

Elk Farming

Final Report for FNE98-212

Project Type: Farmer

Funds awarded in 1998: \$5,610.00

Projected End Date: 12/31/1998

Matching Non-Federal Funds: \$36,350.00

Region: Northeast

State: New York

Project Leader:

[Debra Armstrong](#)

Project Information

Summary:

Les and Deb Armstrong raise beef cattle and sheep. They began raising elk as well, a few years ago, in an effort to diversify. They obtained a SARE grant to assist with modification of their facilities to accommodate elk, and to defray outreach expenses, as their project was largely a demonstration.

Their original idea in raising elk was to cut off and sell the antlers which, when reduced to a powder, are used in the Chinese community as a medicinal. They have done this, but they've also discovered that the elk have value as a tourist draw. Through hosting conferences, exhibiting at fairs, publishing and distributing a brochure, and showing school groups and others around their farm they have drummed up considerable interest in elk. The Armstrongs have been written up in the newspapers many times, and the Greene County S&WCD and the Hudson-Mohawk RC&D have presented them with awards in recognition of their innovative efforts.

They report that the elk have had a salutary effect on their pastures. Their grazing suppresses weeds and their pelletized manure tends to disperse more evenly over the ground than does that of cattle. Further, since the metabolism of these animals slows during the winter, their consumption of feed and their production of manure also diminish, just at the time of year when run-off and consequent contamination of waterways are most difficult to prevent.

Mr. and Mrs. Armstrong are passionate about elk, and have clearly enjoyed working daily with these majestic animals, and learning about them. Eventually they intend to sell some of them, but for now they are most interested in building up the herd.

- [You and Your elk: A demonstration of alternative, deversified farming](#)

Cooperators

- [James Calhoun](#)

Technical Advisor

1024 Route 66

Ghent , NY 12075

Research

Participation Summary

Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the view of the U.S. Department of Agriculture or SARE.



This site is maintained by SARE Outreach for the SARE program and is based upon work supported by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, under award No. 2019-38640-29881. SARE Outreach operates under cooperative agreements with the University of Maryland to develop and disseminate information about sustainable agriculture. [USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.](#)