

Written Profile



Farm: Dowse Orchards

Location: Sherborn, Massachusetts

Date of Origination: 1778

Industry Sector(s): Fruit, Vegetable

"Sustainability and renewal of land and resources, careful crop selection and attention to the overall health of the landscape have kept crops growing on the same fields for more than 200 years," opens Alex Dowse when referring to the family farm, Dowse Orchards. Dowse's ancestors settled the farm during the period of the American Revolution and have braved another war, the Great Depression and urbanization since then. Their commitment to constant development and better stewardship of the land is a valued contribution to **Agriculture's Lasting Heritage**.

Originally from Charlestown, Mass., the Dowse family moved to the Sherborn area to avoid the destruction of the city that was sure to follow the Battle of Bunker Hill. Once relocated, what started out as subsistence agriculture production quickly grew into specialized production supplying eggs, fruits and vegetables to Boston markets through the 19th and 20th centuries. As with any farm, the progression and development of the business hasn't been easy. "The advent of the commuter generation came with more demands for open land that make better income than farming," admits Dowse. However, the family has held onto their ancestor's legacy. "As urbanization overtakes the area, we are the island of sustained productivity," says Dowse.



Apples almost ready for picking at Dowse Orchards

Dowse Orchards continually strives for a balance between productivity and safe environmental practices. They are growing better crops than ever before with fewer inputs. "As the science of agriculture has developed, so has the way we farmed developed," says Dowse. "Today, all products are direct-marketed from the farm and with U-Pick opportunities."

Dowse also credits Farm Bureau with helping to remove roadblocks to zoning and water and crop protection issues so the business can continue with minimal obstructions. As Dowse says, "Hard work and stubborn perseverance, while being watchful for opportunities, is the hallmark of agriculture that endures." He makes the point that the future of agriculture rests with those who are willing to tackle the tough decisions farmers make every day.

"Farms thrive with the collective knowledge of the land," says Dowse. "It is always a choice to be able to follow and to develop a farming business and the experiences of generations working together grows with each renewal of families." We appreciate Dowse Orchards sharing their story with us and for their contribution to **Agriculture's Lasting Heritage**.