



FROM OUR FARM TO YOUR KITCHEN

Stone & Thistle Farm

East Meredith, NY

Denise is an avid chef. She uses lard from her pigs in dishes as varied as homemade pastries to farm fresh vegetable sauté.

In 1993, Tom Warren, a cabinetmaker, and his wife, Denise, a financial service professional, started to grow restless with their lives in Brooklyn, New York. At the same time, one of their young sons, Riley, was infatuated with the TV show, "Lassie." Nearly every night, the famous collie enticed him with images of a different life, as she proudly herded her sheep in their living room. "Riley must have watched that show 638 times," says Tom, "After awhile, we thought 'we better get some sheep to keep him here with us!'"

The Warrens started Stone & Thistle Farm with three sheep. "When I look back, it was probably to our advantage that we didn't have any farming background," Tom reflects. "We started out doing things differently. We didn't have a box to think in."

One of their different ideas was to keep their animals outside, in the open, native environment. Some people thought the Warrens were "moving farming back 45 years," as Tom describes it, but they kept moving forward on their instinct to farm with more traditional methods.

Today the family operates a vibrant livestock farm with hundreds of sheep, chickens, turkeys, rabbits, goats, ducks, pigs, and a herd of about 30 cattle. When the inevitable day comes to slaughter the animal for market, this too, is done



"Our farm operations are run entirely by our family. Our methods are very different methods from conventional farming."

– Tom Warren

with utmost consciousness. For example, every year at Thanksgiving, the Warrens host a "Work for (some or all of) Your Turkey Day" on their farm. People are invited to participate in every step of taking the birds from Stone & Thistle Farm to their very own dinner table. "It's an honorable thing to kill a turkey - we make it as kind, conscious, and quick as possible," explains Denise.

Also since the beginning, the Warrens have connected with shoppers at the farmers market. "We've really been welcomed by the communities where we sell. People generally appreciate what we're trying to do, and that gives us a lot of satisfaction," says Tom.