



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Diversification Key to Managing Risky Business of Farming

Minneapolis, MN — There's more to farming than row crops, heads of cows, or tractor horsepower. Departing from the "get big or get out" approach to agriculture, an increasing number of farmers and ranchers across the country are opting, instead, to diversify, resulting in higher per acre profits than many of their large-scale neighboring farms.

While farming, more than many other industries, is more subject to the vagaries and uncertainties of weather, many farmers have overcome the inherent risks of failed crops by adopting risk diversification strategies that not only improve their farm or ranch profitability, but help renew the countryside in imaginative and creative ways.

Featured on the new *Renewing the Countryside* website, Joel and Teresa Salatin's Polyface Farm, located on 550 acres in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia, reflects such abundance made possible by the diversity of what they raise and how they do it: grass-fed beef and pork, pastured poultry and rabbits, layer chickens that are moved around the farm in a eggmobile, and more recently, niche fruit crops. But diversification doesn't stop there; Polyface Farm serves a wide range of customers in diverse geographic communities and has successfully eliminated most of the middlemen, garnering the high retail margins all for themselves. After the farm expenses are paid, Salatin's family farm nets \$100,000 year before paying four full-time salaries to family members and apprentice stipends.

"Risk management through diversification has helped keep thousands of family farms competitive and profitable," says Jan Joannides, Executive Director of *Renewing the Countryside*, a non-profit organization serving as a both a website and literary depository for hundreds of stories across the United States, just like Polyface Farm. Their website and books provide both the inspiration and practical how-to resources for other farmers to gain greater balance in their operations and make them more profitable — and sustainable. The risk management through diversification project was made possible through a grant from USDA Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service.

For more information about a diversified farm or ranch near you or to tap into the wealth of resources available on-line at *Renewing the Countryside*, visit [www.renewingthecountryside.org](http://www.renewingthecountryside.org).



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