### Face

Continued from page 16

manage them myself without requiring additional labor. I was also very fortunate to find a breed that worked for me. I think half the battle is finding the breed that works best for you, regardless of the species. If you do not enjoy the breed you have, or they do not work for your management system it will make it that much harder and much less enjoyable. I appreciate the hardiness of a Suffolk -- for others they may be too stubborn or too large to work with. I find that there is nothing more pleasing than their jet-black faces, stark white wool bodies grazing on fresh green grass. I really enjoy that we have sheep that can lamb on their own, raise great lambs, grow a quality carcass and can also go out and be competitive at regional shows. I am incredibly proud that we have been able to make a line of sheep that work in the barn and in the show ring.

#### What do you see opportunities for your farm?

I find that more people are becoming interested in lamb

products and are more willing to try cuts of lamb. Consumers are also becoming more educated on the best cooking techniques of lamb and that is also helpful in marketing. Lamb burgers have gained a lot of interest recently and we have noticed an increase in the last two years for ground lamb. I also see more kids becoming interested in showing market projects at their fairs. Each year we have a handful of kids that want to buy or lease lambs for fair projects. More of these kids are showing interest in sheep as a project animal as they require little special equipment and are manageable for younger kids to work with. Even if these kids do not grow up to produce sheep, they have at least had exposure to the industry and the products produced by sheep which makes them a more educated consumer.

#### What are the challenges you face?

The first challenge we personally faced was that some of our area butchers did not want to process lamb. I made some personal contacts and showed them pictures of the lambs we raised, and they were willing to do business once they saw how we raised our sheep. We sent lambs that were clean, shorn and well fed out and finished

and the butchers immediately had a running home to check new moms different opinion. We had a butcher that showed off our lamb that was hanging to a local beef producer they went on to tell others about the quality lamb we produced. On a larger scale, the industry struggles with lamb perception as it is not as widely consumed as other meat varieties and therefore getting people to think outside of the norm for their dinner options is difficult at times. I also find that when you use the word "lamb" people think of a little baby lamb not a 160lb animal at the butcher. There are many sheep and lamb producing organizations that have done a phenomenal job promoting the industry and lamb cuts so I believe those efforts will continue to open the door for producers.

#### As an ag educator, what is the most important thing you would like consumers to understand about what you are your family does?

We raise sheep because we enjoy them and while some do have a terminal market to the dinner table all our animals are treated with the utmost respect. Our market animals are kept with the same regard as our higher valued show sheep. I take any loss personal as I have spent lunch breaks from work

and have spent long nights up with newborn lambs who are not doing well. I welcome anyone to the farm to see how we raise our sheep and will answer any questions on how they are kept and explain why we do what we do. I hope that consumers see that we spend every day caring for these animals and the time that is committed to each one shows in how they are kept.

#### What advice do you have for future farmers?

Be passionate about what you do. Share your gift with others. Always support youth and new people to your industry. Never stop learning. Recognize your areas of weaknesses and continually strive to improve them. Play to your strengths, this will help you gain an edge in the market you are pursuing.

#### Why is Farm Bureau important to you?

Farm Bureau is an organization that can reach all facets of agriculture. It can strengthen our agricultural industries and develop our agriculture leaders while educating consumers and providing educational outreach programming those without agricultural ties. Everyone is served by this organization.

## Masler

Continued from page 9

Farm Bureau Federation Annual Meeting in San Antonio, Texas where I became the first person from New York to win the National competition. These Farm Bureau experiences inspired me to apply to the LEAD New York program – a two-year program to develop leaders in the food and agriculture industry – which built upon my Farm Bureau experiences and opened my eyes to the possibility of a career change. I began attending Cornell Law School in the Fall of

1990 where, for the first time in my life, I truly enjoyed being a student. After graduation, I practiced law with the Ithaca Office of Harris Beach in Tompkins County, where I worked for 15 years. I especially enjoyed the opportunity to use my farm background and legal education to help farm families and other business owners with issues important to their success.

In 2008, I was presented with the opportunity for another change when New York State Supreme Court Justice Phillip R. Rumsey, seated in Cortland County, contacted me and asked if I would consider working with him. It was not an easy decision to leave the busy law practice that I had spent years building, but I was

attracted by the opportunity to work with a respected justice and to do the intellectually challenging work of the Supreme Court. At the trial level, Supreme Court hears the most significant civil cases and is unique among all New York courts due to the tremendously broad range of subjects that it considers, including contracts, zoning and land use, all types of accidents, medical malpractice, real property, divorces and mortgage foreclosures. It is crucial for all residents of our State that we have Justices who understand and appreciate our communities and especially the importance of agriculture as our number one industry.

Now, here comes another change.

Justice Rumsey must retire at the end of the year and I am a candidate to succeed him in the 10-county 6th Judicial District, which includes Broome, Chemung, Chenango, Cortland, Delaware, Madison, Otsego, Schuyler, Tioga and Tompkins Counties.

People in the farm community care about their youth. They excel at teaching practical skills and the value of leadership and community service through organizations like 4-H, FFA, Farm Bureau Young Farmers & Ranchers, LEAD and more. And, although I am no longer a dairy farmer, my roots in agriculture run deep and I always enjoy my visits with those working in agriculture.

## Grassroots Farmers' Market Classified Ads FREE to NYFB members

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Allis Chalmers wide front CA, VGC \$2,000; CASE 1845C Skidsteer reconditioned VGC \$7,500; 1949 John Deere "B" has electric start & 3 point hitch VGC \$2500; FarmAll Super M with wide front VGC \$3000. All equipment stored inside and well maintained. 607-783-2787

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IRRIGATION PIPE – 4 and 6 inch; 20, 30 and 40ft lengths; assorted tees, elbows and hardware. No reasonable offer refused. Laurel, Suffolk County. 631-276-2555

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