

# rural new york minute

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## What are the Plans of Owners of Idle Agricultural Land in NYS?

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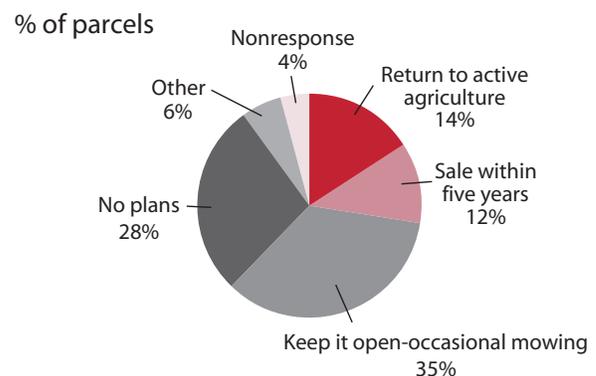
For many years, farm and forest land in NYS has been moving out of the hands of owners who primarily view their land as a productive resource and into the hands of owners more concerned with amenity and natural resource attributes.

In a recent survey conducted by the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets (NYSDAM)\*, rural landowners reported the following:

- 90% of the state's undeveloped rural land can be classified as active agriculture (41%), forest land (41%) or idle farm land (8%).
- The primary reason for holding rural land is agriculture, followed closely by use for a primary residence.
- Owners of 35% of all agricultural parcels plan to keep their land open, with occasional mowing; 28% say they have no organized plans for their land; owners of 14% of these parcels plan to return them to active agriculture; and a small but important minority (12%) of the parcels are expected to be sold in the near term (see Figure 1).
- Financial considerations, including annual property tax levies and the desire to generate income, are the most important reasons land owners give for selling undeveloped land (see Figure 2).

Understanding land owners' views and motivations toward the use of their farm and forest land is a critical first step in addressing farmland preservation, active management of forestland, and the loss of open space. ♦

**Figure 1:** Do you have any near-term plans for your idle agricultural land? (448 owners of idle land)



**Figure 2:** Which of the following is the most important reason you want to sell your idle agricultural land?

