



**FARM  
INSTITUTE**  
FOOD · AGRICULTURE · RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

# Barnyard Tails

Spring | Summer  
2006 Newsletter

THE FARM INSTITUTE | Food, Agriculture & Resource Management | [www.farminstitute.org](http://www.farminstitute.org) | 508.627.7007

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## Letter from the Director

As the spring gains momentum, the life and activities on the farm move faster than the typical human pace. I am amazed how every year it comes as a surprise how quickly the work is upon us. With lambs being born, chicks arriving, garden planting, livestock pasture rotations, field planting, calving, setting irrigation, and more planting, there is little time for fixing equipment, maintaining buildings or designing new innovations. Yet, somehow year after year farmers manage to get their crops planted and fields tilled, and to welcome newborns into the world. There is a moment just before it all starts when I review the winter's work and hope that we did all our chores and planned for a manageable spring season. This moment brings a short-lived breath of confidence that I did it right this year. Once spring comes, regardless of my preparations, everything just grows too quickly. I have learned to hold on, knowing there will be a pause mid-summer when I can again catch up on sleep, off-farm adventures to the beach, and time with friends. This furious pace and my willingness to participate in it year after year beg the question—why? Why take on so much? Why try to keep up with nature during its growth spurt? Why not plan better?

As far as planning and taking on the appropriate workload, winter cups of hot chocolate, long nights, and a desire to get back to the fields create the perfect breeding environment for farming creativity and ambition. In the winter, the farm easel is empty. As an artist I want my creations full of color, texture and depth. I want to be moved by my work. I want others to stop and look, wonder, challenge and experience. The same holds true for the farm design that is sketched every winter, painted in the spring and sculpted through the summer. In the end it is difficult to hold back; the farm with all of its possibilities is one place where I can let go.

What about the roaring speed of nature's spring? There are countless ways to survive this speed. Many of us put our heads down in stern determination, while others work themselves to a boil and pray they don't burst. For me, my strength and weakness is to make everything into a game. I liken the experience to surfing a wave too large for my skills that breaks over me just as I catch it, or to riding a runaway horse. It is too much, it is out of my control, but if I can just hold on, paddle hard enough, and just focus on getting through the moment I will come out with a great huge smile, a pounding heart and an experience that not only makes for captivating stories but enriches my life.

You now know why I plan the farm the way that I do, how I hold on to spring as it takes control, but I still have not answered why I participate in this process and hope to for a lifetime. There are of course all the philosophical wonderings of providing for my community, nurturing and connecting to what physically sustains me, as well as helping to foster the lives of the future stewards of the land and our communities. But even deeper than that is a concept I was reminded of by a friend several summers ago. My brother was visiting us and helping in the garden. We were harvesting carrots, beets, beans and new potatoes that day. As each crop came out of the ground my brother would ask, "How much can you make selling that?" "How much for that?" I replied with the expected "buck-

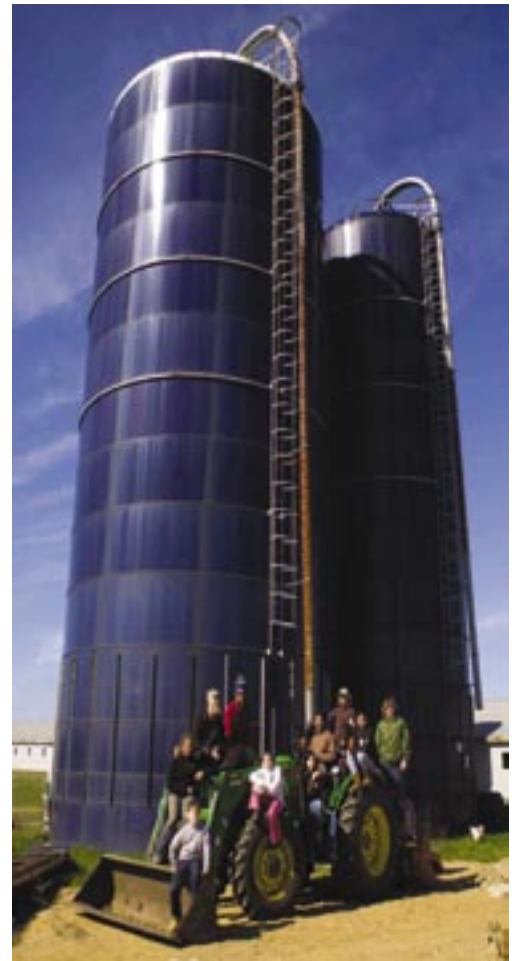


PHOTO BY RANDI BAIRD

fifty per pound" or "two dollars per bunch." After some time of this inquisitiveness from my brother, my friend replied, "Labor is profit; that is what we make. Our labor is our profit." Not only did that put an end to my brother's questions, it put an end to my own questions of why I work so hard for so little monetary return. Hopefully farmers, ranchers, gardeners, and others participating in our food system will witness the day when the monetary value of food will equal its life-sustaining value. But ultimately our profit will always be in the love we put into our work.



PHOTO BY NICOLE FRIEDLER  
PHOTOGRAPHY



PHOTO BY ROB GOLDFARB

When you visit the farm this year you will witness and experience many new improvements. Not only are our barns full of activity and gardens full of produce, so too we now have a new classroom, livestock pens and walking trails. Throughout the fall of '05 and winter and spring of '06, our staff, volunteers and local building crews worked through the winds, snow and sunshine to complete several major projects. Our collective goal was to make Katama Farm safe, inviting, and educational. We want the main buildings, grounds and gardens to easily facilitate hands-on experience of all The FARM Institute has to offer. Our new classroom is open and well-lit with a large kitchen so our students can create delicious meals with their harvest. In addition, there are several offices for TFI staff. We look forward to using this beautiful building for future events. The Horse Barn was renovated and is now home to angora goats, pigs, chicks, dairy goats, and lambs. When you visit, please take advantage of the new pens on the south side of barn. These pens will allow you to get close to a variety of farm animals. The old dairy barn was completely restored. It will be used for winter livestock housing for cattle, sheep and pigs, hay and farm equipment storage and will serve as a workshop for our students. Lastly, our gardens have expanded and been redesigned. Melinda, Dominic and our FIT students spent the winter designing the new paths, special features and perennial beds. Some of the exciting additions are strawberries, asparagus, handicap and elderly accessible raised beds and a sunflower maze. Please come visit and experience all that we have to offer.



PHOTO BY NICOLE FRIEDLER PHOTOGRAPHY

# On the Farm, On the Farm

The entire staff is readying The FARM Institute for our Summer Program. Last year, over 170 children attended our summer programs and we look forward to 385 children attending this summer.

Providing financial aid in the form of Camp Scholarships has long been an ideal of our Board of Directors and staff. We see the farm as a natural place for children to learn about our community and environment while also gaining self-esteem and confidence. There are countless rewards for the child who can say, "I took care of the sheep, helped in the barn, weeded vegetables, and worked with the farmers."

TFI, as you know, holds a unique

place among seasonal island communities in the Northeast. Here, residents and vacationers alike find a natural place to visit throughout the year and learn about sustainable farming, nutrition, and animal husbandry. While the majority of our students might not go on to become farmers, they will be the future stewards of our communities and the land. The skills that they learn with us here at TFI are a great introduction to this stewardship of the earth.

This year, we are asking you to support our educational programs by making a donation to TFI. Our goal is to have a \$20,000 scholarship fund available to help all children experience the programs

that we offer in the summer and throughout the year.

Enclosed in this newsletter is an envelope that you can use to send a donation. We look forward to seeing you on the farm this summer!

*Thank you!*  
*Deborah Berkley*



PHOTO BY ROB GOLDFARB

## Children on the Farm

**By Melinda DeFeo**

A trip to Katama Farm will quickly unveil the incredible amount of physical work that has been completed during the past six months on the property.

Slightly less apparent are the children who have been involved in programs during this transition.

Proving their commitment and dedication to the farm, young farmers of all ages continue to arrive each week for a wide variety of programs, eager to lend a hand and learn about working the land to raise nutritious food for the table.

Braving the windy wintry

weather, they planted spring bulbs, helped shingle the Horse Barn, tended our flock of sheep, took in lessons about soil, worms, chickens & eggs along with planning our new Friendship Garden and much more.

All of these small projects add up significantly, along with the knowledge that students absorb from both the formal and informal aspects of our programs.

Whether participating in a school field trip, enrichment courses, preschool mornings, Farmers-in-Training, Saturday programs or after-school classes with the YMCA, our students

consistently make valuable contributions to the farm.

Over the winter, we at The FARM Institute began to explore our role as a "community" farm. Connecting children and adults to our local food web is as important now as ever and will take many hands to accomplish. Working with the M.V. Public School system, the first steps were taken to begin to link the school wellness policy, cafeterias, classrooms and farms in anticipation of an Island-wide Farm to School program.

If you are interested in getting involved please contact [Melinda@farminstitute.org](mailto:Melinda@farminstitute.org) to join us in creating informed consumers who value the work of farmers.

## The Livestock are Coming!

**By Wes Wood**

That's right, folks, the livestock are coming. As we continue our efforts to ready their homes, pregnant sows, goats, piglets and turkeys are coming soon to accompany our

Belted Galloway cows, sheep, 21 lambs (oh my!!) and the rest of our animal friends at the farm.

As we await the birth of the last of our lambs, we also expect four calves within the next couple of months. Thanks again to Jeff and

Liz Thompson for the 2 Angora goats and the 2 piglets we just received. The kids will love them!

Well that's it in short. Come down and see us soon. You never know what else you may find at the farm.



PHOTO BY NICOLE FRIEDLER PHOTOGRAPHY

# The Busy Bees of The FARM Institute

## Staff Update

By **Matthew Goldfarb**

It has been a tremendous six months with a flurry of designing, planning, building, programming, teaching, and caring for the soil, plants and animals of Katama Farm. We have been blessed with a great volunteer core, neighborhood support and a new creative and dynamic staff. In case you have not met all of us, I want to take a moment to make some introductions. Chrissy Minich, baker, healer and numbers extraordinaire, is our office manager. Melinda Defeo, a life-long Island farm advocate and horticulturist, is our Education Program Manager. Rob Goldfarb, our Camp and

Events Director, continues to inspire us with his passion and enthusiasm for working with children and community. Dominic Dahl-Bredine, a mechanical and engineering wonder, is one of our farm hands. Wes Wood joined the farm staff to deepen his connection to the land and share his diverse skills. Dave Broer, our other farm hand, brings years of teaching experience to our staff. Bridget Meigs, a teacher/farmer has shared her constant laughs and incredible community farming background. Dave Wessling, a farm apprentice, has come to the farm to build his skills so that he can successfully run his own farm. Deb Berkley, our Development Director, comes to TFI with

years of fund-raising experience and a delightful smile. We also have three additional summer camp staff joining us this June—Hollye, Jane, and Kristin. Please come and meet our staff, they are excited to share their work and joys with all of you.



PHOTO BY MELINDA DEFEO

### Thank You!

The FARM Institute staff and Board of Directors would like to thank everyone that has made it possible for us to make it through the winter, rebuild and improve Katama Farm, continue education and farm programs and plan for an exciting 2006 season. The list is extensive and I hope I have not missed any of you. We would like to offer our thanks and gratitude to: The Edgartown Conservation Commission, Bill Bishop, Jim Jeveris, Hinkley Lumber, Howard Sashion, Vineyard Sound and Security, David Hearn, Glenn Hearn, Mark Defeo, Doug Benefit, E.C. Cottle, John McCracken, Steve Handy, The Winnetu and Mattakeeset Family Resort, Ed and Michell Gannon, Mark and Gwen Snyder, The MV YMCA, Walter Smith Plumbing, Rob Young, Brennon and Company, Plumbers Supply, Roger Schofield, JB Flooring, Goodale Construction, Warren Mead, Crane Appliance, Blain Welding, Jay Bodnar and the countless shingling, painting, and construction volunteers, Nora Kennedy, Jackie Korell, Heidi Feldman, Ralph Packer, Mary Baker, and Tamar Russell at Sitka Creations.

Thank you again and again – we could not have accomplished all this without each and every one of you, your time, your contributions and encouragement. We look forward to sharing our new facilities and the farm with you in the coming years.

## From a City to the Farm!

By **Lilly Berkley**

In July of 2005, just before starting 5th grade, my family and I moved to Martha's Vineyard from New York City!

My mom and I always bike to South Beach. And we bike past The FARM Institute. We talk at the beach... "I think that we should get to know more about The FARM Institute. We went to visit the farm.

When we got there it looked very pretty with the cows in the field, the sheep in the pasture, and everything else you would see on a farm. We felt welcomed during our visit. We walked around and knew we would be going there again.

In September I started one of the TFI after-school programs.

When my parents picked me up after the first day, I had a smile on my face and told my mom and dad everything I did, including getting eggs from the chicken coup and feeding the cows and sheep.

In New York I wasn't able to do any of that. At the farm, I get my hands dirty with soil and play with the animals

and get to have fun outside. When I am there I feel like everything that has happened that day that I did not like or things that I worry about don't matter anymore. I am free to have fun and learn something while doing it.

Now I attend the FIT group. It is every Friday and it stands for "Farmers In Training." After being there I have realized that nature and the things around us are every special and that we should take care of them more.

I think that every kid should be able to experience going to The FARM Institute. Kids should be able to go there and learn about animals, dirt, and gardening and other things like that because it will come up in life and you should be able to answer questions about it and once you do it you will remember it your whole life!



PHOTO BY ROB GOLDFARB

## Painting the Canvas of Katama Farm

By **Bridget Meigs**

When I first started working at the FARM Institute in March, the predominant colors of the farm were browns and pale yellows. Now, in early May, the farm is waking up and colors are flooding back into the fields. With increased temperatures, more sunlit hours, and spring rain showers, the browns have changed to greens. In addition, the yellow daffodils and the lavender and pink crocuses and hyacinths planted by students in the fall have sprung into view. These colors signal the start of spring, and the preparation and planting that must commence and continue as the Friendship Garden grows.

I picture this garden in August overflowing with color: red tomatoes, deep green potato plants, bright yellow summer squash, and orange and purple carrots and beets. The rich dark soil that greets us in May will be covered by almost every color of the rainbow expressed in the fruits, vegetables, and flowers that we plant this month.

For now, we continue to lay out the garden, prepare beds, plant seeds, and transplant seedlings with fellow staff and our young farmers. Painting the canvas of Katama Farm is a lot of work, but the colors, scents and flavors that abound at harvest time will be ample reward.

## Mark Your Calendar!

**Sat. 6.3** Family & Community Chore Morning. Be a farmer for the morning, come and help with farm chores, feed the animals and tend the garden. 7:30-9:30 am.

**Sat. 6.3** Summer Open House. Come meet TFI Staff, new facilities and animals. 11 am-3 pm.

**Every Sat. starting in July** Family & Community Chore Morning. Be a farmer for the morning, come and help with farm chores, feed the animals and tend the garden. 7:30-9:30 am.

**Fri. 7.7** Meals in the Meadow. See Dine here! page. 4. 6-10 pm.

**Sat. 8.19** Grand Opening of TFI's Corn Maize and Clam Bake. Get lost, dance to Bluegrass music and enjoy fresh Island clams, catered by Lobster Tails. 5-7 pm.

For more information and future events, visit our website at [www.farminstitute.org](http://www.farminstitute.org) or write Rob at [rob@farminstitute.org](mailto:rob@farminstitute.org)



PHOTOS BY NICOLE FRIEDLER PHOTOGRAPHY

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## Camp here!

By Rob Goldfarb

Get ready for an exciting and engaging summer at The FARM Institute. With a healthy, passionate and dedicated crop of new teacher/farmers, our summer camp is set up to work with children ages 4-14 on a weekly basis. Campers work in age-appropriate groups as well as mentor one another as they join our teacher/farmers in the daily routine at Katama Farm. Our programs foster nutritional awareness, build real-life skills and teach about how all living things are interconnected. Come collect eggs, milk a goat, grow organic vegetables, write poetry, read stories, pick green beans, learn new farming skills, manage a real farm stand, sing songs, explore the Katama grasslands, prepare delicious meals in our new kitchen and much, much more... Space is limited, so register now! For

details and a complete brochure, visit [www.farminstitute.org](http://www.farminstitute.org) or contact Rob at [camp@farminstitute.org](mailto:camp@farminstitute.org) or 508-627-7007 today!

## Dine here!

### Come to Our Fundraiser Event of the Year Meals in the Meadow

Think local. Think gourmet. Think dining under the stars! You are invited to dinner under the stars at Katama Farm where acclaimed Martha's Vineyard chefs are joining forces with Island farmers. Welcome to our annual fundraising event, Meals in the Meadow. Under a see-through tent in the middle of the fields of Katama Farm, guests will experience a casual, yet elegant atmosphere and enjoy a catered gourmet meal. The dishes will be created through a collaboration of some of the Island's top chefs, using local products raised and harvested by Martha's Vineyard farmers. Before dinner is

served, there will be live music, an open bar, hors d'oeuvres, a raw bar and a silent auction. To welcome and entertain guests throughout the night, motivational speaker and best-selling author Squire Rushnell will be on hand with his talented and very funny wife, Louise DuArt. In addition to the dynamic duo, there will be a live auction to help raise funds to support our teachers and programs.

Meals in the Meadow is gathering a tremendous amount of support and enthusiasm from the local community. If you are interested in attending or would like to help support this event, please email [mealsinthemeadow@farminstitute.org](mailto:mealsinthemeadow@farminstitute.org) or visit our webpage at [www.farminstitute.org](http://www.farminstitute.org).

*Fri., July 7, 2006, 6 pm - 10 pm*  
**Chefs: Doug and Jackie Korell of Lobster Tales Catering, Job Yacubian of Bittersweet, Ed Gannon of Lure at Winnetu Oceanside Resort, and Valarie Stoyer of Latanzies.**



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