



## CY Farms Mission

The mission of CY Farms is to provide superior agricultural products and service to our customers to meet their changing needs. We will operate an employee driven business where friendly hard working people gather every day. We will seek to provide our employees with a work place that will enhance their quality of life, reward responsibility and provide career and educational growth.



Onion planting on muck soil



Corn planting w/ a 16-row planter



Harvesting rolls of sod



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Welcome to spring!

We at CY Farms, like probably all of you, are very glad that spring and warmer weather are here! We have finally been able to get out in the fields over the last couple weeks and begin planting.

Getting ready to plant the crops begins long before the weather is warm. Once the crop is harvested in the fall, we look at our yield data to analyze how our season went and see how we can improve the following year. We also take soil samples to determine nutrient levels of fields. This gives us an indication of what nutrients are in the soil and the pH, which are important for giving our crops the proper nutrition the following season. Then we meet with seed dealers to find the right seeds. To pick seeds, we consider the type of soil, growing degree days, and our crop rotation.

Much of the winter is spent in the shop, cleaning and working on equipment to ensure it is in full working order for spring. We also apply manure to the fields in the winter before too much snow falls to provide nutrients for the soil. Winter is also a busy time for marketing our crops like corn, soybeans, onions and cabbage.

When the weather becomes warm and the soil is dry enough to work, field prep work begins. We till the soil using a variety of machines, including chisels and plows. In doing so, the top 8-10 inches of soil are turned over to help the soil become soft, allow more moisture to evaporate, which also helps the soil warm up. Ideally, we want the soil to warm up to at least 50° F. When possible, we use reduced tillage practices rather than a moldboard plow to improve soil health. Sometimes it takes three trips over the field to get the perfect seedbed. The soil samples from the fall let us know the amount of nutrients in the soil currently. If needed, we can add more nutrients through applications of manure and fertilizer. Each

crop has different nutrient needs, so nutrient plans are made for individual crops and fields.

Finally, we are ready to plant! Onions and peas are the first to go in the ground, followed by corn and soybeans. Each crop has different planting and growing needs. Fortunately modern planting equipment allows us to determine the fertilizer application rate and depth and rate of seeding with the push of a button, allowing for precise operations. Once we plant, we wait – and hope for good weather, which entails gentle rains and warm temperatures. Growing and caring for the soil and crops on our farm is just as important as caring for our cows.

With warmer weather comes the need and opportunity to do field work, which also means our tractors and equipment are on the road travelling from field to field. We farm land from Churchville to Albion, and ask that you have patience with us on the road and to please use caution. We try hard to not travel during busy commutes, and to allow cars to pass when we feel it's safe. Often times, our tractors are slowing down to turn into a field or are towing wide equipment that can block views, making unnecessary passing particularly dangerous. So for your safety and ours, please be careful. We also want to apologize in advance that we often get mud on the road. Wet fields in the spring make it nearly impossible to keep the road perfectly clean, but we will make every effort to clean it up.

And one last thing, be on the lookout for a wave and smile when you see our field crew on the road this season! They're working hard to get good, quality crops grown and harvested. Happy and safe travels for all this season!

## Book Review: Farm Hands By Tom Rivers

Many of you are probably familiar with Tom Rivers, through his time at *The Batavia Daily*, and now the *Orleans Hub*. Did you know that he published a book highlighting his experiences on farms in Genesee and Orleans counties?

In 2008, Tom set out to work on farms and discover why so few local people are willing to work on farms. Throughout his experience, he visited and worked on 13 different farms including vegetable, fruit and dairy farms. Over the course of the year he discovered hands-on the skills and strength it takes to do those jobs.

This book is a compilation of articles Tom originally wrote for the *The Daily News*, and has won multiple literary awards.

We would love for you to take the time to read Tom's personal experience working on farms in our area.

Copies of the book can be found at several local bookstores and through Amazon.



## Business Connection: Vegetal i.D.

**To Bring Nature back to the City for the sake of sustainable development is the first priority for Vegetal i.D. For over 20 years, Vegetal i.D. has designed and manufactured complete green roof systems that are efficient and require minimum maintenance and irrigation.**

A green roof is a "contained" green space that is not connected to the earth directly. It can always be found on top of a man-made structure either at ground level, or elevated above the surface on a top of a building or other structure. Green roofs are also referred to as vegetated roofs, eco-roofs, garden roofs, or living roofs.

Growing plants on rooftops is not a new concept; green roofs have been used for centuries for thermal insulation. Their first known use was on temples in ancient Mesopotamia (fourth millennium), and Vikings were known to use green roofs to protect their homes from harsh weather. In addition to thermal insulation, green

roofs manage rainwater on-site, minimize the urban heat island effect, improve solar panel productivity, increase biodiversity, and make cities more beautiful.

In 2011 Vegetal i.D., established their first green roof nursery in the United States. They chose to lease a location from CY Farms, at the Batavia Turf site in Batavia. This location is near the portion of the United States and Canada with the fastest growing green roof market. As well, LEED building systems (a certification for sustainable building) requires building materials to be sourced from within 500 miles of the project. Our location in Batavia reaches 50% of the North American population with a 500-mile radius and helps customers to meet LEED building standards.

Vegetal i.D. Inc is the American branch of a global company, Le Prieuré, that did its first green roof installation in 1989. They invented

and patented the HYDROPACK® system, which was the first modular green roof system in Europe, and remains the number one green roof technology thanks to our constant innovations. As a pioneer in the manufacture and design of green roof systems in both Europe and North America, Vegetal i.D. has been a specialist in urban vegetation for 20 years (green roofs stormwater management, and low maintenance urban development).

**For more information on Vegetal**

**i.D. and green roofs, visit:**

<http://www.vegetalid.us/>



## Harvesting pallets of sod for delivery



## COVER CROPS

Cover crops are low input crops that are planted in between main cash crops to help protect and improve the soil. Considered a conservation practice, cover crops can be grasses, legumes, small grains, or brassicas. There are many diverse benefits to planting cover crops.

## Benefits of cover crops:

1. Reduce/prevent soil erosion and nutrient runoff
2. Conserve nutrients to cut fertilizer costs
3. Reduce weed pressure
4. Protect water quality
5. Improve overall soil tilth and health
6. Aesthetically pleasing during fall & winter

CY Farms plants cover crops in the fall to provide ground cover on fields throughout the winter. This past year, the main cover crops we planted were triticale (a small grain that is a cross between wheat and rye) and red clover. Both those species will get harvested as a forage for our heifers. This spring, we interseeded red clover into 300 acres of our wheat fields. When the wheat is harvested in July, the clover will grow rapidly and we will harvest it as a forage this fall. We also use barley as a cover crop to help get onions established on the muck by protecting them from wind.

While cover crops may not have immediate payback the way cash crops to, cover crops are just one of the many sustainable practices we use to conserve soil health on our farm.

## Did you know?

A heifer is a young female cow before she has had her first

## Life of a Cow at CY Heifer Farm

CY Heifer Farm, LLC is a custom heifer raising facility. This means we raise female calves for other farms, and don't actually own the cows ourselves. These farms often do not have the facilities or the personnel to raise calves and heifers themselves. We currently receive heifers from 12 dairy farms throughout New York State. They travel from as close as 20 minutes away and from as far away as 4 hours to get here. Eleven dedicated people make up the team that provides care for the animals. We take in calves shortly after birth to 2 months old, and raise them until they are due to calve at just under 2 years of age.

Calves are started and raised in a groups of 25. Young calves remain in groups based on the farm they came from. They are fed milk replacer using automatic feeders, which we have been doing for the last 7 years. This system helps to cut down on time and labor, as compared to hand feeding in a calf hutch system, where each calf

gets its own hutch. This method also allows calves to interact more with each other. Some research shows that calves in group feeding drink more milk, as they aren't waiting for us to come feed them and can drink whenever they are hungry. The automatic calf feeder mixes the milk replacer continually in batches so they always have fresh, warm milk to drink. Despite a mostly automated system, the calves are visually inspected daily for any signs of illness or slow growth, and parameters like weight and temperature are taken regularly.

After weaning at 56 days, animals move to a bedded pack in larger groups and then progress through a series of freestall barns until they are ready to be returned to their owners.

The vet visits our farm once a week. From Attica Veterinary Services, Dr. Carlson's weekly visits include pregnancy checks on the bred heifers, treating any sick cows, and a general evaluation of herd health. Our veterinarian plays an integral part in

keeping the cows healthy for their owners and provides valuable input for our operation.

Our heifers receive a diet similar to milking cows which includes corn silage and alfalfa, along with necessary vitamins and minerals, corn meal, corn distillers grain, and soybean for the younger heifers only. They also frequently get to eat cull vegetables from neighboring farms including onions, potatoes and cabbage, which they love! The diets we feed focus on healthy growth, rather than milk production since the cows here aren't being milked yet.

We often give tours for college classes, 4-H clubs and other groups, as our system is relatively unique for New York. Contact us to find out more.

[www.cyheiferfarm.com](http://www.cyheiferfarm.com)

## CY Farm's barley helps create New York beer

Craft brewing is on the rise in New York, thanks to the recent "Taste New York" initiative and Farm Brewery Law. Along with that has been a rise in growing hops, malting houses, and of course, barley production. The farm Brewery Law and License were designed to increase demand for locally grown products to stimulate the brewing industry in NY. It regulates what percentage of products need to be produced in NY to market a product as "Made in NY". CY Farms has been growing barley for malting for several years as the demand has been increasing. The barley is sold to [New York Craft Malt](#) in Batavia. The malt is then sold to brewers around the state.

[Flying Bison Brewing Co.](#) in Buffalo tapped its first batch of "farm-to-table" beer this March, made exclusively from ingredients sourced in New York State. Called Barnstormer Pale Ale, barley from CY Farms was used to make the malt at New York Craft Malt. The hops came from Wrobel Farms near Utica. The first batch was 20 barrels, which is the equivalent of about 35 half kegs of beer. It was sold on draft, in bottles and at a limited number of local bars and was expected to sell out within 30 days. Thankfully, we at CY were able to try some before it was gone!

Flying Bison is committed to using as much New York-grown hops and barley as crop yields will support, and we hope other NY breweries will follow suit. CY Farms hopes to continue to support this growing industry through the production of barley.





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Let us know if you'd like to be included in a list to receive this newsletter in .pdf for by email instead.

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