

Kurt W. Alstede

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The Grandson of German immigrants, Kurt Alstede grew up in a family-owned service station business in New Jersey where he learned firsthand entrepreneurial and customer service skills from his father and grandfather. He began his career in agriculture in the summer of 1980 at the age of 16 when he milked cows at a Vermont dairy farm that adjoined his maternal grandparents antique shop, and then continued later that year as a first generation farmer when he began raising vegetables and doing custom work in his hometown of Chester, New Jersey while at the same time working for a neighboring fruit and vegetable farm owned by the grandparents of Kurt's future wife, Mary.

An Eagle Scout, Kurt graduated as the Salutatorian from West Morris Central High School in Chester, New Jersey in 1982 and went on to earn a Bachelor of Science degree in Horticulture from Delaware Valley University, Summa Cum Laude, in 1985 where he also completed studies in Agronomy and Agribusiness.

Throughout his college tenure he continued to grow his farming business which eventually became to be known as Alstede Farms. Direct retailing to consumers began in a small farm stand in 1985 with Pick Your Own commencing in 1987. In 1990 the Farm Store that is used today was built and over time the business evolved from raising hay, grain, and wholesale vegetables to being an entirely retail based business raising nearly 800 acres of tree fruits, small fruits, vegetables, Christmas Trees, and flowers. Today 100% of the farm's output is sold through two year-round farm stores, two seasonal farm stands, Pick Your Own, tailgate markets, and Community Supported Agriculture. Traditional agritourism also complements the farm's retail offerings. The farm currently employs 30 full-time year-round staff members and seasonally up to 200 people in both the production and retail segments of the business. Kurt functions as the General Manager and is supported by a strong management team that includes his family.

Kurt has been an active volunteer firefighter for over 40 years and has served, or is currently serving, in several different capacities of local, county, state, and federal government. He recently served as a Director for Farm Credit East, ACA; the premier agricultural lender in the Northeast. He is also a past member of the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture which is responsible for oversight of the N.J. Department of Agriculture. He is an active member of the New Jersey Farm Bureau, is engaged in a variety of agricultural organizations, and has served in church leadership roles. Kurt is married to his wife and business partner Mary Elizabeth Thompson-Alstede; a native of Hinesburg, Vermont. Together they have four children: Rebekah (25), Sarah Jessica (22), Karl (19) and Sarah Lynne (16). All four children are active contributors to the family business. Rebekah graduated from Delaware Valley University where she majored in Agricultural Business and Sustainable Agriculture while Sarah Jessica attended Centenary University where she majored in Equine Business Administration. Both have joined the family farm business and serve in management roles.

When Kurt is not busy farming, he enjoys stamp collecting, history, and travel. Kurt and his entire family are dedicated to the future of northeast production agriculture, the responsible stewardship of God's natural resources, and to protecting and promoting rural American values.