



12-15-2016

Southern Tier Farms

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Recommended Citation

Emerson, Donna (2016) "Southern Tier Farms," *Westview*: Vol. 32 : Iss. 1 , Article 24.
Available at: <https://dc.swosu.edu/westview/vol32/iss1/24>

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Southern Tier Farms

by Donna Emerson

After October, crispy brown fields
span out where the summer corn grew,
lumpy bumps as far as you can see.

In Steuben County,
you can walk these broken lines
if you have a day,
if you can stand the sharp edges
of the remaining cornstalks.

At the end of uneven rows,
sits the green forage harvester,
draped in foliage from the trees.
You know it's metal underneath.
Looks like she belongs here, resting
for cooling days, longer nights,

for farm families who know how
to keep her gears in order, run
her straight, not tip her, finish

before the snow,
put the harvested corn in the cribs
for the cows.

They park the John Deere here
with questions beside it.
How many silos do you have?
How many cows since they lowered
the price of a gallon to forty cents?

