



# Carolina Farm Stewardship Association STEWARDSHIP NEWS

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## Farm Profile

### Hammel Heritage Farms, Concord, NC (a Lomax Farmer-In-Training)

by Stephanie Campbell  
CFSA's Outreach Coordinator

Family farms are the backbone of America, but the reality is that we are losing family farms across the country at the rate of fifty acres of farmland every hour. CFSA is raising up a new generation of farmers and helping to shape the regional food systems they need to thrive. We are excited and pleased to share more about the most recent addition to our programs- the Elma C. Lomax Incubator Farm in Concord, North Carolina.

Lomax Farm is the only USDA Certified Organic incubator farm in the Southeast. The farm is a training-ground where beginning farmers gain access to land, equipment, training and mentoring to start their own farm business. Started by Cabarrus County government and Cooperative Extension, the farm is now being managed by CFSA. In addition to the Farmer-In-Training (FIT) program, the farm provides opportunities for on-farm workshops, community education, and organic research.

#### Cody Hammel, FIT at Lomax

When Cody Hammel, at age twenty, sat his father down and laid out his business plan to go into farming, his dad had one thing to say. "If you are going to do this," he said, "you have to do it 'all in.' You have to take it very seriously and do it very well."

Cody took this advice to heart and now, completing his second year at



Cody Hammel, Farmer-In-Training and Aaron Newton, Lomax Farm Coordinator  
- photo courtesy of Stephen Nix

Lomax, he has a thriving farm business to show for his hard work.

"I am constantly focused on being on the top of my game," he says, "gaining skills to be very good at what we do, building marketing relationships, pushing to expand, and consistently improving on the details." The "we" he speaks of includes his fiancé as well as his parents who all participate in the farm business and make Hammel Heritage Farms a true family farm.

Cody's family history in farming is typical of many. His grandfather and earlier generations farmed but farming skipped his parent's generation. "In the 40's and 50's, the family just couldn't make farming work financially," Cody explains. Consequently, Cody grew up in Concord, but not on a family farm.

Cody has always loved the outdoors, working with his hands, and creative problem solving. He was interested in farming as a teenager but didn't see it as a viable career path so he attended the University of North Carolina at Charlotte to study mechanical engineering. He grew up twenty minutes away from the Lomax Farm but never knew about it. When he learned about the FIT program at Lomax, he saw the path he needed to prepare him to be successful in farming.

#### Hammel Heritage Farms

Cody credits two mentors with helping him get started that first summer back in 2014. Carl Pless and David Goforth, both Extension Agents, gave him work experience on their farms and have encouraged and mentored him along the way. In the fall of 2014, Cody became a FIT at Lomax while it was still operated by the Cabarrus County government. Shortly after this, the County was evaluating the future of the farm and Cody had to wait to get space on the farm until the arrangement for the management of Lomax Farm was transferred to CFSA.

In two years as a FIT, Cody has expanded his production and grown his farm business. He currently has more than three acres in production and farms at three locations: plots at Lomax, some of the land on his home property, and three leased acres nearby. "We grow all the farmers' market favorites," Cody

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CFSA is on a mission to bring local, organic food to your table  
from a farmer who shares your values

## CAROLINA FARM STEWARDSHIP ASSOCIATION

CFSA is a membership-based organization of thousands of farmers, consumers, foodies, businesses and organizations in North and South Carolina. Our mission is to advocate for fair farm and food policies, build the systems that organic family farms need to thrive, and educate communities about local, organic farming.

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## From the Director

### Passing on the Trowel

It's hard for me to believe that it's been more than three years since sustainable farming pioneer Bill Dow died. Bill was a founding member of CFSA and the Carrboro Farmers Market, and his farm, Ayrshire Farm near Pittsboro, was the first to be certified organic in the Carolinas. His ideas, personality and drive helped make this region an early-adopter of organic farm-to-table agriculture.

It was welcome news when former CFSA Education Director and past Board Member Fred Broadwell stopped into the CFSA office earlier this year to let us know that he had published Bill's memoir, *What I Stand On*. This issue of Stewardship News provides a review of the book; I can assure you that it lives up to its subtitle, "Practical advice and cantankerous musings from a pioneering organic farmer." Bill never shied away from sharing his opinions, and even within the sustainable ag community those opinions could be controversial.

One of his long-standing concerns was the transfer of farming knowledge to future generations. He saw the degradation of the countryside since the advent of industrial agriculture as a loss not just of soil, water and community, but of intellectual capital. "When the history of a piece of farmland gets lost, we fall back into our old efforts of trial and error," he said. "We can't get that history back." Bill was an advocate for farming education that combined the science of plants and soil with the artistry of gaining a feel for a piece of land, for that moment when the soil is ready to plow.

So I think Bill would be pleased with the work that CFSA is doing at the Lomax Incubator Farm in Concord, NC. Lomax is the only certified organic incubator farm in the Southeast, providing book-learning, peer-to-peer collaboration and hands-in-the-dirt training for aspiring farmers that want to be a part of an agriculture that is good for the land and the community.

Those Lomax Farmers-In-Training and other beginning farmers receive scholarships to attend our annual Sustainable Agriculture Conference (SAC) through the Bill Dow Memorial Fund, and I think Bill would also be glad to know that a portion of the sales of *What I Stand On* will go to support that fund.

Bill grew up on a commodity farm in central Mississippi, and his break with his father's way of doing things was a significant strain on family relationships. But he had learned from experience the challenges 'traditional' farmers faced in trying to survive in the industrial ag system,



*Roland McReynolds, Executive Director*

with all the institutions and 'experts' selling the gospel of chemicals and high-tech.

Bill knew the importance of peer-to-peer learning among organic farmers through events like SAC as the genesis of CFSA over 30 years ago. At that time, the main agriculture schools were "not at all supportive" of organic farmers and local foods, he noted. During his career, he saw the relationship between the sustainable ag movement and the ag schools evolve, and if today we still can't say that the educational institutions have become converts to our view, we can certainly see many supportive faculty and extension agents, and greater engagement from the college leadership.

Indeed, NC State and Clemson for 10-plus years have been vital contributors in putting on the SAC, and NC State has been a crucial partner in the development of CFSA's Organic Commodities and Livestock Conference (OCLC).

We hosted our sixth annual OCLC in March at the Agribusiness School facility of the University of Mount Olive in Wayne County, NC, and many land grant faculty were on the agenda presenting new research on organic farming best practices. With almost 200 people in attendance, it was our biggest OCLC yet, and at least half of the farmers there had never been to a CFSA program before.

They were mostly young people working with their families on commodity crop farms in Eastern NC, the next generation that will be taking over those farms in the coming decades. These young men and women were looking for knowledge and science to help make their farms better, and they brought with them knowledge of the history of the lands they farm.

I think Bill would see some progress as the trowel is passed on to a new generation of farmers committed to building on the legacy of farming that is good for consumers, good for farmers and farmworkers, and good for the land.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Roland".

# Association News

## Recommend a Board Member

Do you know someone who would be a good candidate for the CFSA Board of Directors? Would you like to know more about serving on the Board? Contact Elizabeth Read, Communications and Development Director, [Elizabeth@carolinafarmstewards.org](mailto:Elizabeth@carolinafarmstewards.org). Candidate suggestions will be provided to the Board of Directors.

## NC State Employees Combined Campaign Charity (NC SECC)

Did you know CFSA is an approved NC SECC charity? If you are a state employee, you can designate CFSA to receive your SECC gift. Use Code #2548.

## 2016 SAC Workshop Proposals

The 31st Annual Sustainable Agriculture Conference will be November 4-6, 2016, returning to the Sheraton Imperial in Durham, NC. Each year the conference attracts some of the most talented and innovative farmers, chefs, and food system innovators in the Carolinas and the US, who share their knowledge in one of our 66 workshops or 15 pre-conference intensives. We are now seeking proposals for 2016 workshops, and if you have an idea for a dynamic workshop we would like to hear from you!

Submissions are considered on a rolling basis until all spaces are filled. Applicants are encouraged to submit as soon as possible and no later than June 3, 2016. More information and the link to submit proposals can be found on our website.

## The Road to Organic Certification

Are you interested in learning more about the USDA NOP organic certification process? If so, take a walk on the Road to Organic Certification and watch how Candice Howard successfully certifies her sustainable farm and how Bruce Baxter successfully transitions his farm to certified organic.



*Getting to know a goat at Woodcrest Farm on the Piedmont Farm Tour - photo courtesy of Holly Henderson Bourne*

This interactive video, funded by the USDA-NOP's Sound and Sensible Initiative, created in collaboration with CFSA and WILL Interactive, Inc. covers a number of topics including NOP/Organic Certification Basics, the Organic System Plan, the Basics of Transitioning to Certified Organic, Interpreting the NOP Regulations, and many more useful topics to help you through the process.

The interactive video is on our website at: [carolinafarmstewards.org/the-road-to-organic-certification/](http://carolinafarmstewards.org/the-road-to-organic-certification/)

## USDA Financial Assistance Available to Help Organic Farmers Create Conservation Buffers

Participants establish long-term, resource-conserving plant species, such as approved grasses or trees (known as "covers") to control soil erosion, improve water quality and develop wildlife habitat. Find out more at [www.fsa.usda.gov/organic](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/organic).

## USDA Offers New Loans for Portable Farm Storage and Handling Equipment

The program offers a new "micro-loan" option which allows farms of all sizes seeking less than \$50,000 to qualify for a reduced down payment of five percent and no requirement to provide three years of production history. Learn more at [www.fsa.usda.gov/pricesupport](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/pricesupport)

## 21st Annual Piedmont Farm Tour was a rousing success!

38 farms and almost 2,500 people participated in the tour this year, making a grand total of over 10,000 farm visits!

Many thanks to co-sponsor, Weaver Street Market, and all the volunteers who make the farm tour a success year after year. The biggest thanks goes out to the farmers for opening their farm gates and sharing the work they do to grow local and organic food for our communities.



**June 18-19**

**1:00 - 6:00 pm**

Advance tickets are \$30 per car for ALL 22 farms, ALL weekend

Tour local, sustainable farms and discover the delicious meat, dairy, fruits and veggies produced right in the Upstate of South Carolina!

Check out the tour map and farm descriptions, and purchase your ticket, on our website at [carolinafarmstewards.org/uft/](http://carolinafarmstewards.org/uft/)

# The Tool Shed

## Marketing Your Organic Grain Crops

by Thomas Moore,  
CFSA's NC Food Systems Coordinator

There are two main markets in North Carolina that organic grain suppliers are able to sell their products into: food-grade grain (used to make value-added products for human consumption) and feed-grade grain (for animal consumption). Organic grain is beginning to see a lot of growth within these two markets, with the feed-grade grain projecting to grow exponentially over the next five years within the state. Both markets require differing methods of marketing, quality control, and production planning.

Within the food-grade market there are two main submarkets; baking/milling and brewing/distilling. Most food-grade grain buyers have specific quality parameters for their suppliers to adhere to and will test your crop to ensure it meets their specifications prior to purchasing the lot. Particular concerns expressed by organic grain buyers regard product quality control and deal with inadequate post-harvest management systems and storage facilities.

When selling organic grains most suppliers have to engage in direct marketing practices with the buyer as opposed to dropping off their crop at a single elevator for purchase. It is recommended that farmers, looking to enter this market, should engage with buyers directly in order to assess their needs and specifications prior to production planning.

CFSA Food Systems team has identified a gap in the supply of organic grain within North Carolina and regionally. Currently, organic grain buyers within North Carolina are having to source grain from other parts of the country and internationally in order to meet demand from higher up the supply chain.

### Marketing Strategy

When it comes to marketing a specialized crop, it is important to focus



Grain research field at Pennsylvania State University  
- photo courtesy of John Wallace

on four main components: your product, distribution, pricing, and promotion. This marketing mix will inform your marketing strategy and value propositions.

### Product Strategy

Product strategies require you to concentrate on a particular product like a specific organic grain in order to increase its interest, selection, and purchase among buyers.

- Do you have the volume to provide your customer(s) with the amount of product they need on a consistent basis?
- What are your customer(s) quality parameters and what post-harvest management systems are needed to ensure product quality control?

### Distribution Strategy

Distribution strategies require you to decide how you are going to distribute your organic grain product, which will depend on your production volume. It is important to factor in cost of distribution when pricing your product.

- Do you have the necessary equipment to transport the product load to your customer(s)? If not, have you developed a robust enough network to identify a reputable 2nd party company that can move your product?
- How have you documented your product delivery system within your organic standard operating procedure?

### Pricing Strategy

Pricing strategies are the most crucial to business success. Make sure that your product price points cover your costs and capture your products value, in this case a set premium for organic. You may also want to consider various price point structures for different markets.

- How does your price compare to other suppliers within the region and how can your value proposition assist in securing your price premium?
- Have you referenced enterprise budgets for organic grains in order to establish your baseline price point?

### Promotion Strategy

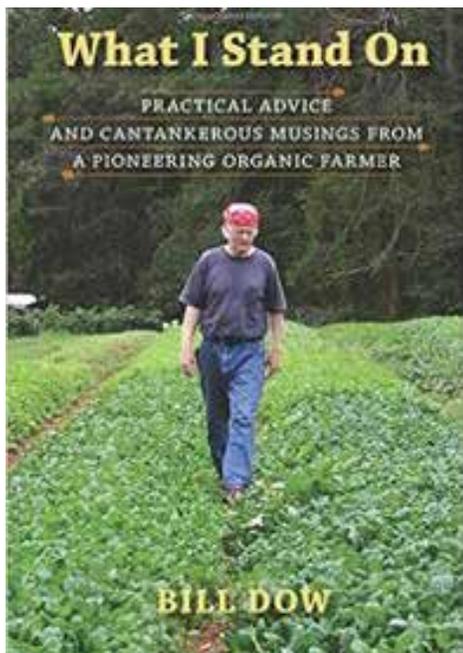
Promotion strategies support your product, distribution, and pricing strategies by outlining how you are going to communicate these strategies to your customer. Direct customer interaction is one recommended promotion strategy within the North Carolina organic grain market.

- Are you looking to sell your product to buyers in the food-grade grain market, feed-grade grain market, or both?
- Does the quality of your grain meet the specifications of the buyers you are marketing toward?
- How does your standard operation procedures and value proposition differentiate yourself from other organic grain suppliers within the region?

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## What I Stand On Practical Advice and Cantankerous Musings from a Pioneering Organic Farmer

Book review by Stephanie Campbell,  
CFSA's Outreach Coordinator



*"I love that I can supply healthy food to lots of people. I love that I can mentor young people and be a good employer. I love that I can steward the water and the land. I love that I can grow things out of the soil. That's what I stand on."*

Have you ever wished you could sit down with a wise elder farmer and wile away the afternoon listening to farming stories? To hear, firsthand, all of the tips and techniques he learned over a lifetime of organic farming? To learn about when farmers' markets were a new idea and how the local food movement grew? To hear how he dealt with drought and deer, disease, pests, and crop failures, as well as the pure joy of sharing bumper crops of delicious, nutrient-dense, organic vegetables directly with the community he knows and loves?

Whether you want to farm yourself, or if you are an eater who just wants to understand where your food comes from, you will want to read the new book, *What I Stand On – Practical Advice and Cantankerous Musings from a Pioneering Organic Farmer*.

Bill Dow (the first certified organic farmer in North Carolina) shares the

stories of his lifelong food activism and path-breaking farming methods in the Triangle region. His book is a feast for all those who care about food, farming, and our future.

The book was compiled by Bill's friend and former CFSA Education Director, Fred Broadwell, through hours of afternoons and evenings spent listening and recording Bill's memories and musings. Although it was always intended to be edited and completed by Bill himself, it became a labor of love for Fred following Bill's untimely death in December 2012. Fred has kept much of the book in Bill's voice so that you can become one of the many friends Bill continues to mentor and influence through his legacy.

Bill was a trained physician who became a farmer. His experience growing up on a conventional farm in Mississippi, training as a doctor in the sixties, establishing health clinics in rural Appalachia, and community organizing, led to organic farming in Pittsboro, NC. His story is a fascinating one of a man who lived what he believed and changed our world in the process.

Bill believed that farming was a calling - a productive, learning, artistic experience - and he always had a collection of young people working on the farm and learning from him.

"Bill was a teacher before anything else," said Ms. Daryl Walker, his partner for the last decade of his life. "He loved to teach young people and his dream for the book was that it would show a realistic picture of the long slog of farming, the day-to-day work and worry, as well as pass along his passion for growing and the satisfaction of the life of a farmer."

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*A portion of proceeds from the book will go to the scholarship fund at CFSA to send beginning farmers and ranchers to the Sustainable Agriculture Conference. The book may be ordered from any local bookstore or from Amazon.*



**Receive your complimentary copy of the book *What I Stand On* by becoming a monthly supporter of CFSA through our Perennial Givers Guild**

Your monthly gift (of any size) is the most effective way to sustain CFSA and fund the work we do.

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## Local Food Councils

by Jared Cates, CFSA's Community Mobilizer

Over 33 food councils across the Carolinas are working to create community networks around health and agriculture. Members of these councils typically are community gardeners, public health practitioners, chefs, food businesses, farmers, farm advocates, consumers, food security advocates and government representatives. Though they take many forms and sometimes serve different purposes, food councils are bringing together cross-sector voices to find collaborative solutions to community food system challenges.

CFSA has been working to support this developing network of food councils over the past several years as a project partner with Community Food Strategies (CFS). CFS is an inter-agency initiative led by the Center for Environmental Farming Systems with project partners at CFSA, the Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project, Care Share Health Alliance and Carolina Common Enterprise. This team is working to support these councils by providing workshops, conferences, networking opportunities, development and research tools, strategic planning, and direct consulting and facilitation.

Blue Cross and Blue Shield Foundation of North Carolina (BCBSNC) Foundation recently awarded a grant to CFSA toward the CFS initia-

ive. This support will allow CFS to provide resources to councils who want to engage in direct policy actions to advance farming and food in their communities. The grant will be used for three purposes: an online strategic policy engagement toolkit, a series of trainings and workshops on local level policy and strategic networking, and direct technical assistance for food councils who want to take on strategic policy actions. The online toolkit will be available by mid-summer 2016, workshops and trainings will be held in late 2016 and early 2017, and direct assistance is available now through Jared Cates.

Catawba Farm and Food Coalition (CFFC) in SC recently reached out for support from CFSA to create a strategic plan for engaging in comprehensive planning processes that are underway across their region.



*One of the many food councils CFSA is working with as a partner in Community Food Strategies (CFS)*

Comprehensive plans are important because they set the framework for development in a community for the upcoming five to ten years. CFFC wants to ensure that there is language in those plans that mention agriculture, land use, food access, community gardens and farmers markets.

CFSA has worked with the group over the past several months to develop a strategic approach to this action. The group has brought in community partners, created a regional inventory of plans, listed who the planners are working on each plan, and documented a schedule of the public comment periods for the plans. They are now working on a set of talking points and are making a timeline for engagement for each plan. The group is being tactical in its networking and is building relationships as early as possible with people involved with these planning processes. The multi-year strategic action plan that they created will allow them to be organized and effective as more comprehensive plans come up for update and renewal.

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For more information, or to apply for technical policy assistance for your food council, please contact: [jared@carolinafarmstewards.org](mailto:jared@carolinafarmstewards.org).

Keep an eye out for a Sweet Potato blog post soon on recent strategic actions by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Food Policy Council.

**The Tool Shed** - continued from page 4

### Carolina Organic Grain Feasibility Study (COGFS)

The Food Systems team at CFSA is in the process of developing an initiative to support the development and growth of the organic grain industry within the Carolinas. The purpose of this project is to assess the supply of and demand for, both locally and nationally, organic grain production across both North and South Carolina. Included within this project will be a feasibility assessment and market research for the development of organic grain storage facilities across the Carolinas.

Through this study, CFSA hopes to further develop the grain industry and provide opportunity for businesses to fill in gaps that have been identified through this project.

For more information about the Carolina Organic Grain Feasibility Study or if you have any questions regarding marketing organic grain crops, please contact Thomas Moore, North Carolina Food Systems Coordinator at [tmoore@carolinafarmstewards.org](mailto:tmoore@carolinafarmstewards.org).

### Additional Resources:

Buyers of North Carolina Organic Grains  
<https://organicgrains.ces.ncsu.edu/buyers-of-north-carolina-organic-grains/>

North Carolina Organic Grain Production Guide 2013

Chapter 10. Marketing Organic Grain Crops  
<http://www.cefs.ncsu.edu/resources/organic-grain-guide-2013.pdf>

Organic Corn, Wheat, and Soybean Enterprise Budgets for North Carolina  
<http://content.ces.ncsu.edu/chapter-10-marketing-organic-grain-crops-and-budgets>



*Hammel Heritage Farm vegetable field at Lomax  
photo courtesy of Hannah Herlocker*

Cody clearly articulates his farm philosophy and values. Farming must be good for the eater, the land, and the farmer, and he strives to accomplish that sweet spot where all three goals are met. For the eater, the food must be nutrient-dense, healthy, chemical-free and delicious. For the land, farming must improve the quality of the soil and the natural wildlife. And for the farmer, farming must provide a good living and a balance to life.

In farming, every day is a challenge and is mentally and physically exhausting, he says, but Cody is well on his way to achieving sustainability in all three areas.

Cody and Hannah's wedding will be in September and their plan is to produce all the food for the reception themselves. We all know how nerve-wracking wedding planning can be without adding the angst of whether beautiful crops will come in on time. "It is part of the fun of farming together to grow produce for ourselves, too!" says Cody.

We wish Cody and Hannah a lovely wedding and a long, happy life as family farmers!

To learn more about Lomax Farm and the Farmer-In-Training program, go to the CFSA website:

[carolinafarmstewards.org/  
lomax-farm/](http://carolinafarmstewards.org/lomax-farm/)

**Farm Profile** - continued from page 1

says, "forty varieties of vegetables over all four seasons." The farm also produces eggs. He has 50 layers currently and plans to expand.

Hammel Heritage Farms sells at several Farmers' Markets: three on Saturdays (Winecoff, Davidson, and NoDa), Rotary Square on Tuesdays, and Highland Creek neighborhood on Wednesdays. The farm also maintains robust website sales where shoppers can pick up their orders at the Farmers' Markets or at two locations in nearby counties on Saturdays.

**Family Farming**

Cody credits the support and involvement of his family with this rapid success. "We've been figuring out our best roles," he says, "Using each person's skills in the role they are best at keeps us all happiest." Hannah, Cody's fiancé, works on the marketing, Cody's mom is the finance person, his dad is a talented handyman, Cody focuses on growing the crops and running the business, and everyone sells at markets and pitches in as needed.

Even with all the family support, though, Cody insists that without CFSA and Lomax he would not be able to farm. "The values, skills, support, and technical training from all of the staff in everything from growing organically to marketing, business management, and food safety, have been critical to my success," Cody explains. "I owe everything to CFSA."

"Cody is a good example of what the Lomax Incubator Farm can do," says Aaron Newton, CFSA's Lomax Farm Coordinator. "He has a solid business started, skills developed, land secured to continue farming, and the confidence and commitment he needs. He has already submitted his organic systems plan and will be the first FIT to be independently organically certified while still at Lomax."

For Cody, organic certification is both a core value and an essential marketing strategy. He has found that organic certification is a great way to get into a good market, and is beginning to be almost required by some markets. It has helped him earn the trust and confidence of his customers and makes his farm stand out at the market. "And once the customers try our product," he says, "they come back because it is so good."



*Lomax Farm Field Day Tomato Grafting Workshop led by  
Gena Moore, CFSA's Organic Research Coordinator*

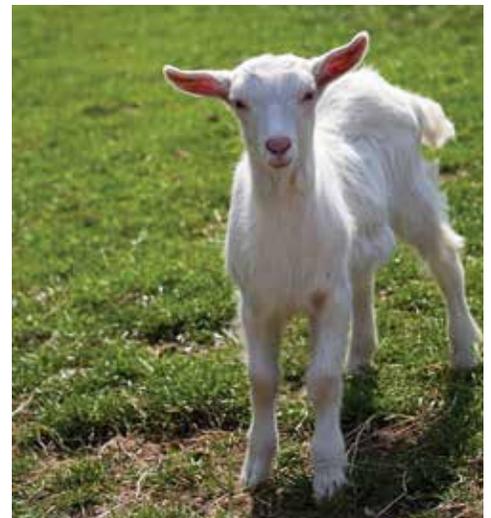
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