

Hello!

My wife and I are in the process of starting a farm on 17 acres at a place called Point Agassiz in the Alaska panhandle. It's 10 miles across the water from the town of Petersburg. There is no electrical grid or services at Pt. Agassiz other than a few gravel roads maintained by the Forest Service. There were a number of small farms here, mostly dairies, for a few decades in the 1920's-40's. One outfit was still free ranging beef cattle in the 70's. Today a neighbor breeds Nigerian dwarf dairy goats and there are some lovely gardens around.

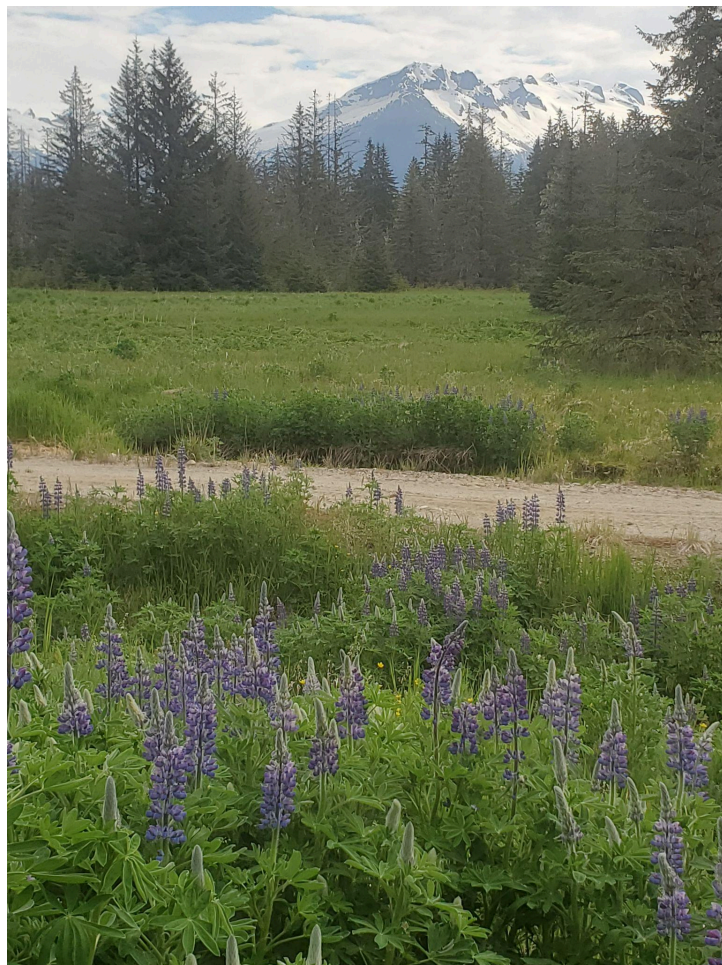


We are hoping to kindle an agricultural renaissance here- it's some of the only arable land in Southeast AK and our small, isolated communities are feeling the squeeze of higher costs for groceries that travel 1,000 miles by barge. Farragut Farm a little way to the north is leading the charge with high-quality produce and organizing a biennial SEAK Farmer's Summit.

The soil at Point Agassiz is sandy and free-draining, grasses and forbs grow abundantly in the cool, moist climate, and the beach out front provides a vast supply of kelp and shellfish. It's common to hear humpback whales spouting and breaching at any time of day or night. Icebergs the size of a cabin occasionally wash up, providing free ice. Apparently back in the day a certain old cow named Dolly "had a tidebook in her head" and could lead her herd to graze the acres of succulent beach plants without being stranded on a sandbar by rising water.

We're particularly keen on bringing back cattle and draft horses here, which will mean figuring out making hay in a rather wet climate. There are not many details available but I know the old timers made both hay and silage here for years; no one has done it since the '70's. Horses and later tractors were used. I have Lynn Miller's book *Haying with Horses* which has been highly informative. The logistics of transporting large livestock over sea appear challenging, but surely if the Vikings brought cattle and horses to Greenland in open boats we can figure something out.

We're also starting a plant nursery to provide the region with useful trees and shrubs adapted to our unique maritime climate- similar to western Norway or the Scottish highlands.



I am reaching out to anyone with farming experience who is interested in lending advice or connections, or perhaps making a consulting visit to this beautiful corner of the world. There are also some fascinating stories and photographs of farming days gone by here that I would be happy to share with those who are interested.

Best wishes and thanks for your wonderful publication! We have some treasured back issues in the old larger format.

