



Wake Robin

A Family Farm

Summer 2009

When I need to slow down and remember what shaped our small farm dream, I flip through the books that inspired Bruce to quit graduate school and return to farming.

In the words of Wendell Berry, "...character and community - that is, culture in the broadest, richest sense - constitute, just as much as nature, the source of food. Neither nature nor people alone can produce human sustenance, but only the two together, culturally wedded."

Thank you, Wendell Berry, for getting us here, and for inspiring us to keep working to bring the culture back into agriculture!

News this month

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Farm Wins Silver Medal for Cheese!

OK, so I know in the last newsletter I said that it isn't our goal to win awards for our cheese, but...

How could we resist participating in the [North American Regional Jersey Cheese Awards](#), when the competition was being held right in Syracuse?!? I think we may have been the only entry to hand deliver our wheel of cheese, and we were definitely the only New York cheesemaker to win an award!

Out of 77 entries from 29 producers, in 15 states and 2 countries (US & Canada), our Mona Lisa cheese scored a silver medal in the Farmstead Hard Cheese category!

We really enjoyed attending the event where the awards were announced, which was held at Sycamore Hill Gardens, in Marcellus. They were serving dinner, but we filled up before the meal on samples of the various cheeses - it was amazing to experience so many cheeses made with Jersey cow milk, all in one place! Bruce was very inspired, and we were honored to have our wheel displayed alongside cheeses from many producers that we admire, like [Cato Corner](#), [Grafton Village](#), and [Consider Bardwell Farm](#).

Next year, there will be a [World Jersey Cheese competition](#), held on the Isle of Jersey, where our cows originated. I'm already working on Bruce, trying to convince him to let me hand deliver a wheel of cheese there!

Free Time on the Farm

What does a farmgirl do when she's not milking cows, making hay, producing yogurt, or selling at market? The answer is, not very much!

Like everyone, I prioritize and make time for the important things. For example, since we need all the young farmers we can get in this country, I participate in things like the [Beginning Farmer Project](#) whenever I'm invited. I'm also concerned about the disappearance of farmland, so I serve on both the [Onondaga County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board](#), and the [New York Agricultural Land Trust](#) board. From September to June, we add another facet to the business of our lives, as we homeschool our 9 year old son, Hugh (with lots of help from my dad!). This again, is an attempt to invest in the future of agriculture!

What do we do for "entertainment"? Our idea of a great night is having a bunch of farmers over for a local food potluck, which we enjoyed doing last Sunday night. After a year of chipping away at it, our family finished the mosaic table below, and I've been re-reading the books that brought us to a farming lifestyle. The family joke is that Bruce's "hobby" is weight-lifting, since he can often be found juggling 100 pound milk cans. Even after a very tough month of haying in June, we're more committed than ever to our farm, family, and community.

