

Greetings from Sholan Farms

I can't believe how fast time goes by. It seems that just a week ago we were busy pruning, getting ready for spring and planning for the year ahead. Now our sights are set on the summer and fall harvest. The blueberries are ripening quickly and the fall raspberries are promising to be abundant. We should also have a heavy peach and apple crop this fall!

We're excited to welcome back all our dedicated staff and volunteers. We have a couple of new employees who will serve in various roles. Kara Gravel is busy managing the farmers markets and we will soon have additional staff to help out in the farm stand. Sam and Paul have been working to keep Sholan Farms a showcase that we can all be proud of. Regardless of the weather they can be found tackling day to day farm work. They have done an amazing job.

This is also the time of the year that we start looking for seasonal help, so if you know anyone who would like to join in on the fun around here, please have them give us a call or email.

Farms like ours have become an integral part of the fabric and culture of our community. Hardly a day goes by without someone sharing a memory of coming here as a child or relating that some of their fondest times growing up, were at this farm. These stories fuel our fire to keep moving forwards, and the reason we do what we do. I often wonder what my parents and grandparents would be thinking of this farm today, and hope they would be pleased and proud of what we have done.

Our greatest need is for community support and volunteers. Some of the work that needs attention includes berry picking, cleaning, weeding, planning events, fund raising, graphic arts work, farm stand staffing and more. Whether you have one hour to help or more we need your support.

Last week we had 8 teenagers from the Leominster United Methodist Church who gave up one hot summer day to volunteer. They pruned, cleaned in the farm stand and picked blueberries. Two weeks ago we had several ladies donate their time to make over 700 bags of apple crisp mix. Then we have our regulars who always show up every day— Felix LeBlanc weeding and picking, Kirk Bodwell weeding and picking, Pat Mason teaching youth the art of pruning, Nilah Gerhard picking blueberries and helping with the crisp mix, and Pat Adams helping to plan for the season and staffing the berry shed, Steve Adams gives his time to manage rubbish throughout the year. I would be remiss if I did not thank the Sholan Farms board members. They work tirelessly throughout the year. There is so much that needs to be done and we can use everyone's support. We hope your having a wonderful summer, enjoying the beautiful New England weather, and soaking up the sun. See you around the farm soon!

-Joanne DiNardo, President BOD

Board of Directors

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Special thanks to the Friends' Board of Directors who volunteer their time throughout the year to make Sholan Farms succeed. A sincere thanks goes to family members who have also given of their time and support the board members which enabled them to make such a commitment to Sholan Farms.

Thank You All

Orchard Manager—Sam Holmes

Hello All!

It's hard to believe another apple season is approaching us so fast. It seems like just yesterday we were putting away the last items from the Christmas Tree Shop, and now here we are preparing the farm for another harvest!

In the last newsletter update, we were right in the thick of pruning season. We were pretty lucky this winter, and didn't have to battle too much cold, ice, or snow to accomplish the pruning of all our apple and peach trees.

Once the pruning was finished, we began our spring preparations. From building prep to field prep, I think the months of April and May might actually be the two most stressful months on the farm. The main reason being the ongoing battle with Mother Nature that always seems it's most fierce in the Spring. Nonetheless, we waited out the rain and mud and eventually things dried up.

In the beginning of June, we planted all our summer and winter crops with the help of some eager volunteers. We are already seeing so much reward from all that hard work. Hopefully, we will continue to see such success when the pumpkins and winter squash come in!

This month things have really started to ramp up. Sholan is participating in five different farmer's markets this year, which started July 10th. People love our blueberries and raspberries, so just wait until they get their hands on our peaches and apples!

We are still about a month out from picking that first apple of the season. As we approach that time we are keeping very busy stocking the markets and keeping up with the farm and all it's various crops (including weeds).

I am very excited for what this season is going to bring. I am cautiously optimistic that it will not be the wet, rainy disaster that was last fall. But for now we will continue to enjoy the sunshine!

See you at the farm!

Sam Holmes, Orchard Manager

Facilities Update

To everyone's relief, especially Sam and Paul, we were able to purchase a brand new Gravely 52" zero turn mower. We will finally have a season or seasons of a mower that doesn't brake down after just about each mowing. This new piece of equipment is being used almost daily to keep the lawns mowed and to keep areas like the blueberries and spindle orchard looking pristine.

The new Dodge Ram Truck purchased last year is being kept very busy right now. It gets loaded five times a week and goes off to farmers markets. Apple deliveries will be starting soon and our days of having to rent a vehicle for the day are finally over.

There are many projects still in the planning stage and we are excited to see the growth and improvements this year.

-Steve Smith, Vice President, BOD

“Volunteering is the ultimate exercise in democracy. You vote in elections once a year, but when you volunteer, you vote every day about the kind of community you want to live in.”

—Anonymous

18th Apple Blossom Festival Wrap Up

Well, as Sam said, April and May were the most stressful months at Sholan Farms. While the Apple Blossom Festival planning committees worked away we also watched one rainy day after another often wondering if the festival would take place at all.

We faced the logistical problems of setting up around the Envirothon on the Friday before, the rain and endless mud, and the endless emails and phone calls from people asking if we would hold the festival at all. We all crossed our fingers and hoped for the best.



Mother Nature was on our side this year and when I woke up very early on May 18th and looked out the window to see blue skies and the sun shining I let out the first sigh of relief in a long time!

What a spectacular day it turned out to be. Traffic was lined up all the way down Pleasant Street to the Number 6 Schoolhouse waiting to get a parking spot. Many people just gave up and parked up and down the street. The entertainment was great, food trucks sold out, craft show was huge with over 50 participants, and the Silent Auction was a huge success. The kids had a blast on the bounce house and giant slide and waited in endless lines to have their face painted and get a balloon sculpture. The bagpipers led us through the orchard and the butterflies flew into the sunshine. What more could we ask for?

This festival takes months to plan and would never happen without the many volunteers that put in so many hours to get ready for it. I thank them all for their devotion to Sholan Farms. Every year gets better and better.

-Patti LaGrassa, Festival Chair

2019 Cash Register Training

Andy Mercik will be holding cash register training for old and new cashiers. Even if you have been a cashier in the past you are required to re-train. Equipment and procedures change from year to year and we hope to have everyone ready.

Training times are:

Tuesday, August 20, at 6 pm

Saturday, August 24, 9 am

If you can't make one of these times let Andy know and we will try to accommodate.



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Sholan Farms[®]

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This newsletter was compiled and
edited by Patti LaGrassa

About Our Organization

The Friends of Sholan Farms is a non-profit corporation that relies solely on the support of its members, sponsors and volunteers. We are formed under the 501(c)3 statutes and all donations are a tax write-off. Founded in 2001.

Calendar Notes

July

U-Pick Raspberry and Blueberry begins mid July, Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday

August

August 21, 6pm, Volunteer Welcome Back BBQ

August 24-25 Season opening -daily 10-5

September

September 21-22 Cream of the Crop

September 22 Johnny Appleseed Homecrafters Show 10-5

October

Columbus Day Weekend October 12-13-14 Scarecrows in the Orchard



Sholan Farms Staff

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