of people from farming to other occupations was facilitated by improved rural schools, better roads and cars, an increasing dispersion of industry, and the completion of the rural electric grid.

Agricultural economists at Cornell made numerous surveys of farmers and other rural people following the war and by the early 1950s began to undertake special extension programs for rural nonfarm residents (Hart 1949). It was becoming clear that a growing group of people preferred life in rural areas to what they visualized as their alternatives in metropolitan circumstances. Some of these could have chosen life in the suburbs but most of them were not that affluent.

With the growth of the rural nonfarm population after World War II, economists at Cornell withdrew their support of the state program for purchasing submarginal lands. The price of this land rose following the war and real estate tax delinquency nearly disappeared.

Suburban Growth and A Proposal For Agricultural Districts

While economists at Cornell remained closely in touch with rural people and governments and with rural land use trends, they largely ignored the massive suburbanization movement during its first 20 years. We were aware that cities were spreading and were displacing some good farms, but surpluses

still were plaguing U.S. agriculture and the abandoned land problem remained large enough to provide us full employment. We also saw no possibility that we could modify the course of suburban events. Planners had become the policy experts in metropolitan affairs. A strong planning department developed at Cornell during that period but no close working relationships were established between agriculture and planning in the early years of suburbanization.

Governor Rockefeller and the farmers of the state, represented by the Grange and the Farm Bureau, pushed Cornell economists into a concern with urban growth in the middle 1960s. Some farmers at expanding suburban margins were selling their farms for large capital gains, but more farmers were seeing urban influences increase their taxes, create inhibiting government regulations, and otherwise interfere with their chances for continued financial success long before they had firm offers for their farms at prices that would enable them to become securely re-established elsewhere. In New Jersey, where these pressures had become strong earlier, farmers had obtained legislation that reduced the effect of speculation on farm taxes. New York farmers pressed for a similar law, but twice it was vetoed by Governor Rockefeller. He had a keen interest in land use planning and was sympathetic with those who sought to protect farming from speculation, but he did not think the New Jersey farm-value assessment law was adequate. In fact he felt that it helped speculators more than farmers.

Governor Rockefeller then created the Commission on Preservation of Farmland --later called the Agricultural Resources Commission -- with membership drawn widely from agriculture, including the Dean of The College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Cornell.

Also in the mid-1960s, Governor Rockefeller reorganized state planning agencies by creating the Office of Planning Coordination, and giving it a clear mandate to plan on a large scale and to propose means for implementing its plans.

Planning in New York has been largely a function of city, village and town governments. The state under Franklin D. Roosevelt's leadership mounted a significant planning effort during the Great Depression but it largely disappeared during World War II. Rockefeller was convinced that comprehensive statewide plans would be the key to continued development within the state and undertook in the 1960s to fund state planning generously from both state and federal sources. He also believed that the state should exercise its inherent powers to coordinate planning and development at local levels and to supplant local planning if necessary.

The activities of the Office of Planning Coordination (OPC) greatly overshadowed those of the Agricultural Resources Commission (ARC) but there was close liaison between the two agencies. The first major step by ARC was to propose an exemption from real estate taxes for 5 years for all new farm buildings other than residences. This was intended to encourage new farm investments even in the face of growing urban influences and was designed so that speculators could gain no advantages from it. This proposal became law with the Governor's approval.

The next major contribution from ARC was more complex and represented the culmination of research undertaken at Cornell in cooperation with ARC and with partial financing by OPC. This research involved detailed studies of urban fringe situations in which farming was being in part displaced and in part debilitated by suburban growth and semisuburban scattering (Conklin and Dymsza).

I was in charge of this research and became convinced that it would be fruitless to oppose suburban growth and increases in the population of nonfarm people in rural areas. I did, of course, bring to this work a background of having encouraged nonfarm people to enjoy rural nonfarm land ownership and I did presuppose that land use controls would continue to be exercised at local rather than state levels.

I also was well aware that the majority of both farm and nonfarm rural people outside the semisuburbs were opposed to police power controls on land use of the type that had become popular in the suburbs. Rural nonfarm people do not want to be excluded from farming areas and farmers oppose not only the prohibition of land sales for nonfarm purposes but also the maintenance of a bureaucracy to administer complex regulations. Farmers furthermore fear that once regulation is begun it will multiply to where it handicaps New York agriculture in its competitive contest with other regions of the nation.

Given this background, I focused in the late 1960s and early 1970s on the possibility of creating some mechanism for facilitating the pleasant and productive coexistence of farm and nonfarm people in rural New York. This work produced an ARC proposal for state legislation that would permit the local creation of agricultural districts within which farm taxes, regulations, and exercises of eminent domain would be adjusted to give farmers a greater chance for financial survival in the face of growing urban influence. Nonfarm people were not to be excluded from these districts. The districts were, in fact, to involve no exercise of the police power and thus no land use controls in the traditional sense.

A Proposal For Comprehensive State Land Use Controls

The work being conducted during this period by OPC produced a bill, Senate 9028, that was introduced in the 1970 session of the New York State Legislature and hopefully was to be passed in the 1971 session. It was patterned after the American Law Institute's suggestions for state land use legislation (American Law Institute) and contained such new concepts as state supervision of local government actions in the control of land use and state identification of "areas of critical state concern". State action was to be limited to the latter areas, but these were defined so they included most areas of the state--urban, suburban, and rural--in which there would be a significant demand for residential, industrial, or commercial construction. Farming areas also were included as being of critical state concern, and exclusive agricultural zoning was contemplated for those areas.

The ARC and OPC proposals were completed at about the same time and both agencies were in continuous communication with Governor Rockefeller. OPC's proposal was much more comprehensive, of course, and would have made the ARC proposal redundant. Rockefeller expressed a clear preference for the OPC proposal and instructed ARC to keep its proposal in readiness, but not to promote it at the legislative level, until the fate of the OPC proposal was determined. He told ARC that he personally did not expect S-9028 to pass, and he never went on record publicly as supporting it, but he made it clear to ARC that he wanted this proposal considered first by the legislature.

S-9028 never came to a vote in the legislature. Instead the legislature cut the budget of OPC by 60 percent and changed its name to the Office of Planning Services (OPS). Governor Rockefeller then contacted ARC and put a skilled legislative lawyer on the preparation of an agricultural district bill. That proposal passed the legislature without a dissenting vote and was immediately signed by the Governor (Conklin and Bryant).

I told the workers in OPC many times in our discussions of S-9028 as it was evolving that rural people would not like it, but I agreed that rural people were too few to influence much the outcome of the coming contest over its passage. When S-9028 was defeated I was too busy finalizing the agricultural district proposal and promoting its implementation to wonder about the source of the massive strength that not only defeated S-9028 but started its originating agency toward oblivion (OPS was dissolved in a few years). Today I believe that S-9028 was defeated by suburbanites. Those who, over the past 25 years, had won the upward struggle to the suburbs did not want any state agency that could usurp their power to reserve the suburbs for like minded people. Most suburbs in New York consist of small villages and towns located in rings around central cities whose boundaries have remained unchanged for decades. Each suburban village and town now has exclusive power to control land use through zoning, building codes, and similar measures. The maintenance of suburban real estate values as well as lifestyles is dependent upon these controls. S-9028 had the potential for destroying the exclusiveness of the suburbs because "areas of critical state concern" would have included nearly all parts, suburban as well as urban, of most metropolitan areas, and a small state board would have had ultimate control over land use in the critical areas.

Generalizing the Philosophy of Agricultural Districts

Planning at the practitioner's level in the United States has been more involved with zoning, subdivision controls, and building codes than with any other group of activities. Land use controls have been in demand in the growing suburban and semisuburban areas and planning agencies have developed high levels of expertise in responding to these demands (Perin).

Today suburban growth has almost ended in New York and there is no clear likelihood that it will be revived soon. Population growth is confined principally to rural areas. This change has greatly reduced suburban demands for planning services and has turned planner's interests more to rural areas (Woodruff).

Overall, metropolitan planning has sought to promote the separation of uses and the concentration of each in assigned areas. This goal has been justified on the basis of minimizing public service costs, preventing use conflicts, pacing rates of growth to local capacities to finance public service investments, preserving attractive environments, and promoting healthful surroundings.

Authoritarian land use controls, especially zoning, subdivision controls, and building codes, have been important means for making the separations so much demanded by metropolitan populations. The word "planning" is frequently accompanied by the word "zoning" in metropolitan planning literature. A small literature has begun to develop in which land use mixes are considered for certain metropolitan conditions but many of these discussions are more oriented to the architectural level than to city wide conditions.

Agricultural districts depart sharply from the metropolitan planning tradition. They accept an intimate geographical intermingling of uses as given and seek only to facilitate the coexistence of uses. To date these districts have sought to assure farmers that if they make large new investments in barns, orchards, irrigation systems, and the like they will not be taxed or regulated out of farming before they have a chance to recover their invested capital. In the future it seems possible that the idea of a facilitating district might be expanded to provide aids to a much wider range of relationships among the mixed land uses of rural areas.

Metropolitan planners often criticize agricultural districts as merely subsidies to farmers. They find two problems in accepting agricultural districts. The first, of course, is the notion that widely diverse uses should share the same geographic area and the second is the idea of substituting facilitation for authoritative action.

The Pluralism of Current Work on Rural Land Policy

Professionals in many disciplines at Cornell today are interested in rural land use policy and their points of view mirror the pluralism that is now so characteristic of American society. Accordingly, I will not try in the remainder of this paper to outline more than my own work and ideas. My interests are now focused on the contrasts that exist between the general body of metropolitan-derived proposals for rural land use policy in New York and the corresponding proposals that are originating with rural people, or that seem at least acceptable to them.

Conflict in the Adirondacks and Catskills

One might expect that S-9028 would have been the subject of bitter debate, but actually it was never exposed to public scrutiny. It was discussed repeatedly with sympathetic critics but rarely with persons of sharply different

minds. Since it never progressed from a study bill to one introduced for passage, it was not even debated in the legislature.

When S-9028 failed, Governor Rockefeller realized that its essential elements might be acceptable to those who formulate policy for the Adirondack Park. The boundary of this park encompasses some six million acres, but the state actually owns less than half the area. The rest is in private hands.

A few wealthy families based mostly in New York City were influential in creating the Adirondack Park shortly before the turn of the century and in obtaining passage of a consitutional amendment that prohibits all timber harvest from state owned lands therein (Lesher). These people built large vacation homes in the Adirondacks during the latter part of the 19th century and came to oppose the harvest of forest products because of its detrimental aesthetic effects. No precedent then existed for land use controls on rural private lands, so the remainder of the park continued in use for production of forest products.

During the course of the twentieth century, the very wealthy lost interest in Adirondack recreation. Many of their summer homes were torn down or deeded to the state. Their work of preserving the area has been taken up in recent years largely by upper middle income professionals and executives, who now maintain more modest summer homes, hike and camp, and patronize ski developments and other commercial facilities in the area.

The existence of S-9028, though it failed statewide, opened up possibilities for a measure of preservation in the Adirondacks never before thought possible. Zoning to control private land owners gained gradual acceptance nationally during the first half of the twentieth century, but controls in that period were in the hands of local people at city, town and village levels and in the Adirondacks local people had strongly opposed the "forever wild" amendment to the constitution and had no interest in taking action to preserve private lands.

As the wealthy had before them, the new generation of protectors sought support for their ideas on Adirondack preservation in metropolitan areas. They appealed to fellow suburbanites through a variety of mutually supported environmental organizations. There being no suburbs in the Adirondacks, no suburbanites became alarmed lest an Adirondack version of S-9028 reduce their autonomy. The new protectors also appealed to lower middle income city people, whose opportunities to visit the Adirondack wilderness are not great and would, in fact, be reduced as a result of the regulations being sought. The appeals directed to these people pictured the Adirondacks as Heaven. One does not go to Heaven, of course, until one's time comes, but he certainly wants to be sure Heaven is there when he needs it.

The Adirondack Park Agency land use controls were put in place in 1973 and for the first few years local newspapers reported numerous efforts by local people to fight them as best they could. Most local residents of the Adirondacks clearly consider that they have been deprived unfairly of property, while those who promoted the land use regulations claim that they were acting in the longrun interests of mankind and imply that the locals are greedy and ignorant.

Under these circumstances those who favor controls often stress the idea that land owners should be considered trustees instead of owners and must be subject to control in the longrun interest of all people. The local people, however, see the promoters of trusteeship arrive in their expensive cars, enjoy a period of what appears to be carefree recreation, then return to their expensive homes in the suburbs. And when they examine conditions further in the suburbs, they claim they find no concepts of trusteeship over land being practiced at home by their summer visitors. Suburbanites are indeed subject to strict land use controls, but they design those controls themselves for the purpose of increasing their equity in property. The local people of the Adirondacks are inclined to feel that it really is their summer visitors who are greedy.

Local rural people also develop a different set of ideas about who is serving the longrun interests of American society after they study metropolitan areas. In the suburbs they see rigorous land use controls enacted in the interests of "health, safety, morals, and general welfare" and then they find many of the people who are excluded from the suburbs living in unhealthy, unsafe, amoral, and unhappy circumstances in the "inner" city. They do find the suburbanites solicitous of the well-being of poor people: they vote for public housing, provided it is not to be located in the suburbs, for generous welfare allowances, and for the busing of children to improve their education. But they cling tenaciously to the land use controls that help to stratify and polarize metropolitan society.

In the rural areas of the United States there is intermingled heterogeneity (Bonnen and Nelson). The children of people in many stations of life ride the same buses to school as a matter of course. The insurance agent, the plumber, the truck driver, the hired farmhand, and the farmer all know each other by their first names. And the value of a house depends little on who occupies the next house down the road.

Rural people have told me that when metropolitan planners come to rural areas, it seems the first thing they do is seek to identify some group they can "ghetto-ize". Usually they select the mobile home dwellers. They begin by pointing out to occupants of other houses that the "trailer people" often have a disproportionately large number of children in school but pay only low taxes on their residences. The idea gradually is spread that to exclude mobile homes would reduce taxes. Perhaps even to force mobile homes into "parks" would reduce taxes.

In some towns this opening is enough to start serious consideration of a zoning ordinance. Often, however, no action follows unless the town includes at least small areas of semisuburban development wherein residents aspire to "suburban-hood". The areas of intense conflict over planning in New York are rings of towns containing edges of suburbia and spots of semi-suburban development. It is here that the voices are shrillest but the communication least. The conflict actually is between highly contrasting lifestyles --a rural lifestyle and a suburban one.

Metropolitan planners have serviced the suburbanites well for over three decades and have developed not only elaborate devices for excluding unwanted land uses, and those who practice them, from the suburbs, but they also have perfected elaborate rationalizations to legitimize the devices both socially and legally. But planners have become myopic in their attachments to the particular devices that are acceptable to suburbanites. They are truly puzzled by the opposition they encounter when they press for adoption of zoning, building codes and like measures in rural areas and they often lash out with bitter criticisms. For them rural people have got to be greedy and ignorant.

The planners' point of view prevailed in the Adirondacks with the support of their traditional clients. Then they pressed next for like action in the Catskill Park (Temporary State Commission to Study the Catskills). This park is much like its Adirondack counterpart in that it includes some state land that by constitutional amendment is to be forever wild, and considerable private land with no land use controls. The Catskills, however, are closer to New York City and the area proposed for control by a Catskill Park Agency included more land outside the park boundary.

Two problems developed in the Catskill effort. More local people were included in the proposed area, and large numbers of New York City moderate income people visit the area annually on vacation. The heavenly illusion was less useful in this case. In fact some city people feared they might be excluded or subjected to limitations on their vacation behavior. The Catskill Park Agency proposal failed.

Generalizing the Metropolitan Approach

The metropolitan approach to planning is separatist and authoritarian. Its standard vocabulary does not refer to people. No person is regulated; only uses. And the goals of regulation are confined to such universally desired objectives as increased property values, reduced taxes, more healthful conditions, promotion of beauty and natural environments, prevention of crime, and the stimulation of economic activity.

The United States constitution is written so that to admit land use controls are controls on people would be to assure their rejection by the courts. A recent Supreme Court decision declared it constitutional to exclude black people from an affluent suburb if it were not the intent to exclude them (Arlington Heights v. Metropolitan Housing Corp., 429 U.S. 252 [1976]. On the other hand another decision declared that the people of another suburb--one of somewhat lower incomes and less sophistication-- intended to exclude them and so must be denied their ordinance (Allison v. Akron, 45 OH2d227, 343NE2d 128 [1976]. In general, the people who are excluded from affluent metroplitan areas are kept far enough away so they do not wonder about where they might have lived and do not even articulate a concern with the ordinances that exclude them.

Rural people, however, have not been conditioned to such subtle distinctions and think quickly in terms of who will be affected if a zoning ordinance is passed in their area. And rural people often view their actions on planning

as responses to aggression by metropolitan planners and suburbanites. They see no reason to separate the "green people from the purple people", as one farmer put it, and place them in separate compartments. Farmers are bothered, however, by the rapid growth in numbers of rural nonfarmers in New York. They never expect the nonfarmers to become numerous or affluent enough to buy any major part of the farm land at high prices, but their presence tends to raise taxes, and bring vandalism, stealing, dog damage, complaints about farm activities, and other problems. But farmers are not accustomed to the controls that metropolitan planning would bring. And the indigenous rural nonfarm people (rural people born in rural areas) control most rural local governments in New York anyway and could not be out-voted by farmers even if farmers might wish they could somehow remove them from the area.

Both farmers and rural nonfarmers in New York join in asking why metropolitan planners are pressing so insistently for police power controls of rural land use. It is the planned and controlled areas of the state--the metropolitan areas--that are losing population. Even the new towns, proposed as places of great beauty where planning was to be total from the ground up, failed.

Rural people wonder if metropolitan planners have run out of things they know how to do in metropolitan areas. Suburban growth has been the lifeblood of metropolitan planning, and that growth has nearly stopped in New York. Perhaps planners would like to catch the escaping urbanites and bring them back to re-people the decaying inner cities. In this case, however, their task is larger than it might seem at first. Most of the people who leave the cities in New York do not stop until they reach another city in the South or West (Scholvinck). To refill cities in New York it will be necessary to entice indigenous rural people to again move city-ward as they once did, and these people find their urban alternatives far less attractive now than formerly.

Many planners recently have fastened their attention on "preserving farmland", but they do so without dropping their metropolitan language and land use control ideas (Toner). The results are both laughable and frightening to rural people. The idea of "preserving farmland" in itself reveals a non-rural point of view. Metropolitan planners seem not to recognize that farm land differs from other land by virtue of a process called farming. But to promote the preservation of farming would expose metropolitan planners to a need to know the nature of this process and those who conduct it. The preservation of a process rather than an object also is not consistent with some of the control ideas metropolitan planners bring with them. To preserve farming requires farmers with high levels of skill who are willing to work long hours for modest pay and willing to direct a large continuous stream of new capital into their businesses even when risks are high.

Large lot zones where parcels of less than 10 to 40 acres may not be built upon, cannot preserve farming, yet in a recent national planning publication they are held up as an example of current progress toward "farmland preservation" (Coughlin and Keene), and several such ordinances have been passed in New York. Such zoning ordinances are very well designed to preserve open space in semisuburban estate areas, but the lots are far too small for commercial farms. In semisuburban estate areas the integrity of such ordinances is strongly supported by owners who are anxious that less affluent lifestyles not detract from their property values. Promoters of large lot zones presume of course that persons of modest means cannot afford to buy large lots. If it truly is a commercial farming area, however, land prices will not have gone so high as to exclude all moderate income people and once they enter pressures for zoning changes follow.

Exclusive agricultural zoning was the control measure visualized under S-9028. Such ordinances still are promoted in New York, but without state action have not been adopted. Two truly innovative devices have been tried in small areas with considerable success. Both involve government acquisition of development rights. One is a county program to purchase development rights to farm land and hold them indefinitely (Lesher and Eiler). The other is a town program to acquire development rights to farm land temporarily in return for tax concessions (Bills and Gardner). A type of compensatory zoning has been tried in a third instance but the program has not functioned.

Government programs to acquire development rights have been favorably received by the persons from whom they are being purchased. Sales are voluntary and the owners retain unencumbered rights to continue farming. The costs of acquisition are high, however, and nothing precludes the use of the land for affluent semisuburban estates though its use is limited nominally to agriculture.

Farmers Respond to Agricultural Districts

Agricultural districts appear to be affecting the decision-making of many full-time commercial farmers in New York. Over two-thirds of the farmers are now in districts (Gardner). The acreage of cropland harvested in the state is increasing, investments in farm plant and equipment are higher than they ever have been, and farm output is at record levels. In the past century New York has dropped to a middle position among all the states of the country in agricultural activity, but to be in this position is remarkable considering our highly urbanized conditions.

The impact on agriculture of growth in our rural nonfarm population must not be ignored, however, even though agriculture now seems strong (Conklin 1980). Fewer rural young people are finding the suburban dream within their reach and life for them in the inner city is unattractive. Even some children of suburbanites are joining them and many retirees are finding rural life the only possibility for stretching their meager incomes to cover necessities. The growth in the rural population of New York is the result of widespread declines in levels of living throughout the state (Conklin 1979).

It is possible, however, to live fairly comfortably in rural settings even with modest incomes. Rural residents can reduce living costs by building their own homes or buying trailers, repairing their own cars, cutting wood for fuel, growing a garden and even some livestock, and practicing less expensive forms of outdoor recreation. Such activities are either impossible or are prohibited by zoning and related regulations in cities and suburbs.

It is unlikely that the stratification and polarization of New York metropolitan areas will be eliminated for many decades. There are not enough resources available to subsidize inner city rehabilitation on the scale that would be needed and suburbanites are not about to permit their suburban enclaves to be merged with the cities.

Farmers actually need less than a quarter of New York's land area to continue to increase agricultural output, but to compete they need certain specific lands and these are widely scattered. Agricultural districts are now affording farmers some measure of protection from the growing numbers of nonfarmers, but pressure is increasing.

So long as police power action rests at the local level, nonfarmers will block moves to exclude them from farming areas. State zoning is unacceptable to suburbanites and there are not enough funds to purchase development rights to all farm land. Many farmers refuse to sell land for nonfarm residences, but nonfarm land is available nearby in most communities. Farmers even rent some one-third of the cropland they use from nonfarmers.

Most of the reports issued on farm land preservation in the United States fail to recognize the existence and importance of the scattered rural nonfarm population (Coughlin and Keene). I have estimated that in New York there are a million nonfarm people scattered among the 25,000 full-time commercial farm families in the state. At four persons per farm family, this would mean that farm people are outnumbered by 10 to 1 in their home communities. I have no estimates for other states but casual observation suggests that farm people could not win an election in most of the local units of government east of the Mississippi River if all nonfarmers voted against them.

To me the most pressing current issue in rural land use policy is one of improving arrangements to promote the peaceable and productive coexistence of widely diverse groups in the rural scene. Agricultural districts in New York were designed to make one small step in this direction. More are needed but planners are not likely to make important contributions so long as they cling to the authoritative, separatist, metropolitan model.

Summary

Rural land use changes have been marked over the past century in New York and workers at Cornell University have played a role in developing policies addressed to them. Over a third of the state became obsolete for commercial farming and Cornell helped in developing and spreading the technologies that caused this. Workers at Cornell also became involved in publicizing the obsolescence of land, identifying appropriate new uses, and promoting public action to solve transition problems.

Cornell helped to close the "farm abandonment" era by promoting nonfarm use and occupancy of the lands no longer suited to farming. The increase in the nonfarm population of rural areas started slowly when rural children began to commute to the city instead of moving, but it has become a rapidly growing tide in recent years.

Workers at Cornell proposed agricultural districts as means for facilitating the peaceable and productive coexistence of farm and nonfarm people in rural areas and this device was accepted by New York State after suburban interests rejected an authoritarian approach that would have jeopardized the autonomy of the suburbs.

There is today a much greater diversity of interest in rural land use policy at Cornell than once existed. My own interests have led me to believe that the growth in our rural nonfarm population is partly a consequence of the high degree of metropolitan stratification and polarization that has resulted from authoritarian land use controls, and is not likely to turn around.

I believe that continued growth in the rural nonfarm population will gradually make competitive farming in New York more difficult, although agriculture here today is stronger than it ever has been. I believe also that rural nonfarm people will so outnumber farm people that they will determine local land use policy and will not pass zoning or other ordinances that exclude them or their children from farming areas.

In the light of these notions, I believe it highly important that rural people work concertedly on the development of further measures to facilitate the existence of intermingled rural diversity, and I hope that Cornell participates actively in this effort.

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