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Draft Animal-Power Network

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LOOSE HAY BARN FOR NATURAL ROOTS

by Rebekah Perry

A few weeks ago I had the pleasure of speaking with David Fisher about the new barn that he is building.

David Fisher has been perfecting his technique of "making do" with a horse barn that is far too small for their needs for long enough. Most of us are familiar with the skill of making do, and maybe we don't even realize the areas where we exercise it until someone else comes along and says, "You're doing what?!" Something in their incredulous tone usually tips us off as a fleeting thought passes by: "Doesn't everyone....?" Apparently not. With a



horse living in the harness room in the barn attached to the house, David recognized that "Not everyone..." So he set out to design a barn big enough to meet all his needs. With a separate harness room (it won't double as a stall). And he doesn't just want to double his total hay storage capacity, he'll quadruple it. Plus there will be room in the hayloft for... dancing, of course! And a ping pong table...and a trapeze.

David and his wife, Anna Maclay own and run Natural Roots, a 200 member vegetable CSA located in Conway, MA. They are designing and building a barn that will house the horses, pigs and a whole season's worth of loose hay. Natural Roots exclusively uses horse power for all of the garden

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Loose Hay Barn, from page 1

power needs. Through extensive use of cover cropping and adding compost and soil amendments they strive to improve soil fertility each year. They also use the horses to harvest all of their hay "loose" or un-baled. Until now some of the crop has been stored in a couple of small hay mows, the remainder stacked outside until the barn areas are empty, then the mow is restocked from the outside haystacks. Thus, hay may be handled 3-4 times or more between the field and when it is fed. This inefficiency as



well as issues of waste and hay quality have inspired David & Anna to build a new barn.

Through conversations with Donn Hewes, Jay Bailey, Sam Rich and others in the DAPNet community, David worked out a plan for the barn. He has based the design on the barns that are built by Donn's Amish neighbors in western NY state. It features a stick framed truss design that has been used by that community for generations. The dimensions are 36' x 56' with an 8' ceiling downstairs and a 12' wall in the loft.

The barn will house 5 horses but there will be 9 stalls plus harness & grain rooms. These stalls will be along one

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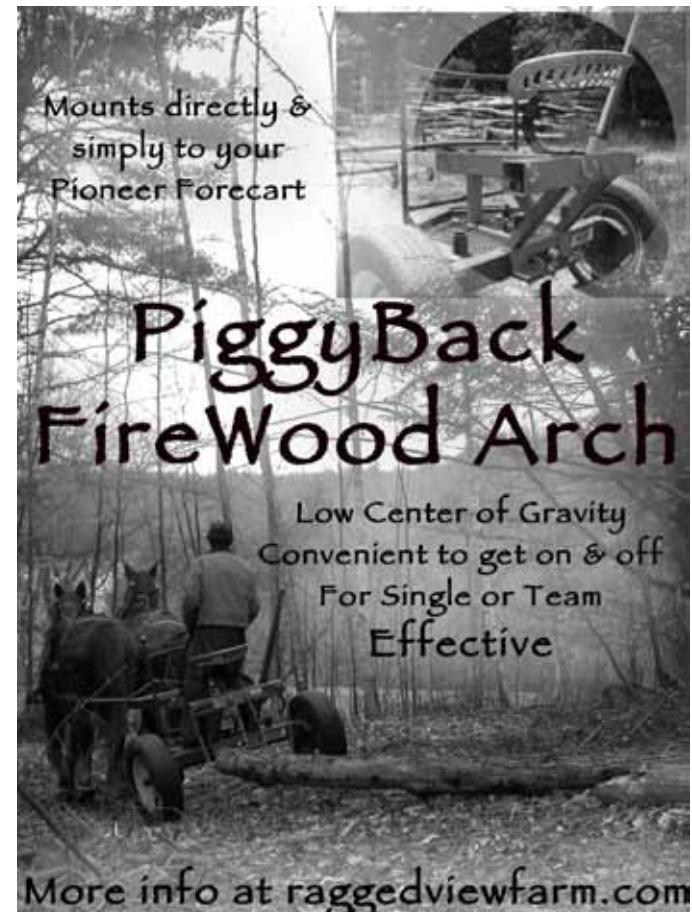
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Observations About the New Barn at Natural Roots from Donn Hewes:

The barn truss design has many interesting characteristics. It lends itself to home-sawn lumber very nicely: it is designed for soft woods, typically 2 x 4's, 2 x 6's, 2 x 8's. The same design is flexible for barns from 30' to 42' wide, and from 48' to over 100' long. The thing that most impressed Jake (my Amish neighbor) and I each time we visited Natural Roots was the obvious care with logging, milling and constructing all the barn pieces. That was one of the things that made the project so much fun to be a part of.

The best part of this barn is that it is being built by a group. Of all the folks at David's on the day of his barn raising, only three of us had ever built a barn like it before. The adjustments made on David's barn to suit the local building codes (and attending inspectors & engineers) only further illustrate how adaptable it is. I think it was a first for my Amish neighbors and friends Jake and Raymond, to see our non-Amish small scale organic, horse powered farm community pull together for an important project. I know they were thrilled to be part of it."



Loose Hay Barn, from page 3

side of the center drive-through aisle. On the other side will be three pig-powered manure composting bins. The manure will be removed from the horse stalls via a bucket & track system and dumped into one of the compost bins. After a few weeks of adding bedding and manure daily, the pigs will be moved to the next pen and manure will be dumped there. Meanwhile, the first pen will have time to rest, heat and compost. David expects each 10' x 12' pen to hold about 2 months worth of manure, giving each pen about 4 months to compost before being spread.

In the past they stored loose hay in several different buildings around the farmstead and had a couple of outside stacks as well. All of the hay will now fit in the loft, lifted off the wagons with traditional, animal-powered equipment. The wagons will be parked outside the barn with a hay fork lifting the hay up through a large door high on the side of the barn. It will be dropped in the center of the loft and stacked in the mows. It works like this: A horse pulls a rope, which runs through a series of pulleys to lift a hay fork set in the load of hay on the wagon parked alongside the front of the barn. Once the forks click into

the trolley directly above, the trolley (with a big fork or 'jag' of hay) rolls through a large door in the gable end of the barn and down the track suspended at the peak of the barn roof. A trip rope opens the forks, dropping the hay at the desired point along the length of the barn. In this way David and his crew will use horse power, rather than people power or electricity to load the years' hay crop into the barn (see related article, this issue).



A few more technical aspects of the design: The horses will eat from a feed aisle that doubles as a manger. Hay will



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be forked through a chute from the loft down to the aisle in front of the horses. They will have a 3' wall in front of them to keep them in their stalls and will reach over the wall to get their hay. There will be an automatic waterer in front of each pair of horses. The floors under the horses will slope 1/4" per linear foot toward the gutter to keep liquid moving away from the animals. The pig pens will slope to the center to avoid liquid overflow. Cement floors will be covered with rubber mats under the horses.

Having built a smaller CSA barn a few years ago, David had some experience in building scheduling to apply to this project. To reduce out of pocket costs he purchased a sawmill and began logging for the barn in December. The earthwork was done in the fall with a foundation poured in mid-December. The winter months featured lots of logging and milling, along with construction of the lower level of the barn in preparation for the barn raising that was held in early March. The lower level of the barn is sheathed with plywood for the structural integrity that it will lend to the building. This is the only lumber that will be purchased. The hay loft will be sided with green lumber; as the boards dry and shrink, the resulting gaps will aid in ventilation to help the hay cure.

Asked about timing for completion of the barn, he replied with certainty: "We WILL put this year's hay crop in the barn!"

Thoughts from the Barn Raising from David Fisher:

The barn raising was quite an incredible experience. I have difficulty finding the words to describe my feelings, but in brief I can say that it was a tremendous blessing. To have so many wonderful friends and neighbors, many of whom I don't even know, come together in joyous cooperation to build something beautiful that will hopefully serve us for generations is hugely uplifting. The building was nailed together with laughter to the symphony of ringing hammers, every member meanwhile building something lasting inside themselves through the experience. After a long winter of hard and careful work, to watch the enormous structure virtually spring up out of the earth is incredibly gratifying. It is as though all of the trees we harvested, all those hemlocks who were possibly living out their last years due to the Wooly Adelgid, were reborn in a new form, and grew instantaneously on such a warm a spring-like day; though not as individuals, but rather as one organism comprised of many trees. The barn is born from the marriage of man and nature; it cannot exist by the efforts of one or the other alone.

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Welcome to Our New Administrator!

from Outgoing Administrator, Rebekah Perry

We selected Karen Pettinelli from a large pool of qualified applicants (see Karen's bio, page 9). We are working through the transition process and I am excited that DAPNet will have such a strong, dedicated administrator. Karen is thorough, quick and a good question asker – very important with such a varied and complex job to learn! DAPNet is a young and growing organization with many systems to improve, expand and rework and Karen has stepped up to the tasks with a great attitude and strong 'toolbox' of skills to apply. We are now most of the way through the transition process, though I am still "in the wings" to answer questions and support Karen in any way I can.

I am excited to be moving onto the board of directors and looking forward to continuing to oversee the newsletter. I'll be soliciting and generating content and working with our designer, Sean Mallinson to produce a newsletter that we hope will continue to grow with information, ideas and photos of interest to our diverse membership.

You may notice that while Karen is now listed as the Administrator, the DAPNet address has not changed. Why is this? As a Vermont corporation, DAPNet must have a Vermont headquarters. My address in Brownington will continue to serve that purpose for the foreseeable future. As our farm is for sale, the address may change to a PO box at some point, however for now DAPNet will continue to use the 509 Dutton Brook Lane, Brownington, VT address. To reach Karen you can email her: dapnetinfo@gmail.com or call her on DAPNet's phone line: 802-763-0771

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Loading Loose Hay

by Rebekah Perry with Jay Bailey

Loose hay is a system – each piece is integral to the pieces before and after, making it hard to talk about just one part of the system. Hay is mowed in swaths of differing widths depending on the length of the cutter bar. It is tedded and then raked. The side delivery rake was a common design from the era when loose hay was in its prime, and our common modern term "windrow" came from the classic action of the side delivery rake: "wind roll". A side delivery rake rolls the hay into a twist very much like a long, loose rope.

The loader goes around the field following the direction of the rake and mower, making it easy to get every wisp of hay up the loader. This means that the person on the wagon is fed billows of hay that is already loosely



organized. Each forkful that the person loading the wagon places along the sides of the wagon is a unit of hay that has an integral, organized structure and "hangs together" to a certain degree. Each forkful is placed and stacked similarly to the way a brick layer builds a brick wall or hay bales are stacked – on the second level, each forkful is placed over the joint where the two forkfuls below come together. Now I can hear you wondering "how the heck can you tell where the joint is?" but trust me, with practice, you can tell. You can see it and feel it with your fork – and beyond that, you just 'know'.

The wagon is loaded with the edges carefully stacked and the middle filled in too. A packer tromps the load, his legs poking down through the layers, further knitting the load together. An experienced loader will load the wagon



in two halves – the front and the back so it will unload more easily. The sky is the limit, as far as how high you can build the load. Keep the height of the barn door in mind if you are unloading inside the barn. The top of the load should always be "as flat as a pool table" so that each layer of hay put on has a flat surface upon which to sit.

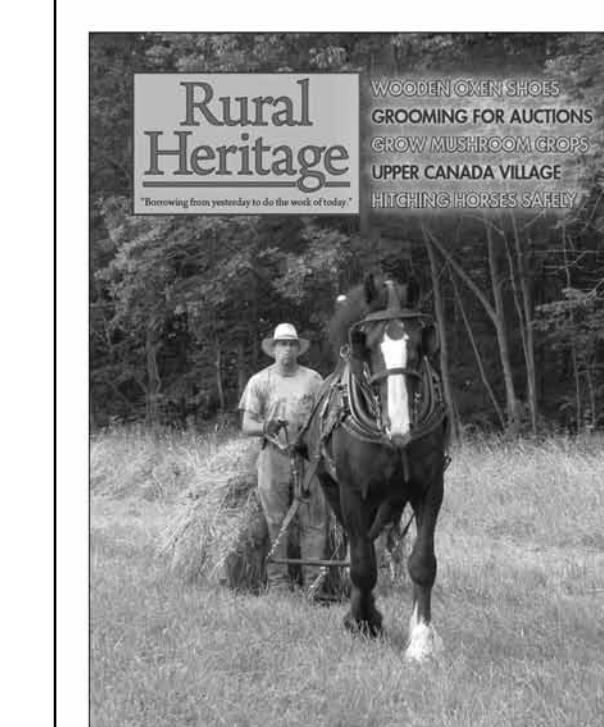
You'll want to keep the load as wide as possible as you go up. It is easy for it to get narrower and narrower and that really limits the amount of hay you can fit on a single load. Build it wide and you'll be able to pack a considerable amount on each load. Of course, if you are going into the barn you'll have to consider the width of the barn door as well. Joe Delaney once built a load so wide and solid at my parents' farm that it got stuck in the barn door. The



horses actually started to pull the wagon out from under the load of hay! We used the hay fork in the barn to unload it from where it was - not an ideal situation, but eventually we were able to pull it farther in to unload the back half.

Next issue: Unloading Loose Hay

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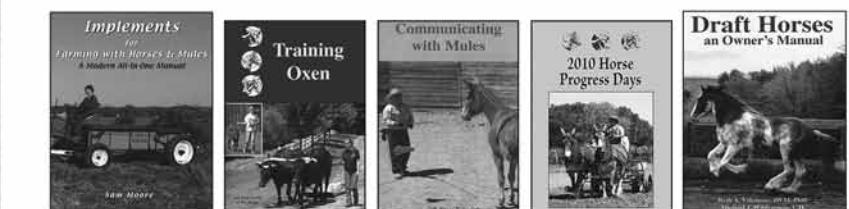


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Calendar of Events:

TUESDAY - FRIDAY, MAY 20 - 23: Fair Winds Farm Draft Horse Workshop, Brattleboro, VT - Comprehensive workshop covers basic harnessing, hitching & driving skills in this 4 day workshop. For info: fairwindsfarm.org or 802-254-9067

FRIDAY & SATURDAY, MAY 16 & 17: Neal & Rebekah Perry Horsemanship Clinic - This workshop will focus on building your relationship with your horse through groundwork and hands-on exercises. Improve your communication, understanding & performance. For info: www.nealperryfarm.com or 802-754-2396

TUESDAY - FRIDAY (TWO WEEKS), MAY 27 - JUNE 6: Working Horses, Working Landscape Workshop, Sterling College, Craftsbury Common, Vermont (see related article in last issue for more info)

FRIDAY & SATURDAY, JUNE 13 & 14: Mowing Hay with Horses - Intensive Workshop covering the basics of mowing, adjustment & considerations. For info: fairwindsfarm.org or 802-254-9067

FRIDAY - SUNDAY, JUNE 20 - 22: Midwest Ox Drovers Association Annual Gathering at Tillers International, Scotts MI For more info see www.midwestoxdrovers.com or call (269) 626-0223

THURSDAY - SATURDAY, JUNE 26 - 28: Women's Teamster Workshop, Neal & Rebekah Perry, Brownington, Vermont - This workshop will cover the basics of harnessing, hitching and driving with the unique strengths & challenges of women in mind. For more information visit www.nealperryfarm.com or call 802-754-2396

FRIDAY - SATURDAY, JULY 4-5: 2014 Horse Progress Days, Mt. Hope, Ohio - See ad in this issue for more information

SATURDAY, JULY 12: Cultivation with Animal Power, with Stephen Leslie and others at Cedar Mountain Farm, Hartland, VT - This workshop features demonstrations & discussions with optional practice time. Evening dinner & teamster panel discussion. See ad elsewhere in this issue

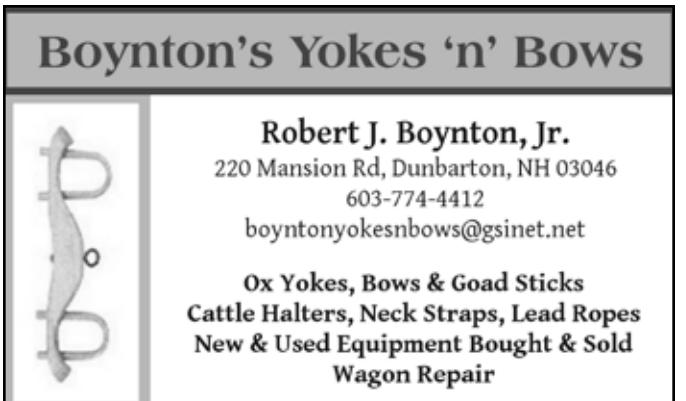
FRIDAY - SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 26-28: DAPNet Annual Gathering, Cummington, Massachusetts - A smaller, low key version of the Draft Animal-Power Field Days, the Gathering will feature a number of teams (and singles, of course!) demonstrating various tasks with their animals. There will be lots of time to visit with your friends and meet others in the DAPNet community. In longstanding DAPNet tradition, good food will also be a feature of the weekend.



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Cultivator Workshop

On July 12th the Draft Animal Power Network will offer a cultivation workshop featuring draft-animal power. We are partnering with Stephen Leslie and Cedar Mt Farm for this workshop to demonstrate the importance and effectiveness of cultivation with draft animals. We will observe cultivation in a market-garden in mid-growing season and discuss techniques, tools, training, and other aspects of the job with several experienced teamsters showcasing their craft.

Demonstrations will run from 9am to 5pm with a lunch break. For an additional fee attendees will be able to 'test drive' equipment in the afternoon with a knowledgeable teamster looking on. The evening will feature a community dinner and a panel discussion including the teamsters from earlier demonstrations, so even if you can't make it for the whole day, plan to come for the evening festivities!

Attend in the morning, afternoon, evening, or all day. More information and registration forms can be found in the ad, this issue or on our website: www.draftanimalpower.org or call 802-763-0771.

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Introducing DAPNet's New Administrator: Karen Pettinelli



A native of Massachusetts, Karen has been involved in farming since she was 18 when she got roped into helping a local organic vegetable farmer do a harvest before a frost. She has now been passionately farming for over a decade, and most recently was managing Holcomb Farm CSA in Ct. As the Farm Manager for Holcomb Farm Karen had the opportunity to communicate with 450 CSA members, 30-40 regular volunteers, and up to 2,000 members of the town and community for the purposes of furthering the non-profit mission of the farm. She also developed and managed fundraisers, farm dinners, and educational events to expand the reach of the farm and its non-profit goals. Karen enjoys working both with web-based tools and person-to-person interactions to manage memberships and the budget and to develop a community through networks, events and activities. The community, the work, the healthy food and lifestyle, and the desire to forward the message of sustainable farming are all motivators in her work as a farmer and as Administrator for DAPNet. Karen currently lives with her partner in Amherst, Massachusetts and in addition to her work as Administrator for DAPNet, grows winter produce using storage techniques and high tunnels, and acts as a consultant for Holcomb Farm. She was recently featured in Edible Boston's summer 2012 issue as one of 4 women farmers featured to represent the growing movement of women in farming.

Of her new position as Administrator she says: "I am very excited to put my efforts toward forwarding the mission of the Draft Animal-Power Network!"

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