

The Natural Farmer

Letters to the Editor, Spring 2002

Dear Jack:

Your last issue was SUPERB! I especially enjoyed the article from your son in college. In fact I read every article by the families and really got caught up in the theme. I made copies of your son's page and sent on to MY kids, who also had to work as they were growing up. I owned a travel agency for twenty-five years while I was flying for TWA and my four kids ALL had a chance to 'work the farm' – altho it wasn't a FARM. There was cleaning, brochure stamping, painting, minor electrical work (by my oldest, whom we have lost since to Hodgkins Disease at age 21), ticket delivery, promotions, phone answering, etc. Each of them earned quite a bit of college money over the years and each of them developed the WORK ETHIC that all your articles mention.

Nothing like a FAMILY BUSINESS to help get kids on the right track. The three of them now are all successful, married, families, and I can borrow money from any of them if need be...

Thanks again for the great bit of editing.

Jim Schmitt
Cream Ridge, NJ



Jack or Julie:

The current issue about farm families is truly outstanding! I commend you on presenting so many varied perspectives and situations. Keep up the great work!

Thank you,
Mark Hyde
Port Murray, NJ

Editor:

The Special Supplement on Farming and Families is excellent. I'm a psychic therapist part-time, activist enviro-person and parent of grown kids. That supplement should be read and studied far and wide.

Many Thanks,
Vera Cohen
Cambridge, MA

Dear Jack and Julie,

Thanks for your great efforts over the years with The Natural Farmer. You do a very impressive job. And thanks especially for your sharing in the Farm and Family section in the Winter issue. You hit a lot of notes that set up sympathetic vibrations here.

Bill Cleland
W. Hartford, VT

Hello Jack

Your "Farming and the Family" package in the winter issue is simply fantastic! I read it cover-to-cover when it arrived just the other day. I want the rest of my family to read it, too.

Congratulations to both you and Julie, and all of your contributors.

You boldly go where few have dared to go before, with great style, compassion, humility and humanity that will serve your readers well.

Thank you!
George DeVault

Dear Jim, Mark, Vera, Bill and George,

Thanks for your kind words. Very much! Actually, though, I blush to admit that the whole thing was just an excuse to show off our family pictures!

I would like to take this opportunity, however, to admit a grievous error. In the last issue I forgot to include the name of the author of the article "The Life of an Early NOFA Pioneer". It was, as many of you guessed, the one and only Joey Klein of Littlewood Farm in Plainfield, Vermont.

*Thanks, Joey and Betsy!
Jack*

Dear Editor,

I love the Natural Farmer. As a second generation organic CSA farmer, I'm a loyal NOFA member. But I am perplexed by why the Natural Farmer never seems to print articles about what we can do to end farm subsidies. Every year the federal government gives approximately \$17 billion (with a B) of our hard-earned taxpayer dollars to large, corporate chemical farms. The all-too-common, heart-breaking stories of struggle like those told by the small-scale organic farmers in the last issue of the Natural Farmer have their roots in farm subsidies. After all, how can organic farmers possibly compete with chemical farmers who get billions of dollars a year from our elected "representatives"?

As I write, there are thousands of organic farmers and consumers in the northeast fighting to end farm subsidies (see www.sustainableagriculture.net and www.ewg.org or call 845-744-8448) and the problem of money in politics that's at the root of so many organic farmers' economic woes (see www.publiccampaign.org), but you wouldn't know it from reading The Natural Farmer. What gives?

Respectfully,
Eesha Williams
eeshaw@hotmail.com
member, NOFA-Vermont

Dear Eesha,

Thanks for writing. I haven't really gotten much in the way of requests for dealing with farm subsidy issues. Mostly we have tried to keep the articles focused on education about organic farming methods and their practitioners. I try to run a page or two each issue about news of interest to organic farmers and their supporters. That might be an appropriate place to keep up to date with farm bill events.

But if you would like to write something explaining why farm subsidies are hurting the organic movement, I'd be glad to run it. It sounds like you have strong feelings on the issue and would do a good job explaining it!

Jack Kittredge