

SMALL FARM QUARTERLY

Good Living and Good Farming that Connect Land, People, and Communities



Feature Articles

Take A Shot At Pumpkins	6
Low-Cost Milking Parlors	3
Marketing Pasture Raised Products	14
First Time Tractor Buying	22
Youth Pages	12 & 13



Photo by Judson Reid

SMALL FARM QUARTERLY - Fall 2003

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EDITORIAL

Welcome Readers by Joanna GreenPage 3

READERS WRITE

Small Farms and Their Big Contributions Not Forgetton by Bill MageePage 4
 Milk Is Here To Stay by Kay Dunn.....Page 10
 Is Deer Food Safe For My Horses? by Jean Griffiths, Jerry Cherney, Dan Brown .Page 19
 Sunday Morning by Troy BishoppPage 23

PRODUCTION AND MANAGEMENT

Low-Cost Milking Parlors by Steve Bulkley and Roberta Crill.....Page 3
 Transitioning Off Pasture to Winter Feeding by Karen Sullivan.....Page 4
 Strategies for Small Dairies: Outsourcing Feed by Aaron Gabriel.....Page 7
 Tactical Agriculture Teams by Mike Stanyard.....Page 15

MARKETING

Bornrnt Family Farms by Tom GallagherPage 5
 Marketing Pasture-Raised Products by Jano Nightingale.....Page 14
 Community Supported Agriculture - A Growing Concept by Molly AmesPage 20

FARMING OPPORTUNITIES

Why Not Oxen? by Brandt Ainsowrth.....Page 10
 Take a Shot at Pumpkins by Judson ReidPage 6
 Making Money with Firewood by Paul Bock.....Page 17

HOME AND FAMILY

Family First or Business First? by Claire Hebbard.....Page 7
 Farming With A Disability - You Can Do It! by Holly CesteroPage 8
 Linette Williams - How Does She Do It? by Torrey Spagnola.....Page 15
 Pastured Meat Jambalaya Recipe by Troy Bishopp.....Page 6
 Cutting Your Own Firewood by Ernie vonBorstel.....Page 16
 Crossroads by Claire HebbardPage 23

NEW FARMERS

Delaware Academy "Tractor Boys" by Mariane KiralyPage 11
 First Time Tractor Buying by Bill Henning.....Page 22

FARM FOLLIES

The Joys of Gardening - Or Not by Rebecca SchuelkePage 14

STEWARDSHIP AND NATURE

Natural Rendering: A Natural Solution for Mortality and Butcher Waste
 by Jean BonhotalPage 17
 Daily Spreading Manure: Watch Out For Water Quality by Dale Dewing.....Page 18
 Buffer Basics by Karen Clifford.....Page 21

COMMUNITY

A Sense of Home by Bill HenningPage 19

RESOURCE SPOTLIGHT

New York AgrAbility Project by Holly CesteroPage 8
 The Growing New Farmers Web Site by Cathy SheilsPage 11
 Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance by Lisa McCroryPage 16
 New York Forest Owners Association by Jim Ochterski.....Page 23

YOUTH PAGES

Growing Up Dairy by Lisa Austen.....Page 12
 Transitions: Learning About Farming by Charity Jump.....Page 12
 Cheesy Crab Dip RecipePage 12
 Down on the Farm Word Puzzle.....Page 12
 Has Your Horse Herbal'd Today? by Ronnie Reid.....Page 13
 More Than Just Another Farm Show by Emily Thayer.....Page 13
 My Special Horse TreatPage 13

We Want to Hear from You!

We welcome letters to the editor -- Please write to us!
 Or send a question and we'll do our best to answer it.
 We're also looking for beautiful, interesting,
 and/or funny small farm photos to print.

Write or email Joanna Green, Cornell Small Farms Program,
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SMALL FARM QUARTERLY

Good Living and Good Farming that Connect Land, People, 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. Small Farm Quarterly is a project of Cornell's Small Farms Program and PRO-DAIRY/CCE NWNy Dairy, Livestock and Field Crops Program.

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; and
- Increase awareness of the benefits that small farms contribute to society and the environment.

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EDITORIAL**Welcome Reader...**

...to the second issue of *Small Farm Quarterly* — a celebration of what farming is all about! We've heard from lots of people that they're happy to see a new magazine focusing on small farms. When so much of what you see, hear and read has to do with getting bigger, people are telling us it's refreshing to hear our message.

And the message is that there's a vibrant future for smaller farms in the Northeast. More and more farmers are figuring out how to farm well and profitably at a scale they can enjoy with their families. And the public is learning that small farms make significant contributions to local communities, to rural economies, to the environment, and to families.

PRODUCTION AND MANAGEMENT**Low-Cost Milking Parlors**

By Steve Bulkley and Roberta Crill

Over the last couple of years there have been a number of tours highlighting low-cost milking parlors. In one tour, dairymen visited 4 facilities in Yates and Ontario counties, New York. Each of these parlors is used to milk cows to the operator's complete satisfaction twice a day, every day, and is making a significant contribution to the success of the dairy farm business. In each case, the parlors cost under \$25,000 to build.

UNDER \$25,000! WHAT'S THE SECRET?

The secret to owning an affordable milking parlor is simple enough; it's ingenuity and hard work, clearly focused and well directed. The ingenuity is in vision and dreaming. The hard work is in planning for a quality installation and then seeing it through with do-it-yourself buying, contracting and building.

The ingenuity is in locating affordable used equipment. One of our hosts simply placed a well-worded advertisement in *Country Folks* and *Lancaster Farming*, seeking a used milking parlor. He received replies from all over the Northeastern U.S. The hard work is in deciding which equipment is appropriate.

The ingenuity may be in thinking to retrofit the parlor and holding area to an existing building. The hard work is in selecting a sound and appropriate structure, and then actually capturing the potential 25-50% saving over the cost of all-new construction.

The ingenuity is in building it your way. The hard work is in searching out and accepting professional advice and assistance, when necessary, to prevent your project from becoming a cement and steel monument to myopic single-mindedness.

MILKING SYSTEMS AND THE PARLOR DECISION...

Focus on fundamentals when thinking about changes to your milking system. Of course, the most fundamental question is: Will you be (or should you be) milking cows over the next 20 years? If the answer is yes, then the fundamental goal is to milk cows 2X or 3X daily, into the foreseeable future, and do it within the limits of ordinary labor resources.

Looking forward, what are the bottlenecks in your current milking system arrangement? Is the solution merely to upgrade an

THE PUBLIC VALUE OF SMALL FARMS

Agriculture in general, and small farms in particular, provide a wide range of benefits to the public:

CIVIC BENEFITS. Small farms help to stabilize and reinvigorate rural communities. Like other independent small business owners, farm business owners tend to have a strong stake in local civic affairs. A large number of smaller farms means more independent business owners; more equitable economic opportunity; and a higher level of "social capital" in the community.

ECONOMIC BENEFITS. Local farms provide livelihoods and jobs; they support local businesses and re-circulate dollars into the local economy. The beautiful working landscapes created by diverse small farms attract tourists, employers, and newcomers to rural communities.

existing pipeline system, or will a new system - flat barn, parlor or robotics - be required? What sorts of investments will pay back, and how soon can these improvements be implemented?

Keep in mind that the payback will be primarily in labor savings and/or improved labor management. Direct improvements in milk yield or quality that increase the milk check are an unlikely consequence of replacing any but the most obsolete or neglected milking equipment.

"SUCCESS" IN LOW-COST MILKING SYSTEM DESIGN IS CARVED IN STONE (WELL, POURED IN CONCRETE)...

Pay meticulous attention to cow flow, including holding and exit areas. Design the holding area to accommodate a simple crowd gate. Also plan ahead for quick, easy cleanup of milking equipment, parlor and holding area. A truly "one man" parlor is a worthy and attainable goal, and trimming even 10 minutes from the milking routine adds up to more than 15 eight-hour work days saved per year with 2X milking!

Consider cost control from the first planning stages; keep it simple, but do it "right". An inexpensive "swing" style set-up pieced together from pipeline components can work just fine for many applications. Select used parlor stalls that are in excellent condition, and milking equipment that can be readily serviced and repaired.

Engineer enough flexibility in structures and equipment to accommodate future upgrades. One of the parlors we toured was entirely serviceable using herringbone stalls fastened with bolts and welded temporary supports. The intent of the operator is to easily upgrade to parallel, rapid-exit parlor equipment in the future.

Low-cost milking parlors are definitely an option, as our host farms so clearly demonstrate.

GET IT STRAIGHT FROM THE SOURCE..

If you're thinking of replacing obsolete milking equipment, or if you're planning to make significant structural renovations to your milk room then you need to get up to speed on milk sanitation code requirements.

Officials from your State's department of agriculture can answer your questions and guide your planning. In New York State, you can reach your NYS Ag & Markets Dairy Products Specialist by calling (518) 457-5363. From this central number you will be

ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS. Local farms preserve open space, and well-managed farms protect watersheds, maintain wildlife habitats, and support bio-diversity. Farmers maintain an acre of open woodlands and wetland for every acre that's cultivated, on average (USDA 1997 Census of Agriculture.) And locally grown food requires less packaging and transportation, which means less waste and pollution.

ESTHETIC AND CULTURAL BENEFITS.

Small farms create a diverse and esthetically pleasing, working landscape. They are natural classrooms and provide education, recreation, and entertainment for community members and visitors. And they are our link to the land and to our rural heritage, whether we're city dwellers 5 generation removed from farming, or new immigrants to America who grew up in a far away land.

NUTRITIONAL AND TASTE BENEFITS.

Locally grown, seasonal food is fresh and wholesome with superior taste and nutrition. Much of the food that is marketing locally is produced on small farms.

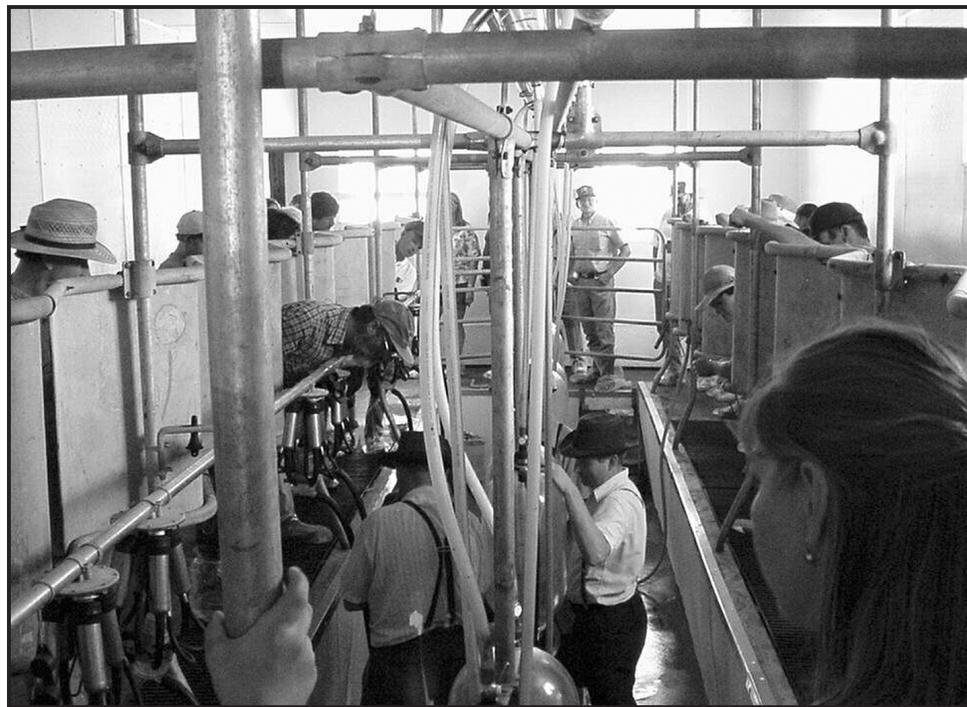
QUALITY OF LIFE BENEFITS.

Small farms offer one of the richest environments for raising a family. If you could put a price tag on "quality of life," it would be clear why so many families choose the small farm lifestyle over higher-paying career opportunities!

LET US KNOW WHAT YOU THINK!

We encourage you to share your thoughts about farming and what it means to you. Write to us, and we'll do our best to share your letter or article with other *Small Farm Quarterly* readers across the Northeast.

Joanna Green, for the *Small Farm Quarterly* Editorial Team



Swing-8 parlor at another Himrod farm.

Photo by Nancy Glazier



Double-3 swing parlor at one host farm in Himrod, NY

Photo by Roberta L. Crill

put in touch with the Specialist in your region that is responsible for assuring that your milk and milking facilities meet minimum standards for hygiene and sanitation. Make this call before you make a purchase - it's the prudent carpenter who measures twice and cuts once!

SINCE THE TOUR...

A producer that was on the summer tour was telling me about the parlor he installed after visiting the host farms. He was very happy with the installation, except for one small thing. As with most building projects,

there usually is something that could have been done better. The key is to make the mistake as small as possible and learn how to fix it in the future.

For more information on low-cost milking parlors, contact Roberta Crill at 315-539-9252.

Roberta Crill is an Extension Associate with the CCE-NWNY Dairy, Livestock, and Field Crops Team/PRO-DAIRY. Steve Bulkley is a Dairy Consultant with Pennfield Dairy Feed Technologies.

READERS WRITE

Small Farms and Their Big Contributions Not Forgotten in Albany

Hello *Small Farm Quarterly* readers.

Although what happens or doesn't happen in the State Legislature often seems remote from the everyday lives of individuals, families, and especially farmers, the NYS Assembly and Senate did advance a number of initiatives this year that seeks to assist new and small farms.

In an effort to provide fruit farmers with the tools they need to survive and thrive, the Assembly and Senate passed legislation that would ensure that NY fruit growers, processors and wineries are, indeed, eligible for funding from the Department of Economic Development. Current economic development programs don't have the flexibility that they need to adequately assist fruit farmers and would-be farmers who want to establish or expand an orchard or vineyard. Through this legislation, which is awaiting action by the Governor, the Department of Economic Development will be able to more freely authorize capital loans that address the unique lending needs of our fruit growers both large and small.

Additionally, recognizing that many of our small fruit growers may often times have surplus apples, peaches or strawberries they could transform into fruit wines, legislation has passed that would establish a micro-winery license. This micro-winery license would allow small farmers to produce up to 1,500 gallons of fruit wine that they could then sell on-farm through a farm stand, at a farm market, in bulk to another winery or directly to a liquor store for sale at retail.

More and more, farmers are looking to diversify their agricultural operations in part to level the peaks and valleys in, for example, the price of milk. To do that, many farmers are planting different varieties of produce, establishing greenhouses or undertaking other ventures to ensure farm profitability. Recognizing that, the legislature passed and the Governor has signed a bill which would, once again, permit the growing and cultivation of black currants in New York State. There is growing consumer demand for currants that could translate into a billion dollar crop for our agriculture industry.

Likewise, composting has been steadily increasing in popularity among dairy farmers throughout New York State and the legislature has been undertaking efforts to assist these livestock operations with marketing their composted fertilizer. To that end, legislation has been passed that would essentially exempt compost resulting from the natural decomposition of animal and vegetative matter from the definition of commercial fertilizer and the related licensing requirements.

Many small farms depend on some off farm income, but currently you can benefit from the agricultural property tax credit only if at least two-thirds of your income comes from the farm. If you lose a crop due to inclement weather you may also lose the benefit of the agricultural property tax credit. To remedy that, legislation has been passed which would allow farmers to average their income over a three year period to satisfy the farm income requirement and continue to qualify for this important property tax credit. This will take effect beginning with the 2004 tax year.

Also, as young people enter the profession of farming in New York they are faced with the dilemma of not qualifying for the agricultural assessment due to the requirement that a farmer meet the gross sales value of \$10,000 during the preceding two years. To assist new farmers, a bill has been passed which would allow newly established farms to be immediately eligible to receive the agricultural assessment if they meet the gross sales value during the first year of operation.

This is just a sampling of the bills the Assembly and Senate have considered during the latest legislative session. There is no doubt that more can and needs to be done to encourage small farms and farmers to sprout all across our country sides.

Submitted by NYS Assemblyman Bill Magee, Chair of the NYS Assembly Agriculture Committee. For more information or to share your thoughts about these and other legislative initiatives, call Assemblyman Magee's office at 315-361-4125 or 518-455-4807.

PRODUCTION AND MANAGEMENT

Transitioning Off Pasture to Winter Feeding

Karen H. Sullivan

One challenge with grazing is how to help the cows adjust to a new feed source in the fall. Changing from high-quality pasture to lower-quality stored feeds is much like changing silos. If the change is made too quickly, milk production drops until the cows and the rumen microbes become accustomed to the new feed. The rumen microbes are especially sensitive to sudden changes, because it takes time to shift their numbers and types to those that are more adapted to higher quality forage.

In the fall, the concerns about changing to new feeds are essentially the same as they are in the spring. However, there are a few new challenges. The stored forages to be fed are most likely from the new growing season. Since no two growing seasons are the same, the quality of the forages will be different from what was being fed earlier in the spring. It is hard to predict how the cows will respond to the new forages, in terms of both intake and performance. Also, most confinement dairymen will begin feeding out this year's crop of hay or haylage sometime in the middle of the summer. This gives them an opportunity to do some fine-tuning before the new crop of corn silage is in. Once the corn is in and ready to be fed, they can do some additional fine-tuning. The challenge for many graziers is that this year's crop may not be fed at all until transition time, and both types of stored forages are being introduced within the same time-frame. Many graziers report loss of milk production during transition time, and it is probably related to the above scenario.

Determining when the grazing season will end can be difficult to predict. If transitioning begins too early, the opportunity to capture cheap, high quality feed may be lost. Likewise, if it is begun too late, the grass could run out before the stored forages have been introduced. Predicting the end of the grazing season will be different every year depending on the weather and man-

agement of the pastures. However, it is important to try to predict the last day of grazing by using some simple planning techniques.

Paddocks should be walked at least once a week beginning in mid-September, and the total amount of the grass dry matter available on the farm should be measured. Once the total "cover" on the farm is known, that number should be divided by the total amount of grass dry matter needed per day. The resulting number is an indication of approximately how many more days of grazing remain if the feeding program stays the same. When there is a significant difference in total grass available from week to week, a transition plan should be put in place.

Strategies for transitioning in the fall will be similar to spring - except things will happen in reverse. Stored forages should be introduced or increased in the barn. Depending upon what the "final" barn ration is going to look like, protein forages such as haylage, baleage, and dry hay should be increased first. Next the amount of protein from grain or concentrate should be increased, because the cows will be decreasing their intake of protein from pasture. If feeding a TMR, the easiest way to make the transition is to mix for 5 to 10 more cows (depending on herd size) each day as they are beginning to look for more anyway. When the TMR is being fed at a rate that is more than 50% of the full ration, begin increasing protein levels by 1 pound every 3 days. When the TMR is above 70% of normal, protein and NFC levels should be checked to make sure they are in balance, and at this time the TMR may need to be reformulated.

At some point, consideration needs to be given to whether cows should be kept in the barn at night, perhaps once the temperatures begin to fall below 35 degrees (unless the plan is to winter the cows out doors.) Eventually the amount of time the cows spend on pasture will be minimal,

especially after a frost has killed the grass and there is little to no new growth. At this point the plan for the winter ration should be in place, because the majority of intake will be provided in the barn.

Karen Sullivan is an Animal Scientist with USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service in Norwich, NY

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MARKETING

Bornt Family Farms: Marketing Natural Meat Products Directly To The Consumer

The Bornt Family Farm has been in business for over thirty years in Northwestern Rensselaer County. Owner-operator Gerald Bornt and his father before him have been survivors during tough economic times for all livestock producers. The secret to their success is simple; keep costs low and cut out the middleman and market to the end user whenever possible.

Gerald learned many years ago from his father how to really stretch a d-o-l-l-a-r. Consequently Gerald does not buy anything new for the farm operation. His newest tractor is a 1973. "Of course I would like to ride around in one of those brand new things with a heated cab and enough horsepower to pull the barn off the foundation, but with a growing family I can't justify the expense."

CUTTING COSTS

Not only does Gerald avoid buying anything new; he doesn't call for outside help to fix anything old or build a new structure. He is capable of building or repairing anything needed on the farm. He built his own house including the plumbing and electrical work, he turned two wrecked pick-up trucks into one useable vehicle, he built his own concession trailer to market his meat products and he and his father built the present facility capable of handling 500 hogs. And of course all of the lumber for the hog barn was cut and sawed on the farm. "The surest way of keeping production costs low is to do all of the work on the farm you possibly can yourself".

ENHANCING PROFITS

I think by now you have the gist of what Gerald has done and continues to do to keep costs low. Let's look at what he does to increase the dollars received for the pork, veal and beef he produces on the farm.

The first thing Gerald and his father decided over twenty years ago was that if they wanted to receive a premium price for their product, they needed to produce a premium quality product. Some consumers will pay a premium price, and these are the ones Gerald and his dad decided to sell to whenever possible. The family originally decided to start with a single product: USDA approved, all natural pork, completely free of antibiotics, growth hormones and preservatives. There was a wholesale market looking for such products in Southern Vermont.

Each week Gerald loaded twenty five hogs on a truck and headed off to the market in Vermont, where he got about ten cents a pound over market price for his all natural raised hogs. This market proved to be very profitable for Gerald until about three years ago, when suddenly it disappeared. The market owner in Vermont had decided to go out of business, leaving Gerald without a premium market for his all natural produced hogs. It was also around this time that Gerald's father was injured in an accident and was no longer able to participate in the operation of the farm and Jerry's wife had just had her third child.

LEAVE FARMING OR CHANGE HOW YOU DO BUSINESS?

It was at this time that Gerald and his family could have decided to quit farming and find a job at one of the many small businesses located in the Capital District. After many long days and nights of contemplating the future of Bornt Family Farms, Gerald and his wife decided not to quit, but to continue farming and instill the same work habits and family values in their children as Gerald's parents had instilled in him.

Once the decision was made to continue farming, Gerald knew he needed to do some research to determine what he could raise on his 160 acre family farm that would support his family. After several months of networking and visiting several farms and retail meat outlets, Gerald decided to continue to raise animals and sell their meat. With his land base and facilities, he could raise free-range, all natural beef and veal in addition to pork, which would give him a wide variety of meat products to sell.

TWENTY HOGS RETAIL WOULD RETURN MORE THAN 100 HOGS WHOLESALE

Gerald's research also showed that if he could market twenty hogs retail per month he would receive the same income as if he were still selling one hundred hogs per month wholesale. To sell the meat from twenty animals a month, Gerald considered several alternatives, including opening up a retail meat shop, selling meat and cooked products at farmers markets and special events, building or reopening a meat processing facility with a retail store, selling mail order from the web or some combination of the above.

He decided the thing to do first was something that he could do himself, keeping his costs low, of course. So what he did was to go out and build himself a cart — actually it looks like a small barn on wheels — that he could take to farmers markets and special events. This cart has a large freezer inside where people can purchase Gerald's natural pork, beef and veal at a retail price. The cart also has a cooking grill from which he can sell various cooked products. Letting people smell and taste the product they can buy from the freezer is the best advertising you can get.

Gerald keeps an up-to-date customer list and during those cold winter days he sends out letters and price sheets advertising his

free-range veal and all natural beef and pork products. He offers to deliver products locally or to ship them out of the area UPS. Marketing your meat products retail here in the Capital District does not come without its problems. The first big problem is time. It takes a lot of time away from the farm going to farmers markets and delivering products locally. Gerald hopes that as his kids get older and become interested in the farm this problem will resolve itself.

NEXT STEP: A USDA INSPECTED PROCESSING FACILITY?

The other major problem that Gerald is running into is the lack of a USDA inspected processing facility in our area. "We need someplace to do USDA processing, if something doesn't change soon, we will lose a lot of our small livestock farms in this area". Currently, Gerald takes his animals to a processing facility in Oneida County, which is about a seventy five mile trip one way or a four hour round trip.

Currently a group of local livestock producers and members of local, state, county and federal agencies is exploring options for opening a USDA processing facility in the area. There is hope that a new plant or a newly renovated plant will open soon. But I am sure that even if a new plant does not come on line, it will only slow Gerald down and not stop him from reaching his goal.

Bornt Family Farms is located at 275 Logwoods Road, outside of Troy, NY in the Town of Pittstown. If you would like to receive a flyer and price sheet, give Gerald a call at 518-663-8132. This could be your contribution to saving another small farm.

Tom Gallagher is an Educator with Cornell Cooperative Extension of Albany County, NY. He grew up working on a dairy farm in Rensselaer County only 10 miles from the Bornt farm.



Gerald's home built stand is working well at local farmers markets.



This livestock holding facility was built by Gerald and his father.

Photos by Tom Gallagher

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FARMING OPPORTUNITIES

Take a Shot at Pumpkins

By Judson Reid

Growing up my Dad would always plant a few pumpkins. Before my folks split up my Mom would use them for pies. In later years Dad still grew them and my brother and I would put them on a cedar fence post to warm up our rifles for deer season.

Making a living off pumpkins might be a long shot, but they are an important part of the revenue stream for produce growers here in the Finger Lakes. One told me "I'd like to get \$1.50 a piece." Growing pumpkins profitably requires attention to a few details:

PESTS

Weeds. This is the biggest challenge for pumpkin growers. The wide spacing required at planting allows weeds to get off to a good start. An effective weed program for pumpkins starts before planting. No-till pumpkins with rye mulch is an option for larger growers. A common mistake is to plant pumpkins close together to shade out weeds. The result is too dense a canopy for bees to pollinate.

Disease. Powdery mildew really hit some Finger Lakes pumpkin growers hard this year. Magic Lantern and Merlin are listed as tolerant varieties. There are a number of fungicides registered. Rotation is an important cultural practice to reduce other diseases, but will not prevent powdery mildew. It's everywhere!

Insects. Cucumber beetles and squash bugs are the biggest bug pests for pumpkins. Row covers can be used early in the season but must be removed when as soon as flowers open.

FERTILITY

Pumpkins like a pH of 6-6.5, and will easily use 100 pounds of nitrogen per acre. The plant will use this best if applications are split up at planting and before the runners stretch out. Organic forms of nitrogen can be had in compost or green manure. Livestock manure can also be a great source of nutrients for pumpkins.

MARKETING

Pumpkins will not sell themselves. Make sure you figure out ahead of time where and how you will sell them. U-pick or roadside stands can work, but it's best to supplement an existing retail market with pumpkins, rather than use them as a centerpiece. Here in the Finger Lakes we have a regular produce auction. If you're not sure about how to market pumpkins in your area, talk to your local Cooperative Extension agent. And get the advice of some farmers who are more experienced in marketing produce.

FURTHER READING

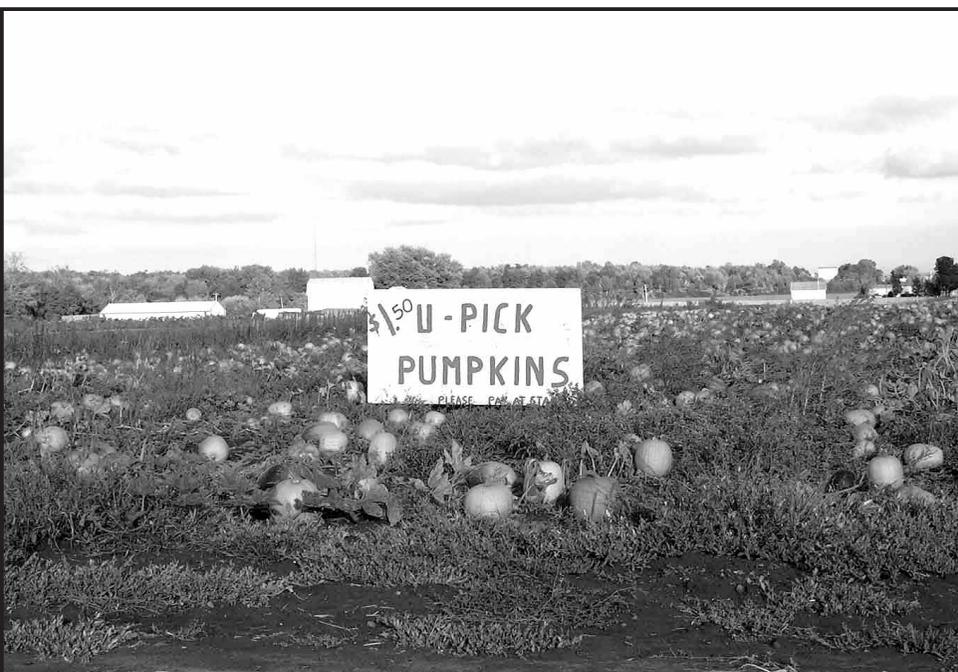
Farmer Boy, by Laura Ingalls, should be required reading for anybody involved in agriculture in New York State. The chapter where Almanzo grows a pumpkin for the county fair will inspire!

The *Pumpkin Production Guide* is a new NRAES publication edited by Dale Miles Riggs, vegetable farmer from Stephentown, New York. This one contains all the production details to successfully grow pumpkins. To order call (607) 255-7654.

Judson Reid is a Resource Educator with Cornell Cooperative Extension of Yates County, NY.



No-till pumpkins on rye with drip irrigation.



U-pick pumpkin operation.

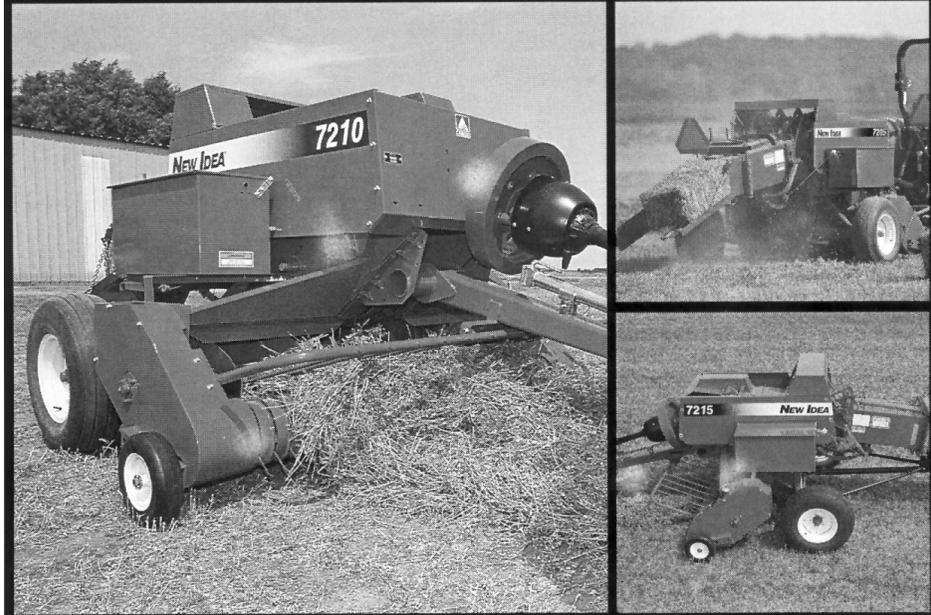


Pumpkin field in October.

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NEW IDEA

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PRODUCTION AND MANAGEMENT

Strategies for Small Dairies: Outsourcing Feed

By Aaron Gabriel

Remaining profitable in a business climate that seems to favor only large dairies is a daunting task for small dairies. Some of the new technologies only benefit large dairies, such as systems to grow, store, and feed crops or manage manure. Our current trend towards larger farm size can make farmers of small dairies feel a bit lonely if not threatened.

Cornell University is focusing its efforts to address the needs of small farms, and the CCE Grants Program for Innovative Small Farms Education is just one such effort. In this program, Cooperative Extension Educators submit proposals to Cornell's Small Farms Program to fund educational projects which address the needs of small farms.

This year we Extension Educators in the Capital Region received a grant for a project entitled: "Outsourcing Feed: Sharing the Experience of Successful Small-Dairies". We have been developing case studies of farms that either purchase feed for their dairy herd or hire custom operators to do their fieldwork. These farms include the dairies of Adam Liddle and Bob McDougal in Argyle, Lyle Purinton in Gansevoort, Bob Weir in Schaghticoke, and Dave Hewitt in Petersburg.

Farms in the case studies share their good and bad experiences in outsourcing feed. Through this project, we put out a series of articles about outsourcing feed in our Extension "Ag News" publication. We also created an information packet which includes the case studies and additional information about outsourcing feed. It is now available through our office. We wrapped up the project with a series of on-farm meetings this fall.

THE IMPORTANCE OF TRUST

Each case study profiles a unique arrangement for outsourcing feed. Probably the common theme for each farm is the importance of developing a good business relationship with your feed supplier or machinery operator. The success of a dairy is at the "mercy" of the person supplying feed or doing the fieldwork. This scares many dairy farmers, as well it should.

However, successful business relationships can be developed. These relationships do not just happen. They develop step by step, just like any friendly relationship where trust is a big part. The development of these business relationships makes each of these case studies an interesting story and a great learning experience. For Adam Liddle and his feed supplier Wilbur McIntyre, reputation was the first step for them to develop a very successful business relationship. As one loan officer said, "a person's past performance is an indication of future reliability".

Adam Liddle is a young farmer and was anxious to have his own operation. Purchasing all his feed was the logical decision for him, but the landlord at his first farm was not providing him with the quality feed that he needed. By word of mouth, Wilbur McIntyre's good reputation came to Adam's attention. He began buying some feed from Wilbur to try it out. Finding the feed quality he wanted, Adam was soon buying all his feed from Wilbur.

On Wilbur's end, he asks around to determine the reputation of his customers before he makes any serious commitments to supply feed. Adam has a reputation for paying on time and being trustworthy, so Wilbur's decision on Adam as a customer was not difficult.

PUTTING ALL THE PIECES TOGETHER

Sometimes a farmer will hire machinery for just one part of a larger operation. If you hire a forage chopper that chops all your haylage in just one or two days, then you must have the capacity to mow and rake all of your haylage in that amount of time. If it takes you five days to mow what will be chopped in one day, then forage quality will really suffer.

Sometimes hiring different machinery operators to work together on the same fieldwork can be problematic. If a chopper breaks down, then you will not be paying for its down time. However, if you hired a different person with a truck to haul the feed, they may be charging you while they are waiting for the chopper repairs. They are still on your clock and can not afford to be idle.

The case studies share a lot of other experiences that can help dairy farmers as they consider outsourcing feed or fieldwork.

Those that supply feed or do fieldwork will also gain valuable experience. For example, it can be quite risky for a feed supplier to harvest feed and store it on the buyer's farm without payment at harvest. Once it is out of your hands, you lose a large degree of control. Also, that feed must be measured at harvest or some other time.

RECIPE FOR SUCCESS

What is the recipe for success when outsourcing feed and machinery? It seems to be slowly building business relationships, so that trust and effective communication can be established. When each party understands that they are each responsible in large part, for the success or failure of the other, then they must be honest with themselves that they can keep that commitment.

Since relationships are based on personality, it also means being the right personality for a good business relationship. The formula for success has less to do with calculating numbers and more to do with expectations, personality, and character. That is why case studies are so useful as a learning tool

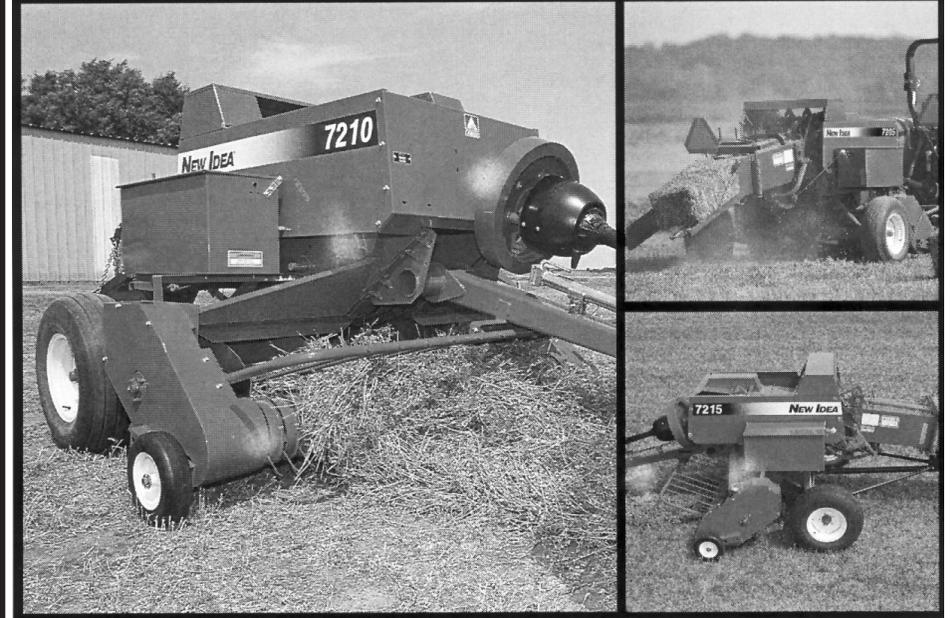
To order a copy of the information packet on outsourcing feed contact Aaron Gabriel, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Washington County, 518-746-2560 or adg12@cornell.edu. The information comes in a three-ring binder, and includes case studies and additional information about outsourcing feed. For information on other projects funded by the CCE Grants Program for Innovative Small Farm Education, visit www.smallfarms.cornell.edu. Click on "Cornell Small Farms Efforts." Click on "Grants Program."

Aaron Gabriel is Extension Resource Educator for Crops and Soils with Cornell Cooperative Extension of Washington County.

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HOME AND FAMILY

Family First? Or Business First?

The role of the family is to nurture its members. The role of the business is to make a profit. For small farms, these two systems are very much interrelated. Sometimes family members disagree about which comes first - family or business. There may be an ongoing debate about whether your family is farming for the lifestyle, or for the income. In my experience, most people are somewhere in the middle.

limited, because one system may require resources at the expense of the other system. Conflict can then occur as members of the farm family hold on to their different priorities. In the long-term whether you are a Business-First farmer or a Family-First farmer, the majority of your decisions will be made with these goals in mind.

Of course, both family and business needs have to be taken care of and kept in balance. Problems arise when resources are

Where on the continuum are you and the other members of your family? Recognizing your own priorities and those of other family members can be a first step in working out a compromise between business and family needs.

Business First Thinking	Family First Thinking
Family resources (people, time) are important to make the business successful.	The business's profit is important for achieving family goals.
You need to be qualified for the job to work here.	If you're family, you can work here.
Pay is determined by the going rate, your responsibilities and your performance.	You need to be able to make a living if you work here, so you're more likely to get what you need regardless of performance. Equal pay among family members is more likely.
Leadership is earned by past performance.	You are born to leadership, but probably not until the older generation retires.
Resources are used for business purposes and family members are not given special privileges.	Business resources are frequently used for family benefits or privileges.
Outside experiences are important. Work elsewhere, make your mistakes on someone else's time, then bring your knowledge home.	Family loyalty is more important than experiences, come home and learn what you need to know here.
Business decisions are made mainly based for financial reasons.	Decision-making is done by consensus, trying to find win-win situations for all.

HOME AND FAMILY

Farming with a Disability - You Can Do It!

By Holly Cestero

Rick, a 65-year old farmer and AgrAbility client, owned and operated a dairy farm for over 30 years. He had an active, healthy lifestyle having enjoyed good health with a minimum of injuries. Rick was attacked by a bull on his farm while moving some farm equipment in a pasture where the milking herd and bull were located. While in the pasture, the 1800 pound bull charged him, knocked him down and crushed him into the ground with the full weight of his body.

This attack caused Rick serious injuries and left him with permanent disabilities that seriously limit his range of motion and steadiness. As a result of these injuries, Rick walks with a pronounced limp and an unsteady gait. He has limitations in walking on rough/uneven ground. Walking down hill is very difficult. Climbing ladders or steps is almost impossible. Rick also has trouble bending over to pick up an object from the floor.

Although Rick felt that he could no longer perform his previous physical duties on the farm, he wanted to focus on managing the activities of his newly hired employees and performing light activities on the farm. Using his farm pickup truck for transport and walking the fields were impractical for Rick due to his limited strength and mobility. He attempted to use his skid steer loader as a means of transportation but risked sustaining a secondary injury as the skid steer is not designed for "off-road" use in such areas of poor traction or uneven ground.

With the assistance of the New York AgrAbility Project, Rick contacted his regional Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities (VESID) Office for assistance. The AgrAbility case manager, after meeting with Rick to determine his needs, requested that the program's agricultural engineer evaluate Rick's farm site and equipment and suggest modifications.

VESID then assisted Rick in making the recommended changes. He first obtained an off-road utility vehicle suitable for his needs. A small area was also constructed next to the rear part of his house so that the new vehicle could be parked in a location that would provide ease of use for Rick. This area also required a roof to protect it from rain and snow and some crushed gravel for parking. A new door was also constructed, which opens out into the rear part of the house and out to the parking area for this vehicle. Rick is now, once again, successfully managing the daily activities of his farm.

Steve is a 43-year old dairy farmer and AgrAbility client. He returned to the family farm last year to assist with farm management and operation following his father's stroke. As a child, Steve developed a cyst on his spinal cord resulting in incomplete paralysis, leaving him with a significant degree of impairment. He primarily uses a wheelchair for mobility but can walk short distances using underarm crutches. Steve and his father have hired others to milk the cows while Steve engages in the field work and farm management. He would like to improve access to the barn so that he can engage in milking duties in order to reduce labor costs. Steve would also like to make some safety improvements for accessing and operating his tractors.

New York AgrAbility visited with Steve to do an agricultural worksite evaluation and make suggestions for modifications to Steve's barn and equipment. AgrAbility staff determined that the current stanchion/pipeline milking system could not be made accessible for Steve. Major renovations to the milking operation, cattle housing and feeding systems would be required to allow Steve to be more active in these areas.

Two possible approaches to a major renovation were suggested to Steve. The first was a robotic milking system, (new to the United States, but currently in use in Europe) in which the cows approach the milking facility voluntarily. An

automatic system of gates admits the cow in to be milked and allows her to leave when finished. Once the cow walks into the milking stall, an articulating robot arm attaches the milking apparatus to her udder without the need for a human operator.

The second option suggested was a milking parlor with a track-mounted operator's seat. This would involve a conventional milking parlor adapted with a seat that Steve could sit on while milking. Certain details would need to be considered carefully before implementing this system. A parlor with all of the labor saving features would be best, such as a support arm for the milking unit, automatic take-off feature, automatic cleaning system, electric gates for cow access to and from the parlor.

With either of these approaches it is necessary to completely overhaul cattle housing to a free-stall system. This change in housing would make it easier to mechanize the feeding system, saving labor and possibly allowing Steve to participate more actively in this aspect of the farm operation.

Steve is very interested in pursuing the first option, the robotic milking system. He did some research to price the cost, for both purchase and rental, of such a project. AgrAbility staff connected Steve with the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) Innovation in Agriculture project, and he awaits an answer to his submitted proposal supporting the purchase of a robotic milking system.

AgrAbility has suggested various modifications to Steve's tractors involving access, seating, controls, safety, and hitching. Steve has chosen to devote his energies at present to the acquisition of a robotic milking system. AgrAbility staff continues to support Steve in his relationship with the regional VESID office.

Holly Cestero is Project Manager for New York AgrAbility.

RESOURCE SPOTLIGHT

The AgrAbility Project

According to Eric Hallman, Director of the Cornell University Agricultural Health and Safety Program, "Agricultural production is one of the nation's most hazardous industries." Each year, hundreds of thousands of people working in agriculture experience injuries that limit their ability to perform essential farm tasks. Tens of thousands more become disabled as a result of non-farm injuries, illnesses, other health conditions, and the aging process. With some assistance, the majority of disabled agricultural workers can continue to earn their livelihoods in agriculture and participate fully in rural life. Your state's AgrAbility Project can provide that assistance.

The National AgrAbility Project, established in 1991, was authorized in the 1990 Farm Bill as a cooperative venture with the USDA Cooperative Extension Service and Easter Seals, Inc. The program, headquartered in Washington, D.C. has grown to include 24 state projects, including the most of the Northeast states.

The New York AgrAbility Project works in partnership with the national and other state projects. As part of the Cornell University Agricultural Health and Safety Program, we provide assistance to disabled farmers including on site assessments and suggestions for equipment and farm site

modifications and/or restructuring of tasks as well as education on secondary injury prevention.

In addition, we help individuals/families identify and coordinate with existing resources, such as the Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities (VESID), New York FarmNet, the New York Center for Agricultural Medicine and Health (NYCAMH), the Department of Health (DOH), Independent Living Centers (ILC's), and state occupational health clinics to help with needed modifications. AgrAbility staff also provide educational programs to help rural professionals upgrade their skills in assisting farmers with disabilities.

If you would like to learn more about the program or know someone who can benefit from these services, contact the AgrAbility program in your state. You can find contact information at www.agrabilityproject.org, or call Holly Cestero,

New York AgrAbility Project Manager, at 1-877-257-9777 (toll free.) You can visit the NY AgrAbility Project website at <http://web.vet.cornell.edu/Public/CUAgri/agrability/>.

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HOME AND FAMILY

Linette Williams — How Does She Do It?

By Torrey Spagnola

Around about the windy hills of Edmeston, NY there is a small dairy farm run by the Williams' family. Through hard work, perseverance and strong family ties, Jeffrey and Linette Williams have increased their herd from two cows to sixty! They have done this while also maintaining jobs outside of the farm.

Jeffrey had worked on a dairy farm from the time he was a teenager. In 1992, he started his very own small farm with only two beef cows that were kept in the neighbor's vacant barn and considered "pets." The Williams soon purchased fifteen yearling heifer calves, and raised them up to milking cows. Given that the neighbor's barn was not equipped for milking, they rented an operational barn.

By August of 2000, their herd had grown to thirty five head, at which time they purchased the outfitted barn and began their actual dairy farm. Since they purchased the farm Linette's father, Duane Dickenson has "stepped up to the plate" to help out. He had run his own farm that had been passed down from generation to generation, however, he'd lost it to foreclosure in the mid 1980's. Duane helps milk in the morning and evening, does field work and takes care of the farm. Says Linette, "Family makes the best help because they know how you like things done. They can be trusted better than outsiders, at least in our case. Plus, the kids love interacting with 'papa.'"

The farm itself seems like a typical family farm, although the Williams family isn't the typical dairy farm family. The wet hay season of 2002 caused a minor disruption in their lives. Comfortable with two small children at home, the couple had considered

reproductive surgery. But due to the late drying hay season, the operation was postponed. The following year, in September 2002, Linette gave birth to triplets, Maria, Alexandra and Elizabeth! "My husband and I always wanted children," says Linette, a vibrant, hardworking woman in her mid thirties. "So we began our family with Victoria. Nineteen months later, along came Bradley and two and half years later we were surprised with triplets."

With five children under six years of age, a typical day is very hectic at the Williams home. It starts around 5 am when Linette is up and ready for the children. At 5:45am, the triplets have their first bottle, by 6 am Linette goes outside on the 6x4 Gator rounding up the milking cows. Around 6:30am she's back in the house getting the five children dressed for the day. A constant chorus of crying, laughter, twinkling eyes and expressive hands can be seen and heard. All the children are dressed and ready to go by 7:15am when the bus from Agri-Business Child Development (ABCD) arrives to transport them to school. Yes, even the babies.

ABCD is a year-round child development program funded primarily by the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets and the East Coast Migrant Head Start Project. The program accepts agricultural children from six weeks to pre-school aged.

Linette feels it would have been impossible to cope if it weren't for the help she's received from her mother, friends and the ABCD program. Linette concludes, "With the kids in ABCD, it allows me more time to sleep and rest. I have more patience and better energy to do the barn chores and prepare healthy meals." Once the children are on the bus, Linette is back in the barn



Victoria Williams at the ABCD child care program.



Bradley Williams at the ABCD child care program.

to feed twenty three calves, clean the mangers, bed the cows and calves, clean the milk house, feed the chickens, and gather their eggs. She also run errands for the farm, answers the phone and makes deliveries for her husband, keeps the house in tip-top shape and works as a dental hygienist part time. The day winds down in the evening when the older kids go the barn to help with chores or play, while Linette tends to the babies inside.



Elizabeth, Alexandra, and Maria Williams at the ABCD child care program.

It's been nine months since the triplets were born. Linette feels a mind set of hard work, commitment and creativity is necessary to maintain a working farm and an active household. She has developed much character over the years due to her farming background. Through determination and a little help from others, the Williams' are able to be loving parents, ample providers and productive dairy farmers.

Torrey Spagnola works with families and children as Family Community Service Coordinator with Leonardsville Agri-Business Child Development. She grew up on a 40-cow dairy farm in Fabius, NY.

The following was found hanging in a Mennonite farm shop:

Tips from Grandma's Wisdom ~ Good Work Ethic

- ❖ Show up for work
- ❖ Be on time
- ❖ Don't stand around and gossip
- ❖ Try to keep busy



Jeffrey and Bradley Williams on the Gator.

RESOURCE SPOTLIGHT

The Agri-Business Child Development Program

The NYS Agri-Business Child Development Program (ABCD) provides comprehensive childhood developmental services for infants, toddlers and pre-schoolers in twenty rural counties New York State. ABCD has served migrant, seasonal, and local farm-worker families and children since 1946. Local farm families who are eligible can also get help from ABCD.

Children as young as six weeks all the way up to six years can benefit from the services provided by ABCD. ABCD follows Head Start Performance Standards to offer the following services to children and families:

- Education: The program is designed to meet each child's individual needs. It also aims to meet the needs of the community served and its ethnic and cultural characteristics.
- Nutrition: Children are served a minimum of one hot meal and a snack each day.
- Health/Dental: Children receive a complete examination, including vision and hearing tests, identification of disabling conditions, immunizations, and a dental exam.
- Parent Involvement: Parents are the most important influence on a child's development. Parents play an essential role in par-

ent education, program, program planning, and operating activities.

- Social Services: Includes community outreach, referrals, family need assessments, providing information about available community resources and how to obtain and use them, recruitment and enrollment of children, and emergency assistance and/or crisis intervention.
- Mental Health: Provides mental health and psychological services to children of low-income families in order to encourage their emotional and social development.
- Special Services for children with disabilities: Staff members work closely with community agencies to provide services to meet the special needs of disabled children.

For more information contact: Agri-Business Child Development, 1576 State Street, Schenectady, NY 12304, (518) 346-6447. Email: abcd@agri-business.org Web: www.agri-business.org.

For information about similar programs in other states, contact the East Coast Migrant Head Start Program at 919-420-0334, or visit their web site at www.ecmh-sp.org.

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AGENCY

FARMING OPPORTUNITIES**Why Not Oxen?**

By Brandt Ainsworth

Heroes are made, not born. The same is true of oxen. Nearly any bovine can be made into an ox and used as a source of cheap power and entertainment. The ox is a forgotten hero in the settling of this country. Whether it was building roads, plowing furrows, hauling timber, or moving settlers west; oxen played an important role whenever draught power was needed.

Cattle used to be triple purpose on the American farm. Cattle were just as sought after for their ability in a yoke as they were for milk, or meat. Even though oxen aren't a vital part of our lives as they were in the past, they still fit in very nicely on a small farm.

VERSATILE, AFFORDABLE, AND ADAPTABLE

I have yet to find anything that workhorses can do that oxen can't, except beat Funnycide in the Derby. Oxen can be hooked to anything from a mowing machine to a plow, or a cultivator, manure spreader, hay rake, or any other horse drawn farm implement. They can also serve a farm well by getting out the winter's firewood, or a few loads of logs out of the woodlot to help pay the taxes.

One of the best reasons to get into oxen is; there is nothing to lose. If you lose interest, or run out of time, or decide your cattle will never make ox; you'll still have a valuable beef animal.

Another good reason to get started is that calves are relatively cheap and easy to find. They are also inexpensive to raise, especially after the first year. After most of my teams turn a year old, the only time they get grain is when I want to catch them out of the pasture. They do quite well on just hay and pasture after they turn a year old.

Another advantage to oxen is their adaptability. Oxen seem to do better outside than they do in a barn. This is good news to anyone who is short on barn space. I know several ox teamsters who keep their oxen outside all year long, even in cold areas.

READERS WRITE**Milk Is Here To Stay**

By Kay Dunn

The closest a lot of people will ever get to a cow is the gallon of milk in the fridge. There was a time when even village people had their own cow, maybe a few hens and of course the carriage horses. When my dad was a young man, milk was drawn to the cheese factory by wagon or sleigh. He used to tell how, on his way to the village with the day's milk (in 10 gallon cans) he would be relieved of a pint here or there.

Neighbors on his route would watch for him and meet him with a pitcher or pail. A dipper of milk in exchange for a few pennies and he continued on to the plant.

Much later, trucks would carry the cans from each farm and return the empties from the day before. In the 40's, Borden had a processing plant in Arcade where the Dairyman's League milk was accepted. Our milk went on to Buffalo, however, because my dad, uncle and some other area farmers had organized the Arcade Farms Co-op. Through he co-op they were able to realize a higher price for their milk. There were several other small co-ops at the time, which much later joined and became Upstate.

EQUIPMENT

Oxen equipment is also cheap and easy to build yourself. There is no complicated harness or collar with reins, just a yoke and goad. The yoke is the wooden piece that rides in front of the oxen's withers. This piece is held in place by bows, which are curved pieces of wood going under the necks. The size of the ox yoke is determined by the width of the bows. A young team of calves would probably wear a 5-inch yoke. A mature team usually gets into a ten or an eleven-inch yoke. The goad is the short whip the teamster uses to command his team, in conjunction with verbal commands.

Even a woodworker like myself, who bends over nails that lack an inch and a half of being flush and then hammers them crudely into the surface, can build his own oxen equipment. It may lack eye appeal, but it gets the job done, and saves money. If you decide oxen aren't for you, and want to sell the yoke; you can almost always get back as much as you paid. Yokes that look used tend to sell better, since most of them are decorative.

FUN FOR THE FAMILY

Teamsters tend to keep oxen for a wide variety of reasons. Some just like to have animals around. Some do it because they were born into it, being a third or fourth generation ox teamster. Doing farm work or logging is reason enough for other teamsters to keep a team.

Then there are other less obvious reasons people use oxen. A yoke of oxen is great advertisement for a farm. Driving your oxen through a couple local parades can really get your name out there, and set yourself apart from other farms.

With things being as tense as they are on farms right now, oxen can be a great stress reliever. The everyday headaches seem to disappear when you're working with a good team. It's great for your peace of mind to know that you're in control of at least one aspect of your life.

A team can also bring a family closer. I get a lot of satisfaction teaching my two sons a lost art. Since we start training calves at just a few weeks old, it's something even a young kid can handle safely. Oxen are also

great teachers of responsibility, though most farm kids know all about being responsible.

There are oxen associations that can make oxen a part of your social life. The Association of New England Ox Teamsters, and the Midwest Ox Drivers Association are two groups that offer a great way to learn about oxen and the people who drive them. Both organizations have informative websites.

BREEDS

Any breed of cattle can make oxen. This fact suits teamsters well because some want a small breed like a Dexter, for the efficiency. Others want a big breed like a Brown Swiss, or Chianina for the impressive size. It's a powerful feeling when you drive a team that weighs a ton and a half each.

A teamster might even want to keep a calf for an ox, out of cow that was a high producer. These calves aren't necessarily better oxen, but it's kind of a cool way to appreciate a good cow.

One thing that is often overlooked is the fact that a cow can be worked the same as a steer. This is very productive way to enjoy oxen. You can get milk, calves, and work all out of the same animal.

WANT MORE INFORMATION?

Oxen information isn't all that hard to find if you know where to look. There are two books that cover everything about oxen worth knowing. *The Pride and Joy of Working Cattle*, written by Ray Ludwig, and *Oxen: A Teamsters Guide*, by Drew Conroy, are the best teachers a beginner could have. Both books explain how to select, raise, and train a yoke of oxen from start to finish. Rural Heritage magazine also has a lot of informative articles on oxen, as well as a good website.

Oxen are a great asset to any small farm because of their thrift, and versatility. Next time you're at the sale and a matched pair of bull calves is going cheap raise your hand, or if old Daisy freshens with a pair if twin bulls keep them for oxen; you can't go wrong.

Brandt Ainsworth farms and logs using horses and oxen in Franklinville, NY.

plant, the lab technicians, the cheese makers, the bottlers, the deliverymen, the retailers and all the folks who do the paper work. In spite of the bad rap that milk peri-

Frequently Asked Questions About Oxen**What breed works best?**

Any breed can be working cattle. My opinion is that whatever breed you like best, works the best. You'll tend to spend a lot more time with a team you like than ones you don't.

Do oxen need shoes?

Not usually. Few teams ever need to be shod unless you plan on using them for serious pulling competition.

Are oxen slow?

They are not as fast as a horse, but they're really not slow. They walk at a comfortable pace for an average adult.

Do they need horns to be oxen?

No, but horns are preferred. Most fairs in New England won't let polled animals compete. The reason an ox has horns is to push loads backward. Breechings can be used but are not traditional.

At what age should I start training my team?

The sooner you start, the better. Oxen can be trained at any age, but it's much easier to handle little calves than it is mature steers. You also develop a better bond with the animals by starting young.

Where can I buy equipment for oxen?

The best place I know of to find new equipment is The Evener edition of Rural Heritage magazine. You can contact them at Rural Heritage, 281 Dean Ridge Lane, Gainesboro, TN 38562, (931) 268-0655, or on the web at www.ruralheritage.com.

Brandt Ainsworth

odically suffers from the media, I think milk is here to stay.

Kay Dunn lives on one of the last small farms remaining in Arcade, NY



Kay Dunn's farm in Arcade, NY

Photos by Kay Dunn

NEW FARMERS

Delaware Academy "Tractor Boys"

Teach a Lesson About Local Agriculture

By Mariane Kiraly

The school year was waning and Delaware Academy senior Zack Robinson was feeling that, since he had always wanted to drive a tractor to school, now was the time! One warm June day, he borrowed his Dad's tractor and away he went. When he arrived at school, however, Zack was called in to see the Principal, who threatened to tow his tractor away if he didn't remove it from school property.

Obviously, the newly installed Principal didn't realize how important agriculture was to Zack — or to the community where 200 dairy farms and many other kinds of farms dot the countryside! Undeterred, Zack told his friends what had happened and set a future date to organize a larger tractor drive "to prove a point". His friends made arrangements to drive their tractors to school a week later in protest of the Principal's action, and to show support for agriculture in Delaware County.

On Tractor Day, the tractors were still not allowed onto the school property. So students parked them just below Delaware Academy where O'Connor Hospital employees welcomed the entourage. They even put up a sign that read: "We Love the Tractor Boys."

Tyler Huyck drove his family's John Deere 24 miles round-trip to join the rest of the students. According to Tyler, "People think that agriculture is dying and we wanted to show support for farmers." Tyler helps run the family's 100-cow dairy in Treadwell and is optimistic about the future of dairy farming.

John Burgin was also among those who drove a tractor in support of agriculture. He says, "The support from teachers and students was amazing. We didn't think we'd get as much support as we did." John is an active worker on his family's expanding dairy in Fraser. He plans to attend college for diesel mechanics and then return to the family farm.

Students who didn't grow up on farms but either work on farms or have family with farms also joined the group. One such student, Kevin Rossley, lives in the village of Delhi and works for Randy and Lynette Inman milking, feeding, and harvesting crops. He loves the dairy business and plans to pursue a career in agriculture or in natural resources. "The impact of Tractor Day was big," says Kevin, "because other schools followed suit."

Cody Weber explains, "Zack and I wanted to do this since we were little." He drove his mother's D-15 that he restored a while ago and hopes that Tractor Day will become an annual event. Cody milks and helps with the harvest on his family's Belgian Blue beef cattle and dairy farm. He will attend SUNY Cobleskill for dairy herd production and management this fall.

Cody's friend Jason Mondore drove Ed Weber's John Deere since he has worked on the Weber farm for 4 years and the family was happy to lend the tractor to him for Tractor Day. "We changed the ideas of the administrators, who now realize how important agriculture is to the students and to the community."

RESOURCE SPOTLIGHT:

The Growing New Farmers Web Site: www.northeastnewfarmer.org

"Growing New Farmers" is a multi-year USDA-funded project that focuses on improving services and programs to beginning farmers in the Northeast region. The new GNF website is a one-stop resource for new farmers and service providers. It connects you to programs, services, events and resources for new farmers across the Northeast. You will also find answers to your frequently asked questions..

The website includes 6 main sections that provide basic information and interactive elements to help you start, develop or make your operation more successful. The Directory, Farming Questions and Calendar sections are most useful to new farmers. The site also contains information about new farmers in the Northeast and ongoing efforts to improve support services.

The Directory is a searchable jackpot of resources available for new farmers in the 12 Northeast states. It will help you locate programs, services and contact information. You can search by topic (ie. land, credit), by location (ie. state), or by type of service or program (ie. workshops, consultants, classes).



Jason Hadley (on top) and Ian Merritt on Jason Hadley's 4030 John Deere.

Matt Davidson drove his family's Massey Ferguson 26 miles round-trip to prove a point. He will be one of the students that will help organize the next Tractor Day, as many of the original members have graduated. "It will be bigger and better than ever!" he says. Matt is a junior and works on the family dairy outside of Treadwell. He hopes that even more students take part next year.

Obviously, the Tractor Boys are dedicated to agriculture. And they're willing to show the rest of the community that they are determined individuals who can stand up to things that are challenging to agriculture: increasing development, low farm prices, and others' attitudes towards farming. They received a great deal of support from parents, farmers, teachers, and other students in their first endeavor to "make a point". We'll watch for their next event and hope that others will recognize that farming is important in Delaware County and all over the Northeast.

Mariane Kiraly is a Dairy Farm Management Educator with Cornell Cooperative Extension Delaware County. She lives in Franklin, NY on a 50-cow Registered Holstein dairy with her husband Andrew and children Ian and Alison.



Tractors lined up outside the Delaware Academy in Delhi, NY on Tractor Day.



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Small Farm Quarterly Youth Page

DOWN ON THE FARM

Find 95 words related to agriculture in the jumbled letters below. Read them forward, backward, up, down or diagonally. Draw a line around each word as you find it, then check it against the list of farm words that appear below.

- | | | | |
|------------------|-----------------|------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Acres | 25. Dairy | 49. Hybrids | 72. Rye |
| 2. Alfalfa | 26. Disking | 50. Irrigation | 73. Seed Planter |
| 3. Baling Hay | 27. Drought | 51. Livestock | 74. Share Cropper |
| 4. Barbwire | 28. Farm Bureau | 52. Machinery | 75. Shed |
| 5. Barley | 29. Farmer | 53. Manure | 76. Sheep |
| 6. Barn | 30. Feeder | 54. Milk | 77. Silo |
| 7. Beans | 31. Fences | 55. Milking | 78. Soil |
| 8. Beef Cattle | 32. Fertilizer | Machine | 79. Sorghum |
| 9. Blight | 33. Field | 56. Mower | 80. Soybeans |
| 10. Bull | 34. Forage | 57. Oats | 81. Spray |
| 11. Bushel | 35. Fruit | 58. Oxen | 82. Stanchions |
| 12. Calves | 36. Garden | 59. Pasture | 83. Steer |
| 13. Canning | 37. Grain | 60. Peas | 84. Storage |
| 14. Cattle | 38. Grazing | 61. Pest Control | 85. Straw |
| 15. Chickens | 39. Guernsey | 62. Pesticide | 86. Sweet Corn |
| 16. Chopper | 40. Harvest | 63. Pickles | 87. Thresh |
| 17. Chores | 41. Harrow | 64. Planter | 88. Tillage |
| 18. Combines | 42. Hay | 65. Plantation | 89. Tractors |
| 19. Corncrib | 43. Heifers | 66. Plowing | 90. Truck Farming |
| 20. Cows | 44. Herd | 67. Potatoes | 91. Vegetables |
| 21. Crop Dusting | 45. Hoe | 68. Poultry | 92. Wagon |
| 22. Crops | 46. Hogs | 69. Produce | 93. Weeds |
| 23. Crossbred | 47. Holsteins | 70. Rake | 94. Wheat |
| 24. Cultivating | 48. Horses | 71. Ranch | 95. Windmill |

R E P P O R C E R A H S A C S E N I B M O C G P L
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 V E R I W B R A B K I S G W I V R F R S Y G A H T
 A E N I H C A M G N I K L I M S S G N I W O L P B
 T C H O P P E R A S Y E L R A B T M U H G R O S R

Answer on page 23

Cheesy Crab Dip*

- 1 cup picante sauce or chunky salsa
- 1 teaspoon Chili powder
- 1 package (8 oz.) cream cheese, softened
- 1 can (8 oz.) refrigerated pasteurized crabmeat
- 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese
- 1/4 cup sliced pitted ripe olives

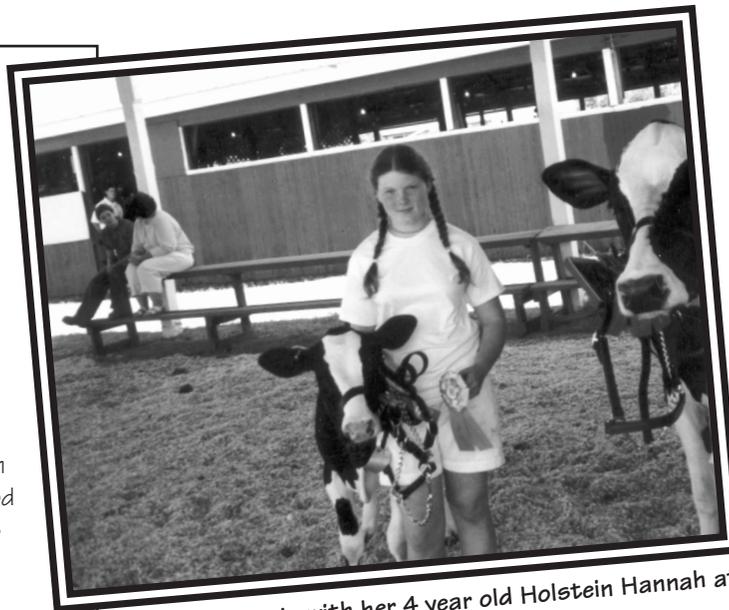
Mix the picante sauce (or salsa) and chili powder. Spread cream cheese in a 9" pie plate. Top with picante sauce mixture, crabmeat, cheddar cheese, olives and additional picante sauce.

Bake at 350(F for 15 minutes or until hot. Sever with pita triangles, tortilla chips, or fresh vegetables for dipping. Makes about 3 cups.

*From www.sargentocheese.com. For 4-H curriculum with recipes go to www.4-Hmall.org type in "Six Easy Bites" (item # 4HCCS 7144). For more recipe books, click on the "Bookstore" link at the top of the homepage, then scroll down and click on "Healthy Lifestyle Education."

Growing Up Dairy

Lisa Austen, Magee Busy Bees, Age 17



Lisa Austen with her 4 year old Holstein Hannah at the Seneca County fair last July.
Photo by Katie Nelson

Growing up in a farming community has continually produced great experiences in my life. I joined the 4-H program as early as possible and became very active in the dairy program. At age 12, I entered an essay contest through the Kiwanis Club and won my first calf, Hunny. Several years later Hunny gave birth to my second calf, Hannah. Hannah is my pride and joy; she has been one of the greatest heifers a girl could ask for. I learned early on that Hannah is not your typical calf; she loves to eat food most cows would turn their noses up at, from doughnuts (her favorite) to even lemons!

Today, I am still highly involved with 4-H as a member of the Magee Busy Bees and the Seneca County 4-H Teen Ambassadors. I am still raising cows, and I am currently awaiting the birth of Hannah's second calf that I have decided to call Savannah.

Along with raising my own calves, I am also the Seneca County Dairy Princess. As Dairy Princess, I learned that nine out of ten girls do not get the daily-recommended amount of calcium in their diets. As a response, I have traveled around Seneca County spreading positive messages about milk. I help inform children and adults the importance of including dairy products in their diets. I have also written articles, created displays, visited classrooms and assisted with programs to teach others the importance of fulfilling their recommended amount of calcium through at least three servings of dairy products a day.

Being in the Dairy Princess Program and a Seneca County 4-H'er have taught me life skills such as responsibility, patience, and the importance of a hard work ethic, that are beneficial to every day life. Through these programs, I have been able to attend 4-H Capital Days in Albany this past March and Cornell Career Explorations in June 2002, and have participated in Dairy Judging and Quiz Bowls. Best of all, I have gotten to meet a lot of people, make new friends and most importantly, have fun.

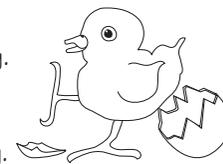
For more information about what we do in the 4-H program in Seneca County you can visit <http://www.cce.cornell.edu/seneca/4h.htm> or the New York State 4-H Youth Development Website at: <http://www.cce.cornell.edu/4h>.

Transitions: Learning About Farming

By Charity Jump, age 11

I guess you could say that it is a hard transition from a large city to a small farming community where the cows outnumber the people. I now live in a very small town in pretty much nowhere in central NY. I first moved to NY in February of 2003 from the large city of Muskogee, Oklahoma. When I arrived here I didn't learn much about farming since it was the middle of the winter, but when spring came around I learned about planting crops and how the corn has to be fertilized or else it wouldn't grow well. I also learned that there are two different types of corn: field corn that is used for animal feed and sweet corn that people use for eating.

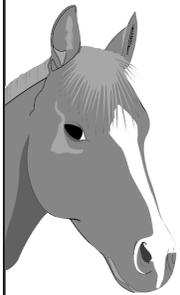
While living here in NY I have learned that livestock play a fairly large role in farming. I myself have 4 chickens. Three of the chickens are hens; the fourth is a rooster. My family doesn't buy many eggs because of the chickens. I was told that raising chickens is part of farming. I guess that the chickens make me feel like I am farming.



When I first acquired the chickens I thought that there was only one type of feed for all livestock. After a few weeks I learned that for chickens there is laying mash, laying pellets, chick starter, grower, scratch, and oyster shells to help them digest their food. In August I attended Empire Farm Days and had a good time learning more about farming and eating a chicken barbecue. Learning about farming at the farm show was exciting, and that's why I thought of writing about my story.

Has Your Horse Herbal'd Today?

Ronnie Reid, Perry City Prancers 4-H Club, Age 15



The Perry City Prancers 4-H Club's primary project this year was a study of alternative herbal treatments for equines entitled "Alternatives." Each member selected one or two herbs to grow and research. Knowledge regarding the herbs was put to use by creating a homeopathic cure and developing a presentation to share with other members. I found this project to be quite fascinating and decided to use it for my 4-H Public Presentation and Horse Communications topic.

Historically nearly every culture on Earth has relied on the vast variety of natural chemistry found in healing plants for their therapeutic properties. And once again, interest in herbal medicine throughout the world is on the rise. People often cite the risk of side effects from powerful orthodox drugs and environmental concerns as a reason for turning to gentler plant medicines.

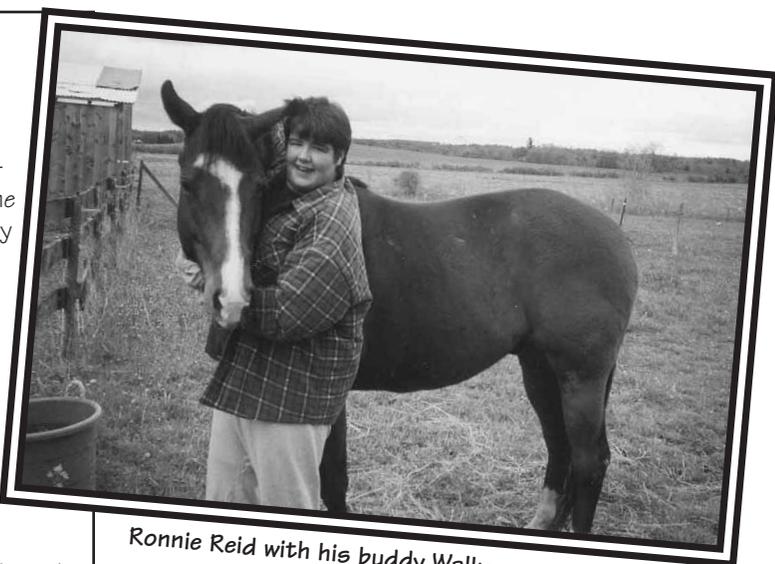
One of the basic beliefs of traditional healing is that the cause of disease should be treated rather than the effects. Traditional health care has as much to do with preventing disease as with curing it. The responsibility for good health rests equally with the patient and the vet.

My 4-H club developed an interest in healing plants for the many illnesses our horses have or develop. The process of learning about the healing properties of plants is overwhelming. I believe that keeping the body and the body of animals healthy and free of toxins will create a good balance in our physical and emotional well-being. Each body system needs support and care.

My research centered on Comfrey (commonly known as knit bone) and Rosemary. Comfrey has been used traditionally in healing fractures. The herb contains allantoin, which encourages bone, cartilage, and muscle growth. When the crushed herb is applied to an injured limb, the allantoin is absorbed through the skin and speeds healing. Comfrey contains calcium, potassium, phosphorus, and allantoin, which initiate cell renewal in damaged muscles and broken bones. A tea made from the leaves treats inflamed, ulcerated digestive tracts and coughs. A leaf poultice reduces swelling and bruising around sprains and arthritic joints, and speeds healing of cuts, burns, open sores, and eczema.

Rosemary is used as a tonic, astringent, diaphoretic and stimulant. Oil of Rosemary is an excellent stomach and nerve tonic. Rosemary can cure headaches and when used as a hair rinse, it can prevent scurf and dandruff. When taken as wine it acts to quiet a weak heart and relieves tiredness by stimulating the kidneys.

Here are some of the resources I have found useful in my research: The Complete Medicinal Herbal Manual by Roger Campbell; Herbs-Eyewitness Handbook by Lesley Bremness; www.alternativedr.com; www.ansci.cornell.edu; www.pioneerthinking.com; www.botanical.com; and www.gardensablaze.com.



Ronnie Reid with his buddy Walker.

My Special Horse Treat

Source: The Horse Lover's Corral www.angelfire.com/tx2/kidshorses/index3.html

- 1 envelope of instant oatmeal (dry)
- 1 handful of sweet feed
- 2 spoonfuls of applesauce
- 1 spoonful honey or molasses
- 1 handful of toasted O's cereal
- 4 sugar cubes
- a pinch of brown sugar
- 1/2 cup of water

The ingredients can be mixed in the horse's feed bucket. Mix the oatmeal with the water. Add sweet feed and applesauce. Stir together. Add the toasted O's cereal, brown sugar, and honey or molasses. Mix again. Place sugar cubes on top. Serves one horse.

For more 4-H resources on "Kids and Horses" log onto <http://www.ansci.cornell.edu/4H/horses/horsekid.html>.

More Than Just Another Farm Show

Emily Thayer, 4-H Friends, age 14 & Katrina Twist, 4-H Teen Council, age 14

For the past 16 years Rodman Lott and Sons Farms in Seneca County have hosted the Empire Farm Days in early August. There is much to do, and much more than farm equipment to see! As 4-H members, we have played an important part in making this a successful event - from presenting programs to scooping ice cream.

Popular attractions at the Farm Show include looking at exhibits and entering drawings. For example, a participant could win a saddle or a John Deere pedal tractor. In each tent and vendor space there are so many exhibits to see and one can learn about every area of agriculture imaginable! Our 4-H Dairy Club, the Magee Busy Bees, made and sold rope halters as a fundraiser. Seneca County's Dairy Princess (also a Magee Busy Bee) could be found promoting milk and the importance of adding dairy to our diet in the Morton Building along with other neighboring princesses. Master gardeners were available to answer horticulture questions and give presentations as well.

Cornell Cooperative Extension had a large booth in the Grange Tent where you can watch presentations done by CCE staff on nutrition, food preservation, food safety and even 4-H'ers doing their Produced in New York presentations. Cornell University plays a large part in the event with exhibits on horses, pest management, tractor safety, Cooperative Extension, and dairy. As the land grant university, they really believe in "helping you put knowledge to work" and bringing it to the people.

Emily worked at the Seneca County 4-H Dairy Bar, where adult and older youth volunteers scoop ice cream for cones, sundaes, and floats. Proceeds from the Dairy Bar help support our 4-H Trips and Awards Fund (thank you to those who stopped and purchased ice cream!).

As young people, one thing we enjoy every year about Empire Farm Days is collecting stickers, pencils, pens, posters, recipes and an occasional t-shirt from the various booths. And of course, it is always fun to check out the tractors and other farm equipment. It was so fun, we can't wait to come back to participate next year!



Emily Thayer making cheesecake at a "Produced in NYS" 4-H foods contest.

Seneca County 4-H Teen Ambassadors with mentor, Katie Nelson.



The Youth Page is written by and for young people. Many thanks to the 4-H Teen Ambassadors in Seneca County, NY, for most of the material in 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! Write to:

SFQ Youth Page
 c/o Celeste Carmichael
 NYS 4-H Teen Program
 N130 MVR Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853
cjc17@cornell.edu

MARKETING

Marketing Pasture-Raised Products: Study Shows What Consumers Are Looking For

By Jano Nightingale

If you're a farmer producing pasture-raised meat and poultry products, you should be interested to learn what consumers think about these products. A recent study by Food Routes Network and Midwest Collaborators provides some useful information. The study was part of an effort to help farmers market their pasture-raised products more effectively.

The study involved six different focus groups with urban consumers in the states of Minnesota, Wisconsin and Iowa. The participants were of mixed ages, gender and education level, and were the primary food buyers in their households. It's important to note that this was not a random sample; consumers were selected who showed some awareness of the impacts of their food purchases on the environment.

OPPORTUNITIES AND BARRIERS

The study revealed a number of opportunities and barriers for marketing pasture-raised products. On one hand, these consumers said that they are open to trying new products. They care about the potential health benefits they see in pasture-raised products. They also would like to support local farmers and have some concern about animal welfare.

On the other hand, they said they are less likely to trust products produced without regulation. As consumers, they would expect the product to cost more. But in order for them to be willing to pay the higher price, they would also expect a higher quality product.

KNOW YOUR CUSTOMERS' SHOPPING HABITS AND CONCERNS

Convenience was a key issue for con-

FARM FOLLIES

The Joy of Gardening - Or Not

By Rebecca Schuelke

Summertime always brings to mind fresh vegetables and for many of us from farms, that means homegrown fresh vegetables.

My first garden was in a corner of a cornfield on my father's dairy farm in Upstate New York. I was 11 and a member of the Snickerdoodle 4-H Club in Cayuga County. It wasn't really a club because it was just my two brothers and me, but that's what we called it and it suited our purposes. At that time, our purposes were going to Cayuga County Fair and bringing home as many ribbons as possible. I had already come to the conclusion that I was not going to win champion dairy-showing ribbons, so, like a good farmer's daughter, I diversified into baked goods, a wildflower collection and vegetables.

I work for 4-H now and of course we teach all our youth that club work is not about winning prizes; it's an educational process and the skills you teach yourself are more valuable than the ribbons. Back then, though, I really wanted that cheap strip of blue cloth.

My father was all for sending me out into the yard with a pickaxe and shovel to start my garden. However, it quickly became apparent to me that the corner of a cornfield is an ideal place for a garden, because you can skip all the pesky details of garden preparation, including plotting out a spot, digging, breaking ground, digging, pulling weeds and digging. The downside is your father might make you walk behind the tiller

sumers in this study. Although they may take the trouble to shop at farmers markets, roadside stands and butcher shops, they want the shopping location to be convenient. "I go on cost and convenience - the amount of time I have to shop and if I'm already in that area," said one of the participants.

These customers all agreed that coupons, sales promotions and samples encourage them to try new products. Recommendations from friends and family also inspire them to try a new product.

Many consumers said that when it comes to meat and poultry, looks sell. They want to see the product to check for freshness and fat deposits. Some check for the date on the package, but acknowledge that they have seen too many stories about repackaging to truly trust the date.

When it comes to dairy, it's the expiration date these respondents look for first. Brand names were also cited as being extremely important with dairy products. "I always buy Morning Glory milk. I don't care how much it costs. The other stuff doesn't seem to stay fresh as long," commented one of the respondents.

The focus groups agreed that pasture-raised animals should be generally healthier, with less toxins and disease than those raised in a confined area. Their concerns about pasture systems included the quality of pasture and the effect of a grass-based diet on the taste of the product.

Although many participants had purchased meat and poultry directly from farmers, they experienced some problems in doing so. Most expressed satisfaction with the product, but found that there was either too

picking up rocks for a whole cornfield, but at least you get out of digging a garden.

I carefully selected my garden plants based on my favorite vegetables: turnips, parsnips, and radishes. Or maybe I just grabbed the first 10 seed packets I saw. After careful tending of my garden all summer, or maybe it was just dumb luck, I had a nice selection of parsnips to enter into the fair. Of course, that year was a drought and the Cayuga County Fair comes a little early in the growing season, so these parsnips were the size of baby corn. Nonetheless, my parsnips were selected for exhibition at the New York State Fair. This was a banner year for me, the first and only year my projects were selected to go onto the state fair. My wildflower collection, dietetic cookies and parsnips all made the trip to Syracuse. Regrettably, no one suggested my Holstein heifer, Dusky, should come along, too.

My wildflowers and cookies both yielded ribbons, but, amazingly — considering all the hard work I put into the garden - my parsnips went home with a participation ribbon. I know a lot of adults who would suggest there is a lesson to be learned here, but, personally, I blame the parsnips.

Rebecca Schuelke is a 4-H Program Assistant with Cornell Cooperative Extension Chenango County, and secretary of the Chenango County Agricultural Development Council. She lives in Norwich, NY and attempts something resembling a garden each year.

much meat for their family or they ended up with cuts they didn't want. Some also said that they stopped buying meat this way when prices went up for processing.

Consumers also expressed some skepticism about how products sold at farmers markets or roadside stands are processed, and whether they meet standards for safety. Most respondents were not particularly trusting of the corporations that provide food products either. "I look at the expiration date, though now I've seen the reports that they actually change the date," said one of the participants.

While many of the respondents say they worry about the use of hormones and antibiotics, they worry even more about e-coli, salmonella, mad cow disease and other illness causing bacteria. Many say that they look for hormone-free, antibiotic-free, and organic products when available.

DEVELOP AN EFFECTIVE MARKETING "MESSAGE"

Participants in the six focus groups were asked numerous questions about the terms pasture-raised, natural, free range and grass-fed. Their consensus was that pasture-raised is the term that best represents the type of production described and the benefits mentioned.

When it comes right down to it, respondents said that the message they need to hear is one of healthy and tasty food for their families. They are in favor of production practices that promotes the animal's well being and the environment. But in the

FARM FOLLIES

Farmer vs. Car Salesman

A wise old farmer went to town to buy a new pickup truck that he saw advertised in the paper for a certain price. After telling the salesman which truck he wanted, they set down to do the paperwork. The salesman handed the farmer the bill, and the farmer declared "This isn't the price I saw!". The salesman went on to tell the old wise farmer how he was getting extras such as power steering, power brakes, power windows, special tires, etc. and that was what took the price up. The farmer, needing the truck badly, paid the price and went home.

A few months later, the salesman called up the farmer and said, "My son is in 4-H and he needs a cow for a project. Do you have any for sale?"

The farmer replied, "Yes, I have a few cows I would sell for \$500 apiece, Come and look at them and take your pick". The salesman said he and his son would be right out. After spending a few hours in the field checking out all the farmer's cows, the two decided on one and the salesman proceeded to write out a check for \$500.

The farmer said "Now wait a minute, that's not the final price of the cow, you're getting extras with it and you have to pay for that too".

"What extras?" asked the salesman. Below is the list the farmer gave the salesman for the final price of the cow...

BASIC COW	.....	\$ 500.00
Two-tone exterior	.....	.45.00
Extra stomach	.....	.75.00
Product storing equipment	.....	60.00
Straw compartment	.....	120.00
4 spigots @\$10 ea	.....	.40.00
Leather upholstery	.....	125.00
Dual horns.	.....	.45.00
Automatic fly swatter	.....	.38.00
Fertilizer attachment.	.....	.185.00
GRAND TOTAL	.....	\$1,233.00

end their biggest concern is convenient access to healthy, good tasting food at a reasonable price.

They agreed that a marketing message to promote pasture-raised products should be brief and to the point, easy to understand, and should indicate benefits to the customer. According to these consumers, the "REAL" label coined by the dairy industry is an example of an effective message.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRODUCERS

The focus groups made several recommendations for marketing pasture-raised products. First is that producers should develop a logo or label to identify their products. Second, they recommended that farmers explore the options for a cooperative marketing campaign that would develop and publicize general standards.

Marketing efforts that include coupons, discounts and samples at grocery stores, farmers markets or roadside stands were also recommended. Information about the consumer health aspects of pasture-raised products should be provided. And finally, it was suggested that farmers make access to the product as convenient as possible while still maintaining consistency and a sense of professionalism.

Jano Nightingale is a Horticulture student at SUNY Cobleskill. She recently completed an internship with the Small Farms Program at Cornell University. This article was adapted from "Pasture-Raised Products: Message and Strategy," by Kim Shelquist, published November 2002 by Food Routes Network and Midwest Collaborators. The full report is available online at <http://www.agmrc.org/markets/info/pasturemeats.pdf>.

What do you give a sick pig?
Oinkment

What is the easiest way to
count cattle?
Cowculator

Why did the foal cough?
It was a little horse

Why did the pig go to the casino?
To play the slop machine

What kind of milk comes
from a forgetful cow?
Milk of amnesia

How did the egg stay fit?
Eggercise

Did you hear the one about the
cat who ate the ball of yarn?
It had mittens

Why did the turkey
cross the road?
To prove it wasn't chicken

Why can't cows drive boats?
Because they can't
steer the udder

What do you call a sleeping bull?
A bulldozer

What did the egg do
when it read these jokes?
It cracked up

PRODUCTION AND MANAGEMENT

Tactical Agriculture Teams (TAg Teams): Hands On Teaching for IPM

By Mike Stanyard

Tactical Agriculture (TAg) Teams have proven to be a great way for farmers to learn about integrated pest management (IPM) and improved crop cultural practices here in New York State. The TAg program was started in 1990 through the efforts of the NYS IPM Program at Cornell University, and it continues to have strong support and participation thirteen years later! Over 850 participants in 34 counties have graduated from the TAg program!

TAg Teams create a comfortable learning environment for a small group of growers, usually neighbors. Members of a small group are more able to openly communicate and

share ideas and opinions with each other. Meetings last about two hours and are in close proximity to the members' farms. Team members spend less time traveling and more time learning and interacting.

As field crops specialist on the CCE-NWNY Dairy, Livestock, and Field Crops Team, I have used TAg Teams as part of my extension program for the last four years. Traditionally, teams here in NWNY have consisted of 6 farmers, 1 agribusiness representative (agrichemical, crop management association, or crop consultant) and the county agricultural extension representative. However, the team is not limited to just the members and additional neighbors, friends, and relatives are welcome to drop in at any meeting.

Meetings begin in April and continue about once every three weeks until harvest time. This allows each of the participants to host a TAg meeting at their farm. Hosting a meeting lets that grower focus on their individual cropping situation and receive personalized input and recommendations from the team. Each participant designates two fields, usually one corn and one alfalfa, for the team to use as outdoor classrooms. All designated fields are scouted weekly during the season and growers are immediately notified if weeds, diseases or insects are found to be over threshold. Otherwise, all pest situations are collectively discussed at the team meeting and management solutions are decided upon as a group.

At each meeting, insect fact sheets on most of our feature pests are handed out to participants to keep in a TAg notebook. Participants also have the opportunity to receive the Cornell Guide to Integrated Crop Management and Alfalfa and Field Corn Management Pocket guide. Both of these are valuable references for making pest management decisions.

Throughout the growing season, each team meets six to eight times and certified pesticide applicators can receive NYS-DEC credits. Participants learn how to assess pest populations and their potential for crop damage, including insects, weeds and diseases. Insect pest management education includes alfalfa weevil, wireworm, seed corn maggot, potato leafhopper, black cutworm, corn borer, and corn rootworm. Other topics include identification of weeds and crop diseases, soil and crop fertility, soil sampling, barnyard fly management, assessing plant populations, and nutrient management. The TAg program allows the flexibility to address local needs, conditions, and interests regardless of the size of the farm or if their focus is dairy, livestock, or cash grain operation.

TAg Teams help participants better understand their role in IPM and improve pest and crop management skills. They become more aware of pest identification, biology, sampling techniques, thresholds, and management options. If you would like to learn more about TAg Teams in your county, contact your local Cooperative Extension Agriculture Educator or Field Crops Specialist. More TAg specifics from the NYS IPM Program can be found on the web at <http://nysipm.cornell.edu/lfc/tag/> or from the NWNY Team at <http://www.nwnyteam.org>.

Mike Stanyard is Field Crops Specialist for PRO-DAIRY/NWNY Dairy, Livestock, and Field Crops Team.



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WHAT TO *DEPEND* ON.  MASSEY FERGUSON

HOME AND FAMILY

Pastured Meat Jambalaya

Troy Bishopp

- 3/4 cup chopped onion
- 1/2 cup chopped celery
- 1/4 cup chopped green pepper
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 2 cups cubed pastured ham or chicken of 1 cup of each
- 1 32 oz. Can diced tomatoes
- 1 1/4 cups hot water with 4 beef bouillon cubes
- 1 cup uncooked long grain rice
- 1 cup water
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1 teaspoon thyme
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 1 1/2 Dash of Tobasco or Cajun spice
- 1 pounds fresh or precooked shrimp
- 1 tablespoon parsley

In a dutch oven, sauté onion, celery, green pepper and garlic in butter until tender. Add the next nine ingredients. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat. Cover and simmer until the rice is tender, about 30 minutes. Add shrimp and parsley. Simmer uncovered until shrimp are cooked, about 5 minutes or so. Serves 6-8 people.

Troy Bishopp sent us this recipe from his farm in Deansboro, NY. He says, "I've used this recipe for Jambalaya for groups and it's delicious!"

RESOURCE SPOTLIGHT

Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance

The Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance (NODPA) is a farmer-run organization whose mission is "to enable organic family dairy farmers, situated across an extensive area, to have informed discussion about matters critical to the well being of the organic dairy industry as a whole." NODPA represents over 350 organic dairy producers in the



The First Annual NODPA Field Days in 2001 included a pasture walk at Roman Stoltzfoos's farm in Kinzers, PA.

Photo by Lisa McCrory

northeast and serves a membership of over 900 farmers, consumers and businesses through its quarterly newsletter, an annual Field Days Event, and web site:

www.nodpa.com or www.organicmilk.org.

NODPA was formed in February, 2001 in order to build farmer networks, establish a fair and sustainable floor price for organic milk, promote ethical, ecological and sustainable farming practices, and create positive relationships with processors and retailers. Providing position statements to the National Organic Standards Board is also a very important role that NODPA plays.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGIES

NODPA has farmer representatives in Pennsylvania, New York, Vermont, Connecticut, and Maine. Their role is to further the goals of NODPA and act as a conduit for the flow of information and ideas to and from their fellow organic producers. NODPA representatives participate in numerous conference calls throughout the year. These phone meetings bring local and regional information to the body, facilitate networking across state lines and alert members to upcoming issues. The conference calls also help in organizing the Annual Field Days Event, creating the quarterly NODPA News, updating the NODPA web page, and staying involved in other organic industry activities.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Since our first meeting in 2001, NODPA has created:

- Effective farmer networking on a state by state and Northeast level
- Open lines of communication with processors, industry representatives, and the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB)
- Three Annual Field Days in PA, NY and ME
- Quarterly NODPA News that goes out to over 900 producers, educators and industry people
- Odairy, the organic dairy electronic discussion group, which has over 200 subscribing members. (To become an Odairy subscriber, send an email to: odairy-subscribe@yahooogroups.com)
- NODPA web page filled with resources including educational information on animal health and grazing management, industry news, classifieds, calendar events, and a business directory. (www.organicmilk.org, www.nodpa.com)
- Two producer surveys (2001, 2002) providing information on pay price of milk, cost of purchased feeds, pasture use and feedback on important issues.

For more information about NODPA, or to get on our mailing list, contact:

Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance, c/o NOFA-VT Dairy Tech Program
PO Box 697, Richmond, VT 05477
802-434-4122, info@nofavt.org
www.organicmilk.org or www.nodpa.com

HOME AND FAMILY

Cutting Your Own Firewood

By Ernie vonBorstel

PREPARATION

Become comfortable in the safe use of your chain saw and if possible attend a hands-on refresher course or demonstration session. Make sure that whatever type of wood burning devices you will be using are properly installed and the chimneys are safe and clean. No amount of fuel saving can compensate for a serious accident or fire.

EQUIPMENT

It's a good idea to have at least 2 chain saws, a small one (14 inches) for limbing and cutting the smaller stuff. I use it as much as possible because it's lighter, less tiring and easier to take with you for quick jobs. Save the bigger one for jobs the little one can't handle. Keeping your saws sharp is absolutely essential. Owning or getting access to a hydraulic wood splitter will surely make life easier and hopefully you will have some form of powered vehicle or wagon that you can take to the woods to bring your wood back home. A pair of skidding tongs for dragging the logs to your vehicle will be a big help.

SOURCES OF WOOD

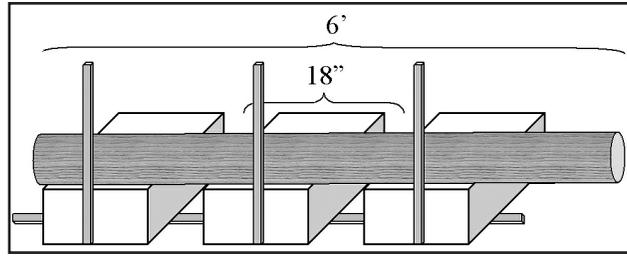
The first source could be wood that needs to be cleaned up such as blow down from storms or dead trees that you want removed. Then go to trees that need to be removed to make your trails or roads. If this doesn't provide an adequate amount I might suggest that rather than just looking for trees to cut, look through your woods for trees that you want to favor and do a little thinning by cutting trees around them to improve the quality of your woodlot at the same time you are getting your firewood.

TYPE OF WOOD

Here a homesteader has much more flexibility than someone selling their wood. I find that a mix of woods is best for me. Even poplar (which sometimes the beavers cut for me) and some pine come in handy on those chilly mornings in the fall and spring for heating up the house quickly where the oaks and hard maple would take too long to get going and then last too long. The softer woods also work well as a fuel source if you are boiling maple sap in the spring.

CUTTING IN THE WOODS

Cut your logs to a length that is an exact multiple of your stove's requirement. This will avoid the odd length and short pieces which are hard to stack and use. I use 18" wood so I carry a 36" length of 1/2" white plastic pipe with a blue tape ring at the midpoint. The tape not only is my 18" measure but the thing that helps me find it when I set it down in the leaves. I try to cut all my logs 72" unless they become too heavy to drag with my skidding tongs, then it's down to 36", and 18" is only for the really big ones.



Drawing of the cradle used by Ernie vonBorstel to cut firewood logs quickly, accurately, and safely.

BRINGING THE WOOD HOME

Wood is heavy and you'll expend considerable energy getting it from the woods to your woodpile. How to do this most efficiently will depend upon what equipment you have available and the route you have to travel. Here are some hints that might make the job somewhat easier.

1. Plan and establish your trails first. Make them so that it will be easy to maneuver your truck or wagon.
2. Try to keep trails on the downhill side of the wood source so you will have gravity helping you when you skid the logs to the trail.
3. I find it most efficient to focus on the cutting and skidding to the trail on one day and actually transporting the logs home on another day.

WHERE AND HOW TO STORE

Find an acceptable outdoor storage place that is large enough to accommodate 2 years worth of firewood. Hopefully it can be close enough to where you will be using it as the ground will probably be covered with snow and the air frigid when you most need access to the wood. It really helps to stack your wood off the ground on wood pallets which you can get for free at various building supply places. Leave at least 12" between stacks for air circulation. Posts driven in the ground at the ends will keep the stacks from tumbling down. When I get the stacks to the maximum height that is convenient for me to reach, I cover only the top with plastic sheeting and leave the cut ends exposed for drying. Another pallet on top of the stacks keeps the plastic from blowing away and adds stability to the stacks. Since you will not want to burn any of your green wood until it has cured for at least 1 year, segregate your piles into this and next year's wood.

CUTTING TO LENGTH AND SPLITTING

Since I bring most of my wood home in 6ft. lengths, I built a "cradle" on to which I can stack numerous logs. The cradle has 3 open spaces on its deck which allow me to cut through the pile of logs at just the right spacing for 18" firewood. It brings the wood up to a comfortable working height and safely supports the logs keeping them from shifting around. My big saw with a 20" bar gets the work

done quickly and safely. When the pile of cut wood starts to get in my way I split the big ones then immediately go to stacking everything on my woodpile. I try to do this cutting and splitting right at the storage site to minimize the wood handling. I also do it in the cool weather of deer season when I'd rather not be working in the woods.

MISCELLANEOUS TIPS

It's probably best to do the work in the fall when the ground is dry, bugs are gone and it's cool enough to comfortably do hard labor. Take a couple of exploratory trips to plan out and mark your trails and trees to be cut so that when you're set to do the real work you can concentrate on the job at hand. When you work in the woods make sure someone knows where you are and keep in touch at regular intervals. If you are working with a partner make sure that you keep a more than adequate distance apart because trees are tall and don't always fall exactly where you want them to. You need your total attention to be focused on what you are doing. Having to worry about another person is too much of a distraction.

Good luck and keep warm and safe this winter!

Ernie vonBorstel is now retired and works full time on the family's 100 acre homestead in Spencer NY. Questions and comments can be directed to him at ewv1@cornell.edu.

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STEWARDSHIP AND NATURE

Natural Rendering: A Natural Solution For Mortality and Butcher Waste

By Jean Bonhotal

Are you paying double for disposal of animal carcasses? First you have the economic loss of the animal, then you must pay the renderer up to \$70 for a cow, \$60 for a pig, and \$200 for a horse! On-site composting of mortalities and butcher waste has emerged as a money-saving, environmentally sound alternative for many farm businesses.

The rendering industry has been providing the valuable service of mortality pickup from farms and residuals from many butchers for as long as we can remember. But recent declines in the prices of hides, tallow, meat and bone meal,



Building the compost pile.

and other products as well as mad cow and foot and mouth diseases have hurt the rendering industry economically. Where at one time these products were paid for, the rendering industry has been forced to charge for service. The rising prices of rendering services have made it unaffordable for many farms and butchers.

Butchers and livestock producers sometimes are unaware of proper disposal methods outside of rendering services. In an anonymous survey we found improper disposal methods to be common. Allowing carcasses to decay above ground (and be scavenged by wild animals,) or buried (which is difficult at certain times of year,) can potentially contaminate surface and groundwater. These practices can also pose biosecurity threats to livestock.

Composting of livestock mortality and butcher residuals is a convenient, biosecure, socially acceptable and environmentally responsible method of disposal. In addition, parts and animals not normally accepted by rendering services can be composted.

KEY POINTS ABOUT CARCASS COMPOSTING:

- Select a site that is well-drained, and at least 200 feet from water courses, sinkholes, seasonal seeps or other landscape features that indicate the area is hydrologically sensitive.
- Lay a 2-foot deep bed of bulky, absorbing organic material containing some sizeable pieces (4-6 inches long). Utility and municipal wood chips work well.

- Cover the carcass with a dry, high-carbon co-composting material, such as old silage, sawdust, or dry stall bedding (some semi-solid manure will expedite the process)
- For young animals, layer mortalities with a minimum of 2 foot of co-composting material.
- Let set for 4-6 months.
- Remove large bones before land-applying compost

Even a 30,000-pound Northern Right whale was composted in New York State. The equipment needed to compost is available on most farms, and can be done at any time of year. It should be noted that some states have enacted environmental regulations for composting, so check with environmental regulators to see if it is legal in your state.

The Cornell Waste Management Institute (CWMI) has produced new educational materials on natural rendering, including a 20-minute video and 12-page fact sheet. Both the fact sheet and the video explain the basics of carcass and butcher waste composting, including the key points such as siting, proper layering depths, materials and how to monitor the pile as well as troubleshooting tips. The fact sheet can be viewed online at: <http://compost.css.cornell.edu/NaturalRenderingFS.pdf>.

CWMI is also offering the Advanced Compost Short Course in Ithaca, NY, October 27-28, 2003, plus an optional Tour on the 26th. For more information visit the CWMI web site at: <http://cwmi.css.cornell.edu>.

Jean Bonhotal is a Compost Specialist with Cornell Waste Management Institute in the Department of Crop and Soil Science. She lives - and composts — on the Tug Hill Plateau in Sandy Creek, NY.

FARMING OPPORTUNITIES

Making Money With Firewood

By Paul Bock

It is possible to earn supplemental income by producing and selling firewood without even owning a piece of woodland. Several factors worked in my favor to allow me to do this, and to satisfy a unique niche market for firewood.

I work in Buffalo, New York, and live in a rented farmhouse on an idle dairy farm an hour southwest of Buffalo. I don't own any woodland. Yet, each fall I sell 20 to 50 face cords of firewood in Buffalo at nearly twice the local price. I cut, split, and cure the wood at home, then deliver it to customers after work. It would not be very economical to deliver wood this far away if I didn't have to go to Buffalo anyway. The profits from the firewood make the long commute a little easier on the wallet.

I was first hooked on splitting firewood when I spent two summers working for a residential tree service. I learned to

use different sized chainsaws, splitting mauls, hydraulic splitters, heavy equipment and techniques for dragging, skidding, and hauling wood.

Two years ago I started a firewood business, called Stone Gully Firewood, when my landlord logged a section of his 200 acres of Sugar Maples, which left hardwood tops in the woods. That first year I used a pickup truck, a crawler, a chainsaw, and a splitting maul. A classified ad in a Buffalo newspaper sold 50 cords the first year.



Paul Bock on a crawler that makes firewood extraction much easier.

Photo by Jessica Bock

Since then, I have made arrangements with woodlot owners to cut their hardwood tops after the logger is done. My work keeps the woods clean and gives the owner a little extra money. I also have an arrangement with a nearby sawmill that sells me their culled logs. While the culls aren't good for furniture, they are great for firewood. I cut them at the sawmill to avoid transportation costs and I keep their log yard clean.

Equipment requirements can vary quite a bit. At the sawmill, I can drive right up with a two-wheel drive pickup. In the woodlot, it may be necessary to have a 4x4 truck or a tractor. Sometimes you will have to leave useable wood in the forest because it is too difficult to harvest.

There was a time when I bought tractors and equipment because I thought it would speed up production. In the end, those pieces of equipment were capital expenses that eventually broke, which took time and money to fix. A good rule is to keep it simple. I have found that the less equipment I own the more firewood I produce. A good, all-purpose tool would be a 4x4 pickup that can get around the woods easily, can haul the wood, and can deliver it to customers.

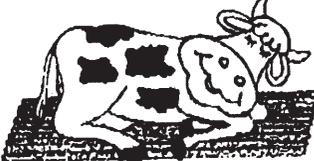
I prefer to use a splitting maul instead of a hydraulic splitter. I learned how wood splits when I worked for the tree service, and a hydraulic splitter made those lessons easy. But now I am faster with a maul than using a hydraulic splitter. I get a backache lifting the big wood onto the splitter or moving it to the splitter. You could move the splitter around, but often that is more work than moving the wood to the splitter.

To break up the time I spend splitting, I switch to other activities like tossing wood in the truck, and limbing and bucking out the next top. You get into a nice rhythm, which makes the work go quickly. Each blow of the maul is like a percussion note against the orchestra of the woods. I breathe enough exhaust smoke from my chainsaw, I don't need more of it from my splitter.

It is important to know your market. I have found that I can divide my customers into two groups. The rural folks have wood-burning stoves, furnaces, and boilers that provide heat in the winter. They want large pieces of wood to fill up large fireboxes. They want to be able to bank the fire over night so that it is still burning in the morning. The urban folks have fireplaces and small fireplace inserts. They want their wood split small so that it will burn well. They want uniform length wood that is well seasoned, with a light color and good checking. For the urban folks, the appearance of the wood stacked against their house is a part of the decoration, adding to the rustic charm of their suburban home.

Niche marketing success depends on the entrepreneurial spirit to identify and then fulfill a marketing area resulting from special circumstances. Once you succeed, you can build on that knowledge to grow your business.

Paul Bock is a mechanical engineer, with a love for his wife and son, and several agroforestry projects. He can be contacted via email at pjbock2001@yahoo.com.



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STEWARDSHIP AND NATURE**Daily Spreading Manure - Watch Out For Water Quality!**

Dale Dewing

Most dairy and livestock farms in the Northeast do not have long-term manure storage. Winter manure spreading is not allowed for some of our neighbors in other states. If you spread daily, here's how you can control the risk of pollution and preserve valuable nutrients for crop production on your farm.

RUNOFF IS THE ENEMY

The nitrogen and phosphorus in manure are valuable resources for crop production, but when these same nutrients enter streams, rivers, lakes or wells they are pollutants. Runoff moves nutrients from the field to the stream causing this transformation from blessing to curse. Runoff can also move any *cryptosporidium* and *E. coli* pathogens that are present in manure into wells and other water sources used for recreation or human consumption.

Runoff is not produced equally from every field or even equally in every part of a field. The old 80/20 rule applies here, 80% of the runoff comes from about 20% of the landscape. Understanding where the majority of runoff comes from on your farm is the key to controlling the loss of manure nutrients.

Think of the soil as a sponge, when the pore space of the sponge is full, any additional water runs off the surface. There are several things that affect the amount of water a particular area of soil can hold. Soil depth is most important; this defines the size of the "sponge". Compaction and surface crusting reduce the effective pore space reducing "sponge" capacity. So shallow compacted soils produce more runoff than deep soils with good tilth.

The size of the area contributing water is also important. Remember, water moves down hill inside the sponge as well as on the surface. All things being equal, soil at the base of a slope begins to runoff before soils at the top of the hill.

Also consider the distance to a stream when spreading manure. Runoff that occurs near a stream is the most risky. The use of set backs or buffer areas is wise when runoff from a field directly enters a stream. NRCS standards recommend a 100-foot setback from surface water unless buffer areas and erosion control practices are in place.

PICK THE PLACE AND TIME

The real art of successfully lowering risk while daily spreading is choosing the time and place of manure spreading. After considering runoff risk, the three things to remember in planning for daily spreading are access, access, and access.

Planning to apply manure on a low risk field in the middle of the winter only makes sense if you can get there. It makes equally little sense to spread an easily accessible field in the fall when less accessible fields are available.

It almost goes without saying that soil erosion and flooding are other big risk factors. You will only want to apply



Manure spreader at Fred Huneke's Thorn-Ridge farm, in Delhi, NY.

Photo by Dale Dewing

manure to these high-risk areas in late spring or summer when the risk of loss is reduced and when crops will be actively growing to use the nutrients.

Your knowledge of your farm will allow you to manage manure spreading within fields as well as between fields. Avoiding the areas in a field that are prone to produce runoff will reduce pollution risk while allowing spreading on the low-risk areas of the field.

MAKE USE OF THE NUTRIENTS

Make sure the crop in the fields your spreading on can use the nutrients you're applying. Excess nitrogen will leach to the ground water possibly threatening nearby wells, and definitely not benefiting your crop. Pick a manure spreading rate that matches crop need.

Fields already high in fertility benefit less from manure than fields with low fertility. The soil also has a limited ability to hold nutrients like phosphorus, so high fertility fields lose nutrients to runoff and leaching more easily. Moving manure to lower fertility fields will help crops and reduce pollution risk.

WHAT ABOUT MANURE PILES?

There are some days when manure spreading is impossible because of deep snow or ice. There are other days when it seems as if the whole farm is producing runoff. On days like these, a well-planned manure pile area is just what you need.

Choose your pile location carefully. A little forethought is best here, don't wait until the manure is on the spreader to pick a place. Manure pile areas should be located with at least 300-foot flow path to the nearest watercourse. Upslope runoff should be excluded, and no groundwater spring, seep or subsurface drainage should be in the area. Access during poor weather conditions such as excessive

ice, snow, or muddy ground is obviously needed. Avoid aquifer recharge areas and land where flooding will occur.

Piles should be cleaned up as soon as practical in the spring. If manure must be piled every year, manure storage should be strongly considered to reliably protect the nutrients from escaping the farm.

PLANNING AND DISCIPLINE

Sound nutrient management planning and disciplined implementation will reduce the risk of your farm nutrients becoming pollutants. Know where and when runoff is produced on your farm. Based on this knowledge, carefully select the time and place each load of manure is spread. Choose rates that match the nutrient requirements of the crop you are growing. Don't let fields become excessive in fertility, which increases nutrient loss.

Using your own intimate knowledge of your farm and thoughtful decision-making, you can manage the risk of pollution and preserve valuable crop nutrients. For more information on manure management, call your local Cooperative Extension office.

Dale Dewing is a Field Crop Educator for Cornell Cooperative Extension, Delaware County and writes nutrient management plans for small farms in the Watershed Agricultural Program for the New York City watersheds.



View of Keuka Lake in NY's Finger Lakes region. Careful manure management helps protect our lakes, streams, and drinking water supplies.

Photo by Bill Henning

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READERS WRITE

Is Deer Food Safe For My Horses?

Small Farms Quarterly welcomes questions from readers. The following question was sent to our web site www.smallfarms.cornell.edu. To answer it, we got the advice of Jean Griffiths, Cornell Cooperative Extension Horse Specialist in the Department of Animal Science; Jerry Cherney, forage expert with Cornell's Department of Crop and Soil Sciences; and Dan Brown, nutritional toxicologist with Cornell's Department of Animal Science.

QUESTION: A bow hunting relative has asked if he might convert one of my grass fields (which I mow and bale for horse hay) into a foodplot for attracting and holding white-tail deer. He wants to plant material which would also be safe for my horses to eat. I would not have any difficulty accommodating him, if it is safe.

His suggested planting would be a mix of Ladino, Barker Subterranean and Alsike clovers, two alfalfas, Birdsfoot Trefoil and Puna Chickory. As a cover, he would add a small amount of Marshall Ryegrass. These are the varieties that I require information about. I would make my last mowing in late August, whereupon he would overseed with Brassicas (Rape, Turnip, Canola) - annuals attractive to deer. Those annuals that survive deer browsing would die with our upstate New York winter.

My understanding is that this deer forage thing is a concept which is exploding in popularity. Bowhunters are wondering (as I am) if the field I have in hay can be converted to more deer-preferred species while allowing me to mow and bale. This could be a win-win, so long as my horses are not going to "buy the farm" - literally.

Any advice you could offer I would appreciate. Thank you.

Pete

ANSWER: Most all forage species we plant should be palatable to deer. Some of the species mentioned (legumes in particular) are very palatable to deer and probably would increase the amount of time deer spend in the field.

Subterranean clovers will not overwinter in the north, so they are annuals here that probably would not be worth planting. The variety "Mt. Barker" is an annual clover that reseeds itself after burying its flowers underground like a peanut. Most varieties used in this country are safe, but some of the "down-under" cultivars have a lot of phytoestrogen that raise havoc with sheep reproduction. Our more traditional perennial clovers might be a better bet.

Alsike clovers can cause photosensitization in horses when in contact with skin and exposed to sun; it can also cause liver damage. So this one is not recommended.

Chickory is a perennial that will overwinter here - the blue flowers along roadways in August are chickory. Puna is one of the varieties bred for forage use. It is meant for intensive rotational grazing. Under light grazing it will bolt (send up a flower stalk) and become unpalatable. We have not heard of chickory ever recommended for horse grazing, but we don't think it has any toxic effects on horses. Deer would probably select the most palatable species in the mixture to browse on (legumes), and let others (such as chickory) go to seed.

We don't know if deer would relish birdsfoot trefoil or not. Sheep will avoid trefoil (high tannins) unless they have no other choice. Once they get used to it, they like it fine, and perform well on it. Like chicory, we're just not sure deer would eat it if other choices are available.

As for the Brassicas, at high enough doses some plants in the genera can cause gastrointestinal problems, anemia, thyroid enlargement, kidney and liver disease in horses. But a little won't hurt so this is probably worth a try.

Do you have a question for Cornell scientists? Send them to us and we'll do our best to find answers.

COMMUNITY

A Sense of Home

by Bill Henning

In 1975 John Denver had a hit tune entitled "Country Roads". The fact that it was a hit indicated that it spoke to a need felt by many Americans. Whether or not they were aware of the need is an unanswered question.

The lyrics in John's song went, "Country roads take me home to a place I belong." If you're like myself a little ear worm will probably play that tune over and over in your mind for the rest of the day.

Recent figures released by the U.S. Department of Labor indicate that 15% of jobs held by wage and salary earners change hands each year. Changing jobs can also mean moving families to new communities. These changes come with a price in terms of emotional stress. Some of that price is paid now. Much of that price will probably be paid at a future time. When that price is paid, how great it will be, and just who will end up paying are more unanswered questions.



Country road take me home...

Photo by Bill Henning

A PLACE I BELONG...

Great memories are perhaps the greatest gifts that can be given to a child. Holidays, family gatherings, visiting the cousins, walks and talks with parents or grandparents, playing games with others - face to face... the list goes on and on. These all provide the basics of sound development that will never be fulfilled by a television or computer screen.

A feeling of belonging is also one of life's greatest gifts. Belonging is not a feeling commonly held when you're the new kid on the block, regardless of your age. Belonging comes with time, contribution, and the acceptance of responsibility. The rewards are unique to each individual.

FARMING, FAMILIES, AND HOME

A sense of home, where you belong, is perhaps one of the strongest emotional reasons to farm - especially on a family scale. There are few occupations that can even come close to offering the degree of parent-child communications that can exist on a family farm. This is the reason most commonly cited by Mennonites and Amish who choose farming as a livelihood. The Plain People have a well recognized track record of successful farms and strong family ties that has endured for centuries.

One of the messages relayed by Ohio farmer David Kline at last winter's Low Input Sustainable Farming Conference was that in order to sustain farming we have to have future farmers. When we nurture children by providing them with fond memories and a sense of belonging we encourage them to be our future farmers. When children show an interest in farming there is more reason to farm responsibly. Our heirs will build on the foundations we provide.

Farming provides an environment in which children have an intimate knowledge of what their parents do to make

ends meet. They are aware of the problems that their parents face and learn, first hand, how their parents deal with those problems. They are flooded with real life experiences upon which they can build abilities.

Farming also contributes to communities. A recent study by Tom Lyson of Cornell indicates that small farms make significant positive contributions to rural communities in the areas of poverty, unemployment, human health, and violent crime. These contributions result in a sense of belonging.

Families that remain local are nearby for support. Having someone we can call on for support is as close as we'll ever get to having security. As much as we would like to think otherwise, the only thing we can ever really control is our attitude. Even that can get severely challenged.

ROOTS

Roots tie into a place. They spread out like a family tree. They lend support. They share their influence. They form a community that results in a beneficial synergy. That synergy fights adversity and promotes growth. Roots not only support themselves but also an over-story of growth above ground. That greenery supports other life. Roots also help hold their surroundings in place which in turn offers stability to other systems.

Our human roots — family and neighbors, offer support for one another, share influence, fight adversity, promote growth, support other communities, and provide stability. That system of human roots offers a sense of home.

Bill Henning operates a grass-based beef farm in Livingston County. He is also the Small Farms Specialist with PRO-DAIRY/CCE-NWNY Dairy, Livestock, and Field Crops Team.



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MARKETING

Community Supported Agriculture - A Growing Concept

By Molly Ames

"Community Supported Agriculture" farms, or CSA's, have been around for over a decade in the Northeast. The "traditional" CSA involves a vegetable grower offering to "shareholders" an entire season's supply of vegetables at a fixed price, which is pre-paid early in the year. But the CSA concept has expanded beyond this in several ways.

The first CSA's were organized by growers themselves, but nowadays CSA's are sometimes organized by non-profit organizations, churches, or groups of consumers, who then recruit the farmer to grow for them. Some CSA's now offer meat, eggs, maple syrup, cider, fresh flowers and dairy products. They may also offer more flexible methods of payment including bartering labor for products. CSA's can involve shareholders in ways that go far beyond weeding, and the rewards go both ways.

MIRACLES BY THE ACRE: ONE CSA WITH MULTIPLE GROWERS

Here in the North Country of New York State, growers are creating some really interesting variations on the CSA theme. One example can be found in Jefferson County, New York. Here a small group of growers, all women, have joined forces in a CSA called "Miracles By The Acre."

Miracles By The Acre was organized through a Community Food Security Project sponsored by Cornell Cooperative Extension of Jefferson County, and is now finishing up its third year of marketing fresh produce. Shares include vegetables, cider, fresh cut flowers and herbs that are grown on 6 different farms with a central collection and distribution location.

One of the Miracles growers, Delta Keeney, handles the accounting with the help of another grower, Janet Schrader. They track what produce each grower contributes and how much they will be paid. "I used to just give away my produce because I was not big enough to do a market by myself," says Janet, who had a large family garden with extra produce at certain times of the year. Now Janet is paid for that produce.

Delta says that one of the advantages of multiple growers is that when one grower's lettuce is late, another's might be early. Or, as can happen, if one grower's tomatoes get blossom-end rot, another grower can come to the rescue. It allows growers to grow what they grow best, while having another grower back them up. "So, for instance, Almata Grandjean is our main sweet corn supplier and I am her backup," says Delta.

Miracles by the Acre has developed some really innovative marketing strategies. Through Cornell Cooperative Extension, they partnered with the Healthy Heart Program, a public health initiative aimed at encouraging healthier lifestyles among the employees of participating businesses. The Healthy Heart Program purchased 36 CSA shares and distributed them to employees as an incentive to make healthy lifestyle changes. Shares that were not picked up were donated to local food pantries.

In this way, over 500 families were exposed to the concept of a CSA and the delicious advantages of fresh, local produce. Other shares were purchased by repeat customers for home consumption and by some local churches that contributed their shares to food pantries.

"Taking it one step further," says Delta Keeney, "we established a new Farmers' Market in the City of Watertown." The Market Board consists of the original six farmers that make up Miracles. This market is located in a neighborhood that had limited access to fresh fruits and vegetables. Sometimes it was even called the forgotten neighborhood, because it has so few stores yet is so strongly residential.

Jennifer Zamarripa, a young mother who doesn't own a car, says she likes the market because it's so close to her home. "Easily three quarters of our buyers walk here," says Kathleen Mielke, one of the Miracles growers. Market hours are also unique - it runs from 3 pm until 7pm every Monday. "It is the only market open after work," says Gail Millard who also sells at the other city markets. All vendors at this market accept WIC and Senior Farmer Market Nutrition Program coupons.

The market only offers fresh and local produce, no crafts. "If it isn't edible, we don't sell it," says Gail. Aisha Miller, a young mother from Ft. Drum Military Base, comes to all the markets but likes this one "because it has so much fruit." Michelle Stuck, a young mother, likes the market "because the produce is fresher and healthier than what I can get in the super-market."



CSA members receive a weekly box of farm-fresh produce.

Photos by Odette Butler

ADIRONDACK ENTERPRISES CSA: ONE GROWER, MULTIPLE ENTERPRISES

In a different CSA located further north in St. Lawrence County, farmer Steve Johnson is also expanding the CSA concept. His farm, known as Adirondack Enterprises, is located about 15 miles south of Canton, NY. Shareholders in Steve's CSA not only receive vegetables, but also meat, eggs, and maple syrup. His season goes until December at present and he hopes to add a cold frame to extend the season even further.

Steve is willing to be creative in how shareholders pay for their shares. Working members can do more than just pull weeds — two shareholders are delivering shares in exchange for their produce. Steve says, "I have need of people who can help! Someone to help with writing the newsletter and gathering recipes to include in the share boxes, the design and production of tags for syrup, eggs and vegetables are all things I would love to get off my plate! These are time-consuming activities and if I can find someone to help with them, I can continue to expand other enterprises."

Steve's weekly CSA newsletter describes what growing conditions are affecting the produce, what has gone wrong and what has gone right — things that consumers are usually unaware of. All these efforts get



Miracles By The Acre went on to establish a new Farmers' Market in the City of Watertown, NY.

members involved in the whole farm and help them understand the growing cycle and other aspects of farming.

As a bonus, Steve gets some creative help with talents and skills he might lack, while sharing his experience and knowledge of farming with folks who want to get involved in farming but may not know how. For example Steve's farm has a flock of hens that is big enough to supply the CSA shares first and then a farmer's market in Canton. Steve says that if someone were interested in managing the flock, he would be willing to allow them to expand it, while using him for guidance, and build on the existing egg market he's already established. Similarly, his farm has a flock of sheep and a herd of beef that have potential for expansion if someone has the interest and the time.

"Marketing concepts are as diverse and creative as the farmers and customers that get involved in thinking them up!"

BENNETT'S FARM CSA: "SUBSCRIPTION CHICKEN"

Brian and Ann Bennett, whose farm is also located in St. Lawrence County, have been selling at Canton's farmers market several years. Now they offer a form of a CSA they call "subscription chicken," and it has been an interesting venture.

Bennett's started at market with eggs and lots of garlic. Then they began to bring their free-range chicken to market, selling whole and half chickens out of a cooler. They soon found that there was a demand for chicken and eggs that went beyond the market.

In some CSAs, customers visit the farm to pick up their weekly shares. These visits are part of the CSA experience and help customers feel connected to the farm. But on other farms like the Bennett's, it may be too hard or too far to get customers to come to the farm. Making the connection to the farm in other ways becomes part of the marketing strategy. It has been easy enough for the Bennetts to offer delivery services to their customers located in the

village close to market. So a cooler left out on your porch will be filled with chicken, eggs and garlic on ice when you get home from work.

Responding to what customers want and being willing to oblige has created another marketing opportunity at Bennett's. Some customers buy day old chicks and then Brian raises them, providing the care and feeding up to the weight the customer wants. Some people prefer bigger heavier roasters. Some like smaller frying chicken and many want a mix of everything in between. Brian wants to oblige. He charges by the pound, so the heavier the bird, the more money it costs the customer at the end but they get exactly what they want. Well, if all goes well they do.

The subscription cost covers the cost of raising the bird, the feed and overhead, and hopefully generates a profit for the farm. It generally costs less than what customer would pay for a similar product in a health food store or food coop. The



Flowers and melons from Miracles By The Acre.

Bennett's "subscription chicken" sells for \$1.50 per pound but in addition, the consumer pays the up-front cost of the bird and assumes some of the risk.

Brian has expanded the concept in another way. He already has a market for meat chicken all dressed and ready to eat. But he has found that there are also customers out there who want to buy birds to take home at two week of age, to their own farm or backyard. This gets them beyond the "tricky" stage. Brian often advises them on raising the birds themselves. Sometimes he may help process the birds if his buyers needs the advice and support.

Cont. on next page

STEWARDSHIP AND NATURE

Buffers Basics

By Karen Clifford

In April 1997, USDA officially launched the National Conservation Buffer Initiative and pledged to help landowners install 2 million miles of conservation buffers by 2002. As the year 2002 approached it was apparent that conservation buffers were a big hit. When the New 2002 Farm Bill passed it continued to include buffers as a major conservation program. Agricultural producers and other landowners who install buffers can improve soil, air, and water quality, enhance wildlife habitat, restore biodiversity, and create scenic landscapes.

The initiative, led by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and run by the Farm Service Agency, has the support of the Soil and Water Conservation Districts, many federal agencies, agribusiness firms, and most major agricultural and conservation organizations. The initiative focuses on using grasses, trees, and shrubs to protect and enhance the resources on a farm or ranch. It is an attempt to help producers not only maintain their best land in crop production, but also to make good use of and protect marginal and hydrologically sensitive lands.

WHAT IS A BUFFER?

Conservation buffers are small areas or strips of land in permanent vegetation, designed to intercept pollutants, support wildlife, and manage other environmental concerns. Buffers include riparian buffers, filter strips, grassed waterways, shelterbelts, windbreaks, living snow fences, contour grass strips, cross-wind trap strips, shallow water areas for wildlife, field borders, ally cropping, herbaceous wind barriers, and vegetative barriers. Buffers represent a greatly under used set of technologies for addressing a variety of conservation problems, including nonpoint-source water pollution.

A Growing Concept

Cont. from previous page

FINDING OUT WHAT "COMMUNITY SUPPORTED" REALLY MEANS

While the Bennetts are always looking for ways to accommodate their customers, this year customers got an education in accommodating the farm and its challenges. Typical on the farm, when it rains it pours. What is already a very busy, stressful time, processing and delivering the first batch of birds, was compounded by an unusual early spring temperature drop that knocked out one third of the flock right before they were ready to go to market. Customers had to be told they would not see chicken until the next batch came along.

It was a difficult day. Brian delivered what birds had been processed and told his story to a few people. Then he hurried back to the farm to deal with dead and dying birds. Brian was basically ready to throw in the towel. He was discouraged, exhausted, even devastated by what was happening. And it was a shock to his customers as well.

But contrary to what you might expect from your typical consumer, completely removed from the realities of risk on a farm, Bennett's customers did not react with complaints. They reacted with curiosity, then concern and finally understanding and compassion. As Brian tells it, "There was an outpouring of support and concern for what had happened on our farm!" The word got out. All kinds of people; long time



Karen Householder says, "CREP is the best thing that ever happened to this farm."

Photos by Karen Clifford

BENEFITS OF A BUFFER

Conservation buffers can be a key to maintaining a healthy, productive farm. They slow water run-off, trap sediment, and enhance infiltration within the buffer. They also trap fertilizers, pesticides, pathogens, and cut down on blowing soil in areas with strong winds. In addition, they protect livestock and wildlife from harsh weather and buildings from wind damage.

If properly installed and maintained, buffers have the capacity to:

- Remove up to 50% or more of nutrients and pesticides.
- Remove up to 60% or more of certain pathogens.
- Remove up to 75% or more of sediment.
- Improve aquatic and wildlife habitat.
- Be a visual showcase of the conservation ethics of the producer/landowner.

Buffer strips qualifying for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) are eligible for an annual rental payment, a signing incentive payment, and 50% cost share of any costs associated with the installation of the buffer. All paid by the USDA. In some areas an enhanced CRP may be available. A Conservation Reserve Enhanced Program (CREP) is designated to a particular area or watershed with a specific objective such

friends and neighbors, some not-so-close neighbors and some folks they barely knew appeared on their doorstep and offered to help. People called and came to the farm. They helped gather the dead and dying animals to be tended and in some cases disposed of.

"It would have been impossible for us without the support of the community," says Brian. "This is what is meant by Community Supported Agriculture." While a difficult one, the Bennett's experience on the farm became their customers' experience as well, a depth of connection that did not exist before. Bennett's came to realize they could weather this setback. Ironically, it has strengthened their base of community support in ways they never imagined.

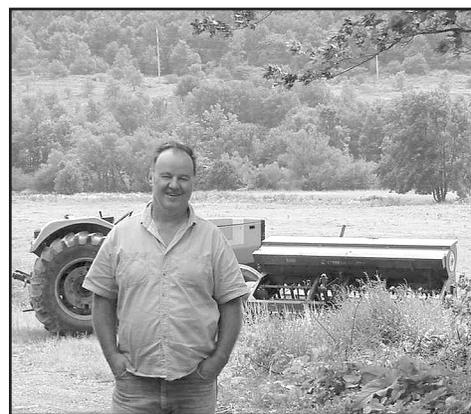
Collaboration and partnering can involve more than just customers. Brian has toyed with the idea of collaborating with his fellow farmers to find ways to offer each other backup and support on labor. In this way, Brian says, "folks could get time away from their own farm" to participate in training or tours, "to find ways to gain perspective" so that life on the farm does not get too narrow. Not unlike the variety of farms in New York; each

as water quality or endangered species habitats. With CREP all the benefits of CRP apply plus an enhanced rental rate and additional cost share for implementation costs provided by public organizations or groups with an interest in the objective.

A WATERSHED EXPERIENCE

In the New York City Watershed, water quality is the focus of the CREP. In 1999 New York City agreed to match the USDA's 50% cost share and pay the farmers cost of implementing buffers on farms in the NYC watershed, making it a no cost program for the landowner/producer. The landscape of the NYC watershed is very mountainous with many, many streams and tributaries joining together, becoming the headwaters the Delaware River and providing the drinking water for NYC. Small to medium dairy and specialty farms scatter the valleys and hillsides of this picturesque land. Pasturing these lands along the streams has been the most common use for generations.

When the CREP came along, many NYC Watershed landowners were skeptical about fencing their cattle out of the streams and planting trees in areas were they had spent their lives clearing the land. As more



Gerry Dewitt receives a rental payment from the CREP program in place of pasturing animals on marginal land along the river.

with it's own combination of soil, water, and drainage qualities, marketing concepts are as diverse and creative as the farmers and customers that get involved in thinking them up!

Molly Ames serves as Farm Business Management Educator with Cornell Cooperative Extension in Jefferson County, NY. She's been involved in North Country agriculture for over 20 years but considered herself a rural philosopher and story teller well before that. She grew up working and studying in Connecticut's ever-changing farm country.



Another satisfied customer at the Farmers Market established by Miracles By The Acre.

and more landowners began establishing buffers, others could see the benefits being provided by the buffers, and the excitement grew. The CREP has now become a very popular program with the farmers in the watershed and as of August 2003, one hundred and twenty one (121) landowners/producers have enrolled 1278 acres, or 354.8 miles of buffers.

Karen and Jim Householder owners of Night Pasture Horse Farm in Grand Gorge, NY are thrilled with the program. Karen says, "CREP is the best thing that ever happened to this farm. Keeping the animals from trampling the stream banks is one of the most visible benefits and it has been wonderful for the wildlife. The horses know exactly where the crossings are and they no longer linger around the water. People are always asking if they can stop to just look, because it is so beautiful."

Gerry DeWitt, owner of DeWitt Farms in Delhi, NY took advantage of the program to accomplish some farm restructuring. Gerry explains that, "With CREP I receive a rental payment in place of pasturing animals on very marginal land along the river. I now concentrate on growing crops on the good land that is farther away from the river. My family will not let me sell one inch of the farm so this has allowed us to keep farming, protect the sensitive areas, and help our children get their own business off the ground."

For more information about buffers or Conservation Reserve Programs, contact your local County Soil and Water Conservation District, USDA Farm Service Agency or USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Karen Clifford is the Riparian Buffer Coordinator with Delaware County Soil and Water Conservation District.

Volunteer Fire Truck

A fire started on some grasslands near a farm. The county fire department was called to put out the fire. The fire was more than the county fire department could handle. Someone suggested that a nearby volunteer bunch be called. Despite some doubt that the volunteer outfit would be of any assistance, the call was made. The volunteers arrived in a dilapidated old fire truck. They rumbled straight towards the fire, drove right into the middle of the flames and stopped!

The firemen jumped off the truck and frantically started spraying water in all directions. Soon they had snuffed out the center of the fire, breaking the blaze into two easily-controlled parts. Watching all this, the farmer was so impressed with the volunteer fire department's work and was so grateful that his farm had been spared, that right there on the spot he presented the volunteers with a check for \$1,000. A local news reporter asked the volunteer fire captain what the department planned to do with the funds.

"That ought to be obvious," he responded, wiping ashes off his coat. "The first thing we're gonna do is get the brakes fixed on our fire truck!"

NEW FARMERS

First Time Tractor Buying

By Bill Henning

The spring 1937 issue of *Canadian Tractor Farming* mentioned different tractor sizes with indications of the size farm for which they would be most appropriate. For example, a 10-20 tractor was recommended for a farm up to 200 acres. The 10-20 designation implied that the tractor produced 10 horsepower (HP) at the drawbar and 20 HP on the belt pulley. Today's tractors don't even have belt pulleys and many of our lawnmowers are putting out that much horsepower.

Looking at today's farm literature would lead a typical first time buyer to believe that if a tractor isn't putting out 80 HP, or more, it isn't fit to pull a plow. Most tractors of less than 80 HP are promoted for doing things like loader work or mowing grass.

For the person without tractor experience, what should they be buying?

THEY JUST DON'T MAKE 'M LIKE THEY USED TO

As times change so do tractors. It has a lot to do with mechanization, time availability, and the profit margin in farming. While tractors have changed to keep up with the times, it is also the changes in tractors that have changed the times. A 30 HP tractor in the 1950s handled many 100-acre dairy farms. That 100 acre farm supported 20 to 40 cows. Hay was probably cut once a year, 10 to 20 acres of corn was grown, and a like amount of small grain was grown to round out the rotation and provide straw. The profit margin was greater back then and people didn't have near as many things they felt were necessities. As you can imagine, it was life at a slower pace.

Today's 30 HP tractor will typically have three times as many gears, a choice of transmissions, power take off, three point hitch, differential lock, and probably four wheel drive. The horsepower rating is about the only thing in common. Probably the most important point - it won't be built anywhere near as heavy. Today's 30 HP tractor is known as a "compact tractor", something that wasn't even thought of fifty years ago.

Compact tractors are a phenomenon that has been developed primarily for the suburbanite. They have many of the bells and whistles of their big brothers but they are, as their name implies - compact. They are smaller, maneuver in smaller areas, and weigh less. This is important primarily from a safety standpoint. A tractor that is too light for the job can soon become like a skateboard when you're heading down hill with a heavy load behind.

Part of the weight reduction in compact tractors comes out of the drive train. While they may produce as much horsepower as their predecessors, it is doubtful that the power transfer system can withstand the prolonged rigors of farm work. The price tag on many of these tractors will also not stand the rigors of farm work.

YOU DON'T ALWAYS HAVE TO PAY MORE TO GET MORE

Whether you're looking to buy new or used, stepping up a notch beyond the compact size will often get you significantly more tractor for about the same amount of money. These tractors will run in the 40 to 70 HP range. They are often called utility tractors. These tractors are not promoted as primary tillage tractors. They are often considered chore tractors by the manufacturers. Don't let this dissuade you. These



These two utility tractors are a step up in size from "compact".

tractors, when set up correctly, can meet the needs of a primary tractor on many small farms.

KNOW WHAT YOU NEED TO DO

Selecting a tractor starts with defining your needs. How many acres are you going to be working? Are you going to be plowing and fitting ground or just harvesting hay crops? How much time are you going to have available to do field work? Do you have the time, inclination, and/or the mechanical ability to do many of your own repairs? What is your soil type? What is your topography? If you envision your farm growing, do you have a vision of how that is going to happen?

It pays to do a lot of visiting with other farmers and equipment dealers. It also pays to just do a lot of thinking ahead of time. You need to get a feel for what a tractor is capable of relative to what your situation is. That takes a lot of visiting and a lot of sorting through the facts. The best that can be done here is give you some basic information about tractors.

WHAT ABOUT HORSEPOWER?

There are basically two horsepower ratings to consider: gross engine horsepower and power take off (PTO) horsepower. In recent years gross engine horsepower has been reported primarily for the compact tractor class. This is probably done to give the illusion that the tractor is more powerful than it really is. Your main interest should be PTO horsepower. This is how all large tractor horsepower is reported and it tells you what size implement you can run off your PTO.

PTO speed for most tractors in the 40 to 70 HP range will be 540 revolutions per minute (RPM). The tractor's engine will have to run at a certain speed to produce that 540 RPMs. Most farm equipment is designed to operate at 540 RPMs on the PTO. Let us suppose that you are looking at a tractor rated at 60 HP on the PTO. It develops that 60 HP when the engine is operating at 2400 RPMs. However, to get the PTO to operate at 540 RPMs the engine will be running at 2200 RPMs. In this scenario, a common one, you will not be developing 60 HP when you are operating the PTO at 540 RPMs. To achieve the rated horsepower on the PTO the tractor should produce 540 PTO RPMs at the engine speed where it also produces its rated horsepower. Then you are getting what you paid for.

FOUR WHEEL DRIVE (MECHANICAL FRONT WHEEL ASSIST)

Four wheel drive (FWD) costs more money. In many cases it is money well spent. In tillage situations a tractor often runs out of

traction before it runs out of power. Draw bar horsepower (pulling power) is typically increased 25% when FWD is engaged. FWD helps maintain traction without a lot of extra weight. A FWD tractor should usually weigh about 100 to 110 pounds per horsepower where a two wheel drive tractor should weigh about 125 pounds per horsepower. Under heavy tillage you might want to add some ballast to control wheel slip, but only if necessary. Increased weight increases soil compaction and takes significantly more power, and fuel, just to move it around.

Anyone who has operated a loader tractor with FWD will not want to go back to loader work with a two wheel drive tractor. On hilly ground FWD will give you better steering response due to superior traction. When going down hills it also increases your braking ability as long as the clutch is left engaged. CAUTION: FWD can also take you into some situations that you would not normally be in with two wheel drive - dangerous situations. You still have to use your head.

TRANSMISSIONS

With few exceptions there are three transmissions available. The standard transmission, often called a collar shift, requires that the tractor be standing still when gears are shifted. This is the least expensive and most dependable. A synchromesh transmission allows you to shift gears on the go if you're moving a rolling load. That is, the load can roll due to its own momentum. If you want to shift a load under power (as in a tillage situation) a power shift transmission is required. A power shift transmission is the most complex, most expensive, and consumes the most fuel. Generally, these are found on the bigger tractors. A power shift transmission is really only practical if you are going to be doing a significant amount of tillage type work. Any of these transmissions can be used for just about any purpose. It is a matter of what degree of convenience you are looking for.

WHERE TO BUY

Buying a new tractor just takes a lot of shopping. You will probably buy it from a dealer. A new tractor warranty, and sound dealer service can be worth the extra cost in certain situations. Buying from a dealer isn't a bad idea when buying a used tractor either, especially if you're short on experience and the dealer will stand behind what he sells.

Buying direct from a private individual is straightforward, but not simple. You need to know well what the tractor is worth and be confident in your own knowledge of its actual condition.

Perhaps the highest risk situation is the consignment auction. In most cases the buyer has no knowledge of where the tractor came from. The only indication of how this tractor has been cared for is what is apparent from visual inspection, sounds, smells, and whatever limited observation you can make of its functions. If you have confidence in your mechanical abilities, or are just plain lucky, there are some fantastic deals.

The auction environment that probably offers the greatest opportunity for a value bargain is where the farm owner is retiring or going out of business for health reasons. Observing the overall condition of the farmstead and other items in the sale will lend evidence to how well things were cared for.

At auctions you also have your fellow bidders to help establish the fair market value, assuming they know what they are doing. You still have to have an idea in your mind as to what you can realistically afford to pay. Keep a cool head and leave your ego at home. On more than one occasion bidders have bought used equipment for more than what new would have cost, but they won the bidding contest.

SOME THINGS CHANGE AND SOME THINGS STAY THE SAME

In that spring 1937 issue of *Canadian Tractor Farming* there was also an article entitled "Farm Equipment in the Economics of Agriculture". It was written to persuade farmers that it was more profitable to farm with tractors than with horses. Interestingly, we still have people farming profitably today - with horses, if you're so inclined.

WANT TO LEARN MORE?

There is a publication available called *Used Farm Equipment*, which will help you assess quality, safety, and economics. It can be obtained through your local Cooperative Extension office.

Bill Henning operates a grass-based beef farm in Livingston County. He is also the Small Farms Specialist with PRO-DAIRY/CCE-NWNY Dairy, Livestock, and Field Crops Team.

Farmer Jones was taking an evening walk when he passed Farmer Smith's place. Smith and his son were busy jacking up the barn and placing blocks underneath it.

"What ya doin' there Smith?" asks Jones.

"Raisin' the height of this barn so my darn mule will stop draggin' his ears when he passes in and out the door." replied Smith.

"I see." said Jones scratching his head. "Why don't you just dig a little ditch beneath the door so he can fit through the door?"

"A ditch in the floor?" asked Smith. "I'll give it some thought."

After Jones had left Smith turned to his son and said: "Darn crazy neighbors. I said he was draggin' his ears, not his feet."

HOME AND FAMILY

Crossroads

Successful small farm families are the foundation for successful small farm businesses. This column is dedicated to farm families working together, and will provide a forum for your questions about the intersection of the farm family and the business.

Q. My husband and his father work the farm together. My husband's mother is quick to criticize my parenting and house-keeping skills. My husband won't tell her to stop. It's hard raising two preschoolers while helping out in fields as much as I can. How can I make my mother-in-law stop criticizing?

A. This sounds like a complicated situation. First, let's make sure you have identified your problem correctly. How do you feel about your housekeeping and parenting skills? If you aren't satisfied with yourself, then your mother-in-law's comments may come across as more critical than they are meant to be. Rather than criticizing you, she may be recognizing how hard it is for

you. It is very hard to juggle a farm business and a young family at the same time and maintain the unrealistic expectations of an immaculate house and perfectly behaved children. Talking with other farm wives may help you to get a realistic view of your own expectations for yourself.

If you are satisfied with your housekeeping and parenting skills, then you need to consider your feelings about your husband and mother-in-law. Who are you more frustrated with? You may feel disappointed that your husband doesn't seem to stand up for you, doesn't help out enough around the house, or seems to place more importance on the business than on the family. Talking with him about this can help to clarify what's important to you and to him, and to figure out how everyone's needs can be better met..

If you're more frustrated with your mother-in-law, talk with her about how her criticism hurts. Let her know that her support is important to you and your family. She probably wants the best for everyone, and finds it difficult to watch others learning how to

balance work and family. You may be able to connect with her on the difficulties of being a daughter-in-law, starting a new family, and maintaining the business. As a last resort, take care of yourself and leave the situation when she becomes too critical. If it is in your house, tell her "Your criticism isn't helpful for me...can we please change the subject." She should follow your lead, but if she doesn't you can excuse yourself and take the kids for a walk. Let her know you'd be glad to chat with her when she can be more supportive.

Q: I'm tired of hearing my wife constantly complain about her mom. It's always the same issue involving other family members. The situation irritates me, and I don't think it will ever change. It's affecting my marriage.

A. You wife is venting her frustrations about the situation with you, which probably makes her feel somewhat better but makes you feel worse. You may not be able to change the situation between your wife and her family, but you can change the situation between your wife and yourself. Let her

know that you understand her frustration, but that simply venting about it with you it doesn't change it. Tell her that when she decides what to do about it you will support her, but until then you would rather talk about other things. When she is unable to vent her frustrations with you, she will need to find another outlet for that energy, and hopefully she'll direct it towards a solution instead.

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTION?

We have three children, ages 9, 11 and 14. The kids are expected to help out around the farm, but our son (the oldest) doesn't like the farm and is difficult to deal with, being sulky and crabby. Is this just a normal part of having a teenager, and how can I lighten the mood around here?

Send your response, or a question of your own, to SFQ Crossroads, c/o Claire Hebbard, NY FarmNet, 415 Warren Hall, Ithaca, NY 14853, or email cer17@cornell.edu.

RESOURCE SPOTLIGHT

NY Forest Owners Association

Small farm operators may be overlooking thousands of dollars available over a long term through good woodlot management. Beyond income, your farm woodlot represents an important source of recreation, nature study, beauty, and exploration. Many New York forest owners have learned how to balance timber income, woodland recreation, ecological health, and wildlife through their involvement in the New York Forest Owners Association (NYFOA).

Forest Owner and local newsletters describe the experiences forest owners are having with timber sales, new equipment, and reforestation. Tips on timber taxes, updates on forest-related legislation, and practical how-tos round out the information available from NYFOA.

In a special program starting in 2003, NYFOA is connecting with small farm operators to provide direct assistance. Recognizing that forests on farms are often an overlooked asset, NYFOA is ready to direct you to no-cost advice from Master Forest Owners, DEC Foresters, and from fellow NYFOA members. These individuals are leaders in the ongoing effort to improve private forest management. They will walk your woods with you and help you get a better sense of what you have and how it can be managed sustainably.

Ideas and tips for improving your woodlot begin with a call to the New York Forest Owners Association at 1-800-836-3566. Membership fees are very reasonable for

individuals, families, and students. More importantly, you will have opportunities to visit with other forest owners, who are potential suppliers or customers for your small farm business.

Contributed by Jim Ochterski, NYFOA - Southern Finger Lakes Chapter

NYFOA is organized into eleven regional chapters, so neighboring forest owners can meet nearby to share management information, attend workshops, and tour each others' woodlots. Special NYFOA woods walks provide the inside story on effective timber management and woodlot improvement in your community. NYFOA's statewide magazine *The NY*



READERS WRITE

Sunday Morning

By Troy Bishopp

My favorite time of the week is Sunday morn. The crows usher in the sunrise like a mighty horn. With the rest of the family still snuggled in the covers, Myself and the kitten tiptoe outside to see what we can discover.

I'm greeted by our goats, Clover and Cricket, with a friendly blat As I scoop some molasses laden grains from the feed sack. The sweet smell rises to their nostrils as they eagerly await the treat. I fill the feeder with hay as they gobble down the grain without a peep.

The ruckus arouses the sleeping earthmovers, Excited at the thought of last night's leftovers. With a happy grunt and oink they devour some sour milk. Good forage and nice cool mud make them smooth as silk.

Let a pig be a pig they say. For raising them outdoors has always been the best way. The distant squawk of a chicken signals who's next on my rounds, So it's out to the pasture to see what the amazin grazin poultry have found.

A patchwork of reds and blacks dots the field of green. Eating clovers, grass, bugs and worms gives the feathers a brilliant sheen. The girls surround me as if I were going to make a great speech. They cackle loudly with applause as I toss them their corn and their wheat.

When I check the nestboxes their payment is there. For eggs can't get any better when made with sunshine and fresh air. Over the fenceline the mighty beef herd gathers like a choir. They, too, sing the praises of fresh clover as I take down the wire.

Moving like herds from a distant past, It doesn't take long for them to chomp the succulent grass. I stop at an apple tree that's sharing its flowers with the bees While a flock of turkeys kneads some pies into the soil with the greatest of ease.

As I make my way down to the house, My friend the hawk hovers overhead, looking for a breakfast mouse. A sweet sounding bell beckons me from my work To a breakfast filled with eggs, bacon and pancakes drizzled with syrup.

The anticipation of fresh coffee quickens my pace, As does the thought of seeing my wife's cover girl face. The trip to the kitchen this morn was made extra sweet By a daughter's hug and a kiss on my rosy cheek.

What a great place we've created with our work and desire. It's the sort of thing that never makes me tire. I'm proud to be a farmer who cares for the soil, animals and his fellow man. For everything we do is entrusted into God's hand.

Troy Bishopp farms with his family in Deansboro, NY.

WORD PUZZLE ANSWER

