



**Beth Gamache, Sign of the Horse Farm, Concord, NH.
Beth cultivates 1.5 acres with her husband and young son,
Jackson, on five acres within Concord's city limits.**

“I wanted to farm for several reasons - it connects me to my family's history - my father's father was a farmer (and a postal worker) in Georgia, and my mother raised horses on the farm we are on today. When I found myself living on my mother's farm, it seemed only natural to continue the tradition of running a farm. When my husband appeared fearless in face of the unknown adventures that

farming promised I decided that I would like to run a small business. I grew up with family gardens, and backyard chickens. Organic eggs are the only worthwhile egg, super full of nutrition and flavor, and I wanted to not only enjoy them myself and give them to my loved ones, but also to share the quality with others that value these amazing eggs. I farm organically because it is an extension of my regular life habits - if I don't use commercial cleaning products to clean my windows, why would I want to use chemicals to raise my food? Also, I was attracted to the challenge and identity of running a farm within the city. I am dedicated to open space and found that instead of getting involved in other community projects that running a farm would satisfy that dedication. The cost of inputs to chemical/conventional farming is high and so is unsustainable. I want to offer high quality and nutritious food, and I believe organics is where it's at.

I like to focus on the sort of large type veggies: broccoli, eggplant, corn, celery - instead of the fussier veggies like salad mix. Cherry tomatoes and peas are the only small veggies I grow. I like to grow crops that require some study, crops that I need to pay attention to to see how they are doing. I also like challenges; people told me, oh, you can't grow broccoli in NH without a lot of spraying, and you can't make any money on it, or, raspberries are too fragile. There is nothing on the planet like the flavor of true organic celery, locally grown - not grown in a sand pit with liquid fertilizers; grown instead in rich organic soil; I have found locally grown celery and raspberries act like fine wine, the flavor lingers on the palate - no kidding!

Right now I farm part-time so I ask myself, if I farmed full time could I make a livable profit? My husband and I have professions that support our family. I think about how if as a farmer I was paid per hour like other trades people, such as carpenters, mechanic, plumbers, the cost of food would be prohibitive. Yet how do we in farming get compensated for our training, and knowledge? How do farmers make any money on broccoli which at best has a 30% success rate from seed to harvest, sometimes 0% depending on the weather. There are many questions.

I grow a Three Sisters beans-corn-squash combo, and grow pole beans that are called "telephone pole" beans - they have been around since the 1800's and grow as long as 6'-8' tall. I like the diversity in flavor that heirloom offers, and I strongly believe in preserving the heritage of these seeds.

Farmers are eternal optimists. Farming is in my blood, I follow the "just keep planting" admonition of old time farmers.”