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see pg. 18

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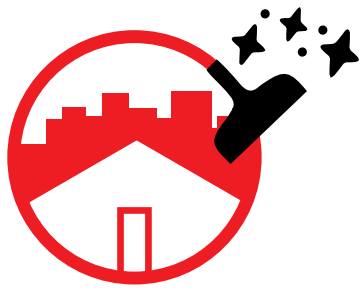


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# FARMER

## Resource Toolbox



**Looking to connect with farms, markets, or programs that strengthen our agricultural community?**

This guide brings together trusted resources for farmers, families, and neighbors alike. Whether you're searching for local food, business support, or educational opportunities, these organizations help keep our region's farming traditions strong while supporting new ideas and growth.

### WHERE TO FIND LOCAL FOOD & FARMS

#### ADIRONDACK HARVEST

Regional directory of farms, markets, and local food events.

[adirondackharvest.com](http://adirondackharvest.com)

#### FARMERS' MARKET FEDERATION OF NY

Statewide farmers' market info, including SNAP/EBT programs.

[nyfarmersmarket.com](http://nyfarmersmarket.com)

#### FARMLAND FOR A NEW GENERATION NY

Connecting new farmers with landowners and protecting farmland.

[nyfarmlandfinder.org](http://nyfarmlandfinder.org)

### ENERGY & SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAMS

#### NYSERDA –

#### AGRICULTURE ENERGY AUDITS

Energy efficiency audits and incentives for farms.

[nysesda.ny.gov/All-Programs/Agriculture-Energy-Audit](http://nysesda.ny.gov/All-Programs/Agriculture-Energy-Audit)

#### USDA REAP (RURAL ENERGY FOR AMERICA PROGRAM)

Grants and loans for renewable energy and energy efficiency.

[rd.usda.gov/programs-services/energy-programs/rural-energy-america-program-energy-audit-renewable-energy](http://rd.usda.gov/programs-services/energy-programs/rural-energy-america-program-energy-audit-renewable-energy)

### COMMUNITY SUPPORT & ADVOCACY

#### NEW YORK FARM BUREAU

The voice of farmers, advocating for agriculture and rural communities.

[nyfb.org](http://nyfb.org)

#### CORNELL COOPERATIVE EXTENSION (CCE)

Local classes, gardening workshops, 4-H programs, and farm/food education in every county. [cce.cornell.edu](http://cce.cornell.edu)

#### SARATOGA PLAN

Protecting farmland, open space, and trails to support agriculture and rural communities in Saratoga County.

[saratogaplan.org](http://saratogaplan.org)

### SPECIALTY AGRICULTURE PROGRAMS

#### CORNELL PRO-DAIRY

Education and resources for dairy farm management.

[prodairy.cals.cornell.edu](http://prodairy.cals.cornell.edu)

#### HARVEST NY (CCE)

Regional specialists supporting dairy, local foods, and workforce development.

[harvestny.cce.cornell.edu](http://harvestny.cce.cornell.edu)

#### NORTHEAST SARE (SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE RESEARCH & EDUCATION)

Farmer-driven research and education grants.

[northeast.sare.org](http://northeast.sare.org)

### FARM FAMILY & BUSINESS RESOURCES

#### NY FARMNET (CORNELL)

Free, confidential support for farm families: financial planning and personal counseling.

[nyfarmnet.org](http://nyfarmnet.org)

#### FARM CREDIT EAST

Financing, records, and tax services designed for agriculture.

[farmcrediteast.com](http://farmcrediteast.com)

#### NYS AG & MARKETS – SWCD FINDER

Connect with your county Soil & Water Conservation District for conservation and cost-share programs.

[agriculture.ny.gov/soil-and-water/soil-water-conservation-district-offices](http://agriculture.ny.gov/soil-and-water/soil-water-conservation-district-offices)

#### AMERICAN FARMLAND TRUST

National nonprofit protecting farmland, promoting sound farming practices, and keeping farmers on the land.

[farmland.org](http://farmland.org)

### MARKETING & BUSINESS TOOLS

#### SCORE

Free, confidential business mentoring for small businesses, including farms.

[score.org](http://score.org)

#### EMPIRE STATE DEVELOPMENT (ESD)

Grants, loans, and tax credits to support business growth and expansion.

[esd.ny.gov](http://esd.ny.gov)

### EDUCATION & TRAINING

#### CORNELL SMALL FARMS PROGRAM

Guides, classes, and resources for aspiring and experienced farmers.

[smallfarms.cornell.edu](http://smallfarms.cornell.edu)

#### NOFA-NY

Organic certification and education.

[nofany.org](http://nofany.org)

#### FARMER VETERAN COALITION

Supporting veterans who choose farming as their next mission.

[farmvetco.org](http://farmvetco.org)

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# FARMERS' MARKETS



## SARATOGA COUNTY

### Saratoga Farmers' Market

112 High Rock Ave, Saratoga Springs

**SCHEDULE:**

Saturdays, May – October, 9 AM – 1 PM  
 Wednesdays, May – October, 3 – 6 PM

- FMNP Accepted: Yes
- FreshConnect Checks: Yes

### Spa City Farmers' Market

Saratoga Spa State Park (Lincoln Baths), Saratoga Springs

**SCHEDULE:**

Sundays, Year-round, 10 AM – 2 PM

- FMNP Accepted: Yes
- FreshConnect Checks: Yes

### Ballston Spa Farmers' Market

Wiswall Park, Ballston Spa

**SCHEDULE:**

Saturdays, June 14 – October 4  
 9 AM – 1 PM  
 Thursdays, June 14 – October 4  
 3 – 6 PM

- FMNP Accepted: Yes
- FreshConnect Checks: Yes

### Halfmoon Farmers' Market

Abele Memorial Park, Halfmoon  
 OR inside Halfmoon Town Hall,  
 Harris Road, Halfmoon

**SCHEDULE:**

Wednesdays, Year-round, 3 – 6 PM

- FMNP Accepted: Yes
- FreshConnect Checks: Yes

### Clifton Park Farmers' Market

Shenendehowa United Methodist Church parking lot, Clifton Park

**SCHEDULE:**

Mondays, June – October, 2 – 5 PM

- FMNP Accepted: Yes
- FreshConnect Checks: Yes

### Stillwater Farmers' Market

662 Hudson Ave,  
 Stillwater Public Library

**SCHEDULE:**

Tuesdays, May 6 – October 28, 3 – 6 PM

- FMNP Accepted: Yes
- FreshConnect Checks: Yes

### Malta Farmers' Market

Allerdice ACE Hardware parking lot,  
 2570 Route 9, Malta, NY 12020

**SCHEDULE:**

Tuesdays, May – October, 3 – 6 PM

- FMNP Accepted: Yes
- FreshConnect Checks: Yes

### Route 50 Green Market (Burnt Hills)

802 Route 50, Burnt Hills

**SCHEDULE:**

Saturdays, June 7 – October 25  
 9 AM – 1 PM

- FMNP Accepted: Yes
- FreshConnect Checks: Yes

### Town of Greenfield Farmers' Market

Middle Grove Park,  
 428 Middle Grove Road

**SCHEDULE:**

Thursday evenings  
 June 19 – September 18  
 4 – 7 PM

Contact: 518-893-7432, ext. 307

# WARREN COUNTY

## Bolton Landing Farmers' Market

Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church  
Parking Lot, 7 Goodman Ave

**SCHEDULE:**

Fridays, June 27 – September 5  
9 AM – 1 PM

Manager Contact: 518-480-9118

## Glens Falls Farmers' Market (Summer)

South Street Pavilion, Glens Falls

**SCHEDULE:**

Saturdays, May 4 – October 26  
8 AM – 12 PM

Manager Contact: 518-792-4918  
• FMNP Accepted: Yes

## North Creek Farmers' Market

Riverfront Park on the Hudson,  
North Creek

**SCHEDULE:**

Thursdays, June 19 – September 18  
2 – 5:30 PM

Manager Contact: 518-251-5210

## Chestertown Farmers' Market

Chestertown Town Hall,  
6307 State Route 9, Chestertown

**SCHEDULE:**

Wednesdays, June 12 – September 18,  
10 AM – 2 PM

Manager Contact: 518-494-3336

## Glens Falls Farmers' Market (Winter)

Aviation Mall Food Court,  
578 Aviation Road, Queensbury

**SCHEDULE:**

Saturdays, November 2 – April 25  
9 AM – 12 PM

Manager Contact: 518-792-4918  
• FMNP Accepted: Yes

## Warrensburgh Riverfront Farmers' Market

Warrensburgh Mills Historic District,  
River Street (NYS Route 418),  
near Curtis Lumber

**SCHEDULE:**

Fridays, May 30 – October 10, 3 – 6 PM

Manager Contact: 518-466-5497  
• FMNP Accepted: Yes



# WASHINGTON COUNTY

## Cambridge Valley Farmers' Market

**SUMMER:** Owlkill Commons,  
17 West Main Street, Cambridge  
Sundays, May – October, 10 AM – 1 PM

• FMNP Accepted: Yes

**WINTER:** The Old Firehouse,  
11 W. Main Street, Cambridge  
2nd & 4th Sundays, January 12 – May 11  
10 AM – 1 PM

• FMNP Accepted: Yes

## Granville Farmers' Market

Granville Village Parking Lot  
11 Main Street

**SCHEDULE:**

Thursdays, June 19 – October 16  
2 – 5 PM

• FMNP Accepted: Yes

## Salem Farmers' Market

Village Park Gazebo,  
Route 22, Main Street, Salem

**SCHEDULE:**

Saturdays, June 21 – October 18  
10 AM – 1 PM

• FMNP Accepted: Yes

## Canal Street Marketplace Farmers' Market

63 Canal Street, Fort Edward

**SCHEDULE:**

Thursdays, June 5 – September 25  
4 – 7 PM

• FMNP Accepted: Yes

## Greenwich Farmers' Market

99 Main Street, Greenwich

**SCHEDULE:**

Wednesdays, June 7 - October  
3 – 6 PM

• FMNP Accepted: Yes

## Whitehall Farmers' Market

Canal Park Pavilion,  
4 Skenesborough Drive, Whitehall

**SCHEDULE:**

Tuesdays, June 4 – October 8  
2 – 5 PM

• FMNP Accepted: Yes

# Saving Rare Breeds and Empowering Homesteaders:

Julie Murray's Mission at **Mack Brin Farm**



Interviewed by **Michael Nelson**  
Photos provided

**I**n the rolling hills of upstate New York, Julie (Jules) Murray tends to her 56-acre Mack Brin Farm with a passion for sustainable farming and a deep commitment to preserving rare livestock breeds. Named after the middle names of her children, Mack Brin Farm is more than a homestead—it's a living testament to the importance of knowing where food comes from and safeguarding heritage breeds for future generations. At the heart of Jules' work is her dedication to the San Clemente Island goat, a rare breed she has helped bring back from the brink of extinction, alongside her efforts to guide new homesteaders in raising their own animals.

**A Legacy of Conservation:  
The San Clemente Island Goat**

Fifteen years ago, when Julie Murray first began working with San Clemente Island goats, only 465 remained worldwide. Originating from San Clemente Island off the coast of California, these goats faced near annihilation in the 1980s when the U.S. Navy, deeming them a nuisance, attempted to exterminate them. Thanks to the efforts of organizations like Friends of Animals, a small number were rescued, preserving a unique genetic lineage unmatched by any other goat breed. Today, through the work of conservation breeders like Jules, their numbers have grown to approximately 2,000 across the United States and Canada.

As a conservation breeder, Jules collaborates with institutions like UC Davis on genetic studies, focusing on the breed's rare traits, such as unique color variations and high butterfat content. "The San Clemente Island goats are special," she explains. "They're a medium-sized breed, with females ranging from 70 to 90 pounds and bucks sometimes reaching up to 160 pounds. Their milk has a butterfat content of 7.5%, making them ideal for cheese and soap production, perfect for homesteading projects."

Jules' fascination with the breed extends to their distinctive characteristics. Known for their intelligence and semi-feral nature, these goats are



adept at free-grazing, navigating her property's mix of open fields, woodlands, and scrubby areas. "They're like deer," she says, describing how they selectively graze, even sampling potentially toxic plants like milkweed before moving on. This adaptability, combined with their low scent and manageable size, makes them an excellent choice for homesteaders looking to integrate livestock into their land management practices.

Her breeding efforts have also uncovered rare genetic traits, such as white markings, which appear in less than 10% of the population. "It took me 13 years to figure out how to breed for it on purpose," she admits, noting her ongoing collaboration with a UC Davis geneticist to further explore these traits. Jules' herd, currently numbering around 35 goats, includes 18 kids, many of whom carry these prized genetics. However, finding the right homes

for these animals is a priority. "I spend a lot of time making sure I pick the right people for each group," she says, emphasizing her commitment to placing goats with homesteaders who understand their unique needs.

**From Farm to Table to Homesteading**

Mack Brin Farm began as a way to teach Jules' children about the origins of their food, rooted in the principles of sustainable farming and farm-to-table living. Over the years, the farm supplied high-quality, pasture-raised meats to fine dining establishments across Saratoga, Warren, and Washington counties. Chefs from renowned restaurants like Salt & Char and Gideon Putnam visited the farm to see her rotational pasture system, which ensured healthy, ethically raised animals. However, the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted this model when restaurants closed, leaving Jules with surplus stock and a need to pivot.

The challenges didn't stop there. Rising costs of feed, coupled with stricter regulations on meat processing, made it difficult to continue supplying restaurants. "It's hard to find processors who can meet my standards," Jules explains, noting her insistence on USDA-certified processing to minimize liability and ensure quality. "I want my meat to look like it could go into a grocery store at any second." This meticulous attention to detail, while admirable, made large-scale meat production unsustainable in the post-COVID landscape.

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Instead, Jules shifted her focus to live animal sales, particularly to homesteaders eager to start their own small farms. “I feel like I did it first,” she says with a laugh, recalling how skeptics doubted her ability to succeed as a woman in farming. Undeterred, she built a reputation for raising heritage and rare breeds, including Black Welsh Mountain sheep, Ancona ducks, and composite rabbits with striking blue eyes. Her pivot to homesteading aligns with a growing movement of people seeking to grow their own food and live sustainably.

### Empowering the Next Generation of Farmers

Jules’ mission extends beyond preserving rare breeds—she’s passionate about helping others start their homesteading journey. Whether it’s raising San Clemente goats for milk and foraging, rabbits for meat or companionship, or ducks for eggs, she offers practical advice and high-quality livestock to aspiring farmers. “It’s not easy,” she acknowledges, citing the labor-intensive nature of sustainable farming. Yet, her enthusiasm for teaching others is unwavering. She’s even compiled a notebook of tips, such as how to hatch duck eggs, which she shares with her clients.

Her farm’s 56 acres, a mix of open fields, hayfields, and woodlands, serve as a living classroom. Murray’s rotational grazing system, which she once used for pigs, sheep, and poultry, demonstrates how to manage land sustainably. While she no longer raises pigs due to the intensive fencing required, her goats thrive in a free-grazing setup, moving through the property with minimal fencing. “They’re smart,” she says. “They know where the good stuff is, and they teach their offspring what to eat.”

For homesteaders, Murray’s goats offer unique advantages. Their cashmere-like wool, a trait she’s exploring with researchers, provides an additional income stream for those interested in spinning or crafting. Their foraging ability also makes them excellent for clearing brush, including invasive plants like poison ivy. However, she cautions that San Clemente goats require a firm hand. “You have to be the boss,” she advises, noting their shy yet independent nature.



### Challenges and Resilience

Running Mack Brin Farm hasn’t been without setbacks. A devastating fire in 2017 destroyed her barns, halting her breeding programs and forcing a rebuild. Rising costs of hay and feed, coupled with encroaching development around her property, add ongoing pressure. “It’s hard to feel caught up,” she admits, describing the constant juggling of farm maintenance, animal care, and personal projects like her house, which still bears scars from past neglect.

Despite these challenges, Murray’s resilience shines through. She’s navigated personal and professional losses, from the fire to the economic fallout of COVID, with determination. Her focus on homesteading has reinvigorated her purpose, allowing her to connect with a new generation of farmers who share her values. “I’ve shipped animals all over the United States,” she says proudly, reflecting on her role in spreading rare breeds and sustainable practices.

### A Call to Support Local Farms

Jules’ story is a reminder of the importance of supporting local agriculture, especially farms dedicated to conservation and sustainability. Through her work with San Clemente Island goats and her support for homesteaders, she’s preserving not just a breed but a way of life. “I started this farm so my kids would know where their food comes from,” she reflects. Now, her mission is to ensure others can do the same.

For those interested in starting their own homestead or learning more about Mack Brin Farm, Jules welcomes inquiries—preferably by text, given her busy schedule wrangling goats and managing her land. Her story, like her farm, is one of perseverance, passion, and a deep connection to the land and its creatures.

*You can learn more about Mack Brin Farms by visiting their facebook page @mackbrinfarms* ■



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# FULLER ACRES



## A Fourth-Generation Farm Rooted in Innovation, Tradition, and Community

Interviewed by Michael Nelson • Photos provided (unless noted)

**T**ucked into the rolling countryside of Fort Ann, New York, Fuller Acres is more than a pasture-based livestock operation—it's a living testament to sustainable farming, local food systems, and multigenerational stewardship. At the helm is Olivia Fuller, the fourth-generation farmer behind this vibrant, evolving enterprise. What began as a traditional dairy farm has transformed under Olivia's leadership into a diversified operation raising beef cattle, pigs, and sheep—all on pasture—and connecting directly with local consumers through innovative sales models.

### From Dairy to Diversification

Fuller Acres' roots run deep. Olivia grew up helping her father and grandparents milk cows, feed calves, and navigate the ups and downs of a dairy operation bound to volatile milk markets. "We didn't set our own prices," she explains, recalling how tough it was to make a living under such constraints. When the opportunity arose for her to return to the farm, Olivia knew she didn't want to follow the same path.

Instead, she chose a bold new direction: transitioning from dairy to pasture-raised meat production. "We began breeding our dairy cows—Holsteins, Jerseys, and Brown Swiss—to beef breeds like Angus," she says. That pivot, launched in 2018, eventually led to a full conversion in 2023. Today, Fuller Acres is home to approximately 60 head of beef cattle, a growing herd of nearly 20 sheep, and seasonal rotations of pigs raised thoughtfully in woodland pastures.

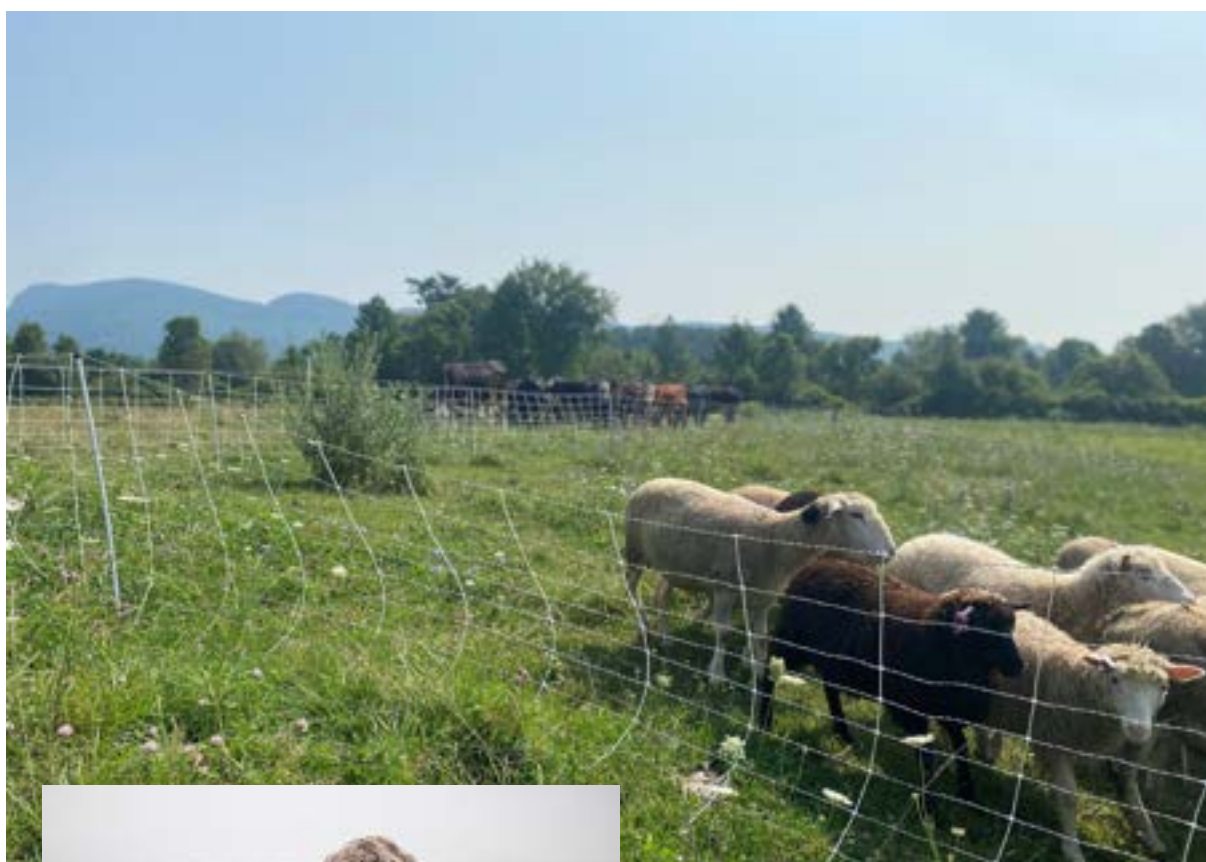


Photo: Eric Jenks



**Creative Marketing:  
Subscription Boxes and Self-Serve Stores**

For Olivia, running a farm isn't just about livestock—it's about building sustainable systems that work for her lifestyle and for her customers. As someone who also works full-time off the farm, traditional farmers' markets weren't feasible. The solution? A subscription-based "Farm Club" service that delivers boxes of meat directly to customers across Glens Falls, Saratoga, and Albany. "The subscription model allows me to schedule my delivery routes in advance and gives my customers priority access to popular cuts like ground beef or bacon," Olivia explains. Farm Club members choose from boxes like the Burger Lovers Box, a beef-and-pork combo, or a rotating "Pick of the Month" assortment.

Fuller Acres also operates a self-serve farm store, open seven days a week, located in their remodeled former dairy parlor. The store is a charming and functional nod to the farm's past—with a glass-front freezer full of retail cuts, an iPad for checkout, and options to pay via card, Venmo, or cash. "It's a relief," Olivia admits, "not having to coordinate every transaction myself. It gives me the flexibility I need to keep the business going."

**Maximizing Every Animal,  
Respecting Every Acre**

Fuller Acres emphasizes whole-animal use and land stewardship. "We work hard to make use of everything we raise," says Olivia. From lard soap made with pig fat to beef tallow balm crafted by local artisans, value-added products reflect the farm's commitment to sustainability.

Breed selection is a carefully considered process. The sheep herd began with just three Dorsets and has grown into a healthy flock with Icelandic and crossbred genetics—valued for hardiness, grazing efficiency, and wool quality. Olivia and her partner Tom even process Icelandic sheepskins, which are tanned and sold as unique, natural products.

The pigs are equally diverse, with a blend of Tamworth, Mangalitsa, and KuneKune lineage that thrives in the wooded portions of the 300-acre farm. This includes about 60 acres of forested land, where pigs are rotationally pastured to manage invasive plants like honeysuckle.

"We're trying to use every corner of our property thoughtfully," Olivia says. The cows and sheep are co-grazed strategically to manage parasites and optimize forage use, with mobile fencing systems allowing for flexible pasture rotation.

**Community-Driven,  
Conservation-Focused**

At its core, Fuller Acres is built on relationships—with customers, animals, the land, and the local community. Olivia's approach combines education with accessibility, using newsletters and social media to keep customers informed about what's in stock, and sharing the "why" behind her methods.

But perhaps the most inspiring part of Fuller Acres is the commitment to conservation. The farm is permanently protected through a conservation easement with the Agricultural Stewardship Association. That means its 300 acres can never be subdivided for development. "This land will always be available for farming," Olivia proudly notes. "It's a haven for wildlife, and it's going to stay that way even after it's no longer in our family."

**Looking Ahead**

Despite rapid growth, Olivia is quick to note that Fuller Acres is still evolving. Demand often outpaces supply, especially for beef and pork. Lamb, while still a niche item locally, is gaining traction as more customers try it and learn about its flavor and preparation.

As Fuller Acres grows, so does its vision: to educate more consumers, support the local food economy, and serve as a model of resilience in small-scale agriculture.

*Visit [www.fulleracres.com](http://www.fulleracres.com) to learn more about their Farm Club, farm store hours, and the story behind each cut of meat on your plate. ■*

A Model for *Community-Driven,*  
Sustainable Agriculture in Ballston Spa

# FEATHERBED LANE FARM



Interviewed by **Michael Nelson**  
Photos by **Tory Shelley**

**N**estled in the countryside of Ballston Spa, New York, Featherbed Lane Farm is quietly redefining what it means to farm with intention, integrity, and community at the heart of every decision. Run by Tim Biello, this 60-acre farm is not only a beacon of sustainable agriculture but also a prime example of how deep community ties and ecological mindfulness can form the backbone of a thriving local food system.

### **The Free Choice CSA Model: Empowering Members with Flexibility and Abundance**

At the center of Featherbed Lane Farm's operations is their unique **Free Choice CSA (Community Supported Agriculture)**—a model that distinguishes them from most traditional CSA programs. Unlike box-style CSAs, where members receive a pre-packed assortment of vegetables each week, Featherbed Lane invites members to visit the farm every Saturday and **select exactly what they want** from a vibrant farm store setup.

"It's like their own farmer's market," Tim explains. "Members take as much as they need for the week for the members of their household, based on an honor system."

This innovative approach gives families the freedom to eat what they love and try new things—reducing food waste and encouraging a stronger connection to their food. Kids are often seen picking out vegetables and snacking as they walk, engaging directly with the harvest in a way grocery store produce rarely inspires.

What's more, the CSA is **year-round—52 weeks a year**—a rarity even among farms in New York. With the help of greenhouses and an impressive stockpile of storage crops like squash, potatoes, carrots, and leeks, the farm maintains a steady supply of produce through even the coldest months. Eggs, flowers, honey, mushrooms, and other products sourced from neighboring farms round out the offerings.



*“They’re powered by grass and sun, and their waste is fertilizer.”*

**The horses are part of the farm’s core philosophy: *to work with nature rather than around it.***

**Powered by Horses and Heart**

Featherbed Lane’s fields are worked primarily not by tractors—but by a team of draft horses named Bear and Duke. Tim has partnered with these Percherons for over a decade, using them for everything from plowing and cultivating to compost spreading and sleigh rides for CSA members.

“They’re gentler on the soil,” Tim says. “They’re powered by grass and sun, and their waste is fertilizer.”

The horses are part of the farm’s core philosophy: to work with nature rather than around it. While Tim is quick to acknowledge that great farming can happen with tractors too, his decision to use draft horses stems from a commitment to environmental stewardship and reducing reliance on fossil fuels.

**Soil-First Farming**

At Featherbed Lane, soil health isn’t just a buzzword—it’s a daily focus. The farm employs cover cropping extensively, often interseeding into standing vegetable crops to outcompete weeds and ensure living roots remain in the ground as harvest winds down.

Compost is another critical piece of the fertility puzzle. Members contribute food scraps weekly, which are blended with horse manure, straw, wood chips, and bedding to create rich, biologically active compost. Combined with occasional natural mineral amendments, this practice feeds the soil—and, in turn, the plants—without synthetic inputs.

**No Sprays, No Shortcuts**

Pest management at Featherbed Lane avoids chemical shortcuts. The farm uses no synthetic or organic biocides, relying instead on crop rotation, healthy soils, floating row covers, and beneficial insects to keep plants resilient.

“We want this to be food that’s safe for our families, our workers, and our members,” Tim emphasizes. “I take my kids out there to pick carrots and strawberries and eat them right from the field.”

### Community Commitment and Shared Values

Tim doesn't just run the farm full-time—he also works part-time for the **American Farmland Trust**, helping other farmers find land and navigate the challenges of long-term viability. He understands firsthand how difficult it is to secure land access and has made it part of his mission to support others through the same journey.

Back on the farm, the CSA model is structured to be **inclusive and community-focused**. Featherbed Lane offers a **sliding scale payment system**, allowing families to contribute what they can afford. Some members pay above the suggested amount to subsidize others, and grants from local nonprofits help close the gap. The farm also donates food weekly to a local pantry.

“It’s a constant tension,” Tim admits. “You need to charge enough to pay your farmers well and invest in your land, but you also want your food to be accessible. We try to meet people where they’re at.”



### Farming for Every Season

Even during New York's harsh winters, the CSA doesn't stop. The farm leans on cold-hardy storage crops and greenhouse-grown greens to provide variety through the quieter months. “From April to December, there's something new every week,” Tim says. “In winter, it's a bit more consistent, but still fresh, local, and nutrient-dense.”

That seasonal rhythm, paired with the weekly trips to the farm store, helps members connect deeply to the cycles of local food. It's an experience that's hard to replicate in grocery store aisles.

### More Than a Farm—A Movement

Featherbed Lane Farm in Ballston Spa is more than a farm—it's a living, breathing example of what's possible when sustainability, transparency, and community are at the forefront. Through the Free Choice CSA, horse-powered cultivation, regenerative practices, and a heartfelt commitment to equity, Tim Biello and his team are not just growing vegetables—they're growing a model for what food systems can become.

*To learn more or become a member, visit [FeatherbedLaneFarm.com](http://FeatherbedLaneFarm.com).* ■



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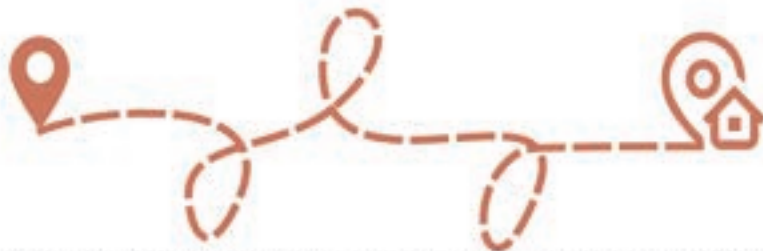


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# RAISING CHICKENS *with* INTEGRITY



## Arthur and Melanie Kraamwinkel's Mission at HEPATICA FARM

Interviewed by **Michael Nelson**  
Photos provided

**L**ocated in Greenwich, New York, Hepatica Farm is the realization of a dream. Founded and operated by Arthur Kraamwinkel, a former full-time mental health counselor turned full-time farmer, along with his wife and equal business partner Melanie Kraamwinkel, the farm is a living testament to regenerative agriculture, animal welfare, and the ethics of truly honest food.

Arthur didn't grow up farming. His roots are in the Netherlands, where he was raised in a city but found himself drawn to the rhythms of farm life

from a young age. Inspired by his grandfather's biodynamic farm, Arthur has always held a deep respect for nature and a desire to be part of it. That respect has shaped every inch of Hepatica Farm.

Melanie, a practicing dietitian, may not be involved in daily farm chores, but her role is no less vital. She works the Saratoga Farmers Market each Saturday and contributes meaningfully to the strategic and management decisions that guide the farm. Together, Arthur and Melanie navigate the complexities of running a small, mission-driven agricultural business.

### The Poultry Foundation

While Arthur's long-term vision is a diverse, multi-species operation, poultry has provided the foundational building block. Chickens offer a relatively short investment-to-return cycle, making them a financially viable entry point for a startup farm. In 2025, Arthur is raising over 6,000 pasture-raised chickens on his property—no small feat for a one-man operation.

But raising chickens the way Arthur does is nothing like the industrial model. "It's much more work," he says, but he wouldn't have it any other way.

### Pasture-Raised Done Right

Hepatica Farm chickens live on pasture from three weeks of age until their final days. Housed in custom-built, mobile "schooners" that Arthur designed himself using local materials, the chickens are moved daily to fresh ground. This movement ensures access to clean forage and prevents waste buildup, which means healthier birds and healthier land.

This isn't just about animal welfare—it's about soil regeneration. As the birds graze and leave behind manure, they fertilize the fields naturally, restoring pastures that had once been depleted from years of hay production.

"We're regenerating the land with the birds," Arthur explains. "I'm not buying fertilizer—I'm earning income while putting nutrients back into the soil."

*"We're regenerating the land with the birds," Arthur explains. "I'm not buying fertilizer—I'm earning income while putting nutrients back into the soil."*

### A Higher Standard Than Organic

While Hepatica's poultry is certified organic, Arthur's commitment goes well beyond the minimum requirements. He uses locally grown, organic feed from the Hudson Valley to reduce transport emissions and ensure quality. Unlike many organic feeds that still include synthetic amino acids like DL-methionine (a byproduct of oil and natural gas), Arthur's feed is 100% natural. This makes his product more expensive to produce—but far healthier.

"There's a lot of food that looks like what you think it is, but really isn't," he says. "I feel morally obligated to produce something that's actually food—an honest, healthy product."

His birds are also processed at Maple Wind Farm in Vermont, one of the rare USDA-certified organic poultry processors that uses air-chilling and lactic acid instead of the chlorine baths common in commercial operations. The result is a better-tasting, safer chicken.

### The True Cost of Cheap Food

Arthur is passionate about educating customers on what goes into a \$5 grocery store chicken breast. He highlights the hidden societal costs—pollution from synthetic fertilizers, health impacts from synthetic proteins, the environmental toll of long-distance transport—that rarely get factored into the price tag.

"If you add up the true costs, the health costs, the environmental costs, what I charge is actually much closer to the real price of food," he says.

This emphasis on transparency extends to every aspect of the farm, from untreated locust fence posts split by hand to his openness about the economics of small-scale farming. He's scrappy, as he puts it, not just for survival—but because he believes in doing things the right way.



### Why Pasture-Raised Matters

Unlike conventional or even some organic operations that keep birds indoors with minimal outdoor access, Arthur's birds live outside—soaking in sunlight, foraging for bugs and plants, and contributing to the ecosystem. Studies show that pasture-raised poultry is more nutrient-dense, with higher levels of omega-3s, vitamin D, and antioxidants compared to their confined counterparts.

It's also better for the land. Arthur has noticed an increase in birdlife and pollinators around the farm since beginning his daily move rotations. "I didn't used to hear so many birds," he notes. Now, their songs are a constant backdrop, a sign that the land is healing.

### More Than a Farm, It's a Philosophy

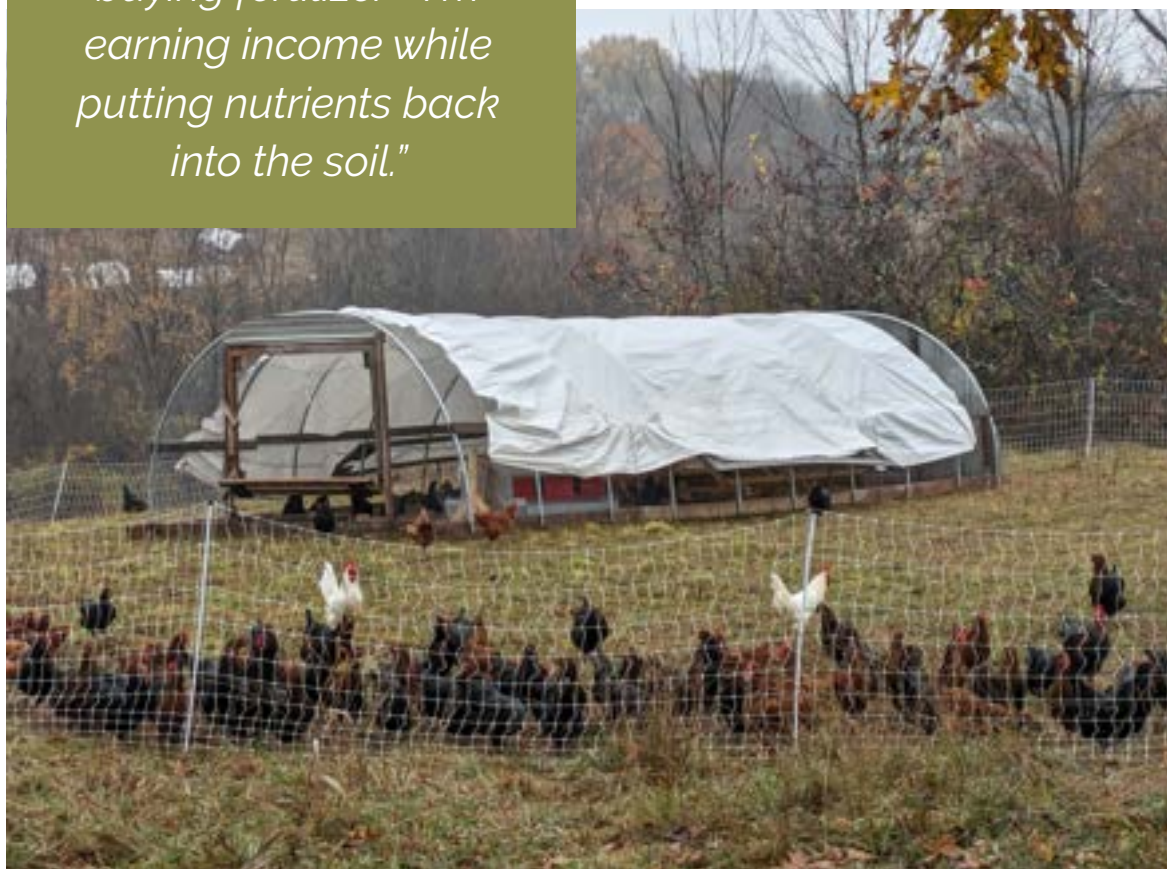
Farming this way isn't easy—or cheap. It's labor-intensive, high-risk, and physically demanding. But for Arthur, it's a labor of love.

"There's a deep respect for nature in everything I do," he says. "I don't want to manipulate it to serve me. I want to work with it."

That ethos extends to his customers, too. Arthur believes food should be honest, not just in labeling, but in how it's grown, handled, and brought to market. He hopes more people will understand that buying local, pasture-raised food isn't just better for their health—it's an investment in their community and the planet.

### Where to Find Hepatica Farm Products

Hepatica Farm sells at the Saratoga Farmers Market every Saturday and is stocked in several regional stores, including Pitney Meadows in Saratoga Springs, Cambridge Co-Op, and Random Harvest in Columbia County. The farm doesn't have a dedicated store yet, but visitors are welcome by appointment through the website: [www.hepaticafarm.com](http://www.hepaticafarm.com) ■



# Tiashoke Farm



Interviewed by **Michael Nelson** • Photos provided

**N**estled in the scenic hills of upstate New York, Tiashoke Farm is more than just a working dairy—it's a dynamic fusion of tradition, innovation, and heartfelt community engagement. Owned and operated by the Ziehm family, Tiashoke is now in its fifth generation of agricultural stewardship. At the heart of it all is Jessica Ziehm, whose creativity and entrepreneurial spirit have helped reshape the farm's identity and outreach.

### **A Growing Legacy**

The story of Tiashoke Farm begins generations ago in Albany, where Jessica's husband's family farmed land that is now overtaken by development. Seeking sustainability and space, the family moved to Buskirk in Washington County with 35 cows and a vision. Over the decades, the farm expanded both in acreage and ambition. Today, they milk around 1,100 cows, manage 2,200 acres of crops, and employ two dozen team members.

For Jessica, her place on the farm emerged from a unique blend of passion for agriculture and a drive to create something personal. "I grew up on a dairy farm," she says. "I didn't think I'd marry a dairy farmer, and here I am—very happily married. But I knew I wanted a creative outlet."

### Diversifying the Dairy Model

While dairy remains Tiashoke's core, diversification has been key to the farm's resilience. Over the last 15 years, the Ziehms have expanded into beef, pork, poultry, and even pumpkin production. This shift was born out of both economic pragmatism and a desire to deepen customer relationships.

Jessica recognized early on that customers wanted more than bulk beef or freezer packs. "Sometimes people just want to buy a steak," she notes. This feedback inspired the creation of the Tiashoke Farm Store, a welcoming retail space offering "meats, sweets, antiques, and other local farm treats."

Inside the repurposed dairy barn—now a vibrant storefront and event space—customers can find everything from grass-fed beef and pasture-raised pork to local maple syrup, vintage cast iron, and handmade wreaths.

### Community, Connection, and Creativity

The farm store isn't just a business—it's a community hub. Jessica has transformed what was once a practical agricultural building into a lively destination for events, learning, and connection. Workshops, birthday parties, bridal showers, and even funerals have been hosted in the lovingly restored barn space.

Two standout community initiatives highlight Tiashoke's commitment to fostering deeper local ties. First is "Worship Night," a monthly gathering that brings together area churches for music and fellowship. The second is "Fridays on 40," a celebration of local vendors, food, music, and handmade crafts.

Jessica puts it best: "We're not just supposed to sell stuff. We should be giving people more of an experience and allowing them to just be in this atmosphere."



### Stewardship and Sustainability

Tiashoke's success also comes from a careful blend of traditional farming methods and modern technology. From their strategic breeding programs—where they crossbreed dairy cows with Angus for better beef yields—to the use of embryo transfer for high-end genetics, Tiashoke combines hands-on care with scientific rigor.

One of the most innovative developments is the farm's recent use of drone technology, spearheaded by Jessica's nephew, a Purdue graduate. These drones help monitor crop health, precisely apply treatments, and avoid damaging delicate crops like pumpkins. "It's amazing," Jessica says. "Instead of spraying a whole 50-acre field, we can target just three acres with an issue."

### The Human Side of Farming

Jessica is candid about the challenges of running a large-scale farm in today's environment. "It's not easy. There are a lot of easier ways to make money," she admits. But what keeps her going is the belief that farming should be a legacy worth inheriting. "Our goal is to have something vibrant and progressive enough to attract the next generation."

The Ziehm family is already seeing that vision come to life. Their nephew has returned to the farm full-time, marking the beginning of the fifth generation's leadership.

### The Store That Feeds the Soul

In many ways, the Tiashoke Farm Store encapsulates the Ziehm family's philosophy. It's a place where agriculture meets artistry, and where customers are not just buyers but part of the story. With a growing inventory of locally sourced products and thoughtfully curated antiques, the store has become a regional destination.

Pumpkin season, in particular, has become a cornerstone. "It gave me the courage to leave my day job and start this," Jessica recalls. Today, the farm grows 10 acres of pumpkins—over 100 varieties—making it one of the largest pumpkin displays in the Capital District.

### A Vision for the Future

Tiashoke Farm is not just a symbol of agricultural endurance; it's a blueprint for how farms can thrive by blending heritage with adaptability. Whether it's selling artisan cheeses and pasture-raised pork, using drones to monitor corn fields, or hosting a worship night in a 1950s barn, Tiashoke shows that farming is as much about heart as it is about harvest.

As Jessica puts it, "Our motto is to share the bounty and beauty of our farm." And through their store, events, and unwavering family commitment, they're doing exactly that.

To Learn more about Tiashoke Farm visit [www.tiashokefarm.com](http://www.tiashokefarm.com) ■

# WILLOW MARSH REIMAGINED

How a Crisis  
Sparked a  
Farm's **Bold**  
*New Future*



Interviewed by **Michael Nelson** • Photos provided

**I**n Ballston Spa, New York, Willow-Marsh Farm and Farm Store is turning a year of crisis into one of the most transformative chapters in its history. For owners Chuck and Sara Curtiss, what began as a devastating listeria outbreak has evolved into a catalyst for renewal—allowing them to reimagine everything from cow comfort to community connection.

“We really feel like God put this opportunity in front of us,” Sara said. “Yes, financially, it’s been devastating—but we’ll come out of it stronger.”

The listeria forced the Curtisses to pause raw milk production—an emotional and economic blow for a farm known for its clean, high-quality raw milk. After months of attempts to eradicate the bacteria, they chose another path. Out of necessity came innovation, and the couple seized the moment to build something better from the ground up.

## A New Era for Dairy at Willow-Marsh

Central to Willow-Marsh’s rebirth is a state-of-the-art overhaul of its dairy operation. The old tie-stall barn is being renovated into a free-stall system—an open, cow-friendly design where animals can move, eat, and rest as they choose. The cows will have 24/7 access to grazing pastures. Rather than using sawdust, the new stalls will be lined with sand—an inorganic bedding choice aimed at eliminating bacterial growth and maximizing cleanliness.

The barn’s crown jewel will be a robotic milking system. Unlike conventional setups, this technology allows cows to decide when they want to be milked. The robot evaluates milk from each teat in real time, detecting health issues long before they become visible. “It’s better than any human can do,” said Chuck. “You’re basically just managing the system, not doing the labor.” Willow-Marsh Farm will house one of approximately 200 Lely robotic milkers in the Northeast, about 120 of which are in New York.

The system not only improves cow health and milk quality—it also provides instant biofeedback through a phone app, giving the Curtisses constant insight into each cow’s wellbeing. “We used to struggle identifying problems fast enough,” Chuck added. “This system changes that.”

### Education and Transparency at the Core

Sara and Chuck aren't keeping these changes behind the scenes. Instead, they're using them to deepen community engagement. Part of the barn will include a glass wall so visitors—especially school and homeschool groups—can watch the robotic milking process in action. A separate section will allow hands-on interaction with cows, reinforcing the farm's mission to reconnect people with where their food comes from.

"We already have a homeschool group on a waiting list," Sara laughed. "They don't even care when we're ready—they just want in."

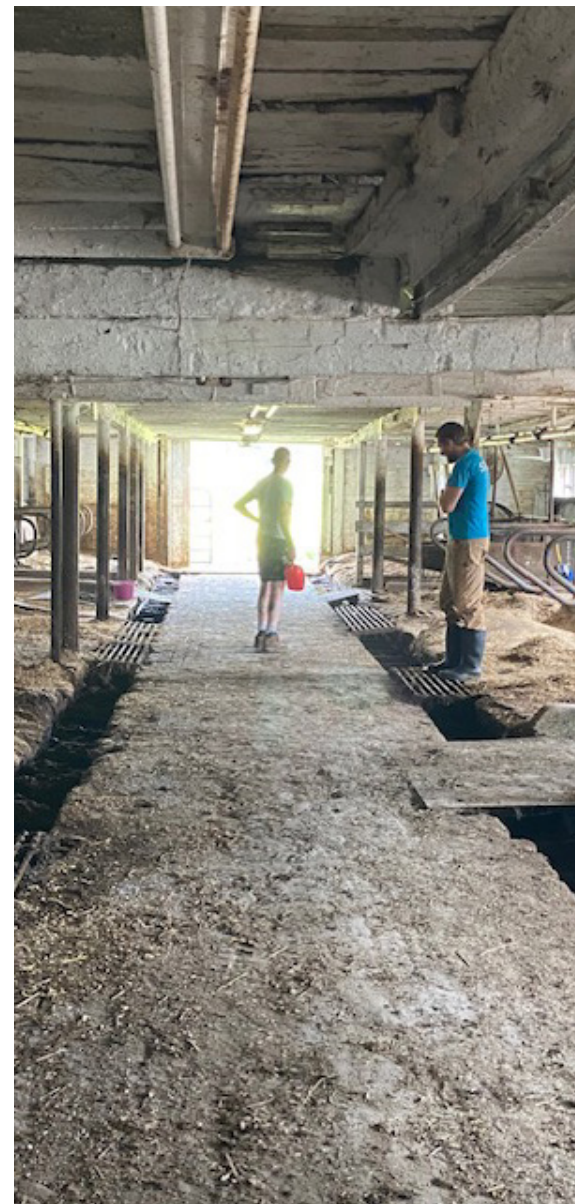
Educational outreach will also extend to a new beekeeping center, with plans for a bee house where guests can meditate above buzzing hives and learn about the vibrational benefits of nature. Lesson plans, interpretive displays, and even sound baths are on the horizon. "We want to offer spaces for people to ground themselves, to raise their vibration, and to just learn," Sara said.

### The Return of Raw Milk—and More

Though they've adapted in the interim by bringing in milk from Battenkill Valley Creamery, the Curtisses are determined to bring their own raw milk back—with higher standards than ever before. The new system, they say, will allow for safer, more efficient milk production.

The return of their creamery is timed to coincide with the relaunch of milking. They also plan to install a commercial kitchen for preparing healthy, farm-fresh grab-and-go meals—real food for people too busy to cook, but still mindful about ingredients.

"We've been there ourselves," Sara admitted. "You get home late, you're exhausted, and you just want something decent that's not junk. We want to offer that."



### Expanding the Farm's Offerings

Willow-Marsh isn't just revamping dairy—it's also diversifying its product lines. The farm has invested in a premium beef herd, including Angus and Wagyu cattle. Their first Wagyu calf is already on the ground, and the Curtisses plan to double the herd over the next year. Eventually, they'll offer USDA cuts, boxes, and shares to meet growing demand.

"We're raising beef the way it should be raised," Chuck said. "Clean feed, no commercial grain, no chemicals. Just quality."

That philosophy also extends to new plans for raising free-range meat chickens in mobile "chicken tractors" and building a sugarhouse to start producing their own maple syrup and candies. Chuck's nephew Spencer, who has a PhD in biology, will help lead the maple initiative—bringing both passion and science to the project.

### Farm Store, Food Truck, and Community Roots

Even as the Curtisses work behind the scenes to overhaul the barn and build out new programs, the Willow-Marsh Farm Store remains open Thursdays through Sundays. It offers beef, pork, chicken, honey, local baked goods, teas, and unique finds like raw cheese from California and freeze-dried candies that have become a local favorite.

In the next year or two, the Curtisses also hope to launch a farm-branded food truck, serving burgers made from their own beef. It will mostly operate in front of the store, but will also pop up at events like the Saratoga County Fair.

And soon, the farm itself will become even more accessible with the addition of a public walking trail, complete with benches for meditation and rest—offering visitors a way to connect with the land as deeply as the food it produces.

### Farming Forward—Together

Chuck, a farmer since childhood, admits that some of these changes would have been hard to imagine years ago. "When you've been doing something for 60 years, it's hard to shift," he said. But Sara has been gently nudging him toward innovation—and now, he's all in. From adopting non-GMO crops to planning fall cover crops and regenerative soil practices, Chuck has transformed the way he approaches farming.

"I've seen the improvement," he said. "Our soil is better, our weed control is better, and we're getting more life back into the land."

Sara, proud of the progress, summed it up: "We're doing this for the animals, for the community, and for the earth. We're not just trying to stay in business—we're trying to do it better."

In a time when small farms are often fighting just to survive, Willow-Marsh is choosing to thrive. Their journey proves that from adversity can come innovation—and from a family's passion can grow a whole new vision of what farming can be.

*To learn more or plan a visit, go to [www.willow-marshfarmstore.com](http://www.willow-marshfarmstore.com). You can learn more about the events they host like classes, live music, bonfires, soundbaths, and a Christkindlmarkt Dec. 5-6th. The info will be available on their events pages online and their Facebook page. ■*



## Cultivating a Future for Local Farming

Interview with **Sarah Walsh**,  
Associate Director at Saratoga PLAN  
by **Michael Nelson**

Photos provided (unless noted)

**ABOVE PHOTOS:**  
Left: Half-A-Chance Farm. Photo by Megan Mumford  
Middle: Questroyal North Farm  
Right: Welcome Stock Farm

In the heart of upstate New York, where development pressures collide with agricultural heritage, Saratoga PLAN is leading the charge to preserve the region's farmland and strengthen its farming future. Through conservation easements, landowner partnerships, and advocacy, the nonprofit is playing a critical role in protecting the land that feeds our communities. We sat down with Sarah Walsh, Associate Director at Saratoga PLAN, to explore how the organization supports farmers across Saratoga County and beyond.

### Protecting Farmland, One Acre at a Time

Saratoga PLAN (Preserving Land and Nature) has protected over 2,900 acres of farmland in Saratoga County alone, a critical feat given the alarming rate at which farms are disappearing. According to Walsh, "We're losing 50 acres of farmland per day in New York State." This statistic, sourced from American Farmland Trust, underscores the urgency of PLAN's work.

Through conservation easements, the organization works with willing landowners to permanently protect farmland while allowing for ongoing agricultural use. Contrary to common misconceptions, these easements do not remove the land from the tax rolls or eliminate all development. Instead, they create a smart balance: preserving prime soils for farming while allowing farmers flexibility to grow their business.

"These easements are tailored to the farm's needs," Walsh explained. "If a farm wants to add barns or other infrastructure later, that's possible—as long as it stays within designated use areas that protect core farmland."



2025 Farm Showcase - City Goat Farm. Photo: DeGraff Hill Projects



2025 Farm Showcase Photo: DeGraff Hill Projects



Half-A-Chance Farm

**Supporting Viability and Growth**

For PLAN, it's not just about preservation; it's about supporting viable farming for future generations. "The state's farmland protection funding looks for long-term viability," said Walsh. That means the organization dives deep into a farm's business operations when evaluating protection projects. A pre-application process helps PLAN understand the size of the operation, its income sources, next-generation involvement, and overall sustainability. Farmers who go through the full three-to-five-year conservation process may receive payment for relinquishing development rights on a portion of their land—a "bargain sale" compared to full market value, but a valuable opportunity nonetheless. That money can go back into the business, help pay down debt, or fund investments like micro-dairies.

However, Walsh acknowledges the challenge: "This model doesn't work for every farm. The payout isn't a silver bullet. Some farms simply need more capital support than the state can currently offer."



2025 Farm Showcase - Smith Brothers Farm Photo: DeGraff Hill Projects

**A Regional Resource for New Farmers**

With the average age of farmers rising—and many without a next generation in place—Saratoga PLAN is also addressing the challenge of farm succession. The organization is a regional navigator for the "Farmland for a New Generation" program, connecting retiring farmers with aspiring ones through platforms like Find A Farm and Find A Farmer.

"It's like matchmaking," said Walsh. "We help farmers list their land and assist aspiring farmers in finding potential opportunities. It's about creating a gentle entry into farming, with mentorship and the transfer of generational knowledge."

Although no matches have been finalized yet in Saratoga's region, Walsh is optimistic. "The activity is increasing, and we're hopeful that more pairings will happen over time as the program gains visibility."

**Celebrating Local Agriculture: The Saratoga Farm Showcase**

Beyond the paperwork and easements, Saratoga PLAN also champions public engagement. Its annual Farm Showcase, launched post-COVID, is a celebration of local agriculture. The most recent event, held on June 21, 2025, spotlighted 12 farms in the Galway, Charlton, and Ballston Spa areas, including Featherbed Lane Farm.

Participants toured farms, tasted local foods, and connected with the people who grow their groceries. Highlights included Buckley Farm's robust offerings, 4H horseback riding, and even vegetable and goat-themed temporary tattoos. "It's a way to reconnect the public with farming," said Walsh. "If you don't know your local farmer, you should."

**Balancing Growth and Preservation**

Saratoga PLAN's efforts exist against the backdrop of a rapidly developing region. "Saratoga County is the second-fastest growing county in New York State," Walsh said. The influx of development—particularly from post-COVID migration—means farmland is under constant threat.

Yet, PLAN isn't anti-development. "We believe in balancing the built environment with the natural one," said Walsh. "It's about smart growth that preserves what makes this region so special—our farms, our soils, and our way of life."

**Looking Ahead**

The biggest challenge ahead? Funding. With limited state resources and increasing demand for farmland protection, PLAN is calling for greater investment. "We've relied heavily on generous landowners, but most farmers need real capital to make these protections feasible," Walsh emphasized.

Still, the mission is clear—and deeply rooted. "Farmers have a unique, intimate relationship with the land. Whether you're running a CSA, raising animals, or just growing food for your neighbors, it all matters," Walsh said.

As Saratoga PLAN continues its work across the region—expanding into Fulton and Warren Counties, hosting educational events, and championing smart farmland conservation—one thing is certain: they're not just preserving land. They're preserving a way of life.

For more information about Saratoga PLAN's farmland initiatives, visit [saratogaplan.org](http://saratogaplan.org). ■

## A Legal Advocate for Local Farmers *and Agricultural Legacies*



# MEGAN HARRIS-PERO

Interviewed by **Michael Nelson** • Photos provided

In Saratoga Springs, New York, attorney Megan Harris-Pero and her team at Harris-Pero Law Firm have carved out a unique and meaningful niche—supporting farmers and agricultural businesses through estate planning, succession strategy, and business law. With a career rooted in compassion and a deep respect for community, Megan has emerged as a trusted advocate for the farming community, helping them prepare for the future while protecting their land, legacy, and livelihoods—and offering that same thoughtful guidance to individuals and business owners throughout the region.

### From Big Law to Local Roots

Megan's journey to help farmers as part of her law practice was born from a love of the land and a desire to use her skills to make a tangible impact and to keep farms in operation. After working in a global law firm, Megan relocated to Saratoga County and launched her own practice—starting humbly from her basement ten years ago. Her firm now employs a team of seven and offers services spanning estate planning, elder law, Medicaid planning, and business formation.

But it's Megan's connection to and empathy for farmers that distinguishes her work. Motivated by the revitalization of small farms in places like Essex County and inspired by the surge of young and beginning farmers, Megan committed herself to learning the unique needs of this vital community. Through conferences, personal outreach, and her participation in the prestigious **LEAD New York** program—a two-year leadership initiative by Cornell University aimed at advancing New York's agricultural sector—Megan developed deep insight into the challenges and opportunities farmers face.

### Why Farmers Need Specialized Legal Planning

Farmers aren't just small business owners—they are stewards of land, legacy, and food systems. Their estates are often complex, blending personal and business assets, land held under conservation easements, leased acreage, and high-value equipment. Add to that the realities of generational transition, fluctuating markets, and a physically demanding profession, and the need for specialized legal guidance becomes clear. Harris-Pero Law provides:

- **Farm Succession Planning:** Helping farm families pass land and operations to the next generation or determine alternate paths for preservation.
- **Estate and Emergency Planning:** Establishing healthcare proxies, powers of attorney, wills, and trusts—especially important in high-risk professions like farming.
- **Business Law Services:** Structuring farm entities, managing transitions, and ensuring operational continuity through legal agreements and asset protection.
- **Resource Connection:** Collaborating with organizations like New York FarmNet, the Hudson Valley Agribusiness Development Corporation (HVADC), Cornell Cooperative Extension, American Farmland Trust, Farm Credit East, Adirondack Land Trust, and the Agricultural Stewardship Association (ASA) to provide comprehensive support—including social services and business consultants.



**Understanding the Farming Mindset**

Megan understands that farmers are long-term thinkers by nature. They plan for seasons and generations, not just quarters or fiscal years. But that doesn't always translate to legal preparedness. "Many farmers hesitate to plan because they don't know where the farm is going yet—or they're not ready to think about leaving it," Megan explained in a recent interview. "But it's critical to create an emergency plan that works for today, even if your long-term vision evolves."

She also stresses that failing to plan leaves decisions in the hands of the state. In New York, for example, a spouse doesn't automatically inherit everything if there are children involved—a surprising reality for many. "It's always better to decide for yourself who handles your medical, financial, and succession decisions," she says.

**More Than Legal Help—It's a Partnership**

Megan's firm doesn't just offer services—they build relationships. They understand that each farm family is different, and they tailor their process to meet people where they are, whether they're tech-savvy or paper-based. Megan has also trained in mediation, recognizing the emotional and familial dynamics that often complicate succession planning. And for those who can't afford services upfront? Megan points clients to grant-supported options through resource connections, ensuring that legal support isn't a luxury—it's a necessity every farmer can access.

**Investing in Agricultural Resilience**

Megan's mission goes beyond paperwork. She is a vocal advocate for supporting local agriculture through Community Supported Agriculture Programs (CSAs), farmers markets, and land preservation. Her collaboration with organizations like the Adirondack Land Trust and Agricultural Stewardship Association shows a deep commitment to the broader ecosystem of food and farming in upstate New York.

As small farms face increasing pressure from development, economic volatility, and climate uncertainty, Megan Harris-Pero is doing the quiet, essential work of safeguarding their futures—one plan at a time.

*Learn more about Megan Harris-Pero and her services for farmers at [saratogawills.com](http://saratogawills.com). Her website also features a dedicated section on farm succession with educational videos in partnership with the Adirondack Land Trust.*

*Follow the firm on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Nextdoor for helpful tips, updates, and community events. ■*



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The Adirondack Regional Chamber of Commerce (ARCC) is a 100% membership funded organization with the mission of supporting our business community through advocacy, education, connection and collaboration. The ARCC offers numerous benefits intended to help businesses grow and thrive, including resources in the following areas: business and professional development, money savings, marketing and promotion, ribbon cuttings, and sponsorships.  
518-798-1761 | AdirondackChamber.org

**LAKE GEORGE REGIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & CVB**

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esd.ny.gov/business-pandemic-recovery-initiative

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518-587-0945 | info@saratogaedc.com | saratogaedc.com

**SCORE**

38 local SCORE volunteer mentors help small businesses and entrepreneurs start and grow their businesses. SCORE is a nonprofit and all services are free and confidential.  
Contact: Richard Sellers | richard.sellers@scorevolunteer.org

# Glens Falls Community Shows Up to Support Veteran & First Responder Suicide Awareness



by **Amanda Blanton**,  
ARCC Vice President,  
Marketing & Communications

Photos provided

**T**he Veteran Business Network (VBN) of the Adirondack Regional Chamber of Commerce hosted its 5th Annual Walk for Veteran & First Responder Suicide Awareness on the afternoon of September 10 in Glens Falls City Park. More than 150 attendees gathered to connect with resources, share stories, and support one another.

What began as a “Stop 22” walk—honoring the 22 Veterans lost to suicide each day—has grown into a powerful community event focused on raising awareness and reminding people they are not alone. Attendance increases each year, and with the addition of resource tables in recent years, organizers hope the walk’s impact ripples throughout the community.

According to the New York Health Foundation, Veterans have a suicide rate twice as high as civilians. A 2024 New York State mental health needs assessment also found that 16% of First Responders reported having suicidal thoughts. This year, the event extended its support and recognition to First Responders—firefighters, police officers, and paramedics—who face incredibly high-stress situations every day.

More than 20 organizations lined the park with resources and support for Veterans and First Responders, including Southern Adirondack Independent Living (SAIL), Alliance180, Woofs for Warriors, and Veteran programs from Warren and Washington counties, among others.

“We are deeply grateful to our incredible community, dedicated sponsors, resource vendors, and volunteers whose unwavering support made our 5th Annual Veterans and First Responders Suicide Awareness and Prevention Walk a meaningful and impactful event. This year’s inclusion of first responders highlights the shared mental health challenges faced by those who serve and protect us all,” said Veteran Business Network Chair Chris Thomas, Sergeant Major, U.S. Marine Corps (retired) and founder of Elite 9 Talent Solutions.

“Remember, suicide prevention is not just a once-a-year effort—it’s a daily commitment. If you or someone you know is struggling, don’t wait until next September to seek help. Reach out, speak up, and continue the conversation every day.”

Each year, the VBN selects a beneficiary for the walk. Donations are collected from businesses and attendees, then presented at the conclusion of the event. This year's beneficiary was ASCEND Mental Wellness, an organization whose mission is to encourage and assist individuals in discovering pathways to optimal mental health. ASCEND provides services and develops supportive environments that help mediate stress, improve quality of life, and strengthen community wellness.

"At ASCEND, we know mental health isn't a side note—it's central to overall well-being. Veterans and first responders carry experiences many of us can't begin to imagine, and too often those invisible wounds go unseen," said Michele Morehouse, Communications Coordinator for ASCEND.

"We are so thankful to the Adirondack Regional Chamber of Commerce and the Veterans Business Network for this platform to raise awareness, advocate, and educate, while recognizing the important work we do with others in our communities to support mental health and wellness. To the many individuals and businesses who collectively contributed, your generosity directly fuels the programs and services that help our neighbors, especially veterans and first responders, so everyone in our community has the chance to thrive."

Donations totaled more than \$1,500, which the VBN presented to ASCEND team members in the form of an enlarged check at the conclusion of the walk.

If you or someone you know needs help, call the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline by dialing 988. ■



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Searching for home builders near me, kitchen remodelers in Saratoga Springs, or bathroom renovations in Clifton Park? These top-ranked builders and remodelers are known across Saratoga County for their attention to detail, design/build expertise, and outstanding customer service. Backed by years of proven success and satisfied clients, they're your go-to partners for residential construction and remodeling throughout the Capital Region.

**#1** 5.0 Excellent

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Galarneau Builders proudly serves the greater Malta, Clifton Park, and Saratoga Springs area. If you're in need of a custom home, kitchen remodeling, bathroom renovations, or full home renovations, trust the experienced team at Galarneau.

**#2** 4.5 Great

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**#4** 5.0 Excellent

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# TOP 5 Real Estate Companies

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Whether you're buying your first home, selling a property, or investing in real estate, these top-rated professionals proudly serve clients in Saratoga Springs, Malta, Ballston Spa, and Clifton Park with expert guidance and personalized service. Specializing in residential and commercial real estate, they offer everything from property listings and market analysis to staging advice and contract negotiations—helping you achieve your goals with confidence.

**#1** 5.0 Excellent

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The team stands out for its integrity, community mindset, and deep commitment to client success. They prioritize ethics, open communication, and continued education for both agents and clients—making the real estate process smoother and more transparent.

**#2**

★★★★★

4.7 Great



- ✓ Family-owned since 1969, based in Saratoga Springs.
- ✓ Voted Best Real Estate Company 18 years running.
- ✓ Offers free moving truck for clients.
- ✓ Expertise in residential, commercial, and rentals.

**#3**

★★★★★

4.8 Excellent



- ✓ Over 30 years' experience, 5,000+ properties sold
- ✓ Specializes in residential, commercial, and investment properties
- ✓ Keller Williams affiliation for global market access
- ✓ Highly responsive with dedicated operations support

**#4**

★★★★★

5.0 Excellent



- ✓ Veteran-owned with nearly 30 years' experience
- ✓ Ranked in the top 10% of agents in the Capital District for five years
- ✓ Provides custom home evaluation reports
- ✓ Offers stunning listings and personalized support

**#5**

★★★★

3.8 Good



- ✓ Specializes in luxury properties in Saratoga Springs.
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# GREENWOOD HOFF WEALTH MANAGEMENT MARKET OUTLOOK

## *The Future of Work: How AI is Reshaping the Labor Market*



by Greenwood Hoff Wealth Management of Cetera Investors

**All new groundbreaking technologies** spark fear of labor market disruption, and often with good reason. Electric streetlamps made lamplighters obsolete at the turn of the twentieth century. The automobile upended the horse-drawn carriage industry. The internet disrupted entire sectors, from media to retail to telecommunications. While new technologies can eliminate jobs in the short term, history has shown they also create entirely new industries and employment opportunities over time.

Artificial intelligence (AI) is the latest transformational force, and perhaps the most far-reaching yet. At Greenwood Hoff Wealth Management, we are closely watching how AI may reshape the future of work, the economy, and investment opportunities.

### From the Ground Up

Technology adoption has always taken time. Thomas Edison installed the first private electric system in his home in 1878, but it took half a century before electricity reached 50% of U.S. households. The telephone, invented in 1876, took more than 70 years to reach the same milestone. Infrastructure challenges, particularly in rural areas, slowed the spread of these innovations.

Today, adoption cycles are much faster. With widespread electrical grids, internet access, cloud infrastructure, and mobile networks already in place, new technologies can scale more quickly than ever before.

### The Digital Age

The nationwide electrical grid laid the foundation for the digital age. In 1984, only 8% of households had a personal computer; by 2000, that figure surpassed 50%. Today, nearly every household has access to a computer or smart device.

The internet further accelerated this transformation. In 1995, just 14% of households had internet access. By 2001, half were online. Today, more than 90% are connected.

Then came the smartphone. In 2011, only 35% of U.S. adults owned one. Now, more than 90% do, putting a computer in nearly every pocket. Technology that once took generations to spread now achieves universal adoption in less than a decade.

### The Next Frontier: Artificial Intelligence

AI represents the next great leap. Already, AI is powering driverless car programs in San Francisco, Phoenix, and Los Angeles, with robo-taxis providing more than 250,000 paid rides each week. Beyond transportation, AI is being used for fraud detection, healthcare diagnostics, contract review, content creation, and even energy grid optimization.

Two forces are converging to reshape the labor market: the rise of AI and an aging population. Since 2000, the U.S. population over age 55 has grown by 78%, while the prime working-age population (ages 25–54) has grown by just 7%. With fewer younger workers entering the labor force, productivity gains will be essential to sustaining growth—and AI may provide that boost.

Tech companies are investing hundreds of billions into data centers, chip manufacturing, and infrastructure to support AI. Utility companies are expanding grid capacity to power these energy-hungry systems. According to the World Economic Forum, AI could result in a net gain of 78 million jobs globally by 2030. While some roles will be displaced, others will be created in industries we can't yet fully envision.



## A Changing Workforce

The U.S. labor market has undergone profound shifts before. In 1900, nearly 40% of Americans worked in agriculture; today, less than 1% do. Manufacturing once employed more than 30% of the labor force but now accounts for just 8%. Offshoring, automation, and robotics all played a role.

At the same time, service jobs have surged. In 1950, about 21 million Americans worked in services; today, more than 114 million do, accounting for 70% of total employment. Healthcare, professional services, and hospitality are the largest contributors.

AI will likely accelerate this trend, reducing demand for repetitive, rules-based roles while boosting demand for creative, analytical, and interpersonal skills. Early signs are already visible. Job growth has slowed in cyclical industries such as manufacturing and professional services, while healthcare and government roles continue to expand. Software developer job postings are also down, reflecting AI's growing ability to handle coding and debugging tasks once performed by entry-level workers.



## What's Not Artificial

Despite all the change, one thing remains constant: the human need for connection. The COVID-19 pandemic underscored this truth. Technology helped us adapt, but isolation highlighted the irreplaceable value of face-to-face interaction.

For client-facing professions—financial advisors, lawyers, doctors, teachers, and sales professionals, AI will be a tool that enhances efficiency, not a replacement. By automating routine tasks, AI can free professionals to spend more time building relationships, solving complex problems, and providing personalized guidance.

As Michael Scott from *The Office* quipped, “It’s the people.” That truth will determine whether AI becomes smarter than today’s most advanced systems or not.

## Market Implications

The stock market has already reflected excitement around AI. Since the current bull market began in October 2022, the S&P 500 has returned nearly 85%, the Nasdaq is up more than 100%, and the technology sector has gained 161%. Mega-cap tech companies now represent 39% of the S&P 500.

While these gains have been extraordinary, they also bring risk. High valuations leave little room for disappointment if earnings growth slows. Diversification remains a crucial strategy, especially as other sectors may benefit from AI adoption and productivity gains over time. History has shown that markets tend to broaden beyond early leaders as new technologies mature.

## Adapting to What's Next

The American workforce is made up of more than 170 million people. Some jobs will disappear, but new industries and opportunities will emerge. The challenge lies in bridging the transition through reskilling, workforce training, and widespread AI literacy.

For businesses, adaptability will be key. Those that integrate AI responsibly and effectively will likely gain a competitive edge in efficiency, cost savings, and innovation. For workers, embracing lifelong learning will be essential. And for investors, a diversified, forward-looking portfolio remains the best path through both the opportunities and uncertainties ahead.

## Final Thoughts

Change is the only constant in the labor market. From the shift away from farms and factories to the rise of services and technology, the U.S. economy has continually evolved. Artificial intelligence represents the next great frontier. While disruption is inevitable, history suggests that innovation ultimately leads to progress.

At Greenwood Hoff Wealth Management, we remain optimistic about the future. We believe AI will augment human potential rather than replace it, create new industries, and drive productivity gains essential for long-term growth. For investors, this means balancing excitement about emerging technologies with disciplined diversification and a steady focus on long-term goals.

The future of work may look different, but one truth remains: people, and the connections we build, will always matter most. ■

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OCTOBER

UPCOMING NETWORKING EVENTS



FRI

**BNI**  
Meets every Friday at 7:30 AM  
Southern Adirondack Realtors  
296 Bay Road, Queensbury

MEETING POINT

**Glens Falls Chapter** **13 OCT**  
11 AM  
EOS Office -  
9 Broad Street  
Union Square -  
2nd Floor, Glens Falls

**Young Professionals Meeting** **22 OCT**  
8:30 AM  
Teal, Becker, &  
Chairamont, CPAS P.C.  
7 Washington Square, Albany

**Hudson Valley Chapter**  
4 PM  
460 Freedom Plains Road  
Suite 1, Poughkeepsie

**Saratoga Springs Chapter** **23 OCT**  
8:30 AM  
Saratoga National Bank  
171 S Broadway,  
Saratoga Springs

**Albany Chapter** **24 OCT**  
8:30 AM  
22 Corporate Woods  
Suite 501, Albany

SARATOGA COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

**Leadership Saratoga Alumni Mixer - Fall Back, Give Forward** **09 OCT**  
4 - 6 PM  
Therapeutic Horses of Saratoga  
683 Route 29, Saratoga Springs  
Fees/Admission: \$25 per person

*Register:*  
<https://chamber.saratoga.org/events/register/42200>  
*This event is a wonderful opportunity to relax, reconnect, and support the scholarship program! With each \$25 registration, \$10 goes directly to the Leadership Saratoga Scholarship Fund, helping to open doors for future Saratoga leaders. Ticket includes hors d'oeuvres and 1 drink ticket for wine/beer. Be sure to bring cash for our Raffle & Wine Pull! Cash Bar Available | Guests Welcome*

*If your organization is not a member of The Saratoga County Chamber of Commerce, please use the Guest option at registration to sign up.*

Saratoga County Annual Business Showcase

**14 OCT**  
4 - 6:30 PM  
The Gideon Putnam Hotel  
Saratoga Spa State Park,  
24 Gideon Putnam Road, Saratoga Springs  
Fees/Admission: \$500 Main Ballroom  
\$350 Gallery Space

*Schedule:*  
4 - 6:30 PM - Business Show  
6:30 - 7:30 PM - Vendor mixer post-event.  
**MUST exhibit to attend!**

*Join us for an exciting evening at the Saratoga County Business Showcase — the premier networking event for businesses of all sizes and industries looking to grow, connect, and build their brand in our vibrant community.*

LAKE GEORGE REGIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & CVB

**After-Hours Mixer at Sundance Ranch** **15 OCT**  
5 - 7 PM  
Sundance Ranch  
465 Lake Ave, Lake Luzerne

*Register:*  
<https://pci.jotform.com/form/252334498522157>

ARCC EVENTS

**October Mixer at The Heisman Court Grill & Steak House** **16 OCT**  
4 - 6 PM  
The Heisman Court  
Grill & Steak House  
122 Main Street, Hudson Falls

Fees/Admission:  
\$15 for ARCC Members  
\$25 for Not-Yet Members





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**EPISODE 90**

**Simple Blogging Strategies for Consistent Content**

In this solo episode, your host Michael Nelson of Five Towers Media shares a quick, practical process for turning a simple 5-minute video into a polished blog post using AI tools like Otter.ai, ChatGPT, and Opus Clips. He explains how to save time, create multiple pieces of content from one recording, and boost your SEO without breaking the bank.



SCAN TO LISTEN!



**EPISODE 91**

**Trade Careers and Lifelong Learning at HVCC**

In this episode, your host Mike Nelson of Five Towers Media and Derek Foster interview Joe Dana, Amy Posner, and Chris McNally from Hudson Valley Community College. They discuss the college's trade-focused programs, the importance of lifelong learning, partnerships with industry leaders like Global Foundries, opportunities for students in high-demand fields, and more!



SCAN TO LISTEN!



**EPISODE 92**

**Equity Incentives & Succession with Chris Battenham**

In this episode, your hosts Michael Nelson of Five Towers Media and Derek Foster of Daigle Cleaning Systems interview Chris Battenham, co-founder and CEO of Reins. Tune in as they discuss how his company helps blue-collar contractors offer equity incentives, his journey from working in his father's contracting business to addressing the "silver tsunami" of aging business owners needing succession plans, and more!



SCAN TO LISTEN!



**EPISODE 93**

**The Importance of Growth Mindset**

In this episode, your hosts Michael Nelson of Five Towers Media sits down with Jason and Stacy Spector to explore how growth mindset, resilience, and mindset coaching can transform students, athletes, and blue-collar workers alike. Tune in as they share personal stories from wrestling and education, practical strategies for leadership in the trades, and how mindset shifts can help businesses overcome hiring and training challenges.



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**Saratoga, Warren, and Washington County** have no shortage of fantastic goods & services to offer! In this podcast, our host Mike Nelson will clue you in on the gems hidden **in your very own community!**



**SEASON 3, EPISODE 38**

### **The Power of Belief in Business with Tim Suprise**

Your host Mike Nelson of Five Towers Media talks with Tim Suprise, longtime entrepreneur, brewery founder, and employer engagement leader at SUNY Adirondack. Tune in as they discuss his journey from Army ROTC and law enforcement to launching Arcadia Brewing Company, creative ways to raise capital, the importance of trades education, and how pig roasts and British ales built lasting community connections.



SCAN TO LISTEN!



**SEASON 3, EPISODE 39**

### **Inside the 2025 Saratoga Showcase of Homes**

Your host Mike Nelson of Five Towers Media sits down with entrepreneur and EOS implementer Dave Borland to talk about the real challenges business owners face when scaling their companies. From early failures and marketing mergers to the power of systems like EOS, Dave shares hard-earned insights from over a decade of helping teams grow with clarity and purpose. Whether you're struggling with structure, scaling too fast, or just feeling stuck, this episode delivers candid advice on building strong leadership teams, gaining traction, and knowing when to get help.



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**SEASON 3, EPISODE 40**

### **Processes That Empower with Paul Graver**

Your host Mike Nelson of Five Towers Media sits down with Paul Graver, owner of EXSETIS Consulting, to discuss how strong processes can eliminate chaos, empower employees, and help businesses scale. Paul also shares stories from his 30+ years in manufacturing and his family venture, The Grill Pantry, where he turned a homemade wing sauce into a shelf-stable business.



SCAN TO LISTEN!



**SEASON 3, EPISODE 41**

### **Selling Your Business with Transworld**

Your host Mike Nelson of Five Towers Media sits down with Shawn Pepe and Stephen Tomb of Transworld Business Advisors of Albany. Tune in as they talk about how they help small business owners plan exits, protect legacies, and maximize value. They also dive into the "silver tsunami" of retiring owners, the importance of proper planning, and why confidentiality is critical in business sales.



SCAN TO LISTEN!



Join host Stephen Zabala, lifelong wellness enthusiast and founder of Greenfork, as he unpacks real-life, practical approaches to nutrition, wellness, and success—without the over complication.



**EPISODE 15**

***Building Digital Wellness with Leah Ferrone***

Host Stephen Zabala sits down with educator and mindfulness coach Leah Ferrone to explore the impact of technology and social media on mental health, relationships, and real-world connection. Leah shares neuroscience-backed insights, practical mindfulness tools, and stories from her work with kids, parents, and teens to help listeners build healthier tech habits and deeper human connections.



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**EPISODE 16**

***Renee Salerno's Journey to Holistic Beauty***

Host Stephen Zabala sits down with Renee Salerno, an endurance athlete, yogi, and aesthetician. Renee, owner of Namastetics, shares insights on her journey through yoga, mountain biking, cross-country skiing, and her approach to skincare that emphasizes self-care and education. From the transformative power of restorative yoga to the importance of SPF and embracing new challenges as a lifelong learner, Renee's vibrant energy and dedication to community shine through.



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**EPISODE 17**

***Building Discipline Through Martial Arts with Don Walton***

Host Stephen Zabala sits down with Don Walton, an MMA athlete, coach, and promoter. Listen in as Don shares his journey from fighter to coach at the Academy of Elite Martial Arts in Saratoga, discussing weight cutting, founding Elite Fighting Promotions, and the discipline of martial arts.



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**EPISODE 18**

***Coaching for All Ages with Mo Morales***

Host Stephen Zabala sits down with Christian "Mo" Morales, a strength and performance coach working with athletes of all ages and levels. Mo shares his journey into athletic coaching, from internships and early experiences to leading athlete programs, and dives into topics like youth vs. adult training, the art and science of coaching, using technology in performance, and blending physical therapy with strength training.



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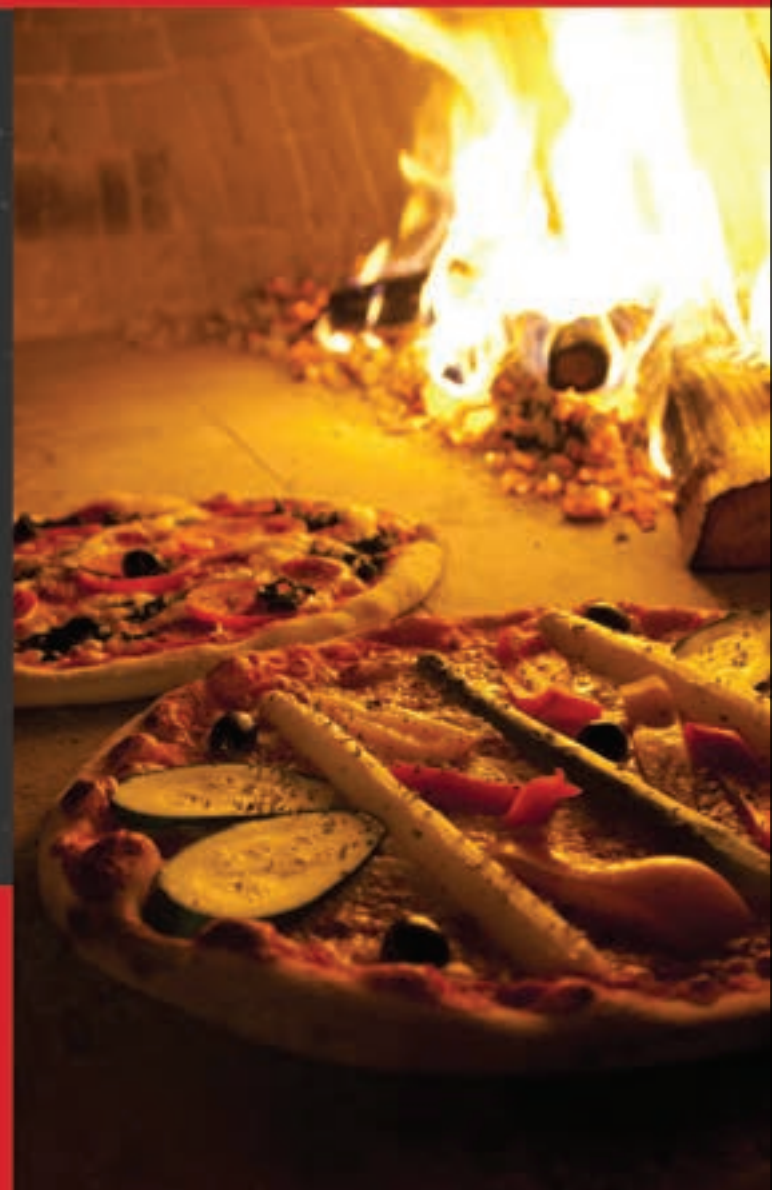
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