



Photo by Paul Post

Dan and Erin Richards with son Mason at their Richview Farm in Argyle, N.Y.

'I Love It Every Day'

Despite Obstacles, Young NY Dairy Farmer Living His Dream

PAUL POST

New York Correspondent

ARGYLE, N.Y. — Dan Richards didn't grow up around cows and nobody would give him the financing he sought to purchase the farm he wanted.

This year, however, his Richview Farm was named a Dairy of Distinction, one of

several awards that his certified organic Holstein herd has won for this agricultural entrepreneur.

Richards, 31, and his wife, Erin, are one of the young couples in Argyle, Washington County, N.Y., who are making a go of things at a time when many sons and daughters are leaving family farms for better-paying, less time-consuming jobs.

"I've been organic since 2006," he said. "One of the biggest differences is that you get paid twice as much as do you for processed milk. I have a two-year contract and the price, \$35-per-hundredweight, doesn't fluctuate. So I know exactly what I'm going to be getting two years from now."

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Hops Conference Reflects Brewing Interest in NY State

AMY HALLORAN

New York Correspondent

MORRISVILLE, N.Y. — A capacity crowd of 280 filled the auditorium at Morrisville State College and more than 20 names sat on a wait list when the Northeast Hops Alliance held its 11th conference Saturday, Dec. 1.

The size of the crowd reflects the growth of interest in the craft brewing industry and also the New York State Farm Brewery Law, which goes into effect mid-January.

The state passed a farm winery law in 1976 and laws to promote farm distilleries in 2002. These licensing programs are designed to stimulate agriculture, manufacturing and tourism.

A trade show drew New York's first malthouse, Farmhouse Malt, which is still putting together its malting facility. Suppliers of hops and hops equipment also provided information to attendees. Randy Flores of US Hops Source came from Colorado to meet hops growers and craft brewers who might be interested in his services; across the country he connects farm fresh hops directly to craft brewers.

The conference covered two tracks, the farm brewery law and growing hops. About two-thirds of the attendees were interested in learning how to grow hops, and just over a 100 listened to experts discuss the farm brewery licensing.

Heather Darby and other staff from University of Vermont Extension detailed the basics of hops production, and Tim Weigle, an IPM specialist from Cornell's Lake Erie Lab, focused on pests specific to hops.

"Normally speaking we have a three-tier system and there's supposed to be a wall between all of them," Thomas Donohue of the State Liquor Authority (SLA) said of the state's usual constraints on manufacturing,

"The culture of craft beer is one that lends itself to getting into it, and this place is really getting into it."
John Shepherd
potential farm brewer

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Vt. Community Holds Summit to Strengthen Local Food System

LEON THOMPSON

Vermont Correspondent

SHELDON, Vt. — Mike McCarthy was impressed the next day.

"When that many people come out on a Monday night in December to talk about food and agriculture, I think it sends a powerful statement," he said early Tuesday, from a window-side table at his Cosmic Bakery & Café in St. Albans City, Vt.

The previous night, McCarthy and more than 75 other people traveled to nearby Sheldon for the much-anticipated Northwestern Vermont Food Summit at the rural farm town's elementary school.

The purpose of the two-hour session, held in the school gym, was to discuss access to local food, its production, the potential for improving

it and feeding more of it to local consumers.

The summit had a more progressive flavor than other agricultural meetings typically held in Franklin County, Vt., which is still steeped in traditional dairy farming. (Or, as one observer put it, "There isn't a whole lot of flannel here tonight.")

Like other rural communities in the Northeast and greater U.S., Franklin County is embracing diversified agriculture as an economic driver. For the past two years, regional planners, industrial leaders, food producers and workforce investment officials — dubbing themselves "The Diversified Ag Group" — have met and educated themselves about the haves and needs in their area.

"From producers, we heard two needs," said Tim Smith, executive

director of the Franklin County Industrial Development Corp. "Education for the consumer, and marketing for them."

To test the region, the Diversified Ag Group held a one-day farmers market last summer at St. Albans Bay, on Lake Champlain, which attracted 700 people, and a separate local food festival in Highgate, Vt., that brought in another 300 people. Smith et al. also compiled a report that featured 91 local diversified agriculture businesses and projects.

"That was a huge success for us," Smith said. "We're doing it again next year."

What else is already happening? Among other initiatives: three elementary schools recently received a grant that will give them more

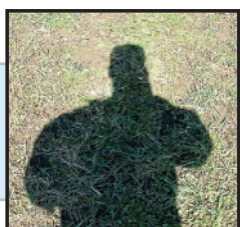
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Photo by Jennifer Williams

Local foods, like these Green Mountain Farms yogurt dips, were conspicuously present at the Northwest Vermont Food Summit.

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