



**The 2021 Squire Valleevue and
Valley Ridge Farms Annual
Report for the Case Western
Reserve University Board of
Trustees**

Submitted March 2022

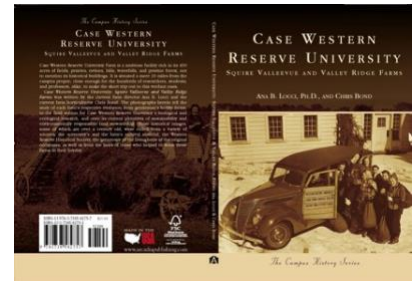
History & Background

The farm continues to be a University asset that provides a wide variety of unique opportunities for education, research, community service and recreation.

- History

- The farm came to the university as the result of five gifts:

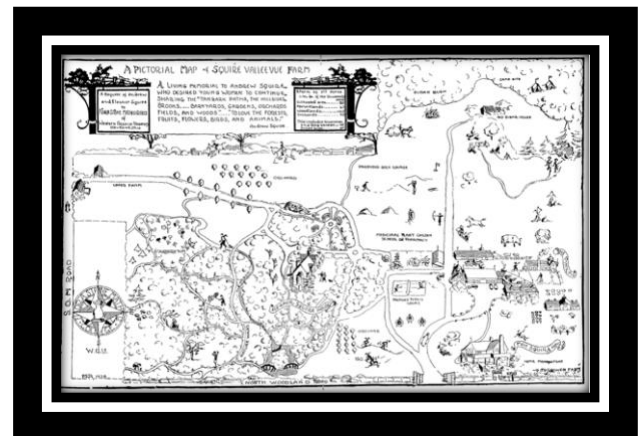
1. The late Andrew Squire gave 277 acres (Squire Valleevue Farm) in the late 1930s
2. The heirs of Jephtha Wade II gave Case Western Reserve 104 adjoining acres (Valley Ridge Farm) in 1977
3. John and Elizabeth Hollister deeded five acres to Case Western Reserve in 1984
4. And the Hollisters gave another five acres in 1995
5. In 2013, nine acres was added to the property thanks to a generous gift by an anonymous donor



- As is outlined in the Farm's history book — In his will Andrew Squire wanted the property to be cultivated and preserved as a farm by the University for educational purposes, and to be a place “where the practical duties of life may be taught; where teachers and students can come in close contact with Mother Earth.”
- As a condition of the Wade gift CWRU must offer a report annually to the Board of Trustees of the University and to the trustees of the Cleveland Museum of Natural History with respect to the operation of the donated property in 1977.

- Site Attributes:

- Approximately 400 acres
- Eight ponds, with several meadows and creeks
- 200 acres of woodlots
- Teaching and research labs
- Art studio spaces
- Debra Ann November Research Greenhouse
- Three conference spaces
- Three private residences
- One overnight cottage that accommodates 16 students overnight



- Funding

- The Farm operations are funded through the Squire Endowment, annual capital asks, and direct gifts and small donations
- The Biology Farm Committee, comprised of Biology faculty members, oversees the Oblebay endowment for biology field station and research infrastructure investment at the Farm

Operations

Covid Impact & Leadership Transition

- Covid-19 impacted utilization and programming at the Farm from March 2020-the end of 2021.
 - The farm was closed to external and internal visitors and event rentals from March 2020-June 2021. The Farm was still utilized for classes and research at the discretion of academic centers and faculty.
 - The Farm Food Program had to scale down their operations first because staff were not allowed on site from March - April 2020, staff were not labeled essential. The 2020 growing season yielded a much smaller harvest because of the late start. The vendors who procure CWRU grown food were also simply procuring less throughout 2020. Food production increased in 2021 but not to 2019 levels. The Farm food staff estimates production will be ramped back up to 2019 levels in 2023.
- Additionally, like other centers on campus staff constraints have impacted the Farm's operations. Long-time director Dr. Ana Locci & Department Coordinator Patty Gregory both retired effective July 1, 2020. Three additional farm staff members left to pursue other opportunities between September 2020-October 2021.
 - Stephanie Corbett became the interim Farm Director in addition to her Sustainability & Energy duties in November 2020 and was officially named Director of Energy, Sustainability & the University Farm in July 2021.

The Farm has three strategic operational areas:

1. Academic & Research Programs
2. Conservation & Sustainable Initiatives
3. Recreation & Community

• Academic & Research Program Initiatives

- **Courses**
 - Eight credit courses hosted classes at the Farm in 2021, accounting for over 1,000 student visits
 - The Farm endowment pays for CWRU class and club transportation costs
- **Continuing Education**
 - One Siegal Lifelong Learning programs was offered at the Farm in 2021 with approximately 16 participants
- **Research**
 - Nine Biology faculty conducted research supported by 10 Biology graduate students
 - Several co-curricular student research projects were conducted at the Farm as a part of the Humanity Design Corp and for undergrad Senior Capstones
 - Dr. Benard brought back the Bioblitz event for CWRU students to use the iNaturalist app for citizen science cataloging event

- The Bluebird trail research project and documentation continued into its 20th year, with 52 boxes and several community volunteers performing weekly documentation and bird banding

- **Conservation & Sustainable Initiatives**

- Farm staff are evaluating electric grounds equipment, electric fleet vehicles and a small amount of electric vehicle charging for fleet and visitor/public vehicles
- Additionally, the Farm is putting together a committee of internal and external experts to help create a Sustainable Land Use Management Plan to determine how to handle invasive species, to help evaluate reforestation or meadow and pollinator planting projects and their potential to offset or sequester carbon and to document ecological trail maintenance practices
- The Farm is promoting a CWRU green event guide and promoting reducing waste associated with special events and catering
- The Farm's 30 passenger Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) fueled shuttle bus is currently operational but evaluation for a new refueling system or vehicle replacement is under study
- As the farm needs to begin to replace the historic crab apples spread throughout the property several flowering native options will be planted in the coming year
- The Farm is also working on improving trail wayfinding and interpretive educational signage about the history, the natural history and the ecological research that occurs on the property.
- Farm Food Program 2021 Production Yield:
 - 5,138 lbs. harvested, earning \$11,100 in revenue
For comparison the 2020 harvest was 3,800 lbs. and the 2019 harvest was 11,000 lbs.
 - Vendors included:
 - Bon Appetit CWRU (purchased 60% of harvest)
 - Local restaurants: Spice, Felice Urban Café, Noble Beast
 - As well as Perfectly Imperfect Produce and three private chefs
- 14 Farm Stand sale days were held at the Farm on Saturdays, July-December from 9 am-12 pm
- 132,174 lbs of compost/food waste were captured from on campus operations, keeping the material out of the landfill and turning it into a healthy soil amendment
- The 2021 honey harvest was bottled and provided to Hartcourt House as a gift for President Kaler's events and visitors
- Two food program staff helped manage the new micro-green grow box at the Fribley Dining Hall, a part of the green building & Bon Appetit local food program
- K-12 environmental and local food education programs delivered by Farm staff are currently on pause and are being studied to determine the best way to offer them again in 2023

- **Recreation & Community**

- The annual student focused event, Farm Harvest Festival returned in September 2021, hosting over 600 CWRU students for a day long Farm and sustainability focused experience
- Event rentals returned to full capacity in July 2021 and over 30 events were hosted at the Farm during the remainder of the calendar year
 - CWRU departments hosted retreats and workshops and several k-12 schools rented facilities or led their own outdoor field trips at the Farm
- The CWRU Cross Country teams returned for a Fall meet and practice runs
- Community members, including alumni continue to use the Farm seven days a week, from dawn to dusk, for recreation including hiking, dog walks, cross country skiing, and picnics

“I desire it cultivated and preserved as a farm for educational purposes, and to be a place where the practical duties of life may be taught; where the teachers and students can come in close contact with Mother Earth”. - Andrew Squire, 1932

