

What People Say About Duncan Hilchey of New Leaf Consulting

Low prices and lack of demand were causing economic strife in the [Concord grape] industry. Duncan recognized that we could do things together that would help the industry grow and prosper. He helped the Lake Erie Concord Grape Belt Heritage Association establish concrete goals and understand that by working together we could reach those goals which would benefit our industry and local communities in the region. Specifically, he helped us establish a foundation from which the industry could grow and prosper into the future.

— Tom Davenport, National Grape Cooperative (Welch's)

Duncan has the unusual balance of someone who is able to envision far beyond the present and yet values the details of how to get there. There is no one who has helped Madison County folks understand the community connection of our agricultural heritage with current farming and products as much as Duncan Hilchey has.

—Dorothy H. Willsey, Co-chair, Madison County (NY) Hop Fest

Duncan has had a prolific career conducting applied research and developing innovative, participatory solutions to the challenges faced by farmers and communities. He is truly a food systems visionary, having been in front of the cutting edge of numerous local food and agriculture trends in the last two decades, including agritourism; ethnic markets; regional identity and regional cuisine; shared-use kitchens; small-scale food processing; farmstead cheese; and many others. If you want to know what will be the next big thing in local food and agriculture development, ask Duncan!

— Joanna Green, formerly with the Small Farms Program,
Cornell University, from nomination letter for
Glynwood Center's 2008 Harvest Award

As co-chair of our Comprehensive Plan Committee, I brought Duncan to the town of Porter to help us develop a strategic plan to revitalize our agricultural business....His creativity, encouragement and statesmanship resulted in an 18-step strategy that was adopted by the Town in December, 2006....Town farmers have had the opportunity, with Duncan's encouragement, to explore new possibilities and see a future that does not necessarily include a "for sale" sign in their fields.

—Patricia Lynch, Town of Porter, New York

Duncan Hilchey and Amy Christian have degrees in planning from Cornell University, with specialties in food systems, agriculture development, and human services.

Contact Us

We'd love to hear from you about your current projects. And visit www.newleafnet.com for details on our services, sample data packs, PowerPoint presentations, and more.

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There couldn't be a *better time* for communities to focus on regional agriculture and food systems.

Regional agriculture and food systems are a growing part of the **solution** to the many challenges our nation is facing. National food and agriculture policy is evolving daily, **interest in local food issues** has never been higher, and farmers, food businesses and communities are exploring how they can **work together** to address their shared economic, social and environmental opportunities and challenges.

In this period of fiscal austerity, we need to replace the conventional approach to food and farming issues with strategies that require fewer resources and have higher impact. And this is where **New Leaf Associates** enters the picture.

- ▶ Ag industry cluster development
- ▶ Regional food and farming strategies
- ▶ Surveys and progress indicators

Banner photo: Montmorency cherry blossoms on Michigan's Mission Peninsula.
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Consulting on Regional Agriculture Development and Food Systems

New Leaf Associates works with organizations, businesses, cooperatives and others in the food and agriculture industry to plan and implement sound projects that have staying power. New Leaf can consult at any point in the food system and agriculture development process, whether you're pulling your stakeholders together and identifying projects; you're conducting evaluation and impact analysis; or you're somewhere in the middle. We can diagnose organizational, financial or management problems, and identify and develop opportunities that help put the project back on track toward economic viability and sustainability.

▶ **Agriculture Cluster Retention and Expansion (ACRE™) Program**

Specialty crop/product clusters in particular suffer from unstable prices, environmental concerns, labor issues, and sometimes internal conflicts surrounding these and other issues. Nonspecialty crop/product clusters often struggle with organizational and supply chains issues. The ACRE™ program brings all the stakeholders together to work through issues and identify new opportunities that increase the cluster's economic viability and overall sustainability.

▶ **Regional Agritourism and Culinary Tourism Cluster Development**

Many agricultural regions across the continent have a fascinating story to tell and possess untapped opportunities for agritourism and culinary tourism. New Leaf has developed a set of tools and services to determine if this potential exists, and, if so, how to profit from it — through interpretive trails, discovery centers, signage, value-added products, and farm-based recreation and hospitality.

▶ **Agricultural Heritage Areas**

If a region has extraordinary history, a unique working landscape with clearly defined geographic boundaries, unique production practices, and world-class farm products, it might consider establishing an agricultural heritage area. In certain cases, a heritage area is designated and supported by local, regional, state or federal governments.

▶ **Certification Marks as Geographic Indications**

An agricultural region that has unique products can benefit from establishing a program to certify its products' provenance and authenticity. In the United State we have a certification mark system — a "geographic indication" that assures consumers that the product they're buying is from the designated region and is produced and processed using specified and/or traditional practices. New Leaf can:

- Perform a preliminary certification or trademark search
- File the mark with the U.S. Trademark and Patent Office
- Monitor the mark's progress through the registration process
- Help develop a certification or trademark logo and tag line
- Develop a certification mark compliance program, including defining the geographic area of production and quality or product standards

▶ **Local Food and Farming Statistical Trend Analysis**

Data on local food and farming trends is critical for identifying opportunities and challenges, planning projects, and evaluating progress toward project goals.

■ **Local Agriculture Trends Data Pack**

- How is our local food industry performing, compared to the region or state as a whole?
- What is the rate of farm concentration or consolidation? Is this absolute or relative decline or growth?
- What are our region's strengths? How is our region adjusting to the globalization of the food system?
- Are we diversifying or specializing?

■ **Local Food System Data Pack**

- What percentage of local food consumed is produced by local farmers?
- What is the per capita consumption of local food in our county?
- How is our local or regional food processing industry doing?
- What are the trends in farm chemical use in our county or region?
- What are the local trends in organic farming?
- How are women and minorities in the agriculture industry faring?