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Contact: Audrey Schwartzberg (518) 891-6200, aschwartzberg@adirondack.org

ANCA Announces Local Farm Grant Recipients

\$104,000 awarded to eight local farms

SARANAC LAKE, N.Y. — Eight North Country farms will receive funding to support the viability and growth of their businesses. The Adirondack North Country Association (ANCA) has announced the recipients of its Local Farm Grant program, which was launched in October 2019 to support farmers and food producers who are strengthening the region's agriculture and food systems.

A total sum of \$103,962 in grant funds have been awarded to the following northern New York farms: Argyle Cheese Farmer in Argyle; Blue Pepper Farm in Jay; Juniper Hill Farm in Wadhams; Mace Chasm Farm in Keeseville; Milkweed Tussock Tubers in Heuvelton; North Branch Farms in Henderson; Peacock and Pony Farm in Natural Bridge; and Triple Green Jade Farm in Willsboro.

"We received an unprecedented number of applications for this grant, and it was incredibly challenging for the grant committee to narrow it down to the final recipients," said ANCA Executive Director Kate Fish. She added that 52 farms and food businesses applied for over \$1M in funding to support projects valued at a total of over \$2M. "There is clearly a need for investment in our region's farms if we are to see them thrive and help drive a more robust local economy."

The Local Farm Grant program was designed to support projects that address gaps in the local food supply chain, increase opportunity for value-added processing or secure business development services. The grants provide financial support where traditional funding resources like bank loans are not accessible.

Blue Pepper Farm owners Shannon and Tyler Eaton will use their grant award to construct an on-farm creamery for producing sheep milk yogurt. The facility will allow them to increase production and expand their dairy product line, which represents a growing segment of their diversified farm business. Blue Pepper Farm, which has been in business since 2012, also produces grass-fed lamb, sheepskins, yarn, pork, eggs and poultry.

"This grant allows for a significant expansion of our farm business that we've been working towards since starting out," said Shannon Eaton. "After spending the past three seasons renting creamery space to make our sheep milk yogurt, confirming we have a product customers love, we're ready to expand production. The timing of this could not be better!"

Argyle Cheese Factory, which is owned and operated by Dave and Marge Randles, will use grant funding to purchase a batch freezer and scooping cabinet for producing and preparing frozen dairy desserts. The new equipment is part of a larger business expansion that includes a new retail location.

Adam Hainer of Juniper Hill Farm will purchase equipment for processing butternut squash grown on the organic vegetable farm. The peeling machine will allow the farm to sell more squash to schools and other institutions that prefer minimally processed vegetables. Since processing will take place during the winter, the project will provide more year-round work for employees.

Mace Chasm Farm owner Asa Thomas-Train will use grant funds toward the purchase a curing cabinet that will help their farm and butcher shop increase sausage and cured meat production. By expanding its value-added products, the farm will increase production during the slower winter months and opportunities to sell at urban markets outside the local area.

Catherine Bennett, sole owner and operator of Milkweed Tussock Tubers, will use her grant award to partially cover costs associated with becoming a certified disease-free seed potato producer, which will open up regional and national markets for her organic potatoes.

Jay and Kathryn Canzonier will use grant funds to purchase and replace parts for North Branch Farm's produce packing equipment. The equipment helps the farm and orchard business provide clean fruit and vegetables for their retail store and for wholesale clients such as Jefferson County schools.

Liam Carney of Peacock and Pony Farm will use his grant award to partially fund the construction of a heated greenhouse and laboratory to help increase the production of gourmet mushrooms on his family's farm.

Triple Green Jade Farm owner Dan Rivera will purchase cow milking equipment to establish a small dairy on their farm. The dairy will allow them to continue to diversify their farm business, which specializes in wood-fired oven baked breads and crackers.

The Local Farm Grant program was funded in full by anonymous donors who participated in ANCA's fourth annual Bike the Barns event on September 29, 2019. Inspired by the farms along the route and motivated by their own appreciation of local farms, they committed \$100,000 to go directly to North Country farm businesses through a competitive grant process.

"These donors understand the cultural and economic importance small farms have in our communities," said Fish. "We know their investment will make a significant impact for the grant recipients, their families and employees, and the people and businesses they serve and support.

"While we wish we could have funded more projects during this round of grants, ANCA continues to develop additional ways we can support our region's farmers. This process gave us a telling picture of their various needs and how we can invest in their future."

[ANCA](#) is an independent nonprofit organization growing the New Economy in northern New York. Using an integrated approach to sustainable economic development and prosperity where economic health, community vitality and ecological stewardship are equally important outcomes, ANCA focuses on creating opportunity for people with diverse backgrounds, experience and education levels.

Attached: one (1) PDF document and two (2) photos

Photo 1 by Lisa Godfrey: Shannon and Tyler Eaton, owners of Blue Pepper Farm in Jay, NY, were awarded one of eight Local Farm Grants to build an on-farm creamery for the production of sheep milk products.

Photo 2 courtesy of ANCA: Tyler Eaton receives Blue Pepper Farm's Local Farm Grant award from ANCA Executive Director Kate Fish at the ANCA office in Saranac Lake on Thursday, January 16, 2020.

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