

**Black Sheep Hill Farm
1891 County Route 83
Pine Plains, NY 12567**

My wife and I run a small family farm in Dutchess County (website: www.blacksheephill.com). We breed and raise Black Welsh Mountain sheep (a heritage breed) for both wool and meat. We also raise heritage Tamworth pigs; chickens for eggs; and vegetables. The majority of our products are sold to restaurants in the northeast corner of Dutchess, restaurants which are eager to offer local products on their menus.

We employ two full-time workers on the farm and use temporary help in the summer when we are picking. We pay these workers \$12.50 per hour, and they generally work 30 to 40 hours per week.

I can see no reason why farm workers should be treated differently from any other workers in our society. They perform an enormously valuable task and are generally extremely hard working and productive.

The legislation before the New York State Assembly and Senate aims for nothing more than fair and just treatment of farm workers. My understanding of the legislation is that it seeks no special status--no special privileges--for farm workers; rather, it is legislation aimed at simple fairness.

I have worked with Rural and Migrant Ministry for several years toward the goal of justice for farm workers. I believe this legislation would have no adverse economic effect whatsoever on farmers in our state.

In the end this is a moral issue. Legislators should simply do what is right. And the right thing to do is pass this legislation.

John P. Banning, Jr.