

## **The Farm Project - Coming into Focus**

Earlier this year, the Township began “The Farm Project,” a concerted effort to make local farming profitable. Preserving farms is very important in East Amwell and now we’re adjusting our goals to ensure that we have working farms long into the future. Since the project started, we’ve made a lot of progress.

The Township’s planner, Heyer and Gruel Associates (HGA), is analyzing development trends within the AVAD and evaluating if the current zoning is capable of producing economically viable farming operations. The intent of the AVAD was to preserve farms. We need to determine if the AVAD is doing that *and* if our local farms are sustainable. That’s what HGA is studying.

We are also working with the County to develop an interactive, web-based map of local farm stands and local farm service operations, like equipment repair, saw blade sharpening, and equine boarding facilities. This effort takes inspiration from the County’s very successful 579 Trail initiative.

One of the most creative (or some might say audacious) ideas that we’re working on is a concept for a farmers’ market integrated with a farmers’ resource center. In this very early stage, we imagine a single facility where farmers and other vendors - like cheese makers and farriers - offer their products and services directly to the public. This same facility would also house an office, providing resource information to farmers on issues like farm mentoring programs, pest control, financing and development, or converting to organic farming. As both a market and a resource center, this new facility would be invaluable to all our residents - farmers and non-farmers alike.

These are just the highlights of what we’re working on at the moment. If you’d like more information, or if you want to share your thoughts with us, please contact the principle project coordinator, Tam Lee at [eafarms156@gmail.com](mailto:eafarms156@gmail.com) or 609-333-0678. Thank you!