

Watershed Farm & Forest

Summer 2009

Stewardship Programs of the Watershed Agricultural Council

Byebrook Farm and Cheese

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In 1985, Paul and Gwen Deysenroth began farming on Gwen's family's farm in Bloomville, Delaware County. Their sons – Paul, Daniel and Dennis – are the eighth generation to live and farm there. The 154-acre dairy farm consists of approximately 40 Holsteins and an equal number of young stock. The herd is grass-based, intensive grazing on pasture during the summer months and feeding on dry hay and baleage through the winter. Byebrook Farm is a model for grazing workshops and routinely hosts Council outings and pasture walks. In 2008, the New York State Agricultural Society recognized Byebrook Farm as a bicentennial farm.

In 1992, the family enrolled as a pilot farm in the Watershed Agricultural Program. Since then, the farm has benefited from the Ag Program in many ways. The Best Management Practices implemented on the farm include: calf and heifer housing, watering systems, fencing, milk house waste systems and laneways. Byebrook also participates in the Nutrient Management Credit Program where they receive benefits annually for properly handling their manure. The farm is also a member of the Pure Catskills by local campaign.

In 2002, Paul and Gwen caught the itch to diversify their business. Looking for a way to make more money – without expanding their herd, and hopefully support two families (should one of their sons choose to farm) – the Deysenroths explored their value-added options in dairy. Paul had always dreamed of bottling and selling the farm's milk, but with the expense and laws associated with bottling, the



Paul carefully turns Gouda cakes in the farm's cheese aging room.

Photo credit: DrewHarty.com



The Gouda, aged for 60 days or more, are sealed in red wax rinds: a time-consuming process but worth the work and the wait.

couple began researching cheesemaking.

A watershed-sponsored tour of a Hudson Valley cheese producer sparked the couple's interest. Paul and Gwen began travelling to other cheese producers and educating themselves on the process and industry regulations. After visiting a Vermont cheesemaker with a similar farm to their own, they decided on Gouda cheese.

In May 2008, the Deysenroths produced their first batch of Byebrook Raw-Milk Gouda cheese. Over the last year, the family has brought 13 batches of cheese, with its signature red wax rind and eye-catching label, to market. The cheese – sold at the Delhi and Andes farmers' markets, local stores and on the farm – regularly sells out. The cheese is currently made by Paul, Gwen, and son Daniel at the Cooperstown Cheese Company in Milford, NY. Paul hauls 2,000 pounds of milk to Milford in a bulk tank and transports the finished product, 200 pounds of cheese, back to the farm. The cheese is aged for at least 60 days in an aging room that was built adjacent to the farm's milk house. "We really get enjoyment out of selling our milk directly to the consumer," says Gwen.

So what does the future hold for Byebrook Farm? Realistically with milk prices remaining low and their youngest son, Dennis now farming side by side with the couple, they would like to expand the cheese-making business and produce the cheese on-site. When asked if they would like to make cheesemaking a full-time career, Gwen replied, "We're not really the indoor type of people." So for now, the cheese is selling and they're taking it one batch at a time. With all three sons, daughter-in-law and two granddaughters living on the farm, there is never a dull moment...and hay (and cheese) help is always just a stone's throw away.



Farm at Sunrise

Photo credit: DrewHarty.com





Side view of forced-air composting facility: This particular facility was constructed with four bays which would aid in the composting of approximately 200 cubic yards/month of material. The concrete, timber, and asphalt shingle structure has dimensions of 33' x 67' with a 10' roof height clearance in the front to account for the height of the front loaders.



Aeration piping, gate valves and blower housing: The 1.5-hp blower operates through a cycle timer which the owner can set at 12 hour intervals. Each bay of the compost facility is supplied forced air from the blower through a network of 3" PVC pipe. Each of the bay's air inflow can be turned on and off through the 3" gate valves shown in the photo above.

Forced Air Composting

The East of Hudson Program recently completed the installation of a forced air composting systems at Pleasant View Farm in Brewster, NY. According to www.O2Compost.com, forced air composting helps support sustainable agriculture by managing manure through the use of aeration. This method eliminates the need to turn the pile, and also accelerates the composting process. An electric blower introduces oxygen into the mix of materials and produces heat. The temperature becomes high enough to pasteurize the material, eliminate offensive odors, destroy fly larvae and weed seeds. Aerated compost is an excellent source of nutrients and organic matter, and retains water well thereby reducing soil erosion.

O2Compost assisted the WAC in developing Pleasant View's designs.

O2Compost – environmental engineers, scientists, and educators based in Snohomish, Washington – has successfully installed over 250 forced air compost systems in the United States and Canada.

Later this year, O2Compost will work with Agricultural Engineer Andy Cheung designing and installing additional forced air composting systems at two croton watershed farms.



Front view of forced-air composting facility: Each of the four bays of this facility are 15.5 feet wide, 5 feet high, 30 feet deep and can hold approximately 83 linear cubic yards of material. Each bay was also constructed with 3 aeration boxes (wooden slats shown in the photo above) to allow air to circulate through the material resulting in decreased composting time. Compost cycle time would be decreased to approximately 30 days and cured in a separate area for 60 days.

Dig It! Composting Workshop

Composting and recycling food, garden, and agricultural waste for institutions, municipalities and farms can be a quite an undertaking. But 30 people took the challenge at Clearpool Education Center in Kent on May 18. A team of experts – headed by Jean Bonhotal of Cornell University's Waste Management Institute (CWMI), Robert Rynk from SUNY Cobleskill, Terry Laibach from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, and Horst Grunow from the Culinary Institute of America – shared their wisdom about waste management techniques for large-scale facilities.

A diverse group from county governments and health departments, schools, private industry, garden and country clubs attended the workshop along with several East of Hudson Whole Farm Plan Participants. Attendees learned about composting's goals and processes, collection and separation of materials, regulations and site selection and troubleshooting.

The workshop was co-sponsored by Green Chimneys and the Council with funding from the NYC DEP.



You Gotta Start Somewhere; Standing by Clearpool Educational Center's compost pile, the group is reminded that everyone has to start small! Pictured (l-r): Phoebe Lindsay (WAC Project Coordinator), Vandra Thorburn (Brooklyn Community Gardens), Chris Hendershot (Clearpool), John Crockett (Magic Soil), Bob Rynk (SUNY-Cobleskill), Jean Bonhotal (CWMI), and Shig Matsukawa (Brooklyn Community Gardens).



Photo credit: Diane Galusha

The Poopolution Solution

Agricultural Program Manager Brian LaTourette and Program Assistant Leslie Deysenroth helped fourth-graders understand the connection between animal waste and water pollution at Ag-Stravaganza, Sullivan County Fairgrounds.

Each June, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Sullivan County invites 500 students from area schools to partake in the day-long, agriculture mini-workshops to learn how agriculture impacts their daily lives through nutrition, water quality and food production.

Save the Date

Pre-registration for Clean Sweep 2009 is September 8-18. Watershed farmers can drop off their hazardous household waste, free of charge, on September 25 in Delaware County. For more information visit www.nycwatershed.org.





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The Farm to Market Program, with \$50,000 in funding from the NYC DEP, sponsored 22 agricultural-educational events in five counties in the Catskill/Delaware watershed this year. For event information, visit www.purecatskills.com.



Watershed Farm & Forest is a semi-annual newsletter of the Watershed Agricultural Council (WAC), a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization whose mission is to support the economic viability of agriculture and forestry through the protection of water quality and the promotion of land conservation in the New York City Watershed region. The WAC is funded by the New York City Department of Environmental Protection, U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Forest Service and other federal, foundation and private sources. The WAC is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer. This issue is printed on 100% post-consumer paper, certified EcoLogo, Processed Chlorine Free, FSC Recycled and manufactured by Cascades using biogas energy.

Choosing a Forester

Ever look out into your forest and wondered what to do with it? A qualified forester can help. Be it harvesting timber or other natural resources, attracting more wildlife or stabilizing water courses to reduce erosion (and improve water quality), a forester will help you align your personal stewardship goals with what your land has to offer.



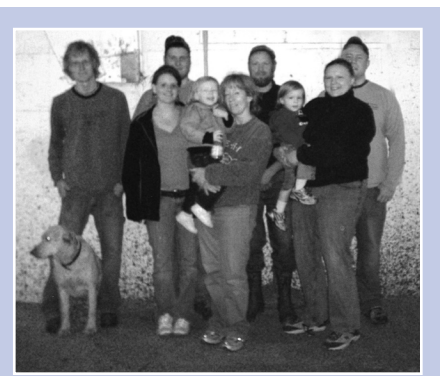
WAC Project Engineer Andy Hubbard discusses a forest management plan with Consulting Forester Michelle Merola.

"Choosing a Forester," a white paper created by the Forestry Program, is available at www.nycwatershed.org. Along with a list of questions to ask a prospective forester, you'll learn why experience, training and education are so important to this long-term relationship between you, your forester and your land.

Download "Choosing a Forester" and a directory of Qualified Forestry Planning Contractors from the WAC website or call (607) 865-7790, ext. 101 for more information.

Byebrook Farm and Cheese

Read more about our featured farm family, the Deysenroths, on page 1.



Eight generations in family farming, and going strong (l-r, back row): Daniel, Dennis, Paul III, and Paul IV. (l-r, front row): Dennis' girlfriend Sami, Gwen holding grand-daughter Grace and daughter-in-law Leslie with grand-daughter Caitlyn. On all fours: Ike.

