

# Northern Forest Compost Collaborative

Maureen Knapp, Farmer Chair of  
Collaborative and co-owner Cobblestone  
Valley Farms

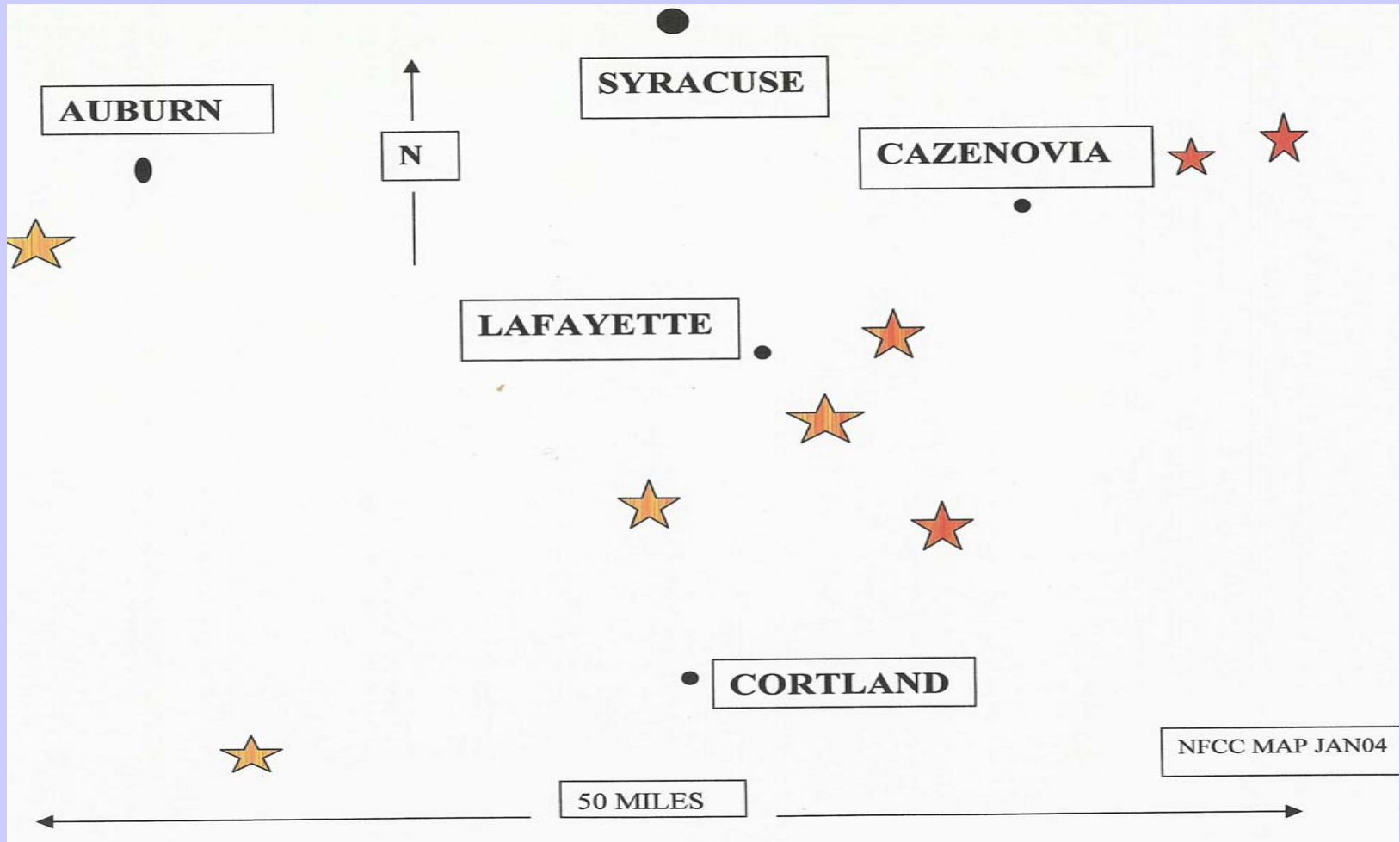
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# Description of Collaborative

- 8 Farms
- 5 Certified Organic Dairies
- 2 Conventional Dairies
- 1 Poultry Farm (eggs)
- Onondaga, Madison, Cortland, Thompsons and Cayuga Counties
- No formal contract during formation phase

# Farm Locations



# Project Team

- Project Manager- WASTE NOT Resource Solutions; Brian Jerosse and Darren Kupinsky- NY/VT-based partnership
- CWMI- Jean Bonhotal- testing/oversight
- Cornell Coop. Ext- Ed Staehr- economics
- Maureen Knapp- farmer chair
- Scott Potter- Dairy Support Services

# Collaborative Farms

- 30,000 cubic yards of manure- portion to be composted to be determined
- Approximately 2200 dairy animals- mature and youngstock
- 120,000 laying hens
- Approximately 3500 acres
- Eligible for cost-sharing on equipment rental and supplies

# Broad Project Goals

- Share specialized equipment for composting between multiple farms
- Share technical, information and economic support resources
- Manage materials between farms to achieve nutrient and organic matter management goals (C-N-P-K)
- Reduce manure and residual mgt. costs

# On-Farm Composting Benefits

- Improved nutrient conservation and flexibility in nutrient application
- Streamlined management of manure and other residuals / opportunity to build soil
- Reduced risk of livestock disease transmission and environmental pollution
- Increased revenue potential from organic products or sales of compost

# On-Farm Composting Challenges

- Stressed labor resources can make mgt. changes difficult/lack of technical expertise
- Common manure management systems generate high-moisture manures
- Industry information can promote investments in costly equipment
- Bedding and amendments expensive or less available in some regions



# Timing

- Project Awarded in April 2003
- Summer 2003- Farm Assessments
- Sept. 2003- Compost Turner Arrived
- Expand composting programs
- Document and assess economics of greater integration of composting in farm operation
- April 2005- Final Report

# Funding

- New York State Department of Economic Development, Environmental Services Unit (ESU) -formerly EMIG
- Collaborative farms (cash and in-kind)
- Other potential funding- USDA NRCS or Rural Development, Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Farmland Viability..

# Sandberger Turner



- **Tractors, loaders, spreaders, trucks also used**

# Site Improvements

- Farm specific- dependent on equipment access and natural resource concerns
- Minimize capital investment- attempt composting on unimproved surfaces, use seasonal mgt., delay costly improvements
- Focus on improved mixing areas, driveways, runoff control

# Compost Site

- **Unimproved Pad- gravel soils**



# Compost for Export

- Compost targeted for sale will be graded for optimal end-use.
- Shared technical support will promote consistency and quality control for composts produced on different farms
- Pooling of compost and compost blending may allow collaborative farms to make sales to high-volume or specialty projects

# Additional Objectives

- Integrate manure handling and compost production practices into farm cropping schedules and other farm labor demands
- Customize training/practices for each farm
- Meet farm fertility needs through primarily farm-generated or local residuals
- Export excess nutrients/residuals off-farm in desirable forms- compost blends