



Rethinking Farming

Farming has been a prominent part of the Cuyahoga Valley since the early 1800s. In order to preserve and revitalize the valley's rural scenery and farming heritage, Cuyahoga Valley National Park (CVNP) has developed a program called the Countryside Initiative. This program invites farmers to live and farm in the park using sustainable methods appropriate for a national park. The success of the program is due to a three-part partnership among the National Park Service (NPS), the Countryside Conservancy (CC), and the farmers.



NPS/ARRE ROSSER

A Lived-in Landscape

Cuyahoga Valley's landscapes have evolved through the interplay of people and nature, from the first hunter-gatherers to modern farmers. Today the valley's rural farm fields and associated buildings are among the most historic and scenic resources in the park. In 1974 Congress created CVNP to preserve and protect "the historic, scenic, natural, and recreational" resources of the Cuyahoga Valley, including this farming heritage. The Countryside Initiative fulfills this mandate while demonstrating land use practices that promote a healthy relationship between people and the land.

NPS owns the farms while the CC, a non-profit created in 1999, provides expertise in sustainable agriculture to assist both park staff and the farmers in the program.

The farmers are carefully selected through a competitive request for proposal process. The NPS grants long-term leases of farmsteads and associated fields to private citizens who

demonstrate the ability to practice sustainable farming. As part of their park agreement, the farmers are also expected to offer recreational and educational opportunities for park visitors.

Ten farms currently operate in the park. The vision is for 15 to 20 farms, using approximately 1,350 acres, or about five percent, of park lands. The farms pursue small, diversified crop and livestock operations that target local specialty and niche markets. The first pilot farms were established in 2002 and others have been created since then. As a result, farms are at various stages of development.



NPS/ARRYE ROSSER



NPS/ARRYE ROSSER

Farming in a National Park

The Countryside Initiative promotes living, working farms that represent the rural heritage of the Cuyahoga Valley, while protecting cultural and natural resources. Many farm buildings are rehabilitated historic structures. Modifications to the buildings and associated grounds require careful review to maintain the cultural integrity of the

property. Natural buffers between farm fields and neighboring streams and wetlands protect water resources. Farmers pursue sustainable practices that include diversified crop selection, crop and livestock rotation, and minimal use of pesticides.



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Meeting the Farmers

There are several ways to become acquainted with Countryside Initiative farmers: contact the farmers directly about their products, visit a Countryside Farmers' Market, or attend a farm-based program. Program listings can be found in the park's *Schedule of Events*, or by visiting www.dayinthevalley.com or www.cvcountryside.org. The following is the 2011 list of Countryside Initiative farms.

Basket of Life Farm

4965 Quick Road, Peninsula 44264
The Walters family operates a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program. Members receive a weekly or biweekly basket of produce grown on the farm. Various classes are also offered. For details visit www.basketoflifefarm.com.

Brunty Farms

2470 Martin Road, Akron 44333
Jeff Brunty and Melanie Schenk are known for their chicken eggs and broilers. They are expanding to raise pigs and ducks and to grow vegetables and flowers. The farm also hosts a small CSA. For details visit www.bruntyfarms.com.

Canal Corners Farm & Market

7243 Tinkers Creek Road, Valley View 44125
Dave Wingenfeld and his family grow and sell a wide range of vegetables. They have established a market at the big red barn on the farm. For details call 216-624-3916.

Goatfeathers Point Farm

4570 Akron Peninsula Road, Peninsula 44264
Terry and Cindy Smith sell humanely raised, pastured meat goats and heritage breed turkeys. For availability call 330-657-2726.

Greenfield Berry Farm

2485 Major Road, Peninsula 44264
The Greenfields focus on growing different varieties of berries as a pick-your-own operation. They also sell honey, hickory syrup, and berry jellies, and offer a small CSA. For availability call 330-657-2924.

Kossuth Farm

9640 Riverview Road, Brecksville 44141
Karoly Bozan is one of the newest farmers. He and his parents, who moved here from Hungary, are establishing a multi-generational family farm that will be a diversified crop and livestock operation. For details call 330-687-2752.

Neitenbach Farm

3077 Akron Peninsula Road, Cuyahoga Falls 44223
The Neitenbachs grow mixed vegetables and medicinal herbs. Pamela Neitenbach is a certified herbalist. They have an on-the-farm roadside stand. For details call 330-926-1176.

Sarah's Vineyard

1204 West Steels Corners Road, Cuyahoga Falls 44223
The Lytz family invites you to sip at the wine bar and browse the art gallery. Food available. Open Wednesdays and Thursdays, 11 a.m. - 9 p.m.; Fridays and Saturdays, 11 a.m. - 11 p.m.; and Sundays, 1 - 8 p.m. For details call 330-929-8057 or visit www.sarahsvineyardwinery.com.

Spring Hill Farm & Market

9570 Riverview Road, Brecksville 44141
At their farm stand, the Halko family sells naturally grown, seasonal produce, herbs, twenty varieties of tomatoes, cut flowers, and free-range eggs. Hours and products vary seasonally. For details call 440-546-0652.

The Spicy Lamb Farm

6560 Akron Peninsula Road, Peninsula 44264
Laura DeYoung's enterprise is composed of agriculture, agri-tourism, and education. Her farm features lamb, wool, an orchard, spicy herbs, and vegetables. For details visit www.thespicylamb.com.

Countryside Farmers' Markets

Enjoy the local seasonal bounty at the Countryside Conservancy's producers-only farmers' markets. Fresh produce, meat, cheese, artisan baked goods, preserves, and much more are available. All markets accept debit cards and Ohio Direction cards. For more information, including market schedules and details about special events, call 330-657-2538 or visit www.cvcountryside.org.

Farming Education

The Countryside Conservancy offers a wide array of workshops, classes, and seminars intended to inspire, educate, and mobilize the next generation of farmers and food producers, and to help Northeast Ohio residents with the tools they need to put more local food on their families' plates. For more information visit www.cvcountryside.org.



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