

# AGRICULTURE *AdvoCate*

## Chattooga Belle Farm named Farmer of Month

Ed and Kitty Land of Chattooga Belle Farm are Farmers of the Month for October at Wilbanks Middle School.

The couple thinks it is a great opportunity to be a farm-to-school farmer, provide healthy food to children and educate them about the benefits of locally grown food.

"This year we'll be supplying apples and muscadines for WMS students to enjoy. In the future, I think it would be great to incorporate some of the more exotic fruits like the Fuyu persimmons or Asian pears to educate students on different foods that they may not see on a regular basis," said Kitty Land.

Chattooga Belle Farm sits on 138 rolling acres in Long Creek, S.C., only 30 minutes from the school. Thirty-five farm acres is for cattle production, 10 acres for fruit production,

farines, apricots, apples, muscadines, scuppermons, blackberries, raspberries, blueberries, goji berries, jujube, pawpaws, persimmons, Asian pears, plums and figs. They have just planted mayhaws, mulberries, almonds, English walnuts and pecans.

Ed Land has always had a dream and passion for agriculture. "We need food to sustain ourselves and our community and being able to provide that is an honor," said Kitty Land.

There is no "typical" day on the farm; the Chattooga Belle farmers are always busy. In addition to the farming tasks of planting, pruning, thinning, picking fruit, weed control, cutting hay, caring for the cattle and manuring the lawn to create an aesthetically pleasing view, they are growing in other areas. Their farm store, which is open seven days a week,



Submitted

Chattooga Belle Farm grows a variety of fruit, in addition to cattle and hay.

their venue for events like their weddings. Chattooga Belle also produces its own line

and one local community farmers market on Saturday mornings.

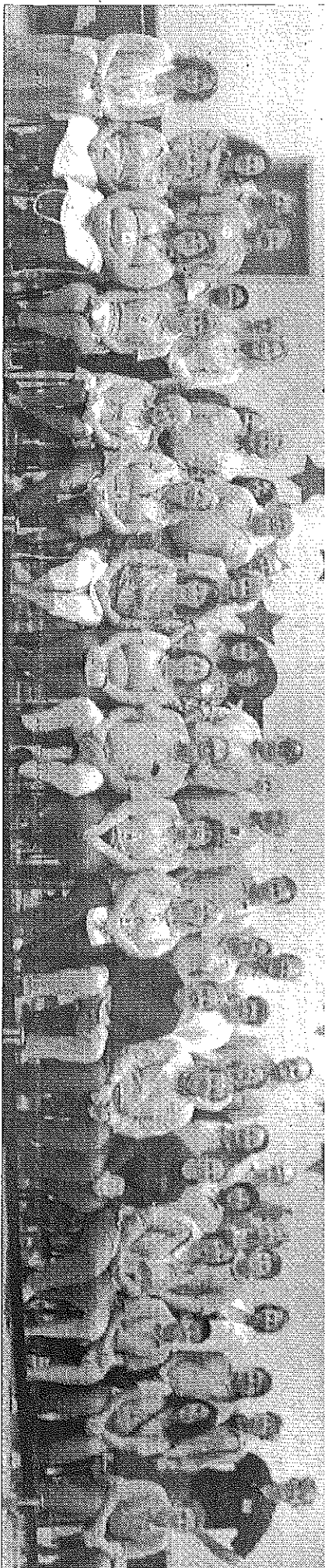
The couple invites everyone to visit the farm.

"We are open seven days a week for the people to enjoy the fruit and the beautiful views. Even when the store is closed, we have a gate for foot traffic, as the farm is a favorite place for enjoying the sunset or night stargazing," Kitty Land said.

Chattooga Belle Farm is located just "up the road" at 454 Damascus Church Road, Long Creek, S.C.

Farmer of the Month is a Farm to School program that applauds the local farmers who are growing fresh nutritious produce for students of WMS.

"Our goal is to help students understand how their food travels from the farm to their finger tips," said Paige Holland, nutrition director for Habersham County



Submitted

Participants in the Farm to School Harvest Celebration held Oct. 8 are shown at Wilbanks Middle School during the event.

## Farm-to-School Harvest Celebration held Oct. 8 at Wilbanks Middle School

The excitement for the Farm-to-School Harvest Celebration at Wilbanks Middle School in Demorest was undiminished Oct. 8.

A program that was supposed to start at 6 p.m. kicked off early because of the early attendees, who couldn't wait to get inside to taste the food, meet the farmers and learn more about a pilot program that has served an entire community, said Paige Holland,

nutrition director for Habersham County Schools.

Participants were able to enjoy music provided by the school's band and chorus, local recipes, pumpkin design contest, corn hole competition, and recognition of farm-to-school heroes. Attendees were also able to meet with leaders who support the program, including student ambassadors, educators, chefs, nutrition team and farmers.

Along with these activities,

other participants who hosted booths included the North Georgia Technical College Horticultural Department, the Clarksville Farmers Market, Habersham Farm Bureau, Springer Mountain Farms, which provided taste tests of hormone-free chicken, Habersham County Extension Service and the Georgia Mountain Farmers Network.

The night was filled with food, fun fall-themed activities and most importantly the recognition of all the people who help make the Farm to School program in Habersham County a reality, Holland said.

Farmers, chefs, nutrition staff, student ambassadors, school leaders and community volunteers were among those honored at this special event.

One of the Farm to School program's slogans is "it takes a community," and that is exactly what attendees saw at Wilbanks Middle School on Tuesday night, "a true example of community," Holland said.

For more information on how to get involved with the program, contact Holland via email at [pholland@habershamschools.com](mailto:pholland@habershamschools.com) or call 706-768-8292.