

Addressing Weather and Climatic Challenges to Agriculture and Water Quality in the New York City Watershed

Frequently Asked Questions



What is the scope of work?

AgMIP is working with the Watershed Agricultural Council (WAC) and the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to use agricultural, economic, and climate models to observe how best management practices (BMPs) perform across climate conditions and to assess their economic viability. Using these findings, WAC, AgMIP, and DEP will develop a climate action plan for agriculture within the NYC watershed, with the goal of improving BMPs so that farmers can continue to protect NYC water quality into the future.

Who is involved?

This project is a partnership of WAC, the DEP, and AgMIP, and is funded through the United States Department of Agriculture's Natural Resource Conservation Service. Farmers operating in the NYC Watershed can help the project to address their needs by providing input on the application and effectiveness of existing water BMPs and guidance on adapting BMPs to evolving climate conditions.

Will farmer information be used?

Farmers' input is essential to ensure that the project produces information that is useful to farmers and that the perspective of farmers in the watershed guides recommendations for improved BMPs. All farm-specific information will be confidential and anonymous, adhering to the same confidentiality procedures currently employed by WAC and the NRCS.

How will farmers benefit?

BMPs may require revision in order to continue protecting water quality as weather and environmental conditions change. This project can help guide the evolution of BMPs to support the continuation of successful farming in the watershed and the broader agricultural region. Participating farmers will contribute to ongoing efforts to maintain a thriving agricultural economy in the region and to secure safe drinking water for NYC.

How can farmers become involved?

Farmers can help guide the project by attending upcoming workshops and focus group meetings, by participating in a survey, and by meeting individually with project staff. As noted above, all information and perspectives offered by participating farmers will be held in strict confidence.

Have other questions? Reach out to Kevin Karl at kevin.karl@columbia.edu.

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AgMIP's Data Sharing Principles

NRCS Conservation Cooperator

AgMIP is a Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Conservation Cooperator. This project complies with the rules and regulations of the USDA-NRCS and meets the requirements of Section 1619 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of the 2008 Farm Bill. Information protected under Section 1619 includes producer names, addresses, and geospatial information.

Data Sharing Principles

Confidential

AgMIP is bound by federal statute to protect all information collected – any disclosure of information is considered a violation

Voluntary

Farmer participation in this project is 100% voluntary and the scope of participation will be clear prior to any agreement being made

Anonymous

All data collected will be anonymized and any personally identifiable information will be removed

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Research institutions, such as Columbia University, establish Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) to protect human subjects involved in research projects. This means:

- All research activities, especially those involving data collection from farmers, must align with IRB rules and guidelines and be approved by the Board before any data collection occurs.
- AgMIP will obtain informed consent from participating farmers, anonymize collected data, and enforce measures to safeguard the privacy and overall well-being of farmers.
- These measures also extend to any data previously collected by WAC that will be exchanged with AgMIP as part of this project.



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A Partnership of the Watershed Agricultural Council (WAC), the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), and the Agricultural Model Intercomparison and Improvement Project (AgMIP) at Columbia University

Watershed Agricultural Council



AgMIP



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Who We Are

The Agricultural Model Intercomparison and Improvement Project (AgMIP) is a global community of researchers, scientists, and stakeholders hosted at Columbia University that use agricultural models to assess the future sustainability of agricultural systems and food security. Beyond focusing on a transformation to sustainable agriculture, a key tenet of AgMIP's mission is to incorporate stakeholders into the modeling process to ensure their needs and perspectives are addressed.

The AgMIP Team



Cynthia Rosenzweig is a Senior Research Scientist at the NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies and the co-located Columbia Climate School's Center for Climate Systems Research. She is the co-founder of the Agricultural Model Intercomparison and Improvement Project (AgMIP). She is the 2022 recipient of the World Food Prize, considered as the "Nobel Prize for Food and Agriculture."



Malgosia Madajewicz is an Associate Research Scientist at the Columbia Climate School's Center for Climate Systems Research. She is an economist with expertise in adaptation to climate change and management of climate risks. She is currently serving on the Westchester County Climate Task Force and has participated in a number of other task forces concerned with adaptation.



Jeffrey Potent is an Adjunct Professor of International and Public Affairs at Columbia University. He has lived part time and now full time in Delaware County for the past 35 years, working on numerous community projects, most of which focus on strengthening our local food system. Formally, Jeff held leadership positions with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Cornell and Rutgers Universities.



Kevin Karl is a Research Associate at the Columbia Climate School's Center for Climate Systems Research, focusing on the intersection of food systems and climate change. He has spent the bulk of his career working as a farmer. Most recently, he launched an urban educational farm for a non-profit organization called Growing Gardens and is passionate about ecologically regenerative agricultural practices.

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The weather patterns in the Catskill region are changing in ways that are likely to impact farming. This project is engaging farmers and other agricultural stakeholders to investigate how to manage water quality and preserve thriving farming livelihoods in the face of a changing environment. The project will help to improve best management practices (BMPs) that protect water supplies while also serving the needs of farmers.

Input from farmers is critical to enable this project to serve farmers' needs. There are several ways to get involved. One way is to participate in a focus group discussion at which farmers can share their experience with water quality BMPs, how they affect your farming operations, what obstacles you may face to implementing them, as well as other challenges and opportunities that you have on your farm. We would like to understand how you think BMPs may help you manage your farm effectively. The focus group discussion will last about an hour, and we will offer you \$50 to thank you for your time. Your answers will be anonymous and confidential. We will not save your name or contact information.

Please tell us about you and if you would like to get involved in a few questions below.

Scan here to fill out this survey digitally



1. Are you currently an active farmer?

Yes No

4. How many years have you been farming?

_____ years

2. In which county and state is your farm?

5. Do you implement water quality best management practices through WAC or NRCS?

Yes No

3. What type of farm do you manage?

Select all that apply.

Dairy Vegetable

Beef Other

If Other, please describe:

6. Would you like to participate in a focus group discussion?

Yes No Maybe

7. Would you like to share your email address or phone number so we can contact you about the focus group discussion or other opportunities to give input?

Name: _____

Email: _____

Phone number: _____

Once you've completed this survey, please be sure to return it to the AgMIP project table.

Watershed Agricultural Council





**Environmental
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