

NY Farms!

Building Farmer-Consumer Connections in the Empire State

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE- January 16, 2008 I Love My New York Farmer! Contest Results Announced

In an effort to build farmer-consumer relationships in New York State, NY Farms! a not for profit organization whose mission is to strengthen NY agriculture and food systems by creating public awareness of the importance of farming; promoting agriculture and food system literacy; and fostering consumer loyalty to New York farm products, is announcing the winners of the Fourth Annual NY Farms! I Love My NY Farmer Contest.

The idea for this contest came about when Cheryl Rogowski an Orange County farmer was explaining some of the benefits of a CSA. Cheryl commented "When I'm at the market or making a CSA delivery, my customers are delighted to see me. They'll nudge the person they are with and say 'That's MY farmer'." That sense of pride strengthens the bond between farmers and consumers and reinforces a commitment to buy local, which is exactly the message that NY Farms! has been spreading since their beginning in 1996.

Through their land-based livelihoods, New York farmers enhance the lives of all New Yorkers in multiple ways, by: providing farm fresh food, increasing food safety and security by decreasing our dependency on food from far away, creating jobs and economic development, maintaining aesthetically pleasing rural landscapes, wildlife habitat and biological diversity, and being good neighbors, committed to community well-being. With the I Love My NY Farmer contest NY Farms! asked the New York public to make nominations, hoping that neighbors and customers would better get to know their farmer and appreciate all that he/she has done.

Winners for the I Love My NY Farmer were selected based upon the notation in the entry of a farmer's: living and selling within New York State; producing a quality product; being a good steward of the land; being a good neighbor, serving the community, and "going the extra mile". NY Farms! asked to have explained in 250 words or less, why a particular farmer deserves such an award.

With the "I Love MY NY Farmer" contest, NY Farms! invited all New Yorkers to submit the reasons they love a NY Farmer and, in so doing, document the importance of supporting New York farmers through the purchase of local foods and preservation of farmland. All four winners were expressed as being very active in their overall community, by their nominators. In appreciation of the diversity of farmers and farms throughout the state, winners were selected in the following categories:

Dairy: Mr. And Mrs. Peter Erlwein of Jeffersonville, NY; nominated by Barbara Hahn of Jeffersonville, NY.

Other Live Stock: John & Marge Arcangeli of Arcangeli Farm Farm/Country Critters in Burdett, NY; nominated by the Schuyler County Chamber of Commerce

NY Specialties: Regis Obijiski, Agency Executive Director, New Horizons Resources, Inc. (Briggs Farms) in Poughkeepsie, NY; nominated by Melinda Riggs of Poughkeepsie, NY

Wine & Grapes: Michael Migliore of Whitecliff Vineyard & Winery in Gardiner NY; nominated by Debbie & Paul Gioquindo of Poughkeepsie, NY

The Arcangeli's, winner of the Other Livestock category, were described as true givers to the community; hosting free tours to hundreds of youth groups, like the Girl and Boy Scouts and after school programs. John Arcangeli was actually a volunteer firefighter with the Burdett Volunteer Fire Dept. until he was injured on scene, leaving him disabled. His commitment to the community of Burdett is unquestionable.

The nominators for WhiteCliff Winery personally felt that the wine they produce has raised the overall quality of Hudson Valley Wines. They also described their commitment to use local product by saying, "Every summer Whitecliff hosts a Red Wine & Grass Fed Beef event at the winery. The beef is purchased from two local cattle farms. In addition they serve fresh local corn and ice cream. It s a great showing of what the Hudson Valley offers and promotes buying locally grown and produced products".

Barbara Hahn warmly talked about the Erlwein family saying, "I love the way the entire Erlwein family all go the extra mile, involving themselves in many community activities including the Methodist Church, the Jefferson Journal, beautification efforts for Jeffersonville Enhances More of Sullivan, and the Sullivan West Central School athletic and music programs, making it hard to imagine how they fit in doing various chores for elderly neighbors". The Erlwein's have one of the few remaining dairy farms in Sullivan County.

New Horizons Resources, Inc., a private, not for profit agency that provides residential and habilitation services to children and adults with developmental disabilities, grew pumpkins at Briggs Farms for another not-for-profit agency and raised funds to provide art and music classes for individuals with disabilities. "Caring for the animals, growing and harvesting vegetables, and other farm activities provide the individuals they serve with a sense of accomplishment and allows them to care for things and gain a great sense of pride and accomplishment", describes Melinda Riggs.

It is with sincere gratitude and appreciation for their noted contributions that NY Farms! and the people of New York recognize these winners and all those who were nominated for the Fourth Annual I Love My NY Farmer Award. For more information about NY Farms!, visit its web site at www.nyfarms.info.

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Editor: Photos available