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Northeast Family Farming

Winter 2022

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A Letter from your Editors:

Well, it's been a year, friends. You've stuck with us through it all during 2022 as we learned and grew and shared all of these amazing farmers with you. We know we've only scratched the surface of all our area has to offer, and we're desperately seeking ways to expand and grow further into our corner of the Northeast. Along with you, we have learned how to raise market lamb, the work involved in raising a steer for the county fair, how to cook and create with seasonal goods, how to care for tulips, how to raise Livestock Guardian animals, how to revitalize farmland and diversify. We've covered so much ground in 2022 and I can't wait to open the door into 2023 and share so much more together.

If I have to be honest, though we seek always to be positive and never show the process underneath this publication, it hasn't been easy every step of the way. There were days I wasn't sure this was going to work and if we wanted to continue. You probably know this as well as I, but it's very difficult to start a small business in a post-pandemic world. Prices shot up and paper shortages loomed.

But time and time again, when I wanted to throw in the towel and chalk it up to a good idea that didn't pan out, without fail, someone would reach out to us and tell us how much they enjoyed this magazine and how much they loved learning about their local farmers. "I never knew so many people were doing so much in my area!" "This is exactly the type of resource I was looking for." "You're on the right track." "This is so helpful for farmers." "We read it cover to cover." God brought each one of your encouragements to us exactly when we needed it.

Time and time again you've encouraged us, and though the path going forward will continue to have its pitfalls and trials, we just want to say, as we top off 2022, THANK YOU. Thank you for your encouraging words. Thank you for reading. Thank you for sharing. And THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING YOUR LOCAL FARMERS.

We're excited about a new year with new opportunities to share with you. We thank the Lord for all He's allowed us to do this year. And we thank Him for YOU! So blessings to you all and a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! Let's discover even more together in 2023.

Hebrews 12:28-29

"Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

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Cover photography by Abigail Shaeffer
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Connecting communities to their local farmers and preserving agricultural traditions.

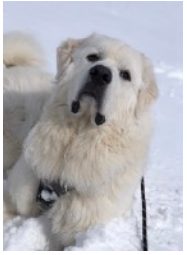
Meet your editors...and Remus

Tony LoSchiavo

Tony grew up in Southern Maryland and started out his professional career working in engineering for government contractors. He met Liz in 2016 and asked her to marry him that same December (spoiler alert - she said yes). Tony now works for the Montrose Bible Conference in maintenance and loves every minute. He loves metal detecting and big ice cream cones with rainbow sprinkles. When he closes his eyes every night, he sees tractors.

Liz LoSchiavo

Liz grew up in Montrose, PA. She went away to Liberty University and earned a Bachelor of Arts in English, specializing in literature and writing. Currently she works at Montrose Bible Church as Ministry Assistant. She was pretty psyched when Tony asked her to marry him and loves being his wife! Liz dreams in flowers and likes to make super challenging and weird recipes in her kitchen, and then spends a good deal of time trying to convince others to try them.



Remus LoSchiavo

Remus was born in North Carolina on a beautiful sheep farm. He was being trained to be a Livestock Guardian Dog and was supposed to guard the LoSchiavo chickens. Currently he likes to chase them because they move funny. He sleeps inside and eats peanut butter out of a Kong toy and begs for belly rubs. He may have failed as a farm dog, but he's an ace at fetching rubber chickens, drooling on furniture, and hating black and white cats.

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Your local health food store is about more than just roots and berries

By: Liz Kearney

When we started this endeavor, one of our biggest cheerleaders and one of the main sources of our discovering local foods, was our local health food store, Little Leaf Natural Products in Montrose. Check out the ways they champion not only local business, but local agriculture as well!

If driving to area farmers markets for local produce and other supplies is not always convenient, we have a solution for you right in downtown Montrose. Did you know Little Leaf Natural Products, at 505 S. Main St., stocks a variety of local produce and products? "It's nice to be able to share local products with all our wonderful customers," store owner Robin Wiseman says. One of our best-known suppliers is Carlton Farms, located in Montrose. Carlton Farms supplies Little Leaf with a variety of seasonal produce, home-crafted "Fire Tonic," an old-time herbal remedy made with various combinations of apple cider vinegar, garlic, ginger, hot pepper and horseradish. Fire tonic is said to help increase immunity, improve digestion and warm you up on a cold day. Carlton Farms also produces, under their AMA Hemp label, several CBD products such as tinctures, gummies, and topical creams and rubs, made with locally grown hemp. Here's a quick list of other local producers who supply Little Leaf Natural Products:

Photo courtesy of Liz Kearney

- Barbour Farms, near Hallstead, provides locally raised grass-fed American Aberdeen beef.
- Dimock Gold Honey, from the Prusack family, is raised in Dimock.
- Endless Mountains Maple is based in Rome, PA, and offers maple syrup products including handcrafted barbecue sauce and infused maple syrup.
- Ellsworth Farms, South Montrose, offers starter plants like herbs and vegetables for your spring planting.
- Funny Farm eggs is a small production based near Montrose offering free range eggs from chickens who are fed organic feed.
- Hardler Farms, Honesdale, offers raw cow's milk. Call Little Leaf at (570) 278-3706 if you'd like to arrange a standard weekly order to pickup.
- Hilltop Meadow Farm in Pine Grove, provides the store with a wide variety of cheeses made from raw, grass-fed cow's milk. Selections include Parmesan, cheddar, garlic cheddar, pepper jack, Gouda, Havarti, Swiss and more.
- J & K Honey, in Hop Bottom, provides local raw honey to the store.
- Loch's Maple Syrup is locally harvested syrup from the Springville area. (Pro tip: Try some in your morning coffee!)

Liz Kearney and Robin Wiseman of Little Leaf Natural Products

And Little Leaf also supports local artists and craftspeople. The shop carries the jewelry created by local artisan Emmalee Huston, who makes necklaces, bracelets and earrings from natural crystals, stones, beads and other natural materials. And new to the shop is a collection of natural wood bowls and cutting boards crafted from locally harvested wood by Michael Garrity. Buying local products from a local shop keeps your money in your community not just once, but twice! First by supporting a local retailer and then by providing income to a local farmer or craftsperson. Are you a food grower or local craftsperson, too, with wares to sell? Stop in at Little Leaf and make your pitch to have your products carried, too. Little Leaf also has lots of other natural foods, including gluten- and dairy-free options, teas and coffees, supplements, essential oils and homeopathic remedies, bulk spices and teas, as well as cleaning supplies, soaps and personal care items. Follow Little Leaf Natural Products on social media via Facebook and Instagram.

Photo courtesy of Liz Kearney

Photo caption: Wendy Burt, left, of Funny Farm Eggs, shares a laugh with Little Leaf Natural Products Owner Robin Wiseman, when Wendy was in the store delivering eggs. Wendy's hens are free range and fed a diet of organic feed.

Liz Kearney is a recovering newspaper reporter who lives near Salt Springs State Park with her man, dog, and cat.

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Winter Comes to the Farm

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By David Nowacoski

I'd really like a winter nap

Winter kind of sneaks in on us, doesn't it? I mean, technically it starts on December 21st, but who the heck is paying attention with just a few days left until Christmas? It just slides in when we are busy wrapping the box of slim-jims for cousin Ed.

Honestly, I usually don't realize it is Winter until around January 3rd. It's just too busy before that. We raise turkeys on our farm, so the week before Thanksgiving is absolute chaos. Then we have to find warm places for all the livestock to hang out until it is warm again. Finally, there are a couple of weeks of cleaning and storing away everything until the green grass returns. Throw in a few days of holiday parties and it's the New Year before it dawns on me that we switched seasons.

But Winter on a farm must be like a vacation, right? Well … not exactly.

Just as I am about to take my first middle-of-the-day nap on a cold and snowy morning in January, the water line to the laying hens freezes up. Out come the heat guns, hot water hoses and anything else that I can use to thaw out those three inches of pipe that freeze every single year. Thawing things that have frozen is one of my biggest pastimes in winter. Watery type things are the easiest to fix. You know it is really cold when diesel type things start freezing. Those could keep me busy all weekend.

As we head into February, I'm getting pretty quick with the heat gun, so I may just have some time to sneak in that nap. That's when the seed guy calls and wants to know what I need for the next growing season. I'd love to just say "the usual" and go grab my blanket and pillow, but I know that won't work out well. So out come the spreadsheets and plot maps to start figuring out what the consumers want to buy, what the livestock wants to eat and what I think will grow in our soil. A big question every year is "how much rain do you think we'll get?" After a few searches on the world wide interweb, the conclusion seems to be somewhere between "Death Valley dry" and "Post Apocalyptic flooding." Hmmm, that helps.

With a few thousand dollars on the line, I sweat over this for a few weeks before calling our order in.

I repeat this whole process for our livestock, particularly the chicks and turkey poults. This is even a bit more complicated. Here we are in February and I have to figure out how many Thanksgiving turkeys we'll need … AND … how big consumers will want them. You'd be surprised how much that changes year to year. 2018 everyone wanted 20 lb turkeys. During the pandemic years no one even wanted a whole bird. Last year it seems everyone wanted to deep fry their dinner so anything over 16lb didn't sell. Since the size of the bird is really dependent on the age of the bird, I have to somehow pick the right week to get day old poults so that they are the perfect size for the Thanksgiving table. I throw a dart and hope I got it right.

Now … that nap. Just as I crank up the heating pad and get snuggled in, the equipment shop calls to let me know that all those parts I ordered back in July have finally arrived. It's March. I've used a dozen rolls of duct tape to hold various pieces of machinery together so we could get through the growing season, but I know it won't hold up to spring-time activities. So mechanic-March it is! Grease guns are loaded, batteries for the impact wrenches are charged and away we go. This is my least favorite activity of the year. I'm not mechanically inclined so every project starts with Youtube University. I still find it amazing that you can find a video for "How To replace that broken thingy on a 1965 Ford 8N." Amazing. I didn't even realize they took videos back then.

With most of the repairs done I soak my banged up knuckles and try to get the last of the grease out from under my fingernails. That big oversized couch is about to get some serious lounging … when the post office calls. It's April … they have our first batch of chicks and a few hundred pounds of seeds waiting to be picked up. Sigh. Here we go again …

David Nowacoski grew up on a farm in East Smithfield and lives just down the road a bit from it still. He and his wife Marla raise chickens, turkeys and bunches of veggies at WindStone Landing Farms. They also run an online farmers market with over 50 other small family farms that deliver right to your door all year long! www.DeliveredFresh.Store

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Feature Family Farmers:

I am so thrilled to share a little about Back Achers Farm in Bradford County. When I first started learning about the local farms around me, I perused the the freezers at Little Leaf Natural Products in Montrose and found some grass-fed ground beef from Back Achers. I'd been wanting to start to get healthy, locally produced beef, and here it was. After that, I began connecting with Breanna Bullock of Back Achers and asking her many annoying questions that a newbie to local meat purchasing would ask. She graciously filled me in and always answered my questions, happy to share her passion for quality food with me. And when the time came to start the magazine, Breanna connected me with many of your local farms, always pointing me in the right direction. The Bullock family and Back Achers Farm has been one of our biggest supporters and cheerleaders with the magazine, willing to share copies at their markets and pass it around to others. It's only fitting that to polish off our 2022 year, we take the opportunity to share with you a family farm that has meant so much to us. This local farm is ALL about family, and they tackle their many projects together as a tight knit team. As I spoke with Breanna for this interview, the right question to ask her was not so much, "what are you doing," but "what AREN'T you doing?" They wear many hats at Back Achers, and we want to share them with you!

Photo courtesy of Back Achers

Sue and Alan Bullock started Back Achers farm in 1997. And they started out by raising sheep and processing maple sap into syrup. In 2000, they added cattle and chickens to sell eggs. The year after that, they added meat chickens and turkeys and a processing facility so they could process all their own poultry. After Alan passed away in 2007, Sue needed to keep things going on the farm so she added a CSA program. A year after that, Aaron came home after college and they've been a family partnership ever since.

Back Achers offers SO much too! When you walk up to the farm store, you might be deceived into thinking it's a small farm, with several beautiful greenhouses and a sugar shack, but not much more. But Back Achers sprawls up the hills and around the corner out of sight, providing healthy habitat for a huge variety of animals. Back Achers offers pasture-raised pork, chicken, turkeys, 100% grass-fed beef and lamb, pastured eggs, maple syrup and seasonal vegetables. In their greenhouses they grow year-round, so they constantly send vegetables to market. In winter months, when you visit them at the store or their farmer's markets, you'll find a variety of lettuces, maple syrup, meat and eggs.

Photo courtesy of Back Achers

One of the biggest questions on my mind for the Bullock family, was, "how do you keep all of these plates spinning at the same time?" They laughed, because it was a question that hit close to home. "We each have our own department. Sue and Tucker take care of the greenhouses, so they're constantly harvesting, constantly clearing beds and constantly planting. It's a continual rotational process. Aaron takes care of all the animals, providing them with everything that they need. Sam takes care of the maintenance and mechanical work so we don't have to call anyone in for that." And Breanna fills in the gaps. She deals with customers, helps run the CSA, bottles the maple syrup. "It's all going on at the same time, but handled by different people. We divide and conquer, but we all love working together." They employ seasonally, but it's usually the same people, and their helpers have been with them for many years.

Back Achers reaches their customers in many ways, but two of the most effective strategies for them have been their CSAs and markets. The Bullocks explained the CSA, "We have people sign up over the winter and in the spring and every week for 19 weeks they receive a box of fresh veggies. They pay up-front because it's as if they're buying a share in the farm. That up-front cost is a partnership with us so we can afford the cost of everything that goes into growing the crops for them." You can expect to find salad, mixed greens, salad turnips, carrots, peppers, cucumbers, tomatoes, kale, and many other varieties of items in your CSA throughout the 19 weeks. They will send out an email with what people can expect in their boxes before they get delivered. They offer a meat CSA in a separate program as well. And several times during the season, they even invite their subscribers to the farm to help with harvests and offer them a selection from what they harvest. The Bullocks love to include recipes in the boxes as well, centered around a unique ingredient that people may have never tried before. This becomes an exciting opportunity to continually educate individuals how to cook with different foods and be excited about what's on the plate!

We launched into a discussion at this point about the selection at grocery stores being sometimes a negative rather than a positive. When you're faced with endless options, you're overwhelmed. But when you're provided a selection of home-grown seasonal produce, you're forced to be creative and learn. The Bullocks shared, "A couple people told us this year that the CSA has encouraged them to cook more and discover a love for it. An individual also shared with us that she's sad her CSA has ended for the season because she eats healthier during these weeks."

Back Achers Farm

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Back Achers also participates in several markets. You can find them every Saturday at the Broome County Regional Farmer's Market in Binghamton with their fresh produce, syrup, meats and other products year-round. Or you can find them on Thursdays during the spring, summer and fall at Hillside Park in Clarks Summit.

And don't think that because it's winter, Back Achers takes a season off. "It's year-round," they explained. "It never stops. The winter doesn't change much as far as the heated greenhouses go. Whenever a crop is harvested, it's pulled up, the beds are cleared, and another one is started."

They're also busy with their maple season in the winter. "There is a lot of wood splitting happening now! Aaron and Sam will go out and tap trees." And you can see the lines spider-webbing throughout the woods on your way to Back Achers. They run about 1200 taps a season and though they only bottle about 10-20 gallons at a time, they store the rest in containers and end up with about 200 gallons per season.

In everything that they do, Back Achers seeks to streamline their processes, to create a greater sense of efficiency in each aspect of the farm to be able to provide the highest quality of food and goods for their customers. I asked the Bullock family what they would say to our readers to teach them how to support local farms. The answer was perfect. "Shop local, whether it's with us or with your neighbor or a farmer's market. All kinds of people are doing great things out there. We support our community farms too, so if we don't carry something, we have a network of family farms that are going to have what you need. So, if you want to get something locally, we want to help make that happen, even if it's not from us."

But one of the biggest ways you can support Back Achers and other family farms, is through word of mouth. Millions of dollars have been poured into PR campaigns and marketing strategies in the corporate world, and what people find is that word of mouth is still one of the most powerful elements of marketing. And the same is true in the world of local farms. So check out Back Achers farm and learn all there is to talk about. Follow them on instagram or Facebook, and check out their website: backachers-farm.weebly.com.

Photo courtesy of Back Achers

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Pretty and Purposeful: *Maple Hollow Botanicals*

Most people know that I (Liz) am a plant nerd. I'll be at a picnic and casually talking to my defenseless (non-plant) friends, and we'll walk past a patch of stinging nettle, and, to their great dismay, I'll launch into a lengthy story about how nettle delivers an electrifying sting, that will last for days (unless of course you hit it with some chewed up plantain leaf), but it also packs a bunch of health benefits if dried and used in tea. They'll start talking about normal things like their kids' t-ball league, and whoops, there's some milkweed! Let's look for monarch caterpillars! It's probably tough being friends with me, unless you, yourself, are a plant nerd. So when I stumbled across Maple Hollow Botanicals, and checked out her instagram feed, I knew I couldn't interview her fast enough. I could've talked with her for hours about plants and their purposes. But let me tell you, Beth Ward, of Maple Hollow Botanicals knows her stuff, loves her plants, and is doing some of the coolest things I've ever heard about. Last winter, I stumbled across a post where she explained how she distilled their family Christmas tree into oils that could be used in various body products. If you are asking yourself, *how do you do that? What does that even mean?,* you're in luck because I got the full scoop from Beth.

Photo Courtesy of Maple Hollow Botanicals

When I asked her to share how her business began, she explained, "whenever people ask that, I always struggle. I was blessed with an idyllic childhood where I played outside all the time. I can't remember not playing with plants. I made little potpourri sachets when I was little. I used herbal remedies that my grandfather and my father taught me about. But I think if I had to pinpoint a time, it was over 10 years ago and I made my first batch of soap that had carrot and chamomile in it and I was hooked after that point. I couldn't believe I had just made my own soap. I found it to be incredibly gratifying." Beth shared how she moved on to making a nettle hair rinse and started diving deeper and deeper into her plant-use research. "I learned how to harvest those plants I had grown up around my whole life and how to harvest them and incorporate them into every-day uses."

From that point, Beth continued to make soap, but she credits her husband with turning Maple Hollow Botanicals into a business. "He was the one who pushed me to really share my products with other people and turn it into a business. He was the one who told me, 'you could sell this.'" She started placing her products in stores and when people started buying, she was shocked. "I started having repeat customers and people requesting different kinds." From there, she branched out into lotions and lip balm and a host of other beauty products.

Photo Courtesy of Maple Hollow Botanicals

But the process to get there is a wonder in its own. Beth's husband bought her a still and it opened up many new doors of opportunity. "Most people associate stills with making alcohol, but I have a stainless steel still that I can either hydro-distill plants (using water), or steam distill. But essentially, what I'm doing is extracting the volatile oils and other water soluble constituents from the plants." In steam distilling, Beth captures those constituents in the steam and it travels up into a condenser where it is then condensed back into a liquid form and falls into a separator. "What I have then in the separator is my hydrosol (which is the water with those water soluble elements) and the essential oils, or the volatile oils, float on the surface. Then I can extract the oil off the top. I'm left with essential oils and hydrosol. Both are used in the plant therapy and beauty industry."

Beth uses this complex process to condense some of the most beautiful flowers she harvests at home and in the wild. Her Instagram feed is a medley of colors and not just in the colors of the flowers but the natural oils. For example, one of her favorite plants to extract is Yarrow, which condenses into this beautiful deep blue. "And you never get the same extract twice," she explained. "Sometimes, depending on where you harvest, it could be a mile down the road, but depending on your source, your oil can be completely different."

Photo Courtesy of Maple Hollow Botanicals

I loved hearing Beth describe her passion for what she does. "I love being out there in a field of queen Anne's lace at sunset. There's something so fulfilling about working to harvest responsibly off the land."

And there's something to do each season. Each one brings its own responsibility in turn. During the winter months, Beth will be dealing with the roots she harvested in late fall. When it's cold in January, she'll be perusing her seed catalogs and planning out the spring garden beds, drinking tea and making preparations. And of course, she may be distilling her Christmas tree! She explains, "From the Christmas tree, I'd get the hydrosol, and use it to make a limited special seasonal lotion. I use that essential oil from the fir tree in some shave soap and salve and lotion."

You may find the same thing twice at Maple Hollow Botanicals, but you're always going to see new things time and time again as Beth continually reinvents all of the things they do.

And if you're like me at this point and you want to learn more and experience Maple Hollow Botanical's products for your own, check out her instagram and Facebook feeds, or you can purchase through Delivered Fresh, as she places her seasonal products there. You can find her creations around Bradford County in places like Bentley Creek Gardens, Juranack's Naturally, Greener Pastures (where she works with Nicole to grow many of her herbs!) and other places in the Troy area.

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Christmas Gift Guide: *From your local farmers*

We've curated a variety of homemade items from your local farmers that would make amazing Christmas gifts for your family and friends! And our list is just a small sampling of all the amazing products to find out there! Remember to shop local and support the hardworking farmers all around you.

Tallow lotions, chapstick, paw lotion and beard balm from Norway Ridge Angus. Norway Ridge Angus' products are all made with organic, grass-fed tallows, beeswax, coconut, castor or almond oils, shea butter and essential oils. Find these products on Delivered Fresh or direct at nrangus.com

Take care of your body this winter with Carlton Farms' Fire Tonic, an healthy vinegar-based infusion of onion, garlic, turmeric, ginger, horseradish and cayenne, for a healthy immune system. Purchase at Carlton Farms' Farm Store, Delivered Fresh, or online at carltonfarms.net

Soaps, lotions, and other body products from Maple Hollow Botanicals. Maple Hollow's products are filled with local distilled plant oils, plant butters and natural ingredients. Find these products through Delivered Fresh or maplehollowproducts.com

Wool Dryer Balls from Viva Villa Farms. These Wool balls, made from Icelandic sheep wool, eliminate static cling, reduce wrinkles & lint, and cut down drying time. Hypo-allergenic and great to use with your favorite essential oil. Find at Slanted Art Co-Op in Montrose, PA, or purchase directly from Viva Villa Farm, jill.kutz24@gmail.com

Photo by Abigail Shaeffer

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A Farm-Fresh Winter Meal

Article & Photography by: Abigail Shaeffer

Winter isn't normally the time most people think of heading to farmers' markets and stands for locally grown food. Especially in Northeastern PA, winter seems to bring with it an ever-present blanket of snow—not fresh fruits and veggies. But just because there's nothing growing in the fields doesn't mean these farmers have nothing to offer. Look a little harder, and you'll find preserves and dried food lining shelves, fresh cuts of meat filling freezers, potatoes and squash sitting in dark root cellars, and a greenhouse extending the growing window of certain plants into the winter months. Companies like Delivered Fresh are all about getting these local products into your hands year-round, and I'm here to suggest a few recipes that utilize these winter-specific ingredients. Cooked together as one meal or separately as additions to your meal plan, these dishes are a simple but delicious way to continue supporting local farmers all year round.

This slow-cooker honey garlic pork is so simple to throw together, but it will reward you all day long with its delicious smell as it slowly roasts to perfection in your crock pot. Look for honey, garlic, and pork from your local farmers to complete this dish!

Slow-Cooker Honey Garlic Pork

Ingredients:

- 1 pork butt or several large cuts of fatty pork
- 1 stick of butter
- Marinade:
  - 4 cloves minced garlic
  - 1/2 tsp basil
  - 1/2 tsp oregano
  - 1/2 tsp thyme
  - 1/2 tsp parsley
  - 1/2 tsp paprika
  - 1/2 cup honey
  - Salt and Pepper to taste

Directions:

1. Mix marinade ingredients together in a bowl.
2. Place pork into a crock pot and baste it liberally with marinade. Pour any leftovers over the top of it.
3. Cut butter into small pats and place around and on top of basted pork.
4. Cook in a crock pot on high for 4 hours or low for 6.

Abbi Shaeffer grew up visiting Northeast PA every summer, and has recently moved permanently to the area she's always wanted to call home. She's worked in a commercial kitchen for the past 8 years, building a love for cooking and creating recipes to share with friends and family. She loves to make meals that are beautiful to look at but simple to make, and that utilize local, farm fresh ingredients. When she's not in the kitchen, you might find her hiking with her husband, teaching English classes, or taking care of her garden. Follow Abbi at @abbi_shaeffer on Instagram for more recipes!

This mashed potato recipe was actually taught to me by my husband, though I may have increased the amount of butter. It takes more work to make than your store-bought instant mashed potatoes, but the effort is so worth it in the end. Check your markets for potatoes, butter, and milk!

Creamy Mashed Potatoes

Ingredients

- 10-15 medium-sized yellow potatoes
- 1/2 cup sour cream
- 3 tbsp of butter
- 4 tbsp milk
- Salt to taste

Directions:

1. Peel and chop potatoes into cubes. Place into salted boiling water and boil until the potatoes are very tender to the touch, about half an hour.
2. Put potatoes into a bowl and add sour cream, butter, milk, and salt.
3. Use a potato masher or a hand mixer to combine and fluff potatoes. You may need to add more milk depending on the consistency.

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The simplicity of this dish is far outweighed by the resulting presentation. I was always taught that enjoying a meal begins before you even taste it—eating starts with the eyes—and this roasted squash looks like a piece of art. Look for butternut squash, dried cranberries, and late kale grown from greenhouses.

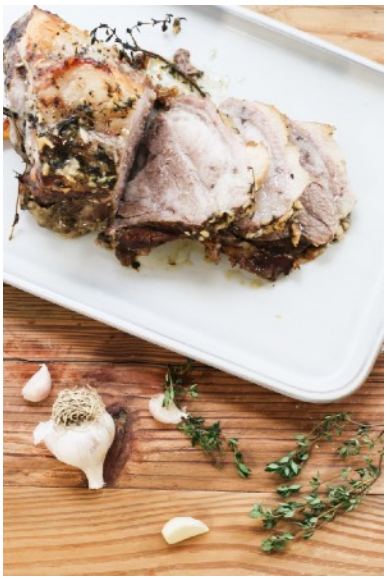
Oven-Roasted Butternut Squash

Ingredients

- 1 small to medium-sized butternut squash
- 2 stalks kale
- 1/2 cup dried cranberries
- 1/2 cup whole pecans
- 1/3 cup olive oil
- 1/2 tsp cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp garlic powder
- Salt and pepper to taste

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees
2. Cut the squash in half and scoop out the seeds with a spoon. Peel off the skin, and chop into small 1/2-inch cubes.
3. Wash and chop the kale.
4. Place the chopped squash and kale, olive oil, dried cranberries, pecans, cinnamon, garlic powder, salt, and pepper into a bowl and toss until everything is well coated in olive oil and spices.
5. Place the mixture in a cast iron skillet and bake for 20-25 minutes, stirring halfway through. The squash is done when it can be easily pierced with a fork.



These pastries serve as a fitting end to this meal, and I'll bet you already have most of the ingredients in your pantry. The most fun part is assembling the little pies—get creative with how you wrap and fold them! If you don't have any stocked up, head to the farm stores to look for preserves, jellies, and jams in as many flavors as you'd like.

Winterberry Pastries

Ingredients:

- Pie Crust
  - 3 1/3 Cup Flour
  - 1 tsp Salt
  - 6 Tbsp Sugar
  - 1 Stick Butter
  - 1/2 Cup Crisco or margarine
  - 4-6 Tbsp Ice Water
- Assorted jams, jellies, and preserves (for the filling)
- 1/3 cup Sugar
- 1 egg

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees
2. In a bowl, stir together flour, salt, and sugar.
3. Cut butter into chunks and place into the flour mixture along with the shortening. Use a pastry cutter to mix the butter into the flour.
4. Put the ice water into the flour-butter mixture a tablespoon at a time, stirring in between until the dough just combines. Knead the dough until it clumps together, but do not over-mix.
5. Roll the dough out 1/4 inch thick on a floured surface. Cut the dough into smaller circles, squares, or triangles—whatever shape you want to fold your pastries into.
6. Place small spoonfuls of jam or preserves onto the center of your dough shapes. Use less than you think you might need, and fold your pastries so that the jam will not spill out the sides as it cooks.
7. Once the pastries are assembled, beat the egg with a whisk and baste the outside of the dough with it. This step is optional but will give your pastries a golden crust. Sprinkle the sugar over the top of the pastries.
8. Bake in the oven at 375 degrees for 20-30 minutes, depending on the size and thickness of your creation. They are done when the filling is bubbling and the crust is a deep golden brown color.

Several ingredients for this meal were purchased via Delivered Fresh from Greener Pastures Farm, Grown Food, LLC, and Under the Moonlite Alpaca and Garlic Ranch.

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The Dish on Meat Rabbits

Q&A with Stephanie Rozelle of Windy Willow Homestead

Have you ever stumbled across a friend of a friend, on social media and thought, wow, they're so cool and I wish we were friends in real life? Well, I felt that way about Stephanie Rozelle of Windy Willow Homestead, and thankfully we ran into each other at the Susquehanna County Farm & Home Days at Elk Lake School! We did that thing where you say, "hey, aren't we friends on Instagram?" You should follow Stephanie on Instagram too when you find out everything their family is doing on their homestead! I was so excited when she agreed to a Q&A about their Meat Rabbits, a topic I'd long wanted to learn more about!

First, tell us a little about your homestead.

I'm Stephanie Rozelle at Windy Willow Homestead. My husband, Mark, and I moved to South Montrose with our 4 children and began our homesteading adventure in 2016. We started with a few chickens and now keep/raise Huacaya Alpacas, registered Nigerian Dwarf goats, White Holland turkeys, Muscovy ducks, Cornish Rock meat chickens, various breeds of chickens for eggs, Coturnix quail and Silver Fox, Champagne d'Argent, New Zealand & American Chinchilla rabbits. We keep a large vegetable garden, a small orchard, a few grape vines and a medicinal herb plot. We are vocal supporters of 4-H, Foster care/Adoption and Autism Awareness. We strive to be a holistic homestead. Everything is used to its full potential while still maintaining healthy, happy animals and being eco-friendly. We do all our own shearing, fiber processing, milking, hatching, butchering, tanning and food processing. Learning to do things [correctly] ourselves cuts out a lot of extra costs. Our big dreams are to eventually move to a larger farm where we could take on larger/more livestock and have more grow space. But the current housing market has us happy to work with what we have now. We would love to be as self-sufficient as possible.

How did you get into raising rabbits, meat rabbits specifically?

Photo courtesy of Stephanie Rozelle

We both have past experience with rabbits. Mark used to raise meat rabbits on his family's hobby farm as a kid. I kept rabbits for a few years for 4-H in high school. After our kids joined 4-H in 2021, there was talk about the county bringing market rabbits in as a new project area. We decided as a family that rabbits would be a great addition to our homestead. We did some research into which breeds would suit us the best. We wanted to be able to utilize as much of the rabbit as possible. We connected with some amazing locals who keep meat rabbits. They offered us not only great breeding stock but also valuable information and are on-going mentors for us and our 4-Hers. We started with Silver Fox and Champagne d'Argent rabbits, then added White New Zealands and American Chinchillas. Our daughters participated in the Breeding Rabbit 4-H project this past 4-H season. This coming season all 4 of our kids will be completing and showing Market Rabbits for the Harford Fair 2023, where they will be sold [as a set of (3) 10-week-old single breed rabbits] at the 4-H Livestock Auction.

What is the lifespan of a meat rabbit?

Our breeding stock have a full lifespan, meaning they don't get processed. We keep one doe and one buck of each breed full time. As long as they remain healthy they will continue to produce young for processing. We haven't yet had one unable to produce or "age out," but I would assume that they would become retired and kept/ sold as a pet. Rabbits can live between 8 to 12 years on average and depending on breed. Our production stock is what is eventually processed to be consumed or sold as pets/ breeding stock for others. Our kits [baby rabbits] are weaned at 6 weeks. They are then paired or tripled into separate cages or "tractors" to best manage their food intake. If you leave too many in one cage you always end up with a few being food hogs and a few not getting enough. We want everyone to get an even and consistent amount of food for healthy maximum harvest weights. We weigh out kits every 2 weeks after they are weaned to track their progress and make sure no one is getting too much or too little food.

At that time we can also do health checks, trim nails and tattoo if needed. We dispatch and process most of our rabbits between 12 and 16 weeks [3 and 4 months]. They usually have a hanging weight between 2.5 to 3.5 lbs. These rabbits are called "fryers." Some people do let their rabbits go as long as 32 weeks [8 months]. These rabbits are called "roasters" and typically weigh over 4 lbs. We have not let our rabbits go this long as it requires us to maintain those rabbits far longer, making them not very cost efficient.

Photo courtesy of Stephanie Rozelle

What sort of daily care is involved?

Most of the day-to-day work is taken care of by our kids, both as chores and as part of their 4-H projects. They each have a pair of rabbits, plus those rabbits' offspring to care for. [We, of course, check the rabbits daily to make sure that all their needs are met.] We keep tags on all the rabbits' enclosures with individual and feed information so everyone gets the correct type/amount of feed. They all get appropriate rations of pelletized feed once a day. They have access to fresh hay and water all day, every day. Their cages/huts/boxes are cleaned when needed. Generally, that is daily but sometimes it's as long as twice a week depending on the rabbit or number of rabbits residing within. Our rabbit tractor gets moved around the yard every few days so its residents get fresh grass. All the rabbits are handled regularly. This makes them much easier to manage and just friendlier. Who's doesn't enjoy a good bunny cuddle?

Tell us a little about the restrictions on selling rabbit meat.

In the state of Pennsylvania, you can not sell processed rabbits from your farm unless you are inspected and registered with the USDA [United States Department of Agriculture] and/or the FDA [Food & Drug Administration]. There are many rules and restrictions on health/biosecurity, slaughter/processing locations, equipment, packaging, refuse removal and record keeping on the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture website under the Bureau of Food Safety and Laboratory Services. Googling "Rabbit Processing Requirements in PA" should get you there. At this time we do not have the space nor the set up to be a USDA inspected facility. All of our meats processed on our homestead are only for our family and friends (non-paying guests) to enjoy.

What does it taste like?

Some people say it tastes like chicken and some people say it tastes like beef. Personally, I think it's somewhere in-between both.

What are your favorite ways to cook them?

We use it in place of beef, chicken or pork in a number of recipes. We have done them in the roaster with potatoes and carrots, grilled it as shish kebab with peppers, made rabbit quesadillas, baked it in a pot pie… you can use rabbit meat all sorts of ways. We have never had a bad rabbit recipe.

How can others support you, purchase from you, learn from you?

Anyone can support/purchase eggs (quail+chicken+duck), produce (vegetables+fruits+gourds+herbs), fiber (alpaca), goat milk soaps or live animals (quail+chicken+duck+turkey+meat rabbits+Nigerian dwarf goats) from us. I usually post when these things are available on Instagram (follow @windy.willow.homestead) or Facebook (add me @ Stephanie Rozelle) or you can reach out and ask. I am always up for questions. If anyone is interested in raising meat rabbits or learning anything else about what we do on our homestead, I am more than willing to share the information/ teach the skills we have. If there is something I don't know, I will do my best to find the answer or someone who knows. Anyone is welcome to contact me through social media or email (srozelle@live.com). Never stop learning. We always suggest supporting local 4-H clubs. You can find contact information and ways to support the programs on www.4-h.org. These kids are our future. Special thanks to Tracy Atkinson & Ed Burke, Mike & Christina Ross, Carey Williams and Tim Repine. Your knowledge and insight has and will continue to be deeply appreciated.

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Meet the Rovenolt Family

Donny and Brenda Rovenolt started Rovendale Ag & Barn in 1992. Donny always had a passion for the agricultural industry; and he always felt for the farmers. Donny and Brenda had five children and now all five children work alongside their parents in the business. As the Rovenolt Family grows, so does the passion for the equipment we sell and the service we offer. We want to provide you with the best equipment you deserve. As we close out our 30th year in business, we want to thank all our customers, friends and family. You have pushed alongside us. It has been a huge year for Rovendale and the biggest excitement is our merger with Krempasky Equipment in Honesdale, PA. May each one of you have a Merry Christmas and a blessed New Year!!

~The Rovenolt Family & Rovendale Ag Team

Rovendale Ag & Barn, Inc.
WATSONTOWN
WYSOX
HONESDALE
800-278-5909
WWW.ROVENDALEAG.COM
Find us on

FARM STORE @ NORWAY RIDGE ANGUS

NR Angus
NORWAY RIDGE ANGUS
WYALUSING, PA

- Naturally Raised Black Angus Beef
- Forest Raised Pork
- Registered Black Angus Breeding Stock
- Grass-fed Tallow Body Butter & more

Open Fridays & Saturdays
10am-5pm

271 Terrytown Mountain Road
Wyalusing PA 18853

570-721-2425
www.NRAngus.com

Check us out on YouTube
Norway Ridge Angus

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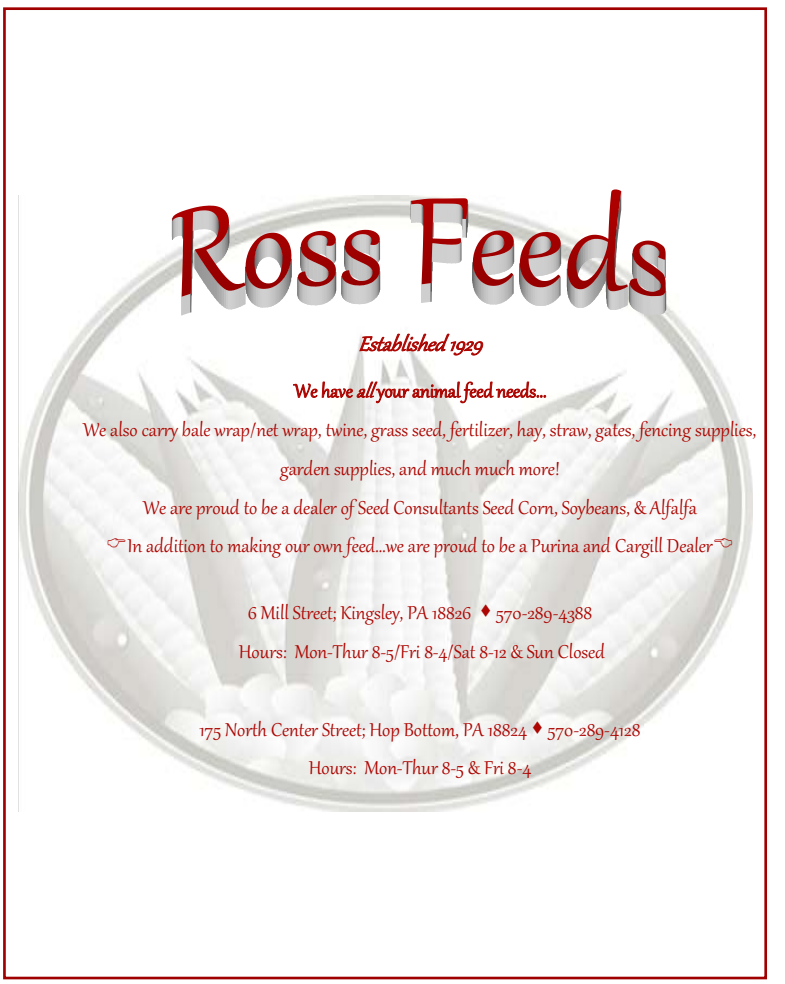

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Special thanks to Lori Voll-Wallace of the Susquehanna County Master Gardeners, for sharing this excellent seasonal resource with us!

Starting Seeds in Winter

What is Winter Sowing?

When you consider how seeds germinate in nature, it makes sense to sow seeds the same way. In late summer, left to their own devices, seeds fall to the ground. They slowly get covered with leaves and other natural materials to begin their long winter in the soil. Exposure to cold temperatures and moist conditions breaks dormancy and the seeds germinate when temperatures increase in the spring.

Winter sowing is the process of planting seeds outdoors in a container during the winter months. The container remains outdoors until the seedlings emerge in the spring. The container protects the seeds from animals and harsh weather, but the exposure to colder temperatures breaks dormancy and the seeds germinate. The container also provides an ideal environment for germination in the spring.

Photo by Lori Voll-Wallace, Master Gardener; Susquehanna County

What to Winter Sow?

Winter sowing is ideal for some annuals, perennials, and wildflowers. Check out a seed catalogue: most will have some sort of notation about a seed's germination requirements. Look for seeds that are described with the following terms:
Reseeds, Colonizes, Self-sows, Hardy seeds, Seedlings can withstand frost, Sow outdoors in late autumn or early winter, Sow outdoors in early spring while frosts may still occur, needs pre-chilling, Requires stratification.

When to Winter Sow?

The best time to winter sow perennials and hardy annuals is generally December to March depending on the weather conditions in your area. These seeds require a consistent period of moist, cold temperatures before germination occurs in spring. Tender plants including annuals and vegetables can be sown later in spring (March or April) as they do not require a cold period in order to germinate.

What are the benefits of Winter Sowing?

When you direct sow in the ground, the seeds are at the mercy of Mother Nature they can be washed out in downpours; eaten by critters, bugs and birds; desiccate in the wind; or rot in the soil. Containerized seedlings stay more compact and do not need to be hardened off before planting in the garden. Winter sowing is ideal for those with limited indoor space for seed starting. No special lighting or equipment is required for germination.

How To:

1. **Clean container** — Wash a milk jug or suitable container in warm, soapy water and rinse. Discard the top. The opening allows rain and melting snow to keep the soil moist.
2. **Cut container** — If not using a container with a hinged lid, insert a serrated knife or box cutter into the side of the jug, lay it on its side and cut all the way round, leaving about 1.5 inches (under the handle, if using a jug with a handle) so that the top hinges open. Tip: use coffee mug with marker placed on top. Twirl jug around to mark a perfect cutting line.
3. **Create air holes** — Use a knife, screwdriver or nail to poke holes for drainage in the bottom of the container. This is important--if you don't make drainage holes, your seeds will drown! If using a container with a hinged lid, poke a few air holes in the top of the lid.
4. **Add soil** — Fill the container with 2 to 4" of a soilless seed starting medium. Avoid garden soil which may contain pathogens and weed seeds.
5. **Water the soil** — Lightly moisten growing medium and allow excess to drain.
6. **Sow the seeds** — Follow the directions on the seed package and sow seeds on the surface of the soil. Cover the seeds with a layer of soil and gently pat down.
7. **Seal the container** – Seal the cut edges of the container with light- colored duct tape. Leave the top open. Tip: rather than using tape, make holes for pipe cleaners or twist ties for easy opening and closing without the stickiness of the tape.
8. **Label container** – use a laundry marker (better than permanent marker) to label the type of seed and date of sowing. Place the label in the bottom of the container.
9. **Set outdoors and leave!** – Site the container in an area that receives winter sun. Do not place the container on a covered porch as the seeds require the moisture from the rain and snow. They should experience all the weather conditions they would in nature. Consider placing containers in a milk crate if conditions are windy. Forget about your containers until the spring when the seedlings germinate.

Photos by George Schreck, Master Gardener; Susquehanna County

Contact your local Extension office for the Master Gardener Garden Hotline for free, personalized gardening advice: https://extension.psu.edu/programs/master-gardener/counties Or contact the Penn State Extension Master Gardeners of Susquehanna County at susquehannamg@psu.edu or call 570-666-9003. Want to receive regular Master Gardener updates, including articles with the latest horticultural advice and upcoming events? Sign up for our electronic newsletter by visiting: https://extension.psu.edu/master-gardener-team-sign-up

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Your Local Farm Directory

Bradford County

Back Achers Farm
Sue & Aaron Bullock
Rome, PA
570-247-2940
backachersfarm@epix.net
backachers-farm.weebly.com
pastured pig & poultry, 100% grass-fed beef, organic seasonal produce and maple syrup

Backroad Creamery
Amanda Kennedy
Columbia Crossroads, PA
570-404-0664
backroadcreamery@gmail.com
www.backroadcreamery.com
quality artisan cheeses

Bluebird Ridge Farms
The Ashby Family
Milan, PA
www.bluebirdridgefarms.com
pastured grass-fed beef, veal, chicken and Berkshire hogs

Bohlayer's Orchards
David & Heather Loomis
Troy, PA
570-297-2480
www.bohlayersorchards.com
heather@bohlayersorchards.com
quality Romeldale sheep and wool products

Dirt Road Herbals
Gillett, PA
Dirt Road Herbals on Facebook
dirtroadherbals@yahoo.com
Natural herbal remedies, lotions, salves and other botanical products

Edsell's Greenhouse
Wyalusing, PA
seasonal: May - Mid June
570-744-1960
Edsell's Greenhouse on Facebook
hanging baskets, annual flowers, pre-planted containers, vegetable plants and herbs

Greener Pastures
Troy, PA
Steve & Nicole Harris
www.greenerpasturesfarm.net
570-337-0815
pastured pork, poultry, grass-fed beef, plants, produce, pumpkins, maple syrup, hay

Norway Ridge Angus
Paul & Stacy Fusco
Wyalusing, PA
570-721-2425
paul@nrangus.com
www.nrangus.com
naturally raised Black Angus beef, Forest Raised Pork, Tallow Balm

Southview Station
Jessica Newman
585-261-5434
SouthViewStation@outlook.com
www.southviewstation.com
grass-fed cows and sheep, pastured pork and poultry

Bradford County cont...

Sunset Ridge Creamery
New Albany, PA
570-924-3949
Sunset Ridge Creamery on Facebook
delicious A2 Jersey milk

WindStone Landing Farms
David & Marla Nowacoski
Columbia Cross Roads, PA
570-596-4470
dnowacoski@gmail.com
wslfarms.com
quality pastured pork, chicken and turkey, eggs, vegetables, jams, salsas, soups, pickles

Susquehanna County

Albert C. Shaulis
Montrose, PA
Albert & Rachelle Shaulis
tweetyburdz@yahoo.com or
beefcow10@icloud.com
570-934-2833
grass fed, grain finished quarter, half, whole beef

Amy Boot
Montrose, PA
snoylany@hotmail.com
570-396-2043 (text or call)
quality farm fresh eggs

Barbour Farms
Jim & Kim Barbour
Hallstead, PA
607-435-0830
barbourfarms.com
organic/sustainable vegetables & pumpkins. Raising grass-fed American Aberdeen beef.

Bennett Farms
Brandon & Adele Bennett
New Milford, PA
570-947-4056
Bennettfarms.biz
local beef, pork, and equine services

Burke Farms LLC
Bill & Becky Burke
Meshoppen, PA
570-240-0714 or 570-240-5485
wb.burkefarmsllc@gmail.com
whole, half or quarter beef and individual cuts and packages

C. Birchard Farm
Chapin Birchard
Birchardville, PA
607-321-9298
U.S. Inspected Individual retail beef. Call or text for meat order.

Carlton Farms
Jennie & Richard
Montrose, PA
570-396-0886
info@carltonfarms.net
carltonfarms.net
certified organic produce, pastured lamb, fire-tonic, pestos and CBD products

Susquehanna County cont...

Parrish Family Farm
Karen & Guy Parrish
South Montrose, PA
607-759-8201
karen.glparrish@frontier.com
home-grown quality beef

Rocky Ridge Farm
Rob & Hannah Squier
Brooklyn, PA
845-258-0742
rocky-ridgefarm.com
grass-fed beef, pork & chicken

Russell Farms
Mike Russell
Brackney, PA
@russellfarms
russell-farm.com
year round farm store, CSA, and u-pick apple orchard

Si's Sow & Steer
Silas Lewis
Montrose, PA
570-278-4533
sisowsteer@gmail.com
@sisowsteer
Si's Sow & Steer on Facebook
fresh homegrown pork and beef

Trinity Angus, LLC
Edward & Dr. Rebekah Burke & Family
Brackney, PA
570-840-7376
trinityangus@gmail.com
www.trinityangus.com
veteran-owned family farm offering hormone and antibiotic-free Angus beef for your freezer and/or local business. Also offering embryos and bulls to help build a healthy Angus herd.

Viva Villa Farm
Jill Kutz
Friendsville, PA
h-570-553-4280, c-607-237-6053
Jill.kutz24@gmail.com
www.VivaVillaFarm.com
Great Pyrenees/Maremma breeder, goat soaps and lotions, Icelandic sheep fiber and crafts

White Dog Farm
Tony & Liz LoSchiavo
Montrose, PA
570-280-0718
@whitedogfarmnepa
local raw honey, seasonal produce

Windy Willow Homestead
Mark & Stephanie Rozelle
Montrose, PA
srozelle@live.com
570-309-7955
@windy.willow.homestead
registered Nigerian Dwarf goats, chickens, ducks, turkeys, quail, meat rabbits, herbs and produce

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Susquehanna County cont...

Castiglione Family Farm
Heather Castiglione
Montrose, PA
Grass-fed beef, free range non-GMO eggs
dcastiglione111@gmail.com

Clodhopper Farm
Pete & Eliza Comly
Springville, PA
570-965-2201
clodhopperfarm@gmail.com
clodhopperfarm.com
pasture-raised chicken, turkey and eggs, grass-fed beef and natural pork

Corbin Family Farms
David Corbin
Hop Bottom, PA
570-396-6105
djc005@lvc.edu
locally sourced, naturally and sustainably grown beef and lamb. Beef Quality Assurance certified.

Endless Mountains Ranch
Paul & Emily Travis
Hallstead, PA
607-205-0361
info@endlessmtnsranch.com
www.endlessmtnsranch.com
@endlessmtnsranch
quality pastured pork and pastured poultry

Ellsworth Farm
Samantha Ellsworth
Montrose, PA
910-352-0929
Ellsworth Farm on Facebook
organic, non-gmo homegrown plants and flowers

Evelyn Adams
Montrose, PA
570-982-3702 (text only)
local fresh eggs

Jill's Happy Bees
Chuck & Kate Castrogiovanni
Montrose, PA
570-396-0311
Jill's Happy Bees on Facebook
honey, nuc boxes, and wax-dipped bee boxes

LaRue's Farm Market
Ben & Renee LaRue
Montrose, PA
570-934-2618
laruesfarm.com
seasonal home-grown vegetables and meats

Legacy Farm/Lauer Farm
Springville, PA
John Krayestki
570-575-0284
beef and hay

Marcho's Florist and Greenhouses
Susquehanna, PA
570-756-2626
marchosgreenhouses.com
florist, greenhouse, dahlia farm

Wyoming County

Brown Hill Farms
The Brown Family
Tunkhannock, PA
570-241-8430
brownhillfarms@gmail.com
brownhillfarms.com
seasonal tulip & sunflower fields, pumpkin patch and local produce

Carlin Farm (4 Seasons Farm Market)
Gerald & Tina Carlin
Meshoppen, PA
570-240-5094
4seasonsfarmmarket@gmail.com
4seasonsfarmmarket.com
wide variety of fresh produce and pasture-raised beef

Redfield Farm
Falls, PA
570-614-6697
redfieldfarmpa.com
beautiful daylilies in a full spectrum of colors, varieties and bloom times

Rock "N" K Farm
Josh & Elena Kuwaye
Meshoppen, PA
607-206-1036
KuwayeJosh@yahoo.com
grass fed, grain finished beef by the whole, half or quarter

Wild Notion Farm
Falls, PA
wildnotion.farm
microgreens, mushrooms and herbs

Wilson Farm
Lynn
Tunkhannock, PA
570-836-3289
grass-fed lamb and poultry, wool, Texel breeding stock

Should your farm be in our directory?

We'd love to list your farm and grow our directory to help our community learn where to find quality home-grown products! Please contact us via our website so we can connect with you and list your family farm for free!

Little leaf
natural products
505 S. Main | Montrose, PA. 18801
570-278-3706 | thelittleleaf.com

Wolfe's Custom Threads & Awards
Formally Elmira Trophy & Awards
WOLFE
Dave Wolfe
607-734-8023 - P
www.elmiratrophy.com
Screenprinting-Embroidery-Promotional Products-Trophy & Awards

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