



National Park Service  
U.S. Department of  
the Interior  
  
Cuyahoga Valley  
National Park



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## Cuyahoga Valley National Park News Release

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### **Countryside Conservancy Welcomes New Farm to National Park**

*Spice Acres joins the Countryside Initiative program*

**Brecksville, Ohio** – Countryside Conservancy is pleased to announce the addition of Spice Acres, a new farm managed by Ben Bebenroth, Chef/Owner of Spice Kitchen + Bar and Spice of Life Catering Co., to its Countryside Initiative program. The farm will become the eleventh working family farm in this Cuyahoga Valley National Park program, and will join the others in their commitment to sustainable agriculture.

Countryside Conservancy launched the Countryside Initiative program in 1999 in partnership with Cuyahoga Valley National Park (CVNP) to preserve and protect the rural landscape in the Cuyahoga Valley. In this unique program, Countryside Conservancy identifies old farmsteads suitable for current use which are then rehabilitated by CVNP. After a highly competitive application process, a farmer is awarded a long-term lease of a proposed site only after powerfully articulating his or her plan to manage and farm that site through the entire term of the lease. The farms are expected to be managed with only sustainable farming practices, and the farmers are required to welcome CVNP visitors. This innovative land use program has achieved international attention and is sought as a model for public/private sustainable land use. The Countryside Initiative Farms bring over 100,000 people into the park each year and have an economic impact of millions of dollars.

Ben Bebenroth is no stranger to sustainability or the local food scene. As Executive Chef/Owner of Spice Kitchen + Bar and Spice of Life Catering Co., Bebenroth has long frequented area farmers' markets to develop deep-seated relationships with local farmers. These relationships are key to The Spice Companies' commitment to provide seasonally inspired food and cocktails sourced from their own gardens and local small family farms.

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Spice Acres is located at 9570 Riverview Rd in Brecksville. The location is formerly the site of Halko's Spring Hill Farm. Farmer Alan Halko elected to transfer his lease to Bebenroth after leaving the Countryside Initiative program to engage in other pursuits. Spice Acres will produce over a dozen vegetables, including many heirloom varieties, as well as flowers, herbs, and eggs from pasture-raised chickens. Spice restaurant and catering guests will enjoy the majority of the farm's harvest. Canned and prepared farm foods will also be available at the Spice Acres stand at Countryside Farmers' Market at Howe Meadow.

For more information about Spice Acres and the other Countryside Initiative farms, please visit [www.cvcountryside.org](http://www.cvcountryside.org).

### **About Countryside Conservancy**

Countryside Conservancy connects people, food, and land. We manage three thriving farmers' markets; offer educational programming for farmers, backyard gardeners, and home cooks with our Countryside U courses; and through our Countryside Initiative program have reestablished working family farms in Cuyahoga Valley National Park. To learn more visit [www.cvcountryside.org](http://www.cvcountryside.org).

CVNP encompasses 33,000 acres along the Cuyahoga River between Cleveland and Akron, Ohio. Managed by the National Park Service, CVNP combines cultural, historical, recreational, and natural activities in one setting. For more information visit [www.nps.gov/cuva](http://www.nps.gov/cuva) or call 330-657-2752.

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