



FARM TOUR 2021

2021 SOUTHEAST STRAWBERRY EXPO
Farm Tour & Conference Dates: November 10-12, 2021
Delta Marriott Virginia Beach Bayfront, Virginia Beach, VA

DON'T MISS OUR FARM TOUR 2021!!

Wednesday, November 10, 2021

Cost: \$85.00/per person

Farm Tour includes Lunch & Catered Dinner

- Please note that buses will NOT be provided this year (Attendees will be required to drive their own car to each farm stop)
- Attendees will meet at Hickory Ridge Farm at 10AM to begin tour (Pre-registration is required to attend the Farm Tour)

TAKE A LOOK AT THESE FARMS WE WILL BE VISITING.....



HICKORY RIDGE FARM

Hickory Ridge Farm is owned and operated by John and Robin Pierce. Located in the Hickory section of Chesapeake the family farm is 18-acres that includes 3-acres of strawberries, summer produce and you-pick and wholesale pumpkins. John's family ran the farm as a part-time operation many years ago and grew pumpkins and strawberries. After his mother, father, aunts and uncles retired from their career jobs, they decided to put the farm up for sale. After much prayer and consideration, John and Robin asked the family about opening the operation in 2011. With the family's blessing and guidance, John began farming the land. Having never farmed before, he had a lot to learn! With the guidance of family, extension agents and other farmer friends, John learned much and continues to learn more and more every year!

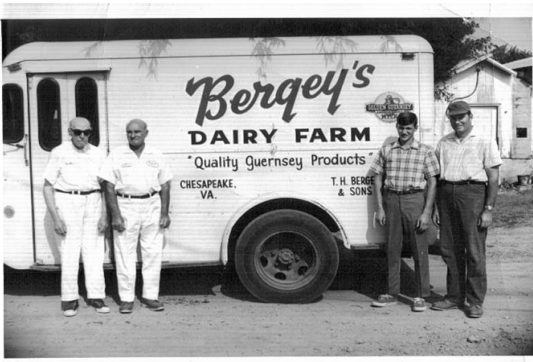
The job of farming has become a full time venture for the Pierce family. They are blessed with an extremely supportive family and community. Their triplet boys are now at an age to help on the farm and become more involved every year. John and Robin continue to look for ways to grow the family farm business with the hopes of passing the tradition and way of life down to their children. They thank God for their supportive family and friends. Without their help and support, they would have never been able to do this adventure!

MT PLEASANT FARMS

Slabaugh Farms was established in 1992 as a family-owned farm in Chesapeake, Virginia raising beef cattle, corn, soybeans, wheat, and oats. The opportunity arose in 2009 to start a peach orchard, and James Wenger a family friend graciously offered his assistance and years of experience in raising peaches to the project. The orchard has grown quickly with 400 trees planted in the first year and 1,500 trees planted in 2010 including a few apple, pear, and nectarine trees in addition to the peach trees. Mount Pleasant Farms was born in 2011 with the first peach harvest from the new orchard.



More pick your own options have evolved to include strawberries, blackberries, and pumpkins. Free Range Chickens provide eggs to the store where food items including honey and dairy products are sold. Birthday parties and pony rides delight many children. Mt Pleasant also offers wholesale options to restaurants and other markets.



BERGEY'S BREADBASKET

The Bergey family has been providing the Tidewater area with fresh food for over 100 years. Clayton Bergey and his wife, Amanda, with their four young sons moved from Bucks County Pennsylvania in 1910 using a horse drawn covered wagon. He began farming a small plot of land in what is now Chesapeake VA. From the beginning, there was focus on marketing products directly from the farm to the consumer. Clayton marketed meat and dairy products at the downtown Norfolk market, the milk in 10-gallon cans, and the meat freshly prepared on the farm.

In 1930, Clayton's son Titus had a job at the Ford Assembly plant in Norfolk, but starting a farm to raise and support his family was more important than the sought-after job at Ford. Therefore, in the middle of the Great Depression, Titus quit that job, combined his father and father-in-law's small farms and began to develop Bergey's Dairy Farm. The operation expanded and soon the Bergey's were milking 25 cows. Titus began a door-to-door delivery service for the farm fresh milk and milk products. In the 60's many customers began to come to the farm to purchase their milk so Titus began to sell bottled milk to customers directly from the "cold room".

In 1961 Titus's son James Harold took over the operation and began an expansion that would continue over the next 30 years. James Harold and Mary Jane had seven children and through the years each child has been involved in the business in some form. During this time, the processing plant expanded and the retail operation moved from home delivery only to also include three stores and a bakery. The first store opened on the farm property in 1978 and a premium ice cream recipe was developed with the help of VA Tech. A second location opened in Virginia Beach at the Farmers Market in 1985. A third location complete with a bakery was opened in another part of Chesapeake in 1988.



In 2005, the dairy operation was sold and the stores closed. The family property was in danger of complete liquidation. Four of James and Mary's children thought that the property should be preserved. In 2006, Bergey's Breadbasket opened using recipes and techniques that had been passed down for generations. Bergey's Breadbasket is a full service restaurant in the City of Chesapeake offering cinnamon rolls, cream cheese Danish, made to order sandwiches, fresh ice cream, made from scratch pies, breads, cupcakes, and cookies. The farm offers a petting zoo, an annual corn maze, fall festival, produce, and conventional crops of hay, corn, soybeans, and wheat.



BROOKDALE FARM

Brookdale Farm got its start in 1992, a year after Tom and Anne Baker and daughter Amanda moved from "town" to Virginia Beach's rural Pungo community. Tom worked for Virginia Cooperative Extension and Anne was an Emergency Department nurse with Sentara. Pumpkins, a crop where harvest could be "sometime" vs. "now," were grown in the early years. Small-scale school field trips were first conducted in the fall of 1996.

The first strawberry crop was harvested at their Pungo farm in 1997. Tom had just left Extension after a 20-year career and Anne soon moved to an administrative position at the same hospital. The first sweet corn was also grown in 1997. The farming operation grew, opening a summer produce market on the nearby main road in 1998. Sweet corn, cantaloupes, and watermelons were grown (some wholesaled to other farm stands). Other summer vegetables and peaches were purchased. The Bakers operated one of the first corn mazes in Virginia from 1999 to 2001. The school field trip business grew to include strawberry and pumpkin seasons and by the early 2000s the Bakers hosted over 12,000 students, teachers, and chaperones annually.

In 2005, two acres were rented from James & Mary Bergey and the first strawberry crop was planted in Chesapeake. The next year five additional acres were rented, Brookdale's Chesapeake farm market was opened, and a pumpkin and fall entertainment enterprise was started on the Bergey property.

The Bakers "retired" from summer produce after the 2014 crop year and from pumpkins after the 2018 crop. COVID-19 ended school field trips in 2020. Brookdale Farm now concentrates on strawberries, which were always the core and most profitable crop, with one acre in Pungo and one and a half acres in Chesapeake. Being three-fourths retired is great!



CULLIPHER FARM MARKET

Cullipher Farm Market is located on Pungo Ridge in the Back Bay section of Virginia Beach. It is owned and operated by generations of the Cullipher family. The current operation evolved from a tobacco and peanut farm in Bertie County, North Carolina and small truck farms in Princess Anne County, Virginia (now Virginia Beach) and Currituck County, North Carolina. The Cullipher farming history goes back over 200 years.

The farm grows a variety of fruit and vegetable crops, concentrating on strawberries, blueberries, peaches, apples, sweet corn, and pumpkins.

They specialize in pick your own activities, on farm educational activities, and have an on farm market. In May 2021 they opened a new market on the main farm surrounded by pick your own crops. The market offers an array of produce, honey, flowers, baked goods and ice cream.

At Cullipher Farm Market they strive to provide the highest quality produce from their fields and orchards. The Culliphers practice numerous conservation activities in partnership with the Virginia Dare Soil and Water Conservation District and Natural Resources Conservation Service.

