

FALL 2007

SMALL FARM QUARTERLY

Good Living and Good Farming – Connecting People, Land, and Communities



**CORNELL
Small Farms
Program**



Photo by Bill Henning

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SMALL FARM QUARTERLY - FALL 2007

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SMALL FARM QUARTERLY

Good Farming and Good Living —
Connecting People, Land, and Communities

Small Farm Quarterly is for farmers and farm families — including spouses and children - who value the quality of life that smaller farms provide.

OUR GOALS ARE TO:

- Celebrate the Northeast region's smaller farms;
- Inspire and inform farm families and their supporters;
- Help farmers share expertise and opinions with each other;
- Increase awareness of the benefits that small farms contribute to society and the environment.
- Share important research, extension, and other resources.

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CORRECTION

In the Summer 2007 issue of the *Small Farm Quarterly*, we mistakenly credited the article entitled "Cosmos Farm" to Margaret McGrath.

The actual author of the article is Susan Pierzchanowski, County Executive Director of the USDA Farm Service Agency in Riverhead, NY.

Cornell Small Farms Program Update

Warm summer days and lots of sunny weather set the stage for abundant on-farm learning opportunities, tours and field days. Here are some of the activities the Small Farms Program sponsored this summer.

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE EDUCATION CONFERENCE

The Small Farms Program was a proud sponsor of the 2nd annual "Facilitating Sustainable Agriculture Education Conference" held at Cornell University July 11-14. The conference provided a stimulating opportunity to dialogue, build networks, and identify current and future educational programs and goals for learning and teaching in sustainable agriculture at colleges and universities. The conference helped launch a new national Sustainable Agriculture Education Association. To get on the Association's mailing list contact Katie Monsen at kmonsen@ucsc.edu.

ON FARM LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

The Small Farms program sponsored several field walks with an emphasis on holistic management this summer. The first, titled, "Whole Farm Health Pasture Walk" was led by Dr. Ann Wells, a nationally known veterinarian who relates the health of animals to the health of the soils and plants on a farm. During her visits, she assessed the health of two Chenango County farms and two Yates County farms based upon what she saw in the pastures. Another group walk focused on organic field crops at Ed Scheffler's farm in West Groton, NY. The attendees studied test plots of field peas, oats, barley, and triticale and sat in on a panel discussion of organic grain growers.

FARM AID AND FRIENDS VISIT ITHACA

On September 5th the Small Farms Program joined up with the 2007 Farm Aid Upstate/Downstate caravan for a tour of Dilmun Hill Student Farm at Cornell and a local foods lunch at Olivia's restaurant in Ithaca. The Program co-sponsored the caravan's journey, which departed from the New York State Fair in Albany and crisscrossed the state visiting farms in the Rochester, Ithaca, Albany and Hudson Valley areas. Other groups attending the Dilmun Hill farm tour included NOFA NY, NY Sustainable Agriculture Working Group, New World Agriculture and Ecology Group and Cornell horticulture faculty. Farm aid collected a lus-



Farm Aid Caravan Sponsors, including SFP's Violet Stone (top row center), pose before the refrigerated truck carrying fresh local produce down to the 2007 Farm Aid concert.

cious basket of fresh fruits from the Cornell Orchards to feed awaiting organizers and performers upon arriving at the 2007 Farm Aid Concert and Festival in at Randall's Island in New York City.

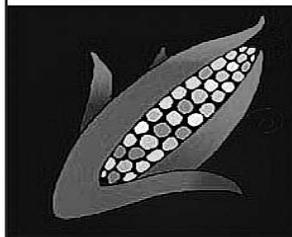
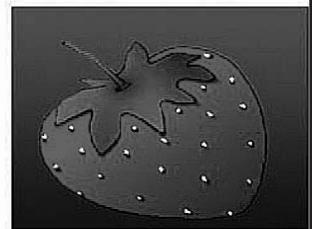
SMALL FARMS SUMMIT FOLLOW-UP

We've gotten terrific feedback from readers of our report on the 2006 Small Farms Summit, entitled Key Opportunities and Strategic Investments to Enhance Small Farm Viability in New York State. As we go to press, three statewide Work Groups are being organized to address some of the key recommendations in the report. Work Groups will discuss their progress and get feedback from participants at the upcoming 2007 Small Farms Summit, which is scheduled for November 29. For more information on the 2007 Summit contact the Small Farms Program at 607-255-9227.

Need Info?

Subscribe to the Small Farms Update, a monthly email newsletter with announcements, upcoming events, resources, funding and farming opportunities and more. Send an email to smallfarmsprogram@cornell.edu. Please provide your name, farm name, postal address, and county.

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Cornell Small Farms Program
www.smallfarms.cornell.edu
 Cornell Cooperative Extension

COMMUNITY AND WORLD

As Small Farms Go, So Goes the Community

by Gerard F. Monnat

The saying "As Maine goes - so goes the election" has been known for many years to be fairly accurate. What about the statement, "As small farms go - so goes the community"? Is there a relationship between small family farms and the health of the communities these farms are located in? If there is a relationship, is it a direct or indirect one? Let's look at this question and see how the existence, growth, health, and survival of the small family farm relates to their neighbors and communities.

Communities prosper in many ways, economically, socially, morally, and religiously, when there is within the boundaries of those communities a number of small family farms. Each of these ways of prospering could take an article in itself to expound on. In this article I wish to elaborate on the economic benefits of small farming to the community and in turn, the economic benefits to small farmers. This is both a direct and indirect relationship.

Economically, the towns and villages where small farms exist benefit from the local buying patterns of small farms, who purchase mostly from other small local businesses like feed



Is there a relationship between small family farms and the health of their local communities?

stores, hardware stores and local markets. Small farms' buying power and needs create a constant customer base for the small business owners. As the small farmers buy smaller quantities, and are more diversified in their needs, the larger wholesale/distributors are not set up to deal with them. This is where the community feed stores, hardware stores, equipment repair businesses, etc., come into play. These businesses are very much needed by the small farmer, and visa versa.

The relationship that develops between the small farmer and local business people often becomes like a family friendship, lasting for years. The farmer knows that he or she can just call "Earl" down at the store, and "Earl" will have whatever is needed in a day or two, even if it is a special order. That kind of service usually doesn't happen when you're dealing with the larger wholesaler/distributors several state away, when you're talking to a machine.

The small businesses in these communities depend on the generational small family farms as well as beginning small farmers for their business survival. The small farmers would have a hard time keeping their operations going if these small businesses were not there. The WallyMarts and Super stores just don't have the same relationship and are usually miles away

from the villages or town the farmers live in.

On those wonderful "Friday Night Fishfrys", Ham Dinners, or Pancake Breakfasts at the local Fire hall, VFW, or church house, this economic relationship is so evident in the support these communities and farmers give each other. The business relationships, blend into community friendships, making real community. When you lose too many small family farms for one reason or another, you will see the loss of the small businesses one by one. WallyMarts coming into town will only encourage this loss of community.

When a community starts to lose its' Main Street because the small farmers are no longer around to support it, it is the beginning of the end for most communities' financial survival. True, there are many factors that affect a community's survival, but certainly the small family farm is an important one. Our small farms are needed if this nation is going to keep "small town America".

Gerard F. Monnat is a freelance writer, reporter, and farmer in Mannsville, NY. He can be reached at (315) 387-5590 or plowshares@frontiernet.net.

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HORTICULTURE**Schoharie Valley Farms and "Carrot Barn"**

These innovative direct marketers have a lot going on at their farm market

by Elizabeth Lamb

Editor's note: Although technically not a small farm according to USDA's definition, we think Richard and Sue Ball's Schoharie Valley Farm will be of real interest to many of our readers.

The beautiful Schoharie Valley, once called the "bread basket of the Revolution", may now be the cornucopia of the Capital District. Richard and Sue Ball and their three children, Sarah, Ethan and JoLyn, operate Schoharie Valley Farms and the Carrot Barn farm market, just outside of the village of Schoharie; a fine example of the richness of the environment and the abilities of the local farmers.

Richard grew up in the Schoharie Valley region where his grandparents had a dairy farm, and he learned early that he wanted to farm. He took a job on a vegetable farm in Rhode Island, where he met and married Sue and they started their family. They were lucky enough to work for and learn from a bright and innovative grower who adapted his farming to changes in markets and customers.

While the farm's first venture into retail was 50# bags of cull carrots for horse owners, now they produce at least 30 vegetable crops from asparagus in the spring to pumpkins in the fall for retail and wholesale markets. They sell wholesale through brokers, with Ethan doing the marketing in Albany three times a week. Local restaurants can purchase directly from the farm. Chefs will even ask Richard to find particular varieties or bring in seeds themselves to get the produce they want, and they are happy to advertise that they use local produce in their cooking. Increasingly, direct sale retail customers make an important percentage of their sales.

The Carrot Barn farm market, just off Route 88, is popular with local people as well as those from the Capital District. The market is filled with displays of all the vegetables in-season as well as bouquets of their field-grown cut flowers. At certain times of the year they have bulk sales of various crops for those customers that want to preserve or store them. They partner with other local producers to sell fruit, honey, maple syrup, milk, beef, cheese and ice



The Carrot Barn looks out over the vegetable and flower fields in the beautiful Schoharie Valley
Photo by Elizabeth Lamb

The family might have stayed in Rhode Island but for a chance real estate sale notice in a farming magazine and his oldest daughter's desire to look at Cornell for college. Fifteen years ago they bought Schoharie Valley Farms - 200 acres with packing and cold storage facilities - and continued the previous owners' successful production of root crops for fresh market sold through grocery store chains.

Consolidation in the grocery industry and competition from Canada were enough to convince Richard and Sue that they needed to diversify in both crops and markets. And having all three children willing to add their hard work and innovative ideas to the operation resulted in the Schoharie Valley Farms and Carrot Barn as it is today.

cream - which benefits the Balls, the other producers, and the customers by giving them more reasons to stop and shop.

Richard and Sue first built greenhouses so they could produce their own vegetable transplants. Once the houses were up, though, they started looking for other ways to maximize those resources. They now grow bedding plants, chrysanthemums, and poinsettias and make container planters, too. The flowering plants have the added advantage of being a colorful focal point for anyone driving by the shop.

Their cold storage facilities and broad crop base allow them to keep the Carrot Barn open

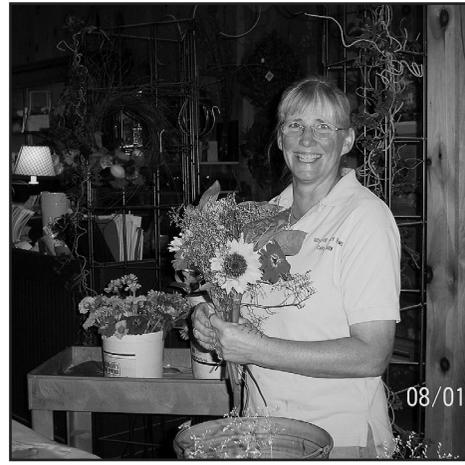


Richard and Sue Ball's first venture into retail was 50# bags of cull carrots for horse owners. Now they produce at least 30 vegetable crops from asparagus in the spring to pumpkins in the fall for retail and wholesale markets.
Photo by Elizabeth Lamb

7 days a week from March 1 to December 31. As a benefit to their customers, they have extended their season to Saturdays in January and February for root crops, meat and milk.

While all their customers are important to them (see Making a Market as You Grow), they get a lot of good ideas from the face-to-face interactions. Sarah had already been managing a bakery of carrot-based and other baked goods, as well as gifts and crafts, in the Carrot Barn. Customer requests for the sandwiches they were making for their crew led JoLyn to suggest opening a lunch bar - serving soups and sandwiches featuring their own seasonal vegetables.

The direct interaction with the customers is a baseline of their advertising. You can often find some member of the family in the market discussing potato varieties or the proper size cake for a birthday party with customers. While they use some media advertising, Richard says the benefits are hard to measure. A mailing list and fair prices help bring people in the door. In order to make Schoharie Valley a 'destination market' for the Capital District, the Balls do some cooperative advertising with a variety of other local businesses, agricultural and not, to give those at a distance a greater number of reasons to visit the area.



Sue Ball making bouquets from her own cut flowers
Photo by Elizabeth Lamb



Richard Ball in the bedding plant greenhouse.
Photo by Elizabeth Lamb

Every winter the family and employees discuss changes for the next year. The intent is to try 6 new things each year - crops, varieties, products, methods, marketing ideas, whatever. Then they discuss which ones have 'staying power' and eliminate the rest after the year's trial. This method of planning for the future has the advantage of being very flexible and allowing for rapid adaptation to changes in customer needs.

And if they weren't already busy enough, Richard and Sue are very involved in the Farm to School program; working to get locally produced food products into the schools. They work with school personnel in nutrition and purchasing to identify those products that can be integrated easily and economically into school meals, as well as with administrators to learn the true economic, social and environmental costs of poor eating habits.

For more information on and photos of Schoharie Valley Farms, check their websites at: www.schoharievalleyfarms.com, www.schohariechamber.com/svfarms, or contact them at: Schoharie Valley Farms/The Carrot Barn, Route 30, Schoharie, NY 12157, 518-295-7139.

Elizabeth Lamb is the Coordinator for Ornamentals for the New York State Integrated Pest Management Program. She can be reached at 607-254-8800 or eml38@cornell.edu.

MARKETING**Making a Market as You Grow**

by Richard and Sue Ball

With a history of adapting to the changes in vegetable marketing, Richard and Sue Ball suggest some marketing tips that have kept them successful in business through changing times.

MAKE A CONNECTION WITH YOUR CUSTOMERS

Every farm has a story and that story can help you connect with your customers. Listening to your customers is a good way to start - besides the fact that a satisfied customer is good advertising, it is customer comments that give you the information you need to determine new directions and changes. Have a positive attitude. You are much more likely to get customers, and their feedback, if they believe you enjoy what you do.

ADAPT TO YOUR CUSTOMERS' CHANGING NEEDS

Don't get so comfortable doing what you are doing that you can't, or won't, change. Learn to adapt, change and diversify to make the most of your opportunities. The customer base for our farm has changed, but the customers have also changed. Younger customers are starting to can and freeze vegetables again. There is also increasing interest in the taste of foods and their seasonality; the concept of a simpler time; more concern with food quality and less with price.

EDUCATE YOUR CUSTOMERS.

Many still think that a potato is a potato and they all taste the same. We grow seven varieties of potatoes and now customers will ask for them by name. Let them know that today's agriculture is responsible, that today's farmers are knowledgeable and have the sophistication to understand

the market, the economy, and the environment, and are doing the job of producing good, safe food.

KNOW YOUR CUSTOMER AND THEIR NEEDS

Marketing through brokers rather than grocery store chains means we have more, but smaller, customers who need a variety of products and want mixed loads. Customers coming from the Capital District need a reason to come to the Schoharie Valley - we need to motivate them to come from an hour away. They need a variety of products and possibly even a variety of businesses to visit, to encourage them to make the drive.

If your buyers come from a distance, they'll need somewhere to eat once they are here. You can provide the service or direct them to someone that can. Chefs have a specific vision of what works for their restaurants. While Bright Lights chard is beautiful, green chard doesn't bleed color and still has the desired flavor and texture. And they may even suggest new crops or varieties to try, based on what is new in culinary circles.

PLAY TO YOUR STRENGTHS

You can't win a production race - someone else will have lower production costs or higher yields. But you can emphasize those things you do well. Selling to a local market means we can grow carrot varieties with more taste, more juice, more color, and more sugar, which wouldn't ship because they are also more brittle.

Local production also keeps money in the local economy - we hire local people, buy from local businesses, market products from other local producers and they become our customers, our supporters, and our advertising. Use your employees for more than their labor. They often see what can be changed or added or improved to your and your customers' benefit. And take care of the customers you have before worrying about getting more. They give you a solid foundation and will help you grow your market.

Richard and Sue Ball raise vegetables, cut flowers, bedding plants, mums and poinsettias in the Schoharie Valley. They can be reached at Schoharie Valley Farms/The Carrot Barn, Route 30, Schoharie, NY 12157, 518-295-7139.

COMMUNITY AND WORLD

Agri-What?

What has happened to the Culture in Agriculture?

by Bill Henning

Being among that group that was born before the end of World War II, I have the dubious distinction of growing up through an era of explosive change in farming. As a young boy visiting relatives in Perth County, Ontario I got to work on threshing crews that were still farming with horses. These weren't Amish folks, but Catholics and Protestants in general. Combines were not yet common in that part of the country so I caught the shirrtails of the end of an era.

After hours in the field building stooks out of sheaves people from throughout the neighborhood came together to thresh. Sheaves were forked by hand onto horse drawn wagons. The load was built with sheaves perpendicular to the wagon edge so the load ended up leaning inward. No one wanted to be responsible for a wagonload dumped before it got to the barn.

Unloading meant picking off the top most sheaves and feeding them in head first while keeping the thresher running at capacity.

The threshing machine was run by the only tractor. In the barn, the threshing machine, the grain room, and the straw mow all needed tending. The dust was almost overwhelming. Combine that with the heat and humidity of late summer and there'd be a group of dark faces with white eyeballs standing in line at the washbasin in the yard come lunchtime.

Threshing meals were the highlight of the day. Heaping platters of fresh cooked meat, numerous vegetables, mashed potatoes smothered with gravy, thick slices of homemade bread, real butter and desserts - pies and cakes, bowls of berries - like there was no tomorrow. A very long table was surrounded by very hungry men who left it empty in short order. But that was not the best part.

Camaraderie filled the air, at dinnertime and all day long. Plainly, threshing was a lot of hard labor, yet folks looked forward to it. It was a cultural event. It was a time to visit, swap stories, and exchange friendly barbs. In one word, all this work was FUN!

Similar events occurred throughout the year, maybe not so grandiose, but frequently and for a number of reasons. Money was not exchanged, nor records kept. Neighbors helped one another because they wanted to. And they knew, sooner or later, in one way or another, it would all work out. Most important, during a period when farming took so much time and effort, friends actually had more time to visit.



Loaded and coming in.

Photo by Shayne Coward

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Today, now at an age past when I could retire, I operate a little farm. I have all the modern equipment to keep farming even as my body is starting to wear out. For this I am grateful. It's taken me a long time to get here. But something is missing.

This little farm is surrounded by much larger farms. Their equipment dwarfs mine. They accomplish so much in so little time it makes your head spin. They have hired labor, fleets of trucks, behemoth tractors and manure spreaders so big, that work so far from home; it takes a fleet of tractor trailers to feed them. The local feed mills are gone. The implement dealerships, few and far between, are conglomerates. Veterinarians travel hundreds of miles. Fertilizer dealers don't want to be bothered with trivial

sales. The word 'farmer' is often replaced with 'producer' or 'grower'. But what is missing most - visits among people with common interests - a sense of community.

There are still communities in the country where much of the experiences of a half century ago are still enjoyed. The troubling aspect is that so much of today's society is completely ignorant of this enlightening phenomenon - the joy of sharing work. Today we have agri-science and agri-business, but what about agri-culture? What can make an entire society aware of their rich heritage in an environment so far removed from what is really so important?

Bill Henning is Small Farm Specialist with Cornell Cooperative Extension's NWNV Dairy, Livestock, & Field Crops Team.

Resource Spotlight

"Animal Welfare Approved" Seal of Approval Program

The Animal Welfare Institute (AWI) has instituted an Animal Welfare Approved seal of approval program based on a set of welfare-friendly husbandry standards. The Animal Welfare Approved seal is not just a list of rules: It is a philosophy of respect that provides animals on the farm with the environment, housing and diet they need to behave naturally, thereby promoting physiological and psychological health and well-being.

The Animal Welfare Approved Standards require farmers to provide animals the Five Freedoms identified by the United Kingdom's Farm Animal Welfare Council:

- Freedom from fear and distress
- Freedom from pain, injury and disease (including parasitological infections)
- Freedom from hunger, thirst and malnutrition
- Freedom to express normal behavior
- Freedom from physical and thermal discomfort

Animal Welfare Approved standards are species specific and forbid practices such as tail-docking piglets and de-beaking chickens. Farmers who meet the Animal Welfare Approved standards can participate without being charged fees or royalties. Participating farmers have access to AWI husbandry advisors who can offer advice on animal health, husbandry, housing and animal environments. A complete list of Animal Welfare Approved husbandry standards can be found at www.animalwelfareapproved.org.

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FOREST AND WOODLOT**How 'Bout Those Trees!****How to manage the forest resources on your family farm**

By Jerry Michael

Farmers are usually preoccupied by the crops they have to plant and harvest every year, and may give scant attention to the trees in the woodlot on the "Back 40". Trees typically reach their individual "economic maturity" in 75 to 100 years, so forest management is often put on the back burner. In the past, many forest owners considered their woodlot as a source of firewood, venison for the table, or recreation. In addition, they might have hoped that the forest would provide some income from timber when the kids were ready for college.

Times are changing, and at least three factors have pushed forest management to the front burner in recent years. First, the increasing value of northeastern hardwoods has caused sawmills and loggers to actively prospect for harvestable woodlots. Second, escalating property and school taxes have pressed owners of forestland to look for ways to meet expenses.

habitat in addition to income from sawtimber and other forest products.

These objectives are not mutually exclusive, and provision for each of them can be included in your plan for the sustainable management of your woods. As illustrated in the following paragraph, it is usually appropriate to involve the family in discussions leading to the establishment of objectives.

Which of the following two scenarios makes the most sense to you?

1. A logger offers you \$40,000 cash for the trees he has marked in your 25-acre woodlot. You are pleasantly surprised, accept the deal, and pay off the loan on your tractor. The harvest removes all desirable tree species 12" in diameter or larger, does not include any thinning of inferior trees, and leaves the woodlot in such a condition that the next harvest will be more than 50 years in the future.



Every MFO volunteer visit typically ends with wrap up session, which includes a pitch for joining a forest owner organization such as NY Forest Owners Association. Photo by Gary Goff

Third, society-at-large has become increasingly aware of the broad benefits of healthy forests for air and water quality, wildlife habitat and overall quality of life for humankind. In some areas, this public interest has resulted in new land-use regulations, legislation supporting conservation easements and, most recently, consideration of rewarding forest owners (in some form) for carbon sequestration.

2. You retain a consulting forester who develops a long-term management plan for your forest, including periodic harvesting of economically mature trees, plus timber stand improvement (thinning), and regeneration. The consultant manages an initial harvest yielding \$25,000 and advises you that your plan for sustainable management of your forest should yield a similar harvest every 20 years or so, "forever".



Forest owners and Jerry Michael looking up into the crowns to determine if the stand needs to be thinned to achieve optimal growth. Photo by Gary Goff

WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS?

As a forest owner, what are your objectives in this new environment? This is the first question I ask forest owners when visiting their woods. Establishing objectives is the first step in developing a management plan for your forest property. Objectives can include recreation, firewood harvests and enhancement of wildlife

If your objectives for your forested property are short-term, you might be tempted to accept the logger's offer. If you want to keep the farm in the family, you would probably forgo the logger's offer and retain the consultant. Recognizing that trees are not a short-rotation crop, you would do so without delay.

GETTING STARTED

To get started, go to www.forestconnect.com, a site maintained by Cornell University Cooperative Extension with information useful to forest owners in any region of the country. From the Home Page, click on "Publications", and then click on "Enhancing Forest Stewardship". Download and review the first 10 chapters for all of the background information you will need to establish your objectives and work with a consulting forester on a plan for the sustainable management of your forestland.

If you have finished your reading, but are still not quite ready to hire a private consultant forester, consider talking with a State Forester (ex. NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation or PA Bureau of Forestry) who may be able to walk your land with you and prepare a basic forest stewardship plan. Another option is to contact your local Cooperative Extension county office and ask them if they have a volunteer program such as the Master Forest Owner Volunteer (MFO) program in NY State.

Most states have something similar to the MFO program, sponsored by cooperative extension or private forest owner organizations. These volunteers can help you identify tree species, evaluate the potential of your woodlot to achieve your objectives and refer you to additional sources of information and assistance.

DO IT YOURSELF?

Let's say you have concluded, with or without the help of a forester, that your woods are not ready for a harvest at this time. Do you have the interest and time to perform some timber stand improvement (TSI), which will accelerate the growth rate of your most valuable trees? If so, go back to forestconnect.com and download the publication "Crop Tree Management Quick Reference".



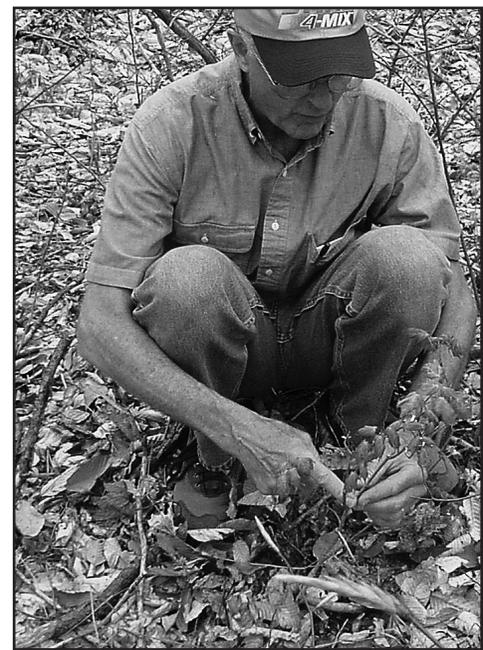
The old axiom, "what you see is what you get" applies when it comes to assessing regeneration potential. Unless appropriate silviculture is applied to this stand, the next stand will be composed of mostly American beech. Photo by Gary Goff

I enthusiastically recommend crop tree management to most of the forest owners I visit because it is the most effective and efficient method of timber stand improvement, especially for the "do it yourselfer".

Additional publications available on the forestconnect.com website include: agro-forestry, improving wildlife habitat, firewood harvesting, taxes and insurance, etc. Spend some time exploring the resources available on this site and its many links, and add it to your "Favorites" list; I promise you will refer to it often.

Not on the web? Not a problem. Your local cooperative extension office will have a large supply of forest management bulletins and publications available at a modest cost, and they can help you locate what they don't have in stock.

On a final note, parcelization and development, often driven by increasing costs of ownership, are among the most serious threats to our forests today. Sustainable management can provide a stream of income to help cover these



Jerry Michael showing how sugar maples that are repeatedly browsed by deer fail to grow in height and take on a "bonsai bush" appearance. Photo by Gary Goff

costs, and allow you to keep the "Back 40" as part of the family farm. The tools for developing a long-term plan are at your fingertips, so get busy!

FIND OUT MORE

For more information on how to arrange a visit from a MFO volunteer in your area or how to become a MFO volunteer, contact your county Cornell Cooperative Extension Office or visit www.cornellmfo.info. Most New England states have similar forest owner volunteer programs as does Pennsylvania. Contact your state Cooperative Extension Forester to learn how to get involved in the program.

New York's Master Forest Owner Volunteer Program is sponsored by The NY Forest Owners Association, NYS-DEC Div. of Lands and Forests, The Robert H. Wentorf Foundation, USDA Renewable Resources Extension Program and Cornell Cooperative Extension.

Jerry Michael has served as a Master Forest Owner Volunteer (MFO) with Cornell Cooperative Extension since 1995. He has visited over 100 forest parcels in the Southern Tier of NY State, offering advice to forest owners on sustainable management practices. This article is based on observations made during these visits, as well as information available from Cornell Cooperative Extension, NY Forest Owners Association, and other sources. Jerry has been very active on various committees within NY Forest Owner's Association and currently is on the board of the Broome County Association of Cornell Cooperative Extension. He can be reached at 607-648-2941, or gotreego@stny.rr.com.

MARKETING

Adding Value to Your Farm

by Bernadette Logoza

In a world of information highways, high speed communication and an increasingly fluid global economy, more and more people are becoming concerned about where and how their food is produced. They are looking for a connection, or reconnection with the source of food they place in their freezer, refrigerator and pantry.

This growing consumer interest in the food system provides farmers and rural entrepreneurs an opportunity to grow your businesses by providing customers a connection with the farm and the farming experience. There are lots of ways to add value to your farm enterprise. See the accompanying list of ideas for something that might work for you and your farm operation.

Try to make your products and business unique by using your old farm buildings. Put your gift shop in a barn or develop other uses for buildings. Develop creative names for your products, creative packaging, and private labeling. Provide printed "how to" instructions for picking, storage, canning and freezing. Don't be afraid to sample your products, one taste may get them to buy more to take home.

Another idea for adding value to your farm is to expand a way of life by offering customers the opportunity to: "Rent a farm" as in rent a lifestyle for a week or a month; grow an animal or a Christmas Tree for a specific family; Rent a garden patch; Host farm festivals, Ethnic or Traditional Holiday Ranch tours, Cowboy poetry. Check out this website to see an example of 'renting mother nature'

www.rentmothernature.com.

Whatever you choose to do in order to add value to your farm and expand your farm income, some things to think about is to consider these following questions:

- * If you create it, can you manage it?
- * Does it make you unique?
- * Does it conflict with your busiest times?
- * Where are your customers coming from?
- * What do your customers want?
- * What are your customers willing to spend?
- * Will your facility hold that many people?
- * Do you offer enough parking?
- * Do you have ample restrooms?

Some Hints and tips from Agritourism operators:

- "Start small"
- "Find you niche and do it well"

- "Differentiate yourself from other food and recreation establishments"
- "Know who you are and be that!"
- "Do what you say & say what you do."
- "Exceed expectations"
- "Be Open!"

Bernadette Logoza is Rural & Ag Economic Development Specialist with Cornell Cooperative Extension of Franklin County. She can be reached at 518-483-7403 x312 or bel7@cornell.edu.

Need Info?

Visit the Cornell Small Farms Program online at www.smallfarms.cornell.edu.

Agritourism Ideas

If your farm is already open to visitors you can add to the experience by developing any number of ideas-and this list is by no means exhaustive!

- * on-farm walking tour
- * horse drawn wagon rides
- * orchard tours
- * special events
- * contests
- * offer good value
- * seasonal festivals
- * on-farm camping
- * processing tours
- * on-farm bakeries
- * old fashioned hayrides
- * working farm vacation
- * bed & breakfast
- * nature study
- * artist retreat
- * bird watching
- * early morning u-pick club
- * u-grow your own vegetables
- * u-fish, craft or flea markets
- * corn mazes off-season mailings
- * kids "farm" playground area
- * pony rides
- * host a local theatre group
- * sweet corn roast
- * "adopt a pumpkin" and watch it grow
- * scarecrow festival
- * star gazing
- * have a Haunting Season
- * offer regional cuisine
- * Corporate or Group retreats
- * u-pick or community garden
- * story teller
- * rent a tree
- * peddle tractors
- * scavenger hunts
- * Christmas themes
- * pig & goat races
- * Easter Egg & Bunny hunts
- * Enchanted Forest

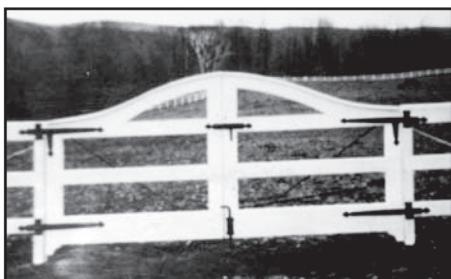
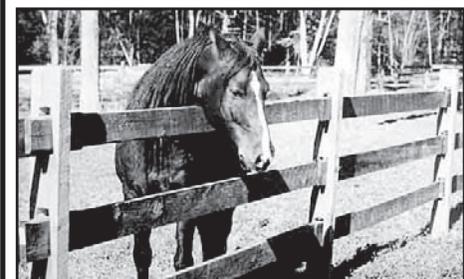


Offering a hay wagon ride pulled by horses can help visitors experience a bit of the past. In the Northern Adirondack Region, Country Dreams Farm offers folks a view from a different perspective. Photo by Bernadette Logoza

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Resource Spotlight
Resource Guide to Direct Marketing Livestock and Poultry

This resource guide covers everything producers need to know about direct marketing meat and poultry: meat regulations; slaughtering, cutting and processing; value-added products and labeling; market opportunities and more. One way for farmers to realize higher returns for their farm products is through direct marketing. This resource guide makes direct marketing more feasible by explaining complex meat laws in layman terms and by clarifying the legalities of direct marketing livestock and poultry. The resource guide hopes to promote a more direct market chain from farm to consumer in New York.

The Resource Guide to Direct Marketing Livestock and Poultry is now available! Download your free copy from the NY Farms! Website at www.nyfarms.info/whatny-farmsdo.html or purchase a copy for \$5 from CCE Franklin, 355 West Main St., Malone, NY 12953.

NEW FARMERS

Understanding the Legal Nuts and Bolts of Farming

New "Guide to Farming in NYS" Offers Comprehensive Summary of Legalities and Regulations

by Laura Biasillo

While resources for beginning farmers are abundant, few are comprehensive. The Cornell University Small Farms Program and the New York Beginning Farmer Project have recently released a resource guide entitled, "Guide to Farming in NYS: What Every Ag Entrepreneur Needs to Know."

This resource was modeled after a successful New Hampshire Beginning Farmer resource guide. The guide outlines issues related to getting into farming or diversifying your farming

If your land is not zoned "agricultural", then you will need to visit your local planning or assessment department to inquire about changing the zoning. This should not be an issue if you are buying fallow land or an operating farm. With more and more rural areas being zoned "low-density suburban" for development, it is important to speak with your planning board to ensure you will be able use your land for agriculture now and in the future.



Bonnie Jensen and her son man their tent at the Downtown Binghamton Farmers' Market on opening day, June 15, 2007. While Bonnie and her family have farmed for generations, this is the first year they have sold at in a Farmers' Market setting and it was quite a learning experience.

Photo by Laura Biasillo

enterprise, and also provides contact information for agencies and contact people within your area of the state.

For beginning farmers there are a multitude of legal issues and regulations that must be satisfied in order to begin operating. In this article I'll share just a sample of the many tips you'll find in the Guide to Farming in NYS.

REGULATIONS 101

Whether you will be direct marketing or farming for lifestyle reasons, there are regulations you must meet in order to ensure your right to farm. Zoning, Right to Farm laws, on-farm and product liability and environmental regulations are central to good relationships with your customers and neighbors.

In addition to your parcel(s) being zoned agricultural, it is also important that you are located in an agricultural district. Being located in an agricultural district ensures that your agricultural operation is exempt from excessively restrictive regulations, including many local and state regulations such as SEQR (State Environmental Quality Review), some building codes, and the need to provide professionally stamped plans for farm buildings. You can find out if your land is located in an agricultural district by contacting your local planning department.

COMMUNICATION IS KEY

When it comes to legal regulations for beginning farmers, much depends on the type of agricultural enterprise. The most important issue is your relationships with your neighbors.



Amanda Heller comes from a family of farmers and market farmers at that. But this is her first year selling at the Downtown Binghamton Farmers' Market and she is loving every day of it.

Photo by Laura Biasillo



It's critical to understand the legalities involved in direct marketing. Here, Eric & Sandy Krenner sell their fresh herbs and greens at Johnson City Farmers' Market for the first year.

Photo by Laura Biasillo

Communication with your neighbors about what you are doing on your farm and what to expect will go a long way towards avoiding complaints and also in educating them about agriculture and where their food comes from. The most common complaints usually revolve around noise, smell and livestock escapes.

If you plan on having agri-tourism events, then you will need to post your property for trespassers and also have landowner liability insurance. While this is not often the case for beginning farmers, it is still a good idea if hunters traditionally come on your property and for safety reasons in general.

If you will be raising livestock, you must have the correct type of fencing. You should also let your neighbors know what they can do if the animals break the fence.

If you will be selling your products at a Farmers' Market you will need to make sure you have the correct licenses and product liability insurance. None of these are difficult to get, but it is imperative that you have all of your licenses and liability documents in order in the event of something happening.

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Environmental regulations for a new farmer mainly fall into three categories: water quality, pesticides and agricultural environmental management. Any landowner is subject to water quality regulations, whether they farm or not. It is best to contact your closest DEC office to learn about their regulations related to your agricultural enterprise.

Agricultural Environmental Management (often referred to as AEM), looks to aid farmers in incorporating good environmental practices into planning. The implementation of such practices often has grants or cost-share programs associated. AEM programs are typically run out of county Soil & Water Conservation Districts.

The decision of utilizing sustainable farming practices should factor into what types of pesticides you will use. If you will be using "restricted use pesticides" then you will need to become certified by DEC and show your license when purchasing the pesticides. This is a five-year license.

If you will be using "general use pesticides" then you will not need a license to purchase or use. To be eligible for certification you must have one season's experience working with the crops, livestock or stored products on which you will be using pesticides and also be at least 17 years old. You must then take the certification exam during the five years of certification you must obtain recertification credits.

TO LEARN MORE...

For many beginning farmers sifting through all the regulations can be time consuming and difficult. By providing every county extension office in NYS with the New York Beginning Farmer Project resource guide, as well as having it online, individuals are able to choose the venue they feel most comfortable in using the resource. This resource will be updated at least once a year to stay current on changes in regulations or issues related to beginning farming or agriculture in general.

For more information on getting into farming, or to diversify your on-farm enterprise, contact your local Cornell Cooperative Extension office. The "Guide to Farming in NYS: What Every Ag Entrepreneur Needs to Know" can be downloaded for free at www.smallfarms.cornell.edu (click on "Resources" and then "Business Management").

Laura Biasillo is the Agricultural Economic Development Specialist at Cornell Cooperative Extension of Broome County in Binghamton, NY. She can be reached at (607) 584-5007 or lw257@cornell.edu.

Resource Spotlight

New York's New Beginning Farmer Loan Program

New York State is making it easier for beginning farmers to acquire agricultural land and equipment by offering low-cost financing through the New York Beginning Farmer Loan Program (BFLP). Through the BFLP, beginning farmers can borrow up to \$250,000 to help start a farming business or facilitate inter-generational transfer of a farm business.

To obtain BFLP financing, the beginning farmer works with a lender to arrange the terms of a loan. The interest rate is based on the applicant's credit rating, the type of loan, etc. The BFLP acts as a conduit by issuing and selling a tax-exempt bond (aggie-bond) to the lender with the funds being loaned to the farmer and the loan assigned back to the bank. With the loan being tax-exempt, the bank can give a better interest rate to the farmer, usually around 1 to 2 percentage points less than the usual taxable interest loan.

To be eligible for BFLP financing the Beginning Farmer must:

- * Be engaged in farming or wish to engage in farming in NYS.
- * Be a NYS resident at least 18 years old.
- * Not have previously owned farmland with a value greater than \$125,000 and acreage greater than 30% of the median farm size in the county where the parcel of land is located.
- * Possess adequate education, training and experience in the type of farming to be financed
- * Perform the farm labor or management, or delegate these duties to his or her spouse/fiancé and/or minor children.

The BFLP is administered by the NYS Environmental Facilities Corporation (EFC) in partnership with the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets. For more information on the BFLP, call 800.200.2200 (NYS). Visit www.nysefc.org and click on "Programs" and "Beginning Farmer", or e-mail beginningfarmer@nysefc.org.

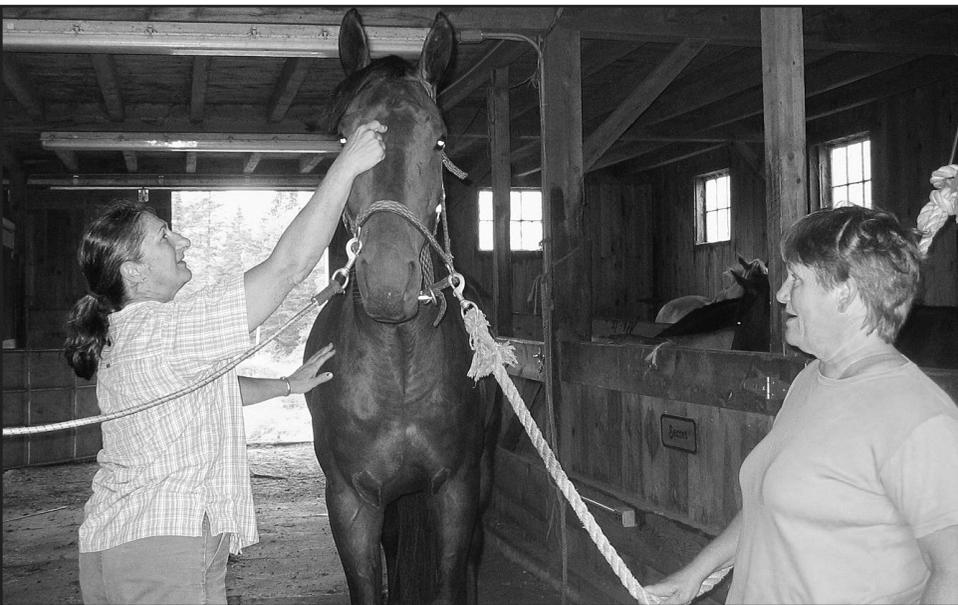
NON-DAIRY LIVESTOCK

Acupuncture: A Staple in the Stable?

by Martha Herbert Izzi

Fresh, as in "Fresh Start" is standing patiently as Maria Dunton, DVM, starts a twenty minute course of placing pins in the right meridians to treat his feet, specifically his stiff hock. "Fresh was a divorce present to myself" says stable owner, Rebecca Rice, who found him in County Limerick, Ireland years ago as she began a new, single life.

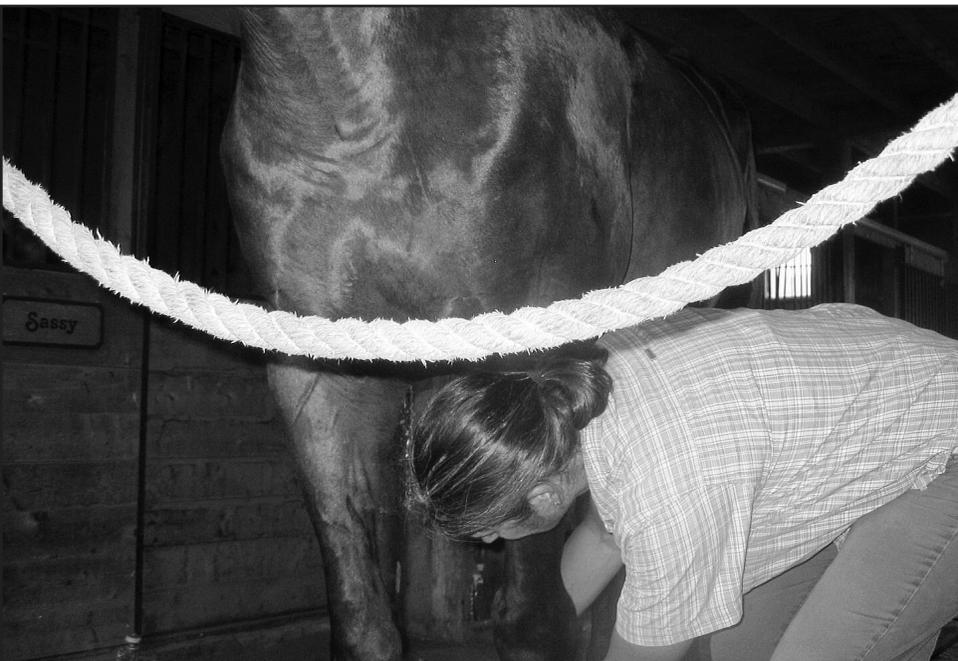
Yet another horse in Rice's stable, Sassy, has become a legend for the strides she has made through acupuncture. The ten year old was "lame all the time." Within one week following the first treatment, there was no lameness. By the third week, Sassy had grown almost one inch of new hoof. The crack that was three quarters of an inch wide and a half inch deep in the old hoof was simply not there in the new hoof. "We were kind of drop jaw," Maria says. "To grow an inch of hoof is unheard of. Now I can expect miracles."



Dr. Maria Dunton treating Fresh, as owner Rebecca Rice looks on.

Now in his teens, the fox hunter injured himself last year. When he was initially seen by another vet, he received injections in the joint to correct the injury. His trainer could not believe his improvement this year and was amazed that acupuncture had improved his movement so well that no injections were necessary. What is apparent during this session is the visible change in the horse as he relaxes to a point of being almost asleep. Fresh will be on a weekly treatment for four weeks.

Dunton is a 1980 Ohio State Veterinary School graduate. She began to study and use acupuncture during her training. She even used acupuncture years ago on her then young daughter who had developed juvenile arthritis. It significantly reduced her pain level. But last October she began in earnest with a six month course at the Tampa, Florida IVAS (International Veterinary Acupuncture Society) where she attended one week a month. It's a "rare night" that she doesn't go home and review acupuncture books, asking



Dr. Dunton works to re-direct Brego's deformed leg.

Photos by Martha Herbert Izzi

Next we watch Brego, bred locally, who has a congenital defect in his front left leg and he proves that every horse reacts differently to acupuncture. His leg points out to the side and Maria's goal is to stimulate bone growth to correct the deformity. Brego reacts to a needle placed at the meridian BL (bladder) 13, which is the master point for lung. And an even stronger reaction to SI (small intestine) 9, the point for front leg lameness. He shivers and shakes before our eyes and pushes two pins out, one of which is actually crooked. It's 'pay dirt' in the vernacular. The energy, or Qi as it is known, in those two areas is now unblocked and flowing through his body. His leg, according to Rice, "is so much better."

herself "how can I do something more effectively or differently?"

Acupuncture has been practiced on animals for centuries beginning with the Chinese who discovered that animals have similar meridians and reflex-points to humans. Legend has it that horses used on the battlefields were found to become sound after they had been hit by arrows in specific parts of their bodies. Later cows, dogs and other animals were added to the list of successful recipients. Dr. Dunton recently treated the cow of a local Vermonter for a reproductive problem. "The major challenge, she says, is just to get the needles into the cow because the skin is so tough." She knows another vet who effectively treated a cow for a prolapsed uterus. Acupuncture has also been shown to be remark-

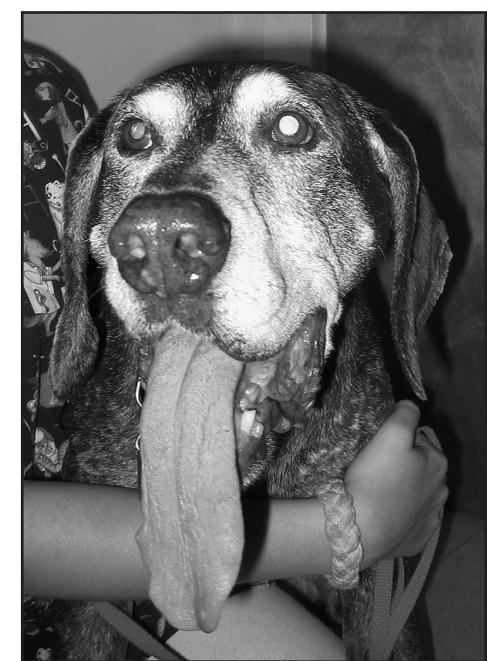


Healing hands place needles in strategic points.

ably effective in stimulating heat in cows that had failed to respond to GNRH within fourteen days and thus able to be artificially inseminated.

Understanding the neurophysiology behind acupuncture is sometimes a major obstacle for many western-trained medical practitioners, though as a treatment form it has gained wide acceptance among human patients and their animals in recent years. The acupuncturist stimulates the animal's "Qi," the energy that flows through "meridians" or pathways that are connected to internal organs, the nervous system and muscular and joint structures and thus boosts the immune system. At the same time it decreases inflammation and aids the body in releasing hormones and endorphins in a self-healing process.

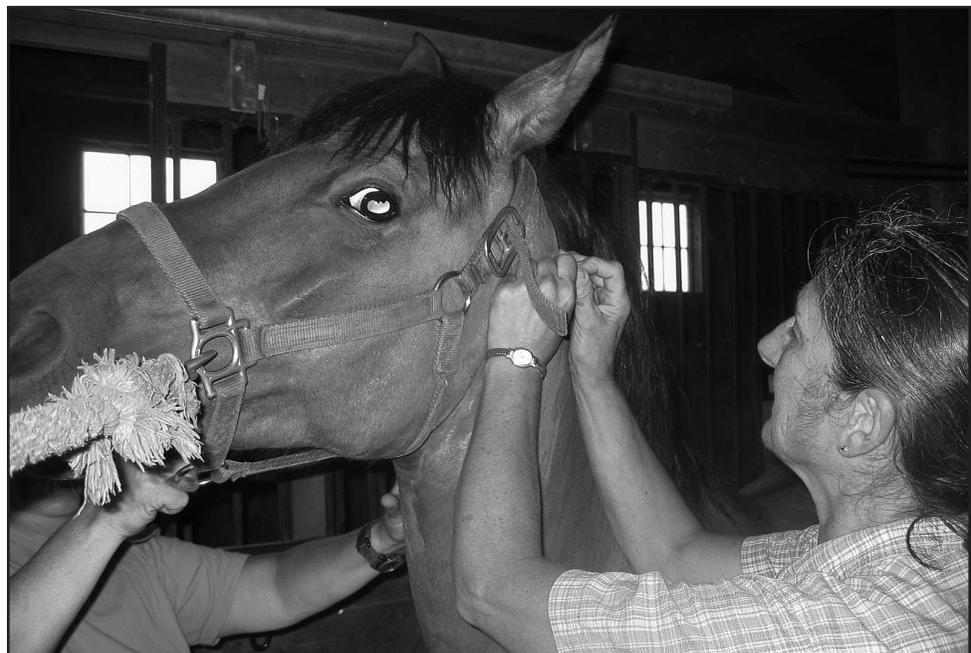
Following our afternoon at the stables, we are now at the clinic where Maria does a small animal practice. And today she is working on Jack, a German short hair pointer who is fourteen years old. This is his third session, and already he is another success story. When he began, Jack almost couldn't walk, and had great difficulty climbing stairs.



Jack's pink tongue is a sign that he is healing.

As with any treatment modality there are limits. Yes, there are "miracles" but sometimes an animal requires more acupuncture treatments than perhaps an owner is willing to accept or pay for or perhaps the animal needs a combination of medications and acupuncture, especially really old animals. What is known is that acupuncture has little or no negative effects on the animal.

Deciding how many treatments to administer is another issue which requires the vet and the owner to agree and sometimes trust to chance that an additional number of sessions will make the difference. As to those diseases or conditions for which acupuncture is not effective, Dunton says that "it does not work for cancer. You can make an animal feel better, increase their white blood cell count, affect things around the cancer, but the cancer itself



Sassy has a watchful eye as Dr. Dunton places the needles.

Before she begins the treatment, she checks his pulses and tongue color (his is deep purple) to assess his condition. Marie pushes the pin into BL 40, the master point for hind legs and back. It's another time where the animal visibly relaxes to the point where he tries to lie down to sleep. His tongue begins to hang out and it is becoming pinker by the minute, a signal that he is healing.

Maria's greatest dog success story so far was a Chesapeake Bay Retriever, then twelve years old. He had allergic dermatitis, a chronic skin problem, since he was two years old. He was perennially on antibiotics, steroids, and allergy serum for desensitization. Since his acupuncture treatments he has a whole new hair growth and all vestiges of the allergies have disappeared. His owners were more than skeptical, they thought of acupuncture as "voodoo" but they were desperate enough to try anything and they now have a vastly different opinion of the ancient and honorable treatment of acupuncture.

will not respond." Likewise an animal with a completely severed spinal cord is not going to be "cured" by acupuncture. With respect to treatment cost different vets charge according to whether they are treating an animal in a clinic or at their own barns. Dunton's standard range, after an initial assessment fee, ranges from \$40 to \$60 a session.

Finally, it should be mentioned that animal acupuncture is strictly regulated, requiring formal training and certification. And only licensed veterinarians may practice what is considered a surgical procedure.

Martha Herbert Izzi raises Tunis Sheep/Alpine Goats on Bel Lana Farm in Shrewsbury, Vermont. She can be reached at 802-492-3346 or mhizzi@yahoo.com.

GRAZING

Electric Netting for Sheep

by Ulf Kintzel

An electric netting is a prefabricated temporary fence with conductive horizontal twines, with built in posts and connecting non-conductive verticals. This mesh of fence is usually 150 to 164 feet long and can be rolled up after taking it down.

There are a number of different electric nettings for sheep on the market.

The three most important practical items that can differ in electric nettings are, in my opinion, height, the material of vertical connections, and the number of spikes per post. The "regular" height is 33 to 36 inches tall while the higher nettings are about 42 inches tall. The material of the verticals is either flexible (strings) or static (struts). The posts can have either single spikes or double spikes.

I use Euro Netz (Euro Net) made in Germany. It is about 36-inches (90 cm) high and about 164 feet (50 m) long with flexible verticals and double

spiked posts. The height is sufficient. Taller nettings are more difficult to keep erected. The flexible verticals allow for faster take down and are easier to roll back up for transportation. Nettings with struts as verticals are more designed as semi-permanent fencing since the struts keep the sections between posts from sagging.

The double spikes allow me to step the post into the ground as opposed to forcing them in by hand, as is necessary for single spiked posts. Using the foot is particularly important when the soil is hard, stony, or semi-frozen. The double spike also keeps the posts more securely in the ground, especially in windy conditions.

The electric netting can be used to subdivide a larger parcel of land that is fenced in permanently, for example, with woven wire. Or it can be used entirely as the perimeter and interior fence. When I use it as interior fence to subdivide a larger parcel I use it like anyone who uses regular twine fencing with plastic or metal posts. In

the summer I like to include shade by including a large tree, several trees or a hedgerow. I also try to think ahead where the next cell will be. This allows me to leave one side of the fence erected when I fence in the new parcel.

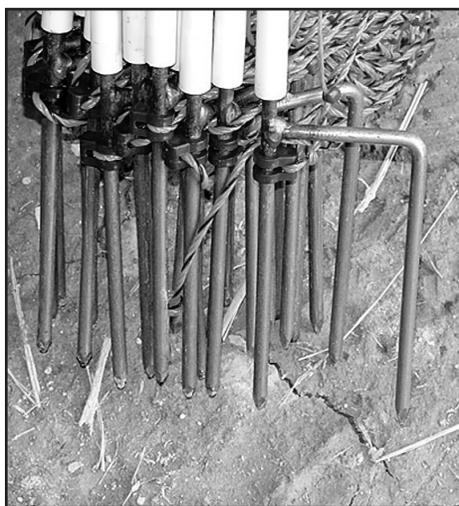
When I use the netting to pasture rented adjacent land, neighboring harvested hayfields or land seeded down temporarily for my sheep, i.e. with cereal rye, I try to shape the cell somewhat rectangular. A square is the ideal since it has the biggest amount of space of any rectangular for the same amount of fence being used. I start at that end of the field that suits me, which is often the one next to an access road. When I rotate the flock and put up the nettings for the next parcel I usually leave one side of the old cell standing.

The time that my sheep spend in one of these cells of pasture varies greatly. It can be anywhere between one day and a week. If I use a neighbor's harvested hay field in the fall or winter I often enlarge the current cell after two to three days rather than building entirely new. That is often simpler and I also don't have to move the water tank and the water troughs so often.

Sometimes limit of shade in the summer is a concern and the existing shade trees are included in the original cell and I enlarge that original parcel after a few days. When putting up the nettings it is very important to have the sections put up as tight as possible by stretching it as much as possible. Loose sections of fence are likely to become a death trap for sheep. They can hang themselves that way. Also, I use a spike attached to a string or rope on each corner post in order to increase tension in the fence.

The source of energy is a decisive factor when it comes to the reliability of the fence. I use Gallagher energizers that are designed for sheep fencing. The standard energizer I have has 2.6 Joules. Energizers that store less than that are often not sufficient for 15 to 20 nettings or for high weed load on fewer nettings. The Gallagher B260 is my long time favorite. It is handy and it is powerful.

Of course, the energizer won't work to its capacity when the grounding isn't deep enough or the soil isn't moist enough. I use a marine battery to power the energizer. Marine batteries are designed to be run down entirely and then re-



Double spikes make it much easier to push the posts into hard ground.



Netting comes in rolls 150 to 164 feet long and 33 to 42 inches high.

charged again. In dry conditions I like to use a bucket that leaks lightly at the bottom, fill it with water and set it next to the ground rod. The water will slowly drench the soil around the ground rod without running off.

It pays to have as many nettings as possible. More is better. I like to have about 20 to 25 rolls of netting that are less than 5 years old. I usually get about five years of reliable use out of the nettings. Some producers claim their average use is about ten years, but I find that nettings lose conductivity past 5 years of age. Including the older nettings remaining from previous years I have more than 35 rolls at any time. That is easier said than done since it is indeed a major expense for my farm.

I buy my nettings from my native Germany. These days one roll cost me about \$105 including shipping. The shipping part is currently about \$25. The price depends on the current exchange rate USD versus Euro. I used to be able to buy these nettings for less than \$80, shipping included, when the dollar was worth more and most of the financial world laughed at the Euro. Yet, the current price is still competitive to any domestic netting with only single spiked posts.

Having a good number of electric nettings allows me to style the pasture the way I want it to be, following natural borders such as the edge of a field, a tree line, a forest line, the property line and so forth. When I used to have fewer nettings due to financial limits I had to subdivide more than actually necessary, creating unnecessary labor.

Despite the greater cost in comparison to twine, I find electric nettings the safer choice for sheep. Electric nettings are more effective when it comes to keeping lambs, sheep, and guard dogs in and predators such as coyotes and black bears out. The peace of mind that comes from knowing your sheep are safe when you hear the coyotes howling at night is priceless.

The Ulf Kintzel family's White Clover Sheep Farm is in Rushville, Yates County, NY. Ulf can be reached at (585) 554-3313, or ulf@whitecloversheepfarm.com. The farm web site is at: www.whitecloversheepfarm.com.



Electric netting makes a good interior fence to subdivide pastures for rotational grazing of sheep. Photos by Ulf Kintzel

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Resource Spotlight

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WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE**Women in Agroforestry**

by Susan Neal

The forestry industry has long been considered the realm of men. But today, as natural resource management becomes less about extraction and exploitation, and more about sustainability, women are quietly securing positions for themselves in this once all-male arena. Many women choose traditional economic pursuits in forestry, such as small diameter logging, forestry consulting, and nut or Christmas tree production. But there are a growing number who have turned to those practices known collectively as agroforestry.

Women cite a variety of reasons for their involvement in agroforestry, particularly a long history of family involvement, a desire to learn a new skill or profession, or the fact that many forest products just seem to naturally complement existing agricultural products already being produced.

Anni Davenport's interest in agroforestry began when she was a child. In the mid-eighties, her family began producing maple syrup on their small subsistence farm. Today Anni is a maple syrup expert who Jim Ochtterski, Agriculture Agent in Ontario County, says "defies the typical image of a maple guy." After high school,



Carol Clemens in Bee Attire

Photo by Heather Ridge Farms

Agroforestry is a wise land-use system that incorporates diverse and integrative farming and forestry practices in an ecologically sustainable and profitable manner. It is a system that combines the raising of traditional crops and/or livestock with the production of trees and shrubs.

Proponents claim the benefits of agroforestry include habitat protection for wildlife, improved stewardship of soil and water resources, preservation of natural resources for future generations, and diversified income sources. As noted by Alice Beetz, NCAT Agriculture Specialist and author of the ATTRA's Agroforestry Overview publication, "Farmers adopt agroforestry practices for two reasons...to increase their economic stability and...to improve the management of natural resources under their care."

New York State has a growing community of women involved in agroforestry practices. Many are drawn to the unique, niche products that can be produced alongside more traditional agricultural items. Maple syrup, honey, and specialty furniture supplies have been common products of the industry for years; but other women are pursuing more exotic crops such as mushrooms, forest botanicals and pharmaceuticals, woody ornamentals for the cut flower trade, and even the production of pine needle mulch. These products are finding small, but growing, consumer outlets.

For the last ten years, Debbie Polaski (Saugerties, NY) managed a specialty mushroom business. On her one and a half acre property, Aunt Debbie's Gourmet Mushrooms produced Shitake and oyster mushrooms for restaurants and farmer's markets in the Hudson Valley. Just what led her down the mushroom path?

Debbie says, "When my children were young, I needed a business I could operate from my home. Growing specialty mushrooms fit the bill." The decision to give mushrooms a try turned into a business that provided the bulk of her family's income for nearly a decade.

Debbie has since retired from the mushroom growing business and now manages several farmers' markets for organic producers in her area.

Anni pursued an education in natural resource management and forestry at Syracuse University, and for a time she coordinated the maple syrup program at Pennsylvania State University.

Anni furthered her exposure in the field by authoring papers on maple syrup production for both Penn State and a variety of industry publications. In 1998 she bought the family farm and has been producing maple syrup ever since. Her syrup and other sweet treats are sold at her farm supply and feed store, The Family Farm Store in Spencer, NY.

When asked if she ever encounters any resistance to the fact that she is a female producer, she admits with good humor that syrumping has "always sort of been an old boy's club," but that she has met countless individuals who have been very supportive of her efforts. Perhaps the most interesting trend she sees today is the involvement of more and more women within the industry, partnering with spouses and other male producers. She feels this is a trend that will continue as more women pursue careers in agroforestry and natural resource management.

Carol Clemens' introduction to farming began with an agroforestry pursuit...beekeeping. She purchased a property brimming with fruit trees and berry bushes in 1979 and understood right from the beginning that "bees were the cornerstone of any agricultural enterprise." Today, Heather Ridge Farm (Preston Hollow, NY) produces a multitude of farm products including grass-fed beef, pork, and poultry. But she claims that the heart of the farm is still the bees. Her honey has been voted Best Honey in the Hudson Valley by Hudson Valley Magazine, and she offers two varieties at her farm store, along with beeswax soaps and candles.

Carol admits that she is not certain why beekeeping is considered by many to be an agroforestry activity instead of a traditional farming activity, but she thinks it may be a historic and cultural reference to a time before chemical fertilizers, when orchards depended almost entirely on bee pollination for their success.

While the specialty crops and agroforestry methods practiced by women today vary greatly, most female producers would agree that



Working on Hives - Christine O'Dell and her bee-keeping mentor Carol Clemens.

Photo by Heather Ridge Farms

they share a common goal...the desire to participate in a rewarding career that not only provides a promising economic return, but also ensures the health and sustainability of precious natural resources.

These hard-working, savvy businesswomen are breaking new ground and quietly leading agroforestry into the future. While they may not exactly be inciting a revolution, they are certainly inspiring a revelation in forestry and sustainable agriculture.

Author Susan Neal farms and writes at Wicaway Farm in Beaver Dams, NY, and is a contact person for the NY Women in Agriculture Network. She can be reached at (607) 535-2135 or wicawayfarm@aol.com. Anni Davenport of the Family Farm Store, Spencer, NY, can be reached at (607) 589-7866. Carol Clemens or Heather Ridge Farms and Farm Store, Preston Hollow, NY, can be reached at (518) 239-6045.



Carol Clemens in Bee Attire

Photo by Gary Gold

**Resource Spotlight
Agroforestry Resources**

Cornell Cooperative Extension's South Central New York Agriculture Team Website. See the "Woodlots and Ponds" link at www.scnyat.cce.cornell.edu/forestfarming/index.htm.

This is an informative website about agroforestry, including information about marketing forest products.

Agroforestry Research Center-Cornell Cooperative Extension of Greene County. www.arc.cce.cornell.edu. Agroforestry education and research program in the Catskill Mountain / Hudson Valley area.

National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT), www.attra.ncat.org/attrapub/agroforestry.html, 1-800-346-9140. The Agroforestry Overview provides a wealth of information on the subject, including definitions, marketing information, references, and resources.

The National Agroforestry Center (NAC), www.unl.edu/nac; (402) 437-5178. Educational resource providing free or low-cost publications and newsletters on agroforestry practices and products.

Small Farm Quarterly Youth Pages

The Youth Pages are written by and for young people. Many thanks to 4-H teens from New Orleans County who contributed to this issue.

We believe there's a bright future for young farmers in the Northeast. Whether you live on a farm or only wish you did...we'd love to hear from you!

Get your article published by sending it to:

SFQ Youth Pages

c/O Celeste Carmichael

4-H Youth Development Program Specialist

CCE State 4-H Youth Development Office

340 Roberts Hall

Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853

607-255-4799 • cjc17@cornell.edu

Oh the Places You'll Go

By Kerrie Walker, Orleans County 4-H Alumni, Age 22

Born and raised on a small farm in Orleans County, I never imagined I would be sitting in Clemson, SC contemplating my future career in agricultural education. I look back now and think of all the places I have gone thanks to the Orleans County Cornell Cooperative Extension and 4-H program. 4-H has led me on a path of great discoveries and wonderful relationships.



For two summers Kerrie Walker was the Orleans County Cornell Cooperative Extension 4-H Summer Assistant.

I began my career in 4-H when I was only two years old. My mother was a leader and my oldest brother was the first member of her club. When I turned eight years old, I was became a member myself. I remember the early days: sewing, cooking, and craft making. As I grew older, I became more involved in the volunteer aspect and the youth leadership program. The Orleans County 4-H Fair became a week long event that I could not miss a day of. I never showed any animals, but I was there. I tried to help with anything I could during the day and slept in my tent at night. I think about how my mom probably hated sleeping in that tent, but she did it so I would not miss a moment of the fair. Throughout my high school years, I became more involved in the horticulture program in 4-H. I helped plant gardens, learned plant identification, participated in the horticulture contest at the county level and even went on to the contest at the state level.

When it came time to choose a college and a career path for my life, I followed my 4-H horticulture "roots". As we all know, Upstate NY is not the best place for someone who wants to do year round horticulture, so I headed south. Clemson, SC became my new home, but I never forgot where I came from. For two summers I returned home and worked as the Orleans County Cornell Cooperative Extension 4-H Summer Assistant - assisting with fairs, events and state and county activities. I loved every minute of it! Four years later I obtained my Bachelors of Science degree in Horticulture from Clemson University.

Upon graduation, I had no idea what I wanted to do. So I went back to the drawing board. It was then that I realized just how much 4-H had shaped my life. I decided that I wanted to be able to do that for someone else.

This all brings me back to today... I am currently pursuing my Masters degree at Clemson University in



Kerrie with some of her college friends.

Agricultural Education. I have hopes of becoming a 4-H Educator here in South Carolina and giving back what so many have given to me. I will always remember and miss the people and events of 4-H in Orleans County, but I thank each and every one of them for bringing me to the place I am today. Oh the places I have been... and the places I will go!

For resources in horticulture and garden based learning, visit <http://www.hort.cornell.edu/gbl/>

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Steer-ed Right

By Tom Smith, Age 17, Orleans County Beef Club & Senior Council

When I first joined 4-H in Orleans County, I didn't have a show animal. The beef leader, Mr. Keppler, sponsored me an animal to show at the county fair. The next year I worked harder and brought 2 of my own. Then 4, then 5, 6, 8, 10, and now 13. Now I'm involved in other animal areas and other shows as well.

Seven years ago, I sold my first 4-H steer after the county fair and invested the money into a registered heifer. Through the study of EPD's and artificial insemination, I have greatly increased the quality of my cattle. I have now expanded my herd to 15 registered animals.

Last year I showed my cattle at 14 shows, including the county fair, State fair, and the Keystone International Livestock Exposition. I received the honors of master showman at the New York Junior Hereford Association Classic Show, the Grand Champion Bred & Owned female at the Coby Classic, and the Reserve Grand Champion Intermediate Division Bull at the National Hereford Show in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. I also showed swine, sheep, and entered horticulture exhibits at the county fair. I have received both showmanship and conformation honors in all areas, including master showman and best of show and reserve best of show honors with my pigs last year. I have learned a great deal from showing.

I was a member of the New York State Junior Livestock Judging Team last year and was the high scoring member at the National Competition at the NAILE in Louisville, Kentucky. I also judged at Keystone, State Fair, and the NYJBPA Coby Classic Beef Show, where I won the judging competition.

As I enter my Senior Year at Brockport High School as the valedictorian of my class of almost 400 students, I can truly look back and say that all of these experiences have inspired me. All of those late nights working with my animals, all of the public presentations that I was never excited about, all of the time that I have put into sponsoring



2007 Orleans County 4-H Fair Master Swine Showman

other 4-H'ers my animals, and all of the times that I have answered the famous question, "Do brown cows really make chocolate milk?" have really paid off. I feel ready to finish high school and to move on to the challenges of college. The skills I have gained have helped me to finish that late night homework, prepare for that big test, and especially, to interact with other people and to effectively communicate my ideas.

For more information raising beef animals, visit www.ansci.cornell.edu/4H/beef/index.html

County Fairs: Hard Work and Helping Others

By Brie Olsen, Age 14, Helping Hands 4-H Club

Hi! My name is Brie Olsen and I live on a small farm in Orleans County. I have been in 4-H for 7 years and it has played a very significant roll in my life.

At my home, preparing for fair is an important part of summer. It is a difficult but enjoyable task. With each task I take on comes responsibility. For example, I must teach each sheep I bring how to walk with me around the ring until they will walk by my side without me even having to lay a finger on them. Another sheep responsibility would be washing a sheep! Now you may think that it would be almost like washing a dog! Ha! By the end of this oh so joyful experience the only thing you gain is wet pants and the smell of lanolin. This, however, is only one way I participate in the fair.

Each year I also try my best to grow a selection of flowers and vegetables to enter in the fair. Although, I do not have the greenest of thumbs, with a little luck (and help from my mom!) they usually turn out decently. Along with sheep showing and growing plants, this year I have taken on something extra. I have taken four kids and I have taught them how to show sheep. Two of my "students" come straight from a farm, but my other two have never experienced the farm life. Not only was this interesting for me to teach, but it was also interesting to observe. One factor that really struck my interest was how each of them approached the

sheep. Just by standing there you could easily tell which ones came from the farm. The two boys that came from the farm tackled the sheep and had them set in one try. On the other hand, the two that were not raised as farmers approached them with great caution. Although their ways were very different, they were both affective and very amusing to watch! They have come a long way from when they started, and now I can say that they are ready for anything the fair throws their way.

To me fair is an opportunity to show others what someone can do with hard work and determination. Kids who show at fair want to help others experience a new and exciting way of life, that anyone can have if they put their mind to it. So next time that you go to a county fair, please remember to stop and think about all the hard work that is put into all the animals and displays you may see.

For more information about the 4H Sheep program, visit <http://www.ansci.cornell.edu/4H/sheep/index.html>



HOME AND FAMILY

Raising Rural Kids To Like The Outdoors and Each Other

by Celeste Carmichael

Even if you and your family are exposed to daily outdoor adventures on the farm, there are benefits to a family camping trip. Be it in the backyard or in a state campground, camping in the great outdoors does something special to connect kids to nature and their families.

I am writing as my family is traveling back to reality from Lake Durant State Park in the Blue Mountain area of the Adirondacks. Three nights away from the hub-bub of normal life was a treat, and while some may prefer the Ritz Carleton, I prefer the wide open spaces of nature. It may not always be full of stress free moments (like when two mice took up residence in our car...or we were trying to set up a tent in the rain), but our family seems to like each other better when we have time to just "be" together.



Photos by Celeste Carmichael

And, as you might have experienced, "being" and playing together isn't as difficult while away from all of our favorite technology-vices (tv, computer, cell phone, games, etc). Most moments of our camping days were taken up with biking, hiking, swimming, frogging, listening to the loons, finding blueberries or playing Yatzee (I am proud to be the reigning family champion).

It turns out that there is a variety of research that confirms that being away from it all - in the great outdoors is, indeed, a good family thing to do as it enhances family communication and cultures environmental awareness in young people. I thought that you, too, might appreciate knowing more about what the researchers are saying on these topics.

When children spend leisure time in the outdoors, playing - they grow up to respect the environment.

Nancy Wells, assistant professor of design and environmental analysis in the College of Human Ecology at Cornell, has studied this topic, analyzing data from a U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service survey that explored childhood nature experiences and adult environmentalism. "Our

study indicated that participating in (non-formal) wild nature activities before age 11 is a particularly potent pathway toward shaping both environmental attitudes and behaviors in adulthood," said Wells, whose previous studies have found that nature around a home can help protect children against life stress and boost children's cognitive functioning. "When children become truly engaged with the natural world at a young age, the experience is likely to stay with them in a powerful way -- shaping their subsequent environmental path," she added.



Challenging outdoor recreation can improve parent-adolescent communication and thus strengthen families.

There has also been some interesting work done by Dr. John Kelly McCoy from the Brigham Young University College of Family, Home and Social Sciences. Dr. McCoy has found that challenging outdoor recreation/camping can improve parent-adolescent communication and, as a result, strengthen families.

Dr. McCoy led a study that took twenty-three families with an at-risk adolescent (a teen with defiance issues, substance abuse, poor performance in school, negative family and peer relationships) out for a physically challenging four-day outdoor camping experience. In the end families indicated increased trust and support, increased affection and kindness towards one another, and increased communication.

The study suggests that working through outdoor challenges together gives both youth and adults a reason to talk - opening communication pathways, and builds trust and mutual respect.

Overall the study found, what you might already know - camping and adventurous outdoor recreation provide families with opportunities that are different from their everyday lives, making room for more and better communication to occur. These kinds of activities give families a reason to work together, a reason to talk and uninterrupted time together as a family.

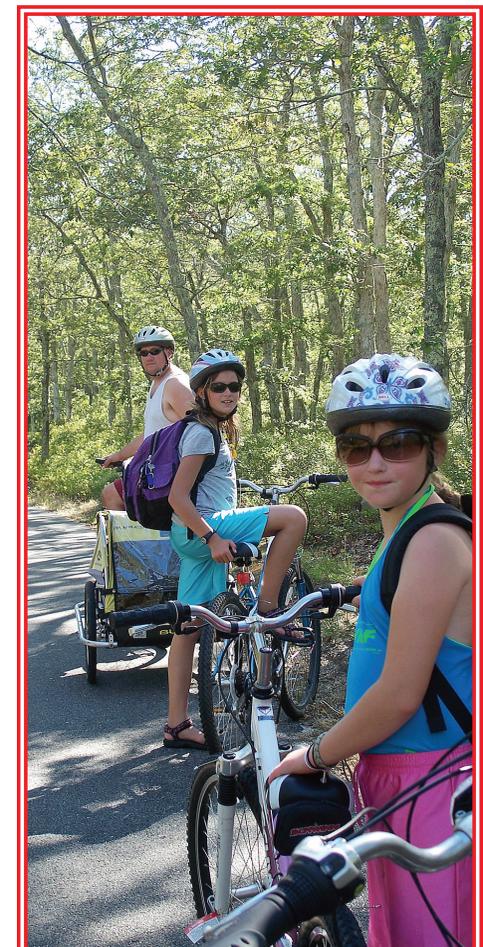
Personally, I find it very interesting to see what the researchers have to offer about parenting and family living, but I always find it worthwhile, too, to get a local reality check by asking my kids for their opinion. Here is

what my daughter, Cara, age 9, has to say about the topic, "Camping is really cool. I love when my family goes camping. We always get silly, well - sometimes we get mad at each other about things; but then we end up laughing about it later."

Hope that you can get out and have some fun, family adventures this fall. I sure hope that we can.

Celeste Carmichael is a State Program Specialist with the NYS 4-H Youth Development Program. She is also the

Youth Pages Editor for Small Farm Quarterly. If you have topics that you would like to see appear in Raising Rural Kids or would like to suggest an interview candidate for this column, please contact, her at cjc17@cornell.edu or 607-227-2715.



For more information on raising kids to appreciate the outdoors and each other.

Cornell Chronicle Online: "Camping, hiking and fishing in the wild as a child breeds respect for environment in adults, study finds." www.news.cornell.edu/stories/March06/wild.nature.play.ssl.html.

Anasazi Foundation, www.anasazi.org/results.html. Dr. McCoy's study The Influence of Challenging Outdoor Recreation on Parent-Adolescent Communication can be found in full here.

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STEWARDSHIP AND NATURE

The Bees

by David Kline

I had a pleasant surprise the other week. I opened the bee hive and discovered every frame filled to the edges with clover and locust blossom honey. Likewise, the brood chamber frames were overflowing with young bees from eggs to sealed brood -- an indication of an excellent queen along with plenty of pollen and nectar. Amid all the bad news on disappearing bees worldwide, I was hesitant to check the bees in fear of what I would find. With joy I gave the bees another super of drawn comb to fill with clover nectar.

Because of the early summer drought, we grazed all of our second cutting hay and I had some time on my hands. So the following week I set up the archaic two-frame A. I. Root honey extractor in the basement, fired up the capping melter, and set out to steal the two supers of honey from the bees. Stuffing the bee smoker with baler twine and lighting it, I cracked the hive lid and gave the bees a few puffs of sisal smoke. Waiting a few moments for the bees to move lower into the hive, I removed the cover and inner cover and to my amazement found the bees had already filled the new super with 30 pounds of white clover honey. All in a week's time!

While I manage the honeybees to work for us, they still are not domesticated and remain wild animals. When the bees bring the nectar into the hive it is too high in water content to be honey. The bees then have to evaporate the moisture from the nectar to turn it into honey. This is done by a number of bees, maybe a hundred, fanning their wings at 250 beats per second at the hive entrance, which forces air up through the frames and the nectar becomes honey.

But honey is more than nectar alone. The naturalist John Burroughs wrote in *Wake-robin* in 1895, "Most persons think the bee gets honey from the flowers, but she does not: honey is a product of the bee; it is nectar of the flowers with the bee added. What the bee gets from the flower is sweet water; this she puts through a process of her own and imparts to it her quality; she reduces the water and adds to it a minute drop of formic acid. It is this drop of herself that gives the delicious sting to her sweet. The bee is therefore the type of the poet, the true artist. Her product always reflects her environment, and it reflects something her environment knows not of. We taste the clover, the thyme, the linden, the sumac, and we also taste something that has its source in none of these flowers. Once the honey is right, the hive bees cap and seal it with wax."

Now instead of two supers, my daughter Ann and I spun out three supers and eight gallons of likely the finest honey I've seen in my 30-some years of keeping honeybees. I do know that I have never extracted fresher honey from nectar to table in eight days. The nice part is that we now have eight gallons of food that will never spoil using almost no fossil fuel, perhaps a pint of camping gas in the old Coleman camp stove to heat the water in the capping melter. The Coleman I picked up free from the no-sale wagon following the spring Mt. Hope Machinery Auction. My wife will use the beeswax from the cappings to make Christmas candles for the family and the faint aroma of the bee and summer will linger all the way through the holiday season.

I returned the three extracted supers to the hive giving what I hoped was ample space for honey storage for the next six weeks, or until the fall honey flow. The fall honey from goldenrod and aster tends to be dark and of a stronger flavor. The bees don't mind eating that honey during the cold months. Yesterday Joseph the bee inspector stopped to check the colony for foulbrood, mites, hive beetles, or problems bees encounter. He reported that the bees are in excellent condition. He added that the top super is already filled with new honey and that the queen is doing her job too well and has moved into the other two honey supers and is filling them with brood.

That means I have to smoke her down into the brood chambers and place a queen excluder between her and the honey supers. The bees would eventually force her down

and fill the frames, after the brood has hatched, with fall honey. I don't want to wait for that and miss all the white clover honey. The good queen in the hive, along with several frames of sealed brood and honey, was brought to me by Joseph a year ago when he inspected our colony and found them queenless. The bees had swarmed and apparently something happened to the young queen. A colony of bees without a queen is doomed.

For \$75 Joseph rescued our colony. A bargain. He told me the other day that the queen was from a wild swarm. For many centuries beekeepers thought the queen was king of the colony. It wasn't until the 1600s that it was discovered the king had ovaries and is the mother of all the bees. So thanks to the queen and her court, we have honey and, because of their pollination efforts, Macintosh apple sauce for the winter months.

Few things can compare with a piece of fresh wheat bread still warm from the oven spread with butter and covered with white clover honey dripping off the sides. What I then like to add is a slice of sun-ripened tomato zaftig with the goodness of summer, a touch of salt, and I've got a feast that the upscale New York City eateries have a tough time to match.

David Kline farms and writes in Fredericksburg, Ohio. He is the author of two books, Great Possessions and Scratching the Woodchuck. He is also the editor of Farming Magazine (www.farmingmagazine.net) which is available for \$18 per year from Farming Magazine, PO Box 85, Mt. Hope, OH 44660.

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MARKETING

What's A Cookie?

Farmer Co-op experiments with creative products for farm-to-school marketing

by Marty Broccoli & Juanita Finn

The Central New York harvest season is not very well timed to market produce to schools. Enter butternut squash - abundant, fresh until February, and pureed for year-round use. But, how much squash is served in schools?

Intrigued by value-added options, in June 2004, Upstate New York Growers & Packers (UNYG&P), an 18-member cooperative, began to develop a frozen cookie for school markets using members' squash, apple and honey ingredients.

The experience has been an exciting and mostly positive learning curve, and the Coop has translated the experience into marketing other value-added products. But even after four years, developing a quality, nutritious product that tastes good; keeping production costs low enough to meet school pricing; and marketing are ongoing cookie challenges. How do we keep this venture a success?

BE OPEN TO CREATIVE IDEAS

If you have excess product, find a delicious way to convert it into value-added, especially if it helps extend your marketing season. If you have a delicious family recipe, find a way to produce it in volume.

CONSUMER RESPONSE = OPPORTUNITY

Turns out people tend to think of cookies as flat and chewy, not mounded and moist, like UNYG&P's taste-test product. One school district decided it was a breakfast item, comparable to popular "muffin tops". One welcomed a 2 1/4 oz. cookie as a grain option. Another test district designated a 1 1/4 oz. version a fruit option. The five school systems that offered the warmest reception, served 7,000 cookies in December 2004.

BE PREPARED FOR REJECTION

Anticipate as many different responses as there are customers, including outright refusal of some buyers to work with you. Embrace criticism as an opportunity to know how to satisfy customers. Two districts were very negative about the concept and cookie.

While UNYG&P can meet the demand for custom-cookies, nothing can make cookies taste better if they're not prepared according to directions. Accept the fact that even with good directions, preparation may be out of your control. Be aware of the potential for

buyer/partner conflicts of interest that may prevent your product from being accepted.

WORK WITH QUALITY PARTNERS

Research potential production facilities and talk to their present clients to find out how satisfied they are. Find people at New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets and within retailers, institutions and other potential buyer organizations who can provide advice and open doors. Talk to other producers who are marketing to your potential buyers about their experiences.

IT TAKES TIME

When test marketing, and if you have to handle your own sales, be prepared to spend time promoting. The UNYG&P President served cookies at a trade show in California that developed interest and leads. It also takes time to build a customer base. Understanding your customer base is necessary to plan wisely. Negotiations begun in 2005 to market cookies to New York City schools are still in progress. Professional production and marketing consultants may be well worth their fees. Research and apply for any grant funds that may be available to help pay for industry-specific consultants to help advance your business plan and products.

LOGISTICS AND TIMING ARE CRITICAL

Demand, timing, delivery, price and quantity logistics require a lot of attention and usually an immediate response. Producers have to be able to determine economies of scale and the security of their customer base before investing in their own sophisticated production equipment. Resolving the "Catch 22" issue of having large clients interested, but not being able to supply enough product when and where the client needs it, at a price the client wants to pay, is a huge issue.

Timing is critical, especially marketing to school districts, where sales may need to be made when you need to be in the fields. A dedicated marketing person is crucial for success.

SUCCESS HAS IMPLICATIONS FOR PRODUCERS

UNYG&P's largest regular customer is a school district that buys 8,000 cookies a month. While recipe and distribution rights belong to UNYG&P, producer-members

HELP OPEN SCHOOL DOORS

Research and understand school and institution buying practices and limitations. Do everything you can to promote "buy local" to your local school districts, and general consumers, who, as the parents and relatives of

The Upstate New York Growers & Packers co-op's largest regular customer is a school district that buys 8,000 cookies a month.

who are paid for ingredients at wholesale prices have been most active in the Coop's value-added projects. Profits go into Coop reserves. **MORE FARM-TO-SCHOOL PROMOTION IS NEEDED TO**

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Resource Spotlight
From Restaurant to Retail: A Handbook for Food and Hospitality Professionals
 This handbook offers advice to farmers on transforming a specialty food item into a branded retail product. Farmers have the unique advantage of providing the main raw ingredient featured in a specialty product, providing an immediate market niche. As consumers seek more local foods, farmers can fulfill this growing demand by creating a packaged product that can be sold at their farmer's market or elsewhere. This practical guide includes twenty step-by-step exercises and dozens of quotes from experienced professionals who have brought products to market. Author Barbara Lang, former restaurateur and Cornell University Hotel School lecturer for eighteen years, received her master's of professional studies degree at Cornell in food marketing.
 For more Information, visit www.restauranttoetail.com or contact Barbara Lang at barbara@restauranttoetail.com
 RTR Ideas (607) 255-6421 P.O. Box 803, Dryden, NY 13053.

Marty Broccoli and Juanita Finn work with the Agriculture Economic Development Program of Cornell Cooperative Extension Oneida County. For more information contact Marty Broccoli at [CCE Oneida at mjb83@cornell.edu](mailto:CCEOneida@mjb83@cornell.edu) or 315-736-3394 ext 121.

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NEW FARMERS

DoveTales Farm

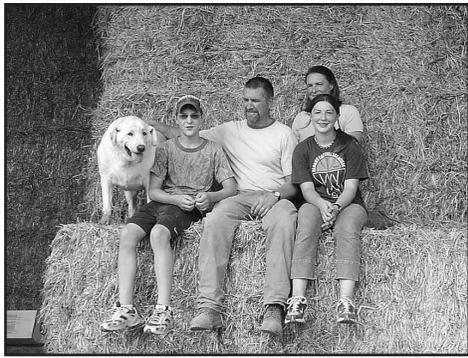
Dan and Karen Dove made good use of the FSA Beginning Farmer Down Payment Farm Ownership Loan Program to start their own dairy farm.

by Roger C. Thomas

I'd like you to meet Dan and Karen Dove, owners of DoveTales Farm, who along with their son Mark, 12 and daughter Carly, 11, own and operate a 155 cow dairy farm near Truxton, NY in Cortland County. Owning and operating a dairy farm was something that they had always wanted. With a lot of hard work on their part and some assistance from the Farm Service Agency's loan programs, this lifetime dream has become a reality.

A FAMILY AFFAIR

Dan and Karen first contacted me at the Cortland FSA Office in February 1996. At that



The Dove Family, (left to right), Jake, Mark, Dan, Karen, Carly

time they were both working on a large dairy operation in Ontario Co. They owned 55 cows and 50 head of youngstock along with a tractor and feed cart. Their animals were housed on the farm where they worked. They enjoyed their jobs, but felt that it was time to find a place of their own. As Dan told me recently, "We did this for the kids. We wanted to raise our kids on a farm and not at the local day care facility". As it turned out, at milking time the parlor at their new farm became the day care facility, complete with playpen and baby swing.

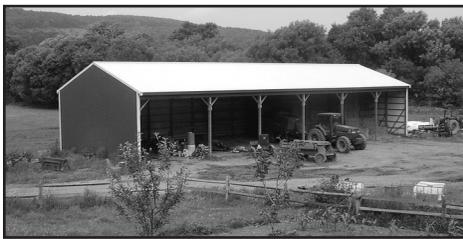
Karen has a Master of Science degree in Animal Science with a concentration in reproductive physiology and had worked on several large dairies in Ohio and New York. Dan was born and raised on a family dairy farm in Seneca Falls, NY and was a partner on his family's 160-cow dairy. He was also the dairy manager of a 300-cow operation in Ontario Co. prior to the purchase of their present farm. Together, their education and past work experiences gave them the right background to become dairy farmers on their own.



Dan and Karen Dove with Jake the dog and large square baler, Dan's pride and joy!

Even though the Dove's cattle and equipment were debt free and they had saved up a considerable down payment, they were unable to obtain financing from the commercial lenders that they had contacted because they lacked the 25% down payment required by most banks to purchase real estate. One of these commercial lenders, NBT Bank, suggested to the Doves that they contact FSA regarding the Beginning Farmer Down Payment Farm Ownership Program.

The Doves received their first assistance from FSA in 1996 with three loans: a direct annual operating loan for start-up expenses and annual operating expenses; a direct operating term loan for the purchase of additional cows and equipment; and the direct Beginning Farmer Down Payment Farm Ownership loan to purchase the 340 acre farm. The balance of



Machinery and hay storage building

All photos by Roger Thomas

the funds needed for the farm purchase was provided by a loan from NBT Bank.

BUMPS ALONG THE WAY

As with most farms, not everything went according to plan. A delayed real estate closing resulted in delayed planting and lower than expected crop yields in 1996. FSA helped out with a subsequent operating loan in 1997 to purchase forages needed to get them through until the new crops could be harvested. In 1998, the Doves implemented an intensive grazing program. In 1999, drought caused reduced pasture yields to a point where pastures had to be irrigated by pumping water from the nearby river to keep them from burning up.

Then in 2000, excessive rains caused flooding of the pastures from the same nearby river. The flooding of the fields reduced yields and cows had to be kept out of the pastures and fed inside until the water receded and the laneways could be improved. Things went fairly smoothly until June 2006, when flooding resulted in reduced corn silage yields.

STEADY PROGRESS

The Doves began with a low investment in machinery, owning only two tractors, a skid-steer loader, mixer wagon, bedding chopper, and a manure spreader. For the first few years, they had their crops custom planted and harvested. Their expertise was in the care of the cows and they felt that this is where their time and energy could be best utilized.

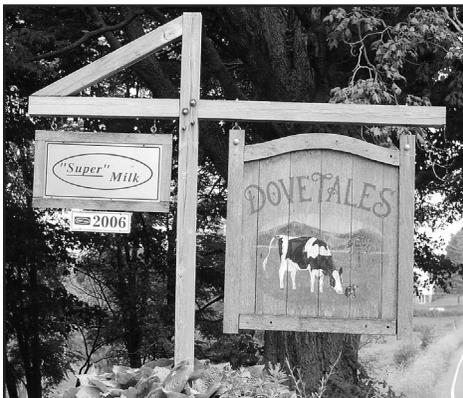


Commodity Shed

Over time they purchased additional equipment and took over more of the cropping operation. They continue to hire the corn planted and harvested, but they now do some custom large square baling for other farmers in the area.

They've also made many improvements to their farm over the years. Concrete walls were added to the original bunk silo. In 2000, a four bay commodity shed was constructed. In 2006, they built a 40' X 96' hay and machinery storage barn. Future plans call for a shop to be added to the end of this building, as well as a calf and heifer barn.

Karen and Dan are above average operators and excellent managers of cows, time, and



Farm sign, "DoveTales"

money. They put in long hours on the farm while raising two small children, but feel that their efforts are paying off. Despite her very busy farm schedule, Karen also served on the Cortland Co. FSA Committee for two years as the minority advisor.

Their children, Mark and Carly, are active participants in the operation and their duties include calf feeding, bedding cows, mowing the paddocks with a lawn mower, and moving the cows around in the 100 acres of managed pasture. They also belong to the local 4-H club and play sports.

In the beginning of this adventure, Dan and Karen were unable to take much time off. However, they now try to take part of their weekends off and spend time with family and friends. Karen has three Haflinger horses that she enjoys hitching up to the wagon and touring around the farm. Carly recently acquired an Appaloosa horse to ride.

ADVICE FOR OTHER BEGINNING FARMERS

I recently asked Dan and Karen if they had any advice to give other beginning farmers. "Make sure that at least one of you is a good cow person," Dan said. He credits their success to Karen's "cow knowledge" and Karen is quick to add that Dan's ability to fix and repair equipment has been key to their success. They both agree that it is their teamwork that keeps things running smoothly on a daily basis.



Rotational pasture

They also advise beginning farmers to "find a good neighborhood with lots of other farms." They said the local farming community was a big help when they moved into the area and they continue to help each other. They also suggest beginners should "manage the risks that you can control, and get all of the help you can get from other USDA and SWCD agencies". They'll be the first to tell you that they have benefited from many governmental agencies working together to meet a common goal, "improving the quality of life on their family farm."

In their first decade of farming on their own, and with FSA assistance, Karen and Dan Dove have purchased a productive farm, increased cow numbers from 55 to 155, raised adequate numbers of youngstock, and are well on their way to becoming successful farm owners and operators. In 2003, Dan and Karen became graduates of the FSA direct operating loan program and in 2005 they made their last payment on the beginning farmer down payment loan.



Carly with Red, her Appaloosa horse

The Doves are exactly the type of borrower that can benefit the most from the Farm Service Agency's loan programs. They came to FSA with a well thought out plan and with a few minor changes along the way, their plan has worked. They were the first beginning farmers that I was able to help with the FSA Beginning Farmer Down Payment Farm Ownership program and they have been role models for others to follow. Dan and Karen have been a pleasure to work with and I miss my visits out to their farm.

Roger Thomas is a Farm Loan Officer with USDA's Farm Service Agency located in Cortland, NY. He can be reached at (607) 753-0851 or roger.thomas@ny.usda.gov.



The Dove Homestead



Pasture shades for heifers

**Resource Spotlight
FSA's Beginning Farmer Down Payment Program**

The Beginning Farmer Down Payment Farm Ownership Loan Program was a part of the 1992 Ag Credit Act and provides funds for beginning farmers to become owner-operators of family-size farms. To be eligible for this program one must meet the definition of a beginning farmer, basically someone who has farmed less than 10 years and owns less than 30% of the average farm acreage for their county. The purpose of this program is to provide a portion of the funding for the purchase of farm real estate.

This program initially began providing 30% of the purchase price or appraised value, whichever is lower, with a 10 year term. It was later changed to the present program of providing 40% of the purchase price or appraised value, whichever is lower, with a 15 year term. A shorter term can be requested by the applicant. The interest rate has remained at 4%. As with any loan program there are a few limitations:

1. The "down payment" portion of the program is the 10% of the purchase price that is supplied by the applicant. This can be in the form of a gift or cash.
2. The purchase price or appraised value, whichever is less, cannot exceed \$250,000.
3. Financing provided by FSA and other credit cannot exceed 90 percent of the purchase price or appraised value, whichever is lower.
4. The other financing for the balance of the purchase price must be amortized for at least 30 years and no balloon payment in the first 15 years.

The remaining balance of the purchase price or appraised value, whichever is lower, not to exceed 50%, can come from another lender or an individual and may be guaranteed by FSA.

The use of this program allows FSA to spread out its limited farm ownership funding over more farms and allows FSA to assist more beginning farmers. Also FSA can take a junior lien on the real estate being purchased to allow the other lender to have a first lien and reduce their risk thus encouraging participation in the program.

If you would like more information about FSA's Beginning Farmer Down Payment Farm Ownership Loan Program or any of our other programs, please contact your local FSA office.

GRAZING

Helping Your Animals Cope with Disease

Although good grazing management can minimize the stress on your livestock, it's still important to monitor the stress factors that might be affecting them.

by Bill Henning

Ann Wells is a veterinarian who runs Springpond Holistic Animal Health in Prairie Grove, Arkansas. "I work to put myself out of business," she says, but that will probably never happen.

Folks in New York recently got to know Ann better through pasture walks with her on two dairy farms and two beef farms. Those of us who got to participate became familiar with a refreshing approach to animal well being - enabling the animal to do the best it can to cope with disease. Ann is staunch advocate for pasturing as a means to naturally enhance an animal's immune capabilities, primarily through stress reduction.

To help farmers better understand how to reduce stress, Ann developed a scoring system which lists a number of common stressors (see sidebar.) A positive score on an item means the animal is not stressed, while negative scores indicate stress. The more positive your number is the better the animal can cope with disease.

Ann doesn't expect that people will score their animals all the time, but the system does provide a learning tool, or review, for those seeking to take advantage of an animal's natural abilities to reproduce and produce.

Come to think of it, we might even apply the principles to ourselves. Pastures really are, well - pastoral, bucolic, and stress reducing.

Author info: Bill Henning and his wife Kathleen operate a grass-based beef and sheep farm in the Finger Lakes region of New York. He is also the Small Farms Specialist with PRO-DAIRY/CCE-NYNY Dairy, Livestock, and Field Crops Team.



Pasture walk participants on their way to stress reduction.

Resource Spotlight

Fundamentals of Beef Management

This 148 page guide was developed by the University of California specifically for small-scale operations, and includes a wealth of information for readers getting started in the beef cattle business. Chapters discuss:

- * Beef breeds - to help you select breed characteristics that best match your environment, economic situation, and production goals
- * Equipment for handling cattle and corrals
- * Fencing needs - including descriptions of basic designs and construction materials
- * Truck and trailer design considerations, tips for safe transportation, information on shrinkage, and legal requirements associated with transporting cattle
- * Health and management of your livestock, including dehorning and castration, cattle identification, general animal health, identification and treatment of internal and external parasites, and reproduction
- * Range and irrigated pasture management
- * Animal nutrition and feeds that meet nutritional requirements of various classes of cattle
- * Calving
- * Carcass traits and how they affect the value of the beef you produce
- * Record keeping, marketing, and economics, key aspects of a successful beef cattle operation
- * Regulations relating to land use and zoning ordinances, waste disposal, livestock identification, the Endangered Species Act, and the Clean Water Act

Four appendixes, a glossary and index, round out the manual and also provide more specialized information that will help keep you abreast of trends and changes in the industry. For information about ordering this publication, contact University of California, Agriculture and Natural Resources Communications Services at 1-800-994-8849. Cost is \$18.00.

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 ___ No weather extremes = 0, Hot & humid = -2, Extreme cold = -2, Cold & wet = -3

Genetic Predisposition
 ___ Flighty = -1, Calm 0

Chronic Disease
 ___ Present -1 Not present = 0

Antibiotics
 ___ Given within last 2 weeks = -1, None given = 0

Parasites
 ___ No signs = 1, Mild parasitism = -1 Severe parasitism = -2

Social Behavior
 ___ New animals in herd = -1, Closed herd = 0

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 ___ Conventional weaning = -1, Pasture weaning = 0

Handling
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COWS AND CROPS

Planning a Farmstead Cheese Operation

by Fay Benson

The Randles family of Argyle is going through a common but risky process on their New York dairy farm. They are adapting their farming business to serve new direct-marketing outlets opening up for dairy products.

They have decided that by investing in a farmstead cheese plant, their family dairy will be able to supply an expanding market for locally made artisanal cheeses. The Randles understand that having a healthy dairy farm business in New York means change is inevitable, and planning for that change is critical. Without planning, the time and capital spent can seriously harm the existing business.

RANDLES FAIRVIEW FARM

My sister Marge is part owner of the 50-cow, Randles Fairview Farm located in Argyle N.Y., 45 miles north of Albany, along with her husband Dave, his brother Will and Will's wife Stephanie. Their story is typical of New York dairies. Dave and Will are fourth generation farmers who took over the farm from their father in the '70s and '80s. Their farm system was well-designed and well-run. It supported the brothers' families and paid for the transfer process when their father passed down the farm. But over time the two couples began to notice the erosion of their income due to higher costs of production and stagnant milk prices.

The farm paid the bills and provided a modest draw to each family. But they foresaw a dilemma when it came time to pass the operation on to the next generation. To do that, the business not only has to pay its bills and pay the managers. It also has to purchase the equity from the current owners.

The Randles had always kept good production and financial records. These records gave them an accurate picture of what financial resources they had, and served as the first piece of their business plan. They realized that continuing to supply the fluid milk market was unlikely to reverse their shrinking profits. They began to address part II of their new draft business plan: "Identify the problem and brainstorm solutions".

Working with the cows and the soils on their farm is something both brothers enjoy, so both agreed that staying in the dairy business was their first choice. The brothers weren't interested in becoming employee managers which is what would be required if they chose to expand the size of their herd.

They considered producing certified organic milk to increase income. But there were very few other farms in their area that had made the transition, and the obstacles they identified were too risky for them.

LIGHTING A FIRE

In the end, it was the thought of turning their cows' milk into cheese that lit a fire under them. Marge stresses how important this was. "Most of the ideas we had in our brainstorming would have helped solve our problem, but if we weren't excited about the project, we probably wouldn't have persevered through the barriers and obstacles that we have encountered over the past three years."

Once the Randles identified farmstead cheese production as their goal, they started doing their homework - reading, asking questions, and attending meetings on the cheese-making process. They contacted food science experts at Cornell Cooperative Extension to help answer their questions and identify resources. The New York Department

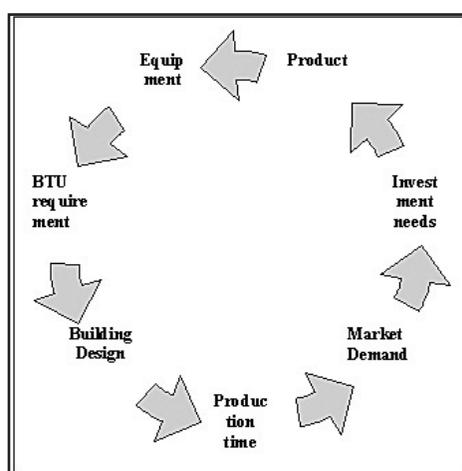
of Agriculture and Markets' staff provided information about facilities and identified the processing equipment they would need to comply with the detailed inspection process that oversees cheese production in New York.

The Randles also hired a well-known cheese production expert, Peter Dixon, to come to their farm to help them visualize their project, identify marketing avenues for their finished product, and make numerous batches of cheese in their kitchen.

One advantage the Randles have had during the process is a business planner on staff. Marge is a Certified Financial Planner. Her well-crafted business plans have helped the family look for risks in their new business venture, as well as garner grants. They are currently making use of grants totaling \$22,000 from the USDA Sustainable Agricultural Research and Education (SARE) program and the New York Farm Viability Institute (NYFVI). The grants help but the families still had to fund the remainder of the estimated \$100,000 start up costs.

PLANNING A SYSTEM VS. PLANNING A BUSINESS

The Randles quickly realized that their planning for "Argyle Cheese Factory" proved more complicated and wider in scope than writing a traditional business plan. The routine questions addressed in their business plan included: What is the capital invested? What is the cost of production? What is the marketing plan? What is the income needed to pay off loans, labor cost, production cost? Tackling these questions was important, but Marge said that in planning a farmstead cheese business each component of the plan impacted other areas of the business. For example, choosing the products that were to be sold was important to marketing but also determined equipment needs, building space, energy requirements, and production time.



-After visiting other farmstead operations Marge coined the phrase "Planning so that you hit a wall rather than a ceiling". She means figuratively hitting a wall is fairly easy to rectify, because walls can be moved outward. Hitting a ceiling requires serious changes to the structure. She shared the story of a visit to a farmstead cheese operation in another state where the couple had "Hit the Ceiling". They started making yogurt with a 100 gallon vat pasteurizer which could produce 400 quarts of yogurt per batch. Their product was well received and within 8 months they had orders for 1,500-2000 quarts per week. Their dilemma was that they needed to run batches 5 days out of the week and they were limited on time to do the batches and the filling of the containers. They were also limited in space available to "age" the yogurt. The couple needed the sales they



Label for Argyle Cheese Factory

had to repay their existing loans and to get a family draw. Their system would have been good had they sized their pasteurizer over their original plan, which would have required a larger heat or BTU source, and more building space.

HURDLES AND BARRIERS

General Napoleon said about battle plans; "Very few survive the first engagement," but they are still important for re-planning. This has been the Randles's experience with their original business plan. As their planning moved forward there were many changes that had to be refigured into the plan so that the end result was still what they had envisioned. Here is a sample of some of their hurdles:

* Their original plan was to cooperate with a neighboring dairy farm to operate the cheese plant. After the first year of planning the neighbor realized that the cheese operation wasn't in their best interest and opted out, so the Randles had to refigure amounts of milk, capital availability and the location of the plant.
 * When the Randles were offered a free boiler for their plant it seemed like they couldn't go wrong. They designed the cheese plant for the free boiler. Marge and Dave's son Andrew explained how to calculate the BTUs required for the amount of milk they planned on processing and comparing that to the BTUs that the boiler required in LP gas. This calculation showed that the boiler was too big and that it would be cheaper for them to purchase a new smaller boiler for their plant.

Plan carefully for any major business change

To minimizing risk when planning for change, farm families should:

- * Inventory your farm's existing resources, These include:
 - o Extra labor and management time
 - o Buildings, land, and geographic location
 - o Capital and credit
- * Determine what's wrong with the current system.
- * Brainstorm solutions to the problem.
- * Choose solutions that match the family's capabilities and desires.
- * Assess the side effects or risks changes may bring.
- * Set up methods of measuring progress toward the solution.
- * Seek perspective from an outside specialist

Resource Spotlight**Farmstead Cheese Resources**

Start up information for small scale dairy processing:
 The Dairy Practices Council 51 E. Front St. Suite 2 Keyport, NJ 07735
 Phone/Fax: (732) 203-1947 E-mail: dairypc@dairypc.org

Cornell Small Farms Program, Dairy resources
www.smallfarms.cornell.edu/pages/resources/production/dairy.cfm

New York Artisans and Farmstead Cheese Makers Guild
www.nyfarmcheese.org/cheesemakers.asp?id=3

Farmnet for business planning assistance to NYS farmers: 1800 547-FARM
 Web page www.nyfarmnet.org.

This was a problem since the plumbing had already been installed in the plant.

* The original plan was to have product for sale by June 1st, with all the changes to the original plan the new date for product sale is this September and they have decided that their first product will be yogurt instead of cheese. This is because yogurt can be ready for sale quickest because the production time is days rather than months as it is with cheese.

THE PLAN IN ACTION

When the Randles open their business, they will have the capacity to produce 900 pounds of cheese each week. Eventually, the Randles plan to make yogurt and several types of cheeses -- including queso fresco, cheshire and derby.

Their marketing plan targets farmers markets, local farm stands, and specialty food stores. The Randles plan to capitalize in on the ever-growing "buy local" trend by having an on farm store. They have installed large windows on either side of the steel building that will house their cheese plant so consumers can see where their food comes from.

The change to their farm hasn't been easy for the Randles. The fire that was lit under them three years ago still burns strong, even with the countless hours spent on educating themselves, the unexpected changes and delays and the thousands of dollars in capital involved in establishing the cheese plant. The written business plan was a constant reminder of their vision of the future for their family farm.

If you don't have a financial business planner in your family, Cornell Cooperative Extension and NY FarmNet have farm business specialists who can help you plan how to deal with the profit squeeze. Planning a change can be a lot of fun because everyone can dream of what they would like to see in the future. And honest planning helps ensure that your dreams don't turn into nightmares.

Fay Benson is a Small Farm Educator with Cortland County CCE. He may be reached at 607-753-5213 or afb3@cornell.edu.

STEWARDSHIP AND NATURE

Covered Bedded Pack Barn Project Receives National Award

In the Summer issue of Small Farm Quarterly we featured an article on Jake Fairbairn's covered bedded pack barn in Arkville, NY, a project which was funded in part through a USDA Conservation Innovation Grant. We're pleased to report that this project recently received highest honors at the Conservation Innovation Grant Showcase which was held at the National Conference of the Soil and Water Conservation Society of North America.

John Thurgood of Cornell Cooperative Extension of Delaware County and Brian LaTourette of the Watershed Agricultural Council received the award for their poster titled "Conservation and Producer Benefits of a Bedded Pack Management System" which explained the bedded-pack system that was implemented last fall on Jake Fairbairn's farm, Lazy Crazy Acres.

The intent of the Conservation Innovation Grant is to explore non-traditional solutions to solve environmental concerns on the farm. The bedded pack management system consists of a steel framed fabric covered structure with ten foot high sidewalls. The barn houses the cows late fall, winter and early spring and allows the cows to loaf on a soft bed of straw. New bedding is added every other day to keep the floor clean and comfortable for the cows. All of the manure is stored in



Dan Flaherty, Brian LaTourette, John Thurgood and Challey Comer (l to r) in front of their winning Conservation Innovation Grant Showcase poster.

the bedding material until the summer when the material can be either spread on fields or composted. Jean Bonhotal, compost specialist of Cornell University has visited the site and says the bedded pack is well suited for composting.

Thurgood said, "This practice shows great promise for providing an economical way to store manure. The system not only provides for manure storage, it also provides for animal housing and can

make daily chores much less time consuming and physically demanding." Thurgood says "Receiving the award was only possible because of our outstanding Watershed Agricultural Program team, innovative leadership of the Watershed Agricultural Council and a farmer that was willing to take the risk of having the system built on his farm." LaTourette added, "When we left for the conference

couple of times and were impressed with the system. Flaherty stated, "Jake wasn't sold on the bedded pack idea at first, but after a while warmed up to the concept. The system can be managed with the equipment that small dairy farms have, the cows like it, and the bedding doesn't smell all that bad when it is emptied from the barn."

The system was implemented with funding from the Natural Resources Conservation Service's, Conservation Grant Program and The Watershed Agricultural Council. The overall project manager was Challey Comer of the WAC. The structure designed by WAC engineers Mike Sinniger and Paula Christman. Christman related, "The barn sidewalls and posts are constructed of untreated hemlock and locust, since Jake said he may want to produce milk organically in the future and treated lumber is frowned upon by organic certifiers. A local forester supplied the lumber."

The cows spent last winter and early spring in the barn this year and did very well in the new system. Fairbairn said, "My cows are in better condition and my yearlings have done better than ever... they really look great. The cows were happier and so was I."

The bedded pack system is now being studied by Mariane Kiraly, educator for Cornell Cooperative Extension in Delaware County, who will be researching how the system affects farm profits and labor. Kiraly stated, "If the system pans economically we may see a lot more bedded pack barns in the future."

we had no idea we would be shaking the hand of the national chief of the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service [Arlen Lancaster], it was quite an honor."

Dan Flaherty, whole farm planner for the Watershed Agricultural Council is a creative thinker and discovered the bedded pack barn system in northern Vermont. Mr. Flaherty, farmer Jake Fairbairn and other program staff visited Vermont a

Resource Spotlight New Alternative Swine Production Health Reference

In recent years there has been dramatic growth of specialty markets for meats produced on farms that satisfy new sets of consumer preferences. These production systems bring special opportunities and also unique challenges. A new guidebook, *Managing for Herd Health in Alternative Swine Systems*, draws on the knowledge of veterinarians and experienced producers who are successfully working in alternative production systems.

"Alternative swine systems" often differ from a typical, "conventional" operation both in the inputs they use and in the way pigs integrate with the overall farm. There is likely to be tighter integration, with crops providing bedding and in turn relying on swine manure returned to the field. Swine pasture may rotate with other crops. Alternative swine systems are often tied to specific premium markets that determine some of their production practices. Typically this includes the avoidance of antibiotics. It may also include practices to assure animal comfort and restrictions on synthetic wormers.

Managing for Herd Health represents a three-year effort by swine producers, field veterinarians, ISU scientists, and the nonprofit organization Practical Farmers of Iowa (PFI, www.practicalfarmers.org). Real-world examples and producer profiles are spread throughout, as are "words of wisdom" from experienced hog farmers.

Copies are available without charge from Practical Farmers of Iowa. Contact the PFI/ ISU Extension Farming Systems Coordinator Rick Exner, 515-294-5486, dnexner@iastate.edu. The 50-page guide is also available at www.pfi.iastate.edu/pigs.htm, where you can download updated versions of guide chapters and also leave your comments and suggestions for future revisions.

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MARKETING

Bootstrap Marketing: How to Keep Your Marketing Budget from Going Through the Roof

by Bernadette Logozar

I can hear the chant in my head, it's all about marketing, marketing, marketing. This seems to be the one area where farmers-whether they are trying to sell cheese, yogurt, vegetables, flowers, meat products or value-added agriculture products-will say they have the biggest learning curve. Growing, raising, and making the product generally is NOT the challenge for experienced farmers, but marketing what they grow, raise and make IS a challenge.

easy to read, with few words in bright colors.

Consider also using the shape of the product you are selling to tell people what is in. For example: If you are selling brown eggs, your sign might be a brown egg-shaped sign. So how big should the letters be? Rule of thumb for making roadside signs is that the letters should be 1/5th as wide as they are high. Information about sign 'readability' is in Table 1.

Distance (feet)	Letter Width (Inches)	Letter Height (Inches)	Number of Words at Speed:			
			30 mph	40 mph	50 mph	60 mph
50	3/8	1 3/4	4	2	1	0
100	3/4	3 1/2	8	5	4	3
200	1 3/8	7	15	11	8	6
300	2 3/16	11	22	16	13	10
400	2 7/8	14	30	22	17	14
500	3 1/2	17 1/2	38	28	22	18

There are folks who spend their whole lives focusing on marketing other peoples stuff. So how does someone who is busy trying to grow, raise or make the product get an edge in this fast-paced, savvy world we have? Well, agricultural products have a few things going that other products don't have and by banking on these features you, the farmer can reap the benefits-in this case it is sales. That said let's dig in.

FALL IN LOVE WITH THE SANDWICH BOARD

Gnade-McGrattan recommends you 'fall in love with the sandwich board'. These are great for keeping your name out on the main road and keep the advertising fresh. Changing your signs frequently keeps the loyal customers coming back for the new things that are in. Another tip is that specificity trumps broad statements. For example announcing that "Pink and yellow throated petunias just in!" says something different than "Hundreds of annuals".

THE BASICS -- SIGNAGE

Cheryl Gnade-McGrattan from NYS Department of Ag & Markets states you should have "Signs, Signs, everywhere!" Announce what you have ready or coming in so that travelers know what to expect when they stop by. If you have some road frontage have several signs posted along the way to tantalize potential customers as they get closer to your location.

Materials used for signs can vary. You can use plywood and paint to do much of your roadside signage. If you want to make a bit of an investment you can purchase pre-made signs with the produce on them. These can be plastic, metal or wood. More recently more and more people have been using 'election' signs. Those firm plastic signs that have a metal stand that can be set up with ease and stored in minimum space. Be sure to check with your local municipality for any regulations regarding roadside signage. Whatever your choice of signage remember to use your signage to your advantage and look for ways to maximize your exposure without breaking your wallet.

Be sure to let folks know well in advance that you're open for business. Although some say a little goes a long way, bigger is definitely better when trying to pull traffic from a main road to your farm stand.

Once folks are at your farm stand use this opportunity to market what you've got. At your farm stand or farmers market be sure to tell your farm story. If you have other farmers supplying some products share their stories too. Have recipes available for items that might be a little different-such as garlic scape

pesto or pasta bean salad. Share how you serve a particular product to your family.

For those regular customers, have a "VIP bag" which can be simple brown paper lunch bag, with their name on it, holding a little something to say 'thank you' for their patronage. It might be that fresh ripe tomato or the pint of raspberries they missed out on last week. Announce what is coming in. It might be a simple sign by the door that says "Come back next week for _____."

Another way to creatively market your products without adding cost is to bundle items together either for convenience or experience. For example: "Asian Supper Basket" or "Pick a Pizza Pie".

DO A MARKETING COLLATERAL AUDIT
"Marketing collateral" refers to all the items or ways you connect with your customers. These might include brochures, business cards, signs, folders, website, on-hold messages etc. Take some time to review what your collateral is saying about you. It can be surprising when you gather all the bits that you have been handing out to folks in one location (like the kitchen table) and look at it critically.

The review won't cost a thing, but streamlining your materials so you that you send out a consistent message may bring more customers to your door. Being consistent with your marketing materials will help people to identify your farm and your products from all the others that are out there-which will keep them coming back for more.

Consider creating a template for your advertising and use that consistently throughout all the ways that you might touch your customers. For your printed materials pick one or

use different signatures for maximum marketing effect in various situations. And if you have several product lines, you should have a signature for each.

Another way to up sell is by using your on-hold messages or voice mail messages to update customers on products, sales and specials. Be sure to use your Fax Cover sheets and Bills or invoices as a way to continue to up sell. These are points of contact with your existing customer base. Keep them coming back by keeping the anticipation of new items you will be offering and when.

WHEN THEY CALL...

When people ask for sales literature from your company they're probably asking several of your competitors for their literature at the same time. Some tips to remember to help you stand out from the rest are:

- * Email within 24 hours
- * Get the response in the mail within 2 days after receiving the inquiry, one day is better.
- * Print: "Here is the information you requested" on the envelope
- * Print: "First Class Mail" on the label or the envelope, again to make sure everyone who handles it understands that this is not mass, 'junk mailing'. Or use Priority Mail envelope for extra impact.
- * Clip a personalized thank-you note to the front of your literature package. Reference the exact nature of the literature request: "Thank you for stopping by B's Market Booth and chatting with us at the NextYearFood Show in NYC. Here is the information you asked we send you about our Fall Product line."
- * Send EXACTLY what the customer asked for. Sending your complete set of literature wastes money (for printing and postage) and makes it more difficult for the customer to find what he or she is looking for.

Marketing of the Farm Stand

- Signs, signs everywhere.

Meet the farmer from 12-3pm!

Coming up next week
Super sweet corn
White eggplant
Watermelon
Radishes

Pick up a fresh salad all bagged and ready for your family on the way home

Fresh today,
Purple
Green beans
Heirloom tomatoes
Tender baby greens

Asian Dinner in a Basket

Marketing Tips about signs.

- Signs. Take a tip from Crispy Cream. Change your sign frequently.
- Fall in love with the sandwich board.
- Use humor
- Specificity trumps broad statements.

Hundreds of Annuals

Pink and yellow throated Petunias just in!

may be two type fonts and stay with them. Choose your colors carefully, and avoid Word Art.

And if you're on the web, create an email signature that has how to contact you as well as regular update on your business. If I had a farmstand, my email signature might look like this:

Best regards,
Bernadette

B's Market Stand
bmarket@anyserver.com
www.bsmarketstand.com
Open May - September, M-Thurs 10-5
Major Road, Anytown, USA
1-800-000-0000

This week just in Fresh Sweet Corn! Stop by to pick a dozen on the way home.

You should also use what you have to "up sell." If you have an email signature, when was the last time you updated it? You can

* Log the inquiry and place a follow-up call a week after it was mailed .

UPDATE YOUR MARKETING STRATEGY

In summary, some things you can do to update your marketing strategy include:

1. Learn to love the sandwich board
2. Conduct a marketing collateral audit
3. Build a competitor file -for marketing
4. Explore ways to 'bundle' your products for either convenience or experience.
5. Create and update your email signature
6. Update your on-hold and voice mail messages regularly
7. Enjoy your market season!

Bernadette Logozar is a Rural & Ag Economic Development Specialist at Cornell Cooperative Extension of Franklin County in Malone, NY. She can be reached at 518-483-7403 or bel7@cornell.edu

NON-DAIRY LIVESTOCK**Shea Farm of Long Eddy****Holistic Management with Grass Fed Animals.**

by Janet Aldrich

The Shea family farm, situated along a winding road in Long Eddy, Delaware County, was homesteaded in 1880 by Tom Shea's great great-grandfather Edward Shea. He started a small dairy farm that has been owned and managed by the Shea family for 130 years. In 1993 Tom Shea was working in a machine shop when he began to reflect upon his happiest moments in life. He arrived at memories of being outdoors and helping on the farm when he was young. His



A portable coop - the chickens are easily transported to new pastures in a renovated camper

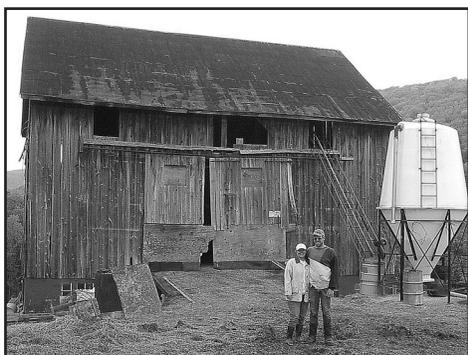
realization drew him back to the farm on Long Eddy, where he took over stewardship.

Tom's approach to farming was influenced by Allan Savory's book, *Holistic Management - A New Framework for Decision Making*, which pointed him toward integrated, diversified farming systems. Shea farm currently produces beef, sheep, hogs, chickens, vegetables, and several value added products. When asked what he considers his main crop he answers: "Grass - the animals are the tools this farm needs to keep the grass growing."

AN INTEGRATED SYSTEM

Today Shea Farm is a fully diversified 100 acre farm run on organic and holistic principles. In 2000 Tom Shea became a full time farmer with a focus on raising a mix of cross and purebred Belted Galloway and Scottish Highlander cattle. Tom experimented with integrated rotational systems that benefit both crops and animals. He discovered Tamworth hogs were an important addition to the mix, to till the ground in preparation for planting annual crops for the other animal grazers, beef and sheep.

Tom explains, "Most importantly, the hogs break the parasite cycle. They are a dead end host to intestinal parasites, thus ending the need to use chemical wormer on our livestock." Once they have done their job tilling the soil they are moved in the



Debbie and Tom Shea outside the farrowing barn

fall to the wood lot and orchards to forage. Says Tom, "Our porkers provide a sustainable alternative to conventional tillage, reducing the need for labor and tractor use by 8-10 times. Hogs eliminate the need for herbicides because they eat every living thing."

Today, seven family members contribute to the success of Shea Farm: Tom and Debbie Shea and their children Deanna and Cade, Tom's parents Chip and Connie Shea, and his uncle, Guy Shea. Connie keeps the books and runs the farm store. Chip and Guy, who have worked on the farm throughout their lives, help with farm chores, haying, and



Tom & Debbie with their Tamworth hogs - the farm's natural tillers

machinery upkeep. The Sheas recently added honey to their product list and Debbie, the beekeeper, just harvested her first crop. She also grows the vegetables and herbs, and makes farmstead soaps with pure, farm-grown ingredients.

GRAZING IS KEY

Grazing is the backbone of Shea farm. They graze on their own 100 acres as well as on 300 acres of neighboring land. Neighbors saw how the farm was bringing overgrown fields back to lush production and wanted the same for their properties. They pay for the soil tests and liming and the grazing animals renew the beauty and productivity of the land. This win-win arrangement is unique in the Hancock area where agriculture seems to be disappearing and unused lands are either developed or overgrown with brush.

The farm's cattle are crossbred Angus, Belted Galloway and Scottish Highlanders. The cattle graze the fields in rotation and are always provided fresh water and grasses when needed. Tom keeps a close eye on the animals' grazing progress and keeps them moving. They are allowed to forage for 1-3 days and are moved up to new fields once they've done their job. Tom has no trouble moving them - they are eager to follow him up the road to new, tastier pastures. Needless to say, this is a rural road with low traffic volume.

The cattle are on pasture year round, and are also fed hay in the winter. Most calves are born in May, and calving is usually over in July. Calves stay with their mothers until 10 months of age when they are turned onto pastures of their own for a 1-3 day rotation. They pasture through to fall and the fastest growing steers are harvested at 16-18 months of age. The rest are harvested in the spring at 23-25 months.

The meat from these grass-fed animals is tasty and tender. Says Tom, "It's hard to explain the health benefits of not giving them any grains. Ruminant's biological systems are designed to forage." Tom is committed to grass-based agriculture. He subscribes to "The Stockman Grass Farmer", a magazine that brings farmers the latest information from across the world on high profit grassland management.



Connie, Tom & Debbie provide a warm welcome at the farm's on-site store

All photos by Janet Aldrich

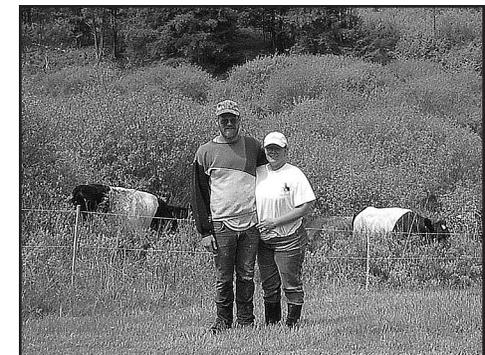
lamb is sold as rib, loin and shoulder chops, ground meat, stew meat, half and whole legs. The pastured pork, and grass fed lamb and beef are cut, wrapped and frozen by the pound; feeder pigs and smoked pork are also available.

Lambs are sold either processed or live. The wool from the Tunnis/Icelandic cross sheep is sold raw, washed or carded. A self-taught spinner, Debbie spins the wool into yarn and does some specialty items upon request, such as knee-high socks (Tom's personal favorite).

The free range chickens include Silver Wyandottes for meat and a Rhode Island Red cross called Golden Reds for farm fresh eggs. Tom was intrigued by Joel Salatin's chicken tractors and invented his own - two old recreational campers that could be easily pulled from pasture to pasture, serving as a portable coop.

NEW DIRECTIONS

The recent purchase of an old John Deere combine will enable Tom and Debbie to begin producing small grains. This year they will plant about 3 acres of barley, 14 acres of buckwheat and 8 acres of field corn. They also intend to



Sheas with cows

expand honey production and invest in more efficient equipment for a bigger sap harvest. Tom plans to offer bales of barley straw to landowners interested in algae control for their ponds.

The Shea Farm store is open Saturdays from 10-2:00 or by appointment. Special meat orders or store visits can be arranged by calling Tom and Debbie at 845-887-6546. The store is located at 452 Shea Road in Long Eddy, NY.

Janet Aldrich is Senior Extension Educator for Cornell Cooperative Extension in Delaware County. She and her husband Keith Aldrich own Maple Grove Farm, a small scale dairy farm in Laurens, NY. She can be contacted at 607-865-6531 or jla14@cornell.edu. This article first appeared in *The Part-Time Farmer*, July/August 2007 issue. It is reprinted with permission.

After a pasture has been grazed by the cattle or sheep, the Shea Farm hogs may be put in to dig it up and get it ready for planting buckwheat or winter rye, or an annual crop such as pumpkins, field corn, or turnips. "Buckwheat and winter rye are natural weed killers", Tom notes. The annual crops are either harvested or grazed. This year's turnips will be either grazed by the cattle or sold as a fresh vegetable. After the annual crop, buckwheat or rye, the pasture is seeded to clover or grass. This rotation takes about four to five years.

OTHER SHEA FARM PRODUCTS

Shea Farm's maple syrup operation consists of about 300 taps on productive old growth maple. They produce on average around 50-60 gallons of syrup a season. They boil the syrup using wood from their woodlots, giving the syrup that old fashioned wood smoke flavor.

The Sheas also produce small high quality hay bales for horses, cattle, and sheep and large round bales for beef cattle and dairy. They grow Ophio garlic, a German stiff-neck garlic that they sometimes grind into a flavorful powder. They grow a mix of Connecticut field pumpkins and sweeter varieties for cooking as well as jack-o-lanterns.

The Farm Store offers frozen meats, including pork sausage, Kielbasa, bacon, ham, chops and spare ribs. The beef is sold as ground beef and steaks. The

STEWARDSHIP & NATURE

Agricultural Environmental Management

Safeguarding Your Family's Drinking Water

By Barbara Silvestri

Our continuing series on New York State's Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) Program focuses this quarter on an issue that's close to home: the water that your family drinks. In addition to protecting the environment, AEM planning can help you to ensure that the water your family drinks stays clean and healthy. The Farmstead Water Supply Evaluation worksheet is the first step.

The main factors that determine the safety of your water supply are the condition of your well or spring and its proximity to sources of contamination. For example, a cracked well casing may allow bacteria, nitrates, oil, pesticides or other contaminants to enter the well more easily. Spilling pesticides or fuel near a well can result in the contamination of your family's, and your neighbors', drinking water supplies. Feedlots, barnyards, septic systems, and even wildlife are potential sources of pathogens and nitrates. Fertilizer applications and waste storage areas can also be sources of nitrates. Pathogens, petroleum products, pesticides, and nitrates can pose serious health hazards if they get into drinking water supplies.



Maintaining your well or spring development properly can prevent dangerous and costly problems for your family down the road. If the groundwater that supplies your well or spring becomes contaminated, it can be very difficult to clean up. The only options may be to treat the water, drill a new well, or obtain water from another source. If contamination affects your or your neighbors' wells, you may be responsible for clean up costs.

The good news is that simple maintenance and management practices can greatly reduce these risks. Conducting an AEM Risk Assessment can help assess your farm's water supply and identify opportunities to increase safety. Signed into law in 2000, New York State's AEM Program provides a voluntary and confidential way to assess a farm's environmental practices and then address any concerns identified.

The AEM Farmstead Water Supply Evaluation Worksheet will help you identi-

fy risks to your water supply safety in the following areas:

WHAT IS THE LOCATION OF YOUR WATER SUPPLY RELATIVE TO POLLUTION SOURCES?

It is safest for the water supply to be up-slope of any pollution sources with surface water diverted away from the water supply. Runoff water collecting and ponding around the wellhead may pose a risk.

Risk is reduced if the farmstead water supply is sufficiently separated from contamination sources like septic systems, petroleum storage tanks, or silos. Having separate water supplies for household and livestock use can also minimize risk.

The water supply is safest if the well head is not in an area that periodically floods. If there is a stream near the well, the stream water could also affect well water quality.

surface will both minimize contamination risk.

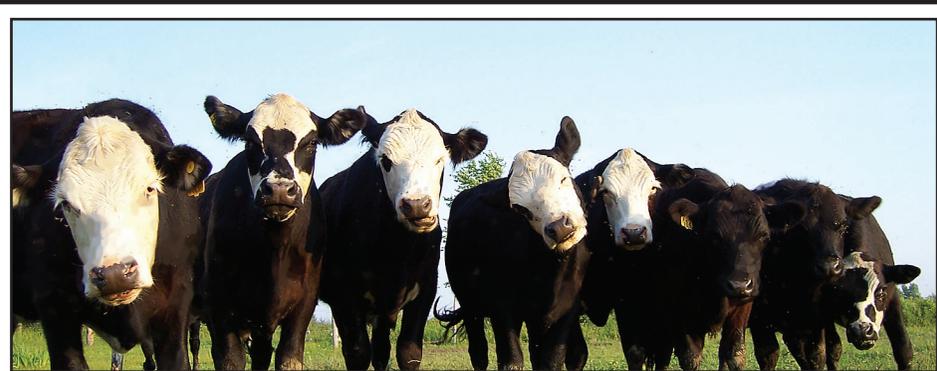
WHAT ARE YOUR MANAGEMENT PRACTICES?

Water should be tested every spring for the presence of bacteria and the concentration of nitrates.

The best scenario would be to have consistently satisfactory water quality with no bacteria or pesticides detected, and nitrates less than 5 mg/l as N. If contaminants are occasionally found, the problem should be investigated further, corrective action taken and the well disinfected.

Water supply and plumbing system should be inspected annually and records kept of maintenance performed. Any unused wells on the farm should be capped and protected, and abandoned wells should be plugged.

Safeguard your family and your neighbors by taking some time to assess your water supply situation as part of a complete



Beef cows grazing at Gordon Farms in Albany County. The farm has recently installed several AEM practices that protect water quality, while increasing the efficiency of the farm operation. "Our new barnyard runoff management system protects our drinking water, keeps the barnyard cleaner and makes it a lot easier to do chores, said Sarah Gordon. Our cows are even drier, healthier and happier!"
Photo by Sarah Gordon

FOR DRILLED WELLS, WHAT IS THE CONDITION OF THE WELL?

Risk is reduced by having a clean steel, plastic or wrought iron casing at least six inches in diameter with no holes or cracks. The cap should be tightly secured with a screened vent that faces the ground. There should be a pitless adapter or sanitary well seal for pump lines or electric cables.

A deep casing with a screen is safest. A casing that rises at least 1-2 feet above the ground surface will help prevent flooding contamination. Thorough grouting around the well casing and concrete (or soil) sloping away from the casing at the

AEM farm assessment with a member of your local AEM team of resource professionals. They can equip you with the information you need to make smart decisions that will protect the water your family and neighbors rely on.

If you would like to schedule a free, confidential AEM Risk Assessment for your farm, including a Farmstead Water Supply Evaluation, contact your County Soil and Water Conservation District. Other resources include your local Cornell Cooperative Extension educators and staff at your county Health Department.

To learn more about AEM, view the Worksheets (including the Farmstead Water Supply Evaluation worksheet), or to locate your Conservation District office, visit: www.nys-soilandwater.org.

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Check the next issue of Small Farm Quarterly for more information on how AEM is helping over 10,000 farm families statewide farm cleaner and greener, and how you can use AEM to your advantage on your farm.

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