

WE NEED FARMER HOUSING.



The Hudson Valley's housing crisis affects all working people, with unique and profound impacts on small farms. With workers unable to find housing, and farms unable to find and keep workers, farms are downsizing, reducing productivity, or shuttering altogether. Extraordinary housing pressures, on top of the usual risks and challenges of farming, put the agricultural nature of our region in serious question. Will the Hudson Valley keep its farms and its rural character? Or will pricing pressures continue to push farmers and farm workers out of the region or out of their vocation?

The answer will depend on whether or not we respond in time to establish dedicated, affordable farmer housing.

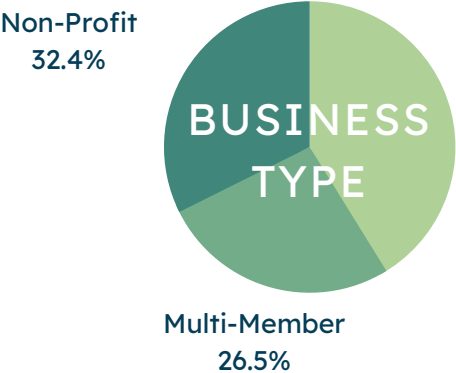
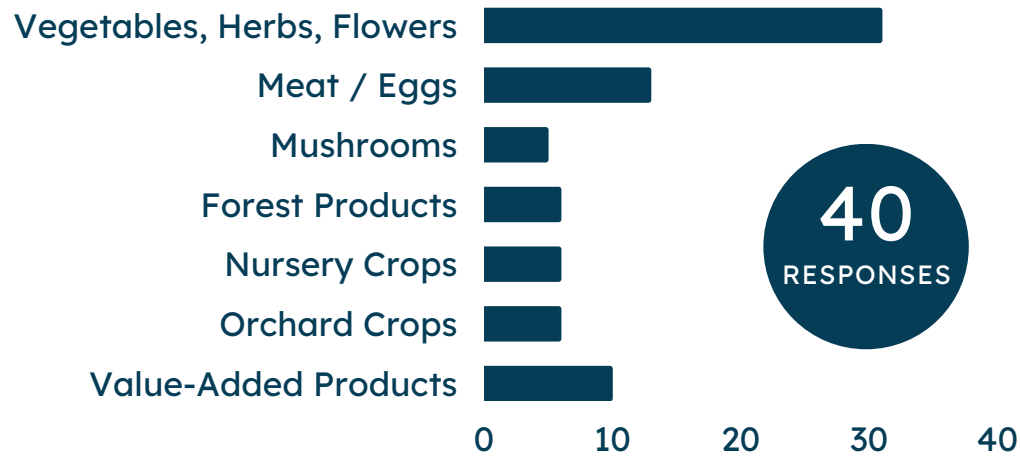
The Farmer Housing Working Group was convened to advocate for this critical need. In this booklet, you'll find the results of our Farmer Housing Needs Survey, taken from 80 responses from farmers and farm workers, Oct-Dec. 2022. Find our other work to date, learn more about the Working Group, or get in touch via our website:

www.hvfarmerhousing.org

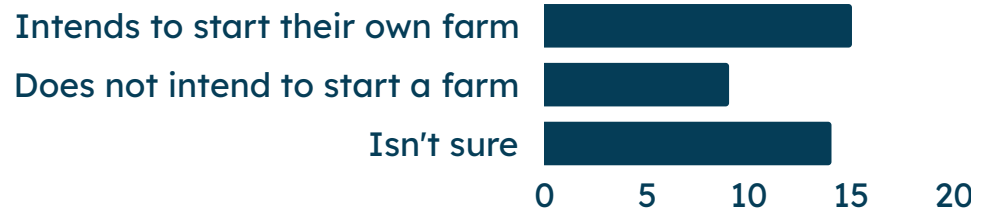
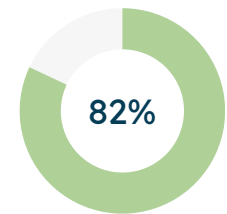
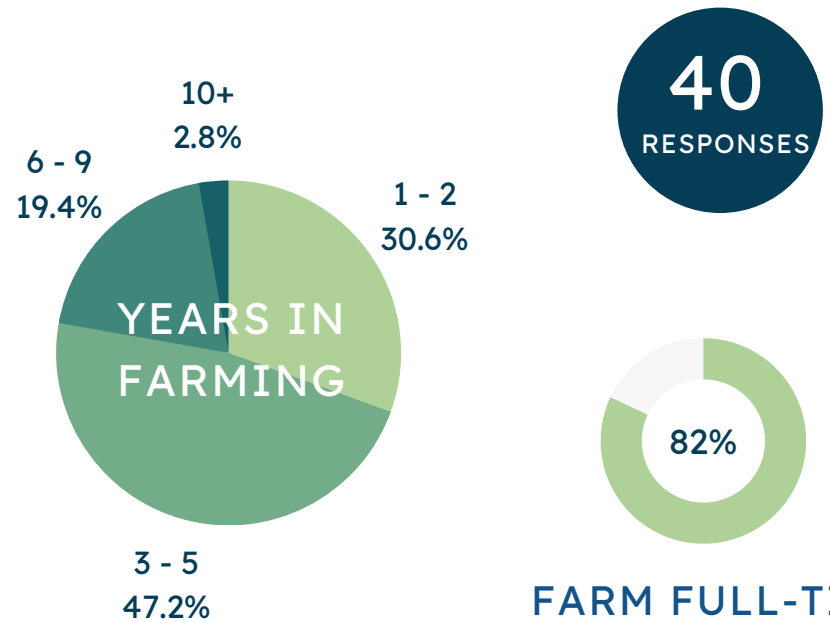
2022 FARMER HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY

RESPONSES & DEMOGRAPHICS

WHO ARE THE FARMS?

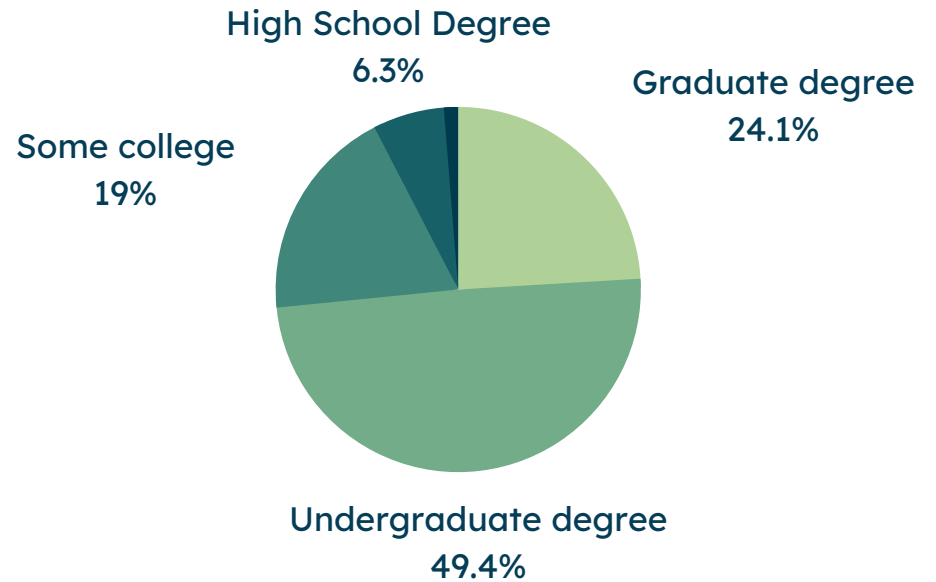
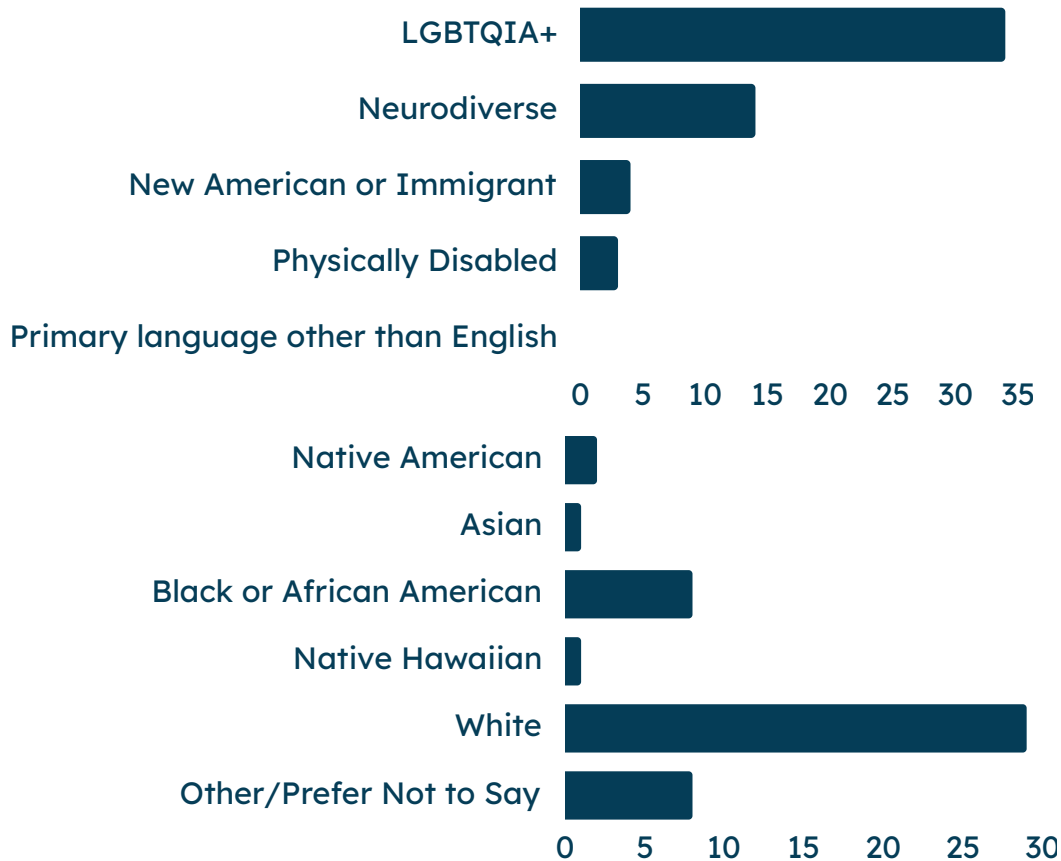


AND WHO ARE THE WORKERS?



2022 FARMER HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY

RESPONSES & DEMOGRAPHICS



2022 FARMER HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY

CURRENT HOUSING SNAPSHOT

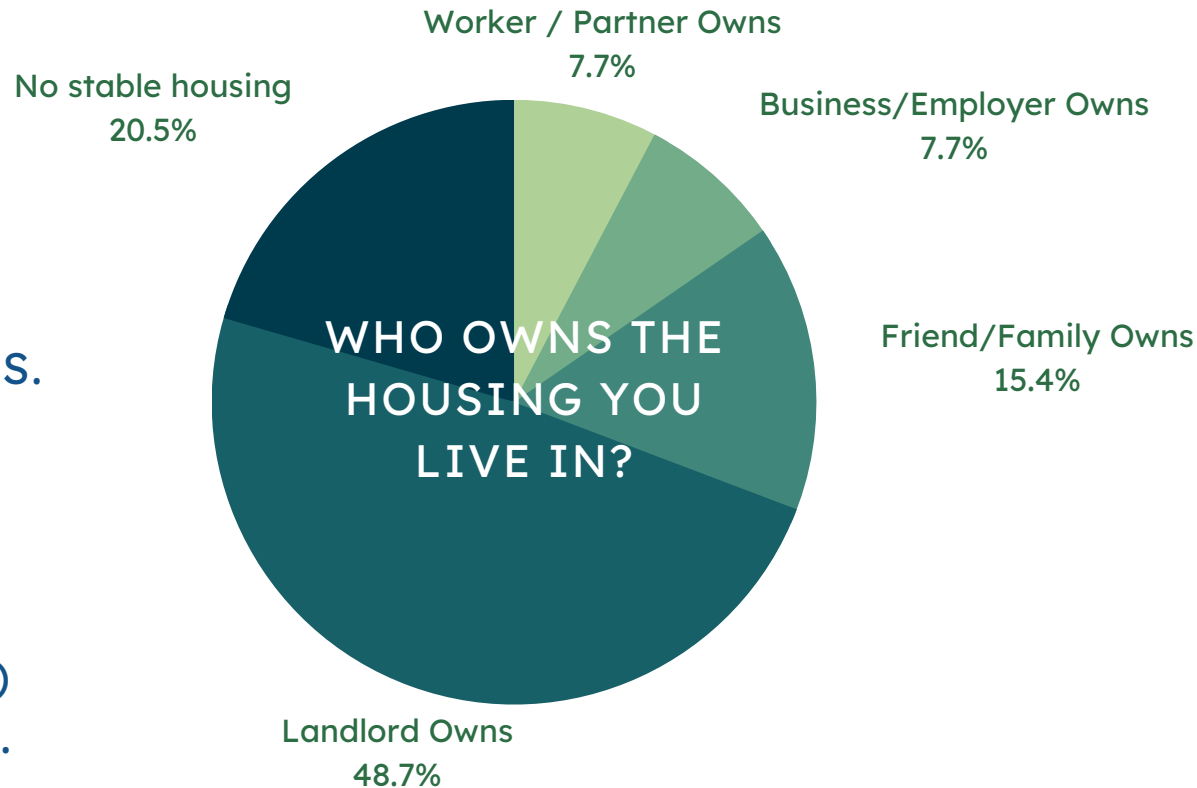
RESPONSES FROM FARM WORKERS

A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF FARM WORKERS LACK STABLE HOUSING (PLACE TO STAY FOR 3 OR MORE MONTHS).

MOST ARE LIVING IN RENTAL APARTMENTS, OR IN FAMILY HOUSES.

OWNERSHIP AND EMPLOYER-PROVIDED HOUSING ARE RARE.

FEW (6%) LIVE ON SITE. MOST (70%) LIVE WITHIN 30 MINUTES OF WORK.



2022 FARMER HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY

CURRENT HOUSING SNAPSHOT

RESPONSES FROM FARM WORKERS

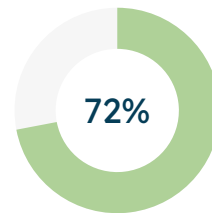
STABILITY AND COST
ARE BOTH BIG ISSUES
FOR FARM WORKERS.



Lack a stable place
to live for 3 or more
months

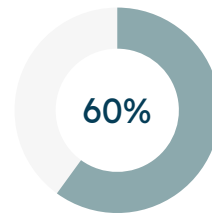


Another 35% will
need to move in 3-
11 months.



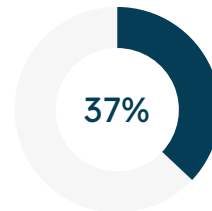
**MOST FEEL THEIR HOUSING
IS SAFE & HEALTHY**

While 25% felt their housing should be improved,
only 3% had significant health/safety concerns.



**BUT MOST ARE COST-
BURDENED**

housing costs are more than 30% of their
household income.



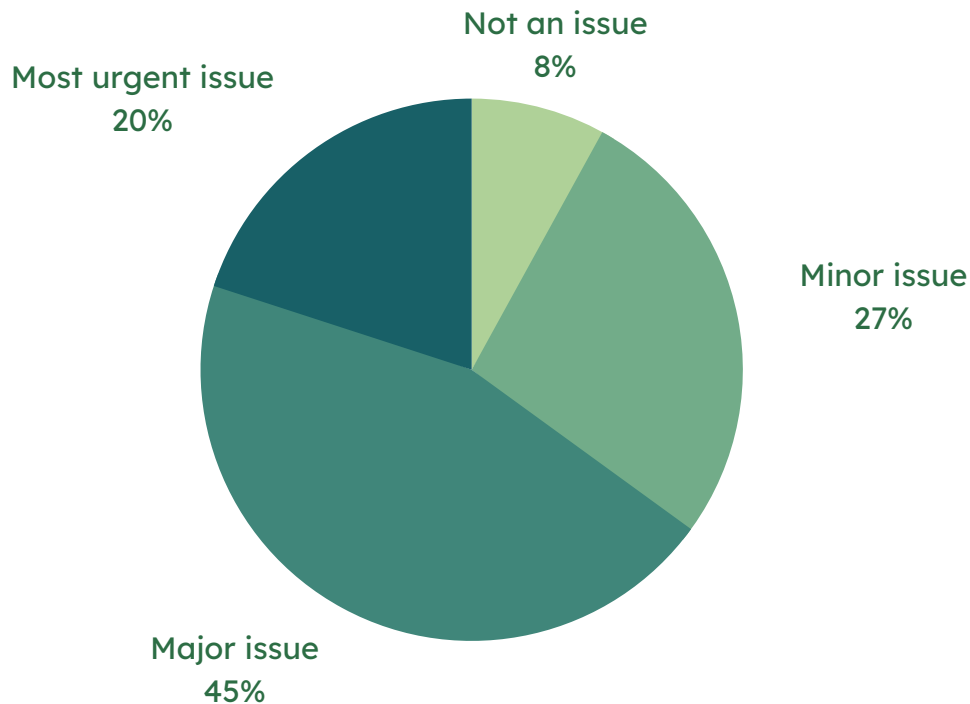
**AND MORE THAN 1/3 ARE
SEVERELY COST-BURDENED.**

Housing costs are more than 50% of household
income.

2022 FARMER HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY

IMPACT ON FARM WORKERS

SUBSTANTIAL IMPACT ON MAJORITY OF WORKERS



MAJOR INFLUENCE TO DEPART FROM AGRICULTURE OR REGION



5 out of 10 say housing is a moderate concern for their future in agriculture.

4 out of 10 say they are considering leaving the field because of housing difficulties.



Of those who told us they were definitively leaving the region, 5 out of 7 cited housing cost as a significant factor.

2022 FARM HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY

CURRENT HOUSING SNAPSHOT

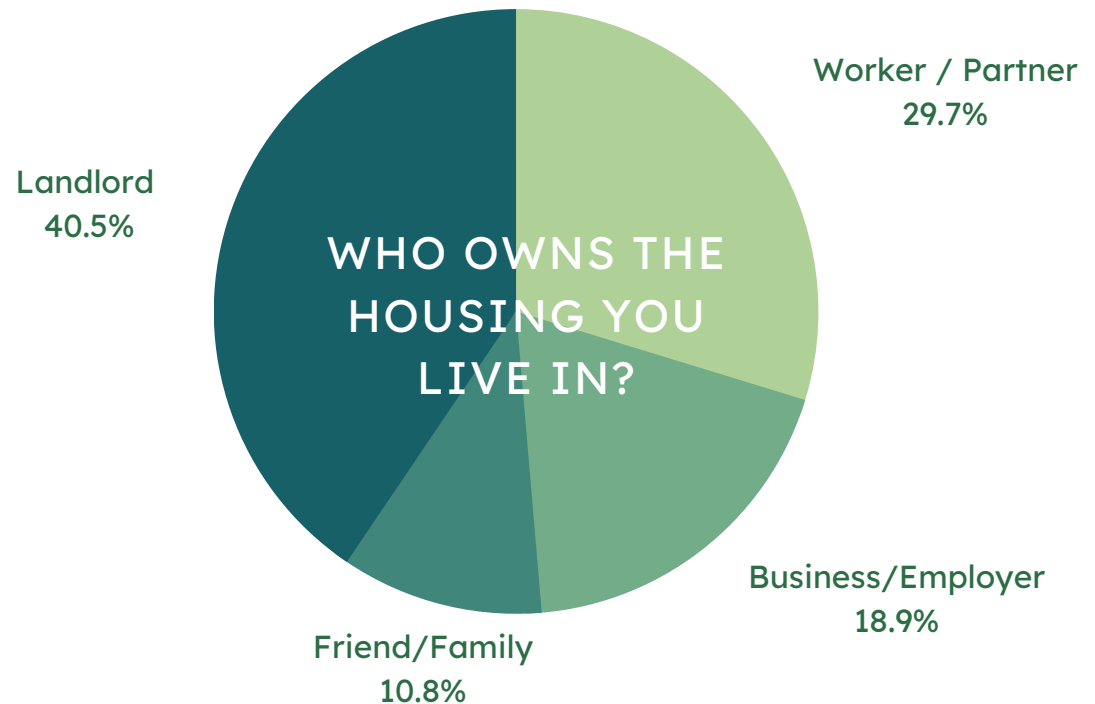
RESPONSES FROM FARM OWNERS & MANAGERS

30% OF FARM OWNERS & MANAGERS OWN HOMES.

MORE LIVE IN DIVERSE RENTAL HOUSING -- APARTMENTS, HOUSES, MOBILE OR TINY HOMES.

FARM-PROVIDED HOUSING IS A BIT MORE COMMON.

ABOUT 40% LIVE ON SITE.
ANOTHER 40% LIVE WITHIN 30 MINUTES OF WORK.



2022 FARMER HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY

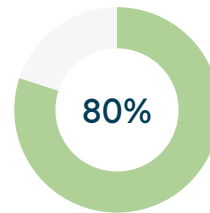
CURRENT HOUSING SNAPSHOT

RESPONSES FROM FARM OWNERS & MANAGERS

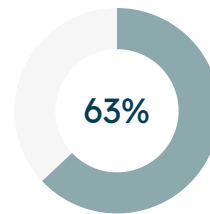
A SMALL PORTION OF FARM OWNERS & MANAGERS STRUGGLE WITH HOUSING COSTS OR STABILITY.



Less than 20% will need to move in 3-11 months.

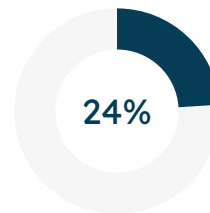


MOST FEEL THEIR HOUSING IS SAFE & HEALTHY



MOST ARE COST-BURDENED

housing costs are more than 30% of their household income.



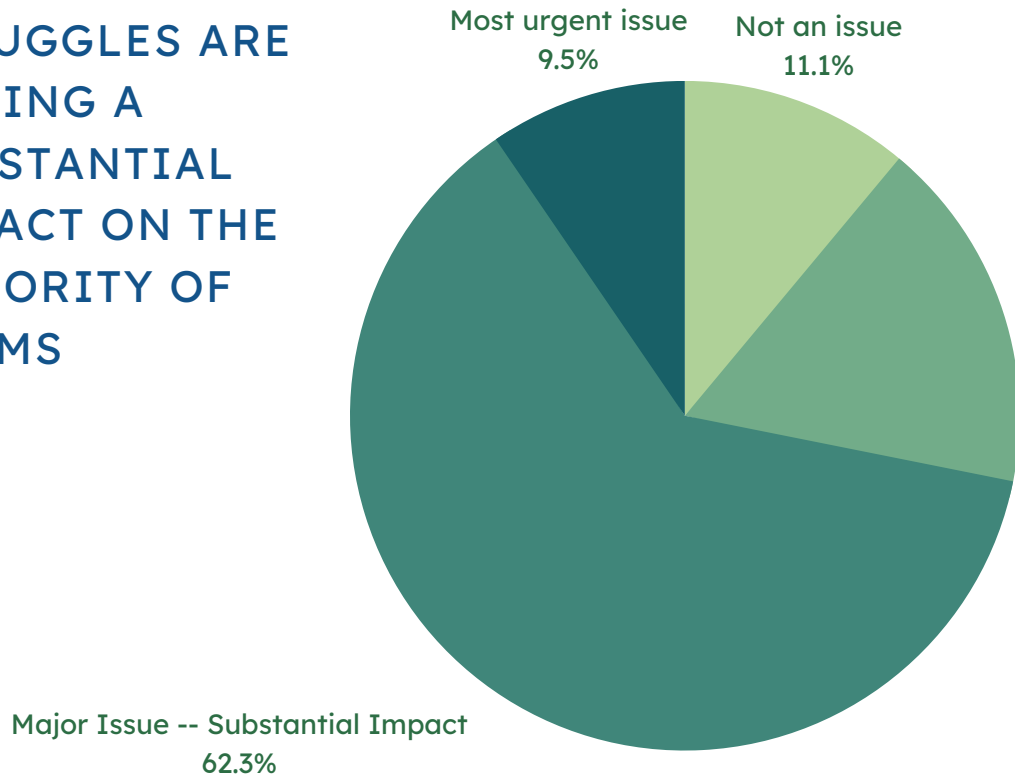
AND ABOUT 1/4 ARE SEVERELY COST-BURDENED.

Housing costs are more than 50% of household income.

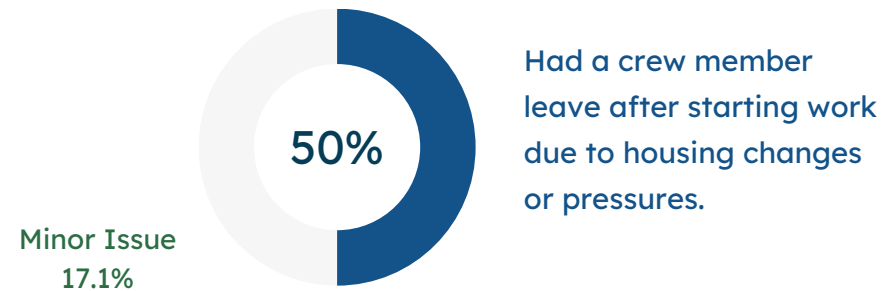
2022 FARMER HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY

IMPACT ON FARM BUSINESSES

WORKER HOUSING STRUGGLES ARE HAVING A SUBSTANTIAL IMPACT ON THE MAJORITY OF FARMS



MAJOR DISRUPTIONS



INABILITY TO HIRE



2022 FARMER HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY

IMPACT ON FARM BUSINESSES

Downsizing

"Lack of affordable housing and our inability to pay wages high enough for market rents was a major factor in our decision to take a hiatus from hiring staff next season."

Closures

"I was the primary worker at the farm, and had to take another job due to lack of affordable, nearby housing."

Barrier to New Businesses

"I am trying to find farmers to lease land on my property but housing is a major obstacle."

Limit to Growth

"When we think about growing the farm and the people that will take, we have to find housing for them first, which seems like the harder task to do than growing the business to support more people."

Management & Cost Burdens

"We currently hold 2 leases for 2 properties for our team members, but the amount of time, labor (management), and financial burden it takes to hold these leases is unsustainable."

Value Chain Disruptions

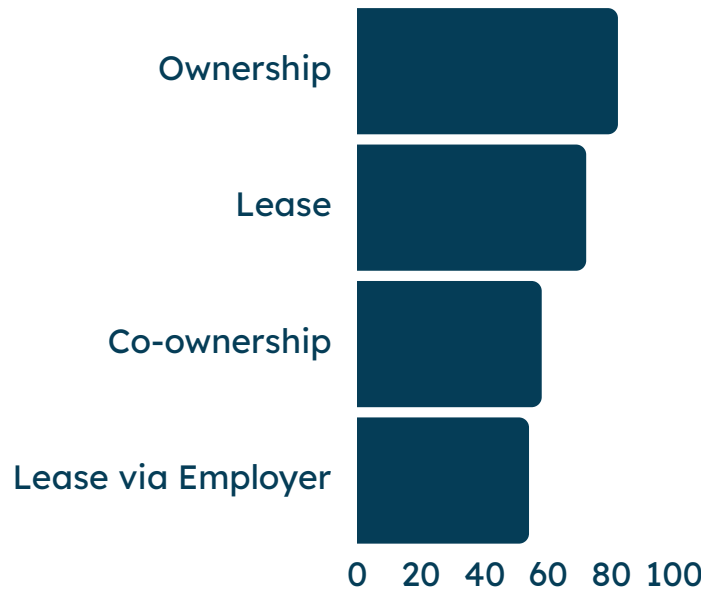
"There are shortages of housing for workers at other businesses my farm depends on for supplies and services."

2022 FARMER HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY

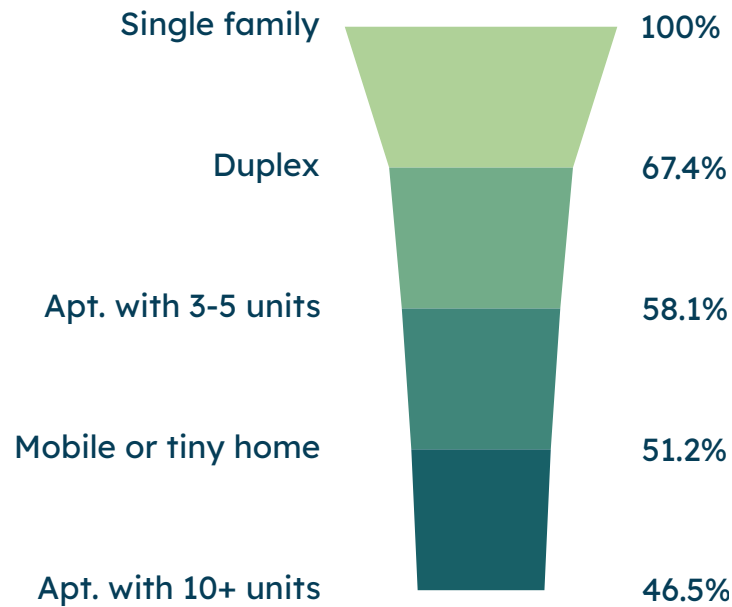
HOUSING TYPE

RENTING AND OWNING ARE BOTH OK. PREFERENCE FOR LOW DENSITY HOUSING. SMALL HOUSEHOLD SIZES.

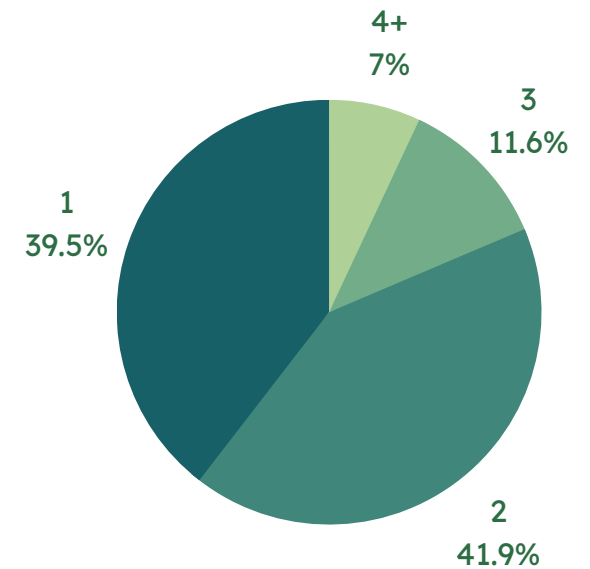
ACCEPTABLE TENURE



ACCEPTABLE TYPE



HOUSEHOLD SIZE

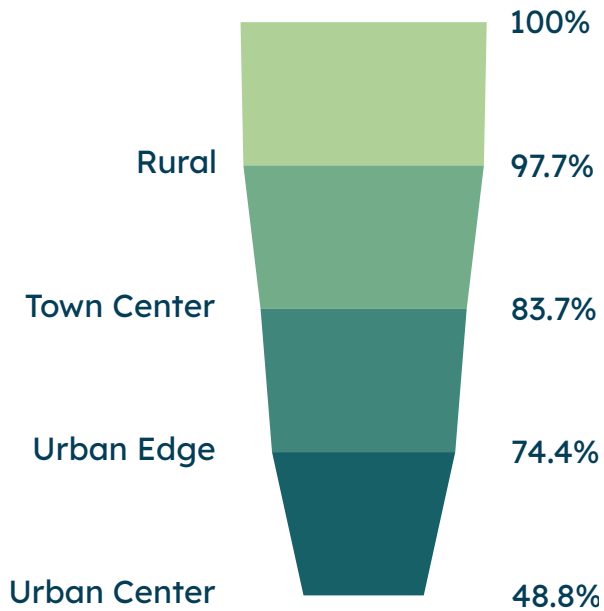


2022 FARMER HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY

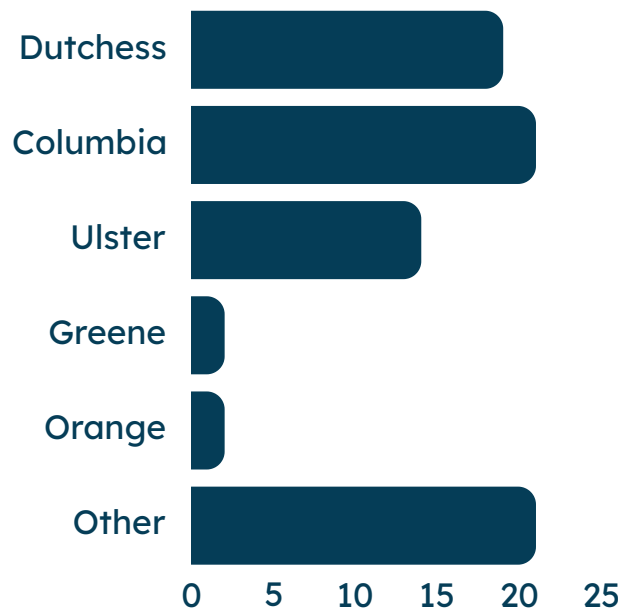
LOCATION & SETTING

UNANIMOUS PREFERENCE FOR RURAL SETTING! PREFERRED COUNTIES ALIGN WITH DENSITY OF SMALL FARMS.

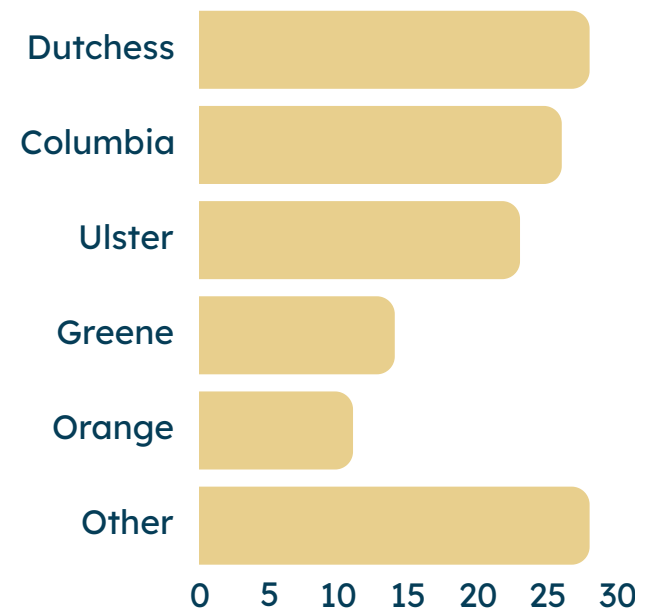
ACCEPTABLE SETTING?



WHERE DO YOU FARM NOW?



WHERE WOULD YOU LIVE?

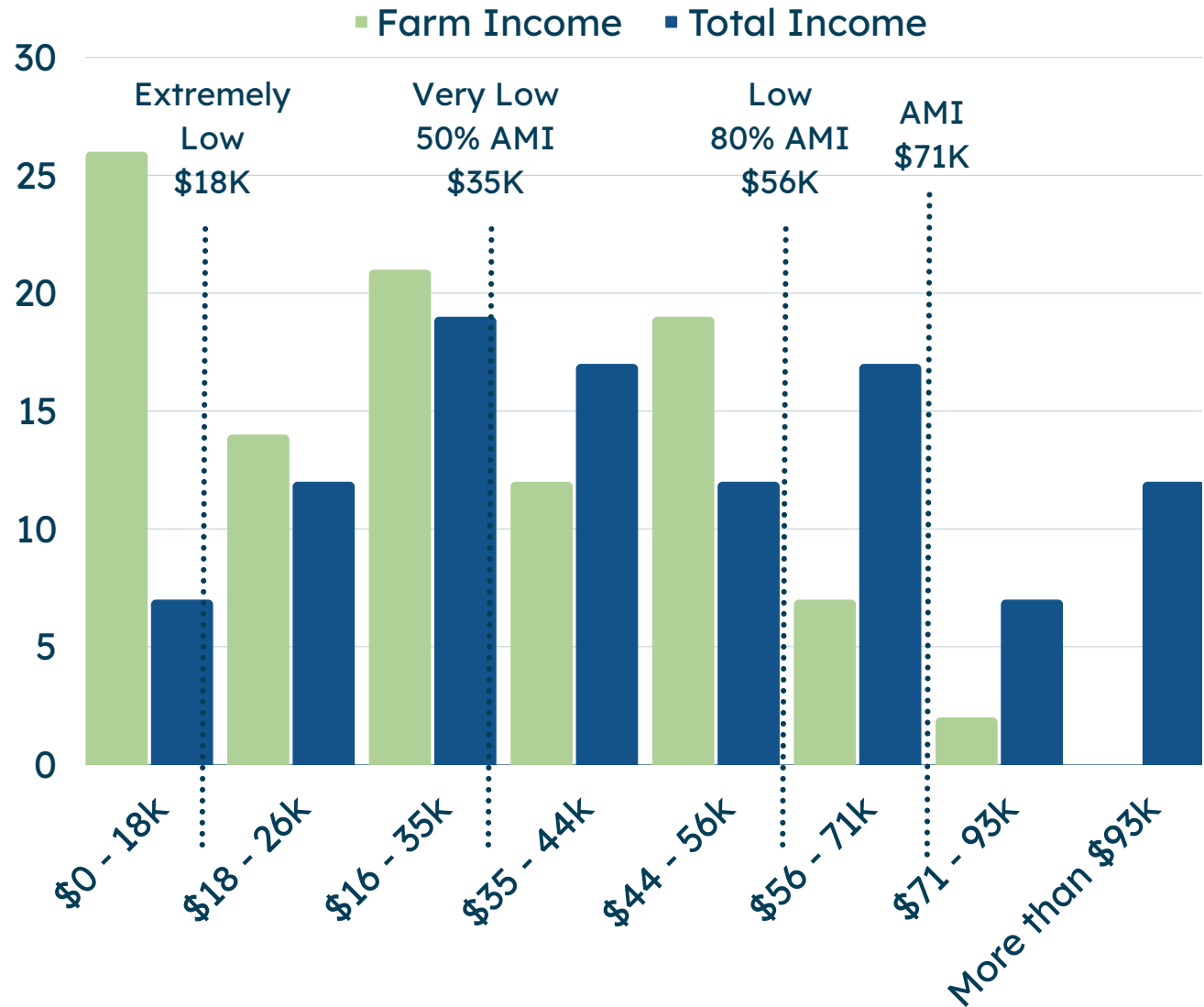


2022 FARMER HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY

HOUSEHOLD INCOME

NUMBERS ARE SIMPLIFIED FOR SUMMARY PURPOSES. AND COMPARED TO THE AREA MEDIAN INCOME NUMBERS FOR A 2-MEMBER HOUSEHOLD IN COLUMBIA COUNTY, AS DETERMINED BY HUD.

BECAUSE MOST FARMING HOUSEHOLDS HAVE ADDITIONAL OFF-FARM INCOME, BOTH FARM INCOME AND TOTAL INCOME ARE SHOWN.



85% OF HOUSEHOLDS HAVE TOTAL INCOMES BELOW AMI. 65% ARE CONSIDERED LOW INCOME, 35% ARE VERY LOW INCOME.

2022 FARMER HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY

AFFORDABILITY

Affordability by HUD thresholds for 2-person household	
30% of income at 50% AMI	30% of income at 80% AMI
\$885	\$1420

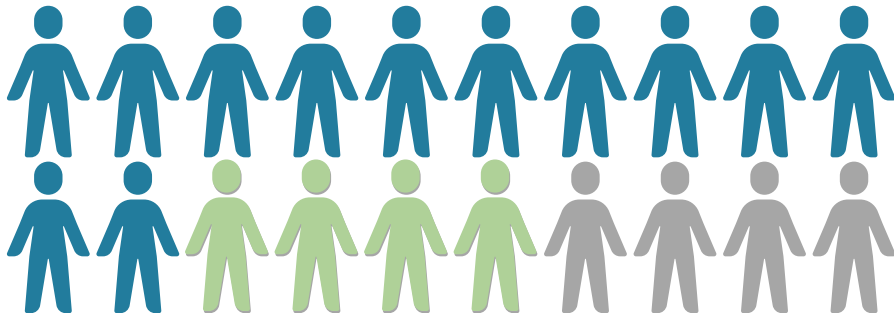
Type	Popularity	Max. Monthly Budget	
		Average	Range
Room in shared home	30%	\$900	\$600 - \$1200
1 bedroom/studio	51%	\$1250	\$1200 - \$1500
2 bedroom	70%	\$1675	\$1000 - \$2750
3 bedroom	48%	\$2250	\$2000 - \$2500

What can a farmer or farm worker afford? HUD standards suggest \$885-\$1420 for a 2 bedroom unit. Survey responses with self-reported household budgets are shown alongside HUD standards.

2022 FARMER HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY

SEASONALITY

4-SEASON HOUSING IS NECESSARY, BUT SEASONAL WORK AND WORKER TURNOVER NECESSITATE HOUSING BUDGETS THAT ACCOUNT FOR SIGNIFICANT SEASONAL VACANCY.



60% WORK YEAR ROUND. ANOTHER 20% FARM SEASONALLY BUT STAY THROUGH THE WINTER. 20% MOVE ON.



8 MONTHS IS TYPICAL FOR SEASONAL WORKERS, MAR-NOV.



NET 20% VACANCY? 7% STANDARD + 13% FOR SEASONALITY

THESE ARE APPROXIMATIONS WITH MANY VARYING FACTORS.

2022 FARMER HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY

POTENTIAL FOR ON-FARM HOUSING

20%

- ARE MOTIVATED,
- HAVE LONG-TERM LAND ACCESS,
- HAVE ADEQUATE LAND BASE
- NO KNOWN LEGAL RESTRICTIONS
- AND HAVE SUPPORT OF KEY DECISION-MAKERS TO DEVELOP HOUSING

50%



Have short-term land access -- leases of 0-10 years.

10%



Are not interested in on-site housing. 30% are on the fence.

23%



Lack an adequate land base for additional housing.

30%



Have legal restrictions (such as easements) that prohibit additional housing

12%



Lack support from other decision-makers to develop housing.

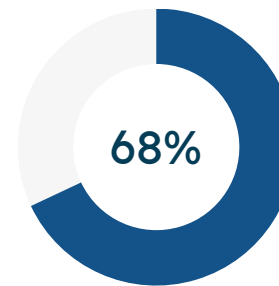
2022 FARMER HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY

INTEREST IN CENTRALIZED HOUSING

OFF-FARM, CENTRALIZED HOUSING
DRAWS SIGNIFICANT INTEREST FROM
FARMERS AND FARMWORKERS.

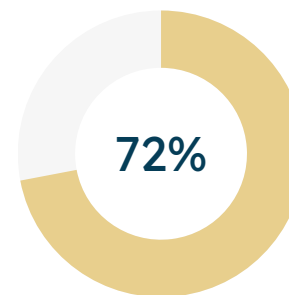
AS OUR SURVEY QUESTION DESCRIBED
THIS CONCEPT, “THIS COULD TAKE MANY
FORMS, BUT COULD INCLUDE
DEVELOPING APARTMENT-STYLE, DORM-
STYLE, TOWNHOUSE, OR TINY/MOBILE
HOME SITE(S) CENTRALLY LOCATED TO A
NUMBER OF FARMS THAT NEED
HOUSING.”

ANTICIPATED BENEFIT



Believe centralized
farmer housing would
benefit their farm.

INTEREST IN LEARNING MORE



are "interested" or "very
interested" in learning
about possibilities for
centralized farmer
housing.

SUMMING IT UP: WHAT HOUSING IS NEEDED?

Farmers' ability to address the housing crisis by building on-farm housing is limited. There is a strong need for farmer housing to be developed in locations central to a number of farms. This housing should be relatively low-density and retain rural character in order to be embraced by farmer residents and the towns in which it is located.

Area farmers need mostly 1-2 bedroom quality rental housing, plus a smaller number of 3+ bedroom home ownership opportunities, in rural settings, in mid-Hudson valley counties. Rental housing should cost \$850-1450 per unit per month and account for a ~20% vacancy rate.

The Working Group's research suggests that this low-density, scattered, off-farm farmer housing can be financially and architecturally feasible, though it will require strong vision and support from many organizations in affordable housing, food systems, and government. Find more on our findings and connect with the Working Group at hvfarmerhousing.org.

ABOUT THE WORKING GROUP



The Farmer Housing Working Group is a cohort of farm owners, managers, workers, and service providers, supported by a seed grant from Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (NESARE).

Our current efforts include collecting housing needs data, developing grassroots leadership, building an informed community network, and seeking support and partnership to address farmer housing needs.

Find more information on the Working Group at hvfarmerhousing.org.