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### UNH Woodsmen Team holds demonstration in Lee

By [Jason Claffey](#)[jclaffey@fosters.com](mailto:jclaffey@fosters.com)

Sunday, October 3, 2010

LEE — The University of New Hampshire Woodsmen Team on Saturday tried to chop down the effect of a miserable apple season for DeMeritt Hill Farm.

The team put on a free demonstration, hurling axes, hacking logs, and speed-sawing tree trunks at the entrance to the farm, which dates to 1820.

It was part of an effort by farm owners Meg and Roy Wilson to attract visitors after the farm experienced one of its worst seasons on record.

Ninety percent of its apple crop was destroyed by an erratic weather pattern in May. Temperatures started off unusually warm, causing an early blossom. A cold snap, however, encased the fruit in an icy coffin, causing it to turn black and rot off to the ground. Many local farms experienced similar misfortune.



**Claffey/Democrat photo Eliza Cope, of the University of New Hampshire Woodsmen Team, hurls an ax during a demonstration at DeMeritt Hill Farm.**

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The Wilsons were forced to delay their pick-your-own apple operation, resulting in a big hit to their bottom line. So they lined up a series of events, like the woodsmen demonstration, to get people down to the farm.

"We're trying to fill in our calendar," Meg Wilson said. "That's the only thing you can do."

A.J. Dupere, coach of the woodsmen team, said the demonstration was important for community service. The team holds several demonstrations a year.

"We're trying to help," he said.

The show impressed Erin Walker and her 2-year-old daughter, Kelli, of Biddeford, Maine.

"I didn't know the farm got hit so bad," Erin said. She bought a bag of apples, which are still sold in the farm store.

Meg Wilson said she might open the pick-your-own season in a week. She said regulars have been supportive.

"Everybody's been very gracious," she said.

The farm has scheduled several more events, including a Cocheco Valley Humane Society adoption fair on Sunday, Oct. 10 and "enchanted hayrides" during the last three weekends of October.

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