Day two of our tour had all great stops. Each farm operator has his own story, but all have passion for their enterprises. The first stop was at Teets Farms in Lost River. The farm is owned by Mike and Matt Teets; Matt is the operator with his wife, Jill and 3 young boys and some hired hands. Their focus is show cattle, but other things – sheep, poultry and USDA-quarantine barns for exports to foreign countries.

Second stop was at Weese Farms in Fisher. John Weese with the help of his two sons run an operation that focuses on stocker/backgrounder cattle. He does finish about 10-20 cattle a month for the Kosher market in Maryland. John stated right from the get-go that he does not take any government money and relies heavily on his ag-friendly lender. He also told us for his sons to be successful he will have to give them the farm – cattle, equipment, and land – since they wouldn’t be able to afford to get into the business. Cattle prices may be high but the margin is small.

Third stop was at Cottage Hill Farm/Triangle T Farm, owned by the Taylor family. This is a farm currently run by 3 generations. Their focus is registered Hereford cattle. Poultry production under contract with Pilgrim’s Pride is another enterprise. This enterprise pays the bills, but not without costs. They are in the Chesapeake Bay watershed so more environmental restrictions are occurring. Show cattle are the pride and joy of the farm. Grandson, Dave’s best bull is in the background. He is just a year old, two months older than the bull in the foreground, and weighs close to 1,450 lb.

Our last stop of the day – with dinner included - was at Flying W Farms. Rick and wife, Margaret run a complete vertical chain operation: cow/calf, finish, slaughterhouse, processing, and restaurant/store. Rick is the 4th generation on the farm. About 80% of their slaughter is for other farms. The kill floor is about a mile from the store and processing room since they didn’t want live animals coming to the store.
Some comments from WVU extension agents that joined us:
Average herd size in the state is 16-18 cows.
Many of the beef operations have benefited from the poultry industry’s litter in the state.
There are no zoning laws, but changes are in planned.

Some observations on the day:
These operations were started two or more generations ago, but the current family members have take the enterprises in their own directions.
Love for farming.

Nancy Glazier, NWNY Small Farms Specialist, Cornell Dairy, Livestock, Field Crops Team.