

It's Who We Are

Notes from the Porch for July-August 2009 Hobby Farms

By Karen Keb Acevedo

Photo by Salix

I stopped to feed clover to one of the Gettles'

Royal Palm turkeys at the Baker Creek Spring

Planting Festival in Mansfield, Mo., in May. If you noticed the cover blurb about "sharing the harvest" and a day in the life of a CSA (community supported agriculture) farmer, I hope you're intrigued.

That is, unless you're already a CSA farmer and you're well versed on the ins and outs of your typical day. From sun up to sun down, a CSA farmer is on the move, hustling crops, people and equipment, all for the privilege of feeding people in his or her local community, and hopefully, a livable wage.

In the last couple years, we have seen a tremendous surge in interest in small-scale agriculture and particularly with growing, buying or consuming local food. Consumers are curious about farmers and what it takes to be one.

A huge part of this equation is due to the efforts of community-supported-agriculture growers, like John Mitchell of Heirloom Harvest Community Farm in Westborough, Mass., and their collective ability to put a face to farming. Yes, I said face; not logo, not stock symbol and definitely not corporate slogan.

Despite squall-like efforts to knock back America's small and inventive farmers (can anyone say NAIS or HR 875?), we're still growing and thriving despite the obstacles. Why? Because for us (and by "us" I mean this community of like-minded people), growing food and raising livestock is who we are—not what we do.

There are not many professions or jobs in the world in which a person would be proud to say "this is who I am. My job defines me." There is something about stewarding land for oneself that is deeply satisfying, beyond a paycheck, that draws a certain kind of person in.

Accomplishment driven, eager, thoughtful and ... you tell me. What is the single most important quality you possess that drew you to farming? Post a comment to this article below.

You also may have noticed on the cover a preview of our newest magazine, Urban Farm. Are we crazy for launching a new magazine in this economic climate? Perhaps ... but time will tell.

Urban farming has been around for ages, but with the momentum that gardening is experiencing now—not just on rural hobby farms, but in city plots, balconies and suburban backyards—we thought it was time to pay homage to these resourceful and inspiring individuals and bring their stories to light.

It's a beautiful thing to think of America's cities being sustainable to even a small degree, and I'm looking forward to aiding that effort with Urban Farm magazine. Look for Urban Farm on newsstands on August 25.

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