Q&A with Linda Stewart of Clan Stewart Farm

Location: Huntingdon

In operation since: 160-acre 7th generation farm, one of Pennsylvania’s few remaining Bicentennial farms, in operation since 1793.

Mission: “Our land is very precious to us. We believe that producing fresh, natural and healthy food and selling it locally is the best way to ensure a bountiful food supply, protect the environment and keep farmers on the land.”

Farming Methods
Clan Stewart Farm practices sustainable agriculture with no pesticides or herbicides and operates a licensed kitchen for Farm to Table fare.

Our History
My family has a very long farming history on this old farm. For more than 200 years we’ve grown wheat, oats, and rye; milked cows; raised hogs and chickens. Now the farm produces certified organic spelt, soybeans, and corn. Since 2006, my immediate family has grown vegetables and flowers for farmers markets.

Recently my daughter-in-law, Noemi, and I have carved out a space on the farm for our own food business—preparing our vegetables and local eggs and fruit in season. We are both old hands at cooking real food but we come from very different backgrounds.

Noemi (pictured at right, on the left) was raised in a small seaside town in Italy, in a family of nine children. By necessity, all the women in her family cooked fresh food in great quantities, delivered by the vegetable and seafood purveyors every few days. Her talents can be seen in the Italian entrees we offer. Noemi is undaunted by huge stacks of pie pans, pounds of garlic, and gallons of olive oil. She is absolutely the fastest cook I’ve ever known.

I, on the other hand, am a good bit slower. I grew up on this farm in the 1950s and ’60s when every farm girl had to cook (unless you had older sisters to do it for you). I started to bake with my grandmother when I was a small child and was immediately addicted. I begged to bake my first pie at age 7. Later my mother taught me to grow and steam the first tiny vegetables, how to fry green tomatoes and vegetable fritters, cook potatoes 40 ways, and use black pepper without abandon. I’ve always been most at peace in the kitchen. These days my cooking is infinitely easier because I don’t have to go to the bulk tank in the barn for milk and cream. I don’t have to dig the potatoes or pick the beans either—I have help for that. Many times I have extra help from my sister, Kathy, and my nieces Lisa and Kerry (pictured above, on right). They are all very creative cooks and also help us brainstorm recipes.
Specialties for the Friends & Farmers Online Market

Entrees like Chicken Potpie, Roasted Vegetable Tart, Mushroom and Spinach Lasagna
Soups like French Onion, Tomato Basil, Pasta e Fagioli
Desserts including fruit pies, sweet rolls and muffins
Fresh Produce in season
Christmas wreaths and centerpieces from our greens

What are your seasonal specialties?
We offer prepared foods that rotate with the seasons. For example, in April and May we will offer many dishes from our asparagus crop, in August our specialties include tomatoes and eggplant, and in the fall, winter squash appears on the menu. We use as much of our home-grown produce as possible and we buy from other producers as well, especially Friends & Farmers and our neighbors, Plowshare Produce.

Our winter specialties are Christmas wreaths and centerpieces made from our trees and trees from a neighboring farm.

How do you choose the prepared foods you offer? Are these family recipes? What’s the history behind them?
We cook with nutritious ingredients only—no processed foods. We feature fruits and vegetables from our farm or other local farms whenever possible, and use whole ingredients like olive oil, butter, and Meyer Dairy milk and cream. We make our own tomato sauces and freeze many of our own vegetables in our commercial kitchen. Many of our recipes come from my grandmother, Anna Stewart, who could turn farm foods into art. Her jams, potato dishes, desserts and fresh chicken — prepared in an iron skillet on her wood cookstove — were legendary. (We still use that iron skillet.) We draw on daughter-in-law Noemi’s heritage too, as we use pasta and soup recipes from her Italian mother, Anna Mistretta. Her minestrone is a particular favorite. All the women in the family are avid food blogger followers, so if they aren’t helping in the kitchen, they are sharing recipes.

What are your customer favorites?
Grandma’s Chicken and Dumplings is our most popular dish. It always sells out. All our quiches are very popular, too, probably because we use an all-butter crust and our fresh greens. Folks really like our Spinach Lasagna and Shepherd’s Pie. Anything made with fresh, whole foods is bound to taste good.

Will you be offering any new products soon? We offer new dishes every week.

May customers share requests with you?
We would be delighted to receive requests. Please feel free to email us at ClanStewartFarm1793@gmail.com to suggest new dishes. If you would like to order a certain dish, let us know before Wednesday and we will include it on our menu. We will also offer summer catering for small gatherings.

Favorite quote: Don’t judge each day by the harvest you reap, but by the seeds that you plant. ~ Robert Louis Stevenson