

# AG & NATURAL RESOURCES

## Farm-Raised Kids, Goats Milk Soap, and Hydroponic Fodder: The Story of Pearl Mill Farms

**“Natural Products Raised, Grown, and Produced the Old-Fashioned Way”!** That is the motto of Shane Duncan and family’s Pearl Mill Farms.

Shane grew up in the Rock Branch area and always wanted to farm. Except for one year of his life, Elbert County has been home. He was raised by his grandfather and they always had a vegetable garden. In his teen years Shane raised livestock such as swine, dairy cows, and horses. He enjoyed trail-riding too.

After meeting, and later marrying his wife Paula, the idea of Pearl Mill Farms became a goal. With the help of friends who have partnered with them, the farm has now become a reality. Located at the end of Walt Anderson Drive, you’ll find goats, beef cattle, pigs, chickens, and two Great Pyrenees that closely watch over everyone. They grow produce too. Since its inception two years ago, the Duncan family and their friends have been busy developing a program. Their idea is to have a locally grown, self-sustainable concept. No chemicals are used in the production of any of their products. Theirs is truly an all-natural approach.

One very important aspect of their plan is to have farm-raised children as well. Cheyanne, Kira, and Garrett all work on the farm. In fact, being home-schooled, they are able to incorporate their farm chores into homework and study programs, which apply to school credit. Shane and Paula want other children to benefit from their operation as well. They have made their farm available for school field trips, and the “Clemson Life” program has visited as well. They are both adamant about others learning from their experiences.

The Duncans and their partners are trying some unconventional farming techniques too. Hydroponic fodder has



become a desired staple in the diets of all of their animals. In a climate-controlled building on the farm, Shane and family raise “bean sprouts”. Wheat, barley, sunflowers, and oats are sprouted under grow lights, grown for six to eight days in trays, and then fed to the livestock. And they love it. The health of their animals is a tribute to its beneficial qualities.



So what does Pearl Mill Farms produce? Currently one of their most impressive products is goat milk soap. Organic goat milk, coconut oil, olive oil, lye and other essential oils are combined to make an all-natural product that is truly special. Eucalyptus, Jasmine, Chamomile, Almond & Oatmeal, Caramel Apple, Patchouli, and my favorite, Pumpkin Spice are available scents. They started making these products last spring, and the demand has been great.

Seasonal produce, eggs, jams and jellies are all produced on the farm too. You can typically find Shane and one or two of his children at the Elberton Farmers Market on Wednesday mornings during the season. USDA-inspected beef is next on the families “to do” list.

The Duncans are passionate about their local farm mission. However, their life mission spreads well beyond Elbert County. “Outside the Gate Ministry” is part of their calling as well. Regular trips to Kentucky, Florida, and South Carolina are just a few of the places that the Duncan’s spread the wealth and generosity of Elbert County and many others in Georgia. Working through local churches, meals and clothing are provided to those in need. Just last week, over 100 Thanksgiving meals were provided to needy families in Kentucky.

So, let’s all be thankful for our local farmers, families, missions, and let’s thank a farmer. Specifically, let’s thank the Duncans and Pearl Mill Farms.



- Patrick Marcellino, *Elbert County ANR Agent*