



SMALL & BEGINNER FARMERS OF NH NEWSLETTER

AUGUST-SEPTEMBER 2016

The Mistlers & Twillingate Farm by Kate Kerman

Twillingate Farm is an example of "old time" Yankee independence. When Allan and Janice Mistler started farming, their original goal was merely to raise healthy food for their family while enjoying a high quality of life together. It has since evolved into an ecologically self-sustaining resource providing hands-on farming experience and education to the local community in addition to organically grown produce, meat and dairy products to its neighbors and farmers market customers. Community involvement includes free cheese- and soap-making classes along with farm tours and animal husbandry mentoring. The couple delight in sharing the farming lifestyle with their grandchildren, who are enthusiastic participants.

Allan reminisces:

We lived on a one-acre lot in Windham



The apprentice at
Twillingate

which pretty much ruled out cattle so we started with chickens and a goat, thinking that eggs and milk along with the associated manure for the garden would be beneficial. I never could develop a relationship with those chickens other than to realize they were totally dependent upon us for everything, but the goat was so personable, she actually seemed to enjoy human companionship. We eventually realized that was because we were the only companionship she had and so we added more ladies to the 'herd' as we decided to relocate to a more agrarian friendly neighborhood. Thirty-five years later we find ourselves milking a herd of about a dozen goats which provides us with milk and cheese as well as whey for our two pigs. Over the years our two boys developed an appreciation for fresh, GMO

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Our Livestock Program

Do you have a vision for raising a certain kind of animal on your farm? Has the cost of purchasing that animal held you back? SBFNH has a program to help you establish a flock or herd and then to help another farmer in return. Modeled on the well-known Heifer International Pass-on Program, but not requiring that the recipient demonstrate economic need, the program asks farmers to sign a contract promising to give an offspring of the original animal to another farmer.

Farmers applying to the program must be members in good standing, and must remain members until their livestock contract is fulfilled.

An animal can be obtained from the inventory, or if there are funds available, a member may request the purchase of an animal. Steps in applying for an animal:

- ◆ The farmer fills out an application form.
- ◆ To ensure the health and safety of the animal, the farm is approved through a visit from a State Council member, a Livestock Committee member, an extension agent or a vet.
- ◆ Before the animal is placed, the farmers sign a contract that includes the requirement that they will pass on an offspring of the animal, and that until they do so the original animal belongs to SBFNH.
- ◆ The animal is placed. There may be a follow-up farm visit. SBFNH members are available for consultation whenever

needed.

- ◆ When there is an appropriately aged animal of breeding age available, offspring of the originally placed animal, the farmer contacts the Livestock Committee, which adds the new animal to the inventory and publicizes its availability.
- ◆ When the livestock program animal is placed, the contract is completed and the originally placed animal is fully owned by the recipient.

Requests for exceptions to the process (passing on a different animal in lieu of an offspring, for instance) may be brought to the committee and taken to the State Council for consideration.

The Livestock Committee is ready to take animal and cash donations to make this program more useful to our members, and does have some funds available now.

The forms and policies for the livestock program and a list of available animals can be found on the website, www.sbfnh.org in the "members only" section.

Questions? Call Livestock Committee chair, Henry Thedford, at (603) 542-5034.

See page 3 for member experiences with the livestock program.

Small & Beginner Farmers of New Hampshire

is a statewide network of small and beginner farmers, their families and agricultural partners. We share ideas, information, labor and equipment to connect farmers to each other and to their communities.

State Council

Christine StClair, State Leader
leader@sbfnh.org 603-325-5677

Denise Renk, Co-Leader

Doreen Gitschier, Treasurer
treasurer@sbfnh.org 603-934-8146

Kate Kerman, Ass't. Treasurer
Patricia Rutko, Secretary
secretary@sbfnh.org 603-783-5300

County Leaders & State reps

Belknap

Allan & Janice Mistler, State Reps
nhbfc@metrocast.net or 603-267-115

Carroll

Kathey Wotton
wottonfarm@gmail.com or 603-539-8134

Cheshire

Kate Kerman
kkerman@phoenixfarm.org 603-876-4562

Coos

Sandy Davis, Leader
americanwayfarm@aol.com 603-237-5188

Stephen "Lobo" Tracy, State Rep
oleoacresvt@yahoo.com

Julie Moran, State Rep
jmconnect777@gmail.com 603-726-6992

Grafton

Steve Walsh, State Rep jafajr@aol.com

Hillsborough

Denise Renk info@elioracres.com
603-938-2771 or 680-2771

Merrimack

Doreen Gitschier (see above)

Rockingham

Vacancy

Sullivan

Henry Thedford
jayneandhenry@comcast.net 603-542-5034

Strafford

Vacancy

Newsletter

Kate Kerman, Editor pro tem
newsletter@sbfnh.org

Trish Rutko, Christine StClair, Sandy Davis, Dawn Whiting & Kathey Wooton, Contributing Editors

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State and Regional News

State Council

The State Council is on summer break. The next meeting will be in Concord at 6:30 PM on September 14. Christine StClair submitted a grant proposal to the USDA for their Value Added Grant for two more Mobile Processing Units and to update ones we already have.

USDA Specialty Crop (SCBG) Projects.

2013: Plans are underway to have a third equipment workshop.
2014: see article by Alice Tuson on page 4. □

County Councils

Belknap/Grafton-Merrimack

On June 23rd we held a potluck and business meeting.

On July 17th, 11 people gathered at Twillingate Farm for a workshop on cheese-making taught by Allan Mistler. We were walked through the process of making feta cheese and a soft vinegar cheese using goat milk from the farm. Allan provided recipes and a catalog of cheese-making supplies, plus tastes of a variety of cheeses including aged cheddar cheese. Janice Mistler provided a popular goat's milk cheese cheesecake. □

— Patricia Rutko

Carroll

We took the month of July off.

In August we are planning a demonstration with the new barrel washer. This meeting is scheduled for August 21st at MiVida Gardens. (see page 4)
In September we will have a Farm Tour of the Wotton Farm. This is scheduled for Sunday, September 18th at 3:00 pm. □
Kathey Wotton



Cheshire/Sullivan/Hillsboro

On June 25, Elior Acres hosted a work party to help set up their new NRCS funded high tunnel. A group of around 10 people worked on the high tunnel and enjoyed a pig roast. The heroes of the day were Melissa Cloutier and Sean Griffin as they climbed up the somewhat wobbly structure to install the horizontal poles.



Jeff Renk supports the pole from the top of a pickup truck.

We took July off. In August we are joining the annual Phoenix Farm barbecue. In September we plan a farm tour, location tba. □

—Kate Kerman

Coos

This year's focal point is on getting more farmers, especially youth. There have been PR articles written for the 4 newspapers in the County with some positive feedback. We are getting new faces to meetings and interested contacts to our FB page. We are working on a Coos County flyer/poster to distribute to the farmer's markets around the county. Some of our members are also members of the North Country Food Coop which could sell more

(Continued on page 3)

Small & Beginner Farmers of NH

...is a farmer-to-farmer network with the goals of connecting farmers and the community, sharing ideas and information, accessing technical assistance and agricultural education. Our cooperative and collaborative efforts help small and beginner farmers achieve their goals, strengthen their communities, boost the agricultural industry and economy and improve the quality of life in NH. □

News (Continued from page 2)

than current members can produce. We are seeing more container gardens appearing in town. We need farmers!

Speakers at our meetings have been very interesting and informative with many attendees asking many questions. Sandy Davis spoke on goats and sheep at our June meeting. Our July speaker was Kitty Kerner on hugelkulture/ permaculture which is good for dry conditions as well as wet areas. We also learned of her farm's UNH test plot on Hardy Kiwis.

Our work share program is on hold as there are no projects at this time. Upcoming projects may include helping with a biomeiler project in town, as well as more fencing at another farm and enclosing a trailer to house the MPU under a permanent cover. We have cleared trees for a garden and helped with goat fencing.

Future classes will be on soil health (August), wildlife control with Fish and Game (September), Future Farmers of America, and a report from a young up and coming 13-year-old farmer. There was a discussion on taking the rest of the summer off but we have too many classes lined up to do that. This shows the increased interest in farming in Coos.□

—Stephen 'Lobo' Tracy

Hayfield Project coordinator Allan Mistler reports that the first cutting is complete with a harvest of 3,184 bales, just under 600 bales short of last year's entire harvest! Tons of wood ash, lime and fertilizer have been spread and he anticipates a harvest of 7,000-8,000 bales, which are all reserved. **Allan is looking for the next hayfield project coordinator, to be trained in 2017 and to take over in 2018.**

The livestock program has only one animal available currently: **Josephine, a 4 year old highlander heifer—ready to breed**



For information contact Christine StClair (603)989-2009

However, **if you need a specific animal, SBFNH also has some money to use for purchasing animals for the program.** Or if you have an animal to add to our inventory, please contact us.

Henry Thedford says he benefitted tremendously from the Livestock program. He was able to get a bred Highlander heifer and because he didn't have to pay for her he was able to negotiate purchase of a second animal and this founded his Highlander herd. Josephine is from his herd.

Likewise, Phoenix Farm partner Ada Kerman notes that the gift of a breeding pair of American Guinea Hogs was an excellent introduction to the breed, leading to the farm's current herd of 5 breeding animals and as many as 34 other pigs at one time to sell as feeders, breeders and meat.

State and County Meetings

You are welcome at all State and County meetings. You do not have to be a member of SBFNH to attend any meetings. The meetings are free, informative and a great way to get to meet other NH farmers. Contact information for State and County Leaders is on Page 2.

State Council

September 14 Concord: Contact Secretary Trish Rutko for details.

County Councils

Belknap/Grafton-Merrimack

Date and venue varies. Contact Christine St. Clair for details.

August 14: 2 pm to 5 pm : Potluck at Christine StClair's

Carroll

Third Tuesday, 6:30 pm, Cook Library, Tamworth: Contact Kathy Wotton (539-8134 or wottonfarm@gmail.com)

August 21: 1 pm to 3 pm Barrel washer demonstration at MiVida Garden in Madison. Contact Alice Tuson 717-5390

September 18, 3:00 PM: Farm tour at Wooton Farm in Ossipee showcasing a mobile milk parlor. Contact Kathey Wooton 539-1834

Cheshire/Sullivan/Hillsborough

Date and venue varies Contact Kate Kerman (876-4562 or kkerman@phoenixfarm.org) for notices and details.

August 27 3:00 - 8 :00 PM Phoenix Farm, Marlborough

Annual Barbeque: bring a potluck dish or \$8 to help cover cost of meat (pork, chicken, lamb).

September : tour of Kroka Expeditions farm in Marlow. TBA

Coos

Fourth Thursdays, 6:30, Colebrook Library. Contact Steve Tracy

August 25 Soil health video led by Micah Rau

September 22 Wildlife Control with Fish & Game rep, Eric Fluette

Twillingate (Continued from page 1)

free food as they help support their own families now by raising their own chickens, turkeys and lamb such that we all share our produce cooperatively for diversity. Since all of our families have 'backyard gardens' we benefit from the livestock by-products while eating and sleeping well, knowing that we can weather economic downturns."

Since Twillingate Farm is primarily a dairy, Allan and Janice raise and breed goats of various breeds to capitalize upon the inherent advantages of each breed. Toggenburgs provide milk with perfect characteristics for flavorful cheese, whereas South African Boers are heavier and provide faster growth. They sell both breeding stock and meat animals.

Allan explains that dairy goats are popular because they are smaller, easier to handle, and mature more rapidly than cows. They eat brush and weeds, including poison ivy, so they can be a useful tool in terms of clearing land and keeping it clear. It is also easier to butcher goats due to their smaller size. Allan makes cheese every other day, mostly feta cheese and soft cheese, with an occasional batch of the more complicated cheddar cheese.

I asked Allan for his advice to beginning farmers:

Don't bite off more than you can chew... we've seen far too many folks attempt to 'do it all' and become overwhelmed by the incumbent challenges of each aspect of farming. Develop and refine your animal husbandry skills with each species of livestock you add from year to year and don't fall for the "Bigger is Better" mindset. If your 'thing' is gardening, don't try to begin by sowing an acre of various crops until you understand the requirements and weaknesses of each. It also helps if you know what you're going to do with the end product.

Allan and Janice are the state representatives to the Small and Beginner Farmers State Council and coordinate the Belknap hayfield project (see page 3).

"Don't bite off more than you can chew... we've seen far too many folks attempt to 'do it all' and become overwhelmed by the incumbent challenges of each aspect of farming. "

Each issue of the newsletter will feature farms from a region of New Hampshire. This issue is focused on the Belknap and Grafton Counties. There will be a feature article about one member-owned farm and other members from the region will be welcomed to submit short descriptions and/or pictures of their farm. Businesses featuring local farmers may also be included.

Schedule:

October-November: Carroll
 December-January: Cheshire/Sullivan
 February-March: Merrimack/ Strafford
 April-May: Hillsborough /Rockingham
 June-July: Coos
 August-September: Belknap/Grafton
 Send your descriptions to newsletter@sbfnh.org

Does Washing Veggies Have You Over a Barrel?



Food safety has become an increasingly important issue. Growers understand the need for improving produce handling, but are simultaneously concerned about the economic and labor related impacts that the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) could create. Cleaning root crops on a small farm can be challenging, as these crops tend to mature during cooler weather and it can become a race against the cold weather to get the produce washed and put into storage for the winter. Small farms can save time and labor and produce a more attractive, safer product by using mechanical washers for produce. Barrel washers are ideal for many root crops, such as potatoes, carrots, and beets. For those of you who have personally washed root vegetables by hand, you will appreciate this literally hands-off approach, which means no more cold hands!

Learn how the barrel washer can help you meet future changes in food safety regulations and also drastically reduce the amount of time and effort spent washing root vegetables. The workshop will demonstrate how to use one manufacturer's version of a barrel washer, with an emphasis on safe handling of food, equipment, and technology.

Choose from one of two workshop locations:

Wednesday, August 10, 2016

5:00pm - 7:00 pm
 Red Manse Farm
 5 Pittsfield Road
 Loudon, NH

Sunday, August 21, 2016

1:00pm - 3:00 pm
 MiVida Gardens
 272 Savary Road
 Silver Lake, NH

For more details and to register, visit www.sbfnh.org

As space is limited, **members will have priority**. If you have questions, please contact Alice Tuson (717-5390) or Christine St. Clair (325-5677). □ —Alice Tuson

The University of New Hampshire Agriculture Experiment Station has started a silvopasture experiment at its organic dairy research farm. Their report notes "Silvopasture is the simultaneous management of forages, livestock, and timber on the same piece of land." This gives shade and protection to the livestock, opens the forest floor to the light which allows forage growth, and leaves trees for food production and forestry products. Researchers will compare the 2.5 acres of silvopasture to forest, permanent pasture and recently opened pasture. For more information, visit <https://colsa.unh.edu/nhaes/article/2016/07/silvopasture>



Photo by Nick Hammer

HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY AGRICULTURAL FAIR
 59th ANNUAL FUN FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY!
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SEPT. 9, 10, 11

FOR MORE INFORMATION HCAFAIR.COM

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Resource Roundup

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is offering farm ownership **microloans**, creating a new financing avenue for farmers to buy and improve property. These microloans are especially helpful to beginning or underserved farmers, U.S. veterans looking for a career in farming, and those who have small and mid-sized farming operations.

To learn more about the FSA microloan program visit www.fsa.usda.gov/microloans

NH Gleans is a network of organizations working to increase the availability of fresh and local produce that is distributed to and through New Hampshire food pantries, soup kitchens, community suppers and schools. Working closely with growers who have registered their excess crops online, NH Gleans staff or volunteer leaders organize gleans to gather the fresh produce. Registered volunteer pickers sign up online, checking off a liability waiver that protects crop owners. The produce collected is distributed by local food banks and food pantries to our neighbors in need.

For more information, go to <http://www.nhgleans.org/>

For an NHPR interview on the **Food Modernization Safety Act** go to <http://nhpr.org/post/nh-farmers-prepare-new-food-safety-law> .

The Business Side of Farming

Livestock and Taxes

This month's tax topic is how to account for livestock. There are two main categories for livestock – those held for sale and those held for use on the farm. When the purpose of the livestock is to create income from the sale of the animals, it is inventory. As inventory, you deduct the cost of the animals when they are sold. There are various methods to determine the cost, such as last in, first out, or first in, first out. This means, for instance, that for tax purposes, you purchased a cow for \$1000 at the beginning of the year and you purchased a cow for \$500 at the end of the year. You can decide whether to take the \$1,000 (first in, first out) or the \$500 (last in, first out). This is determined when you first set up your business. You cannot change the method chosen without permission from the IRS.

If you are holding the livestock for production of income, such as dairy cows, the cow is an asset of the farm and must be depreciated. However, you do have the option to take the depreciation all in one year and thereby expense the cost.

What if you are breeding and raising the livestock? Well, there is no cost of purchase of the animal. The costs are associated with raising the animal or with the production of income from the animal, such as milk in the case of a dairy cow. Normally the costs are expensed in the year that you pay them. There are exceptions, though. If you remember in last month's article, pre-production costs were discussed. If the cow is being raised to produce offspring, you must hold on to

the costs until the cow is in the productive state. At that point, you may depreciate the costs associated with raising the cow. Going forward, you may then take the expenses associated with the health and welfare of the cow.

This area of the tax law is complex and of course, there are exceptions to the normal rule. If you have any questions, please consult your tax advisor who will be able to answer the questions related to your particular situation.

. □—Dawn Whiting



UNH Cooperative Extension is accepting registrations for its **Agriculture and Natural Resource Business Institute (ANRBI)**. Those interested in starting or expanding an agricultural or natural resource business are encouraged to attend this weekly course, which starts September 12 continuing through December 5.

Weekly classes will take place Mondays from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. at the Granite State College in Concord, NH. Registration cost is \$200 per individual or \$300 for two people from the same farm. To register go to <http://bit.ly/anrbi2016>.

For more information contact Kelly.McAdam@unh.edu (603) 527-5475 or Nada.Haddad@UNH.edu (603) 679-5616.

Members' Marketplace

Services

- ◆ **Tax Preparation, Representation and Planning, Penacook.** SBFNH member, over 30 years experience, Dawn Whiting, MSB, JD, 378 Village Street, Penacook, NH 03303 (603) 496-2753, dwhiting@tds.net or www.dewhitingllc.com

For Sale

- ◆ **American Guinea Hogs** available now. 3-4 months old: breeding pairs, \$450, feeders \$150 each. Contact: info@phoenixfarm.org or Kate or Ada Kerman (603) 876-4562
- ◆ **Ewes** available. 2 ewe lambs 8 months old, 2 yearling ewes and a 2 year old ewe who has lambed. From a line of great mothers. \$125 each. Contact: info@phoenixfarm.org or Kate or Ada Kerman (603) 876-4562.

Wanted

Farmers from Strafford and Rockingham counties to re-start a regional network for Small and Beginner Farmers of NH with help from the State Council. Contact Christine StClair leader@sbfnh.org 603-325-5677



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Membership—join for the livestock program

___ Individual (1 vote) \$30.00/year *Add \$5.00 for printed newsletter*

___ Farm (2 votes) \$40.00/year *Add \$5.00 for printed newsletter*

SMALL & BEGINNER FARMERS OF NH NEWSLETTER

Scholarships Available. Contact

State Leader Christine St. Clair (603-325-5677)

Name(s) _____ E-mail _____

Street Address _____ Phone _____

City _____ County _____ State _____ Zip _____

Farm _____ Products _____

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Go to www.BeginnerFarmers.org.

Click on the green box.

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OR

Send completed application & check payable to SBFNH to

Doreen Gitschier, SBFNH Treasurer

206 Currier Road

Hill, NH 03243



Advertise in SBFNH's Newsletter

Our readership comprises over 400 small and beginner farmers, their families, friends and agricultural partners. SBFNH is an organization closely associated with animal husbandry, but our ranks include beekeepers, market gardeners, cordwood producers, maple orchardists and makers of value-added products from soaps to sausage.

Members purchase a wide variety of agricultural, small business, manufacturing, computer, marketing and household goods and services.

Nonmembers read newsletters posted in grain stores, USDA and UNHCE waiting rooms throughout the state.

Classified ads Free to members, due 15th of the month prior to publication.

Display ads Per insertion: 1/8 page \$15 ; 1/4 page \$30; half page \$60; full page \$100. **10% discount** on a yearlong run. You can change your ad as needed.

Contact Kate Kerman (newsletter@sbfnh.org) to discuss your ad needs. □

Farmers & The Election

Here are some election season suggestions from the National Young Farmers Coalition which can also be appropriated by not-so-young farmers of any political persuasion!

Election season is in full swing, and Congress is in recess, which means that instead of hanging out in D.C., most Senators and Representatives are in their home states, listening to voters. Agriculture hasn't gotten much discussion at the national level, which makes it even more critical that candidates hear from farmers.

Try one of these five actions:

- **Attend a town hall or candidate forum.** Candidates use these events to share their beliefs and get feedback
- **Ask a question at a local debate.**

- **Get a group of local farmers together to request an on-farm meeting with the candidate.** What better way is there to show the importance of farming than to get the candidate out onto a local farm!

- **Engage the candidates on social media.** If you only have a few minutes or cannot make it to an event, you can still reach out to a candidate online.

- **Bring your friends into the conversation.** Bring other constituents with you to amplify your impact, either online or in person.

Farmers need champions from both sides of the aisle, and lawmakers need your help understanding the issues!

www.youngfarmers.org/a-young-farmers-guide-to-election-season/



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 Marlborough, NH 03455
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In this issue...

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- ◆ Barrel washer trainings
- ◆ News, meetings, marketplace, calendar of events

Calendar of Ag Events

- ◆ **Thursday & Friday, August 4&5, All day, Durham.** *Live Free & Eat Local-Farm to Table Weekend.* UNH Cooperative Extension.
- ◆ **Thursday to Sunday, August 4–7, Swanzey** Cheshire County Fair.
- ◆ **Thursdays August 4, 11, 18, 25 6:30-8pm Chichester.** *4-Day Basic Production* workshop on goats Call 603-796-2151.
- ◆ **Wednesday August 10, 5:30-7:30 S. Hampton.** *NH Vegetable & Berry Growers Meeting* www.heronpondfarm.com Call 603-796-2151 .
- ◆ **Thursday August 11, 1-5pm Chester.** *Hands-On Small Ruminant Hoof Trimming Workshop.* Register: <http://bit.ly/HOOFTRIM> .
- ◆ **Wednesday August 12, 5-7pm Wilton.** *Building Healthy Soil Workshop.* Hillsborough County Conservation District. Call to register (603) 673-2409 ext. 100.
- ◆ **Friday August 12, 13 & 14th UMASS Amherst MA.** *NOFA Summer Conference.* Register at www.nofasummerconference.org/register-now .
- ◆ **Saturday August 13, 9:30am-12pm Dover.** *Keyline Plowing Demo* NH Contact alena@straffordccd.org or (603)749-3037 .
- ◆ **Saturday & Sunday August 13–14 Belmont** Belknap County 4-H Fair, Belmont.
- ◆ **Saturday August 20, 9-5pm East Alstead.** *NH Permaculture Day.* For tickets go online to www.nhpermacultureday.org .
- ◆ **Monday August 22, 6-8pm Lancaster.** *Preserving Your Harvest.* The Basics of Preserving Food Safely Call 788-4961 or email christine.whiting@unh.edu.
- ◆ **Sunday August 28, 10-4 PM: Locavore Festival, Acworth.** Acworth Village Store, Call (603) 835-2486.
- ◆ **Thursday to Monday September 1–5, Lancaster.** Lancaster Fair.
- ◆ **Friday to Monday September 2-5, Contoocook.** Hopkinton State Fair.
- ◆ **Friday to Sunday September 9-11, New Boston.** Hillsborough County Agricultural Fair (see ad page 5) .
- ◆ **Sunday September 11 All Day, New Boston.** New Hampshire Livestock Show and Auction. The first-ever New Hampshire 4- H Livestock Show and Auction is slated for the Hillsborough County Agricultural Fair.
- ◆ **Monday September 12, 6:30-8pm Boscawen.** Got Healthy Soils? Free. Call 603-753-9188 ext. 301.
- ◆ **September 16–25, Rochester.** Rochester Fair .
- ◆ **Sunday September 18, 1-4pm Loudon.** Mobile Poultry Processing Unit Workshop: learn how to use the (SBFNH) Mobile Poultry Processing Unit. Cost of \$40 includes a one-year membership in SBFNH . Payment must be made in advance. <http://www.loudonag.org>.
- ◆ **Thursday to Sunday September 29-October 1 Deerfield** Deerfield Fair.