

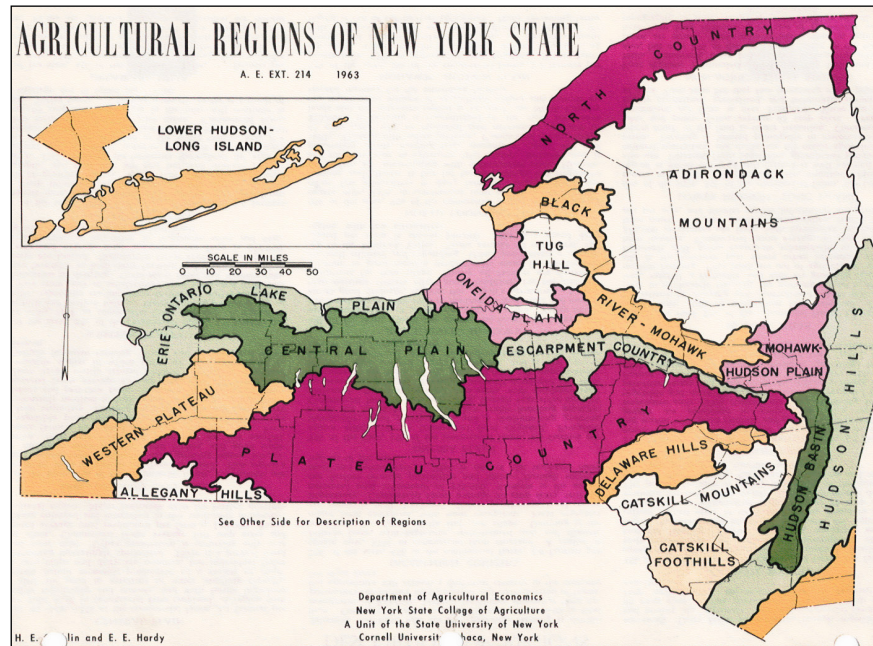
# NORTH COUNTRY REGIONAL FOODS INITIATIVE

## Fact Sheet 1: The Agricultural Geography of the Adirondack–North Country Region



Photo by D. Hickey

The Adirondack–North Country region is actually a cluster of smaller, very diverse agricultural regions. At the core are the Adirondack Mountains, which include the subregions of the Northern Adirondacks, Champlain Valley, High Peaks, Saranac Valley, Keene Valley and Ausable River Valley. Despite its remoteness and a shorter growing season than the rest of the New York State, there are pockets of livestock and specialty-crop production permitted by unique soils and microclimates. The photo above was taken outside the Village of Lake Placid.



The early settlers of the Adirondack–North Country region adapted to the limitations of their surroundings in order to successfully feed their families and their neighbors, by focusing on processed and preserved foods which could last through long winters. Later these same savory products also became prized by seasonal residents and tourists. Today the region’s signature foods reflect this rich heritage, and include processed meats, aged cheeses and maple sugar.

Surrounding the Adirondack Region are several more commercially friendly agriculture regions: the North Country Region (including the Thousand Islands) between the Northern Adirondacks and the St. Lawrence River, the Black River–Mohawk Region, the Mohawk–Hudson Plains, and the Hudson Hills Region. Lake Champlain borders on the east (not shown on the map above). Tug Hill and the Oneida Plain may also be considered part of the “Greater Adirondack–North Country Region.” With a generally warmer climate (see Figure 1) and better soils, these “gateway” or “peripheral” subregions are dominated by dairy and field-crop farms, with a smattering of other enterprises that include maple sugaring, horse raising, and fruit and vegetable production. Owing to the microclimate and landscape, the Champlain Valley produces superlative apples; the region’s

### Signature Foods and Farm Products of the Adirondack–North Country Region

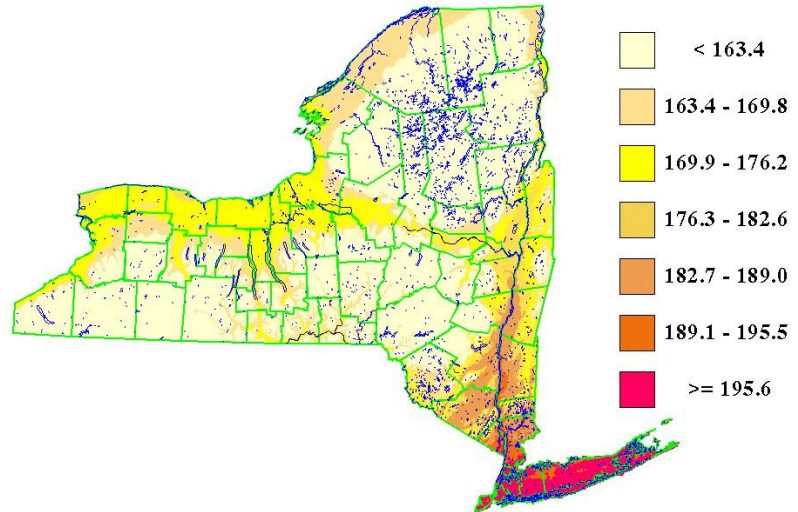
- aged and smoked cheeses
- McIntosh and other fine apples
- venison jerky
- smoked fish
- cole crops
- Croghan Bologna
- maple products
- smoked sausages
- root crops
- wild harvested foods
- regional breweries and microbreweries

McIntosh apples highly prized for their red color, flavor and firmness. Onions are a major crop in the mucklands of Oswego County; Lewis and St. Lawrence counties lead the state in maple sugar production. The Black River and North Country regions are among the most productive milk sheds in the Eastern U.S. and some of the largest dairy processing plants are found here. In Lowville, Lewis County, one can buy McCadam's Adirondack Reserve Cheddar from the Lowville Producers Cheese Store, which is owned by a dairy cooperative with over 200 members.

It should be noted that several ethnic cultures continue to influence Adirondack–North Country foodways. These include French Canadians, Native Americans, Yankees, Italians and Mennonites. Croghan Bologna, for example, is a smoked sausage with a German pedigree that is still made from local beef in the village of Croghan, Lewis County.

A regional brand — *Adirondack Harvest* — was formed out of concern for the loss and abandonment of farmland in the region. The organization's approach in supporting farms, farmers and farmland is to build regional identity that captures the region's unique food and agricultural geography. This, in turn, leads to increased sales and enhanced profitability. To learn more about Adirondack Harvest, visit them online at [www.adirondackharvest.com](http://www.adirondackharvest.com) or call 518-962-4810 ext. 404.

**Figure 1. Degree Days in New York State**




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