



Steve Liptay stacks bales of hay for the farm's cattle. Beef, eggs, and vegetables are staples raised on the farm near Hopewell Rocks, New Brunswick. (Janet Wallace photos)

Love of the land

Liptays farm for the community

by Janet Wallace

Beauty inside and out. I've heard that said about people, and I can say it about Liptay Farm. The location is stunning, the buildings are majestic, and the land is beautiful. And at the heart of the farm is a young family full of love, commitment, and a passion for their way of life.

When I hear the depressing statistics about the loss of family farms and aging

farmers, I think of the Liptays and I feel hope for the future. Mindy and Steve Liptay raise grass-fed beef, pastured poultry, and organic vegetables near Hopewell Rocks, New Brunswick, about a half-hour drive south of Moncton.

LAND WITH HISTORY

The Liptays moved to the farm at Lower Cape in 2002, just after they

were married. The couple and their two daughters, Jenica (seven) and Aynsley (five) live in an enormous mansard-roofed house. The house was built in 1841 and expanded in 1860. It was used as a stagecoach stop before becoming a farm house, home to the Lower Cape Dairy and later beef farms. The Liptays are only the fifth family to live in the house. "The average stay in the house



is 30 to 40 years," Mindy says.

The house is perched atop a ridge with a "mountain" behind, a valley to the side, and Shepody Bay just a field away across the road. Shepody Bay feeds into Chignecto Bay, which in turn feeds into the Bay of Fundy. The cattle and horses graze the valley and its slope. Once, several years ago, a sudden storm surge flooded the valley. I saw Steve in a canoe with an outboard motor on what is usually pasture. He drove the herd of swimming cattle to safety.

When the Liptays bought the house and 400 acres of land, the deal included 20 head of mixed breed cattle. They now have 30 head of beef cattle, six horses, a

flock of laying hens, and more than an acre of vegetables. "We love living this way," says Mindy. "We love bringing up our kids on a farm. This allows us to spend so much time with our children.

"We face challenges every day and these give us a chance to think in our jobs," she adds. "We wear many hats. In one day, we can be a part-time gardener, farmer, vet, and mechanic, and then work on the computer."

Steve works off the farm as the auctioneer at the livestock auction in Sussex, N.B. He also works with his father, a world champion livestock auctioneer, and two brothers. They auction cars through The Great Northern Auc-

Wood Burning Cook Stoves & Heating Stoves

Pioneer Princess



The largest
airtight
cookstove
available.
Heats
2000 sq. ft.

Cunningham

Ultimate
Natural-
Circulating
Space heaters.
Heats
2400 sq. ft.



Bakers' Choice



Durable
Economy
Model
Cookstove.
Heats
2000 sq. ft.

For a complete full color
information kit on all our
wood-fired products, send \$5 to:

SUPPERTIME STOVES
51653 College Line
Aylmer, Ontario,
Canada N5H 2R3

Buy direct from our family-owned
Canadian company.
We've been manufacturing
cookstoves for 33 years!



**Davon Sales
Inc.**

**We are proud to distribute
high quality products for
your operation!**

- "Hi-Hog" Cattle Handling Equipment & Feeders
- "Nudo" Poly Coated Plywood, Moldings & Fasteners
- "Cozy Cow" & Green mats & Animal Comfort Products
- "No-Rot" F.R.P. Doors & Windows
- "Tuftex" P.V.C. Ceiling & Wall Liners
- "Concrete" Bunks, Slats & T Walls
- Horse Stalls, Flooring & Feeders

**Maritime Trucks In Our
Yard Weekly**

www.davonsales.com

**Toll Free: 1-800-561-1706
P: (519) 537-2375 F: 537-7991
davon@oxford.net**



The Liptay family in front of an antique cart they restored. Steve worked on the metal and wood, and Mindy and the girls painted it. The cart was used for the 100th Anniversary of the Albert County Exhibition and also serves as the roadside vegetable stand.

tion and Estates via Liptay Auctions. Mindy works part-time as a clerk with the auction sales.

BECOMING FARMERS

Mindy grew up in nearby Riverside-Albert. Her mother, Janine Underhill, was surprised when Mindy got into farming. She says that whenever Mindy "got dirt on her hands, she had to wash her hands right away." Mindy says she remembers picking potato beetles and thinking it was "the worst work imaginable." Although Mindy showed horses, even winning awards for jumping at the

All American Quarter Horse Congress, she never thought she would become a farmer.

Steve, on the other hand, has a farming background. He grew up in farming country outside Bowmanville, Ontario. His grandfather was a market gardener and his father is a livestock auctioneer. Steve's first jobs were working on nearby dairy, beef, and vegetable farms, and in greenhouses.

When the Liptays moved onto the farm in Lower Cape, there was already a garden in place. They planted vegetables the first spring, but Mindy

**ÉNERGIE
MATRIX
ENERGY**

**A Renewable Energy
Products Distributor**

Matrix Energy is one of Canada's largest suppliers of solar and wind products and systems for:

- Lighting • Water pumping
- Back-up electrical power
- Grid-tie, net metering systems
- Remote homes, farms and cottages

Dealers Wanted

Toll Free: 1-866-830-5630
www.matrixenergy.ca
info@matrixenergy.ca



The garden lies between the road and the future greenhouse. The farmhouse, which was once a stagecoach stop, is visible behind the tree.

says, "The large garden was too much to handle. So we ended up with a much smaller garden. Then we learned how to garden properly and now have a larger vegetable garden than the past owners had," she says.

B&B BEGINNINGS

After Mindy had been growing food for her own family for five years, the people who bought a nearby bed and breakfast (B&B) encouraged her to

"We wear many hats. In one day, we can be a part-time gardener, farmer, vet, and mechanic, and then work on the computer."

start selling vegetables. Elaine and Alan Demaline were thrilled to find a local organic farmer, and persuaded Mindy to start a community shared agriculture (CSA) project.

Alan explains why they buy vegetables from the Liptays. "We know the food is truly local," he says, "and we know we're supporting the small farm just a kilometer from our B&B." At Innisfree B&B, the Demalines use as much local food as possible, including local eggs, fruit, vegetables, and maple syrup.

After a trial year of supplying vegetables for the Demalines, Mindy started a 10-member CSA. The Liptays now provide bags of mixed vegetables to 30 households for 16 weeks. This is the

Mindy's tips

When asked about advice she would give to new farmers, Mindy offers two tips:

- Start small and don't take on more than you can handle.
- Realize that you don't need brand new shiny equipment. Just get what you need and build on that.



ROSS FARM
A LIVING HERITAGE FARM
A PART OF THE NOVA SCOTIA PARADISE

Join Us For
The 20th Annual
New Ross Christmas Festival
December 7th & 8th

1-877-689-2210
Google Ross Farm Museum
Find us on Facebook

NOVA SCOTIA



RADTECH
INNOVATION

www.radinter.com
60 years of expertise to share...

Representative Garth O'Brien
Cell: 902 439-6450

BEA-VAC
Products with outstanding performances to meet your needs !

SUZUKI

BEA-VAC Hydro

Hydraulic snowblower with innovative drive system !

Rugged and durable housing, for the most demanding tasks !

2835 Chemin de l'Aéroport
Thetford Mines, Qc, G6G 5R7
Phone : 1 800 338-1615
Fax : 418 338-6090
www.radinter.com

Innovation, our passion !



third year of their CSA program, and even though they haven't advertised, they already have a waiting list for 2014.

Sales of grass-fed beef have grown just like the CSA, and all through word of mouth. The Liptays sell 25 and 50lb boxes of mixed cuts of fresh or frozen beef. Eggs are sold from the farm gate or through the CSA. "It's a great time to be in food production," says Mindy. "The demand for local beef and vegetables... local food in general, is huge. The main challenge is there are not enough hours in a day."

A RURAL LIFE

Country life appeals to the family. The girls love their horses and both have won ribbons at the local horse shows. Steve says he has seen "amazing things" when he's out on the tractor, such as a family of fox cubs playing by their den. Once, while Steve was haying, a moose walked right by the tractor following the path between the windrows of hay. Another time, a young eagle flew from bale to bale while Steve was haying. Mindy points out the Bald eagles that nest nearby and fly over the farm daily.

The Liptays strive to be more self-sufficient. They grow all their own hay, silage, and straw, as well as the grain for chicken and cattle feed.

Wood from their own land heats the house and is sawn on their portable mill



Baling straw with Shepody Bay in the background. Mindy drives the tractor while Steve stacks the bales.



ARCH SPAN BUILDINGS
(The Strength of the Arch)

Manufactured by
TARP-RITE INC.

327 LOCKHART MILL ROAD, WOODSTOCK, NB
PHONE: (506) 328-TARP (8277)
FAX: (506) 328-9544
www.tarprite.com

*** TARPS * TOTE BAGS * ROLL KITS *
* COVERS * BUILDINGS ***

 Straight Wall Buildings Up to 60' Wide	 Portable Garages	 Quonset Buildings Up to 80' Wide
 Gothic Style Buildings 62', 72' and 80' x any length	 Flat Bed Tarps	 Front to Back Roll Kits
 Side to Side Roll Kits	<p>Tarp-Rite Brand</p> <p>for all your covering needs. Custom made tarps and covers any shape or size.</p>	

www.tarprite.com

into lumber. All the new outbuildings are built with their own wood and/or recycled materials. The frame of a used greenhouse was erected this year, and the Liptays will put plastic on it next spring. Like the house, the greenhouse will be heated by the outside wood furnace.

LOCAL MOVEMENT

The Liptays find satisfaction in being self-reliant and growing food for their community. "We need to bring children and families back to their food," says Mindy. "A safe and local food system is so important for our economy and our community."

Mindy is frustrated by the current food system. "There is no reason," she says, "for all the hospitals and schools not to buy New Brunswick beef and potatoes. If all our institutions bought New Brunswick food, the economic impact would be staggering." She works for change by teaching the next generation to garden and cook healthy meals, and is a board member and active volunteer with Foods of the Fundy Valley.

Along with Lisa Brown of Farmer Brown's Greenhouse and other volunteers, Mindy has started school gardens at Hillsborough Elementary and Caledonia Regional High School and a community garden at the Albert County Museum. She is also involved with "Kids in the Kitchen" projects at both schools, where

Fundy foods

Foods of the Fundy Valley (FFV) is a non-profit organization formed in 2010 to address concerns over the dwindling number of farms and limited access to local food in rural Albert County, N.B. According to its mandate, the group aims to "Strengthen agriculture and commerce, thereby strengthening communities, in Albert County." The "Fundy Valley" refers to the area between Moncton and Fundy National Park, with the Bay of Fundy on one side, extending beyond Elgin-Parkindale in the other direction.

Foods of the Fundy Valley supports local farmers and food-related businesses, helps people connect with local food, and teaches both children and adults about healthy eating and food production.

The group produces a map of the area indicating farms, lobster shops, stores, and restaurants that produce and/or sell local food. FFV has also started to publish a newsletter that

includes profiles of local growers, places to buy local food, and tips on growing, preserving, and/or cooking local produce.

FFV offers workshops to help farmers with undertakings such as establishing a Community Supported Agriculture, using social media in their businesses, saving seeds, as well as workshops that teach people how to grow their own food.

Foods of the Fundy Valley has established three school gardens in Riverside-Albert and Hillsborough. Garden produce is used in "Kids in the kitchen" programs at the schools. The group also partners with the Shepody Food Bank by providing summer vegetables grown in the school gardens and offering cooking classes for food bank clients. Volunteers also prepare soups using the fresh produce available in the weekly food bank box. When clients arrive to pick up their food, they are offered a bowl of soup and the recipe.

students learn how to prepare and enjoy meals made with fresh local vegetables. Change will come, she suggests, when people start asking for local food. That will create a demand for more farmers.

"It's important to let people know that they can farm," says Mindy. She and Steve are leading by example – a healthy and

joyful farm family living off the land.

"We work hard, but we love it," she says.

(Janet Wallace lives in Albert County, N.B. She is an organic gardener and a volunteer with Foods of the Fundy Valley.) ●



The Spectrum

When you've looked at all the others.



The Spectrum can be part of any decorating scheme. Choose from four rich porcelain enamel colors.

Features: Built-in ash drawer, air wash for clean glass, low clearance to walls, mobile home approved, cast iron, gold plated door.

We have the largest selection of wood stoves on the South Shore.

GOW'S



OPEN 8 AM - 9 PM MON - SAT
Eastside Plaza Bridgewater



902-543-7121 Visit our website: www.gowshomehardware.ns.ca