

BLACK WIND FARM

Albany County, NY

SIZE

103 acres of transitional farmland

FARMER

Justin Butts



FARM VISION

A diversified animal husbandry and farm-to-table operation focused on sustainable land stewardship and providing community access to quality food and community education on agriculture and culinary arts.

ABOUT THE FARM

Black Wind Farm is owned and operated by Justin Butts, a Navy veteran and chef who returned to his farming roots after navigating health challenges. Justin grew up watching his grandparents grow food, which made a lifelong impact on him. After serving in the military, Justin attended culinary school and began to re-engage with farming. He apprenticed at farms in the Northeast and began renting land, managing livestock, and building a lard soap business. Justin worked with Soul Fire Farm's Braiding Seeds fellowship program, where he was connected to Local Farms Fund and learned about an opportunity to purchase a farm they were selling in New York's Hudson Valley.

Justin's expansive vision for the farm includes direct-to-consumer offerings of diversified livestock products, on-farm educational experiences, and habitat restoration and carbon sequestration strategies in collaboration with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

FARMING PRACTICES

Justin is intensely managing a herd of heritage breed pigs, sheep, broiler and laying chickens, and whole turkeys on pasture. He plans to dedicate a few acres to growing produce for sale primarily through a CSA program. In the future, Justin will plant an orchard and fruiting shrubs that visitors to the farm can pick in a do-it-yourself program. Justin plans to plant a windbreak along the farm and restore 4 acres of wetlands and riparian habitat while maintaining perennial pasture.

HOW WE HELPED

Iroquois Valley provided financing to enable farmland ownership for Justin. Working with Justin provided the catalyst for Iroquois Valley to conceptualize a new loan program to share risk with farmers from diverse and often underserved backgrounds. This pilot program offers innovative loan discount mechanisms that we will more fully launch in 2023.

