

cover story

Family Preserves

Just 80 miles from Times Square, Jones Family Farms offers a great experience for visitors, and help to other farmers trying to protect their rural acres.

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PHOTOS BY GREG M. COOPER



EACH AND EVERY TOUR at Jones Family Farms near Shelton, Conn., begins at a large rock into which the following inscription is carved: “Be good to the land and the land will be good to you.”

That pretty much says it all for the six generations of Jones family members who have nurtured 400 acres’ worth of Christmas trees, vineyards, fruits and vegetables. And while the sale of those products is certainly one focus of the farm, exposing tens of thousands of city dwellers and suburbanites to the

“agricultural experience” is also a part of the business plan. Located 80 miles from New York City’s Times Square, Jones Family Farms may be the closest destination farm to the city.

“My dad, give him credit,” says Terry Jones, 64. “In the 1950s when he started doing it, the idea of a choose-and-cut Christmas tree farm was barely a concept.” A few friends from church asked if they could bring their families out to the farm and cut their own tree. Prior to that, the farm was mostly a dairy with forage crops.