

# Farm Offers Animal-Inspired Retreats

Windy Goat Acres in Chelsea, Iowa, is a 15-acre animal sanctuary and farm retreat welcoming visitors of all kinds.

“My partner, Jim Carney, and I found this little piece of land,” says Jessica Kettler, farm owner. “We started with just a horse and a few goats and some chickens.”

At that time, Kettler was a full-time artist looking to create something that would support other artists and creative folks.

“I dabbled in hosting small arts fests and little intimate events on the property,” she says.

It didn’t take long to see the potential for hosting retreats, larger events, and fun farm stays for families looking to connect with animals and nature.

“We wanted to offer people a space to simply wake up and enjoy peaceful country life, filled with sunsets, farm-fresh eggs, and peacefulness away from chaos.”

Carney, an experienced builder, drew up plans.

“We brought his vision to life, with help from some friends,” Kettler says.

Today, the farm has two 24-ft. yurts, three cabins, and a charming little “hobbit house” built into the ground.

“We now host artist retreats, wellness retreats and some fantasy retreats, along with small weddings, bachelorette parties and food-to-table events.”

Most guests come from Midwest population centers like Des Moines, Chicago, Minneapolis-St. Paul and Iowa City, as well as neighboring states. Windy Goat Acres remains distinctive in the rural retreat space by staying open to new ideas.

“We want everyone to feel welcome, to feel like they can share their own visions with others.”

The farm is also home to many goats, sheep, llamas, horses, ducks, chickens, peacocks, emus and potbellied pigs.

“Some were taken in because they needed a space to live,” Kettler says. “Each animal is so friendly, which makes it more special for kids who are meeting them for the first time. No matter what brings people to our property, they’re generally so excited to see the baby goats, to feed Bentley the potbelly pig



“We wanted to offer people a space to simply wake up and enjoy peaceful country life filled with sunsets, farm-fresh eggs, and peacefulness away from chaos,” says Kettler.

a popsicle, watch the peacocks put on a full tail display, and maybe receive a llama kiss.”

Kettler finds joy in meeting so many people and seeing them have positive experiences on the farm.

“We read about some of their favorite moments in the public journals in all the glamping sites,” she says. “It makes us feel like we’re doing good work, offering a sense of calm to help guests create good core memories.”

However, the workload of such a diverse operation can lead to burnout.

“Between animal care, meeting guest expectations, and organizing unique events, it’s difficult to juggle all at once.”

Lodging costs range from \$75 to \$135 per night. They can be found on Facebook and Instagram, with listings on the booking websites Hipcamp.com and Airbnb.com. Guests can also add experiences such as snowshoe rentals, llama hikes, goat socials, painting and more.

Kettler’s advice for similar operations is to be willing to work really hard.

“Count on a lot of tears and sweat and uncertainty, but also lots of love. We get to spend every day with what we call our ‘barn fam,’ and they’ll always remind us why we love doing this, even when it feels so difficult some days.”

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Windy Goat Acres, 3091 Q Ave., Chelsea, Iowa 52215 (ph 319-573-0799; windygoatacres@gmail.com; Facebook: Windy Goat Acres; Instagram: @windygoatacres).



BeriTech Inc. is collaborating with Simon Fraser University (SFU) to develop a solution for growing off-season blueberries, raspberries and blackberries in Canada.

## AgTech Challenge Drives Canada’s Berry Supply

Canada is often viewed as a nation of agricultural plenty, but surprisingly, it sources up to 80% of its produce from other countries due to its short growing season. These climate conditions make the country vulnerable to global supply chain disruptions, climate change, and geopolitical instability.

In 2022, the Weston Family Foundation recognized the need to strengthen Canada’s domestic food security and launched its \$33-million Homegrown Innovation Challenge to help bring together Canadian farmers, growers, academics and entrepreneurs.

The Foundation’s goal was to reduce Canada’s dependence on imports, focusing on fresh berries as an ideal test crop for sustainable, technologically advanced agriculture.

Four teams, including BeriTech Inc., advanced to the final phase of the Foundation’s Challenge. Each team was awarded \$5 million to expand their projects over the next three years.

Based in Chilliwack, B.C., BeriTech Inc. is collaborating with Simon Fraser University (SFU) to develop a solution for growing off-season blueberries, raspberries and blackberries in Canada. They’re combining plant breeding, genomics, controlled environment agriculture technologies, and advanced horticultural methods to close a billion-dollar import gap and strengthen national food security. Their approach integrates these berries into a single system, alternating between dormancy and fruiting periods to allow for year-round harvesting.

Rodrigo Santana, BeriTech’s CEO, highlights Canada’s need.

“We have a seasonal climate with growing season constraints. Our berry production is seasonal, but consumption is year-round. On average, 75% of all fresh fruits consumed in

Canada are imported, and the import value of berries alone is around 1.5 billion dollars per year.”

BeriTech’s greenhouse infrastructure is specifically designed for berries, emphasizing a “less is more” philosophy. The goal is to extend the harvest season, maximize the use of existing labor and equipment, and help growers generate steady, year-round revenue. Advanced greenhouse technology and sophisticated techniques will enable intercropping and continuous fruit supply while keeping costs in check.

The SFU-led team, along with partners such as the University of British Columbia and leading berry growers, is also developing new gene-edited berry varieties suitable for greenhouse cultivation. Commercial demonstration trials are currently underway, with ongoing refinements planned over the next three years.

Santana emphasizes that Canadian consumers value more than just affordability.

“Canadians want high quality, great taste, transparency and traceability. It’s exactly what our value proposition of freshness, sustainability, safety and consistency is about in comparison to off-season imported berries.”

BeriTech’s vision is to provide a dependable, domestic supply of “Made in Canada” berries for consumers, retailers and farmers. For growers, nearby greenhouses provide off-season income and better use of infrastructure. For retailers and consumers, this results in fresher, more sustainable, and flavorful fruit available year-round.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, BeriTech Inc., 41510 No. 3 Rd., Chilliwack, B.C., Canada V2R 5G1 (rodrigo@beritech.ca; www.beritech.ca).



No heavy machinery, deep holes, messy concrete or long delays — just a reusable and strong foundation ready for construction right away.

## Ground Screws Eliminate Digging

Stop Digging Ground Screws, designed in Sweden, are entering the North American market as a proven alternative to concrete piles, ready to perform year-round in all weather and on all terrain. Known as ground screws, earth screws, screw anchors or pier anchors, they provide a stable, immediate foundation for decks, carports, sheds, fences, signs and greenhouses.

The screws work like concrete posts or pier blocks but are quicker and easier to install. Trained installers use lightweight, high-torque drills to secure each screw in just minutes, even on slopes, cobblestones or tarmac. No heavy machinery, deep holes, messy concrete or long delays — just a reusable, strong foundation ready for construction immediately.

“We have a screw for every situation, whether needed in soft or rocky, hard soil,” says a company spokesperson. “Pre-drilling pilot holes helps clear small stones and split medium rocks, while longer screws ensure stable installs in loose ground. The equipment is portable, causing minimal disruption to grass, tarmac or the surrounding environment, with almost no clean-up required after the job.”

Stop Digging offers four basic screw models: adapter, pipe, post and beam, each with different brackets, lengths and diameters to suit a wide range of projects. Adapter screws are ideal for living quarters, greenhouses, solar panels and prefabricated houses. Pipe screws secure piping, street signs, temporary fences and bins. Post screws are perfect for fences and barriers, while beam screws support garden deck frames and joists.

Custom attachments are available for tai-

lored solutions, and all screws are made of galvanized steel and tested for tension, pressure and load to meet U.S. building standards.

Ground screws eliminate the need for concrete without sacrificing stability, cost or longevity. Each industrial-grade screw comes with a 25-year warranty, ensuring decades of reliable performance.

When planning a project, Stop Digging experts recommend first measuring and marking the structure’s footprint, then assessing the load requirements. They’re happy to consult for advice, area requirements and pricing. Their team will help solve challenging assignments to quickly and affordably anchor any project.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Stop Digging Ground Screws (ph 844-787-3444; info@stopdigging-groundscrew.com; www.stopdigging.us).