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Nourishing *From Within*

The Story of Pound Ridge Organics

Nestled in a quaint town of Westchester County, Pound Ridge Organics stands as a testament to the belief that true health begins within. Founded by Donna Simons, this bustling organic market, CSA, and teaching kitchen is more than a source of food—it's a movement toward sustainable, mindful living. Simons' journey to this point is as inspiring as the mission she champions.

For Simons, the pivotal moment came in 2009 while attending a thesis presentation on the effects of antibiotic use in livestock on human health and the environment. The eye-opening exploration of concentrated animal feed operations (CAFOs) and their devastating ripple effects on communities and ecosystems sparked a life-changing transformation.

"That half-hour presentation changed the course of my life and career," Simons recalls. Driven by an insatiable curiosity, she dove into researching livestock husbandry, pesticide use, fish farming, and the toxins present in everyday food. Her findings led to "Bon Freakin' Appetit," a thought-provoking art exhibition that challenged viewers to confront uncomfortable truths about their food sources. The exhibit, which included disquieting pieces such as a nutrient label for breast milk containing environmental

toxins, became a catalyst for change—not just in Simons' life, but for her audience as well. This creative endeavor became the seed from which Pound Ridge Organics grew.

What started with Simons sourcing fresh poultry, eggs, and produce for herself and a few neighbors has grown into a trusted community hub, drawing customers from across the tri-state area and beyond. Each week, more people sought her help in sourcing ethical, organic food, and Pound Ridge Organics blossomed into a year-round market, CSA, and educational space serving visitors as far as North Carolina.

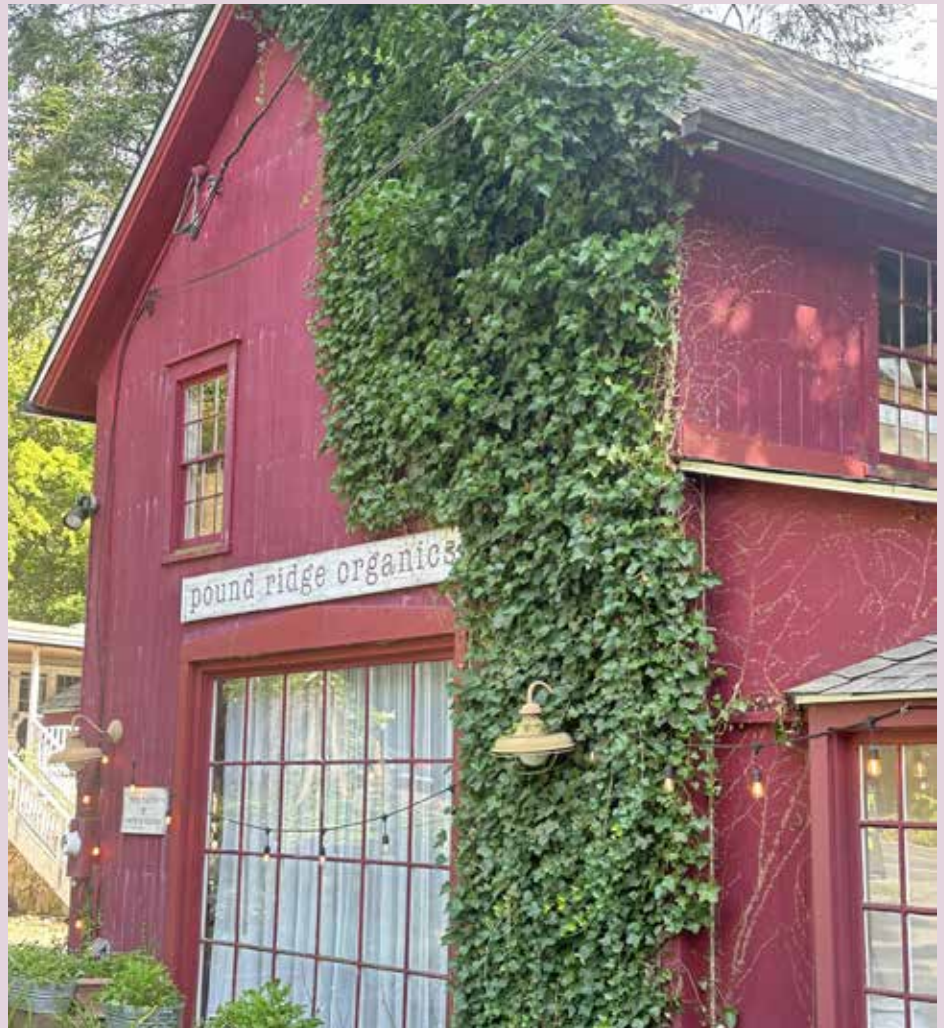
A centerpiece of her offerings is the CSA program, which provides members with an easy way to start eating locally grown produce and experience the difference in taste and nutrition. Customers can pick up their curated shares on weekends at the Pound Ridge Organics farm shop, making it convenient to integrate seasonal, geo-local produce into their lives. Simons believes this connection to local food



**ARTICLE AND PHOTOGRAPHY
BY CHRISTINA WEISS**

not only enhances health but also fosters a deeper appreciation for the land and the people who cultivate it.

Simons is deeply committed to ensuring that every product available through Pound Ridge Organics meets uncompromising standards. “I have a direct connection to the farmers and fishermen who produce our food,” she explains. “This enables me to ensure their practices match my ethos.” Biodiversity, regenerative farming, and ethical practices are paramount. Produce is geo-local, harvested within 40 miles to guarantee peak freshness and nutrient value. Eggs from her farm are Certified Animal Welfare Approved, and her land is maintained as organic.



Simons also emphasizes the connection between food quality and overall wellness. “Produce grown in living soil is more nutritious than that from depleted soil,” she explains. Similarly, ethically raised, pasture-fed animals produce meat and eggs that are richer in nutrients and free of harmful stress hormones. Wild-caught fish, fermented foods, and pasture-raised poultry further underscore her commitment to providing nutrient-dense options.

But Pound Ridge Organics goes beyond food. Simons offers year-round workshops and opportunities for the community to live more mindfully, sustainably, and carefully within their environment. From learning about the art and science of beekeeping to decorating with pressed flowers and leaves, Simons creates spaces for hands-on experiences that deepen awareness of our connection to the earth. She even encourages neighbors to bring their old pumpkins for composting or to feed her chickens, demonstrating that every small action contributes to a healthier ecosystem.

“Living sustainably doesn’t have to feel overwhelming,” Simons says. “It’s about making small changes that collectively have a big impact.” This philosophy is woven into her workshops and educational efforts, which make sustainability both approachable and enjoyable.

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For those just starting their journey toward mindful eating and better food choices, Simons offers simple yet transformative advice: “Start by eliminating processed foods. Read labels—they should only list wholesome ingredients. Buy local, seasonal produce and spend time prepping ingredients to make cooking at home easier.” She also encourages asking questions and verifying the answers when sourcing food, advising consumers to be wary of greenwashing and misleading jargon.

Simons underscores the importance of enjoying the process. “Go easy on yourself and remember that enjoyment of your food is important too,” she says. At its core, Pound Ridge Organics is about more than sustenance—it’s about fostering a deep connection to the land, the community, and our own well-being.

By consuming locally harvested, seasonal food, we not only preserve nutrients but also support sustainable practices that honor both the earth and our bodies. “When you consume produce harvested a week or more earlier and transported across the country, the nutrients are depleted,” she explains. “It’s best to eat local food that is in season.”

Through Pound Ridge Organics, Simons invites us all to reconsider not just what we eat, but how it shapes our health, our environment, and our future. Her work serves as a powerful reminder that even the smallest choices can make a meaningful impact, not just on our plates, but on the planet we call home.



