
2010 Cooperator of the Year

Alyson's Orchard of Walpole NH

Each year the Cheshire County Conservation District honors an individual, business, or organization with a "Cooperator of the Year" award at the Annual Meeting. This is done to reward the recipient for cooperating with the Conservation District and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to conserve the natural resources on their land. This year we are happy to announce that Alyson's Orchard is the 2010 Cooperator of the Year. Alyson's Orchard is a unique 500 acre working orchard located in Walpole NH overlooking the Connecticut River.

On December 10, 1980, recently after Bob Jasse and his wife Susan started the business, Alyson's Orchard became a Cheshire County Cooperator. Thirty years later they have a successful orchard that boasts over 50 varieties of apples, along with peaches, plums, pears, grapes, and berries.

They are a local treasure with over 27 varieties of heirloom apples, and they even have some stock from Kazakhstan, origin of apples, growing in Walpole.

" They are very forward thinking, adopting new technologies, remaining market oriented, and managing the orchard in a low impact manner while providing conditions for apples to flourish. "

**- Heidi Konesko ,
NRCS Soil Conservationist**



Cooperator of the Year continued

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Alyson's has worked with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) over the years on their Environmental Quality Incentives Program to do Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and their Conservation Stewardship Program. Beyond their work with NRCS, Alyson's Orchard has been a strong community partner for many organizations. As a supporter of the Conservation District they offer their orchard as the location of the annual conservation plant sale allowing the CCCD to raise necessary funds for operations. They have also offered their

" We want to be a community orchard. We are at our 30th Anniversary and we are still just beginning to see our potential, that is why it is so exciting to me. "

- Homer Dunn ,
Orchard Manager

generous support to other organizations such as the Monadnock Localvores, Hannah Grimes, Empty Bowl, Cooperative Extension, Walpole Library, and many more. Their orchard is a community asset open for public enjoyment, and as such they often host school groups for farm learning opportunities and gleaning groups from food pantries and community kitchens.

Alyson's has an eye toward energy conservation. They have completed an energy audit and have started to implement energy saving measures such as efficient lighting. They have also been actively looking into alternative energy.

Alyson's Orchard is an important piece of our local food system in Cheshire County. They are Eco-Apple certified and work with Red Tomato to distribute to businesses in our region and nationally. Beyond wholesaling, they also offer pick your own and have a farm stand that offers many local products. Alyson's Orchard also works with many value-added producers such as Pup's Cider and La Belle Winery, as well as having their own winery on the premises.

Looking to the future they have an interest in doing more educational programming at the orchard and are interested in learning more about putting the land in a conservation easement. Alyson's Orchard is very deserving of this award and we are thankful for their stewardship. Congratulations Alyson's Orchard!

