New Beginning Farmer Website Unveiled!
After a year of development, the Northeast Beginning Farmer Project is pleased to unveil a colorful new website with expanded tools and a wealth of new resources. Point your browser to http://nebeginningfarmers.org to find the enhanced site, which will extend high quality support to aspiring, new and diversifying farmers across the entire Northeast.

Do you wonder how other farmers breed pigs, process chicken and transplant seedlings? The new site features a growing selection of video footage capturing experienced farmers and their successful production techniques in action. You’ll also find our popular library of video interviews with farmers sharing advice on profitability, choosing an enterprise, evaluating land, and much more.

Looking for upcoming classes, events and training opportunities? You can browse our events calendar, subscribe to our monthly e-news, follow our blog, or visit us on Facebook and Twitter, all from the homepage of the new site: http://nebeginningfarmers.org.

Get Connected!
Find your local Cooperative Extension office

CT: UConn Cooperative Extension
1-860-486-9228

ME: UME Cooperative Extension
1-800-287-0274 (in Maine)

MA: UMass Cooperative Extension
(413) 545-4800

NH: UNH Cooperative Extension
603-862-1520

NY: Cornell Cooperative Extension
607-255-2237

PA: Penn State Cooperative Extension
814-865-4028

RI: URI Cooperative Extension
(401) 874-2900

VT: UVM Cooperative Extension
1-866-622-2990 (toll-free in VT)

How can I get Small Farm Quarterly?
Country Folks subscribers automatically receive SFQ four times a year at no extra cost. Country Folks is delivered weekly for $4.50 per year.

SFQ-only subscribers receive just the 4 issues of Country Folks that contain the SFQ insert for only $5 a year.

Cooperative Extension Associations and other organizations can offer their members a subscription to SFQ as a member benefit!

Your organization collects the names, forwards them to Country Folks Subscriptions, and pays Country Folks just $2.50 for each subscriber.

Country Folks mails out the copies.

Bulk orders: You can order multiple copies of any issue for just 10¢ a copy!

Minimum order is 50. Orders must be placed at least 4 weeks before the publication date - Summer 2011 copies need to be ordered by June 3rd.

To find out more, contact:

Tracy Crousse
Country Folks Subscriptions
P.O. Box 121, Patience Bridge, NY 13284
1-888-596-5329
email: subscriptions@leepub.com

Enter the ‘New Farmer Hub’ to start drafting your business plan with the help of tutorials and interactive worksheets. Find answers to common questions, browse the Quick Fix Farming toolkit, and check out the latest beginning farmer online courses which can help you turn your dreams into action right from your home computer.

Need some face-to-face guidance in your neck of the woods? Visit the ‘Who Can Help Me?’ to locate organizations that serve new farmers near you.

The Northeast Beginning Farmer Project is part of the Cornell Small Farms Program and is funded by a Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Development Grant from the National Institute of Food and Agriculture. With the help of our team of partners, we are:

To learn more about the Northeast Beginning Farmer Project, visit http://nebeginningfarmers.org.

How can I get Small Farm Quarterly?
Country Folks subscribers automatically receive SFQ four times a year at no extra cost. Country Folks is delivered weekly for $4.50 per year.

SFQ-only subscribers receive just the 4 issues of Country Folks that contain the SFQ insert for only $5 a year.

Cooperative Extension Associations and other organizations can offer their members a subscription to SFQ as a member benefit!

Your organization collects the names, forwards them to Country Folks Subscriptions, and pays Country Folks just $2.50 for each subscriber.

Country Folks mails out the copies.

Bulk orders: You can order multiple copies of any issue for just 10¢ a copy!

Minimum order is 50. Orders must be placed at least 4 weeks before the publication date - Summer 2011 copies need to be ordered by June 3rd.

To find out more, contact:

Tracy Crousse
Country Folks Subscriptions
P.O. Box 121, Patience Bridge, NY 13284
1-888-596-5329
email: subscriptions@leepub.com

Enter the ‘New Farmer Hub’ to start drafting your business plan with the help of tutorials and interactive worksheets. Find answers to common questions, browse the Quick Fix Farming toolkit, and check out the latest beginning farmer online courses which can help you turn your dreams into action right from your home computer.

Need some face-to-face guidance in your neck of the woods? Visit the ‘Who Can Help Me?’ to locate organizations that serve new farmers near you.

The Northeast Beginning Farmer Project is part of the Cornell Small Farms Program and is funded by a Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Development Grant from the National Institute of Food and Agriculture. With the help of our team of partners, we are:

To learn more about the Northeast Beginning Farmer Project, visit http://nebeginningfarmers.org.
COMMUNITY AND WORLD

People, Not Tractors: Agricultural Volunteerism Around the Globe

By Rachel Firak

When you’ve got an unconventional idea about farming, rural people (born and raised) are guaranteed to put it through the wringer. These are the stewards judges you’ll ever meet, so before you start running your mouth in front of them, you’d best be prepared. It was only after six months of experience that I brought up Ithaca Crop Mob—the farm work-party group I co-organize—to a certain rural acquaintance, a young mechanic known for his love of trucks and fishing, I launched into it in my sleep: we were recruited to a different farm each month, educating ourselves, building community, and helping small farmers. Interested? “Huh,” he said. “What happened to tractors?”

I tried to appear unfazed, but the question left me a little thrown. What had happened to tractors? Perhaps a better question is, what happened when tractors—those powerful, petroleum-fueled substitutes for human labor, and consequently, community—came along? Surely the iconic image of a lone farmer driving his tractor into the fields at dawn had emerged out of a much more complex and collaborative history. I knew crop mobs weren’t the first of their kind; I had heard tales of 19th century barn raisings, mythical demonstrations of fellowship and camaraderie, where an entire community would come together to aid one of their own. I wanted to know: How widespread are such customs around the globe? And why, in some cases, have they disappeared?

As it turns out, many, if not most, agrarian societies have a tradition of voluntary farm labor. In some cultures, it’s a daily reality. In many places, working alone is not an option. On the 19th century American frontier, people lived on isolated farms very far from villages; thus, hiring wage workers to raise a barn was difficult, if not impossible. Tough climate conditions-long winters, short summers—further pressured farming communities to work together. Similarly, for farmers along the Volta river in western Africa, severe thunderstorms punctuate the June-September wet season period. Many hands and quick work are required to make the most of the short breaks in between.

This picture of collaborative farming began to change as the industrializing and specializing forces of modernization took hold. After WWII, Irish meitheal began to disappear in the 1970s as farms turned to specialized dairying, destroying old egalitarian social networks. Now around the world, wage payment—a sign and symbol of hierarchy—replaced mutual relationships. Private insurance supplanted community interdependence. Tractors made shared human labor obsolete.

Now we find ourselves facing the monsters of modernization. Our dollar, and the entire wage-based economy, teeters on the brink of collapse. Climate change and rampant pollution betray the tough agro-ecological conditions ahead. Peak oil threatens to take away the machinery that has made this way of life possible. At the same time, there is hope. Small farms are on the rise, and interest in ecological agriculture is growing. Now may be the perfect time to resurrect these traditions of voluntary labor-to use community renewable energy to farm once more.

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

Agriculture volunteer programs are cropping up all across the world. WWOOF (Worldwide Opportunities on Organic Farms) and GrowFood send volunteers across the country and abroad to learn and work on farms in exchange for room and board; visit www.wwoof.org and www.growfood.org to get involved. The Peace Corps sponsors an Agriculture Volunteer program that promotes environmental conservation practices in farming overseas; peacecorps.org has more information. For a shorter term commitment close to home, join a crop mob! Go to cropmob.org and click “Get involved” for a map of crop mob groups around the country. Farms often welcome help from interested community members. Talk to your favorite farmer about getting your hands dirty as a volunteer.

As members of an individualistic, competitive society, this may seem quite foreign to us. We have been raised with the tropes of the selfish gene and the tragedy of the commons; we may wonder why people cooperate. The reason? They have to—but they also enjoy it. By working together and relying on each other, we can revive agriculture, strengthen our communities, and have fun doing it. And perhaps someday, after a long day of work with our friends and neighbors, we’ll wonder as an afterthought: What happened to tractors?

Rachel Firak is a co-organizer of the Ithaca Crop Mob and also serves as Program Assistant for the Groundswell Center for Local Food & Farming in Ithaca, NY. She can be reached at rfrak@gmail.com.

Photo by Rachel Firak

Sometimes volunteers and tractors can coexist peacefully, as shown in this picture, taken last November during the carrot harvest crop mob at Stick and Stone Farm in Ithaca, NY.

N.Y. FARM INSURANCE STABILITY

No matter what size or style of farm, give us a call to schedule an appointment with one of our experienced, responsive agents. Since 1984, farm insurance has been our specialty.

800-258-2494
Honeoye Falls, NY
www.nyfarminsurance.com

FARM AND COUNTRY INSURANCE

Over 500 NYS farms.

AGROBUSINESS SPECIALISTS

Many carriers to compare.


FARM BUREAUS ADVERTISING AND PROMOTIONAL SERVICES SEND CUSTOMERS TO YOUR FARM STAND

More than 150 farm stands and wineries offer a modest discount to Farm Bureau® members in exchange for advertising support—a free service for Farm Bureau member-farmers. Check listing at www.nyfb.org/marketplace

Farmers wishing to enroll: e-mail MemberSupport@nyfb.org

LOCAL FARMS LOCAL FOOD
Wise Gas Leasing Practices for Landowners

By Brett Chedzoy

The outlook for widespread natural gas development in New York is still unclear as policy makers and other stakeholders continue to debate the risks and benefits. But what is certain is that much of upstate New York contains rich natural gas reserves beneath the ground that could be developed someday. Therefore, it is likely that energy companies will continue to seek leases with rural landowners for drilling and related activities such as pipelines, compressor stations, water storage and access roads.

At the same time, many landowners have come to realize that natural gas development affects more than just their individual properties. Experiences from Pennsylvania and other major gas development regions have shined light on both the positive and negative impacts that extend throughout communities. Nonetheless, many landowners will be attracted by leasing incentives and therefore must evaluate the choices in the context of their own situations. Covering all the issues that one needs to consider before leasing would be impossible, but the following are some key points:

- Join (or form) a local landowner coalition. If no group exists in your area, consider starting one with your neighbors. The reason is simple: strength in numbers. Few landowners own situations. Covering all the issues that one needs to consider before leasing would be impossible, but the following are some key points to protecting your interests and those of neighbors.

- Clearly define time frames, deadlines and agreements that are not regulated by others. Make sure that old leases have expired. Under the New York General Obligations Law (Chapter 24-A, Title 3, Article 15-304), the leaseholder is required to send a Letter of Surrender to the landowner within 30 days of the expiration date stated in the lease. Due to complex legal issues surrounding "force majeure" (Acts of God) clauses found in most leases, a landowner should not assume that their lease has expired until they receive this acknowledgement. Detailed steps for requesting a "surrender" can be found at www.legislate.org.

- Don't sign a lease that you are uncomfortable with. Even if you are contemplating signing a lease developed by your coalition (which would presumably be more considerate of your interests than a lease developed by a natural gas company), have it reviewed by your own attorney to see if it sufficiently addresses your unique situation. Considerations like mortgages, conservation easements, ownership goals, and future plans for the property may require customized lease terms. Proposed modifications to the coalition's lease - such as limiting surface rights - may result in a counter-offer or even a withdrawal of the bid. In that case, negotiation in good faith combined with patience will usually resolve initial differences between you and the bidder. Don't be discouraged if the initial response to a request is "no", and decide after a period of time what you are willing to compromise on.

- Retain your own consultant to supervise work done on your property. A lease is only as good as its execution. Consequently, leases should contain language that authorizes oversight and enforcement by the landowner's qualified agent (such as a forester or other qualified professional). This is a common practice in timber sales where consulting foresters supervise logging activities and act as a liaison between the buyer, buyer and buyer's contractors (loggers) to mutually resolve issues and encourage a quality job.

- Two additional standard practices with professionally supervised timber harvests are to require the operator to post a performance bond and evidence of insurance prior to commencement of work. These are prudent and recommendable terms that can also be included in gas leases and easements.

- In some cases, public agencies like NYS Department of Ag and Markets, NYS DEC, and county Soil and Water Conservation Districts may inspect and oversee specific construction activities on your property. But hiring your own expert with a small portion of your leasing revenues will help fill in the gaps and ensure compliance with contractual agreements that are not regulated by others.

- Clearly define time frames, deadlines and compensations by written agreements. Before granting permission for any activity on your property, negotiate how long the company can take to complete the various phases, as well as compensations for non-compliance. This will create incentives for the operator to complete the project in a timely fashion, but also compensate the landowner when things don't go as planned. Another important, but frequently overlooked consideration is long-term compensation for infrastructure and deed restrictions (easements) that affect property value and use. In the case of gas wells, landowners are compensated through royalties over the productive life of the well. But in the case of non-royalty bearing projects like utility rights-of-ways, landowners should either negotiate periodic "rental" payments for the use of their property, or include an expiration date for the agreement. All too often, landowners have felt compelled to grant permanent easements for a minimal one-time payment that does not adequately compensate them for the long-term impacts to their property value and conflicts with desired use.

Make sure that old leases have expired. Under the New York General Obligations Law (Chapter 24-A, Title 3, Article 15-304), the leaseholder is required to send a Letter of Surrender to the landowner within 30 days of the expiration date stated in the lease. Due to complex legal issues surrounding "force majeure" (Acts of God) clauses found in most leases, a landowner should not assume that their lease has expired until they receive this acknowledgement. Detailed steps for requesting a "surrender" can be found at www.legislate.org.

For additional information related to gas leasing, visit: http://naturalgas.cce.cornell.edu

Brett Chedzoy is a Sr. Resource Educator in Natural Resources at Cornell Cooperative Extension of Schuyler County. He may be reached at bjc226@cornell.edu.

Pipeline construction can also have a significant impact on farms, both in the short and long-term. These impacts can be minimized with sound leasing practices.

Drilling operations are one of the more notable activities during the "Development Phase". Photos by Brett Chedzoy.
Steps to a Solidarity Economy: Farmer-Farmer and Farmer-Consumer Cooperatives in Community Supported Agriculture

By Elizabeth Henderson

While a few energetic and competent farmers manage to run CSAs by themselves or with only their families and employees, they are missing the opportunities for broader participation and cooperation that CSAs can provide. Many farmers have begun to appreciate the advantages and at the same time contribute to deep social transformation. To build a future for ourselves and our communities that is grounded in ecological realities, we need to learn from others who are trying to organize.”

The Mondragon cooperatives, which provide social services and also help farmers and farm workers, have had success in creating and maintaining the core of a cooperative. With the help of the Mondragon cooperatives, Rolling Prairie adopted the legal structure of a farmer-owned multi-farm CSA in Kansas since 1994. The seven farms in Rolling Prairie adopted the legal structure of a farmer-owned cooperative. They got help from the USDA Agricultural Cooperative Service which provides support for groups of farmers who want to form coops, including templates for by-laws and other legal documents. Rolling Prairie CSA has four drop off points serving over 300 households. The coop pays farmers to perform tasks such as bookkeeping, quality control and overseeing distribution sites. In some years, they offer farm visits and work days, but member labor is not central to this CSA.

Local Harvest CSA in Concord, New Hampshire, is modeled after Rolling Prairie. The eight New Hampshire farms spent a year of monthly meetings in 2002 carefully negotiating all the ins and outs of their cooperation. Jill Perry and Scott Franzblau have documented this experience in a detailed guide entitled Local Harvest: A Multi-farm CSA Handbook that is available as a free download from Northeast SARE (www.nesare.org). Local Harvest cooperates organization, quality control, crop allocation, and internal and external pricing.

Not all multi-farm CSAs are farmer-owned coops - many associations are less formal. For the Full Plate Collective CSA near Ithaca, NY, two produce farms teamed up to provide the vegetable shares and associated with a livestock farm for meat shares (with a bakery for bread), and a youth training program. The Good Food Collective CSA, on the opposite end of the scale from the farmer-consumer coops, is a project of Headwater Foods in Rochester, filling vegetable and fruit shares from small farms that sell at the South Wedge Farmers Market, supplemented by purchases from other area farms, a bakery and a coffee roaster. They deliver shares to these three work places, the farmers market and a yoga school.

CSA organizers, both farmers and non-farmers, can tap into the rich tradition of cooperatives for resources and inspiration. The roots go back to the founding of the Rochdale Cooperative in England in 1844. Rochdale intended to offer members groceries, housing, clothing, manufacturing, jobs and "a self-supporting home colony of united interests." Coops in the Rochdale tradition adhere to seven cooperative principles:

1. Open and voluntary membership.
2. Democratic control; one member, one vote.
3. Return of surplus to members.
4. Limited rate of return on investment.
5. Continuous education to members and public.
6. Cooperation among co-ops.
7. Concern for community.

To these seven principles of cooperation, the Mondragon cooperatives in the Basque region of Spain, added the crucial concept of equilibrio: "The basic idea is that life in a cooperative should not be carried on as if it were a zero-sum game in which some win and some lose. There must be a balancing of interests and needs; we hear that technological imperatives must be balanced with social objectives and that the financial needs of the firm must be balanced with the economic needs of the members."

Another valuable tool for CSAs from the coop world is the Co-op Scorecard, developed by the staff of the Seward Co-op in Minneapolis (a city that is remarkable for supporting 13 food co-ops in a city that has more than one store)! The Scorecard lists a series of values that sum up the basic goals of the store: "Seward Co-op will sustain a healthy community that has equitable economic relationships; positive environmental impacts; and inclusive, socially responsible practices."

Measuring our success by how well we live up to these commitments:

We cultivate a diverse, respectful and caring workplace.
We operate with intentional respect for the environment.
We commit to financial goals that allow us to maximize our profits in the support of our mission, our values and our community.
We improve the quality of life in the communities we serve.*

Each year, board members, staff and management, measure progress as compared with the base year, 2007, as a way of guiding the on-going development of the store. The basic measurement for the first value is an economic goal: "Seward Cooperative is a self-sustaining home colony of united interests."  Coops in some loss. There must be a balancing of interests and needs; we hear that technological imperatives must be matched with social objectives and that the financial needs of the firm must be matched with the economic needs of the members."

Another valuable tool for CSAs from the coop world is the Co-op Scorecard, developed by the staff of the Seward Co-op in Minneapolis (a city that is remarkable for supporting 13 food co-ops in a city that has more than one store)! The Scorecard lists a series of values that sum up the basic goals of the store: "Seward Co-op will sustain a healthy community that has equitable economic relationships; positive environmental impacts; and inclusive, socially responsible practices."

Measuring our success by how well we live up to these commitments:

We cultivate a diverse, respectful and caring workplace.
We operate with intentional respect for the environment.
We commit to financial goals that allow us to maximize our profits in the support of our mission, our values and our community.
We improve the quality of life in the communities we serve.*

Each year, board members, staff and management, measure progress as compared with the base year, 2007, as a way of guiding the on-going development of the store. The basic measurement for the first value is an economic goal: "Seward Cooperative is a self-sustaining home colony of united interests."  Coops in

---

A meeting of the core group at Fair Share Farm in Kearney, Missouri. Photos by Elizabeth Henderson

GVOCSA members help wash vegetables for shares at Peacework Farm. Members who purchase full shares work three 4-hour shifts at the farm and two 1/2 hour shifts helping with distribution, or they serve on the core group.

---

* Center for Economic Democracy in Olympia, WA has a collection of basic coop documents.

---

**Resource Spotlight**

- David Welty, Book of Procedures for Meetings, Boards, Committees and Officers.
- New Society Publishers www.newsociety.com - books on group process and decision making, such as Resource Manual for a Living Revolution, and Democracy in Small Groups.
- The New Economics Institute (formerly the E.F. Schumacher Society) in Great Barrington, MA has an entire library devoted to decentralism.
- Center for Economic Democracy in Olympia, WA has a collection of basic coop documents.
- The National Cooperative Business Association (1401 New York Ave., NW, #510, Washington, DC 20006) provides advice and legal support for cooperatives.
- The USDA Agricultural Cooperative Service (USDA-ACS, P.O. Box 96576, Washington, D.C. 20090) provides support services to beginning and existing agricultural cooperatives and publishes a monthly magazine, Farmer Cooperatives, which is free to qualifying organizations.
Summer Vacations to the Farm

By Ron Mac Lean

During the late 1940’s and early 1950’s my family, like many others, spent vacation time visiting relatives in the summer. The nation had just endured a war and money was scarce so family visits were a good match.

My mother’s cousin, her husband and three daughters were part of a three-family owned dairy farm in Fremont, New Hampshire. Mistwold Farm, according to my cousin means “misty woods” because fog always clung to the fields in the early mornings. This large dairy farm had been a family institution for many years and included a milk processing & bottling plant to support a milk delivery business.

Going to the farm absolutely thrilled me, even though it was a long, always hot car trip especially for a youngster between 8 and 12 years old. A large farm was such a contrast to living in a small Upstate New York State village.

This Mistwold Farm complex consisted of a circular driveway with a house on one side and a huge white clapboard-sided, black-trimmed barn at the apex of the curve. Facing the driveway was a large double hung barn door that allowed hay wagons access to the second floor hay mow. The cows were housed below. The milk plant stood to the left of the barn, with several various sized out-buildings scattered behind it. On one side of the pasture a classical New England fieldstone wall paraleled the road as it had for decades.

I can remember many games of hide-and-seek in the barn, hours spent on the swings in the yard and walks in the pastures. What I really liked was to help with the farm chores. Sometimes I could ride on the tractor when they were haying or help feed the cows and clean the stalls or walk to the pasture where the cows roamed and help my cousins herd them in for the night. I could watch the milking process, an automated system that moved along with great speed. On one occasion I witnessed the veterinarian give a cow a rectal exam with his whole arm. What an impression.

June 1957

On one occasion I witnessed the veterinarian give a cow a rectal exam with his whole arm. What an impression.

One of my fond memories was the day I rode along delivering milk to customers. We woke before dawn and after an oatmeal breakfast, went directly to the milk plant to load the truck for what would turn out to be an all day venture. The milk bottles were placed in wooden crates with metal dividers after the filling process. Later these crates were taken from the cooler and loaded on the back of a pickup truck, after which chunks of ice were strategically located on the tops of the filled milk crates. The final task was to stretch a heavy tarp across the top of the crates to keep the milk cool. We spent the entire day driving from customer to customer to deliver the bottles of freshly produced milk, from farm directly to home.

Every man who worked on the farm wore a blue and white striped hat like train engineers wore. Once washed, these hats were pliable and looked tailor-made for each person that wore it. I HAD to have one. My parents looked all over for one but apparently not in the right places. They found a navy and white baseball hat but it wouldn’t do. I wanted to look like all of the others who worked on the farm. Not too many years ago, I finally found one and bought it immediately in case I ever wanted to work on a farm on my vacation.

When our children were in their early teens we took our fold-down camper to Maine for a week long vacation. On the way home, I proposed going through New Hampshire to see if I could find the farm where I had so many fond memories. I did find it and found myself driving up and down the now paved road several times in order to view it from every angle. The two homes were still there but the barn complex had been destroyed by fire years earlier. Yes, the field stone wall still bordered the pasture.

Isn’t it interesting what a positive impression a week’s vacation on a farm made to a youngster whose family probably only had enough money to visit relatives. An appreciation for the hard work, passion and dedication of farmers to bring food to our dinner table lasts a lifetime. Sixty years later I find it heartening to hear that young folks and even families are being encouraged to volunteer to help others, including taking vacations to help on farms. I hope they make their own fond memories.

Ron Mac Lean grew up in a small village surrounded by farms in Central New York. He is now retired and lives in the Fingerlakes Region of the state.
Using Goats for Vegetation Management in the Northeast

By Brett Chedzoy

The climate of the Northeast is favorable for growing lush vegetation, but sometimes too many of the wrong plants grow in the wrong place. Ignoring the situation will often lead to greater costs and problems further down the road. Goats are an increasingly popular option for managing vegetation in other regions of the United States, but to date have not been widely used in the Northeast for this purpose. However, the strong demand for goat meat, the increased demand for organic control methods, and the cumulative experiences of managing goats in the northeast are just a few factors that suggest new opportunities for this application.

Goats are intelligent, docile animals with a knack for eating weeds, brush and just about anything with a green leaf. They can be used in places that are inoperable with equipment or difficult to herbicide, while at the same time generate income and other benefits. Nonetheless, achieving the desired results with goats requires skilled management and a well-designed system. Although there is no one right way to utilize goats on the landscape for targeted control of unwanted plants, following highlights some of the most important considerations for success.

Develop a Plan

Goats can be a viable alternative to other control methods, but good planning is essential for good results. The first step is to identify the objectives and determine if goats will be able to accomplish them. If so, are goats the most practical option? Who will care for the goats and how much of an investment is needed both to get started and operate over time? What is a reasonable level of vegetation control and how will you adapt the project if targets are not being met? Will the goats be used for temporary clearing, or for long-term maintenance and management? Where will you find the goats, and how will you keep them healthy and dispose of excess animals? Is the plan flexible enough to adapt over time as vegetation and other conditions change? These are just a few of the points to address in a written plan prior to implementation.

Know the Foe

Different plants respond in different ways to browsing and defoliation. Vegetation can be categorized into one of four groups: grass-like plants (monocots); broad-leaf herbaceous plants (“weeds”); woody shrub-like plants (“brush”); and, trees. Each group, and even species within a group, has a different tolerance and for damages further down the road, as well as a different ability to recover, persist and reproduce. Every plant also has a different level of attractiveness to goats, which tend to preferentially browse the “tastiest” plants first. Some plants may be very unpalatable, or even toxic to goats. Generally speaking, there is a decreased tolerance to browsing moving from grass-like plants to trees, and also decreased accessibility to the edible portions of the plant. In other words, goats can usually reach and damage more of the edible portions of herbaceous plants - but these same plants are usually more resilient to the browsing action of goats. Two other points to consider are, what will take the place of the vegetation that is being controlled, and how might excessive damage to desirable plants be mitigated?

Winning the Battle

Undesirable vegetation can be controlled with goats through a combination of impacts, which include: repeated defoliation which weakens or kills targeted plants; girdling; trampling; and, increased ground light levels (through defoliation of over-top ping vegetation) which encourages the establishment of more desirable and stable plant communities. In some cases, it may be practical to add additional livestock, such as cattle or pigs, to trample and root-up more difficult plants. Initial mechanical treatments may also be needed to make targeted plants more accessible. One example of this combination is mowing to reduce vegetation to a more manageable level, followed by goats to control re-growth and sprouting.

Workforce Management

A band of goats will literally work for food, but they need special forms of instruction and encouragement to perform their jobs well. One key to effective vegetation management with any livestock is the ability to reliably keep the animals in the desired location for the desired period of time. Vegetation management usually requires extensive and repeated impact to the targeted plants, which is contrary to goat behavior. Goats will normally lightly browse plants, gleaning the most palatable portions before moving on to other plants. But to significantly weaken or kill these plants, goats must be forced to defoliate and damage the plants more extensively. This requires secure fencing and an experienced eye to know how much the goats can tolerate. Water, shelter and supplements such as salt - or even the tethering of a lead animal or guard animal that the group is bonded to - are possible tactics for guiding and limiting the movement of goats. But some kind of fencing will probably be necessary as well to concentrate their activities. Although panels and woven wire may work in some situations, a well-electrified fence is probably the most effective - and cost-effective over time. Portable and temporary options like polywire and electro-net wire may work in some situations, a well-electrified fence is probably the most effective - and cost-effective over time.

Goats have a knack for eating weeds, brush and just about anything green. Photos by Brett Chedzoy

Goats will normally lightly browse plants, gleaning the most palatable portions before moving on to other plants.

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 Violet Stone, Cornell Small Farms Program, 15A Plant Science Building, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853 vws7@cornell.edu
Welcome to the Northeast SARE Spotlight!

SARE (Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education) offers grants to farmers, educators, universities, and communities that are working to make agriculture more sustainable - economically, environmentally, and socially. Learn about whether a SARE grant would be a good fit for you.

How to Make Kids Love Their Spinach

Finger Lakes Farm-to-Cafeteria, Canandaigua, NY

By Annie Bass

The Farmers Market Line

In 2002, Todd Fowler noticed that the kids in his cafeteria deli line were asking for salads. First they wanted vegetables instead of meat, and then they wanted to drop the bread altogether. Todd decided that the time had come to bring local fruits and vegetables to Bloomfield Central, an idea he’d been honing for a while. That year, the lunchroom Farmers Market Line was born.

Bloomfield, a school district of 1100, had Farm to School programs, which featured vegetables of the month for one meal each. An extra strawberry cream day enjoyed great success of the month for one meal each. An annual berry day was always a hit. But because of the school calendar, the lunchroom Farmers Market Line featured produce that would be out of season a month and a half later, Dee says.

The SARE Project

Unlike other Farm to School programs, Todd and Seeking Common Ground’s scope includes not just schools but hospitals, elder care facilities, and corporate food providers. With a third SARE Sustainable Community grant, they are training cafeteria workers in how to process and preserve local foods so they can serve them through the winter. In a pilot, Todd tried out different methods of preserving broccoli-in very large quantities. They all worked, and Bloomfield students had broccoli through March. Additionally, he deduced that the time had come to bring local fruits and vegetables to Bloomfield Central under his belt, Bloomfield Central School, is all about next day. The Farmers Market Line featured fresh produce and two kinds of salad greens, bought directly from local farmers. After a successful year in the 6-12 cafeteria, the program spread to the elementary school.

The Results

“Basically,” Todd says, “what this takes is a lot of hard work.” He makes business plans with each participating farmer and often involves walking through the logistics. Many farmers don’t have time to deliver their produce to school districts. With Todd, they work out a plan for an early delivery to their farmers’ market booth, or a central location where they can make one drop for more than one school district. On the institutional end, school food service don’t know how to work around the lack of processing infrastructure. As chair of the New York School Nutrition Association, Todd helped to change state laws to allow schools local preference in produce. The next step is to include minimally processed goods in the clause, so cafeterias can buy the same apple, both before and after it’s been sliced.

Initiating the programs is hard, but once connections are made, they stick. It’s beyond the scope of a food service provider’s job to find a farmer, get in touch, and work out a contract so Seeking Common Ground does this for them. In their first SARE grant, they offered a breakfast with farmers for food service directors. In the follow-up survey, twenty seven participants, both farmers and service directors, expressed interest in implementing a Farm-to-Caf program. Seeking Common Ground administered Cornell’s Farm-to-School in the Northeast toolkit to assess the opportunities and challenges for each institution, and identified very local matches for eight schools and one hospital. The first year of operation yielded $10,000 in new sales for the participating farmers. Now, new sales are impossible to differentiate in the cumulative build of lasting farmer & service director relationships; Seeking Common Ground’s third SARE project involves 16 farms, 6 care facilities, 5 colleges, 3 distributors, and 10 school districts, each with multiple schools.

NEW FOR 2011... SEEDS NOW ON SALE!

Bob’s Designer Pumpkin Seeds - A UNIQUE MIXTURE

- Ten years of on-farm crossing between several winter squash varieties and carving pumpkins.
- As introduced in the June, 2010 VGN front page feature.
- As introduced “Bob” himself at the 2010 Fruit and Vegetable Growers Expo in Grand Rapids, MI.
- Especially well-suited for small to medium size retail growers of higher value specialty crops and niche marketing.
- Great fun and educational opportunity to introduce the science of genetics to school children and the importance of bees.
- Complete color photo gallery and easy ordering instructions available on our website.
- Each seed lot contains a mixture of 10 or more distinctly unique genetic characteristics.
- Edible or canned - ideal for extending the season through Thanksgiving as beautiful, create holiday home decor.

Orders of 1 lot are $135 • Orders of multiple lots are $125 per lot

586-784-5007 BackyardBouquetFarm.com BackyardBouquetFarm@gmail.com

SARE offers sustainable agriculture grants, bulletins, books, an online events calendar and many other resources. Learn more about the Northeast SARE program by visiting www.nesare.org or by contacting Northeast SARE 655 Spear Street University of Vermont, Burlington VT 05405 Phone (802) 656-0471 Fax (802) 656 -0500 E-mail: nesare@uvm.edu

Todd Fowler insists that kids eat with their eyes.

The results of the toolkit led to Seeking Common Ground’s next set of grants, addressing problems of local food access and food preparation. In their second SARE project, they organized local harvest days in cafeterias, and developed a guide to “How We Started a Farm-To-Cafeteria Program and How You Can Start One, Too.” Todd and Deb regularly send copies of the guide to food service directors around the country who contact them for help. On a regional level, they sit down with neighboring counties and go over questions. “Todd knows all the food service directors,” Deb says, “so that helps.” Several of the surrounding counties have started successful programs as a result.

The Next Step

In addition to the farmers and the institutions, a third, and often neglected, party must buy in for local foods programs to work: the eaters. For Todd, it starts and ends with the kids. “Raw fruits and vegetables are inherently attractive,” he says, “kids eat with their eyes.”

Kids also eat what they know. In Bloomfield, second graders take a class with a school nutritionist, and every year, Todd conducts a cooking visit. One afternoon after such a visit, he received a call from a mother. She was in Wegmans with her second grader, who wanted her to buy butternutsquash. “Honey, I don’t know how to cook it,” the call went. But her son said, “Mr. Fowler showed me, you just cut it in half, take the seeds out, and bake it.” Todd chuckled. “I said, that’s pretty much right.”

This article discusses SARE grant CNE10-069. To view the final report, available in 2011, visit http://sare.org/MySare/ProjectReport.aspx?fid=170&viewProj&pn=CNE10-069. For more information, contact info@seekingcommonground.org.

Annie Bass was a summer intern with the Cornell Small Farms Program in 2010. She may be reached at arb258@cornell.edu.
My Experience as a "Shepherdess"

By Lydia Sacheli, Age 8, Onion Patch Kid 4-H Club

My name is Lydia Sacheli and I am 8 years old. I live on an onion farm and I am in 4-H. This is my 1st year as a 4-H'er and I was a Cloverbud for 3 years. I have been a shepherd for 3 years. I have 5 sheep right now that are grown up. I hope my 2 ewe (girl) sheep have babies this spring. I also have a billy (boy) lamb. Our friend Mr. Reifsteck asked me to take care of him until he is weaned. That means until he doesn’t need milk anymore. His name is Ozzie and he is my 6th bottle lamb to raise. I raise him for free because Mr. Reifsteck gives me a deal on shearing my grown up sheep. Raising a bottle lamb is fun because he can run around the house. He wears size 4T diapers so he doesn’t make a mess. You can’t house train a sheep. Raising sheep teaches you how to be a parent (just of a different species).

I can make money from my 4-H sheep projects because I can sell wool at our farm market booth for projects like spinning or needle felting. Needle felting is one of the oldest fiber crafts. I am doing a public presentation for 4-H on how to needle felt. 4-H is good because you learn how to do fun things and then you get to practice teaching others. I learned how to do a power point to help my presentation. 4-H is really fun because you hang out with your friends and do fun things at the same time. I want to be in 4-H for life!!

For more information about the sheep project, please visit: http://www.anisci.cornell.edu/4H/sheep/

Master of the Crow

By Lucca Sachelli, Age 7, Onion Patch Kid 4-H Club

My name is Lucca and I am 7 years-old. I have had a rooster for 3 years. His name is Phineas. I showed him at the fair. He won 2nd place in the crowing contest. The crowing contest is my favorite contest at the fair except for the barn yard Olympics. You put your rooster in a cage and cover his cage to make it dark for 1 hour. The judge tells you to uncover the cage and you count how many times your rooster crows. You can tell him to crow, ask him to crow and beg him to crow but you can’t scare him or hurt him to make him crow. 4-H teaches you how to take care of animals. I like playing with my friends at 4-H.

For more information about the 4-H poultry project, please visit: http://www.anisci.cornell.edu/4H/poultry

Lucca Sachelli (right) with his prize winning rooster in and crowing contest certificate (and with his brother and sister!)

Reaching Out to Touch the Hearts of Others with Miniature Horses

By Jessica Gulvin, Age 16, 4-H Teen Council and Teen Ambassadors

I’ve always wanted to find a way to help others who love animals, but can’t get out to see them. About three years ago, I thought of a community service project that I could do for 4-H. “There are therapy dogs that visit those less able, why can’t I have a miniature horse of therapy and do the same?” I knew I had the perfect horse for the project.

Through a high school drama production, my miniature horse Chloe became a people friendly, extremely calm, safe and lovable horse. Through this production, she received training as students danced in circles around her with lots of sounds, flashes, screams, and bombs. For this production, we found sneakers built for mini horses that protect their hooves and the floors.

We then began taking her to The Homestead Nursing Home and public events. The residents fell in love with Chloe and kept asking for her to come back. As word spread about Chloe, more and more places began requesting for her to visit with the residents. We have also visited a Nursing Home in Waterloo, the VA in Canandaigua, and Rainbow Junction Daycare. What was once a community service project for 4-H, is now my mission that I hope to continue into my adulthood.

Reaching out to touch the hearts of others with miniature horses has been the focus for my community service projects.
I do many animal science projects (raising chickens, peacocks, guinea hens, and my lizard) but my Lizard project is my favorite. His name is Rexy and I have had him for 3 years. He is an adult Blue-Tongued Skink. He is about 18 inches long. Skinks are interesting because they have a blue tongue. They are omnivores, which means they eat both meat and plants. They are one of the only reptiles who have live born young. They also have a neat defense mechanism because they have the ability to drop their tail when a predator grabs it. The nerves make the tail keep twitching for the next 2 minutes to give a chance to get away while the predator keeps holding on to it. Their tail grows back in about 3 years.

I love being in 4-H because I can see my best friend Justice and study science, which I love. I want to be a 4-H'er for life.

For more information about natural science projects: http://nys4h.cce.cornell.edu/about%20us/Pages/SETToolkit.aspx

Kylie Hill with her dog, Kiki, at the 2010 New York State Fair attending the "Dog Expo." This gives me the chance to sit and listen to others’ knowledge on different canine subjects and ask any questions I may have. I also use my experience with dogs and help out at our local shelter, The Shelter of Hope.

My history with 4-H and the knowledge I’ve learned from my animal science projects even helped me receive a job with the Eastview Veterinary Clinic. 4-H is a fantastic program and can help any child or teen grow and learn through hands on experiences. I have met many people that have turned into mentors or friends for life.

For more information about raising dogs visit: http://www.anisci.cornell.edu/4H/dogs/
Cows Raising the calves is financially rewarding and a lot more fun for everyone involved! Photos by Dietrich Gehring for improving the herd if one cannot see the full genetic expression of their traits. We believe only cows and bulls raised by their mothers reach full genetic expression.

Practical Applications
Some logistical considerations need to be made, and each farmer will develop his or her own system. Generally, things to consider include the milking set-up and the best isolate to breeding the mother and baby that first week, how to keep the calves safe while they are with their mothers in the milking group, where they can be weaned, and how you will be breeding back the mothers. About a week of close attention is required as soon as the calf is born to ensure a strong bond between the cow and the calf. This saves a lot of trouble later in the process, and the procedures remain any help, but neither should have to foster the relationship between some very new, i.e. first calf heifers or cows that have never raised a calf before, and some old and tired mothers. Once the calf has been weaned and does not look to another cow for milk, the rest goes very smoothly. For the first two months we run the calves in and out of our tie stall before weaning and then the first group of our calves to us and to the barn routine and makes them easy to handle throughout their lives. They also became trained to respect our single strand electric wires used for rotational grazing by the time they leave the milking group at eight weeks old.

We milk the calves twice a day, but do not keep the calf from them at all, except to tie them in at milking time so they don't trash the barn. By about eight weeks post-calving, the calf is drinking all of the mother's milk, or if it isn't, the cow is likely loosing weight trying to produce enough milk for this. After about ten weeks, weaning is about the limit before weight loss begins to become a problem. We prefer to wean them at about thirteen weeks old. The next year, the spring grass is plentiful again over weaning. We also try to keep replacements that are close in age (within two months) because the calves will form a very tight bond to their mothers, and it is easier to wean them at three to four months old. We also prefer to keep them at all, except to tie them in at milking time so they don't trash the barn. By about eight weeks post-calving, the calf is drinking all of the mother's milk, or if it isn't, the cow is likely loosing weight trying to produce enough milk for this. After about ten weeks, weaning is about the limit before weight loss begins to become a problem. We prefer to wean them at about thirteen weeks old. The next year, the spring grass is plentiful again over weaning. We also try to keep replacements that are close in age (within two months) because the calves will form a very tight bond to their mothers, and it is easier to wean them at three to four months old. We also prefer to keep them at all, except to tie them in at milking time so they don't trash the barn. By about eight weeks post-calving, the calf is drinking all of the mother's milk, or if it isn't, the cow is likely loosing weight trying to produce enough milk for this. After about ten weeks, weaning is about the limit before weight loss begins to become a problem. We prefer to wean them at about thirteen weeks old. The next year, the spring grass is plentiful again over weaning. We also try to keep replacements that are close in age (within two months) because the calves will form a very tight bond to their mothers, and it is easier to wean them at three to four months old. We also prefer to keep them at all, except to tie them in at milking time so they don't trash the barn. By about eight weeks post-calving, the calf is drinking all of the mother's milk, or if it isn't, the cow is likely loosing weight trying to produce enough milk for this. After about ten weeks, weaning is about the limit before weight loss begins to become a problem. We prefer to wean them at about thirteen weeks old. The next year, the spring grass is plentiful again over weaning. We also try to keep replacements that are close in age (within two months) because the calves will form a very tight bond to their mothers, and it is easier to wean them at three to four months old. We also prefer to keep them at all, except to tie them in at milking time so they don't trash the barn. By about eight weeks post-calving, the calf is drinking all of the mother's milk, or if it isn't, the cow is likely loosing weight trying to produce enough milk for this. After about ten weeks, weaning is about the limit before weight loss begins to become a problem. We prefer to wean them at about thirteen weeks old. The next year, the spring grass is plentiful again over weaning. We also try to keep replacements that are close in age (within two months) because the calves will form a very tight bond to their mothers, and it is easier to wean them at three to four months old. We also prefer to keep them at all, except to tie them in at milking time so they don't trash the barn. By about eight weeks post-calving, the calf is drinking all of the mother's milk, or if it isn't, the cow is likely loosing weight trying to produce enough milk for this. After about ten weeks, weaning is about the limit before weight loss begins to become a problem. We prefer to wean them at about thirteen weeks old. The next year, the spring grass is plentiful again over weaning. We also try to keep replacements that are close in age (within two months) because the calves will form a very tight bond to their mothers, and it is easier to wean them at three to four months old. We also prefer to keep them at all, except to tie them in at milking time so they don't trash the barn. By about eight weeks post-calving, the calf is drinking all of the mother's milk, or if it isn't, the cow is likely loosing weight trying to produce enough milk for this. After about ten weeks, weaning is about the limit before weight loss begins to become a problem. We prefer to wean them at about thirteen weeks old. The next year, the spring grass is plentiful again over weaning. We also try to keep replacements that are close in age (within two months) because the calves will form a very tight bond to their mothers, and it is easier to wean them at three to four months old. We also prefer to keep them at all, except to tie them in at milking time so they don't trash the barn. By about eight weeks post-calving, the calf is drinking all of the mother's milk, or if it isn't, the cow is likely loosing weight trying to produce enough milk for this. After about ten weeks, weaning is about the limit before weight loss begins to become a problem. We prefer to wean them at about thirteen weeks old. The next year, the spring grass is plentiful again over weaning. We also try to keep replacements that are close in age (within two months) because the calves will form a very tight bond to their mothers, and it is easier to wean them at three to four months old. We also prefer to keep them at all, except to tie them in at milking time so they don't trash the barn. By about eight weeks post-calving, the calf is drinking all of the mother's milk, or if it isn't, the cow is likely loosing weight trying to produce enough milk for this. After about ten weeks, weaning is about the limit before weight loss begins to become a problem. We prefer to wean them at about thirteen weeks old.
Experiencing with Caterpillars: Another Option for Season Extension

By Molly Shaw

Last fall CCE Tioga staff and local farmers put up two “caterpillar” tunnels on vegetable farms in the Southern Tier of NY, one in Tioga County and one in Schuyler County. We decided to try these “caterpillars” at a couple of local farms because, while more widely used in Eastern NY, their use and construction isn’t very familiar to Southern Tier farmers.

Caterpillar tunnels are, at their most basic, high tunnels on the cheap. They have three endearing qualities over the regular 30 x 96 high tunnel. First off, they’re easily moveable, which means they can be built quickly over an established crop (field prep and planting can be done with a tractor) and crop rotation is easier. If you want to grow tomatoes in your caterpillar tunnel every year, have at it—just erect it in a different spot every season. Secondly, they’re wonderfully cheap, making them an easy way to experiment with growing crops under cover and accessible to even beginning farmers without a lot of capital. Whereas it’s common for standard 30 x 96 ft high tunnels to cost $7-8,000 ($2.00-2.50 per square foot), caterpillars are usually built for under $1/square foot. And, as mentioned above, you can’t beat the construction ease.

Third, you don’t have to level the ground for these tunnels. They can go up a slope or down and up a dip, following the contour of the land. A word of caution here—Ted Blomgren, an experienced tunnel grower who uses both caterpillars and fixed tunnels, comments that while caterpillars are cheaper, you kind-of get what you pay for. The caterpillars don’t have a high roof to help moderate temperature swings, and you don’t have any automation when it comes to venting. Getting in and out of the tunnel when there’s snow is also no easy task.

We started in the fall of 2009, with a caterpillar made of pvc pipe, greenhouse plastic, rebar and baling twine over the tunnel between its two neighboring hoops, with the tip angled nearly flush with the ground and slightly inside the hoops (with a pointed end, the caterpillar name) where the twine stretches the plastic down over each hoop.

Don’t criss-cross the twine over the hoop, go right between the bows. Your finished tunnel should be tight and well-segmented (hence the “caterpillar” name) where the twine stretches the plastic down over each hoop. You might need to tighten the twine in a few days. You vent the sides by pushing up the plastic between the bows—some time it stays on its own, sometimes you need a notched branch to make it stay. This tunnel cost $550 in materials ($0.55/square foot for a 10 x 100 foot tunnel). It probably took three of us an inefficient 4 hours to construct—this was our first one, and I’d expect that in non-rocky ground two people could do it in 2-3 hours.

Look at figure 1 to see the newly constructed caterpillar.

Our other caterpillar tunnel we made with metal hoops. We used 3/4“ galvanized water pipes, 20” long, and we bent them ourselves. That was an adventure. A metal electrical conduit benderson’t work, it breaks.

Farmers in eastern NY said to use a pipe bender, but we didn’t have the right one. In our case, we wanted to make a little peak to the tunnels, so they were more gothic shaped than Quonset. We made ourselves a jig, put the bend in the peak first, then bent the rest of the hoop around another rounded wooden jig.

Definitely more work (and expense) than PVC pipe, but this farm wanted something more durable and long lasting than plastic. The rest of the construction was the same.

After all the rebar pounding, it was really gratifying to see how fast the ribs of the tunnel went up—it’s by far my favorite part in the construction process. We tied 26 ft lengths of baling twine (as tight as we could and UV resistant) to each of the ground staples on one side of the hoops. At the ends of the caterpillar we drove a hefty stake angled outward into the ground. We also tied a string (or rope) “purline” down the length of the tunnel, on the tops of the hoops, and stretched tight to the two ground stakes at the ends. This was the tedious part—that rope should be tight between all the hoops and to the stakes at the ground on either end, and it can take some finicky adjustments to make this happen while the bows are all reasonably plumb. Then we roller our plastic and pulled it over the tunnel. Nice when the farmers you’re working with are tall, it makes this part easy! Note on order specifics: if you want a 100 foot tunnel, start with a piece of plastic at least 130” long, if not 150” you’ll need 12-15 feet extra on either end to pull and bunch to the ground.

Now came the tying down steps; these are very important. We bunched the narrow end of the plastic together and stretched it to the ground. Then we put a soft ball sized smooth rock in the middle of the bunch (like a fist punching out through a t-shirt), wrapped twine around the neck of the plastic-wrapped rock so it didn’t fall out of its pocket, and tied it tight to the stake at ground level. We did the same thing on the opposite end. Make sure at the plastic pulling stage, your caterpillar skin is caught along the whole length. To hold the plastic tight between bows, we threw every twine piece tied to a ground staple over the tunnel between its two neighboring hoops, and tied it snugly to the ground staple on the opposite side. Clothespins on the ends of the twine helped add weight for easier throwing.

Shopping list for PVC caterpillar tunnel

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PVC pipe, 150’ x 24’</td>
<td>$200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PVC pipe, schedule 40, 20 feet long</td>
<td>$208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebar, 24” long, #5’s (52 of these)</td>
<td>$55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebar, 48” long, #3’s, bent in half (50 of these)</td>
<td>$65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heavy duty UV-resistant baling twine</td>
<td>$15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total materials cost</td>
<td>$543</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Shopping list for metal caterpillar tunnel

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greenhouse plastic, 150” x 24”</td>
<td>$200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Galvanized water pipe, 3/4” diameter</td>
<td>$900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebar, 24” long, #5’s (52 of these)</td>
<td>$55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebar, 48” long, #3’s, bent in half (50 of these)</td>
<td>$65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heavy duty UV-resistant baling twine</td>
<td>$15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 feet wiggle wire channel and wiggle wire, tek screws</td>
<td>$12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PVC pipe, schedule 40, 1” diameter</td>
<td>$14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total materials cost</td>
<td>$1270</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Useful note about buying supplies: plumbing stores have much better prices than home stores like Lowes, Home Depot, etc. The store managers were a little incredulous about the orders—they’re not commonly used sizes/lengths by plumbers, apparently—but in the end they were good to work with. We even got the metal pipe delivered, since my little wooden 2x4 jig I used to hold floppy pvc pipe to my Subaru roof rack wasn’t going to cut it for the heavier galvanized pipe.
Caterpillars from 13
Matthew and Liz from Muddyfingers Farm with Matt LeRoux, Molly Shaw, and Eric Yetter, extension employees who helped bend the pipe and build the tunnel. This tunnel’s material costs were $1270, or $1.27/square foot.

except this farm wanted a door in the end (instead of ducking in the side) so we tried the structural compromise of not tensioning the plastic to a stake at one end, but rather attaching it with wiggle wire to the metal bow, and resisting the tugging from the other end by using some pipes set at an angle (shoulder height at end hoop, touching the ground a couple hoops back into the tunnel). This seemed to work reasonably well. This tunnel cost $1270 in materials ($1.27/square foot for a 10x100 ft tunnel).

Both tunnels withstood snow well. The pvc tunnel did bend down under the snow load, but it sprang back up when the snow was pushed off. I wish we had used 1.5” pvc pipe that was stiffer for the hoops—that extra half inch gives an amazing amount of rigidity. For summer use, when snow load isn’t an issue, the anchors and bows can be spaced twice as far apart so more area can be under plastic. Spacing the bows at 8 feet on center gives you two tunnels for only the extra plastic cost, which translates to about $0.70/square foot in the summer configuration.

At the end of the trial, I think caterpillar tunnels have a useful place on a vegetable farm. They’re the right price for beginning farmers and for those just experimenting with growing under cover, and they’re mobile. We’re starting to notice more soil problems in older tunnels, so this mobility factor may be even more important as we learn more about long-term tunnel growing.

If you want to try one and are looking for more details or pictures, contact Molly Shaw, meh39@cornell.edu, 607-687-4020 or Liz and Matthew at Muddyfingers Farm at maglenn_1999@yahoo.com.

Need Info?
Subscribe to the Small Farms Update, a monthly email newsletter with announcements, upcoming events, resources, funding and farming opportunities and more. Sign up from the homepage of www.smallfarms.cornell.edu or send an email to smallfarmsprogram@cornell.edu. Please provide your name, farm name, postal address, and county.

Looking for Chicks?
Order your chicks today!

FREE Seminars/Workshops
Call to RSVP Today!

Horse Owner’s Workshop ~ April 2, 2011
231 Northport Avenue • Belfast, ME • (207) 338-1334

Poultry Seminar ~ April 7, 2011
7572 Court Street • Elizabethtown, NY • (518) 873-2210

Horse Owner’s Workshop ~ April 19, 2011
361 Wilton Road • Farmington, ME • (207) 778-5682

Horse Owner’s Workshop ~ April 21, 2011
129 Main Street • Richfield Springs, NY • (315) 858-2411

AUBUCHON HARDWARE
OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK • HardwareStore.com

PURINA & Mazuri
SOLD AT THESE LOCATIONS:
Connecticut: Putnam Massachusetts: Webster Maine: Belfast Brewer • Buxton • Farmington • Lincoln • Lisbon Falls • Naples Norway • Old Town • Rumford • Skowhegan • Waterville New Hampshire: Alton • Lee • Warner New York: Easton Gouverneur • Herkimer • Peru • Ogdensburg • Richfield Springs Vermont: Vergennes

GOT GAS, LP & OIL PRICE JITTERS?
We build your SOLUTION to high heating costs!

Whole House Multi-Fuel & Wood Furnaces
✓ Save up to 80% on fuel bills
✓ Prices start at $1,688
✓ “0% Down – No Interest Financing”

CALL TODAY! (800) 359-0060
www.yukon-eagle.com

LIVESTOCK GUARDIANS
AKKASHA STARTED
Available for Sheep, Goats or Alpacas
People Friendly, Predator Aggressive,
24 Hour Control
315-683-5860
www.springsidefarm.net

BLUE SEAL
SOLD AT THESE LOCATIONS:
Maine: Belfast • Skowhegan • Brewer New Hampshire: Lee Moultonborough • Warner New York: Elizabethtown • Herkimer Vermont: Hardwick • Jeffersonville • St. Johnsbury
**LOCAL FOODS and MARKETS**

Kale for Sale: One attempt to eat locally in Delaware County

By Rebecca Morgan

I spent three seasons on an organic vegetable farm in Virginia when I was in my twenties. The farmer there focused exclusively on growing food. The hard part is selling it to the right person.” While “the right person” is not a static demographic across the board, for small-scale farms, it often means someone with money. Or at least someone who has enough money to pay $7.00 a pound on tomatoes, and 6.000 a pound on broccoli and $2.00 for a four pound chicken. In other words, not your typical perma-grass roots trying to be organic.

And yes, you’ve heard it all before. The particular conundrum of sustainable farmers charging what the real price of real food costs, while the local fast-food tourists paid the real food stay prime. The hands of those with real food, at real extra money, ironically not the same population generally suffering from obesity, diabetes, and other food-associated health problems.

Here in Delaware County numerous initiatives are underway to rebuild a vital farm and food system, and get youth, seniors, and just regular folks engaged in eating locally. In Walton, we kicked off one local food initiative with the Walton Farm School Project, which received a $10,000 grant from the Walton White Dorper Corporation to pay Walton High School students to grow food for the Walton community. Our motto was “Grown Here to Eat Here”. The larger objectives of the project were to get local food into school cafeterias and teach students the process from Arugula to Zucchini of growing, harvesting and marketing organic produce, and to make fresh, organic produce season became selling our organic produce to the Big M. This was, as they say, a hard sell.

The Walton Farm School Project delivered boxes of organic produce every week to the Big M, often less than five hours after harvest. However, due to a series of factors, the food did not exactly fly off the shelves. When the owner and managers at the Big M were generally supportive, the challenges grew. First, we had to get the food into the hands of buyers. The shelter was there. Keep your pasture smaller in the past few decades. The fact that many more details about raising a guardian dog is whether or not the sheep are literate hauling in my backyard.

Missconceptions The most common misunderstanding I ran across is the desire to have a herding dog as well as a guardian dog in the same dog. That is impossible. Let’s examine this. A guardian dog sees the sheep as its pack, its own kind so to speak. Herding is a form of hunting. The herd dog seeks the sheep it herds as prey. Any serious herding dog would do all kinds of undeniably terrible things to the sheep if not controlled and corrected by its owner. In short, a guarding and a herding dog do not need to know each other as they are trying to do very different instinctive reasons. These reasons are mutually exclusive.

A true guardian dog is protecting the livestock and not its territory. That means it will protect the livestock wherever it is and not its familiar territory. That is especially important when the flock is not stationary, it grazes at least temporarily not stationary, when it grazes at least temporarily away from the home farm. Protecting its own territory. Humans need to be able to get a hold of the dog. But keep in mind what the dog’s purpose is. It is to guard the livestock and not to be a companion dog for the farmer or the family.

Utlf Kintzel owns and manages White Clover Sheep Farm (www.whitecloversheepfarm.com) in Rustyville, NY, where he breeds grass-fed White Dorper sheep. He offers breeding stock and freeze-dried, quick meals. He can be reached at 565-554-3313 or by e-mail at uitf@whiteclover-sheepfarm.com.

Photo by Rebecca Morgan
Creating Farms on Concrete, Rubble, and Rooftops
The Story of New York City’s Newest Farmers

By Daisy Bow

When anyone thinks about New York City, fixtures like concrete sidewalks, skyscrapers, large office buildings, heavy traffic, storefronts, and subway stations come easily to mind. Green spaces are generally relegated to designated city parks, and most flowers are pre-cut, bundled into ready-to-go bouquets. However the metropolitan topography is changing.

Urban farms are popping up across the city on rooftops, in church basketball courts, and backyards. They are finding homes in otherwise abandoned spaces reclaimed by ambitious, enterprising, and entrepreneurial souls. These urban farmers are eager to take advantage of what they see as a commonsensical solution to feeding local, seasonal produce without the carbon footprint to a hungry city. They are also looking to the future. In neighborhoods where you can live next door to someone for 20 years and never know their name, these urban farmers are committed to building community while at the same time expanding production and earning a profit. They are simply not content with the status quo.

"There is just so much space across the city," said Ben Flanner, head grower for Brooklyn Grange. "I just heard the number: there are hundreds of thousands of buildings that are all empty on the top of the roof. The sun is just beating down on all these rooftops, so it makes sense to do something productive with it and grow as much food as we can."

Located in Long Island City, Queens, Brooklyn Grange is one of the newest additions to New York City’s growing urban farms movement. It is also the largest. At 40,000 square feet—a little less than an acre—the Grange is the first commercial farm in the city that has enough scale to support a full-time staff. We’re really close.

"We’re kind of unique in that, almost stubbornly, we want to make it a real farm," Flanner said.

Flanner belongs to a new breed of urban farmer: motivated, audacious, curious, and, in some cases, city-smart. These are the urban farmers, essential characteristics that equip them to navigate a terrain both less complicated and more challenging than a traditional commercial farm. As a rooftop farm six stories above ground, Brooklyn Grange’s growers must think outside of the box in order to work around factors unique to their environment.

"You can’t drive a stake three feet into the ground," Flanner said. "I only have about ten inches of lightweight soil so I have to use techniques that are a lot more creative and more labor intensive. It’s windy up there too, so you need even more staking."

Creativity is the key to growing in the city, something that Jordan Hall and Bennett Wilson of Tenth Acre Farms know well. Hall, Wilson, and Wilson’s brother Adam are the three owners of New York City’s newest commercial venture. Beginning as a project in Hall’s backyard in 2009, the farm expanded last year, taking over a little-used ground space in the back of St. Cecilia’s Church in Greenpoint, Brooklyn.

Wilson and Hall got the idea to expand the farm last spring. "We were digging in new stuff, turning over the soil in the backyard last April. We thought if we had sold everything, we would almost have made back what we had put into it."

The agricultural space that they carved out of the middle of hipster Brooklyn is impressive, sophisticated, clean and elegant. Using the skills and knowledge gained from experience in set building and scenic design, they came up with the idea of “raised bed gardening” instead of planting into the ground.

"You just can’t bet on most of the soil in Greenpoint and Williamsburg. You don’t know what contaminants are in there. We don’t want to get into building soil. Instead of digging in, we figured it was going to be much easier to build a structure where it can be raised off the ground,” said Hall.

According to both Hall and Bennett Wilson, raised beds offer many advantages: they increase your growing season and keep pests away. There is no damage to any root structure because a foot never touches the soil. Harvesting is easier because you don’t have to bend down.

"It benefits the plants in so many ways that it is worth that initial input. And it’s somewhat cosmetically pleasing on a lot of levels. Where there is going to be shared property, we thought this was the right way to go," Hall said.

For Hall and Wilson, one of the biggest challenges to any urban farm is space. Not just limitations on how much space to give the plants, but also space to compost in order to fully realize the goal of farming using organic practices.

"You can’t react like you can in traditional gardening," Wilson said. "You really need to make sure that your soil tests are good and that you keep up with it. We put fish emulsion, seaweed extract, bat guano tea, and things like that on the soil all year just to keep ahead of it."

Wilson and Hall are committed to building community while at the same time expanding production and earning a profit. However, urban farming does have distinct advantages. For one, urban farms are literally in the market’s backyard. Their proximity to New York City’s restaurants, farmers’ markets, and CSA’s ensures that the consumer is never more than five miles away from the farm. Wilson points out other positive points: by eliminating the middle man, an urban farm of 2000 feet like Tenth Acre Farms can actually net as much profit as an 8000 square foot farm elsewhere.

"We don’t have to pay a shipping company, a packaging company, or a wholesaler. We have the costs of big machinery," he said.

Both farms are composting as much as possible, avoiding pesticides, fungicides, and chemical fertilizers. Tenth Acre Farms openly accepts compostable donations from the community. Flanner collects scraps from farmers’ markets, coffee chaff from a local roaster, and pure wood shavings from a nearby woodworker. For Flanner, maintaining healthy soil is the key to staying successful. However, the difficulty of this task is compounded by logistical aspects unique to urban locations. In the case of Brooklyn Grange, delivery of new soil, compost, and compostable materials is limited by what the growers can bring up to the roof.

"It’s like the bucket brigade the last two flights of steps. We can’t get 20 or 30 yards unless we paid for a crane again," Wilson said. "It’s like the bucket brigade the last two flights of steps. We can’t get that many yards unless we paid for a crane again."

For both farms, there is still room to grow. Brooklyn Grange has a ten-year lease on their rooftop, and Flanner is looking to the future with an eye to experimenting, learning, improving, getting smarter, and diversifying. Tenth Acre is looking to conquer not only ground spaces, but rooftop ones as well.

"There are plenty of one-acre lots owned by the city that are just sitting there being garbage dumps right now," Wilson said. "I don’t care where it is: you can put me on the water, you can put me on the roof of a building, I’m going to bring in dirt anyway and we’re going to clean the place up. We can make anything work in this city."

Daisy Bow is a doctoral student studying food in contemporary French literature at New York University in New York, NY. She may be reached at daisy.bow@gmail.com.

To learn more about Tenth Acre Farms, visit http://tenthacrefarms.com
To learn more about Brooklyn Grange, visit http://brooklyngrangefarm.com

Another challenge to any farm, not just urban farms, is distribution. How do you connect with the consumer? How do you find channels to move harvested produce and build the infrastructure needed to deliver perishable goods? How do you educate restaurants and customers to know what is seasonally available?

"Those are challenges to any farmer," Flanner said. "There are 8 million people here and not enough of them are eating good vegetables or spending their dollars on it, but for those who are, we’re really close."

Brooklyn Grange and Tenth Acre Farms both have established markets that they run and maintain throughout the season. In addition to these, both will have Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) operations this season. They will be Tenth Acre’s first, and Brooklyn Grange’s second. In addition, Brooklyn Grange supplies several restaurants in the city. Last year, Tenth Acre Farms began developing relationships with local establishments - restaurants, cafés, and bodegas - to move more of their harvest.

According to Flanner, Brooklyn Grange produced 12 and 14 thousand pounds of produce last year, even with a shortened growing season. They sold almost all of it. For Tenth Acre, the farm’s inaugural production exceeded all expectations - about 7 thousand pounds. Still, Wilson projects that the farm has not yet reached its full potential. Wilson spoke of experimenting with mirrors in order to direct sun to shadier areas of the farm, as well as building cold-frames to extend their productivity. This spring, he will work on the farm full-time (Hall and Wilson both currently work for College Humor, a comedy website).

"I think after this year, we’ll blow people away. Now that I can devote more time, I can go out there everyday and work the place. It’s not like I have to pick everything, deliver it, and then get back to my job," he said.

Currently, all acknowledge that there is a certain novelty to what they are doing.

"I think there is a little bit of misunderstanding, or a curiosity about urban farming," Flanner said. "Real commercial farmers kind of sit and say, What are these kids doing?"

Flanner does make the point that even given phenomenal growth, urban farming is not a replacement for local farming upstate and elsewhere. Citing statistics, he notes that if urban farmers were to cultivate every available space in New York, the appetite of city’s 8,000,000 residents would exceed any supply.

A big challenge is that only 2% of New York City’s vegetables are grown in state. We still get massive shipments in from around the world," he said. "But what we’re trying to do is create momentum. That is the overarching goal: to increase that 2% number. We’re trying to change people’s culture and the way they are purchasing their food.

For both farms, there is still room to grow. Brooklyn Grange has a ten-year lease on their rooftop, and Flanner is looking to the future with an eye to experimenting, learning, improving, getting smarter, and diversifying. Tenth Acre is looking to conquer not only ground spaces, but rooftop ones as well.

The agricultural space that they carved out of the middle of hipster Brooklyn is impressive, sophisticated, clean and elegant. Using the skills and knowledge gained from experience in set building and scenic design, they came up with the idea of “raised bed gardening” instead of planting into the ground.

Both farms are composting as much as possible, avoiding pesticides, fungicides, and chemical fertilizers. Tenth Acre Farms openly accepts compostable donations from the community. Flanner collects scraps from farmers’ markets, coffee chaff from a local roaster, and pure wood shavings from a nearby woodworker. For Flanner, maintaining healthy soil is the key to staying successful. However, the difficulty of this task is compounded by logistical aspects unique to urban locations. In the case of Brooklyn Grange, delivery of new soil, compost, and compostable materials is limited by what the growers can bring up to the roof.

"It’s like the bucket brigade the last two flights of steps. We can’t get 20 or 30 yards unless we paid for a crane again," Wilson said. "It’s like the bucket brigade the last two flights of steps. We can’t get 20 or 30 yards unless we paid for a crane again."

However, urban farming does have distinct advantages. For one, urban farms are literally in the market’s backyard. Their proximity to New York City’s restaurants, farmers’ markets, and CSA’s ensure that the consumer is never more than five miles away from the farm. Wilson points out other positive points: by eliminating the middle man, an urban farm of 2000 feet like Tenth Acre Farms can actually net as much profit as an 8000 square foot farm elsewhere.

"We don’t have to pay a shipping company, a packaging company, or a wholesaler. We have the costs of big machinery," he said.
Get Started With Spin Farming

By Linda Borghi

Calling all aspiring farmers. If you have a calling to farm but you have no land, no money and no farming experience. No problem. Be a SPIN farmer!

My name is Linda Borghi, and I am a SPIN farmer in Walker Valley New York.

SPIN stands for Small Plot Intensive. It's an organic-based production system that allows you to generate $50,000 + in gross sales from a 1/2 an acre of land, which is about 20,000 square feet. SPIN-Farming was developed by a Canadian farmer named Wally Satzewich, and here is his story.

Wally did not come from a farm family. Thirty years ago he began growing in his backyard in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, a city of about 220,000. He began selling at the Saskatoon Farmers Market, and that sealed his fate. He realized he was a farmer. Now, the only land he owns in the city is his own small backyard, and he rents or barter other backyards to make up his land base. He has been supporting himself farming this way for over 15 years. He has documented his system for maximizing income from sub-acre land bases, and he calls it SPIN-Farming.

When he looked at the financials, he saw that even though the land base and overhead of a sub-acre farming operation is a fraction of that of a large-scale farm, their bottom lines are similar. So a sub-acre farmer can earn as much, or more, income as a large scale farmer, but with a lot less stress and overhead, and with a lot more control over their operation, and with a lot more certainty of success from year to year.

So Wally sold off all his acreage in the country. Futility Farm as he called it, and he became an urban farmer. Now, the only land he owns in the city is his own small backyard, and he rents or barter other backyards to make up his land base. He has been supporting himself farming this way for over 15 years. He has documented his system for maximizing income from sub-acre land bases, and he calls it SPIN-Farming.

SPIN-Farming is now being practiced by a growing corps of first generation farmers in the U.S. and Canada. Some of its concepts include a multi locational farm land base, 1-2-3 land allocation, high road/low road harvesting, high-value crops, structured work flow and work rate. What the SPIN system does is knock down the barriers that individuals face when attempting to enter the field of farming as a profession. The three largest barriers are: owning large tracks of land, major capital investment to farm those large tracks and land, and the education necessary to create a financially successful farming business, SPIN-Farming addresses all three.

Over time he realized he was growing high value crops, like carrots, spinach and salad mix in his small backyard, and he was growing low value crops, like potatoes and onions, on his larger acreage in the country. This distinction between a high value and low value crop made him realize the other advantages to city-based sub-acre farming. He could grow high value crops in the city because he was not losing them to pests, like deer and large scale insect infestations. His irrigation system in the city was the water faucet, he did not have to depend on fluctuating river levels or worry about water quality. His work crew in the city was he and his wife. He did not have to depend on outside labor.

How about an urban backyard SPIN farm? This was one of Wally Satzewich's first plots, at his uncle's house. Here is where he grows one of his high value crops - salad mix.

Here is another high value SPIN crop - rainbow carrots. In the SPIN system, once beds are harvested, they are immediately planted to a different crop. This is called relay cropping, with the goal being to plant at least different three crops, one right after the other, in the same bed throughout the season.

Customer: Let's hear how you justify the price then.

Farmer: Look, I know you can always buy cheap food someplace, but it's still an honest price. And the price I charge on everything I sell is an honest price.

Farmer: Do you think it should be a cheap way to buy your food - getting it right from the farm?

Customer: I'm sure you can call it an honest price, but it's still more honest. And the price I charge on everything I sell is an honest price.

Farmer: I'm not going to entice you on price alone - that would be a laugh and I'm not going to even try. You are getting my assurance and accountability for everything about this food - how it was grown, harvested, and handled. You are getting my expertise to grow food that you can't or don't have time to. Any money you spend at my farm will be money well-spent if quality matters to you. The price is probably more reasonable than you would think.

Customer: Let's hear how you justify the price then.

By Jim Ochterski

Pricing Your Farm Products Honestly

If you are calculating your farm product prices based on what others are charging, you are making assumptions that your farm probably can’t afford.

We know it can be tough to get buyers to pay a price that provides a consistent profit for your farm. Yet, the whole idea of growing something and selling it is to earn money, while you enjoy the non-monetary perks of an agricultural life.

Consider “honest pricing.” An honest price is one that gives you the income needed for your farm to survive the season economically. It is a combination of straightforward math and a responsible attitude about your farm. Bottom line - you need to cover all of your costs and then some.

In the end, your honest price might wind up being higher than you think the market will bear. This is when you need a truthful approach in your marketing, being ready to answer some tough questions.

Here’s how one set of tough pricing questions can be answered in a hypothetical conversation between an unusually demanding customer and a market farmer:

Customer: I don’t want to sound like a cheapskate, but you do realize that your lettuce is a lot more expensive than what they have at the grocery store?

Farmer: Well, I’d say the lettuce you are seeing at the grocery store has very little in common with this freshly-harvested lettuce. Would you mind if I asked you why have you come to the farm market today?

Customer: To me it just feels like the right thing to do during the summer. There are a lot of farms in the area. I do like the choices and the freshness.

Farmer: Do you think it should be a cheap way to buy your food - getting it right from the farm?

Customer: It cuts out the middleman doesn’t it? You grow the fruits and vegetables nearby and sell them right to me. We don’t have to pay for the shipping and handling.

Farmer: Do you think it should be a cheap way to buy your food - getting it right from the farm?

Customer: It’s still more honest. And the price I charge on everything I sell is an honest price.

Farmer: I’m not going to entice you on price alone - that would be a laugh and I’m not going to even try. You are getting my assurance and accountability for everything about this food - how it was grown, harvested, and handled. You are getting my expertise to grow food that you can’t or don’t have time to. Any money you spend at my farm will be money well-spent if quality matters to you. The price is probably more reasonable than you would think.

Customer: Let’s hear how you justify the price then.

By Jim Ochterski

Pricing 18

Honest prices will make sure your farm survives the season

Photo by Jim Ochterski
COMMUNITY/WORLD

The Youth Farmstand: Seeding Success for Youth, Farmers & Communities

Since 2003, the Seeds to Success program has been training New Jersey youth in new job skills, bringing business to farmers, and increasing community access to healthy food.

By LuAnne Hughes

In 2003, Rutgers Cooperative Extension (RCE) of Gloucester County launched Seeds to Success, a youth farmstand project. Now in its 8th year, Seeds to Success, part of a statewide RCE youth farmstand initiative, is the largest youth farmstand initiative in New Jersey. It prepares special needs*, at-risk youth for the workforce through classroom and on-the-job training. (*Special needs students have Individual Educational Plans developed to support learning and education.)

Seeds to Success Farmstands bring new business and affordable, nutritious foods to residents of three limited resource communities. The farmstands are a unique example of economic development in at-risk communities. And, they support local farmers by offering three new outlets to sell their crops at competitive, profitable prices.

Seeds to Success is a multi-faceted project with four key goals:
- Support local farmers by creating new retail outlets for their products
- Build food security and healthier, stronger communities
- Increase workplace readiness skills in special needs, at-risk youth
- Improve life skills in at-risk, special needs youth

Because the project is multi-faceted with a range of goals, Seeds to Success offers a plethora of benefits to a number of audiences within its targeted communities.

Seeds to Success youth partners show off “Jersey Fresh” peppers, eggplant, peaches and tomatoes.

A Typical Seeds to Success grand opening is a festive event that draws a large crowd of local customers and the media.

Farmer: Anyone who grows things to sell should have a salary I need to replace my barns and equipment as they get old. I have other expenses, but this is income for my family, not a hobby. Customer: Wait a minute, you are getting a salary out of this? Farmer: There are women and men in farming who have no profession when I am here, but do all the farmers follow the same rules? It makes me wonder. Customer: OK, I am feeling a little better about spending extra money at a “real job” and develop personally with job and life skills training. They are a powerful example of how small collaborations can benefit many.

Seeds to Success provides increased access to the essential components of a healthy diet - fruits and vegetables - to those consumers with the fewest resources, the benefits of this project reach beyond mere nutrition and economics. Projects like Seeds to Success can serve as catalysts of change to support neighborhood revitalization and community food systems by addressing food security and economic development efforts, while offering youth an opportunity to earn money at a “real job” and develop personally with job and life skills training. They are a powerful example of how small collaborations can benefit many.

For more information on the Seeds to Success program, contact LuAnne Hughes at Rutgers Cooperative Extension, 856-307-6450 or hughes@AESOP.rutgers.edu.

Seeds to Success youth partners show off "Jersey Fresh" peppers, eggplant, peaches and tomatoes.

Photos by LuAnne Hughes
The Reasons to Garden

By Bill Duesing

I was astounded and moved, by the reasons they provided and the quickness with which they produced a long list. These children want to garden:

To eat
For beauty
To save money (instead of growing to the store)
For health
To provide a sue for food wastes, that is, compost
To see something new
To have fun
To earn money
To feed others
To become more responsible
For experience
To learn
To feel good about themselves
To produce more seeds
To do something good for the environment - you don't have to drive and can avoid packaging if your food is near your home.
To keep busy
To save energy
To impress family and friends
Because fresh vegetables taste better
To win contests at fairs
Because the food id fresher and more nutritious

These fifth graders understood the reasons to garden. And, judging by the enthusiasm with which they show me their seedlings, growing plants generates excitement.

Two days after this lesson, I was visiting a client in New Haven who is a successful lawyer, still practicing well past normal retirement age. As soon as he greeted me, he took me down to his boiler room, were his seedlings, hundreds of them, growing plant generates excitement.

To feel good about themselves
To produce more seeds
To do something good for the environment - you don't have to drive and can avoid packaging if your food is near your home.
To keep busy
To save energy
To impress family and friends
Because fresh vegetables taste better
To win contests at fairs
Because the food id fresher and more nutritious

The Reasons to Garden


As the days get longer and the soil begins to warm - thoughts of spring and the promise of a new beginning on the land abound. Part of this optimism relates to the planting of the home garden. In this essay Bill explores reasons to garden from the minds of second graders and shares the youthful excitement that gardening brings to a practicing lawyer in his senior years. Enjoy!

It feels good to get our hands into the soil again. Late snows and freezing temperatures kept us out of the garden longer than usual this year. Last weekend though, we found the soil in wonderful conditions (warm and with just the right amount of moisture) as we planted early greens and peas.

We also found some treasures left from last year's garden. A row of turnips we'd been using for greens into December has lovely rosettes of tasty leaves. We found garlic we'd missed at the harvest. We lifted it, took some inside to cook with, and separated and replanted the rest. We also discovered parsnips, just starting to put on their second year's growth to flower and reproduce. Sauteed in butter, they were delicious.

Recently, I asked the 28 students in Suzanne's fifth-grade class at Hallen School in Bridgeport to list some reasons to grow a garden. Over the course of the school year the students have harvested produce from the garden started by last year's class. They've also planted flower and garlic bulbs with the second-graders, sown a winter cover crop of rye inside in different media, i.e., compost, soil, sand and clay. Currently they are excited by growing seedlings of many garden vegetables and flowers for spring planting. We hadn't discussed the benefits of a garden, except perhaps to talk about saving transportation energy by growing lettuce in Connecticut instead of in California's deserts.

The Tale of the Tunis - Sheep Once Rare Now in Demand

By Martha Herbert Izzi

It is difficult to be objective when you're in love. And I confess to have fallen in love with the Tunis sheep breed nearly twenty-five years ago. A time when few people could identify those beautiful copper red-faced, red legged, creamy wool creatures with pendulous ears in our barn who gave new meaning to good mothering and docile temperaments. Their gorgeous almost-chocolate fleece-tamers, born with a double coat of red fibre, took almost like teddy bears at birth, sometimes with a white teddy bear spot on the forehead and on the tip of the tail. For the most part they find their way into this world unassisted, healthy and vigorous even in the Vermont January lambing season.

The Tunis are also known to breed out of season and I can remember, 2004, that "Pumpkin" produced quads in winter I can remember, 2004, that "Pumpkin" produced quads in

Front Page: Plant some seeds for your health, pleasure and sanity.

Morgan horses and assorted fowl) "I have owned just about every known sheep breed and Tunis tops the list." Why?

Most of these fine-wool breeds were raised in the American West and the Tunis. This breed was brought to the United States from the ruler of Tunisia, the Bey of Tunis, a North African nation, in 1808 by Thomas Jefferson.

The Tunis are also known to breed out of season and I can remember, 2004, that "Pumpkin" produced quads in winter I can remember, 2004, that "Pumpkin" produced quads in

Front Page: Plant some seeds for your health, pleasure and sanity.

Morgan horses and assorted fowl) "I have owned just about every known sheep breed and Tunis tops the list." Why?

Most of these fine-wool breeds were raised in the American West and the Tunis. This breed was brought to the United States from the ruler of Tunisia, the Bey of Tunis, a North African nation, in 1808 by Thomas Jefferson.

One of those producers is Douglas Heaversides of Stonewood Pastures in White River Junction, Vermont who has raised Tunis sheep for thirty-five years (along with Saanen goats, cows, pigs, Morgan horses and assorted fowl) "I own and breed every known sheep breed and Tunis tops the list." Why?

Because of their sweet temperaments, mothering qualities and meat, it's tender and my customers love it too."

Jefferson was known to prefer the Tunis over his Merinos principally for their wool attributes and meat quality. In the end, however, Jefferson's Monticello in Virginia among others. Over time they were crossed with other European breeds which resulted in our uniquely American sheep breed.

Jefferson's Monticello in Virginia among others. Over time they were crossed with other European breeds which resulted in our uniquely American sheep breed.

Jefferson's Monticello in Virginia among others. Over time they were crossed with other European breeds which resulted in our uniquely American sheep breed.

Jefferson's Monticello in Virginia among others. Over time they were crossed with other European breeds which resulted in our uniquely American sheep breed.

Jefferson's Monticello in Virginia among others. Over time they were crossed with other European breeds which resulted in our uniquely American sheep breed.

Jefferson's Monticello in Virginia among others. Over time they were crossed with other European breeds which resulted in our uniquely American sheep breed.

Jefferson's Monticello in Virginia among others. Over time they were crossed with other European breeds which resulted in our uniquely American sheep breed.
when my Tunis stayed in the barn even during the worst of snow and cold weather. When I visited Heaversides on a very cold, single-digit day in February, all of the ewes were out in the snow eating from a round bale guarded closely by the Tunis ram. Doug’s flock is of the “old style Tunis size and composition.”

This is an important issue in the Tunis community and one that is causing a lot of concern among those of us who resist the idea that the Tunis should be larger for show judging and meat-selling purposes. The original Tunis genetics that have given us a multi-purpose, heavy-milking, medium-sized animal with the excellent qualities and ease of lambing are being compromised to varying degrees resulting in ever-increasing Tunis sizes and some worrying attendant problems.

Otterknoll Farm producers Amy, Jennifer and mother, Chris Davenport of Wallingford, Vermont are registered Tunis owners with a high regard for the breed. They also have Oxfords and Columbias among their stock. Though Amy shows Tunis the family does not support attempts to enlarge the animal. Chris says that she has seen problems with pasterns “almost to the ground” and thin legs among some flocks at shows. The Davenport’s have left dairying behind, having sold their herd and are confining their efforts to sheep, with Amy saying “there is more money in sheep than there is in dairy.” Something I never imagined hearing. But the shortage of local lamb is acute just as the demand is growing and prices to shepherds are climbing.

One of the larger Tunis herds in Vermont numbering close to 200 ewes is to be found at Tamarack Tunis in Corinth, where owners Ben Machin and Grace Bowmer raise strictly grass-fed Tunis organically and freezer-packaged lamb for local markets as well as breeding stock and some wool products (made from the Tunis fleece blended with the wool of a couple of Navaho Churros.) But overall Machin’s primary goal and market rests in meat sales. Ben is a fourth generation Tunis producer with a strong interest in preserving the old genetics of these “just wonderful animals.” He is the “oldest continuously managed Tunis flock in the country” which was started in the early nineteen twenties by his great grandfather. “Most of the Tunis people in the northeast have stock from my family.” He is concerned about the alterations that he has seen in some animals, but he does not show and has no problems with legs or pasterns in his flock because he fiercely protects the old-style genetics.

Publicity about Machin’s animals is largely word-of-mouth but he and Bowmer have developed a website (www.tamaracktunis.com) to chronicle the Tunis development and their products for sale. As with the Davenport’s and Doug Heaversides, Machin is “getting a few calls from people who want to get into them.” About half the flock is registered and he spends quite a bit of time, networking with the registry (NTSR) trying to find old style flocks in the country.

He has a partnership with the Swiss Village Foundation in Newport, Rhode Island who write on their website that “the partnership emphasizes several important goals: to preserve the planet’s biodiversity through conservation of endangered breeds, to practice stewardship of the environment through sustainable farming and to offer consumers alternatives by way of supporting a niche market.” Swiss Village stresses the Tunis’ “high resistance to disease.”

Fancy Meats from Vermont, Manager, Lydia Ratcliffe, who represents a Vermont cooperative selling lamb and other meat products to high-end New York and Boston restaurants, says “Tunis are on our short list of superior breeds. There are not many high-quality meat breeds, for reliably high quality. Tunis is definitely on that list.”

For those readers who are wondering why I no longer have my beloved Tunis sheep, or other ruminants, stay tuned. As soon as I can move back to my farm in Vermont permanently in the spring, I will be on the “buy list” looking for “old-style” Tunis with the intent to sell breeding stock. That is if I can ever part with them. Martha Herbert Izzi is the owner of Bel Lana Farm in Shrewsbury, Vermont. She may be reached at 802-236-3744 or mhi22@yahoo.com.

Turn-by-Turn Navigation from a Trusted Financial Partner

Keeping your business on track and turning a profit takes strong management and financial resources. We know, because our specialty is helping ag businesses like yours stay strong through every economic cycle. No matter what or how you farm, the way you handle the financial and management aspects of your business can have a tremendous impact on the success of your operation. So choose a financial partner with a full range of products, services and experts who can help you find the best route to profitability. Call us today!