



## Rethinking Farming

Farming has been a prominent part of the Cuyahoga Valley since the early 1800s. In order to preserve 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 over 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](http://www.dayinthevalley.com) or [www.cvcountryside.org](http://www.cvcountryside.org). The following is the 2010 list of Countryside Initiative farms.



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### **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](http://www.basketoflifefarm.com).

### **Brunty Farms**

2470 Martin Road, Akron 44333  
Jeff Brunty and Melanie Shenk 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](http://www.bruntyfarms.com).

### **Canal Corners Farm and Market**

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

### **Goatfeathers Point Farm**

4570 Akron Peninsula Road, Peninsula 44264  
The Bechter-Smith family sells 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 in their 1830s barn. 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](http://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  
The Spicy Lamb is an enterprise composed of agriculture, ag-tourism, and education. The farm features lamb, wool, an orchard, spicy herbs, and vegetables. For details visit [www.thespicylamb.com](http://www.thespicylamb.com).

## Countryside Farmers' Markets

Markets feature a diverse mix of fresh, nutritious, and delicious produce grown by local farmers (including those who farm in the Cuyahoga Valley). In addition you'll find baked goods, meats, cheeses, and other artisan foods. For more information call (330) 657-2538 or visit [www.cvcountryside.org](http://www.cvcountryside.org).

### **Countryside Farmers' Market at Howe Meadow**

Saturdays, May 15 - October 30  
9 a.m. - noon.

### **Countryside Farmers' Market at Stan Hywet Hall & Gardens**

Thursdays, June 3 - September 23  
4 - 7 p.m.

### **Countryside Farmers' Market at Happy Days Lodge**

Saturdays, November 20 and December 4 and 18  
9 a.m. - noon.



**Cuyahoga Valley  
National Park**

[www.nps.gov/cuva](http://www.nps.gov/cuva)  
[www.dayinthevalley.com](http://www.dayinthevalley.com)



**Cuyahoga Valley  
Countryside  
Conservancy**

[www.cvcountryside.org](http://www.cvcountryside.org)