



Glen McMullen and children April, 6, Sandy, 8, and Sean, 10.

(Dave Pink, Examiner)

By DAVE PINK
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So you say you'd like to sell your house in the suburbs and buy a farm in the country.

You're not alone.

More and more city dwellers are moving to the country and beginning small, part-time farm operations. The farm becomes a second profession, or hobby, while they continue jobs in city businesses or industries.

Statistics kept by the provincial ministry of agriculture and food show that about 65 per cent of Peterborough County's 1,387 farmers are part-timers. However, there is no breakdown between city transplants and full-time farmers forced to take other jobs to make ends meet.

"They're both substantial parts of the total though," says ministry spokesman John Cockburn. "They're running pretty close to half and half."

Glen McMullen moved his family to a 110 acre farm just north of Warsaw four years ago — and doesn't expect he'll ever move back to the city.

"I was born and raised in Toronto," he recalls. "but my

grandparents were farm people. I used to spend my summers with them so I guess that's where farming got into my blood.

"Now I dabble in just about everything related to farming."

Mr. McMullen works the farm with help from his wife Gwen and four school aged children. A full-time science teacher at Kenner Collegiate in Peterborough, he has filled in his time restoring the 103-year-old farmhouse and building up the farm.

He has accumulated 42 sheep, 20 Charolais beef cattle and grows hay and vegetables but his pride and joy is 22 colonies of bees.

"I just can't imagine a farm without bees now," says Mr. McMullen. "Even if I had to move back into the city I would still try to keep some bees."

The McMullens took about 3,000 pounds of honey from their colonies this year, way up from only 1,600 pounds the previous year. "And there's going to be more next year," says Mr. McMullen.

The honey is sold from their farmhouse across the counter at the Peterborough

Farmers' Market Saturday mornings.

Commercially processed sugar is not used in the McMullen home in favor of their own honey. "My wife does a lot of baking so we might go through 200 pounds of honey a year in our own house," he points out.

The farm is a family project and Mr. McMullen says his three sons and a daughter, aged six to 12, help out with the haying apple and vegetable picking and the honey selling not to mention the maple syrup making every spring.

The youngsters also busy themselves with other chores around the house, like unloading firewood for the winter months.

"I figured out a load of firewood is equivalent to half a tank of fuel oil in total BTUs," says Mr. McMullen, "so I plan to cheat the oil companies a little this winter. I'm really looking forward to burning that wood."

"I have two woodlots on this farm so why let them go to waste."

The McMullen sheep are sheared every May 24 weekend. Then Mrs. McMullen, a

member of the Peterborough Spinning and Weaving Guild, takes charge of the sheep fleece.

The flock more than doubled this spring with the birth of 22 lambs, but some will be sold to private customers in November.

Mr. McMullen is hoping the price improves for the beef cattle grazing in his fields beside the sheep.

"My heart really bleeds for farmers, trying to make an honest living on beef alone," he says. "Beef is not very good at the moment but I'm hoping there will be some money in it by next spring."

you're doing," he says. "And you've got to be a little realistic when you go back to the land, but I feel I've got two feet on the ground."

"You can't make a living off beef," he says. "Customers are paying as much as they did 10 years ago but the costs to the farmer has risen three times that amount."

"I'm trying to run this farm as efficiently as possible but I find I have to establish a set of priorities and keep them well in view," he says. "My priorities are my family, my job and then the farm but the beauty of the farm is that it does involve the family. They can go out and help and have a great time."

Mr. McMullen says his farm has been successful because he takes an interest in it. "You've got to be interested in what