

The Valley Table, the magazine of Hudson Valley farms, food and cuisine.



THE VALLEY
Table



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New Crop

Lynn Faurie & Barbara Masterson of B&L 4E Farms

Will Brown & Barbara Felton of Lowland Farm

Lisa Schwartz of Rainbeau Ridge Farm

Michele & Eric Thompson of Belmond Farm

Pete & Ian Taliaferro of Taliaferro Farms

KayCee Wimbish & Owen O'Connor of Awesome Farm

Josh Morgenthau of Fishkill Farms

Dante & Kristin Hess of Milk Thistle Farm

Devin Foote & Tim Heuer of Common Ground Farm

Dan Madura of Madura Farm

Will Brown & Barbara Felton of Lowland Farm

by Abby Luby

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The lore of Warwick says that Lowland Farm is named for the flat expanse of rich, grassy pastures and fields that slope into lofty hills skirted by the rambling Pochuck Creek. In the days before refrigeration, farmers would travel from miles away to cool their milk cans in the chilly waters at the farm when there was a dry spell. Today, Lowland Farm is owned by Barbara Felton and Will Brown and managed by Jason Friedman.

Brown and Felton lived and worked in New York City for 30 years, he as an economist, she as a psychologist. They purchased Lowland Farm in 1985 as a weekend and summer home and allowed neighboring dairy farmers to use Lowland's fields for a number of years. The cattle eventually inspired the couple to buy their own herd and begin farming; they acquired their first cows in 2004 and they have been producing beef for almost four years.

In 2007, the farm was permanently protected under Warwick's Purchase of Development Rights program. "We were interested in preserving the land for farming, to keep it natural," Felton says. "When you are a farmer, you appreciate the land--you watch it change, you fence it, utilize it." Brown agrees: "I like to farm," he says, "You get involved with the animals. You manage the farm by tweaking here and there, but there's also a bit of mystery."

Products: All-natural, grass-fed, grass-finished beef.

Size, scope and methods: Cows graze on about 150 acres on Lowland Farm and on 50 adjacent acres leased from neighbors. About 200 more acres are leased from nearby



Will Brown, Barbara Felton & Jason Friedman (Farm Mgr.)



Meadowburn Farm.

Currently there are 146 cows (42 mother cows with 34 calves, 44 yearlings and 26 two-year-olds) and one bull named Chief. About half a dozen new calves are expected later this year. The cattle are mixed breeds and include Angus, Hereford and Red Devon. Last year, 30 animals were slaughtered, a number that is expected to increase this year.

Lowland Farm practices management-intensive, sustainable grazing: Animals are rotated among a number of fields of varying sizes, putting less stress on the land while giving cows more room to graze. The herd is moved daily so that the different grasses are eaten uniformly. The herd's hoof action boosts soil fertility and water infiltration. Overall, each Lowland Farm cow grazes on what amounts to three acres a year. For about two months in the winter they feed on hay harvested from the farm.

What's next: New on the farm are 20 pigs. "We'd like to raise pigs, but, knowing little about them first-hand, we're starting small," Felton says. "We've grown quite fond of them: They're lively and curious--and they follow their food when you need to move them from one field to another. They're growing rapidly and will provide us with pork in late summer. We're trying to add another 20 to 40 in the coming months."

Chickens also are part of the growth plan. Brown and Felton have a new partnership with an egg-and-chicken operation known as Peg's Eggs, run by Jack and Peg Hillery about a mile away from Lowland Farm. The plan is to rotate chickens on the Lowland Farm fields after the cows have munched through. Eventually, the couple hopes to add sheep or goats to the livestock mix.

How to purchase: Lowland beef is sold through Pennings Farm Market, in Warwick, all year round. It is also available at several Warwick area farmers' markets, including Rogowski's Pine Island market and the Florida and Pine Island Black Dirt market in the summer.

Lowland beef is served at several Warwick area restaurants, including the Fig Cafe, Iron Forge Inn and the Crystal Inn in Amity. You can buy a Lowland Farm "barn burger" or steak sandwich at Pennings any day of the week.

Schullers Dairy delivers Lowland Farm rib steaks and ground beef to Warwick customers. Frozen Lowland beef cuts are also available at the farm. Prices vary: hamburger meat is \$6 per pound; filet is \$20 per pound; rib eye is \$15 per pound; bones (for the marrow) go for \$3 per pound.

"We're hoping that next year we'll have enough beef cattle to get us through the winter," Brown says. "To date, we've usually sold out of most cuts of meat by April--about a month or so before new supplies are available from steers who've spent the spring eating the new grass."

Lowland Farm, 68 Prices Switch Rd., Warwick, (212) 867-6376, www.lowlandfarm.com