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Core Report®

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Core Report®

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Grower Feature: Fly Creek Cider Mill

Fly Creek Cider Mill, located just three miles from the Village of Cooperstown and 22 miles south of Herkimer, proudly opened its doors this past May, marking the beginning of its 167th season. This year also marks the 150th anniversary that the Michaels family's entrepreneurial business endeavors have flourished in Otsego County. The Cider Mill continues this legacy with H. William (Bill) Michaels, the sixth generation, providing quality products and a superior customer experience where visitors are encouraged to taste, tour and explore the historic Mill.

At present, the Mill offers a diverse array of products, ranging from apple cider and mill-made fudge to specialty foods, wines, and an enticing foodservice selection. Of these products, one stands out as a timeless classic produced by all



six generations: the Mill-Aged, Extra-Sharp New York State Cheddar Cheese. Historically referred to as "store cheese," this cheddar was an essential staple in countless general stores and

food markets, sliced fresh from a wheel at the counter. At Fly Creek Cider Mill, the cheddar is aged for five years, creating a rich and delightfully sharp flavor. Bill Michaels fondly recalls his childhood memories of this homemade cheese at the mill.

"I remember entering Grandpa's Main Street Market and helping myself to a slice of his delicious cheddar while my mom purchased some for her macaroni and cheese. I am proud to honor this family tradition here at the Mill. We sell over three tons a year and almost 5,000 servings of mac & cheese using my mom's recipe."

While the heart of the Mill lies in its historic, water-powered, cider-making machinery, the family has recently made significant enhancements to enhance their visitors'

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experiences. The addition of the Millpond pavilion and a renovated tasting room now offers guests the opportunity to savor hard ciders, apple wines, and craft beers and spirits distilled from apples, all as a tasting flight or by-the-glass.

As steadfast members of the North American Farmers Direct Marketing Association (NAFDMA) since the 1990s, Fly Creek Cider Mill remains committed to strengthening their retail-centric business. Bill emphasizes that their retail focus remains distinct within the NAFDMA group, which has seen many members shift to more 'agritainment.' The Mill takes pride in maintaining

their core business of apples, cider and food products by collaboratively working with numerous area attractions to offer visitors a full-day experience in the Cooperstown area.

Bill and the entire Fly Creek team eagerly anticipate the return of their mill turbine, currently undergoing restoration at Cardish Machine Works in Watervliet, NY. This season, their first press run will take place shortly after the Labor Day weekend continuing through the fresh market season.

"As we celebrate the remarkable milestone of 150 years of the Michaels family's business presence in Otsego County and the opening of the Fly Creek Cider Mill's 167th season, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to our loyal customers and dedicated employees. We take great pride in our family's enduring commitment to serving our community, and we eagerly anticipate many more years of providing exceptional products and experiences," says Bill.

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Calendar

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