

AGRICULTURAL BUSINESS OF THE YEAR

Sunny Hunny Farms



In just four years, Sunny Hunny Farms has grown from a backyard beekeeping hobby into one of Montgomery County's most dynamic small-scale agricultural enterprises. Now, the farm has been named Agricultural Business of the Year by the Fulton Montgomery Regional Chamber of Commerce — an honor that co-owner Tracy Robbins-Garrison calls both humbling and motivating.

After looking at the list of previous winners, Tracy realized Sunny Hunny Farms was joining “an esteemed group.” Each past recipient had a unique story and purpose. For Sunny Hunny, that purpose is rooted in environmental stewardship and community connection.

The farm's very first hive was born out of concern for honeybee longevity and environmental sustainability. “We know we're not going to change the world,” Tracy says, “but we can change

our bit of the world.” That philosophy shapes every decision on the farm. The main building operates fully electric, with no fossil fuels. A sizable solar array powers the property, complementing an electric vehicle and a “solar house” approach to energy use. Honey is bottled exclusively in glass — never plastic — and customers who return jars receive \$1 off their next purchase. It's a small but meaningful step toward reducing waste and encouraging shared responsibility.

Sunny Hunny Farms officially launched in February 2022, as communities were emerging from the disruptions of COVID-19. The business itself grew organically — almost accidentally. Tracy had been keeping bees for about four years. What began as a hobby slowly became, in her words, “an addiction.” With honey production expanding rapidly, selling informally no longer made sense.

At the same time, Tracy's mother was running a landscaping business focused on custom gardens and operating a greenhouse for cut flowers in Duanesburg. A partnership formed naturally. Tracy wanted to reenter the farmers market scene; her mother had prior experience selling at markets like the Schenectady Greenmarket. They found their home base at the Gloversville Farmers Market, where they built a loyal customer base that Tracy calls unmatched. Though opportunities to vend at larger markets exist, they remain committed to Gloversville. “Our customers there are the best,” she says.

In 2023, a personal turning point accelerated the farm's evolution. After her mother's partner passed away, she sold her home and moved to the current Amsterdam property full time. With three generations now connected to the farm — Tracy's daughter even lives across the street — Sunny Hunny became a true family operation.

The on-site farm store emerged sooner than expected. Originally part of a long-term plan, it took shape when Tracy and her mother decided to “make a real run at it.” They constructed a greenhouse and a building that now houses a commercial kitchen, honey processing space, and storage for market equipment. The store also became a staging hub for farmers market products — and then, almost naturally, opened its doors to the public after other local producers expressed interest in participating.

Innovation is central to the farm's production strategy. Competing with large-scale growers isn't realistic, so differentiation is key. They grow Concord grapes for customers who wait all year for the short season, ground cherries (also known as goldenberries), and unusual ornamental plants like “pumpkin on a stick,” a striking member of the eggplant family. Creative wreath designs — reflecting Tracy's mother's artistic style — are often the first items to sell out.

Honey remains the cornerstone. Beyond raw honey, infused varieties have gained a following, particularly elderberry-infused honey, prized for its color and flavor. A partnership with Second Act Spirits grew out of connections at the Gloversville market. The distillery first purchased Sunny Hunny's lemon honey for Bee's Knees cocktails, then later collaborated using farm-grown elderflowers and lavender in specialty spirits.

Each season is an experiment. Unlike farmers who stick to a single tomato or cucumber variety year after year, Sunny Hunny embraces trial and error. “We do a lot of trying,” Tracy says. What works scales up; what doesn't informs the next planting plan.

Beyond products, the farm is expanding its agritourism footprint. Beekeeping workshops, planned for this summer, will be offered in small groups with protective gear, giving participants a firsthand appreciation of hive life. Floral design classes, wreath-making sessions, kombucha workshops, and even yoga among the flowers are either underway or in development. A planned sign on Route 5 — made possible through future plans to become an agritourism designation — will help drive visitors to the property.

Floral services for weddings have also blossomed. What began with a bride who wanted to pick her own flowers has grown into at least three to four weddings each summer. By setting clear expectations — they are a flower farm, not a traditional florist — they keep pricing accessible while delivering wildflower-inspired arrangements enhanced with selectively sourced wholesale blooms when needed. Sunny Hunny Farms is always planning new, exciting ventures for the business. A new website with integrated e-commerce and point-of-sale data to launch this Spring will not only help customers purchase Sunny Hunny products but will also help the business collect important data about which products are most profitable, and meaningful to its customers. Expansion of wholesale markets is a priority, though Tracy is clear-eyed about scale. “We don't want to sell honey on a wholesale level in California,” she says. “More localized honey is the best product for all. But we do want a high-quality product that people seek out.” Already, flavored honeys ship to Florida, North Carolina and other states where customers prize Sunny Hunny products.

At its heart, Sunny Hunny Farms is striving to be a good neighbor — to Gloversville, Amsterdam, Montgomery County, and New York State. In an era of global supply chains and industrial agriculture, their mission is refreshingly grounded: feed customers good quality food at a fair price, care for the land and the bees, and thoughtfully steward their small corner of the world.



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