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HOME-GROWN

East Tennessee couple run a small, sustainable farm across the Carolina line.

Story by CHELSEA FARNHAM ♦ Photos contributed by TROSLY FARM



A visitor at Troslly Farm will gain not only a delicious culinary experience, but also a memorable lesson in food.

Some might call it traditional agriculture, others might call it an orchestration of living things, but Amos and Kaci Nidiffer call it their livelihood. A young married couple from East Tennessee, the Nidiffers run a small, sustainable farm in Elk Park, N.C. Offering various produce items as well as poultry, pork and lamb, Troslly Farm has something to offer in every season.

After growing up around their grandparents' farms and gardens, the couple became interested in agriculture while attending Milligan College.

"There's the people who come to the farmer's market and the people who grow, and they're both important," said Kaci, 26. "But we just realized we didn't just want to be the support. We wanted to be doing it."

"There was also this fascination about the fact that almost everything a person could need could be grown or found around where you live," said Amos, 24. "Like, you don't have to go to the grocery store. And just that concept can be romantic and idealized, but it's also really attainable."

Fed up with fast food culture, factory farming and the separation between food and its consumers, the couple decided to put their philosophy into action.

First, they started a gardening club on Milligan's campus, planting a few seeds and even raising chickens on campus. They also visited friends' farms and helped out whenever possible.

"I was milking cows for a while then going to Greek class," said Amos, who graduated from Milligan in 2008 with a degree in English and humanities. Kaci graduated in 2006 after studying photography.

The couple then bought the century-old farmhouse in Elk Park in August 2008. After nine months of renovations and repairs — all performed by the Nidiffers, friends and family — Troslly Farm was open for business.

"It's not an exaggeration to say that if we haven't renovated every inch of this house, we've at least touched every inch of it," said Amos.

From cooking pots to gardening hats, from watering cans to the wood stove, every feature of the house is both useful and beautiful.

A visitor at Troslly Farm will gain not only a delicious culinary experience, but also a memorable lesson in food, as the Nidiffers like to incorporate their guests in the harvesting process — picking the blueberries used in a cobbler, cutting the spinach that becomes a colorful salad, maybe even meeting the animal who will become the main course.

The eating experience becomes infinitely more valuable after gaining a glimpse into the measures taken to grow and raise food as nature intended.

In order to share the farming life with others, the Nidiffers host monthly farm dinners on Saturdays from April through October, where anyone can come and experience a four-course meal entirely sourced from the farm.

"Our goal is to be able to feed ourselves and feed our neighbors," said Kaci. "It's to provide nutrient-dense, healthy food that's not only enriched the land here, but will enrich the people who eat it."

Although the Nidiffers now live a sort of Emersonian existence in the mountains of Appalachia, they insist their early years were spent like any other child — participating in Scouts and even eating McDonald's chicken nuggets.

"I'm not mad at my parents for giving me McDonald's," said Kaci.

"But we're sure as hell not going to take our kids," said Amos.

The farm has grown a little each year, beginning with produce, then adding chickens and now raising ducks, quail, lambs and hogs as well.

In addition to providing food to their neighbors through community

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