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Summer on the Farm - July 2010



Christopher and John McGinn of Elbridge, NY, checked out the tractors at the July 10 event hosted by the New York Agricultural Land Trust and Cobblestone Valley Farm.

Of all the events at country fairs around Central New York this summer, probably none is as popular or serves to connect young children as well to our region's rich agricultural legacy, than a farm animal petting zoo. So it was at the recent Summer On The Farm event hosted by Cobblestone Valley Farm in Preble together with the New York Agricultural Land Trust (NYALT).

As parents arrived with children on a beautiful summer day, chicks, kittens, and ducklings waited to be petted, held and cuddled. But when the week-old ducklings snuck out of their pen, the chase was on as the baby ducks led the visiting children who tried to catch them from puddle to puddle and beyond. Some kids like brothers Christopher and John McGinn of Elbridge gravitated to a shiny new red utility tractor on site courtesy of CNY Power Sports of Cortland. And children and parents alike delighted in ice cream donated by Byrne Dairy and organic yogurt and milk donated by Organic Valley.

When Cobblestone Valley Farm's Paul Knapp arrived with his tractor and hay wagon everybody climbed aboard and went on guided tours of the organic farm operation led by his wife Maureen, who is also the Director of Conservation Programs for NYALT. Maureen explained the details of the diverse organic farm that includes a dairy operation on rotated pastures, berry-picking, free-range poultry and eggs, beef and pork.

Maureen and NYALT Executive Director Tom Larson also described how they need to protect farmland, which is the core of their work with NYALT, had led to the formation of the organization in 2006 and how events such as Summer on the Farm work to foster awareness of and appreciation for the area's farms and forests by all citizens of Central New York. Added Terry McGinn, father of Christopher and John, "these programs and/or any education about farming is excellent for children."

The New York Agricultural Land Trust (NYALT) is a non-profit land trust created by farmers to work with landowners across New York State to conserve working farmland and promote a greater appreciation for the agricultural and forested lands that enrich our communities and connect future generations to the land. For more information on the organization, to subscribe to the newsletter, or to support the organization's work in farmland

protection, please visit their Web site at www.NYALT.org . For more information on what's going on at Cobblestone Valley Farm please visit their Web site at www.cobblestonevalley.com