

OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Noblehurst Farms Inc.

Linwood, New York



Cooperative effort diverts food waste

Self-described as an “older millennial,” Chris Noble became passionate about green energy as a student at Cornell University. Ten years later, the seventh-generation farmer created a business model that uses partnerships within western New York to create green energy.

The cooperative project diverts food waste and scraps from local grocers, universities and schools to a digester at Noblehurst Farms Inc., Noble’s dairy operation. This effort keeps 100 tons of food waste from entering local landfills weekly and provides enough energy to power the 1,800-cow dairy.

“We started collecting food waste from local Wegmans stores more than two years ago. While Wegmans does a phenomenal job with its food-donation program, there’s still food that can’t be eaten by consumers, things like melon rinds or orange peels,” Noble said. “That’s where we come in.”

Noble solved a logistics hurdle by creating Natural Upcycling, which allows participating organizations to work together to efficiently and safely transport food waste. A simple but ingenious process collects and transports materials. Large rolling carts are staged at different locations throughout the store, and once they are full of food waste and scraps, the carts are transported to the farm’s digester.

Investment in specialized collection vehicles has been key to the project’s success, and has eased transportation of food waste back to the digester. That led the Rochester Institute of Technology and the York Central School District to implement the process as well. And, participation by Wegmans has grown from six stores to 30.

“I felt there was a real need to drive this mission forward,” Noble said. “Digesters are great for the environment and great for power reliability. The sun doesn’t always shine and the wind doesn’t always blow, but we can keep this digester and program going day and night.” And that helps Noble confidently plan for the future of Noblehurst Farms Inc.

Through its affiliate, **Natural Upcycling**, Noblehurst Farms Inc. and its food waste recycling partners:

- Divert 500 tons of waste from local landfills per month, reducing the production of greenhouse gases
- Avoid 409 tons of carbon dioxide per month, equivalent to 1,046 cars taken off the road