

# Getting a Reality Check on Farming

By Elizabeth Ochieng, Poughkeepsie, NY

Before coming to Cornell for Career Exploration, I was interested in having a small farm of my own in the future because some of the farmers where I come from made it seem very easy.

Well, whoever said that farming is easy is wrong. After traveling to Indian Chimney Farm, Hillcrest Dairy, ZiemBarbWay Farm and Elderberry Pond Farm and Restaurant, I found out

that owning a farm is not such an easy job. You have to put a lot of things at risk, you have to be brave and dedicated, and you also have to love what you are doing. Farmers have to make a lot of sacrifices that I think many people would never do.

What I learned is that if you want to be a farmer, you need to have a plan, you need to be prepared for any disaster, and also... don't expect success every single time.



Elderberry Pond Farm



Hillcrest Dairy



ZiemBarbWay Farm

# Hard Work, Rewarding Lifestyle

By Kathryn Davis

I recently attended Cornell Career Explorations, in the group called Exploring the Small Farm Dream. We visited four small farms and the common theme I got from all of them is that it is a lot of hard work -- but it is a very rewarding lifestyle. I also learned that to be profitable small farms have to find ways to be different so they stand out and don't get overlooked or overshadowed by large farms.

I don't currently live on a farm but I plan to one day. I want to have free range chickens, dairy goats, and hair sheep. The chickens I will use for eggs and meat, I will milk the goats and make cheese and soap, and I will raise the sheep for meat. I also want to grow fruits and vegetables. I want to be self-sufficient and sell the extra products I have to people who like fresh farm products. This is my idealistic dream. I know that things may not end up this way but I am going to try.

# A Passion for Farming

By Anna Plattner and Ashley Schoenborn, Greene County, NY

We never realized exactly how much work was involved with farming until we attended Career Explorations 2006. The farmers that we visited all had to farm along with a second job just to make ends meet. We learned that to be a farmer you have to have a passion for what you do. Without a passion there is no way you can wake up with the sun just to feed your animals

and milk your cows.

We learned that farming isn't just a job, it's a whole way of life that few have the patience and perseverance for. Career Explorations 2006 was a truly inspiring trip that gave us a whole new perspective on farming and its many aspects. No one should ever say farming is trivial because it's just about the hardest, most challenging, passionate career out there, and we respect anybody who is brave enough to do it.

## Activity

### WORD SEARCH: Pursuing the Small Farm Dream

By Craig Lesser and Kyle Dente

H K R A U V L L T V G D F D S T M A A D H R E N Z  
 Y F C L P L V M D C M B B R X E O N S N Z A X E T  
 I R H L E I Y W Y R I U E N C I V D R O X G P G N  
 M Y I N S R E F S N A R T O Y R B M E P K X B C O U  
 T Y R A D R Y C O W S W N T C Z H S C Y Z V J Q U  
 C O Q X D S E G A A K O M H G M Z U O R U O E K O  
 C T K M G T E B E I M K E I G B H B N R W M E D G  
 E Z K M L F S O O I O K E E N L G B S V E U P V A B  
 P O C K Y O A E E U S Q I O E K C I E B O I M S P  
 U N V Y C Z K S R E J S G H I I R S N R M N R F J  
 R D I V B S O O M C S Q P M E D F T T E Q G P G S  
 S J N C I F Y A T E L J V J U S Q A I D L I B D X  
 N S X I S N K D O C E M E L M A A H C N O L R A W B V  
 O O W C J I D O E U A S I F S J O C N E B H S H M  
 Q X A O N Z R I N H Z Z C H H X R E A Z Z B E X N  
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 W S A L O V S P G L C P J F G N A R Q E J I U L T  
 S F I U H R U E U H V H D R Z A L M R C Q N W K X  
 I M S F W M H N R V D Y I C W G P I D W V L D X Q  
 I X T E T T Z F T F R S Z M W R A N C G A A L H X  
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 R P A S T E U R I Z A T I O N D Y K F Q C C L F S  
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ALPACA  
 CHEESE MAKING  
 CONVENTIONAL  
 CORNELL  
 DAIRY  
 DRYCOWS  
 ECONOMIES OF SCALE

ELDERBERRY POND  
 EMBRYO TRANSFERS  
 FRESH COWS  
 HEIFER  
 HILLCREST DAIRY  
 INDIAN CHIMNEY  
 MILK PROCESSING

ORGANIC  
 PASTEURIZATION  
 RAWMILK  
 SUBSISTANCE FARMING  
 ZIEMBARBWAY  
 SOLUTION ON PAGE 18

### Resource Spotlight

#### The Beginning Small Farmer's Guide to Success

By: Justin Fish, Schenectady County, NY  
 NY FarmLink

<http://nyfarmlink.org/about.htm>  
 Check out this organization that helps support those in pursuit of the small farm dream by connecting them with other beginning farmers and people who want to experience the farm lifestyle.

#### NY FarmNet

[www.nyfarmnet.org](http://www.nyfarmnet.org)  
 This organization helps support farmers during challenging times like farm transitions.

#### FSA Rural Youth Loans

[www.fsa.usda.gov/DAFL/youthloans.htm](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/DAFL/youthloans.htm)  
 Young people can check out this website to find out ways to gain financial support to help make their farming dreams come true.

#### NY Farm Bureau

[www.nyfb.org/programs/YF&R/ynfarm.htm](http://www.nyfb.org/programs/YF&R/ynfarm.htm)  
 The New York State Farm Bureau organizes leadership events, activities, and provides achievement awards for young farmers and ranchers.

# You Gotta Love It!

By Lauren Pitman and Kyle Donnan

After visiting several small farms and listening to people for the "Exploring the Small Farm Dream" Career Exploration group at Cornell University, we got many new insights on the small farming perspective. The biggest message was that you absolutely have to love what you do.

It would appear as though you can't make a whole lot of money, extra money anyway, by working on a small farm, but you sure do spend a lot. Whether you raise alpacas, goats, cows, or veggies, you absolutely have to have a business plan -- you have to know what you want to do and how you are going to go about doing it.

The owners of all four farms we visited work at outside jobs to help support the family. They also have businesses branching off from the farm to bring in some extra money by selling its products, such as honey, produce, or wool. They work day in and day out to keep things running smoothly. Basically, there isn't a whole lot of time for relaxation. But the people we met truly do love what they do and are happy with their lives.

still feel like I can be living some of my small farm dream as well.

This Career Exploration group was a good help in educating us about how small farms are run and how they fit in our society. We enjoyed the program very much and would recommend it to anyone who would like to further explore their small farm dream.

### Do You Care About Farming? New online youth magazine wants to hear from you!

What does soul music, wireless technology, and provocative advertising have to do with changing the food system? Find out in REAP/SOW ([www.reapsow.org](http://www.reapsow.org)), a new youth-driven, online magazine for the sustainable food movement!

Right now, you can also read about:  
 Ten young leaders who are changing the food system  
 A theater troupe that promotes local food  
 A review of "Grub: Ideas for an Urban Organic Kitchen"  
 And more at [www.reapsow.org](http://www.reapsow.org)!

REAP/SOW is a creative space for youthful thinkers and doers working to build a healthier, more sustainable food system. We want young people to contribute their own art, songs, recipes, farm techniques, thoughts, writing, etc. to [www.reapsow.org](http://www.reapsow.org).

Want to write for the Youth Pages? Writers need not be 4-H members.

Please submit your article or letter to:

Celeste Carmichael, 4-H Youth Development Program Specialist, CCE State 4-H Youth Development Office,

340 Roberts Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853

Phone 607-255-4799, Fax 607-255-0788, <http://cce.cornell.edu/4h>