



FARMERS OF  
CATAWBA COUNTY  
PHOTO EXHIBIT



## *Fred & Terri Proni*



## Proni Honeybee Company



Fred Proni began his journey into beekeeping 30 years ago with his first company in upstate New York, Freddy P's Crystal Pure Honey. In 2011, he and his wife Terri moved to Hickory to form the Proni Honeybee Company, which provides several goods and services such as wholesale honey to other beekeepers in the state, queen breeding, beekeeping equipment and pollination services to fruit growers. Currently they manage 100's of hive in about four counties and are the largest honey operation in the region. After passing a rigorous examination process, Fred earned the title of EAS Master Beekeeper and is currently the 2nd vice president elect (2018) of the NC State Beekeepers Association. Wishing to share his knowledge of beekeeping with others, he is active in training other beekeepers, lecturing and giving workshops.



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*Jr. and Susan Proctor,  
son Van & daughter Michelle*



## Sunny Hill Farms & Windy Wool Windings



Sunny Hill Farms and Windy Wool Windings are two farm operations within one family. Sunny Hill Farms, managed by Jr. and Van, produces poultry and dairy while Windy Wool Windings, managed by Susan Proctor produces lambs for meat and sheep for wool and solar field grazing. Susan is the Proctor you will most likely meet at the Conover Farmers Market while you'll find her daughter Michelle at the Hickory Farmers Market. For Susan wool production is a passion and she works to not only harvest the wool but also to clean, spin, dye and knit it to produce many products which she sells at farmers markets. Susan is the recipient of the 2015 Kiwanis Agricultural Educator of the Year Award.

Hickory and Conover farmers market.



828-320-4775

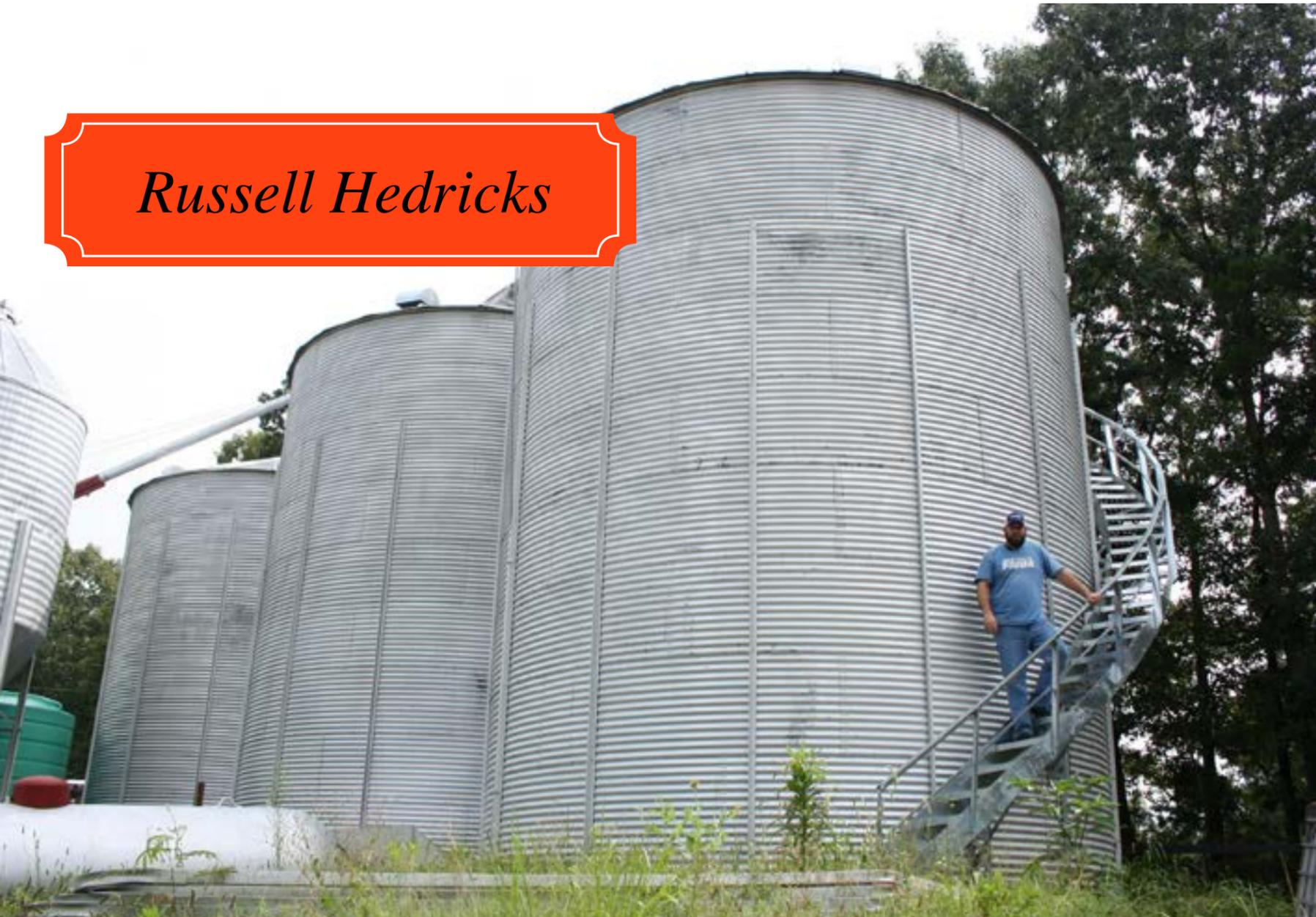
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Facebook: [Windy Wool Windings](#)



*Russell Hedricks*



## JRH Grain Farms LLC



Russell is a diversified farmer whose openness to developing new products and techniques has won him the NC Innovative Farmer of the Year in 2014. Known most for his advocacy of no-till grain production and cover crops as a way to build up soil health, Russell is in demand worldwide as a speaker. Russell expanded his cropping operation to grow heirloom varieties such as Bloody Butcher and Blue Hopi corn sold as either cornmeal or grits and used in several local restaurants. Seeking other markets and ways to utilize his grain locally, he also started working with Seventeen Twelve distillery to produce a bourbon made from local corn. JRH Grains also provides farm services in seed cleaning, seed distribution and hauling. In his free time, Russell is working on a pilot program to explore the production of industrial hemp.



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Southern Seeds and Feed



*Michael & Dianne Fulbright  
& son Joe*



## Millhaven Farm



For 30 years, the Fulbright family have been dedicated to producing high-quality beef and pork for local markets. Michael embraces the process of being a farmer - working outside, caring for momma cows and their calves, managing the pasture, and providing for his herd. He believes that the secret of good beef is the food and care of the animal, providing high quality pasture and grain for finishing. His greatest reward is the satisfaction of providing quality meat at affordable prices to his customers.

Hickory and Cherryville farmers markets, or call for pick up.



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millhaven@abts.net

www.millhavenfarm.com

Facebook: Millhaven Farm





*Tim Roberts*

## Shady Oaks Farm



Tim Roberts' main goal for his farm Shady Oaks is to share his beautiful property with people so they can relax, enjoy nature, pick some blueberries with their families and learn something about growing and enjoying fresh, farm raised food. He's a pilot with American Airlines and started this farm 13 years ago as a retirement project. He has planted several acres in blueberries for U-pick as well as other vegetables, free-range eggs and honey for sale at area farmers markets. Tim hopes to expand his farm to include more agritourism events in the future and explore his passion for winemaking. Products available at Hickory and Public Health farmers markets. U-pick at farm.



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Facebook: Shady Oaks Farm



*Joe & Susie Devine, sons Ben, Tom  
& Luke & daughter-in-law Lori*



## Devine Farms



The Devine family have created a beautiful, family friendly environment on their farm with the goal of educating children and adults about agriculture. Several schools visit Devine Farms during the year for educational programming with a hands-on approach. Susie and her daughter in-law, Lori, enjoy teaching crafts, leading farm tours, and connecting with visitors. The Devine Family works as a team to make Devine Farms a family fun place for children and grown-ups alike. Folks can come and enjoy the outdoors, pet some farm animals, pick a pumpkin, wander a sorghum maze, and take a hayride.



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Facebook: Devine Farms





## Carroll Heavner, Marvin Wilfong & Tommy Cline



Also known as The Sweet Potato Guys. Carroll, Marvin and Tommy have been working together since they retired seven years ago from Catawba County Public Works. They specialize in sweet potatoes, potatoes, peanuts, watermelons and cantaloupes. Carroll and Marvin have farmed most of their lives, Marvin farming with his father in the evenings after work. They have all been friends since they were kids, growing up together fishing and hunting and are well known in the community. In the hour I talked with them in front of the “tater house”, three cars honked in greetings and one drove up looking to buy sweet potatoes. It’s hard labor, with long hours in the heat and cold, often only using hoes to combat weeds, but there is something about the connection with the soil and growing food which keeps them young. Conover and Gastonia Farmers Market.



828-428-9576  
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*Alex Spruell & Hetal Patel*

# Sohudaya



Sohudaya Farm is the result of the ideas and dreams of two long-time friends. Hetal, originally from India, found it hard to find the Indian vegetables she missed from home. Alex, who had a history of diabetes in his family, was interested in the blood sugar stabilizing ability of some of these Indian vegetables. The result was the creation of Sohudaya, which means, "I am rising". They started small, renting a small piece of land and experimented with just a couple of vegetables. It was a success and for the past five years, they have been expanding their production and assortment of vegetables available in ethnic grocery stores in Charlotte.



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919-609-9656 Hetal  
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*Martha & Reynaldo Calderón, son  
Florenceo & daughter Andrea*

## Calderon Produce



Martha and Reynaldo Calderon spent 17 years as migrant farm workers before coming to North Carolina to start a farm of their own. Throughout the struggle of life on the road and a kind of grueling labor that most people have never experienced they raised four children. In 2010, Calderón Produce was incorporated and today they manage over 100 acres of tomatoes, peppers and cucumbers for wholesale markets along the Eastern Coast. From their humble beginnings of harvesting produce from other farms to sell at farmers markets to being recognized as “Champions of Change” by the White House in 2014, the Calderons have never turned away from hard work and continue to learn and improve their farm to not only meet food quality standards but to exceed them.



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*Keith & father Steve*

## Steve Caldwell Farms



Keith Caldwell comes from a long line of farmers. His family is dedicated to maintaining farming as a way of life, in order to preserve farmland and a rural livelihood. Keith learned from his father the importance of developing strategies for better crop production. They continue to work together to explore no-till methods and make the most use of modern agricultural techniques to increase efficiencies and reduce their use of agricultural chemicals. Keith has become so knowledgeable that he works as a certified crop advisor. Keith was awarded the Catawba County Contributor to Agriculture Award in 2016. Keith and Cheryl Caldwell also run the Balls Creek Farm and Garden Store.



828-466-2647  
Balls Creek Farm and Garden  
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Facebook: Balls Creek Farm and Garden



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Photography & Design: Ines Mueller



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