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## Hudson Valley think tank crowing about Warwick farm

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Warwick – The Buckbee family swears it didn't bribe an area think tank with the family's homemade ice cream.

But, they say, their stuff is that good.

Bellvale Farms is being honored next week by The Glynwood Center, a Cold Springs-based think tank that helps preserve and promote the heritage of the smaller family farm.

The creamery and dairy farm, owned and operated for six generations by the Buckbee family, has won Glynwood's annual Farmer Award. The Buckbees were singled out for keeping their family farm viable through connections to the community it serves.

This is the second time in as many years Warwick town residents have been honored by Glynwood.

Last year, it honored Pine Island farmer and community activist Cheryl Rogowski for her innovative efforts in making her family farm become profitable again and for her help in the local farming community.

Much like Rogowski, the Buckbees have left the commercial farming business and now sell niche farm goods straight to the consumer.

Just off their 450-acre farm, they've opened Bellvale Farms Creamery, where they make and sell homemade ice cream.

"The creamery was the first real big step in changing how we farm and what we do," said Amy Noteboom, the 36-year-old daughter of Al and Judy Buckbee, who own and run the farm.

Noteboom, her brother and the elder Buckbees all either work on the farm tending to the fields or the farm's 125 Holstein cows, or helping to dish ice cream at the creamery.

In addition to the creamery, which sits atop Mount Peter on Route 17A and offers a vista of their sprawling farmland and the Warwick Valley, the Buckbees sell seasonal fruits and vegetables and operate one of the area's more popular pick-your-own pumpkin patches.

Just a few years ago, the Buckbees designated a majority of their land PDR, or purchase of development rights, which will keep the land "forever green," Noteboom said.

"A lot of people thought this was the wrong way to go," she said. "But my father wanted to preserve this for the next generation. Sure, he could have sold to a developer, but money doesn't hand down the same as this farm."

The Buckbee family will be honored Wednesday at a ceremony in New York City.

The family said they'll serve ice cream to the guests