

Go behind-the-scenes on Dufferin Farm Tour

of Farm Tour

Your breakfast this morning was made possible by Farmers. They have entered into a contract with you, the consumer, to produce safe, healthy, high-quality food in an environmentally responsible and sustainable way.

This Saturday, the Dufferin Town & Country Farm Tour is committed to sharing information regarding their ongoing work to meet the challenges of emerging issues such as biodiversity, water quality, protecting natural habitats and animal welfare.

This week, you and your family have the opportunity to see how the agricultural industry operates, through the lives and businesses of several different farm families.

We hope this exchange will enhance public awareness and efforts to meet emerging challenges.

ALTON GREENHOUSES (The Spans Family, 19598 Main Street, Alton)

With the arrival of spring, the traffic on Main Street in Alton increases as customers shop for their first plants of the season. As you walk through the doors of Alton Greenhouses, you would be greeted with masses of colour from the overflowing baskets of blooms throughout the over two acres of plants on display.

Cindy and Bill Spaans have spent 38 years on this property, first building then growing their business. With the help of their three daughters, Candice, Jasmine and Billie-Jo, they run the day to day business of growing plants from seeds and cuttings. The plants are then selected to create the unique baskets and planters ready for consumers. In addition to the many baskets of annuals, they also grow a large selection of perennials.

Growing the plants on this scale can consume over 25,000 gallons of water per day and 60 gallons of fuel per hour for the multiple boilers required to provide heat. The Spaans have developed many labour saving techniques that also conserve water and energy.

Take a tour for a behind the scenes look at the process required to create the beautiful pots and baskets of flowers. Find out about the conservation techniques the Spaans have developed and implemented. Feel free to ask questions as there is decades of information to share.

Beekeepers will be on site with a cross section of a hive. It is fascinating to watch the bees at work. As well Spring Gait Meadows will have their miniature horses and donkeys for petting. Lavender Blue will be selling delicious food and baked goods to eat on site or take home.

HILLERIN FARM (Bryn and Carol Robertson, 6001 9th Line, Hillsburgh)

Carol and Bryn married in 1966 and set up residence in Hillsburgh, establishing Hillerin Farm. While raising their three children, they operated a boarding, breeding, showing and race training centre. They have enjoyed the spoils of victory on both the quarter horse race track and in the barrel racing arena.

In Ontario, quarter horse racing takes place at Ajax Downs, east of Toronto. It has experienced a significant increase in popularity

over the last several years. Bryn has obtained his trainer's license and has been very successful in racing Hillerin bred offspring and other horses.

Both Carol and Bryn successfully competed in barrel racing, a time honoured sport catering to all abilities, members and ages of the family. Competitions are part of rodeo events, club shows and fall fairs.

The passion for horses and enjoyment of the sports has been passed on to their children and grandchildren as they follow in their footsteps. Kim, their oldest daughter, and her three children have all competed in western performance classes, barrel racing and driving competitions. Kim represented Canadian Barrel Racers at the World Barrel Cup in Italy. Kim and her family are dairy farmers in Bright, Ontario. Their second daughter, Jodi, is a Registered Massage Therapist, Osteopath and instructor for Equine Massage Therapy. She will be providing demonstrations and explaining about the benefits to horses throughout the day. Jodi and her daughter compete on the barrel racing circuit at rodeos.

Their son Michael and his wife Jaime are assistant trainers for the race horses. Michael also runs a farrier practice. At intervals during the day, he will be doing some hoof trimming and shoeing demos. The Robertsons are always happy to share their horses' accomplishments and answer any questions.

MARSVILLE HOLSTEINS LTD (The Brouwer and Bouwman Families, 191399 13th Line, East Garafaxa)

In 1960, Cornelius Brouwer purchased this 100 acre farm after emigrating from Holland. The original bank barn housed 14 cows in wooden stalls that were milked by hand. After some renovations, including the addition of a much appreciated concrete floor, the herd grew to 25 milked cows.

Mel and Wilma Brouwer, who took over the farm in 1974, increased the capacity of the barn to 48 cows. Other buildings were added to the property that provided storage for equipment and loafing room for the herd.

In 2004, a major expansion took place with the addition of a new free stall barn that included a milking parlour. The farm is now home to 90 cows, milked twice daily, as well as dry cows, replacement heifers and growing baby calves.

The third generation of farmers, Mel and Wilma's daughter Nelene and her husband Brandon Bouwman, are now partners in the operation. Together, along with the help of other family members, they work approximately 1000 acres where they grow hay to feed the cattle, along with corn, soybeans, wheat and barley.

Marsville Holsteins Ltd works hard to produce quality milk while keeping the cows comfortable and healthy in a good environment.

WOODRILL LTD (Lou Flanagan, Marsville Manager, 1062160 Dufferin Road 3, East Garafaxa)

Late summer and fall is a busy time in the farm community as the harvest of field crops gets underway. Woodrill Ltd is a grain elevator business where harvested crops are brought for drying and distribution. During this busy time of year, the elevator operates for extended hours, seven days a week.

Woodrill's main location is near Guelph, but in 2005, they purchased this second elevator location. They have expanded the facility to accommodate about one million bushels of grain. Farmers bring their soybeans, corn, wheat, barley and canola directly to the elevator or they can arrange for pickup in the fields by Woodrill trucks.

At the elevator, the grains are analyzed for moisture content and then assigned a bin for dumping. A computerized control room

monitors the drying and sorting process. Woodrill trucks then transport the grains to end users which include farms for feed, flour mills, export terminals, ethanol plants, and soybean crushing facilities.

In addition to handling the grain harvest, Woodrill also supplies all the inputs required for growing crops. They have a team of Certified Crop Advisors who provide recommendations based on reliable agronomic information. Woodrill is committed to helping their grower-customers maintain their productivity.

As this will be a busy time at Woodrill, we ask that you be cautious while on site as there will be tractors and trucks bringing in loads of grains.

SOUTHCREEK ACRES (Scott and Heather McClinchey, 1120225 11th Line, East Garafaxa)

Southcreek Acres was established in 1998 by Scott and Heather McClinchey. They moved to this current location in 2005. The farm is home to two future farmers, Davis and Norah, horses, ducks, chickens, a donkey and a herd of Lincoln Red beef cattle, a rare breed.

This herd of cattle was originally established by Donald McQueen Shaver. When he retired, the McClinchey's purchased the herd and continued breeding under the Shaver prefix.

Originally from Lincolnshire, England, the Lincoln Reds were introduced to Canada in the 1970s. There are about a dozen herds existing in North America. Cows are dark red in colour and known for their excellent mothering, calving ease, and ability to thrive on grass and hay. The McClinchey cattle are raised to be used as breeding stock. Scott is a research scientist with Dupont Pioneer and is the president of the North American Lincoln Red Association.

Heather, a veterinarian, owns the Fifth Avenue Veterinary Clinic in Orangeville. In order to keep the farm running smoothly, they have the on-going support of family and friends.

There will be a display of antique tractors and carriages. Children will be able to choose a pumpkin from the patch with donations going to support the Orangeville Food Bank. If weather permits, wagon rides will be offered. Visitors are welcome to access the walking trail through the cedar bush along Butler Creek.

Admission to the Dufferin Town & Country Farm Tour is a donation to a local food bank. Donation barrels are located at each host farm and the tour happens rain or shine. Please leave your dogs at home. For more information, please visit www.dufferinfarmtour.com.