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

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

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The Small Farms Quarterly is compiled by the Cornell Small Farms Program, based at Cornell University in Ithaca, NY. The Cornell Small Farms Program fosters the sustainability of diverse, thriving small farms that contribute to food security, healthy rural communities, and the environment. We do this by encouraging small farms-focused research and extension programs.

Anyone is welcome to submit articles for consideration. See our guidelines at smallfarms.cornell.edu/quarterly/writers/ and contact Kacey Deamer with inquiries.

Articles should be 1,000 - 1,600 words in length with at least three high-resolution image options.

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Futuro Project Launches Spanish-Language Resources

Are you interested in joining a community of Latinx producers? Do you want to see in the world.

Join a growing community of Latinx producers in New York State and beyond. The Cornell Small Farms Program has launched a new project, Futuro en Ag (Futuro in Ag), to create educational resources and training opportunities in all areas of farm production, including farm finances, accessing markets, starting a farm business, and more.

The Futuro project is an agricultural education program for Latinx farmers who want to improve their farm management skills. We believe Futuro will help pave a pathway for success in agricultural careers for all. Futuro connects Spanish-speaking agricultural producers and provides information tailored to the needs of a diverse community of Latinx farmers. The project will also provide training for all members of the farm business using appropriate methods that yield positive results.

At the Futuro project, we speak Spanish and English. For more information visit the Futuro en Ag project at smallfarms.cornell.edu/projects/futuro.

As part of our Spanish-language and bilingual educational efforts, we have worked in coordination with Latinx producers to develop a new center for resources that will provide access to the vital information needed to grow their ag business. The Centro de Recursos features innovative bilingual financial management tools such as the farm financial glossary, calculation scorecard, and a complete farm record-keeping and chart of accounts workbook. The Centro de Recursos will also include Spanish-language versions of our most popular free resources: “The Guide to Farming in NYS” and the “Plan Your Farm” self-paced online course.

To see the full resource collection, visit the Centro de Recursos at smallfarms.cornell.edu/recursos.

Futuro nurtures our agricultural roots, our love of the land, our love of food, and our desire to build a community of successful Latinx agricultural producers. At Futuro we learn together and we learn from Latinx farming experts. We learn together and we learn from Latinx farming experts.

Message from the Editor

Dear farmers and friends,

“No one should lose their lives while shopping for food,” stated the media advisory we share in this issue on page 8, co-created by Food For The Spirit and other Black-led organizations in New York State to call for an end to white supremacy, white nationalism, and anti-Blackness.

The Small Farms Program’s Equity and Justice Statement affirms our commitment to the Black, Indigenous, and Farmers of Color in our network. We will continue to be actively engaged and involved in relationship building, collaboration, and support of efforts to build diverse, equitable, and just food systems.

Our collective efforts are needed to stop the violence against people of color in our communities. The work to dismantle racism starts at home, on our farms, and in our communities by understanding our own implicit biases and by assuming personal responsibility to challenge racist thinking and vocally condemn racial hatred and violence. We need to stand in support of our Black colleagues and any individual who suffers from any forms of oppression.

It is challenging work to transform our hearts, minds, and behaviors. But it is essential work to achieve long-lasting change rooted in dignity, respect, and equity for all members of our community. We can all work toward making our communities a place where all are welcome and safe. Let’s build locally what we want to see in the world.

A Few Ways to Take Action

• Support Black-led organizations working to end food apartheid and violence in Buffalo.
• Support the Black Lives Matter movement.
• Support the NAACP efforts on race and justice.
• Explore ways to reflect on and talk about race issues.
• Support the Northeast Farmers of Color Land Trust.
• If you are white and wanting to take action to build a powerful anti-racist movement for collective liberation, join the Showing Up for Racial Justice email list.
• Black Love Resists in the Rust has compiled a Community Resource Document to find food, mental health, transportation, and other support services and donation opportunities.
• Food Solutions New England has hosted the 21-Day Racial Equity Habit-Building Challenge for several years. Explore their collection of materials to help learn more about racial equity in the food system.
• Consider how you build a more inclusive workplace on your farm. Soul Fire Farm in Grafton, NY, is committed to ending racism and injustice in the food system. They have shared how they commit to creating a safer space. They also share ways to take action for racial justice in the food system.

We all must remain alert and committed to dismantling white supremacy and white nationalism to create inclusive environments for people of all identities. Join us in transforming agriculture and farming to be a more just, equitable, and safe vocation.

In solidarity,

Anu Rangarajan
ar47@cornell.edu
Director of the Cornell Small Farms Program
Assessing Woodlands for Silvopasture

Silvopasture is a land management system that simultaneously focuses on the sustainable and integrated production of trees, forage, and livestock.

By Brett Chedzoy and Peter Smallidge

Silvopasture is a land management system that simultaneously focuses on the sustainable and integrated production of trees, forage, and livestock. There are examples in New York and the Northeast for the use of almost all types of livestock including poultry, small ruminants such as sheep or goats, and larger ruminants such as cattle. Past generations of farmers, woodland owners, and foresters had concerns about using woodlands for grazing. As described below, those previous concerns can be circumvented, and silvopasture can be a positive tool for forest health, soil health, and carbon sequestration.

Each type of livestock would have specific needs for use in a silvopasture system. Poultry, for example, would be rotationally grazed differently than sheep or cattle because they are more likely to feed on seeds and insects than on forages in a silvopasture understory. They can be integrated with ruminants or grazed alone. Their action in scratching the soil surface as they look for insects creates a suitable seedbed to establish forages that need exposed mineral soil. The particular challenge with poultry is to ensure their safety from predators, especially birds of prey.

As with any new enterprise or effort, planning must include deliberate attention to the opportunities and challenges that exist. Because silvopasture integrates multiple production systems, the assessment is more comprehensive than for simpler systems. There are several silvopasture resources on the ForestConnect publications page at blogs.cornell.edu/ccednpub/ publications/agroforestry-silvopasture.

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Notably, there is a guide for developing a silvopasture and also links to case study examples of silvopasture in the Northeast.

On this webpage, there is also a site assessment guide (bit.ly/SP-assess). The site assessment guide considers factors that influence the suitability of an area, and offers suggestions on how to remediate factors that are less than ideal. The assessment would apply individually and collectively to management units (i.e., stands) to be included in the silvopasture.

The site assessment guide has additional details and provides a scoring system, and a discussion of each factor follows.

1. Site quality for an area is based on the ability of the site to grow trees and forages. This factor addresses primarily soil characteristics related to drainage and fertility. Historically, the earliest lands to be abandoned from agriculture were those least fertile, least accessible to the farmer, wetter or drier than other areas, and/or less easily tilled. The site quality of forest land will usually be less optimal than lands currently in single commodity agricultural production. For silvopasture, the drainage and fertility are of greatest interest. Except perhaps for orchards, existing lands with trees are not likely able to be tilled. Soil treatments would be implemented through livestock or surface applications of seed or other amendments.

2. Silvopasture involves rotational grazing of livestock within fences. The areas to be included will ideally have good access regardless of season or recent weather patterns. The owner will need to inspect fences, facilitate the movement of livestock from other paddocks, and potentially access the site for vegetation treatments. Because most woodland will need some thinning to reduce the abundance of low-value trees to stimulate the establishment and growth of forages, harvesting may provide the opportunity to improve access. In other circumstances, some investment in woods roads or access trails may be required.

3. Livestock with a small body size (e.g., chickens, turkey, sheep, goats) are less likely than large body size livestock to alter soils and desired species.

News from 3

how to succeed in agriculture while receiving training in Spanish. Futuro is the path to a successful farming career. To be a part of this exciting project, you can sign up for our email list at smallfarms.cornell.edu/projects/futuro/join-the-futuro-community.

Reduced Tillage Field Research Continues, Field Days This Summer

Our Reduced Tillage project has started another season of field research, our eighth season managing a long-term organic vegetable cropping systems experiment using permanent beds. We’re using terraces to maintain a continuous no-till system and comparing this system to conventional tillage practices by documenting changes in our weeds, crop yield, labor, and our soils. This year, we’re shifting our focus to understand the legacy effects of these practices and we’ve started measuring the soil arthropod community as an indicator as soil health. Soils harvested from our experimental plots are being brought to the lab and put under heat lamps, forcing a migration of all the sand grain-sized organisms for collection and identification under the microscope. We look forward to sharing the results in a future issue; stay tuned for in-season updates via Instagram.

Join us for a Soil Health and Climate Resiliency Field Day at the Thompson Village Research Farm on July 25 in Freeville, NY, to talk about how to use terras to suppress weeds and use less tillage. We’ll be sharing our research results alongside other Cornell researchers in partnership with the NY Soil Health Initiative. You’ll tour the fields and learn about cover crop breeding, mulching strategies, weed technology, and more. This field day is part of a statewide series; learn more on page 11.

Learn more about our research and events at the Reduced Tillage in Vegetables project page smallfarms.cornell.edu/projects/reduced-tillage.

Farm Ops Continues to Bring Veterans Together with Cohort Learning Sessions

During the Small Farm Program’s online course season, extending from September to March each year, Farm Ops, our military veteran project, provided veterans with free enrollment into select online courses and conducted veteran learning cohort sessions to supplement the course material. Veterans should be on the lookout for these opportunities, which will be posted on the Farm Ops Event Series page at smallfarms.cornell.edu/projects/farm-ops/event-series-veterans.

Read more about the veteran learning cohort sessions on page 14.

New Livestock Resource Website Now Available from CCE

Our livestock specialist, Erica Frenay, collaborates closely with the members of the Cornell Cooperative Extension Livestock Program Work Team (PWT). This team has recently launched a new website full of resources for producing and marketing livestock at ccelivestock.com.

One of the key features of this website is the NYS Slaughterhouse Map, which was formerly housed on the SFP website. While this is a hard resource to keep current, it’s incredibly valuable to producers and the Livestock PWT team in charge of that web-site will make every effort to update the map as they learn of changes.

The CCE Livestock Program Work Team recognized New York livestock producers need to have a trustworthy central location for all things livestock and developed the website in response. The website is organized into themes based on species and information can be found on a variety of production topics including breeding and reproduction, nutrition, and health as well as marketing.

“Our goal is to continue adding resources and have it be the go-to place for workshops, trainings, and webinar recordings,” stated Nancy Glazier, Regional Small Farms/Livestock Specialist.

Dana M. Havas, ag team leader from Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cortland County, expressed, “It is exciting to have Extension livestock experts from all over the state working together to develop a robust and valuable collection of resources for our communities.”

As the website grows they look forward to hearing how you use the website and invite you to tell them what you think by contacting the website administrator at ccelivestock.com/contact-us.

The CCE Livestock Program Work Team is comprised of educators working to build a collaborative network of experts and resources to foster the success of livestock farms across New York State.

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(866) 669-7267
New York State Farm Directory Launched in June 2022

The Farm Directory connects consumers to producers of farm products and promote New York farms.

By Cornell Cooperative Extension staff

As part of Cornell Cooperative Extension’s role in strengthening New York State agriculture, we are helping to spread word of the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets’ plans to launch a statewide online Farm Directory. The Farm Directory, which launched in mid-June, will connect consumers to producers of farm products and promote New York farms.

The Farm Directory appears on the NYS Department of Ag and Markets’ website at agriculture.ny.gov/farming/farm-directory. It will show information for each listed farm, which can include the farm name, farm type, point of contact, addresses, telephone number, email address, website, social media, and a listing of all available products produced by the farm. Other categories of interest to the public, like the farm’s inclusion in the NYS Grown & Certified Program and designations of organic, halal, or kosher certification, may also be noted. Website visitors will be able to sort or search the directory by any field. Since not every farm offers products to the public at the farm site, each farm can indicate whether it is open to the public or if there is another means that their farm product can be accessed. This might include listing a distributor, and noting that your product is eventually marketed under.

Farm Directory

Silvopasture from 4

saturated by a significant rainfall. The goal is to minimize “pugging” or “post-holing” wet soils, which can alter soil structure. Some amount of pugging can be reversed with winter freeze-thaw cycles. Soils that are prone to saturation can be avoided during wet conditions. Installing drainage tile in silvopasture is not common, but this activity is sometimes practiced in some poorly drained sugarbasins of Quebec and might have application in a silvopasture. Related to this consideration of drainage and erosion is the presence of vernal pools or wetlands from which ruminant livestock should be excluded.

4. Livestock usually learn how to avoid situations that can cause them harm, but not always. The owner needs to look for hazards such as gullies, flood-prone streams, or areas of high predator density. Sheep and goats may lean into streams, or areas of high predator density. Sheep and goats may lean into streams, or areas of high predator density. Gentle slopes and open understories facilitate inspection and access via foot or farm vehicles.

5. The potential for silvopasture has expanded only because of the availability of portable and low cost fencing, usually within a permanent perimeter fence. The terrain of the silvopasture is best when access for installation and inspection is simple. Areas with heavy understory vegetation will require more effort prior to installing fencing. Nothing fosters frustration quite like loose livestock, so paddocks need regular inspection to repair damaged fences. Gentle slopes and open understories facilitate inspection and access via foot or farm vehicles.

6. Livestock can obtain a portion of their water from vegetation, but some supplemental supply of water is needed. The best circumstances allow for potable water with minimal investments of infrastructure. Sometimes, water is hauled to the location, wells can be drilled or dug and enhanced with the addition of distribution systems, or surface water improvements are installed. Every paddock need not have water as livestock can have access to adjacent recently grazed paddocks that have a water source.

7. The size, shape, and location of the management unit under consideration influence the logistics of utilization. The size should be big enough to justify the fixed-cost effort (e.g., water supply), noting that variable costs (e.g., thinning effort per acre) may also be a factor. The shape influences the ease and efficiency of fencing. An isolated area is less optimal than an area that is proximate to existing grazing operations. It goes without saying that among isolated sites, a large area is preferred to a small area.

8. The evaluation of each site, assuming there is some investment needed to create or use it, should always be within the context of all other sites on the property. Consideration of alternate sites aligns with the strategy to focus on those sites with the best utility. Note, however, that a site may be suboptimal when considered alone, but might serve an important role over the course of a grazing season. For example, the suboptimal site might have a location (e.g., bridging two other areas) or other factors (e.g., good soil for use during the other season) that increase its relative worth.

9. A silvopasture, by definition, has trees. These are often timber species in natural stands or plantations, but trees could also be present as a fruit or nut orchard. Trees provide benefits to livestock, especially in the way they can buffer hot summer sun and cold winter winds. Trees reduce the energy needs of the livestock to thermoregulate. The hypothet- cal condition of trees as forest, orchard, or open pasture may depend on the needs of the owner or the owner’s ability to make the best of a given situation. In some cases, a fully stocked forest stand provides the opportunity to thin the woods and obtain firewood and low-value sawlogs, but with some significant effort and time. Alternatively, a pasture allows for planting of trees and creating spatial patterns or species (e.g., conifers as a living barn) that may facilitate some other aspect of the property. The least desirable example of this attribute might be a severely high-graded stand or an area dominated by invasive trees species such as European buckthorn. While even these less desirable examples help the animals thermoregulate, they offer little future value to the owner.

10. The plants found in the forest understory of a developed silvopasture are often different from the plant species found in open pastures because of the contrast in amount of water and livestock in the silvopasture need forages of high nutritional quality. The ideal woodland has existing understory plants to browse, or the ability to establish those through canopy thinning and scarification of the litter layer. Many woodland have seed beds of stored agricultural plants, but the owner may also decide to sow seed to accelerate forage establishment or to influence the composition of forages available.

For owners interested in additional revenue, especially those with existing livestock operations that would like an expanded land base, silvopasture is worth considering. Modern technologies of portable electric fence and rotational grazing allow owners to avoid the concerns of “putting cows in the woods.” More information and a network of silvopasture graziers is available at silvopasture.ning.com.

This article originally appeared on ForestConnect.com, a program project of Cornell University Cooperative Extension and the NYS Department of Natural Resources. Support for ForestConnect is provided by the Cornell CALS and USDA-NIFA through McIntire-Stennis and the Renewable Resources Extension Act.

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Futuro en Ag
In-person training to online courses to resources, all Spanish-first

By Mildred Alvarado

Gabino Bautista, a beginner farmer from the Hudson Valley region, attends monthly classes as part of the Futuro en Ag project, receiving weekly lessons and encouragement while learning to establish a farm financial record-keeping system. Gabino, like all farmers, works hard to grow his farm business, producing vegetables and herbs. He saves money from a landscaping job which he invests in the farm business. Together with his wife, Teresa Trujillo, Gabino raises the farm and three young children side-by-side with the shared goal to have a financially balanced family, farm, and life. He wants to learn how to think as a manager and agricultural entrepreneur, to develop the skills to turn his farm and his family’s effort into a successful business. Gabino is one member of a group of 18 New York State farmers who receive monthly farm financial education through the Cornell Small Farms course “Capacitación en español: Conociendo las Finanzas de su Finca” (“Getting to Know Your Farm Finances”).

New York State is home to a population of 19.7 million individuals, of which 17.3% (3.4 million) are of Hispanic origin, placing the state in the top 10 highest Hispanic populations nationwide, according to the U.S. Census Bureau (2019). In March 2022, as part of our Futuro Financiero Course, we met with a group of 15 Latinx farmers to learn about their priorities, needs, and barriers to achieving their farming goals. There was a clear desire to share experiences and learn from within their community. The group expressed interest in sharing best practices on farming in NYS and motivating aspiring and existing Latinx farmers and farm employees who are not yet encouraged to start an agricultural career due to a lack of access to information in Spanish. They were also interested in ag training tools and resources. This group of Latinx farmers consisted of small- and medium-sized farms, seeking education in Spanish and a way to share ideas. We, the Futuro en Ag and Latinx community as a whole, understand the need to voice the needs and barriers Latinx farmers face, but with clear goals and support from each other, as well as service providers and community organizations, we can see a successful future for a generation of Latinx farmers. Working together, with farmers of every identity, we grow safe and nutritious produce. Together, we are proud to be NYS farmers.

Mildred Alvarado is the LatinX Farmer Training Coordinator for the Cornell Small Farms Program. Her work is focused on building bridges to facilitate knowledge and help farmers overcome linguistic, cultural, and technical barriers to promote inclusive and profitable businesses. Coming from a farm facing the challenges that many still face, the program’s mission is close to home for her. The soil of her Honduran farm taught her how to survive and fueled her ambition to create economic opportunities for Latinx farmers and communities in the region.

We, the Futuro en Ag and Latinx community as a whole, should be proud of who we are, of what we have achieved, and continue to strive for success. The journey is not easy, but with clear goals and support from each other, as well as service providers and community organizations, we can see a successful future for a generation of Latinx farmers. Working together, with farmers of every identity, we grow safe and nutritious produce. Together, we are proud to be NYS farmers.

Farm Directory from 5 – or a specific consumer-facing website where the public can determine where to purchase your product in a retail location. The information available on the directory for each farm can be tailored to meet the individual needs of each business and farmers will be able to update their information as desired.

The creation of the Farm Directory derives from Section 18(52) of the NYS Agriculture and Markets Law, requiring the department to create a directory of every farm in NYS. Farms will be receiving a package in the mail shortly outlining the Farm Directory purpose, a survey to collect information on the farm to be included in the directory, and a return envelope. If you choose not to have your farm participate in the directory, you are required by law to notify the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets of this decision by opting out by returning the provided survey or indicating it through the online survey linked at the website above.

Farms that initially opt out can later contact the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets if they wish to be included at any point. Also, farms can also contact the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets if they wish to opt out after initially choosing to participate in the directory. For questions or additional information on the Farm Directory, contact the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets at 518.485.1050 or FarmDirectory@agriculture.ny.gov.

This article originally appeared on CALS News.

Cornell Cooperative Extension connects communities with the expertise of Cornell University’s College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALS) and the College of Human Ecology to enrich and empower NYS neighbors, local businesses, towns, and cities.

Co-facilitator Miguel Saviroff works simultaneously in Spanish and English with two skilled orchard managers of the Western New York Lake Ontario Region. El co-facilitador, Miguel Saviroff, trabaja simultáneamente en español e inglés con dos hablantes de ambos idiomas que contribuyen a la creación de los programas de formación de manzanos y peras.

More farmer voices will enhance the learning potential for all. As members of the Futuro en Ag community, every time we meet more Latinx farmers, we confirm that we are people full of talents and honesty with a desire to learn. We hold unique qualities and skills that make our community a versatile, flexible, and adaptable community.

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Futuro en Ag
Apoyamos la educación y el acceso a la información en Español

By Mildred Alvarado

Gabino Bautista, un agricultor principiante de la región del Valle del Hudson, asiste a clases mensuales como parte del proyecto Futuro en Ag, recibiendo lecciones semanales y motivación de sus compañeros de clase mientras aprende a establecer un sistema de registro financiero de su finca. Gabino, como todos los agricultores, trabaja duro para hacer crecer su negocio agropecuario, produciendo hortalizas y cuidando gallinas ponedoras para la producción de huevos. Ahorra dinero de su trabajo de jardinero y lo invierte en su finca. Junto a su esposa, Teresa Trujillo, Gabino cuida de su granja de gallinas ponedoras y de sus hortalizas, al mismo tiempo que cuida de sus tres hijos pequeños, ellos tienen un objetivo compartido como familia el cual es tener una finca y una vida económicamente equilibrada. Para lograrlo, él quiere aprender a pensar como gerente y empresario agrícola, para desarrollar las habilidades que le permitan convertir su finca y el esfuerzo de su familia en un negocio exitoso. Gabino es uno de los miembros de un grupo de 18 agricultores del Estado de Nueva York que reciben educación financiera agrícola mensual a través del curso de Small Farms Program: Capacitación en español: Conociendo las Finanzas de su Finca.

El Estado de Nueva York tiene una población de 19,7 millones de personas, de las cuales el 17,3% (3,41 millones) son de origen hispano, lo que sitúa al estado entre las diez poblaciones hispanas más numerosas del país, según la Oficina del Censo de los EEUU (2019). En Marzo del 2022, como parte de nuestro Curso de Futuro Financiero, nos reunimos con un grupo de 15 agricultores latinos para conocer sus prioridades, necesidades y barreras para alcanzar sus objetivos agrícolas. Había un claro deseo de compartir experiencias y aprender de su comunidad. El grupo expresó su interés en compartir las mejores prácticas sobre la agricultura en el Estado de Nueva York y en motivar a los aspirantes y a los actuales agricultores y empleados agrícolas latinos, que aún no se animan a iniciar una carrera agrícola debido a la falta de acceso a la información en español. También estaban interesados en las herramientas y recursos de formación en agricultura. Este grupo de agricultores latinos mencionó constantemente la necesidad de intercambiar ideas y experiencias, aprender de otros, contar sus historias y obtener acceso a recursos. Este significó que asistieran a un grupo de enfoque de agricultores condujo a nuestro programa piloto titulado, “Juntos Aprendemos,” que tiene como objetivo crear redes agrícolas con el propósito de educar y reforzar las prácticas de gestión financiera, mientras se motiva a los agricultores latinos y empleados agrícolas para desarrollar negocios y carreras agrícolas exitosas.

El entusiasmo de los agricultores latinos que hemos tenido el placer de conocer en los últimos años ha sido contagioso. Estas relaciones han llevado al establecimiento del proyecto Futuro en Ag, sede de Juntos Aprendemos y Futuro Financiero, así como al desarrollo de cursos en el que Gabino está inscrito actualmente. Gabino y los otros 17 agricultores latinos están aprendiendo a aplicar y desarrollar sus propios sistemas financieros de su finca para apoyar el proceso de tomar buenas decisiones en sus negocios agrícolas. En diferentes partes del Estado de Nueva York, los agricultores latinos están recopilando, organizando y registrando las transacciones financieras (gastos, ingresos y otros) semanalmente. Se reúnen regularmente con los facilitadores del curso Mildred Alvarado y Miguel Saviroff para ayudar a sus sistemas financieros y dominar Microsoft Excel. Se les anima a hacer preguntas y a expresar sus inquietudes en materia de finanzas. A medida que cada participante comparte sus experiencias y prácticas, todos los participantes tienen en cuenta el matiz que existe en cada finca y la importancia de entender que los mismos principios financieros se aplicarán en cada sistema de registro financiero único.

Como proyecto, Futuro en Ag apoya a los agricultores latinos para que tengan acceso a la información en español y a las herramientas educativas apropiadas para lograr sus objetivos y minimizar los riesgos. En contribución a los objetivos expresados durante el enfoque de agricultores latinos de WNY, el equipo de Futuro en Ag, en colaboración con nuestros socios, ha planeado las siguientes actividades para el verano del 2022.

- Curso Futuro Financiero en la Región
- Curso de Campo en español para la comunidad latina en el oeste de Nueva York, llevado a cabo el 17 de Junio en la oficina de Extensión Cooperativa de Cornell en el condado de Orleans. Los agricultores latinos de Long Island. Nuestro objetivo es colaborar con la comunidad latina en el desarrollo de formación y recursos específicos de la región para mejorar la gestión de sus fincas, educación financiera y el éxito general de los negocios agrícolas en la comunidad Latina.

A lo largo del año pasado, hemos intercambiado con una comunidad cada vez mayor de agricultores latinos que desean mejorar sus negocios agrícolas y convertirse en agricultores exitosos del Estado de Nueva York. Los graduados del curso del 2022 han inspirado a sus amigos y familiares en todo el oeste y el este de Nueva York. Como comunidad, queremos seguir aprendiendo jóvenes talentosos y motivados que se unan a nuestra comunidad para formar parte de nuestros recursos y capacitaciones. Esto ayudará a los agricultores exitosos del Estado de Nueva York, los demás agricultores que desean mejorar sus fincas, a ganar las habilidades y conocimientos necesarios para establecer sistemas financieros sólidos. En contribución a los objetivos expresados durante el enfoque de agricultores latinos de WNY, el equipo de Futuro en Ag, en colaboración con nuestros socios, ha planeado las siguientes actividades para el verano del 2022.

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A Call to Stand in Solidarity with Buffalo Food Justice Advocates and Partners

No one should lose their lives while shopping for food.

By Buffalo Food Justice Advocates

The Cornell Small Farms Program team stands with our neighbors in Buffalo as we collectively grieve the lives lost and process the horror of May’s mass shooting by a white supremacist targeting Black residents while they shopped at a neighborhood grocery store.

Please consider sharing this media advisory, co-created by Food for the Spirit and other Black-led organizations in New York State, and direct your support to the Black-led organizations feeding the community directly.

Change can only happen with our collective efforts.

Buffalo Food Justice Advocates and Partners Call for End to White Supremacy and Anti-Blackness

No one should lose their lives while shopping for food.

The recent mass shooting in Buffalo happened in a grocery store in East Buffalo. Because of the history of redlining and ongoing disinvestment in East Buffalo, there are very few grocery stores, leading many Black residents to rely on one neighborhood grocery store for their day-to-day needs. Reliance on the neighborhood grocery stores is especially critical for individuals without cars and the elderly.

In a recent household food survey of East Buffalo by a coalition of BFEN partners, 42% of respondents reported food insecurity, and 45% of those who are food insecure do not own any vehicles. The terrorist attack at that one grocery store most certainly highlights the importance of the work that many Buffalo residents and BFEN Food Equity Network members have been doing to fight food apartheid.

The root problem in Buffalo – and Buffalo’s food system – is white supremacy. We are calling on policymakers and society at large to retain focus on the institutional conditions that enabled the perpetrator to kill people in a Black neighborhood.

The Buffalo Food Equity Network (BFEN) is made up of over 100 people of color, predominantly Black folks who are East Buffalo residents, committed to addressing systemic racism in the food system in Buffalo and Western New York. BFEN members are growing food on urban farms and gardens; they are teaching people how to grow their own food at home; they are educating the public about the existence of racism in the food system; they are educating people on how racism in the food system impacts communities of color; they are advocating for more grocery stores in their communities; and they are advocating for increased investment in all these community-led activities and initiatives. We understand better than most the need for a healthier and equitable food environment in Buffalo. That said, Black neighborhoods need to be protected from acute violence toward Black people – and from chronic violence resulting from food apartheid. We need both things, and we need them now.

We are calling on policymakers to implement policies that will end acute and chronic violence against Black people. We are calling on policymakers and everyone to invest in Black communities and Black-led initiatives. We are calling on people to exert pressure on elected officials and everyone in their sphere of influence to demand an end to extreme and chronic violence toward Black people.

The following quotes from BFEN founders, members, and partners:

Ras Jorno Akono, CEO, Project Access to AFreeKa Radio and Arts: “I am deeply saddened by the terrorist attack on our community. Our families, friends, and neighbors have been traumatized from 1619 in this land. Our human rights have been abridged and we are pursuing Justice for our Ancestors – our past, present, and future. Our local, national, and international community is sending love and support. We demand Justice and Repair for the continued Maafa – or Great Tragedy – that this modern attack has augmented.”

Dennice Barr, BFEN member, President of Fruit Belt Advisory Council: “After having to take time to just breathe and regroup I can respond and offer tribute first to the elders and loved ones who were senselessly slaughtered for no reason other than being Black people in public. The lovelies who lived with honor and dignity were targeted by a ruthless racist with murderous intentions for living. The shock and outrage of this community that has lived through every demeaning, systematic plan to make the lives of respectable Black people as difficult as we can, this community that has endured long term from redlining, to denying basic human services such as adequate stores to spend our dollars in, has been the barriers that we have climbed over and around and to witness this young white male be walked out and placed into a police vehicle is in itself a showing of the systemic pieces working as every Person of Color recognizes without doubt that my son, their son, wouldn’t have made it out of that parking lot alive. Too much pain from too much history that can’t even be honored by too many people who keep those barriers in place daily, but we will continue to climb over and around the barriers and carry the truth within us regardless, because we know who and what we truly are.

Dr. Gwendolyn Baxley, BFEN member: “Unfortunately, the tragic massacre on Saturday is not an isolated, singular incident. It is important to contextualize what happened Saturday as part of broader implicit and explicit AntiBlackness in our society historically and currently. In all of our interconnected systems – education, housing, health, employment, food access, etc. – there have always been attacks on Black life and disdain for Blackness. Reckoning with this reality is crucial for considering any path forward.”

Allison DeHonney, Executive Director, Buffalo Go Green Inc.: “We must end Band-Aid type solutions to systemic problems. We must understand that access to healthy food options and equity in our healthcare system are basic human rights. If we do not have healthy food we will not live healthy people. Investment must be made in organizations and businesses that have a vested interest in seeing disenfranchised people have equality in all the systems that continue to thrive on the oppression of black and brown people. Resolutions to these systemic problems directed by Black and Brown leadership is imperative. We need a strong sustainable local food system and that means folks working in these spaces need access to land, buildings, resources, and a say in where economic investment is directed in order to put in place solutions that the system has failed to implement.”

Rita Hubbard-Robinson, JD, CEO, NeuWater LLC: “We have been fighting for so long and not heard. The systemic racism that was finally seen the nation during the COVID pandemic are laid bare at this moment. In a horrific moment defined by a heinous racist act of violence and death, lives were lost, and a lifetime for medicine, bill paying, groceries, and personal and household needs was stolen. We will never make sense of this loss, but if we can finally address the systemic issues around food that our community continues to face, this loss can be a catalyst for new hope. We need our supermarket back with a renewed focus on improving health. With the population"

Buffalo Food Equity Network is made up of over 100 people of color, predominantly Black folks who are East Buffalo residents, committed to addressing systemic racism in the food system in Buffalo and Western New York.
health of the Black community, we need additional stores on the east side beyond the one store closed as a present crime scene. We need the voices of our community to be heard and respected. And we need to be believed that racism exists in our daily lives, both in institutions and interactions."

Pamela James, BFEN member and Co-Founder, West Valley Farm and Camp Sites: “Although racial hatred has been rooted with in the United States of America since its conception, love and truth can drive hatred out.”

Della Miller, Community First: The health of a community is determined by the health of its people. Therefore, we need a bigger supermarket with a wider selection of fresh produce, health food section, a community kitchen or demo kitchen, better hours, brighter lights in the parking lot, wider access in and out of store entrance, space for community room, and the store must be in the surrounding community. These are some of the recommendations to bring a quality supermarket and justice to this community.”

Stephanie Morningstar, Mohawk, Turtle Clan, Executive Director, Northeast Farmers of Color Land Trust & Network: “This is not a singular issue that’s disconnect ed from other mass acts of racialized hatred. This tragedy is the symptom of an interlocking system of oppressions that was built to systematically exclude and oppress Black folks and people of color from health and well-being, community wealth, and joy. Self-determination and dismantling systemic oppression are the only cures to ending the epidemic of White Supremacy in the systems that control access to food, justice, education, and healthcare.”

Leah Penniman, Co-Founder of Soul Fire Farm and author of “Farming While Black”: “It is a moral outrage that the single most sacred and fundamental human duty — to feed our families — was exploited in this act of white supremacist terrorism. The colonial settler state has weaponized our access to food for over 400 years through land theft, chattel slavery, discriminatory lending, food apartheid, commodity rations, and corporate industrial food subsidies, among other acts of violence. Enough is enough. To free ourselves we must be able to feed ourselves.”

Dr. Samina Raja, BFEN member, Founder, UB Food Systems Planning and Healthy Communities Lab: “Structural racism and violence toward Black communities perpetuates acute and chronic harm. The routine act of shopping ought not to be hazardous to life.”

Dr. Jared Strohl, Facilitator, Food For the Spirit: “To stand in solidarity against white supremacy, we must support ongoing grassroots efforts happening in communities of color, particularly on the eastside of Buffalo where this tragedy occurred. Rather than white supremacy, it is time for white accountability — accountability to Black, Indigenous, and other communities of color in the ongoing fight against food apartheid and other forms of racial inequality.”

Jaime Swygert, community activist and Founder, the Juneteenth Agri-cultural Pavilion: “The fact that this disgusting, terrorist, evil act of violence took place in a grocery store is no coincidence. Access to food has been weaponized throughout history. From early crop burning and well poisoning, to present day terrorism. The colonial settler state is built to systematically exclude and distribute. We need to stop making color blind and acknowledge the truth that racism exists. This must be acknowledged as fact and the indoctrination of hate must be eradicated.”

Gail V Wells, Founder, Buffalo Freedom Gardens; BFEN member; Black Farmers United NYS member: “The time has come for a serious conversation regarding reparations. My ancestors were stolen and kidnapped and forced to labor for over 400 years. After building America we were promised 40 acres and a mule, yet that debt has never been paid! As a result of white nationalism and supremacy our communities have been burned, our lives have been violently taken, our wealth has been stymied, and our humanity has been denied. How long do we have to wait for justice? The time for reparations is now!”

"The truth is that movements are comprised of many organizations and individuals taking risks, demonstrating leadership, and contributing ideas and work. The media has a role in telling this truth," from Soul Fire Farm’s “Beyond Heroes Media Guide: A Guide for the Media: A

Rebekah Williams, Co-Founder, Food For the Spirit and BFEN: “There is not just one solution to the issues of racism and food apartheid in Buffalo. There needs to be policies created to address issues of historic disinvestment and racism in the food system. There needs to be increased investment in food organizations and initiatives led by people of color across the board, and there needs to be more education about systemic anti-Black racism throughout the United States and in our local communities.”

Alexander Wright, Founder, African Heritage Food Co-op and Blegacy Farms: “The attack was a physical manifestation of a problematic system. We have to take a hard look at everything and be honest about the racial bias inherent in the system, from funding to licensing to lending. And we, the community, must lead these efforts supported by allies and funding sources.”

Emmylou F1
EMMYLOU (previously B-3040) is a new 
TSWV and TYLCV resistant tomato variety from Bejo Seeds. It has a strong heterozygous fruit with a dark green shoulder, but the mature fruit is red and firm. Suitable for mature green or vine ripe production. HR: Va, Fol (1,2), TSWV, TYLDV

Jolene F1
JOLENE (previously B-3041) is a new introduction from Bejo Seeds for the Florida market. It produces attractive large to extra-large fruits with deep dark interior on a determinate plant. Early maturing, fruits are firm with a clean blossom end and uniform smooth shoulders. JOLENE is suitable for mature green or vine ripe production. With TYLDV and Fusarium crown rot resistance. HR: Va, Fol (1,2), TYLDV, For.

Loretta F1
LORETTA (previously B-3094) is a new high color, high flavor variety for fresh market or gas green production in Florida and the Southeast. Fruits have a smooth deep round shape, pinpoint blossom end, and reliably high pack out rate. Continuous yielder with strong determinate plant providing good protection from sun scald. HR: V, Fol (1,2), TSWV, For.

Mountain Rouge F1
All-America Selections 2019 Edible Award Winner! MOUNTAIN ROUGE is a large pink tomato with flavor and a unique shouldered look comparable to many heirlooms. Strong plants are highly productive. Good tolerance to Late Blight. HR: V, Fol (1,1, M, P, P)

Mountain Vineyard F1
MOUNTAIN VINEYARD is the first of its kind — this grape tomato contains the crimson gene for high lycopene as well as resistance to TSWV and Fusarium 3. The fruits are a glossy dark red color with appealing red locular gel. The green fruit has a dark green shoulder, but the mature fruit does not develop yellow eye on shoulder. They are firm with a balanced sweet flavor. Compact indeterminate vine, the short internodes make for a manageable plant on a 2’ stake. We recommend heavy pruning early. HR: V, Fol (1,3), TSWV

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Bejo Seeds are available through quality-minded dealers on both a seed packet and commercial scale. Contact your local sales representative, or call the number at right for a list of seed sources. See the Bejo assortment at bejoseeds.com, and the full lineup of 120 organic varieties at organicseedfinder.com
Buying a Ram for Breeding Purposes

Discover what traits to look for in a ram.

By Ulf Kintzel

A German proverb states “The ram is half the flock.” Since a ram can breed dozens of ewes during a breeding season, his quality is more important than the quality of any individual ewe in that same flock. Yet, the purchase of a ram is for many small flock owners an afterthought, often attempting to buy any ram just prior to breeding season. In this article I will outline how I suggest going about selecting a new ram.

Before giving thought to the individual health, the health of the flock that he will be from deserves some scrutiny. Some common diseases are more worrisome than others. There are some diseases that can easily be managed and are in fact so widespread that it will be hard finding a flock without them. Orf (sore mouth) is one of them. Other diseases are such a big economical factor and so hard to eliminate once they are in a flock, it is best to stay away from buying a ram from a flock that has it. Hoof rot is on that list of diseases.

Regarding the individual traits of a ram, I refer to a few traits that are specific for a grass-fed flock. They may not all apply if you feed a lot of grain. Also, my emphasis will be on meat production. If you seek an increase in wool production, many of my suggestions may not apply. Ultimately, any individual flock owner will have priorities based on what they might want to maintain or improve in their flock.

1. **Structure**: A ram should be built correctly. The individual body parts should be in proper proportions. The back should be firm and should not have a dip. The pastern joints should be firm. The hoof structure should be good. The overall appearance matters to a great degree since a flawed structure is often passed on to the offspring.

2. **Growth rate**: The actual weight of the ram at time of purchase is not that important. The importance lies in how long it took the ram to get to the weight and how the weight was achieved (grain vs. forage). The faster he achieved the weight when you buy him, the higher the daily gain of weight is. Daily gain of weight is a very important trait for commercial enterprises. One needs to be cautious, though, since a single-born lamb will always look better and weigh more than a comparable twin or triplet born lamb at the same age.

3. **Meatiness**: When selling market lambs, the development of the prime cuts like hind legs (leg of lamb) and back (roast, loin, and rib chops) will determine the sales price. The higher their perceived or actual yield, the more money a market lamb can fetch.

4. **Dam of ram**: The mothering and the milking ability of the mother are on top of the list of her traits. Easy lambing is another one. How many lambs the ewe has raised during her lifetime (her production record) is also important. The ram will pass on many of her good traits to his offspring.

5. **Temperament**: Calm sheep are easier to handle when you work with them during lambing season, deworming, vaccination, weighing, and so forth. They also gain weight easier. Wild sheep that jump fences can be a strain on a farmer’s nerves.

6. **Ability to thrive on forage**: This is a trait particularly important for grass-fed sheep. A deep and voluminous body allows the sheep to consume more forage. Tubulous stomachs, often associated with very long-legged sheep, do not. That is of utmost importance because forage always has a lower nutrition density than grain. Therefore, more must be consumed by a sheep to get the same nutrition compared to grain.

7. **Age**: A ram lamb, often less expensive than an adult ram, can often breed a few dozen ewes when born in spring and then breeds a small flock in autumn. An adult ram is more suitable for a larger flock. Older proven rams may be a safer buy but will shorten the time it can be used.

While one may have priorities in selecting a ram, it should never be based on just one or two traits. The whole picture must always be considered. The sum of all traits is what makes the ram.

The most common request for a ram I receive is for the ram lamb to be twin-born. You will have noticed that this trait is entirely absent from my list. While most ram lambs I sell are in fact twin-born and my flock consists mostly of ewes that were twin-born, it is still not high on the list of desirable traits when I buy a ram. Many people think that a twin-born ram will sire more twins than a single-born ram. That is a fundamental misunderstanding of genetics, and it is entirely incorrect. Whether a ram was born as a single, twin, or triplet has absolutely no effect on the number of twins he will sire. Many factors affect the twinning rate of a flock; few have to do with the ram. A healthy ram with good libido and a healthy flock structure. The way the ram looks (phenotype) the day of sale of problems. Heavy hoof trimming may hide incorrect hoof structure. The way the ram looks (phenotype) the day of sale allows the sheep to consume more forage. Tubulous stom-

The yearling White Dorper ram (center) is harmoniously built and without structural faults.

My statements above relate to sheep breeds with “normal” fertility. There are breeds with higher fertility such as composite breeds that incorporate a breed like Finn sheep or crosses that include a breed like Romanov. Breeds or crosses like these can produce lamb crops well over 200%, meaning more than two lambs per ewe on average, instead of the 180% I enjoy with my White Dorper sheep. Breeds like these are an exception to the rule I have outlined but come with several other inferior traits that one needs to consider before choosing them for the sake of wanting to increase fertility in a flock.

I still don’t want my statements about twin-born ram lambs be seen as an argument against selecting twin-born rams for breeding. I would just like to point out that there are many important traits to be considered and that the fact that he may be single-, twin-, or triplet-born should not rank too high on the list of desirable traits.

Lastly, the management of the flock from which a ram will be purchased needs to be considered as well. There is such thing as sales talk. A ram can be made to look good, for instance with heavy grain feeding, which can mask a variety of problems. Heavy hoof trimming may hide incorrect hoof structure. The way the ram looks (phenotype) the day of sale is not necessarily the way it will produce (genotype). Don’t

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**Buffalo from 9**

Soul Fire Farm Guide to Accurate Reporting on Social Justice Work.”

**Everyone Act Now**

- Share this media adviso:
  - bit.ly/BFEN_2022-05MediaAdvisory
- Invest in Black-led organizations working to end food apartheid and violence in Buffalo. Visit bit.ly/BlackLedBIIoOrgs. (To suggest edits, email foodsystems@ap.unl.edu.)

For more information about BFEN, visit bit.ly/bflofood-equity-faqs or contact Rebekah@foodforthespirit.org.

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By New York State Soil Health Initiative

Mark your calendars for 10 field days across the state that will focus on principles and practices related to building soil health and climate resiliency on farms.

“Soil health field days bring together farmers, agricultural professionals, and researchers for valuable co-learning around innovative research and on-farm practices,” said Joseph Amisili, Extension associate with the Cornell Soil Health Program.

The series kicked off on May 18 at New Roots Community Farm, a half-acre urban farm in the Bronx. This hands-on field day focused on urban soil health and water management.

Presentations, farmer panels, and demonstrations will be tailored for different types of agricultural systems, depending on the event’s focus. Certain field days will focus on urban agriculture, field crop, dairy, vegetable, orchard, vineyard, and organic systems.

“In collaboration with local researchers and partners, we are delivering region-specific information on current challenges and advancements in soil health practices,” said Deborah Aller, Extension associate with the Cornell Soil Health Program.

Events will showcase some favorite sustainable soil management practices: cover crops, reduced tillage, orchard groundcover management, strip-till pumpkins, precision viticulture, organic no-till, planting green, and biostrip till. The field day sites will be statewide.

Online registration is required for all events. A few events will have a small registration fee to support costs associated with the event.

2022 Field Day Collaborators and Partners include CCE Harvest NY, Cayuga SWCD, Tompkins SWCD, Cornell Climate Smart Farming Program, Kings AgriSeeds, CCE Clinton, Cornell Small Farms Program, CCE Eastern NY, USDA-NRCS, Cornell Lake Erie Regional Grape Program, Hudson Valley Farm Hub, CCE Orleans, American Farmland Trust, Western NY Crop Management Association, CCE Suffolk and SWCD, NOFA-NY, and the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets.

For more information about each of the events, visit fielddays.newyorksoilhealth.org.

Schedule of the 2022 Soil Health and Climate Resiliency Field Day Series:

- July 20, 1 - 4 p.m.: Northern NY – Peru at Sullivan Orchards (333 Rte. 22B), Topic: Orchard weed management and soil health.
- July 25, 3 - 7 p.m.: Central NY – Freeville at Thompson Research Farm, Topic: Weed management, cover crops, reduced tillage.
- July 28, 3 - 7 p.m.: Eastern NY – Johnstown at B&B Crop Farm, Topic: Reduced tillage, cover crops.
- Aug. 4, 2 - 6 p.m.: Hudson Valley – Hurley at Hudson Valley Farm Hub Farm, Topic: Organic no-till.
- Aug. 9, TBD: Western NY – Orleans County, Topic: Orchard groundcover management, soil health demos.
- Aug. 25, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.: Western NY – Pavilion at Swede Farm, Topic: Planting green, cover crops, biostrip.
- Aug. 31, 3:30 - 6:30 p.m.: Long Island – Calverton at Lewin Farms, Topic: Cover crops.

The New York State Soil Health Initiative seeks to build on the current strengths and momentum of key stakeholders and coordinate a network for information exchange, prioritization, and identification of barriers and opportunities in order to facilitate farmer adoption of soil health practices.

just ask about the ram itself. You want to be informed how the flock is managed before you focus on the ram. If the management system is similar to yours or is what you strive for, a ram from such farm may be a good fit.

If the management system is similar to yours or is what you strive for, a ram from such farm may be a good fit.

Ulf Kintzel owns and operates White Clover Sheep Farm and breeds and raises grass-fed White Dorper sheep without any grain feeding and offers breeding stock suitable for grazing. He is a native of Germany and has lived in the U.S. since 1995. He farms in the Finger Lakes area in upstate New York. His website is whitecloversheepfarm.com.

Ulf Kintzel / White Clover Sheep Farm

These March-born White Dorper ram lambs will be able to breed two dozen ewes or more by autumn.
Some Fencing and Grazing Considerations for Beef Cattle

In Part 9 of our “What’s Your Beef?” series on raising cattle on small farms, we share grazing experiences that have been learned about and adapted over the years.

By Rich Taber

This is the ninth installment of articles in our series on raising and managing beef cattle. Previous versions may be seen in the archives of Small Farms Quarterly at smallfarms.cornell.edu. In this installment I am going to highlight some of the grazing experiences that I have learned about and adapted over the years. In the farming world, there are hundreds of articles, PowerPoints, books, Zooms, and people that will show you how to plan for and execute a good grazing management plan for your property; most of them are excellent and well worth you availing yourselves of. Rather than simply rehash some of the volumes of information that is out there, I thought I would write about some specific things that I have learned and adapted for use over the years—in other words, theories established with lots of experience.

The experiences that I have garnered over the years may be applied to any class of livestock: beef, sheep, horses, and dairy animals. I learned many years ago about the viability of grasses and grazing for livestock. In the late 1960s, I was a 4-H’er living on a small farm in Eastern Connecticut. That was the era of cheap energy and feed grains. We gluttoned our show animals on inexpensive grain and a little grass; how we did not have more digestible issues than we did amazes me. I had a small group of market lambs that I was feeding for show and meat animal sales at the University of Connecticut. As mentioned, we fed huge quantities of grain to these animals, with no grazing, and a little hay. One day a neighbor came along and wanted to buy a ewe and a couple lambs from me. Away from my barn-kept, pampered show lambs and in pastures I had an old, raggedy Horned Dorset ewe who had two lambs, almost as an afterthought, and just subsisting on a little grass and no grain. When I brought this ewe and her lambs in to sell, I was absolutely stunned to find that the lambs were fat, well-muscled, and as heavy as my market lambs receiving their high-octane grain diets. It was sort of an epiphany for me, learning firsthand that livestock could perform so well on grass. By no stretch was the field these sheep were living in a stellar example of grazing management; it was just an old, unimproved pasture/hayfield. Then it dawned on me that many American beef herds and sheep flocks are raised on rough, unimproved lands in the western part of the country. Keeping to Midwest feedlots to be finished, and they subsisted on marginal lands. A seed for grazing (metaphorically speaking) was planted in my mind. Grasses and grazing provide the most nutritious and inexpensive source of feed for ruminant livestock. The concepts of grazing fit well within the ecological and environmental inclinations; we could depend less on fossil fuels and high inputs and let nature do most of the work with green grass!

Fast forward to the late 20th and early 21st centuries. I live on a rough, former dairy farm high in the hills of southern Madison County, NY. We have long, cold, snowy winters and not the greatest soils (they are acid prone and somewhat poorly drained), but I have grown mountains of rain most years. We can graze from mid-May till about the end of October/early November. The steep, wet, highly erodible land is not so good for row crops and conventional agriculture but does just fine for grazing.

Another thought that seeped its way into my mind was that whatever I do agronomically with my grazing fields that I keep economics in mind. If you do everything that all of the many sources of information tell you to do, you can end up spending huge amounts of money. This is okay if you have it, but many times we don’t like to admit it, and we ended up spending fair amounts of money from off-farm jobs to finance our grazing operations. I salivate as much as anyone thumping through those beautiful seed catalogs replete with many different seed mixes that I might plant. With that being said, I try to keep in mind that what I will be selling on the other end of the grazing cycle as income will repay farm expenses, whether it be a calf/cow/calf beef operation, finishing beef animals, feeder beef cattle, lambs, or dairy heifers. In other words, let’s try to get the animals to pay for themselves.

With these musings in mind, I will now share some of the adaptations that I have found worked for me over the years as far as grazing goes.

Let’s talk about fencing first. Many people use high tensile electric fencing for their perimeter fences, powered by high energy chargers. This works well for many people and situations, but I have shied away from this practice in recent years on this farm. I dislike depending on anything electric for a perimeter fence for a couple reasons. First, almost all of our fence lines are up against woodland edges. Winds, heavy thunderstorms, and snowstorms blow down trees, shorting out fences. In 1997, we had a notable late snowstorm dropping 16 inches of heavy, wet snow on much of Upstate New York, shorting out fences all over, resulting in hav-oc being wrought by fallen tree limbs. We also had a complete loss of power for four days. Yes, we have a PTO-driven tractor generator, but we don’t run it 24/7 due to the cost of diesel fuel and the wear and tear on the tractor engine. A couple years ago I had a neighbor who had several beef cows escape when a tree limb shorted out their fence. It took almost two months to get these near-feral animals caught up again. Loose animals can lead to all sorts of legal ramifications! Think of cow/cow collisions and ruined crops and seedings from unwanted animals!

We do use electric fences for all our interior paddock subdivisions, and it works quite well for that purpose. If an animal breeches a paddock, it’s no big deal; at least the animal does not escape the property. What we do fence our perimeters with is either high tensile stretched woven wire or purchased 16-foot panels. Both types work fine for us. It’s expensive, but once they’ve up they require little maintenance. If a tree falls on the fence, most times it’s not crushed enough to allow the animals to escape. We use cedar fence posts to attach the woven wire or wire panels to. If you want to use the woven wire, you will need to acquire a Jenny that holds the wire in a roll from on your tractor’s three-point hitch, which allows you to pay it out before attaching it to the fence posts.

I have also adapted the use of high tensile electric rope for my interior subdivisions. For the number of cows that we have, I lay out about four-acre subdivisions with the ropes, using step-in plastic posts. The cows remain in each paddock for about four days and then are moved into the next paddock. I have no desire to move animals on a daily basis; you need to do this if you’re milking dairy cows. Many of us with livestock, however, work off the farm and it does take a fair amount of time to lay out paddocks and move animals. In that vein, we don’t want to leave animals in a paddock for too long either, such as in continuous grazing. Paddocks do need a given amount of time to recover, and that depends on myriad factors such as the time of the season, the condition of the soil, the amount of regrowth that you can expect, and the amount of rain received.

Another area that I have developed some skills in is in bringing back worn-out hayfields and pastures to a good state of production, and without the use of too much tillage. Again, if I were milking dairy cows, I would

This shows high tensile woven wire fencing under construction and being attached to cedar posts.

Four acres is the minimum amount of land I have on my farm for grazing. Even if you have more land, the paddocks must be large enough and the pastures must be managed in such a way that the animals do not cause the land to be eroded. The paddocks are also the means by which I rotate the animals to the various fields.

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Cornell Garden-Based Learning Sets Sights on Food Forests

The new Food Forest Trial Garden Project supports the development of edible perennial landscapes for new audiences.

By Hannah Rae Warren

Food Forests, also known as Edible Forests, sees community growers cultivating edible perennial plants, such as fruit and nut trees, berries, roots, flowers, etc. in an arrangement that is functional, productive, and often aesthetically pleasing. This is a subset of agroforestry, which broadly speaking is a land management approach that integrates trees or woody perennials (think nut trees, timber, sugar maple) with other crops such as annuals, mushrooms, or even pasture for grazing.

Cornell Garden-Based Learning is looking to support the development of edible perennial landscapes for new audiences through their Food Forest Trial Garden Project. The project supports collaboration between CCE educators, Master Gardener volunteers, and local gardeners and has offered micro-grants to communities to implement and steward their own food forests. As part of this focus, they invited Master Gardener volunteers and other CCE stakeholders from across the state to participate in a round of hands-on workshops held in CCE Tioga’s Hilltop Community Farm to hone some of the skills needed to tend to a Community Food Forest.

Topics included creating habitat for beneficial insects, honoring the history and ingenuity of indigenous agroforestry, low-till gardening techniques, soil and water best practices, and propagation demonstrations. It culminated in the planting of Hilltop Community Farm’s first ever Food Forest.

Following the event’s inaugural planting in Candor, NY, four other forest garden sites will be designed and planted through a Food Forest Trial Garden mini-grant program with Cornell Garden-Based Learning, with the hope of bringing the pilot workshop program to other sites around the state, engaging local audiences and people from diverse backgrounds and indigenous agroforestry traditions to take the lead. These Food Forests may have distinct forms and vary greatly in their perennial crops and design. Participants discussed how different community needs will impact the design and layout of the garden in their communities. For example, in some urban landscapes, gardeners may face pressure to highlight aesthetic beauty and the “tidy” nature of their garden (using straight lines, neat fences, mulching, and to show it is a managed, not abandoned space) whereas those in rural areas may face different challenges, such as such as deer fencing and other pest pressures.

Regardless of location, all Food Forests will need a plan for who will steward them and should be designed in consideration of future climate change impacts.

To explore opportunities for beginning farmers in the farm incubator program and view upcoming events at Hilltop Community Farm, visit tioga.cce.cornell.edu/hilltop-community-farm.

Hannah Rae Warren is the Bilingual Project Specialist for the Cornell Small Farms Program. Her work focuses on building relationships throughout our local and regional food system, and supporting pathways for Spanish speakers to pursue farming and adopt IPM practices. She’s interested in promoting land access for all people that wish to grow food and working to make educational and financial resources more accessible in sustainable agriculture.

Craig Cramer / Cornell SIPS

Participants learn how to plant a hickory tree in the new Food Forest.

I’ve found that brush-hogging can work wonders. I have brush-hogged some fields infested with horrible concoctions of weeds and thistles that have returned with some beautiful swards of grasses once the weeds were removed. Where do these grasses come from? In a nutshell, from the native seedbank which lies dormant waiting for the right conditions to flourish. I do not use any kind of herbicides on my pastures, being somewhat organic in my leanings.

Soil testing is a must! You cannot continuously graze or remove hay without having to return some nutrients to the soil, whether it be fertilizer, compost, manure, or cover crops!

I also use the brush-hogs to clip the pastures; I try to hit every paddock at least once a year but don’t always succeed in doing so. If you don’t, you will see noxious species starting to show up, such as thornapples and briars which if left too long become very difficult to mow.

This is not an end-all, exhaustive compendium on grazing theory, just some of the experiences that I have developed over time and that work for me, high in the hills of Madison County. I love grasses and grazing, because it provides for excellent animal products and face pressure to highlight aesthetic beauty and the "tidy" nature of their garden (using straight lines, neat fences, mulching, and to show it is a managed, not abandoned space) whereas those in rural areas may face different challenges, such as such as deer fencing and other pest pressures.

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Farm Ops’ Cohort Learning Sessions Bring Veterans Together to Talk Ag

During the Small Farm Program’s online course season, Farm Ops, our military veteran project, provided veterans with free enrollment into select online courses and conducted veteran learning cohort sessions to supplement the course material.

By Nina Saeli

It is commonly known that military veterans are drawn toward opportunities to learn and train together, but in early 2020 when the pandemic derailed in-person training opportunities, the inability to meet became more than disappointing.

“I felt isolated. I had not been farming long and not being able to meet and talk to other farmers was discouraging,” stated veteran farmer Jesse Wixson.

Veteran project associate Dean Koyanagi decided that he was not going to wait until the pandemic ended to bring veterans back together. He set up virtual office hours on Zoom and invited veteran farmers across New York State to join him and other veterans engaged in farm-related discussions. “We knew we had veterans ready to expand their farming efforts during the pandemic, but they were unable to connect with peers and mentors at a critical time for beginning farmers,” Koyanagi said. “We knew it might not replace those strong connections made through spending time together in person. But for some, it helped maintain their motivation.”

In January 2021, Koyanagi also decided to work with the Small Farms Program’s Online Course Coordinator, Erica Frenay, to support free enrollment into online courses for veterans. Over time, the concept of bringing veterans together virtually when enrolled in the same SFP online course seemed like a good fit for the veteran cohorts, who shared their growing experiences throughout the season.

“Veteran cohort sessions provide a space to collaborate with veteran peers, enhancing the learning experience and creating a sense of community.”

Veteran cohort sessions include a space to talk about veterans’ experiences, plans for our farm, as well as learning from other veterans and their experiences farming. I am hoping to continue expanding my network of veteran farmers. As a veteran and a farmer, it is nice to have a sense of connection and community.”

In the cultural transformation of Whole Health, community is the circle that brings it all together,” said Danielle Lutz, DPT, at the Canandaigua VA Medical Center. “Our partnership with Cornell over these years has allowed us to expand and support the community of veterans interested and working in agriculture. This community helps support our mission of empowering and equipping our veterans on their pathway to discover/rediscover ‘what matters most’ to them.”

When enrolled in a Small Farms Program online course, a person may interact with individuals not just from around the U.S. but from around the world. The Farm Ops cohort sessions bring together the veterans enrolled into that course as a smaller, more localized, collaborative group. Coast Guard veteran Allison Lavine started farming when she and her husband purchased acreage in Savona, NY, in 2014. They learned mostly through trial by fire, reading lots of books, watching videos, and learning by personal mistakes and successes.

“Our farm is ZiegenVine Homestead. On a small scale we raise goats, offering goat yoga since 2017; raise chickens and ducks for eggs; turkeys; and have raised pigs off and on for the past several years,” Lavine shared. “I jumped at the chance to take the Cornell Small Farms Pastured Pigs course mainly because they offered veteran cohort learning sessions along with the course. The veteran sessions led by veteran farmers were very informative, giving me the opportunity to talk about my experiences and plans for our farm, as well as learning from other veterans and their experiences farming. I am hoping to continue expanding my network of veteran farmers. As a veteran and a farmer, it is nice to have a sense of connection and community.”

The veteran cohort sessions have allowed me to engage with a wide variety of both beginning and established farmers who are all linked together by their service. This link tends to engender a sense of base camaraderie that allows us to open up with each other, and I’ve found myself learning quite a bit just sharing and hearing others’ experiences, whether they be successes or failures,” stated Marine veteran Rich Mattingly. “In our area, I have also been able to make connections with other farmer veterans that has given me a lot of hope for our success as we begin to build our farm business. As veterans engage in a cohort, they may be exposed to new careers, opinions, experiences, and ideas. Because many veterans have similar interests, goals, and/or experiences, being part of a cohort makes it easier to further network and build relationships.”

“THINKING SMALL ISN’T ALWAYS A BAD THING!”

By Jim Catalano

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Vine Removal Technique Foils Devastating Grape Disease

There's no cure for leafroll disease, but scientists at Cornell AgriTech have documented a new technique that can reduce the incidence of leafroll disease in commercial vineyards.

By Jim Catalano

Removing not only a diseased grapevine but the two vines on either side of it can reduce the incidence of leafroll disease, a long-standing bane of vineyards around the world, Cornell researchers have found.

Leafroll disease, a virus spread by mealybugs, damages grapevines, reduces yield, and alters grape quality – all of which can detrimentally affect wine quality and cost growers tens of thousands of dollars per hectare. There’s no cure for leafroll disease, so growers have traditionally attacked it by tearing out infected vines – that is, roguing, or removing “rogue” plants – and replacing them with healthy ones.

In the first study of its kind, scientists at Cornell AgriTech have documented that the new technique, called spatial roguing, can reduce the incidence of leafroll disease in commercial vineyards. Removing the extra vines eliminates the mealybugs’ means of transporting the leafroll virus, creating a moth-like space. The study was published in the April issue of the American Journal of Enology and Viticulture.

For the study, Marc Fuchs, professor in the Plant Pathology and Plant-Microbe Biology Section in the School of Integrative Plant Science at Cornell AgriTech, and his team set up a cabernet franc plot at Shelдержe Point Winery in Ovid, NY, where they documented the presence of leafroll disease and mealybugs, and then tested the effectiveness of spatial roguing and mealybug insecticide management, both alone and in combination.

Over a five-year period, they found that spatial roguing was effective in quickly reducing the incidence of leafroll virus – from 4% in 2016 to almost zero in 2020-21 – while the unrogued vines’ viral incidence increased from 5% to 16%. Insecticides reduced mealybug population to almost zero over the same period; in untreated vines, it grew 57 to 257 times greater. But insecticides were not shown to limit the number of newly infected vines.

"Managing leafroll used to seem a bit like a ‘whack-a-mole’ game because it would keep popping up," said Dave Wiemann, vineyard manager at Shelreshold Point Vineyard. “By acting quickly and utilizing Fuchs’s strategy, we now know that we will avoid having to remove large sections of vines in the future. That will translate into more consistent yields and quality, which are both critical to our winery’s success.”

Fuchs has been researching grape viruses for decades and had been intrigued by the possibilities of spatial roguing. But it wasn’t until 2015, when he collaborated with Miguel I. Gomez, the Robert G. Tobin Food Marketing Professor in the Charles H. Dyson School of Applied Economics and Management, and Shadi Atallah, Ph.D., his graduate student at the time, that he was able to gather some numbers to bolster his case.

“They modeled what they are referring to as the bio-economic spread of the disease, where one takes into account how the disease is spreading in the vineyard and what the economics have been for the grower," Fuchs said. “Meaning, do you remove just one vine or also the two adjacent vines, and how much money do you make or lose? When is it economical to do one thing versus the other?"

There is a cost to spatial roguing, Fuchs said, in terms of the labor needed to removing disease vines and replanting with healthy vines, in addition to the loss of full production for the five years it takes a new vine to begin producing.

“Growers are used to making business decisions on how to best manage their vineyards based on immediate profits,” he said. “But we are convinced that it’s worth losing a little bit of money upfront, or investing money upfront, because dividends would be incurred much faster down the road.”

Sometimes, leafroll infestation can be so high – a virus incidence of 25% or more – that it’s not economical to employ spatial roguing. In those cases, some growers will choose to do nothing and live with the reduced quality of their grapes, while others will determine that total vineyard replanting is the better strategy.

The concept of spatial roguing may puzzle some growers and wine-makers, Fuchs said. “Growers like to grow things, not tear them out,” he said. But as more of them adopt the tactic, he believes the results will speak for themselves.
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