Granary Project

Near the entrance to the Farm Hub on Hurley Mountain Road, preliminary site work has commenced for our granary – a new farm building for storing, drying, cleaning, bagging and shipping grains and beans. Like vegetables which go to our wash and pack facility, field crops need a landing place where they can be processed and readied for distribution. Our new structure, with the storage bins attached, will function as an all-important holding area to which crops are brought in from the fields for quick dry-down and stable storage. This on-farm infrastructure will help advance our transition away from assigning large numbers of acres to soybeans and feed-corn towards a more diverse suite of food-grade crops – a shift that is aimed at broadening the availability of locally produced foods in the community and supporting regional efforts to grow small grains in the Hudson Valley.

The site and structure:
The 6100 square foot structure will serve as a sheltered drive-through for loading and unloading while acting as a buffer between the road and the mechanical agricultural activity. The building is made of pre-fabricated metal with custom charcoal grey color and wood trim designed to complement the nearby seed storage barn. The long end will be flanked on the backside by a series of slender crop storage bins. The gable end marks the vehicle entry point and also houses seed cleaning equipment.

The site is located on the southside of the entrance to the main Farm Hub facility off Hurley Mountain Road. The land directly opposite the granary to the north of the driveway will remain an open farm field. Here, we will continue our annual tradition of growing pollinators such as sunflowers and other diverse species in the rotation.

Storage for greater diversity:
The series of bushel grain bins (including four dryer bins) are specifically suited to diverse crop production and will hold a variety of crops in our rotation such as:

- Food grade corn: We are growing heirloom open pollinated varieties such as Wapsie Valley and modern organic varieties bred for making corn meal or tortillas. One of our long term goals is to reduce tillage across the farm. In order to minimize erosion and build soil health, our field crops team is dedicating more acres to planting corn directly into nutrient rich and carbon sequestering cover crops like vetch.
Dry beans: The Farm Hub is growing pinto, navy, and black beans. And we’re finding ways to grow dry beans no-till, which is highly experimental in an organic system. One of the amazing things about dry beans is once they are direct-combined in the field and thoroughly sorted and cleaned, they are a ready source of protein, ready to be soaked in water, simmered on the stovetop, and enjoyed.

Small grains: Variety trials at the Farm Hub with Cornell researchers have led to successful grow-outs of wheat and rye. Once harvested, these grains often need to be quickly dried down to prevent mold and other problems from developing in the moist grain. After drying and cleaning, the grains are ready to be sent for milling and turned into flour.

With storage capacity of two to three thousand bushels each, the bins are relatively modest in size compared with the more typical 10,000 bushel commodity grain bins that are used on farms that grow all the same crop across hundreds or thousands of acres. With a number of smaller bins, we can dry down many different types simultaneously, thus allowing for a more diverse cropping system and a greater variety of foods leaving the farm.

Access and flow:
With a fluid system and ready access to the contents of the bins, we can adapt to changing community needs, whether that means adding small grains varieties that prove successful in baking, or meeting sudden emergency food needs such as we saw with the pandemic this spring. It will also save valuable time during the harvest season. Because the bins are connected to the seed processing line inside the granary through a double run elevator system, the granary requires fewer farmers and less time to operate. For example, just one farmer can readily transform the contents of a field-dirty bin of wheat into a cleaned 50 lb. bag sewn tight and ready for delivery. Whatever the crop variety, our ability to separately clean, sort, bag, and load it in sequence all in the same location is key to turning our farm fields into food—ready to be sent off to food pantries and end users around the region.

Schedule:
Once the ground-work is finished, the site will be ready for placement of the structure and bins in August. The project is expected to be completed at the end of October in time for the 2020 harvest.