

## Summary & Resources - Elmwood Stock Farm June 2026 OAK Farmer Field Day



### Integrating Organic Poultry and Sheep

#### Event Summary

“Our job as farmers is to harness solar energy as best we can.”

This take-home message, from farmer Mac Stone, rose above the many recommendations and lessons he shared at a recent OAK Farmer Field Day at Elmwood Stock Farm. “Our job is to convert the solar energy of photosynthesis - stored by plants in the soil, roots, fruits and seeds of crops and pasture - into energy harvested for human nutrition.” Touring Elmwood’s certified organic pastures, Field Day participants learned time-tested methods for the integrated grazing of hair sheep, chickens and turkeys in a regenerative system using portable electric fencing, farm-built structures, farmer innovation and regular observation.

#### Elmwood Stock Farm

Elmwood Stock Farm is a sixth-generation family farm in Georgetown, Kentucky. Certified organic for more than 25 years, Elmwood is among the largest and most diverse organic farms in the region. Supplying a large Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), multiple farmers markets, an on-farm store and online sales with nationwide shipping, Elmwood raises certified organic fruits and vegetables, row crops, grass-fed cattle and sheep and pasture-raised pigs, chickens and turkeys. They also produce a variety of value-added products. Mac Stone farms with his wife Ann, brother-in-law John Bell and a strong crew of year-round and seasonal staff.

#### Integrated Pasture Systems

Raising livestock on pasture requires healthy soils and healthy plants for forage, so Elmwood Stock Farm’s rotational grazing is the backbone of the farm’s management. The pastures benefit from increased organic matter, microbial diversity and aeration from the livestock’s movement and “waste” fertility. The poultry and sheep feed on pastures that regenerate after each short grazing period and are free from chemical inputs. The sheep graze down forage on 25 acres of fescue, bluegrass, white clover and more, reducing weeds and plant height for the poultry, which then feed on insects and reduce parasites that affect the sheep. This multi-species grazing system keeps the land fertile and the animals healthy.

## Poultry

Elmwood Stock Farm's 800 Hyline Brown laying hens are rotated weekly to ensure fresh forage and exercise. The mobile chicken "egg-mobiles" are built on wagon bed frames that allow shade, weather/predator protection, dark nests that the hens can see out of, instant access to the pasture and fresh water. Mac advises leaving one wagon tire flat to reduce unintentional movement of the wagon. The wagon gets water via 3/8" irrigation tubing from a field spigot to a gravity-filled hanging water bucket with a float valve.

Surrounded by electric netting, the hens are protected from predators with space to roam and forage. The electricity travels via an extension cable to the top wire of the netting, all of which is kept mowed to reduce the loss of protective electric current. The pasture forage is supplemented each morning with certified organic feed from KOFFI (Kentucky Organic Farm and Feed Inc.), allowing the hens just enough food to support their growth and laying nutrition (~ 0.33lbs/day) while minimizing excess food that could attract wild birds and avian predators. Eggs are collected daily in the early afternoon to be washed and candled. Candling uses light to identify cracks that could allow bacteria to get into the egg and to detect occasional meat spots, or epithelial tissue, that's unsightly in a frying pan.

Chickens raised as broilers or meat birds are housed in two floorless cattle-panel hoophouses with closed ends and connected by an enclosed "courtyard," open to fresh air and sunlight. The middle courtyard section is closed at night, and the entire structure is moved daily to fresh pasture. These Cornish Cross chickens receive approximately three pounds of organic feed containing roasted soybeans over the life of the bird and reside on pastures rich with white clover and insects. To maintain their organic certification all the way to the consumer, Elmwood takes the year's 2,500 birds (at around eight weeks of age) in batches every two to three weeks to a certified organic processor (Central Kentucky Custom Meats). They schedule these dates in January to ensure a consistent inventory for market demand.

Elmwood Stock Farm raises two breeds of turkeys, Narragansett (heritage breed) and Broad-breasted Bronze. Raised in a floorless structure with nesting boxes, shade, water and feed, and surrounded by electric netting, the turkeys are rotated weekly to fresh pasture. The heritage turkeys are hatched on-farm from a breeding flock of 10 toms and 35 hens that is pastured year-round. Elmwood's 450 Broad-breasted Bronze are purchased from Mt Healthy Hatchery as day-old poults and on the farm from June through October. Note that certified organic poultry must be under continuous organic management beginning no later than the second day of life.

## Sheep

Elmwood Stock Farm manages a flock of Katahdin sheep, with a few Dorset remaining from an early trial flock. Mac has selected Katadhins, in part, due to their greater resistance to parasites, good "mothering instincts" and their characteristics as hair sheep, requiring no shearing. (The Dorsets need shearing each February before lambing so the lambs can find the teats more easily.) As certified organic livestock on certified organic pastures, they're given no grain, antibiotics, steroids or hormones. As a buildup of internal parasites would be debilitating, the herd is continually rotated every two to three days during the summer. Any internal parasite eggs that pass through the animal will hatch in three days. The resulting larvae climb up a blade of grass to be consumed by a grazing animal, but the sheep have been moved during that time, keeping the herd free of parasitic infection.

Lambing in April, the ewes and lambs are isolated for a few days to encourage bonding and then spend their days on pasture, housed only occasionally at night for predator protection. Elmwood converted a steel-wheeled wagon into a shade structure with used landscape fabric, providing shade but allowing airflow, and surrounded it with a large grazing area enclosed in electric fence netting. Management is simple: an occasional hoof to be trimmed (only two to three per year due to healthy pastures and movement), observation to select and cull ewes with unpleasant dispositions or unhealthy lambs and infrequent doubling of the electric fence netting when coyotes pose a threat.

Through rotational grazing - continually moving from pasture to pasture - Elmwood Stock Farm's animals naturally fertilize and condition the soil life, preparing fields for future residents - either pasture for the next round of livestock or vegetables for grateful customers. So the solar energy cycle continues, nurtured by intentional management of organic regenerative practices.

## Gratitude

OAK is grateful to Mac and Ann Stone and the entire crew at Elmwood Stock Farm for their generous time and effort for this Field Day and to all the farmers and ag professionals who made the trip to Georgetown to share in the learning and conversation.

Keep in touch with Mac Stone at [elmwoodstockfarm.com](http://elmwoodstockfarm.com) and @ElmwoodStockFarm ([Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#)).

## Related Resource Links:

OAK Resources:

- [OAK Farmer Field Days](#) - Hosted on working farms, these events highlight organic crop and livestock systems and best practices in production, marketing, business and resilience on Kentucky farms. The 2026 Field Day calendar offers events from May to October, on-farm and online!
- [Organic Production Assistance Program](#) - Organic production consultation services provide dedicated technical assistance to Kentucky farmers who are currently using or interested in adopting or expanding organic practices.
- [On-Farm Conservation](#) - This program provides outreach and education for farm-based conservation on owned or leased land. Eligible participants are Kentucky farmers and landowners with production or subsistence farms, urban or rural growing spaces, community-run projects or privately managed lands. OAK's Conservation Outreach Coordinator, Mad Marchal, is available to connect Kentuckians to local NRCS field staff, to reduce barriers to entry into NRCS programs and to offer logistical support and conservation education. Contact Mad at [mad@oak-ky.org](mailto:mad@oak-ky.org) or (502) 509-9839 or [schedule a free call](#)
- [Soil Health Project](#) - OAK and partners are working with farmers and buyers in Kentucky to promote the adoption of organic farming practices and to develop markets for commodities grown and raised in ways that improve whole-farm resilience, soil health and ecosystem services. This project, part of the USDA's Advancing Markets for Producers initiative, runs through August 2028.
- [OAK Conference](#) - OAK's annual conference includes a growing audience of hundreds of Kentuckians and neighbors active in the region's food systems: farmers, researchers, nonprofit professionals, federal and state agency partners, technical service providers and conscious consumers working collectively to build a resilient local food system for all. Collaboration among these diverse voices, grounded in the connection to Kentucky farms, soil and communities,

provides a rich foundation for learning and growth. Mark your calendar to join us in Cave City, KY, on January 29-30, 2027, and keep an eye out for more details in summer 2026.

- [Organic Transition Program](#) - Organic transition specialists assist farmers interested in transitioning to USDA-certified organic production. Organic specialists are available for one-on-one consultations, providing a personal level of service and technical assistance on-site, at the farmer's convenience.
- [Kentucky Farm Share Coalition](#) (KYFSC) - KYFSC creates market opportunities for Kentucky farms growing for community supported agriculture (CSA), a weekly box subscription of the farm's harvest. KYFSC partners with farms and employers to facilitate workplace CSA programs that incentivize employees to purchase CSA. Learn more today!
- [Join OAK today!](#) - The organic and sustainable farming network in Kentucky is growing. Together, we are creating a thriving regional food and farming network. Your support and participation help provide resources to farmers, inspire community members and enhance organics across KY!
- [Sign up for OAK newsletters](#) - For farmers and consumers, OAK offers a variety of regular communications to stay connected to Kentucky food and farming news, research and events.

### Organic Pasture-Raised Livestock Resources

- National Center for Appropriate Technology ([NCAT-ATTRA](#)) Resources:
  - [Small Ruminant Toolbox](#)
  - [Sheep: Sustainable and Organic Production](#)
  - [Tipsheet: Organic Cattle, Sheep, and Goats for Meat Production](#)
  - [Tipsheet: Organic Approach to Animal Health](#)
  - [Tipsheet: Organic Poultry Production for Meat and Eggs](#)
  - [Poultry on Diversified Farms: A Guide to Profitability and Sustainability](#)
  - [Pastured Poultry Nutrition and Forages](#)
  - NCAT Organic Livestock Documentation Forms
- [Nutritional Benefits of Pasture-Based Foods](#) - Food Animal Concerns Trust (FACT)

### Soil Health Resources:

- Soul Fire Farm's [How Alive Is My Soil?](#)
- [Building Soil Health in the South](#) - Organic Farming Research Foundation (OFRF)
- [Building Healthy Pasture Soils](#) – NCAT ATTRA

### Funding /Technical Assistance Resources and Service Providers

- Kentucky Center for Agriculture and Rural Development ([KCARD](#))
  - Free [business planning](#) for Kentucky farms and agribusinesses
  - [Funding assistance and grant information](#) (Kentucky and beyond)
  - Sign up under "GET UPDATES" on [KCARD website](#) to receive e-newsletters
- U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)
  - Read this first! [A Guide to USDA Resources for Historically Underserved Farmers](#)
  - USDA [Farm Service Agency \(FSA\)-Kentucky](#)
    - [How to Start a Farm: Beginning Farmers and Ranchers](#)
    - Find your county's office in [West Kentucky](#) or [East Kentucky](#)
  - [USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service \(NRCS\)-Kentucky](#)

- [Kentucky Agricultural Development Fund \(KADF\)](#) - Apply by October 30 for [2026 programs](#)
- Kentucky Department of Agriculture (KDA)
  - [Organic Marketing Program](#)
- Grants:
  - [SOAR loan](#) - southern and eastern KY
  - [KSU Small-Scale Farm Grant](#)
  - [County Agricultural Incentives Program \(CAIP\)](#) grant: county-specific! Ask your County Cooperative Extension Agent or Conservation District; more information [here](#)

## USDA-NRCS and Other Conservation Resources

- [USDA National Organic Program](#)
- Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
  - [Environmental Quality Incentives Program](#)
  - [EQIP Funding for Organic Farmers](#)
  - [EQIP Homepage](#)
- Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)
  - [CSP Homepage](#)
  - [“Is CSP Right For Me?”](#)
- Organic Management Plan (823)
  - [2024 Organic Farmers Association 823 Factsheet](#)
- ‘Historically Underserved’ Farmers
  - [“Get Started! A Guide to USDA Resources for Historically Underserved Farmers and Ranchers”](#)