



# CAROL COULTER

## HERITAGE HOMESTEAD GOAT DAIRY

### *A BRWIA Profile Written by Tathel Miller*

*I first met Carol Coulter in 2005 when I had the pleasure of interviewing her for my senior thesis, “With Fullness of Heart and an Aching Back. The Changing Roles of Women in Agriculture.” And eighteen years later on a sunny spring afternoon on the same soil surrounded by hard work and dreams realized, I am again sitting with that same determined city girl, turned farm woman.*

Carol Coulter and her husband Lon own and operate Heritage Homestead Goat Dairy in Crumpler, Ashe County. As one of the founders of Blue Ridge Women in Agriculture (BRWIA), Carol has played an important role in the organization from her time on the on the board as well as serving as the first full-time Executive Director for BRWIA.



THEN (CIRCA 2004)

Carol recalls the first years as one of the founding mothers as exciting, a somewhat slower pace then, when everything was new, fun—and a time for sharing knowledge and encouragement. “We were all really excited,” Carol says. “It certainly opened up several doors for me, so I’ll be forever grateful to Sue Counts and to all who had a part. Those were fun times back then. I miss it. It seems things were slower, and I really enjoyed the community that we were able to form. Like at potlucks when we were all together and talking about whatever was going on. I mean, it was just wonderful. And now we’re just so busy. But it is really exciting to see how many people stayed with farming and agriculture and didn’t give up and how far things have progressed.”

***“I am just really eager to learn and make this work because I think small community farms are eventually going to swing back around.”***

***- Carol Coulter, 2004***

Carol had already been involved in BRWIA for two years before the first interview in which she fondly referred to herself as a city girl and a “newbie” farmer. When asked the question, ‘What has your role in BRWIA meant to you thus far?’ She answered with gratitude for the education and community and shared her personal prediction of the future for small farms—which we have seen come to fruition.

“I am an example of a newbie,” Carol explained. “I think one being fairly new to this and being able to interact with people who have either been doing it full-time or have been doing it a long time, I’ve been able to learn from them. And understanding when you are just getting started up and what’s involved and how many resources are needed, and why people have to work full time to make it happen at the farm. I was just really eager to learn and make this work because I think small community farms are eventually going to swing back around.



“And it (BRWIA) is a great place to get a lot of education. Women are so willing to share. Most farmers are, but you know there is a different thing with women. They are just more nurturing, I guess. They are always trying to help you.”

While Carol served as the Executive Director of BRWIA from July 2014 to December 2019, the organization went through significant growth during her tenure adding personnel and new programs--programs and outreach which continue to benefit both farmers and communities today.

“We grew by hiring just really top-notch staff like Dave Walker and Serene Cullen--some really stellar staff,” Carol explains. “We took over the Lettuce Learn Program where we were working with all the elementary schools with gardens. And Dave started the CRAFT program, the producer training program. We also started the Double Up Food Bucks program which helps EBT Snap double their spending power.”



NOW (2023)

period of time. We didn't have money to hire it all out and we did it all ourselves. And fortunately, I married a builder!”

Another question Carol was asked in the interview in 2005 was this, ‘Do you see yourself as a dreamer?’ She laughed and replied, “Yes, absolutely. I have great visions for this place (referring to her farm), how it is going to work, and how my life will be.”

And 18 years later, her answer remains the same.

“Those dreams kept me going and my husband constantly reminds me of the reality of those dreams,” Carol says with a laugh. “I have students come and they're just like drooling over this farm and it's like, look y'all, this is 23 years of work. It was one thing at a time over a long

Carol continues to support BRWIA and celebrates the continued dedication of the organization. “It just tickles me to death to see all the different things that they're doing,” says Carol. “And how many women are working there now, and how smart and dedicated they are. It's just, it's really exciting.”

Carol and her husband Lon will be retiring this year as owners of Homestead Heritage Goat Dairy and look forward to traveling and spending more time with family and their four grandchildren. Carol will continue her role at Appalachian State University as a faculty member in the Sustainable Development Department teaching agriculture and farm related classes.

