

# 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.

