

The Art of Farming

BY MARY STANLEY

From blueberry picking to biomedical lab assistant to organic farming, new Farm Manager Jim Lough has a very diverse background and a multitude of talents that he brings to Colchester Neighborhood Farm.

“I grew up in Middleboro and one of my first jobs was picking blueberries at Freitas Farm. I guess farming is in my blood. My father was a chicken farmer on an industrial farm and I grew up around agriculture,” he says.

Right out of high school, Jim got a job working in a biomedical lab at Mass General Hospital. That led to a position working as a research assistant in a lab at Mt. Sinai Hospital in New York City. But after a while, Jim began to miss his hometown and returned to Massachusetts and to the family business, so to speak.

“When I got back here, I spent five years working on an organic farm in Buzzards Bay, learning all I could about that type of farming,” he says.

From there, he went on to work as the Livestock Manager for a farm in Hingham. “I found out that I prefer vegetables,” he says with a chuckle.

One of the things that fascinates

him, he says, is the battle to keep plants healthy without the use of pesticides. “It’s a challenge, but I enjoy it,” he says.

His favorite part of his job is putting the farm stand display together, which includes placement of the vegetables in such a way as to draw attention to certain items and to make everything look appetizing and appealing. “I like setting up the display and making it look like a work of art,” he says.

Putting these displays together allows him to tap into his creative talents—which he has many.

When Jim isn’t managing the farm, he is a member of a bluegrass band where he plays the mandolin. He also plays the guitar and is hoping to play his instruments at some upcoming events at the farm.

His wife Dee Elliot also works in the non-profit industry, publishing artwork created by high school students. She also teaches at the University of Massachusetts-Boston.

Jim enjoys working with and teaching the individuals at the farm.



Farm Manager, Jim Lough, serves up some organic produce

“They all do a really good job of taking care of the animals. They’re not crazy about weeding, but unfortunately, that is 88 percent of the work on an organic farm,” he notes.

He is, however, very impressed with the work ethic of the individuals who help at the farm. “I am really surprised by how diligent they are. They really are pretty focused and they stay on task and don’t complain,” he says.

As farm manager, he will be looking for ways to improve on the growing and harvesting aspects of the job. With the fall season winding down, Jim is looking forward to filling the greenhouse with seedlings that will later be replanted. “It never ends,” he says. ■