



DIAMOND L RANCH & CATTLE

HURON COUNTY, OHIO

Diamond L Ranch & Cattle LLC is a family owned and operated business run by Jeff and Bev Lepley and their children, Jay and Steph. They currently own and rent 1,600 acres total where they grow corn, soybeans, wheat, and hay. They also feed ~200 head of Holstein beef cattle a year. Jeff is a 5th generation farmer; his family has farmed in Huron County since 1916, when they built the homestead the family still lives in. In fall 2016, one of their rented farms came up for sale. The Lepleys reached out to Iroquois Valley Farms and presented the first investment opportunity in Ohio.



The Lepleys have farmed this particular parcel since 1984. It is a major piece of their operation and has proven to be a very profitable farm. It was rented to them by Flat Rock Homes, a nonprofit that provides social services to the disabled community. When Flat Rock decided to sell this land, they wanted the Lepleys to continue farming it. Iroquois Valley Farms is happy to support this well-established farm family as they transition to organic on land they have a deep connection to.

The Lepleys sought out advice from other Iroquois Valley farmers on how to best transition a large parcel of land. This kind of collaboration and community-building within the company's organic farming network deepens social impact and ensures farmer success. Their transition plan begins in spring of 2017 with soybeans, wheat, extensive cover cropping, and corn. They will create soil nutrition by using a mixture of chicken and cattle manure.

The Lepley family looks forward to making the full organic transition because they believe in creating a better, healthier planet. They began preparing for this transition by planting entirely non-GMO crops and using non-GMO feed for their cattle. The Lepleys firmly believe in sustainably raising their cattle and providing the public with healthfully raised and high quality beef products. Fully transitioning to organic is the next step for the Lepley family to fulfill what they believe is their responsibility as producers to provide the best quality food/product they can with the knowledge available.

Furthermore, as a small family farm operation, the opportunity to become organic producers represents a sustainable means of financial revenue. Once transitioned, they believe they will generate good profits from their low-input farming operation while providing a very good product. They will also continue to gradually transition additional acres and livestock to organic production, with this parcel as their initial project.



Photos: The Lepley Family and their farm

The Lepley's long-term goal is to own enough tillable acres to have a self-sustaining farm operation that will provide financial security to their family, eventually allowing them to pass the farm to the next generation. In their own words, "farming is our way of life and it's what we love to do."