



Carolina Farm Stewardship Association STEWARDSHIP NEWS

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Farm Profile: Live Oak Farms

by Jena Eison,
Marketing Coordinator
for Live Oak Farms

Take a ride on Live Oak Farms' horse-drawn trolley and you'll be treated to a trip back in time before tractors noisily plowed over the land and animals were raised in abhorrent, overcrowded conditions. From this entertaining and unique vantage point, visitors can enjoy a close-up view of the many farm animals roaming this tranquil and picturesque 82-acre property.

Past Board Chair, Ron Wilson, along with his wife and co-owner, Cassie, firmly believe in the farming methods practiced at the beginning of the century before the onset of World War II. Draft horses take the place of tractors on this working farm. Cattle roam freely in expansive pastures feeding off the grass. After the cattle have sufficiently fed on one pasture, they are moved to an adjacent pasture to continue their grazing. Sheep and goats eat the bramble left behind by the cattle, which makes for an efficient system.

Incidentally, Wilson spent nearly five years building and nurturing the soil in order to produce top-notch grass and produce. This process was of utmost importance to him. "All the land is depleted. People merely throw fertilizer at it in order to compensate," he



Past CFSA Board Chair, Ron Wilson, with his gentle Suffolk Punch Draft horse.

said. In addition, all of the animals on the farm are raised without the use of growth hormones or antibiotics. "Our animals are not on drugs, but they are on grass," was once the farm's axiom. Now it's the farm's official slogan and is printed on popular hats and T-shirts.

Dear to Ron's heart are the many heritage breeds scattered across the farm. As a board member of the American Livestock Breeds Conservancy (ALBC), Ron is serious about the preservation of endangered breeds of livestock and poultry. The ALBC is a non-profit membership organization working to protect more than 170 breeds of livestock and poultry from extinction. According to ALBC, one in five breeds of farm animals is on the verge of

-Continued on page 12 -

The Tool Shed: Labeling for Farmers

by Emily Lancaster,
Animal Welfare Approved

As the Southeast Farmer and Market Outreach Coordinator for Animal Welfare Approved, the nonprofit certification program and food label for pasture-based livestock farms, I wear many hats. One of these hats is assisting AWA farmers with labeling. I work with farmers, graphic designers and the USDA to move label claim applications through the approval process on a weekly basis. The one piece of advice I would share with anyone selling a product – and this goes for produce as well as meat, dairy and eggs – is:

Understand the claims you make, and understand their value to your customer.

The Farmer as Retailer

No matter what you sell, you will probably "label" it in some way, even if it is just verbally explaining the product. So why not do this as effectively as possible? For starters, accurate labeling is a legal issue. The Code of Federal Regulations, Title 9, 317.8 (a) states, "No product or any of its wrappers, packaging, or other containers shall bear any false or misleading marking, label, or other labeling." This includes any statement, word, picture or design associated with the product. But your label is not just needed for regulatory compliance; it's also a marketing tool. Your label is an introduction to your farm, and an opportunity to give customers information that will make them feel good about buying your product.

-Continued on page 13 -

In this Issue:

Meet the New Staff pg. 3 **Why Is Poultry Sustainable? pg. 5** **Ask the Livestock Experts pg. 6**
Backyard Chickens pg. 8 **Beef & Veggie Pot Pie pg. 9** **Building the Local Food Economy pg. 10**

CAROLINA FARM STEWARDSHIP ASSOCIATION (CFSA)

CFSA is a membership-based organization of more than 1,500 farmers, processors, gardeners, businesses and individuals in North and South Carolina who are committed to helping people in the Carolinas grow and eat local, organic food. CFSA's Mission is to promote local and organic agriculture in the Carolinas by inspiring, educating and organizing farmers and consumers.

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Newsletter Information

Stewardship News, CFSA's quarterly newsletter, would like to hear from you! Send articles, queries, cartoons, recipes, corrections, to amy@carolinafarmstewards.org. The opinions expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily shared by the editor or the CFSA Board. CFSA does not endorse any product or service advertised.

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From the Director

Bigger Wins, Bigger Goals

The sustainable agriculture movement is growing ever more influential in public policy, especially here in the Carolinas. Last year's food safety debate is just one example. CFSA and its members played an essential role in winning protections for the nation's small-scale, local and organic farmers and food producers in the Food Safety Modernization Act. Through grassroots pressure and grasstops negotiations, together we were able to make two Senators, a Republican and a Democrat, into successful champions who stood up to block the application of industrial-scale safety regulations to healthy, local farms.

At the state level, we've also been able to lead on questions of food safety and regulatory obstacles to community-based food systems. Last year the NC Dept. of Ag announced that it is legal after all for a farm to process more than 1,000 poultry on premises without inspection. And, as of this writing, an important bill, HB 162, passed the North Carolina House of Representatives unanimously, and is now on its way to the state Senate.

HB 162 would exempt small-scale on-farm agricultural processing from wastewater permit requirements where the farm operator produces no more than 1,000 gallons of wastewater per day and land applies that water with no discharge into surface waters. Under a hole in current regulations, even small amounts of wastewater from dairies, vegetable-washing operations, breweries and wineries are improperly classified as industrial waste, making required disposal methods prohibitively expensive for farmstead-scale businesses. The bill will fix this problem.

CFSA was instrumental in developing this bill. We conducted a survey of our farm members' water use and documented the challenges members faced in acquiring wastewater permits. Two CFSA members, Kathryn Spann of Prodigal Farms and Debbie Stikeleather from The Winery at Iron Gate Farms testified in committee about the battles they have fought and the thousands of dollars they have spent unnecessarily under the



Roland McReynolds, Executive Director

existing regulatory program.

On many fronts the momentum is running our way but much work remains. We are facing dire threats today that demand action by the sustainable ag community, producers and consumers alike:

Unfair budget cuts: Programs that support small-scale and organic farming and local foods are on the chopping block. In NC, the agricultural research station in Waynesville, which has been designated for organic research to support mountain producers, is at risk of being sold to help close a gap in the state budget. Likewise, NC's state meat inspection system, which allows 147 local businesses to provide animal slaughter and processing without onerous federal inspection, may be eliminated. Ag extension and research at Clemson and NC State are under severe budget pressure.

On a national level, the budget passed by the US House of Representatives eliminates tiny but essential programs that support sustainable ag, like the National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service and the Organic Transitions research grant program. It would slash the Agricultural Research Service, which has been critical to breeding the very hard wheat varieties that have undergirded the success of our Organic Bread Flour Project, and funding for soil and water conservation programs.

Association News

The House budget doesn't touch the subsidies for conventional commodity crops, ethanol, and crop insurance that fuel our nation's epidemics of environmental pollution, diet-related disease, and farmland loss.

Genetically engineered plants and animals: The US Dept. of Agriculture and Food and Drug Administration continue their campaigns to make the world safe for GE foods and biotech profits. Even though USDA's own belated impact analysis shows that the release of GE alfalfa will cause direct harm to non-GE producers and put our food supply at risk, the agency went ahead and allowed the release of Monsanto's Roundup Ready alfalfa.

USDA has also sided with Monsanto on GE sugar beets, which have been released even after a federal judge found the agency violated a court order to delay planting. And the FDA is expected to approve the release of GE salmon, an insane decision given how easily such an animal could escape into the wild and contaminate native populations.

Unjust taxation: South Carolina allows small-scale farms to qualify for beneficial property tax treatment. But NC does not.

Moving forward: With these threats and a new Farm Bill coming next year, it is more important than ever that we work harder for policies to create a better food and farming system. Meet with legislators and share stories of how local, organic food creates jobs and makes people and our environment healthy. Engage with regulators and traditional farmers to win their support for an alternative to the 'get-big-or-get-out' mindset that has driven farmers off the land and debilitated our rural communities.

We have experienced great and unexpected successes over the last several years. Now, let's build on that momentum and make healthy, local, organic food and farming the 'conventional' way to grow and eat.

Sincerely,



CFSA Is Growing!

Jacqueline Thompson started at CFSA in the Pittsboro office as our Grants Manager. Jacqueline brings 17 years of experience in grant program management and grant writing to CFSA, and will dramatically enhance our ability to execute our enlarging portfolio of grant programs, including the Growing Green Farmers Programs, Organic Initiative, Organic Grains Program, Local Produce Safety Initiative, and Cultivate Piedmont programs in Winston-Salem. Jacqueline is a gardener and crafter and a Carolina native.

Karen McSwain started as our Organic Initiative Coordinator. Karen got her Masters in horticulture at Iowa State University, home of the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, and managed the organic garden at Warren Wilson College. She will be providing technical assistance to organic farmers in the Carolinas and working with soil and water conservation agencies to improve the services they provide to organic and transitioning-to-organic farmers. Karen's work is funded by grants from the SC Dept. of Agriculture and Santa Fe Natural Tobacco Co. She will work out of Asheville.

Jennifer Lapidus, also in Asheville, is transitioning from a contractor on



CFSA is growing - we are now more than 1,500 members strong. photo by Kari Brayman

our Organic Bread Flour Project to a staff position as our Organic Grains Program Coordinator. Many of you know Jen already from her outstanding work to establish a local small scale mill for Carolina-grown organic wheat, which is now officially oper-

-Continued on page 4 -

Save the Dates!

2011 Piedmont Farm Tour

April 16-17, 2011

5th Annual Upstate SC Farm Tour

June 4-5, 2011

**SUSTAINABLE
AGRICULTURE
CONFERENCE**



Nov. 11-13, 2011
Durham, NC

More Association News ... (continued from page 3)

ating as Carolina Ground. Santa Fe Natural funds are making it possible for us to retain Jennifer on staff. She will continue to work with Carolina Ground and organic farmers to rebuild the infrastructure for a Carolina grain economy from seed to plate.

Finally, we have hired **Adrienne Outcalt** as the Program Manager for Cultivate Piedmont. Adrienne is in the Sustainable Agriculture program at Central Carolina Community College and has a degree in Environmental Studies from UNC-Asheville. Cultivate Piedmont is a regional committee of CFSA in Winston-Salem, NC that seeks to continue the phenomenally successful Krankie's (now Cobblestone) Farmers Market, as well as initiate sustainable ag outreach and education programs in the Triad.

We owe this growth to you, our members. Thanks to your phenomenal support for our work, we are able to build the systems that sustainable family farms need to thrive and to educate farmers and the communities they serve. The Board and (growing) staff of CFSA are grateful for that support, and look forward to more success in restoring a sustainable food system in the Carolinas. 🌱

CFSA Builds Seed Cleaning Infrastructure

by Jennifer Lapidus

In the Carolinas, we need a revived system to re-connect small-scale grain growers with buyers. In NC, we are lucky to have existing potential markets for organic grains—Lindley Mills and Bay State Milling. But, small to medium-sized grain users are a different kind of market for a grower. The larger mills have volumes high enough to justify in-house cleaning and lab work of grain. Grain is shipped—55,000 lbs—in bulk, in grain trucks to the mill. It's tested, then cleaned and processed. But for growers to access smaller buyers, or put another way, for bakeries or distillers or malters to establish direct relationships with growers, certain systems needed to be rebuilt.

Also, there was still no clear source for regionally adapted organic grain

and cover crop seed (for more information about seed varieties developed through both the USDA-ARS Uniform Bread Wheat Trials as well as NCSU's BOPS project, visit www.organicbreeding.ncsu.edu).

But, it just so happens that grain and seed cleaning infrastructure is one and the same. And so an idea began to take shape. Organic on-farm grain and seed cleaning infrastructure would create not only a source for organic regionally adapted grain and cover crop seed, it would also provide a service to a grower who wanted to sell a higher value product—clean grain, bagged or in one-ton totes. Not only that, but numerous varieties of clean grain (in totes or bags) could be transported together on one truck—hard wheat, soft wheat, barley, rye, oats.

Enter Looking Back Farms. Already instrumental in their partnership with Lindley Mills in assuring a seed supply of TAM 303, a regionally adapted wheat variety, Kenny and Ben Haines expressed interest in setting up full-scale organic grain and seed cleaning infrastructure. This on-farm infrastructure would ensure a source for double certified grain and cover crop seed as well as provide a grain and seed cleaning service.

But, they faced the chicken-egg scenario. Because the infrastructure did not yet exist and seed availability was still sparse, the demand for this service is not yet there. So, in order to jumpstart this essential piece of our sustainable food system, the North Carolina Organic Bread Flour Project assisted Looking Back Farms. Together we sought and secured grant funding.

Looking Back Farms received 40% cost share assistance from NC Market Ready for on-farm grain and seed cleaning infrastructure. And, we just learned that RAFI-USA awarded Looking Back Farms a Tobacco Communities Reinvestment Fund Community



Enjoying the fresh produce at Krankie's, now Cobblestone Farmers Market.

photo by Virginia Weiler

Grant. Very good news indeed! 🌱

> Learn more: www.ncobfp.blogspot.com/

Cultivate Piedmont Kicks off 2011 Season of the Cobblestone Farmers Market

by Jo Dawson

Winter was a bustling prelude to the reopening this month of Winston-Salem's newly named Cobblestone Farmers Market. The market's operator, Cultivate Piedmont, is a new CFSA program, and its outreach and community support are growing fast.

The market, currently the most visible of Cultivate Piedmont's projects, has been renamed to reflect its new location -- a historic cobblestone plaza at Third Street and Patterson Avenue in the city's thriving downtown. Loyal shoppers will still be able to park free nearby, and each of the Tuesday morning markets will feature live music, cooking demonstrations and

-Continued on page 14-

Developing Sustainable Flocks of Poultry

A New Certification for Heritage Breeds Raised the Way Nature Intended

by Jim Adkins, Sustainable Poultry Specialist, Center for Poultry

So, what makes a flock of poultry sustainable? There are a lot of consumers and farmers who are looking for sustainable poultry, but there is a lot of misunderstanding about what it takes to raise birds sustainably.

Let me share with you a personal experience. For several years, I worked in the commercial turkey industry and 100% of the turkeys we raised were unable to reproduce naturally! We raised breeder flocks that needed us to assist in the process of reproduction. We trained hired men to collect semen from the toms and then spend the next day inseminating the hens to fertilize the eggs. These turkeys cannot reproduce without the “assistance of man.” This is true of the entire commercial, industrialized turkey industry. Poultry that cannot reproduce naturally are not sustainable. This is also true in the commercial chicken industry. The famous Cornish cross meat chickens cannot reproduce. In fact, all hybrids of meat chickens and egg layers that are crossed for production reasons cannot reproduce and hatch the same species of birds. They are genetically controlled by the companies that own them. This is also true of the “Freedom Ranger” and the “Label Rouge.” You cannot reproduce these birds on your own local farm. So, think about this, if you are dependent upon a company to send you baby chicks every year because you cannot reproduce your own flock, is your flock of poultry sustainable? Absolutely not! If these companies folded, you would no longer have a flock of birds.

This is why we are very excited about teaching farmers about heritage poultry. We believe that sustainable, healthy breeding of poultry is defined by historic, standard bred poultry. Some of these are defined as heritage breeds and are recognized by the American Poultry Association (APA). Criteria for heritage breeds includes natural mating with 70-80% expected fertility rates, long productive life span and slow growth rate that allows

and promotes natural and proper growth.

Currently, 26 farms are participating in the 2011 Heritage Poultry Project. The participating farms are in NC, SC and eastern Tennessee. The farmers that are participating in this movement are committed to the core values listed below.

Standard Bred Poultry: Center for Poultry Certified Flocks – Farmers involved in the project, must breed flocks of poultry that are identified in the American Standard of Perfection. Genetic lines must trace back multiple generations and have traits that meet the APA standard guidelines for breed. This includes heritage breeds of poultry that are identified by the American Livestock Breed Conservancy (ALBC). All flocks must be approved by me or another APA licensed judge.

Natural Outdoor Environment: Farmers involved in the project must allow the birds to behave naturally and allow them the opportunity to perform natural and instinctive behaviors essential to their health and well-being. This includes daily access to natural, outdoor pasture.

Local, Sustainable Farming: Farmers involved in the project must be committed to local poultry farming that promotes and encourages sustainability. This is defined by selling your poultry products locally and by raising poultry that can be reproduced locally and is not dependent on “outside resources” to provide eggs, chicks and/or poults for your farm. Commercial/industrialized hybrids are not permitted. We are committed to preserving genetics that are reproducible at the local farm.

Welfare of the Bird: Farmers involved in the project, must be com-



Jim judging a Mottled Cochon Female
photo submitted by Jim Adkins

mitted to the standards of Animal Welfare Approved (AWA). Farmers in the network will be distinguished by a humane and conscientious attitude toward the birds in their care as well as by humane housing and husbandry. The premise of the AWA standards is that animals must be allowed to behave naturally. Provisions are made to ensure social interaction, comfort, and physical and psychological well being.

We are very excited to begin marketing these heirloom breeds of poultry and getting them back on the tables of American families. We are committed to training farmers for understanding, coaching them for implementation and mentoring them for the sake of multiplying sustainable flocks of poultry throughout the Carolinas. Stay tuned as we develop this network of farmers. 🐔

> Learn more: www.centerforpoultry.com

Jim established the International Center for Poultry in 1992 and currently lives in McDowell county, NC.

ASK THE EXPERTS

This season, CFSA asks about animal health, marketing, feed prices, and processing



Now that the weather is finally warming up, what are your top priorities to maintain ideal animal health?

David White: I will be moving the birds outside sooner from the brooders as it warms up. When it gets really warm my priority will be to see that they have water all day in the shade and that it is as cool as possible.

Charles Sydnor: We have not had to worm cows for more than five years because we now move them at least once per day, sometimes twice. This means that they are always on fresh pasture with their manure behind them. Once they leave a pasture they don't return for 45 - 90 days. With no toxic wormer in the manure, the Dung Beetles disperse the manure quickly resulting in a reduced parasite load and a better nutrient cycle

Ben Bergmann: Animal health priorities for us this time of year are typically:

- Keeping chicks in brooders, warm, dry, and draft-free, and timing their move to pasture just right weather-wise.
- Transitioning sheep and any steers that have been on hay back to green pasture in a methodical way to avoid

Pigs on pasture at Homestead Harvest Farm in Wake Forest, NC.

photo by Jenn Sanford

problems that can come with grazing the first flush of spring grass.

- Keeping up with hoof trimming of sheep as the cool/wet of winter can lead to greater problems.

Casey McKissick: Getting lactating and nursing cows on spring forage growth, not too early at the detriment of the forage health, but the cows are begging for it! Poultry are arriving as day-old chicks here and in the brooder. Even our nights in Western NC are still pretty mild so we anticipate putting well-feathered birds on pasture by mid-April, but we will be ready for spring weather surprises!

What marketing ideas are you excited about for 2011? Any thoughts on consumer demand and pricing?

David White: I hope to have to work at marketing as my volume increases. I have not out produced my current markets for some time so my efforts are aimed at production right now.

Charles Sydnor: Company Shops Market, a coop grocery store, will open in Burlington in June 2011. This is a project that a group of people

have been working on for the past 6 years. It will provide a new marketing opportunity for many local growers of meat, produce and value-added products. Our traditional markets include restaurants, farmers' markets, food stores and our own on-farm store. All of these continue to grow largely through word of mouth.

Consumer demand for beef will probably decrease because of the unprecedented rise in the price that we have seen over the past year. I believe that this will drive more people to local and organic markets. It will also provide an opportunity for some to raise prices in keeping with the increasing costs.

Ben Bergmann: We assume consumer demand will continue to rise as it has for the last 10 years for us, even through the recession. We are most excited about retail-direct sales outside of farmers' markets (i.e. on-farm sales, meat/egg buying clubs).

Casey McKissick: We are excited about the opening of the Foothills Pilot Plant, McDowell County's (soon-to-open) USDA inspected processing facility for rabbit, chicken and turkey. This will open up new markets for farmers in the region and offer our cow/calf operators a viable, low-risk enterprise to increase revenue on their acreage and decrease nitrogen

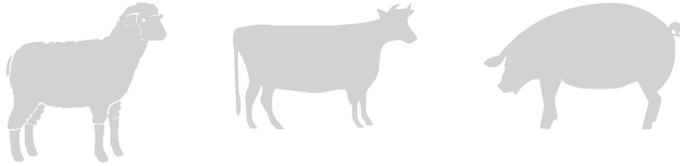
OUR EXPERT FARMERS:

David White ("The Chickenman")
Oaklyn Plantation Free Range
Chicken in Darlington, SC

Charles F. Sydnor
Cane Creek Farm
Snow Camp, NC

Ben Bergmann
Fickle Creek Farm
Efland, NC

Casey McKissick
Crooked Creek Farms
Old Fort, NC



and phosphorus inputs. Many signs indicate the economy is on the uptick and consumers in this area seem ready to continue supporting farmers.

Animal feed prices are rising. How will this affect you?

David White: Feed is a major cost and I will need to raise prices to reflect the increased feed bill. I may try growing all cocks to see if that saves on feed at all.

Charles Sydnor: We use few purchased inputs for cows, but pigs are finished on a grain-based diet. This has been steadily rising in price and has resulted in an increase in our price for pork.

Ben Bergmann: Hog, layer, and broiler feeds are all considerably more expensive than last year. Thus, we will likely have to increase pork, egg, and chicken prices.

Casey McKissick: Grains are up, feed is up so meat prices will have to rise if farmers want to maintain their thin margins. With a new source of bulk certified organic feed now available from Reedy Fork Farm, I am seeing the gap between the price of conventional feed and certified organic feed continue to close. Despite higher prices, I think many farmers will begin to see commercial use of certified organic feeds as economically viable.

How is your processing situation shaping up for this year?

David White: We are pleased with the processing at Williamsburg Packing in Kingstree for the most part and have confidence that Sep is doing what he can to make it work for all of us.

Charles Sydnor: We have been blessed to have an excellent relationship with our processor. This is probably based on two factors. First, we have increased our volume considerably over the past three years and second, my partner, Eliza MacLean, is in the plant every week to pick up product and give feedback and constructive criticism. We also work with other processors for specialty products and are pleased to have butchers willing to work with us. I look forward to an increase in the number of processors to stimulate some competition.

Ben Bergmann: We are lucky compared to many parts of the country where there is no choice in animal processing facilities, but we continue to need more meat processing options for small-scale farmers. We are also lucky that the processors we have are willing to work with us small farmers even as they do more and more processing for relatively large-scale accounts.

Casey McKissick: Many of the area's inspected meat processing facilities have some major plans for growth and expansion in the next few years. This is in response to the demand by farmers and consumers to increase services. Farmers and ag support organizations need to support the existing plants through this time of unprecedented growth before investing in new "bricks and mortar" processing facility projects.

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GOT A QUESTION FOR OUR EXPERTS?
 Email Amy at amy@carolinafarmstewards.org or post it to our Facebook page at [facebook.com/carolinafarmstewards/](https://www.facebook.com/carolinafarmstewards/)



Backyard Chickens

What you'll need to choose and care for your new hens.

by Lucy Bradley, Ph.D. - Extension Specialist, Urban Horticulture, NCSU

Beautiful, living lawn ornaments that eat bugs, lay eggs, turn compost, and poop fertilizer - our chickens are wonderful backyard pets. If you are thinking about adding chickens to your family, first be sure you are willing and able to care for them. Then you have lots of fun decisions to make.

What It Takes to Keep Hens Happy

Even if you allow them to free range, you will still need to protect chickens from predators and the weather by providing a safe coop inside a fenced run. The coop should be secure but well ventilated and should also provide at least 3.5 square feet per bird. Inside the coop they will need roosts and nesting boxes. The coop should be inside a completely enclosed, open-air run that provides a minimum of 5 square feet per bird and includes space to get out of the rain and sun. To prevent predators from tunneling in, the fencing should be buried at least 6 inches deep or be bent out at the soil line, extended at least 12 inches and pinned.

Chickens require constant access to fresh food and water, and eggs must be gathered daily. The litter beneath the roosts must be moved weekly to the compost bin and replaced with fresh pine shavings. For gardeners, this is such an amazing gift of fabulous fertilizer - it may seem more like a pleasure than a chore.

And, Now, The Fun Part!

Once you decide that you are willing to take on the responsibility of chickens, you are ready to make decisions: How many? What kind? How and when to begin?

Chickens are social creatures so you need a minimum of three hens. The size of your flock will depend on city or subdivision limitations, available space, and how many eggs you want for your family and to share (hens average two eggs every three days).

Many factors come into play as you

select your breed:

- Size [full size vs. Bantam (1/4 size)]
- Egg vs. meat
- Egg color
- Heartiness in your climate
- Heritage breed (promote genetic diversity)
- Disposition (docile vs. aggressive)
- Beauty

Remember, these may be your pets for many years; make an informed choice by following the links below.

Once you select your breeds you can decide how and when to begin. You can hatch fertilized eggs. This is exciting, but more work and there is a higher risk of getting roosters. Roosters tend to be illegal in urban/suburban settings, aggressive, loud, unpopular with neighbors, and hard on the flock unless there are more than ten hens. Without a rooster, hens lay unfertilized eggs. Roosters are only necessary if you want the eggs to hatch.

Day old chicks are another option. Purchase female chicks and avoid "straight run" mixes (which may include males) unless you have a plan to eat or give away the roosters. Keep the chicks in a box with a lamp to keep them warm until they are feathered. Keep the light on day and night for the first 3 weeks and change the pine shavings daily. It is not uncommon to have one or two die so start with one more than your desired minimum. Starting with chicks means you handle them often so they become tame pets.

A third strategy is to start with young hens. This is more expensive, but less work, and leads to quicker production. You can also start with mature hens, but be aware that egg production often begins a steady decline after the first year or so. Older birds will likely yield fewer eggs. In areas with



Backyard chickens are a great way to teach children where their food comes from! photo by Lucy Bradley

mild winters, you can begin your flock in Oct.-Nov. or in March-April. In colder climates, begin in March-April.

Keeping Your Hens Healthy

Prevention is the key to healthy birds. Provide ample space; clean, dry food; clean, fresh water; and good ventilation. Minimize fly problems by using dry litter under the roosts and composting and replacing it regularly. To discourage rodents, store extra food in a metal can, and place feeder in a metal can each night. Train your birds to come by giving them oatmeal or steam crimped oats when you call. This is important for management and safety. Pick your girls up regularly. This makes it easier to check them if you think something is wrong, and helps you know what is normal. Happy, well-cared-for chickens are fascinating, fun, and make eggcellent pets. 🐔

For More Information:

"Keeping Garden Chickens in North Carolina", <http://tinyurl.com/4wbok2n>

Henderson's Handy-Dandy Chicken Chart: <http://tinyurl.com/y93vr9>

Local flavors

Grass-fed Beef (or Bison) and Spring(ish) Vegetable Pot Pie

by Sarah Sinning, CFSA Intern

Salads are great in August, but in the sometimes still chilly nights of April I want something a bit heartier. So, the following recipe is a hybrid between the rib-sticking comfort foods of winter and the fresh, vibrant offerings of early spring. I chose grass-fed beef as the star of the show, but bison works just as well if you can find it. The vegetables in this recipe are a mixture of those commonly stored over the winter and those just starting to poke their delicate little heads into the spring harvest roster.

Ingredients

3-4 T oil (canola, peanut, even olive - but watch your heat because it will smoke if too hot)
 1-1.5 lbs grass-fed beef or bison stew meat, cut into 3/4" cubes
 (If you can't find already prepared stew meat, ask for a cut from the front shoulder or hind leg region of the animal; these tough cuts of meat make excellent candidates for stewing.)
 1 large onion, medium diced
 3 stalks celery, medium diced
 4 medium carrots, medium diced
 8-10 small new potatoes, quartered or 3-4 small-ish waxy potatoes, like Yukon gold or Red Bliss, large diced
 4 cloves garlic, sliced
 ½ cup all-purpose flour
 1 cup dry white wine
 1 quart beef stock
 1 cup snow peas
 3 T fresh thyme or marjoram (or as much as you like, or can stand to pick)
 Zest of 1 lemon
 2 sheets of your favorite pie dough (enough to cover the top and bottom of a 9x13 baking dish)
 1 egg (for brushing the crust)



Place a large dutch oven or deep sauce pan over medium-high heat. Once the pan is heated, add your oil.

Add your beef or bison cubes to the hot oil. You want your pan to be large enough so that each piece has its own space to brown in; an overcrowded pan will result in sad, gray meat with not very much depth of flavor. Once the cubes are a deep, rich brown on all sides, remove the meat from the pan.

Add your onion, carrot, and celery to the pan, stirring to coat in the fat. Turn the heat down slightly to medium so that the vegetables soften without browning too much. Once they start to become tender, add your sliced garlic to the pan and cook for a few minutes longer. Now add your meat cubes back to the pan with any juices that escaped onto the plate.

Stir your meat/veggies while you slowly sprinkle in the flour. You want the flour and the fat/juices in the pan to form a paste coating the meat/veggies. It's important that all the flour gets incorporated, so if you keep stirring and it still looks chalky, go ahead and add some more oil.

Now add in your white wine and stock, making sure to scrape the bottom of the pan to loosen those tasty brown bits. Once the liquid has come up to a simmer, reduce the heat to

The fresh herbs, lemon, and peas perk up this dish that's perfect for spring!
 photo by Sarah Sinning

low and cook for an hour and a half, stirring every so often to make sure nothing is sticking to the bottom of the pan. When you add your liquids, you can also go ahead and add the potatoes.

In the meantime, roll out enough of your pie crust to cover the bottom of your baking dish. Place the crust into the dish, cover it with dried beans (to prevent it bubbling up too much), and then bake it in a 350°F oven for about 15 minutes.

Once the stew has simmered away long enough to tenderize the meat, add in your thyme or marjoram, lemon zest, and snow peas.

Now pour this filling into your par-baked crust and cover it with your remaining piece of dough. Cut small slits in the dough so the stew can breathe and brush it with your egg so it comes out nice and golden brown. Bake at 350°F for about half an hour. *Note: This dish is also tasty with puff pastry substituted for the pie crust.*

> Hear more of Sarah's musings on food, cooking and farming on CFSA's blog at carolinafarmstewards.org/blog

> Become one of our blog contributors!
 Email sarah@carolinafarmstewards.org.

The New Breed Freedom Rangers are slower growing than Cornish broil- ers but make up for it with other beneficial traits

by Doug Smith, NCSU

In the southeastern US, the two predominant strains of broilers grown on pasture are slower-growing Freedom Rangers and faster-growing Cornish-crossed strains. Each has specific benefits and drawbacks. However, there was little information on direct comparisons of these strains when grown in identical conditions – at the same farm, at the same time, in pens together.

In the summer and fall of 2010, a study was set up in Western NC to brood both strains together then place them on pasture together. Chicks, both Freedom Rangers and Cornish, were ordered and delivered from the hatchery on the same day. They were brooded together for several weeks then put on pasture with supplemental feed. Forty of each strain were used in each season. As birds reached 6 pounds live weight, they were caught and processed at the NC State Poultry Processing pilot plant in Raleigh and evaluated for weights, yields, and microbiology.

Cornish birds reached weight approximately 2 weeks before Freedom Rangers. In general, the Freedom Rangers have higher yields of wings, legs, thighs, and frame (back, front half skeleton, and breast skin). The Cornish birds had better boneless skinless breast meat yield. Freedom Rangers have better parts yields, but at the expense of breast meat yield.

Another important issue for consumers is food safety. Levels of on-farm bacteria are rarely evaluated, but it was assumed birds grown together would have similar levels. However, Freedom Rangers had slightly lower numbers of *E. coli* and *Salmonella* than Cornish birds. More tests are needed to determine why. 🐔



3.5 week old Freedom Ranger chicks with larger Cornish broilers that are the same age
photo submitted by
Doug Smith, NCSU

Building the Local Food Economy

by Amy Armbruster

Four new facilities will open for business this Spring. They represent a huge leap forward for local food systems. As the demand for local fresh food increases, small farmers are met with the challenge of providing the necessary volume of quality products, processing those products and then selling and delivering them. In March, the Southeastern NC Food Systems Program, Feast DownEast, opened the SENC FOODS Processing and Distribution Center at the Historic Train Depot in Burgaw to address this growing need. "We see this partnership as ... a great opportunity to build a viable food industry in Pender County", said Martin Beach, Chairman of the Depot Authority.

"SENC FOODS will facilitate the process of providing local fresh foods to our communities", said Dr. Leslie Hossfeld, Co-Founder of Feast DownEast and Director of the Public Sociology Program at UNCW.

At the WNC Regional Livestock Center in Canton the Southeast Livestock Exchange held its first livestock sale in March. "The center is a grassroots vision of area producers

and family farmers that has come to fruition," L.T. Ward, Vice President of WNC Communities, said.

The Livestock Center will serve as an economic development program for the livestock industry with three areas of focus: a long-term, viable market to sell livestock to replace the market that closed in 2004; a quality improvement program to improve the quality of the herd; and an area that gives producers access to buyers who are willing to pay top dollar for quality beef.

Later this Spring, the Piedmont Food and Agricultural Processing Center in Hillsborough, NC will officially open. The PFAP is a business incubator for enterprises and farmers in the Piedmont Region to add value to local farm products and create new local food businesses. You can visit the Center during the Piedmont Farm Tour, April 16-17 from 1-5 pm.

Last, but not least, the Foothills Pilot Plant in Marion, NC is scheduled to begin operations this Spring. The small scale slaughtering and processing facility will serve independent growers of poultry and rabbits. Before this plant, the closest such facility was over 200 miles away. 🐔

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We are organizing loads to that area contact 7 Springs Farm
- * **Asheville NC and surrounding areas. Loads are being organized to that area 3 times a year. Call Seven Springs Farm for details.**

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For more information on how you can make a bequest contact Roland McReynolds.

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Live Oak Farms...(continued from cover)



extinction.

The most striking and formidable of his livestock are the reddish brown Devon Beef cattle grazing peacefully on the expansive pastures of the farm. This breed originated in the Southwestern part of England. Prized for their production of high quality beef and the rich milk used in the famous Devonshire clotted cream, English farmers were devoted to the welfare of their precious red ruby cattle. Because of the resilient nature of this breed, Devon Cattle were specifically chosen to accompany the Pilgrims on their journey to America in 1623. They continued to thrive into Colonial times, even grazing in the pastures at Mount Vernon during George Washington's day. However, by the 1950s, Devons had become nearly extinct, and in attempt to preserve this breed, they were split into two groups—Devon Beef Cattle and the American Devon Milking Cattle. It is the Devon Beef Cattle that reside in the pastures at Live Oak Farms, providing the quality grass-fed beef that is sold at the Live Oak Farms store.

In keeping with this fine tradition of heritage breeds are the farm's hand-

Heritage breed Devon Beef cattle are grass fed at Live Oak Farms. photo by J. Caleb Greene

some Suffolk Punch Draft horses. Wilson transported these rare horses from a ranch in Montana whose mission is to preserve this valued breed. Suffolk Punch Draft Horses originated and prospered more than two centuries ago in Suffolk and Norfolk counties in England, but only 1,350 exist in the world today. These fine working draft horses are put to use at Live Oak Farms to plow the land and haul supplies and equipment. They're also used on special occasions to pull the trolley for the popular farm tours. Not only are Suffolks renowned for their size and stamina, they're also extremely gentle and social horses. While we were taking pictures of the farm, one of these delightful creatures ran right over to us so she could pose for the camera, too!

Beautiful, white St. Croix Sheep also grace the farm. The St. Croix sheep have an unusual look about them because instead of a coat of wool, they sport a coat of hair. Coming from St. Croix Island, they are associated with the Caribbean Hair Sheep

family. Adapting well to heat and humidity, they are the perfect choice for long, hot South Carolina summers. Lamb custom cuts from this flock are a popular item at the Live Oak Farms store, often selling out immediately.

San Clemente Goats and Heritage Chickens round out this wonderful, exclusive menagerie.

Allison Schaum, the Wilsons' daughter, her husband Chuck, and their four children manage the busy, expanding on-site store and tend to the needs of the farm. Two years after Live Oak Farms opened the doors of its store to the public, the reaction from the community was so tremendous that a new addition had to be constructed to accommodate the growing line of products and customers. People have been flocking in from all over the upstate in order to take advantage of the many offerings of all natural produce, grass-fed beef, pastured poultry, various dry goods, and to take in the sights of this local working farm. Allison keeps the store stocked with products from the farm and the surrounding area. A recent and popular addition is seasonal seafood freshly delivered from Charleston, SC.

Ron Wilson hopes more people will benefit from Live Oak Farms' efforts to educate the public on the advantages of sustainable agriculture. Most of all, a day at Live Oak Farms is a wonderful opportunity for families to slow down, experience farm life, and enjoy each other in a fun and relaxing setting. A visit to the farm is truly like taking a step back in time, before the frantic hustle and bustle of the computer age. "In a day of computers, iPods, cell phones, and video games, it is nice to know the world was able to survive without them in an earlier tranquil period. We may find that our grandparents really had it right all along," Wilson said. 🐾

Learn more at: liveoakfarmsllc.com

In addition to her love of local farming, Jena Eison is passionate about music and has degrees in Vocal Performance and Music Education.

Labeling for Farmers...(continued from cover)

Adding Value: Additional Information, Claims, Logos & Certifications

We know that consumer demand for “ethical” food is on the rise, but how can you prove that your product qualifies? A 2010 study by Context Marketing reports that in order to qualify as an “ethical food,” consumers felt the product must avoid harming the environment (93%), meet high safety standards (92%), use environmentally sustainable practices (91%), avoid inhumane treatment of animals (91%), and be produced according to high-quality standards (91%). The study also showed that 69% of consumers are willing to pay more for food produced to higher ethical standards.

So how do you communicate your ethical practices to your customer, and show them the value of what you do?

1. *Identify your values and your customer's values: What do you want to communicate?*

- Humane/animal welfare standards
- Pasture-/range-based
- Organic
- Environmentally responsible
- Local

2. *Make sure your claims comply with existing regulations and accurately*

reflect your farm.

3. *Look for a credible third-party certification, like Certified Organic, Animal Welfare Approved, etc.*

Don't Sell Yourself Short!

Within the alternative or “niche” farming community it is easy to forget that we are part of a much bigger labeling landscape. The farmers’ market shopper still likely visits the grocery store and is mentally comparing your claims with those made on conventional products. This is where it falls to you to educate your customer and explain why what you are doing is valuable and worth paying for. It is important to give yourself credit, especially if what you do is above and beyond conventional production. If you are a pasture-based farmer, these claims probably don't fully describe you: “Cage Free,” “Free Range,” “Natural,” “Naturally Raised.” For more information, see “What do Food Labels Really Mean?” in the link bundle below.

Know Your Claims

A farmer recently told me that once she started calling her beef “grass fed” she started getting twice as much for it. But, as the conversation continued, it became apparent that she was still feeding grain. Most likely, this person just didn't know what “grass fed”

meant – much less that there are two official definitions, namely USDA's “Grass Fed” claim and the American Grass fed Association's “Grass fed” claim (widely considered to be much more stringent). However, regardless of what the farmer thought, her customers were probably under the impression that there was no grain involved - much less routine feeding. This could lead to misunderstandings down the road, and possibly lost customers.

The Problem with “Stretching It”

It's not just the law, it's your integrity. How did we all feel when we found out Taco Bell's “beef” really wasn't beef? Or that Tyson was injecting embryos with antibiotics and claiming that the birds were “Raised without Antibiotics?” Both of these situations resulted in lawsuits. Aside from being illegal, making false claims can seriously undermine your customers' trust in you and in your products. Farmer or consumer, we all have an interest in engaging in an honest conversation about how our food is produced. 🌱

> For more information on food labels, visit the link bundle at: <http://bit.ly/giVXNb>



Live Oak Farms' on-site farm store sells eggs, produce, grass-fed beef and other local treats. photo by J. Caleb Greene



**Don't Miss CFSA's
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April 16-17 &
Upstate SC Farm
Tour, June 4-5!**

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More Association News ...

lunch prepared by local chefs.

Vendors, selected for their healthy, sustainable and humane practices, will be offering seasonal fresh vegetables and fruit as well as eggs, honey, breads and pasture-fed meats. For the first time, the market will be accepting EBT (electronic food stamps), with a matching benefit to make high-quality local food more affordable for needy families.

The market was founded in 2009 by Krankies Coffee and the Triad Buying Cooperative. All five of the original vendors (Moser Manor, Gary's Produce, Sanders Ridge, Shore Farms Organics, Felsbeck Farm) have remained with the market through its growth. With the move outdoors, the market has also developed a partnership with the Piedmont Triad Research Park, whose property will accommodate parking and market stalls.

Cultivate Piedmont's other partners in its expanded mission include Krankies Coffee, Triad Community Kitchen, Slow Food Piedmont, and the Womble Carlyle Sandridge & Rice law

firm. CFSA and Cultivate Piedmont received a generous grant from the Winston-Salem Foundation to fund a program manager position and to promote sustainable food systems in the Piedmont region through a range of education and outreach programs. Look for announcements from Cultivate Piedmont for cooking classes, school programs, and even food-themed movies. 

> **Learn more or get involved, email cultivatepiedmont@gmail.com**

GMO Seeds: What You Can Do

In recent days, the GMO issue has been heating up, with disturbing federal approval of GMO alfalfa and beets. CFSA Seed Staffer, Brian Cricket Rakita, offers these thoughts:

GMO's are generally not independently tested for safety in the food supply. All required tests pertaining to the safety of GMO crops are conducted by the entity seeking approval to produce the crop. There is no standard test, and if they conduct a test and do not like the results, they are under no obligation to share the results.

In the past, there has been a legal as-

sumption that if a person owns an organism, they are responsible for what that organism does. This is not the case with GMO's. In fact, if I purchase GMO seeds and plant them, I do not own them. The company holding the patent to the gene owns them. I just have the right to plant them one time. If the pollen carries from my plants to your yard and pollinates your plants, the company that owns the patent to the gene then owns your plants as well. If you save the seeds from them, you are liable.

In my opinion, GMO's have the potential to be the most insidious type of pollution ever known to mankind. GMO's once released into the environment will naturally increase themselves, like the classic Von Nuemann machines of science fiction. I urge you to frequently check with the Center for Food Safety to see what action you can take to oppose the spread of GMOs. The best way to avoid GMO's when not buying direct from the producer is to buy certified organic products. GMO's are considered "excluded methods" and are prohibited from use in organic production. 

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Farm Fresh North Carolina

The Go-To Guide to Great Farmer's Markets, Farm Stands, Farms, Apple Orchards, U-Picks, Kids' Activities, Lodging, Dining, Choose-and-Cut Christmas Trees, Vineyards, Wineries and More

The title of long-time CFSA member, Diane Daniel's new book says it all! This guide is jam-packed with great ideas for visiting the farms, restaurants and markets in your hometown or across the state. The guide also includes terrific recipes that will give you delicious inspiration to use the treats you pick up on your visits as well as sidebars on ag history, politics, and fun facts. Diane's lively and knowledgeable recommendations will make you want to discover all of NC's ag attractions.

Since this edition of the Stewardship News celebrates livestock, Diane shared four farm excerpts from her guide that are CFSA member farms that raise animals sustainably. One Note: Although the emphasis is on sustainable farms, not all stops listed in her guidebook are sustainable.

You can find Diane's book at local book stores or pick one up for a slight discount (part of the proceeds benefit CFSA!) at Fickle Creek Farm (see their farm listing below) on the Piedmont Farm Tour, April 16-17. 📖

> Learn more and find out where else to meet Diane on her book tour at: www.farmfreshnorthcarolina.com

From Diane Daniel's Farm Fresh NC:

Hickory Nut Gap Farm

You've likely seen or tasted Hickory Nut Gap Farm products, as the 600-acre farm's beef, lamb, pork, chicken, and eggs are distributed widely to stores and restaurants. The fifth-generation family farmers practice sustainable agriculture on their sixty acres of livestock pasture. For one-stop shopping and farm visits, stop by the beautifully situated farm store in Fairview, where all Hickory Nut products are sold, as well as foods and gifts from other area farms. In September and October, the store adds apples (some organically grown), and for kids, there are barnyard animals, a pumpkin patch, and a

corn maze. When it's time for refreshments, try a yummy "ciderville."

57 Sugar Hollow Road,
Fairview (Buncombe County),
828-628-1027, hickorynutgapfarm.com
Open year-round.

Goat Lady Dairy

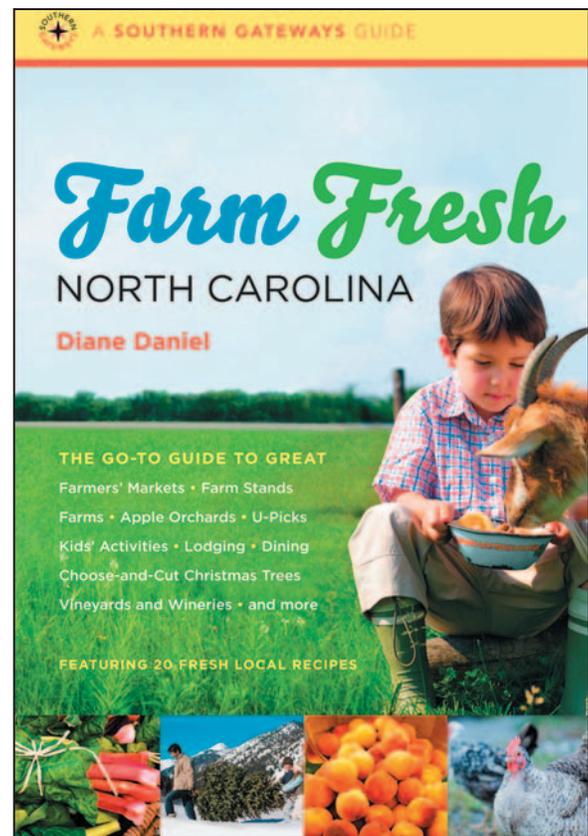
Don't spend too much time around Steve Tate at Goat Lady Dairy unless you want to raise dairy goats, make cheese, grow produce, tend to turkeys and chickens, and host gourmet dinners. The public face of this sixty-acre family enterprise is so passionate about sustainable farming you'll want to practice whatever he's preaching. It's no surprise that Tate is an ordained minister who used to work as a counselor. "We are the new American farmer: food with a face," he told a crowd at one of the dairy's popular dinners and tour. "There really are easier ways to make a living, but not as fun." Steve and his wife, Lee, moved here from Minnesota in 1995 to join his sister, Ginnie, the "goat lady," in starting the dairy. When it opened in 1996, Goat Lady was one of the state's first farmstead cheese makers, and it set the bar high. Their cheese is now sold at several farmers' markets and grocers. Several thousand fans attend their two yearly Open Farm Days, held in conjunction with neighboring Rising Meadow Farm.

3515 Jess Hackett Road, Climax (Randolph County),
336-824-2163, www.goatladydairy.com
Two open-farm days; otherwise, sales, dinners, and tours by appointment.

Editor's Note: Steve and Lee Tate are CFSA's Sustainable Farmers of the Year!

Fickle Creek Farm

Ben Bergmann and Noah Ranells started the seventy-four-acre Fickle Creek Farm from the ground up in 1999, having bought the land a few years earlier when they were doctoral students at North Carolina State University. Ben's background is in horticulture and forestry, while Noah studied animal and soil science, giving them a strong knowledge base for their diversified livestock and produce farm. "My first goal is to be a grower of really high-quality produce grown in a sustainable way, with minimal mechanical and no chemical input," says Ben. "All of the animals are here to do something." They keep small numbers of sheep, cattle, and pigs, and much larger numbers of chickens—about 1,000 laying hens and, in a year, some 1,800 broilers. They sell produce and meat at several farmers' markets. Everything about their farm is operated sustainably, including their passive solar home. The couple also operates a bed and breakfast, giving guests a taste of life on a working farm and some very delicious



breakfasts.

4122 Buckhorn Road, Efland (Orange County),
919-304-6287, www.ficklecreekfarm.com
Sales and tours by appointment. Lodging.

Editor's Note: Check out Ben's expert advice on pg 6!

Rainbow Meadow Farms

If you've had local poultry, pork, or lamb at a North Carolina restaurant, there's a good chance some of it was raised on Rainbow Meadow Farms in Snow Hill. The multigenerational family farm sells at markets and to retail outlets as well. In operation since 1746, it started selling naturally raised livestock in 1996. For years, farmer Jeff Garner grew commercial chickens for Perdue farms. One day Jeff tasted a chicken dish made from the free-range flock of his daughter, Genell Pridgen. "I said, 'Honey, what did you do with this chicken to make it taste so good?' And she said, 'Daddy, it's because it's raised out on the pasture.'" Now father and daughter, along with their spouses, Sandra and John, raise chickens, hogs, lambs, and cattle. Their lambs are Dorper, chickens are from the French stock La Belle Rouge, pork is Berkshire and beef is American Devon. "That's what all the chefs at the upscale restaurants told us they wanted," Jeff said. Tastes good to us.

1065 Lloyd Harrison Road, Snow Hill (Greene County), 252-747-5000,
www.rmfpasturepuremeats.com
Sales and tours by appointment.

> To see one more farm excerpt - this one on Herb Haven - visit CFSA's Facebook page!

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