



Carolina Farm Stewardship Association STEWARDSHIP NEWS

SUMMER 2013

VOLUME 33, ISSUE 3

Farm Profile:

Keep Your Fork Farm

by Thomas Locke,
CFSA Communications Coordinator

The black Périgord truffle is one of the most sought-after and mysterious foods in the world, certainly not something most people find in their neighborhood grocery stores. The name alone conjures up images of rustic men and their pigs walking through provincial French forests, or thoughts of expensive, gourmet dishes served alfresco in Michelin-starred restaurants. So it came as a huge surprise when I learned CFSA member Jane Smith was growing truffles at Keep Your Fork Farm just north of Winston-Salem, NC.

I found Keep Your Fork Farm in a stunning section of the North Carolina Piedmont, nestled between Pilot Mountain and Hanging Rock State Park. The beautiful countryside welcomed me as I pulled up to the house as did Friday and Dazy, Jane's two truffle-finding dogs, who were eager to impress me with their quickness and intelligence. Jane was right behind them, and after a quick introduction, we walked to the first of her truffle sites, planted in 2000. Over the next couple of hours, my truffle knowledge went from "knows nearly nothing" to "could probably answer a question about truffles on Jeopardy." Jane really knows her stuff.

"So how does one actually grow a truffle," I asked, feeling like a kid in class who was the only person in the room to not know the answer. Jane was more than accommodating, assuring me that



Jane Smith, Friday and Dazy make an expert truffle-growing team.
photo by Thomas Locke

it's a fairly straightforward process. "Once you have the land and the desire," she explained, "the first thing you need is someone to inoculate the roots of either filbert or oak trees with the fungus that grows truffles." Luckily for Jane, Franklin Garland of Garland Truffles happens to live just down the road in Hillsborough, NC, and probably knows more than anyone about this mysterious process. His nursery is the oldest and first successful grower of truffles in the Western Hemisphere and the only nursery in the United States that has grown and sold trees in production. Each inoculated tree costs \$24, or you could buy Franklin's book, *The Garland Method for Truffle Growing*, that explains the entire

\$10,000 process. This certainly makes the cost of a tree seem pretty reasonable! Once the tree is in the ground, you need your soil to be well-drained and have a pH around 8, which you can get by adding lime. In addition, you need a fairly temperate climate, adequate water, and in five to seven years, you should begin to find truffles with the help of a well-trained pooch or pig—although almost no one uses a pig anymore. Put simply by Jane, "Dogs are just easier to control, and they can live in your house. Friday and Dazy are 50% truffle dogs and 50% homebodies." On average, each tree should produce anywhere from 0.5 to 2 pounds of truffles

per year, and they are harvested between November and February. "The process seems quite simple, almost too simple," I mentioned. Jane agreed, explaining, "This is mostly due to the fact that we know very little about how a truffle actually grows."

As we walked to the second truffle-growing site, planted in 2004, Jane mentioned that truffles are primarily grown in Spain and Australia—not France—and the number of truffle farms in the United States continues on an upward trajectory. Due to various factors, the annual black truffle harvest in France has fallen from approximately 1,000 tons per year in the 1930s to 50 tons today. This decrease in harvest and an increase in demand from chefs wanting to source locally have made the United States an

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CAROLINA FARM STEWARDSHIP ASSOCIATION (CFSA)

CFSA is a membership-based organization of more than 2,850 farmers, processors, gardeners, businesses and individuals in North and South Carolina. CFSA's mission is to advocate, educate and build connections to create sustainable food systems centered on local and organic agriculture.

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An Interview with Roland McReynolds

CFSA's newest communications coordinator, Thomas Locke, recently sat down with our executive director to learn more about the man who has led CFSA for the past six years.

Thomas: Take me back six years to when you first started with CFSA. Why did you take the job?

Roland: I had been working in legal publishing for a while, and in my spare time had gotten involved in local political issues. We had developers running rampant in Chatham County and a board of commissioners that was rubber stamping everything. It felt like a threat to the things I valued most about living in Chatham County—the woods, the farms, the feeling of community and spirit of togetherness that define places like Pittsboro. So I got involved in that, and we were really successful. I soon realized, however, that I was spending more time on that than I was on my paying job! That was telling me something, I think, and it just so happened that around this time the job at CFSA opened up. I went down to my first Sustainable Agriculture Conference in Spartanburg, met the board, and really felt inspired. I was hired shortly thereafter and started on January 1, 2007.

Thomas: So what was your first year like?

Roland: It had its challenges. We had a staff of four people, and they weren't all full-time (laughing). We were actually measuring people's time by fifths, so Cheryl, for example, was on 3/5ths time. There were certainly some resource challenges as well, and we needed to make sure we could have an effective way to move forward on pieces of the local, sustainable food vision. But all in all, it was fun; I got to organize the Piedmont Farm Tour, I got to really be active in the actual programs, and I spent a lot of time learning what else is out there and how CFSA could best fit in with all the other efforts going on.



Roland McReynolds, Executive Director

Thomas: Tell me a little about your family.

Roland: I have two kids with my wife Katy, and we have been living here in North Carolina for 20 years. My son, Emerson, just turned 12, and my daughter, Hannah, is 8.

Thomas: How is it having a 12-year-old?

Roland: It's great! Is he going to read this? Obviously there are challenges with helping a preteen move forward, but he's a really great kid. He's thoughtful and caring, and good at school and what he puts his mind to. It's fun. Mostly it's fun.

Thomas: You and your family live in Pittsboro these days. Tell me more about where you grew up.

Roland: I was raised in Columbia, Mo. We moved there when I was eight years old, and we lived next door to my grandparents, who were pretty far out in the country. In addition to running a general store, they also managed about 300 acres of land planted in corn and soybeans for an absentee owner. So we got to see the conventional side of things, but we also had a garden just under an acre as well as chickens—broilers for our family consumption and eggs that they sold at their general store and house. That was fun; picking beans and weeding the beds was not fun, but plucking carrots out of the ground, eating the strawberries, and helping with the chickens was all fun. One summer I actually had a chicken on a leash; it was my pet chicken. But that was before I got involved in processing the chickens. After that, I didn't have any as pets! Overall, though, my siblings and I got a good experience of rural

life in terms of having access to fresh air, being able to use our imaginations, and understanding what hard work is.

Thomas: What do you wish you would have focused on more in your first few years, and what do you see as the accomplishments of CFSA in your time here?

Roland: Well, I think what I eventually learned to focus on was bringing in really good staff, which is essential. I remember going on a funder visit when we maybe only had six people on staff, and when I told them about all the things we wanted to do, they said, "How many people do you have? Really?" I knew then that we had to increase our efforts to have the best possible people working on how we eat and how we grow food. That's why we've gotten to the point today where we are able to offer farms assistance with organic certification and with earning money from federal conservation programs, which were intended to help what we now know as sustainable agriculture. Helping farmers access that money is really meaningful and a big accomplishment. I would also have to say that growing the Sustainable Agriculture Conference has been an achievement; we have doubled it in size over the last six years and that feels pretty amazing. The energy, excitement and feeling of community spirit that happens at that conference is one of the most enjoyable and valuable things for me and is a contribution that CFSA and the conference makes to the whole community. People have to get recharged as well as re-educated, and that is what the conference does.

Thomas: What would you say is the ultimate potential of CFSA?

Roland: Our mission right now is to advocate, educate and build the systems that help sustainable family farms thrive; to create a sustainable food system built on local agriculture. We have that mission because we spent a lot of time talking to farmers and community members about what our mission should be, and that is what emerged. So, in a lot of ways, I would say a lot more of the same. More building community, more helping communities tackle the road blocks to that kind of food system

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Call to Action:

Safety Rules Cloud Beginning Farmers' Futures

by Roland McReynolds,
CFSA Executive Director

At its core, the movement for local, organic food and farming is about making lives better—prosperous for farmers and farmworkers, healthy for all humankind, happy for the animals we depend on, and sustainable for the earth's ecosystem. And the influx of beginning farmers pursuing agriculture as a career over the last several years has been one of the signal achievements of our movement. After 40 years of slow and steady work to re-envision how we produce and consume food, young people, veterans and second-career-seekers are able to see the potential for making a rewarding, meaningful living in farming.

After a century that has industrialized the landscape and our diets, this hopeful trend of new farmers is a manifestation of the transformative power of local, organic agriculture—bringing people back to land with a mission to care for it and preserve it for future generations. Pending federal food safety rules, however, would choke this trend and suffocate our chances for a better, healthier world along with it.

The 2011 Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) is as direct and real a threat to local, organic food as any other issue we face, including the corporate ownership of genes, taxpayer subsidies for industrialized production, and even global climate change. Indeed, because the catastrophic negative impacts of the FSMA rules for beginning farmers and new food distribution models would happen within a decade, the food safety challenge is arguably of more immediate concern; if we halt the growth of local food and opportunities for beginning farmers, we lose a critical means to fix those other longer-term problems.

But you don't have to take my word for it that FSMA will make it impossible to succeed as a new farmer. FDA's own data tells the story.

Beginning farmers almost always start small. Ninety-six percent of farms run by beginning farmers—farm principal operators with 10 years or less farming experience—have annual gross revenues less than \$250,000.¹ Beginning farms are more likely than established farms to grow fruits and vegetables, to have direct-to-consumer sales, and to be located in metropolitan counties, where land values are higher.² Beginning farmers are less likely than established farms to inherit land or buy it from a relative; less likely than established farms to receive government payments; and more likely to have difficulty obtaining credit and financing land purchases.³ The average net income to US farms is 10% of sales, and so is less than \$25,000 for almost all beginning farms.⁴

And according to the FDA, the average annual cost to comply with FSMA's produce rules for farms grossing less than \$250,000 per year will be 6% of revenue.⁵ Do the math, and then ask yourself why anyone would choose to start farming—to endure 12+ hour days, have an extra job off the farm, face crop loss risk—when the federal government is promising to take half the profits. It may be the understatement of the year when FDA, in an economic impact analysis, says that “the rate of entry of very small and small [farm] businesses will decrease” as a result of the produce rules.

The proposed FSMA produce rules govern every element of growing and harvesting crops, from worker hygiene and training, to the fertilizers farmers use, to expensive water tests and treatments, to integrating livestock and produce crops. Just as overwhelming is the companion proposed rule on preventive controls for fresh produce handling and other food processing. This rule treats local food hubs the same as 499-employee manufacturing plants, with disproportionate requirements

for record-keeping and sanitization. Even though firms with 20 or fewer employees produce just 4% of the food sold in the US, those size firms will bear 73% of the cost of implementing FSMA's preventive controls.⁶

In other words, the food hub movement will also be shut down as a result of FSMA, cutting off a critical market channel that allows farmers to scale-up while retaining a significant share of the value of their crops. And beginning farmers are especially vulnerable to the loss of this sales outlet.

As former USDA Deputy Secretary Kathleen Merrigan stated in a recent speech, the FSMA rules have the potential to “destroy some operations.” We must speak out if we expect to stop this. We must tell the stories of the young and beginning farmers who will bear the brunt of these regulatory abuses.

Starting this month, CFSA will be posting new content every week describing particular elements of the rules and the real-world impacts they will have on local food and organic farming. We will also be organizing informational meetings about the rules for farmers and local food businesses across the Carolinas. And we need you to share that information with other farmers and foodmakers. The local food sector must swamp FDA with comments, and it will take each and every one of us to mobilize our whole community and encourage farmers to take time out of their busiest season to provide personal testimony about the catastrophic impacts of FDA's proposals. 

>For more information on how to submit your comments to the FDA, go to <http://bit.ly/ZDuR6j>

>To help organize an FSMA meeting in your area, contact Thomas Locke at thomas@carolinafarmstewards.org

1 2011 USDA Agricultural Resource Management Survey.

2 Hunt, Alan and Gary Matteson, *The Emergence of Retail Agriculture: Its Outlook, Capital Needs, and Role in Supporting Young, Beginning, and Small Farmers*.

3 2011 USDA Agricultural Resource Management Survey.

4 USDA: ERS Farm Balance Sheet data.

5 FDA Produce Standards Rule Regulatory Impact Analysis, p. 314.

6 FDA Preventive Controls Rule Regulatory Impact Analysis, p. 181 table 65a.

Association News:

CFSA Hosts Ian Mitchell-Innes at Braeburn Farm

Holistic management expert and South African rancher Ian Mitchell-Innes recently conducted a two and a half day mob-grazing workshop at beautiful Braeburn Farm in Snow Camp, NC. The main goal of the workshop was to teach livestock owners how to manage their herds and improve animal performance through high-density grazing and consistent animal rotation. On the first night, Ian spoke to workshop participants and members of the Saxapahaw community at the Eddy Pub. In addition to pasture walks and presentations, Mark Bader, president of Free Choice Enterprises, also spoke about plant biology, animal pH and the science behind ruminant animal digestion. Ian went into high-level detail about holistic management, but mentioned several times, "If you don't like what you're doing, do something else; this is supposed to be fun."

Piedmont Farm Tour

Despite lots of rain, big crowds came out for the 18th Annual Piedmont Farm Tour. What a testament to the enthusiasm of our local foodies! Even in the middle of downpours, families ventured out to meet our farmers. Thanks to the farmers and Weaver Street Market, who make this wonderful event possible. We especially appreciate Linda Fullwood of Weaver Street Market, who puts together the maps and designs the t-shirts. We also had sold-out buses for our third year of the VIP Beginning Farmer Tour. This technical training program takes groups of 20 young farmers out each day of the regular tour; attendees get an in-depth view of noteworthy sustainable farms. Thanks to Tony Kleese, Andrew Branan, and CFSA's own Eric Soderholm and Keith Baldwin for leading these special tours. Funding is generously provided by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, USDA.

Funds to Farms

The latest Funds to Farms was held in Charlotte, NC, on May 12 at Triple C Brewery. Over 130 people attended.



Three farmers presented:

Bountiful Harvest Farm
Birdsong Farm
Coldwater Creek Farm

Coldwater Creek won the grand prize of \$1,000 for J3 Seeder. The other two farms each received \$500.

The next event is June 30 at the Company Shops Market in Burlington, NC.

>Learn more about Funds to Farms at <http://www.fundstofarms.com>.

We've Moved!

Exciting news to share! CFSA has moved to a different office, just down the road from our former digs in downtown Pittsboro. Our new street address is 287 East Street, Suite 421, Pittsboro, NC 27312. For those of you familiar with Pittsboro, this is in the Main Street Station building complex on 64 E, just a few blocks from the traffic circle. Our phone number (919-542-2402) and mailing address (PO Box 448, Pittsboro, NC 27312) remain unchanged.

CFSA Open House

Where: Main Street Station
287 East Street, Suite 421,
Pittsboro, NC 27312

When: Tues., July 16, 4-7 p.m.

We're excited to show off our new space! All members are invited to drop in and see CFSA's new office. Come visit with staff and fellow members. Light refreshments will be served, and photo contest winners will be unveiled.



*Ian Mitchell-Innes explains how to manage herds and improve animal performance.
photos by Anna MacDonald Dobbs*

CFSA Welcomes New Staff

Ben Filippo joined the CFSA staff as the NC food systems coordinator on Monday, June 10. It's likely that many of you have already crossed paths with Ben, as he's been developing and nurturing connections throughout the NC food system since he moved here two years ago. Prior to accepting this position, Ben worked as the market manager for the South Durham Farmers Market and as the

-Continued on page 7-

Save the Dates!

CFSA Open House

July 16 in Pittsboro, NC

Cycle to Farm

July 20 in Buncombe Co.

High Country Farm Tour

August 3-4

Eastern Triangle Farm Tour

September 21-22

28th Annual Sustainable Agriculture Conference

Nov. 15-17 in Durham, NC

Keep Your Fork Farm...*(continued from cover)*



emerging market for black truffles.

This emerging market has also led to several interesting inquiries over the years, one of which resulted in a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for the farm. For those who live around King, NC, it isn't very often a motorcade of black SUVs drives down the road and unloads massive amounts of equipment at a neighbor's home. This is, however, exactly what happened in January 2007.

Martha Stewart noticed the growing number of truffle farms and had a representative contact Franklin Garland to see if they could film a segment for her television show. Franklin suggested that in addition to his interview, they should also visit Jane and have a live demonstration of the truffle-hunting process. Friday and Dazy were happy to oblige. Once the cameras were set up and Martha arrived, they began filming. It was a successful search, and the happy dogs managed to find several truffles for the distinguished guest. Jane then invited everyone inside to warm up, and Franklin made truffle omelets for a late breakfast. Jane remembers Martha being very polite and down-to-earth, even giving the dogs her plate to lick after she had finished her omelet. Once the segment was filmed and the crew had departed, Jane and her husband, Rick, were invited to New York City to attend the filming of the live show. "Everything was first class," said Jane. "They had a limo pick us up from the airport in New York and take us to our hotel on the Upper

East Side, all paid for by Martha's company. We got to go backstage and visit with the crew before the filming, and then had front row seats for the show. It was wonderful!"

In addition to her responsibilities on the farm, Jane also serves as executive director of the Truffle Growers Association and hopes to further influence more scientific research around truffle growing. Jane sells her truffles all over the country and also makes various truffle-related food products in her certified kitchen on the farm, which you can find at Cobblestone Farmers Market in Old Salem and through her website. One of the most popular items is her truffle butter, which she sources from Maple View Farm in Hillsborough, NC. She also makes a delightful truffle honey and a melt-in-your-mouth truffle white chocolate. Simply delicious! 🍄

> Learn more about Keep Your Fork Farm at www.keepyourforkfarm.com.

> Visit the farm on next year's new farm tour in the Winston-Salem/Greensboro area.



TOP LEFT: Inoculated oak and filbert trees; TOP RIGHT: Friday hard at work; ABOVE: Black Périgord truffle.
photos by Thomas Locke

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An Interview with Roland McReynolds...*(continued from p. 3)*

we would like to see, and having more people as part of this community and network. There are a whole lot of farmers who benefit from our work but may not know we exist. I think changing that is an important goal; we need to get that awareness out further and have more farmers participating in what we do. Also, we need to get more of the people who want to support them participating in what we do.

Thomas: Is there a specific farmer in the last six years that has been a mentor for you, someone you would consider a “safe port,” for example?

Roland: I would say that early in that first year, once I knew a little bit of the landscape and knew who our members were, I started going around and asking people about the big issues facing this movement. What are the big potential problems that we need to be thinking about and focusing on? Everyone said food safety. Pat Battle up in the mountains was one of those voices, but he also helped me think about how to make addressing that challenge of food safety less of a threat and more of an opportunity. I think about that a lot. Pat is a very insightful thinker and a forward-looking person, and he has significantly influenced how we go about our advocacy around food safety. Some of the ideas that he talked about six years ago are still visionary today, and we are at a point in time where we might be able to start making some of that vision happen for the good of our movement.

I also remember having been on the job less than a month and going to the Southern SAWG Conference. Sitting around with Alex Hitt, Ken Haines and Scott Marlow—all of whom have been honored with awards at our own conference over the years—and hearing them just talk and share stories with one another is also one of my best memories of getting started with this organization.

Thomas: So here is a hard-hitting question—what is your favorite meal that you can make personally?

Roland: My favorite meal? Tough one. I guess I would have to say cassoulet.

Lots of meat and richness, with a little green salad of course!

Thomas: Light and heart-healthy, huh?

Roland: Right!

Thomas: Do you use duck fat for the cassoulet?

Roland: When I can; otherwise I use pork fat.

Thomas: What kind of music do you like? Favorite concert?

Roland: I like all kinds of music. I’ve seen Andre Segovia, the Rolling Stones, many jazz shows. It’s hard to single anything out. I listen to a lot of classical these days, but I also like to tune into WXYC (UNC radio) because there is always something different on there. There is not a lot that I don’t like.

Thomas: When you go to the farmers’ market, you probably don’t want to name who your favorite farmer is. But could you maybe single out some of the things you look for at the market?

Roland: Well, I like beets, the different colors of beets especially. I like being able to find those any time during the season. And when I can find organic potatoes, I will buy a ton; it’s almost impossible to find local, organic potatoes except at the farmers’ market. But I really just buy what is there, and I’m excited to see what is there each week.

Thomas: Roland, thank you for taking the time to let the world know a little more about who you are and why you do the work you do.

Roland: My pleasure. 

Association News...

(continued from p. 5)

food industry liaison for CEFS’ 10% Campaign. In his “free time,” Ben is the owner/operator of This & That Jam. Additionally, Ben serves on the advisory council for Farmer Foodshare and the board of directors for Benevolence Farm. Prior to moving to North Carolina, Ben completed formal studies in the anthropology of food at Tufts and SoAS, farmed in three continents, worked for the New Entry Sustainable Farming Project, and conducted research for the EU on genetically-modified food and feed policy.

CFSA is also pleased to welcome summer intern Kane Pour, a student at CCCC’s Sustainable Agriculture program in Pittsboro. Kane is a native of Florida and an avid sustainable grower. Kane has worked on a permaculture farm in California and has a certificate in Permaculture Design. He will be assisting us with our intern referral program and events. Welcome, Kane!

Exciting News to Share

CFSA is currently beginning work on a grant from the Kate B. Reynolds Foundation in Beaufort County, NC in collaboration with the Mid East Commission. Jared Cates will be working over the next six months to develop an action plan for strengthening the system that supplies healthy food to the communities in the county. The grant is part of the Healthy Places NC Initiative, which is a new approach supporting community-wide improvements in rural counties.

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