

IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 15, 2014



Grazers: A Cooperative Story Chronicles NYS Farmers' Struggle to Survive Premieres at **DOC NYC**

Sunday, November 16th at 4:45pm at IFC Center 323 Avenue of the Americas, Theatre 1
Friday, November 14th, 10:45am, IFC Center Theatre 2

Filmed over the course of two-years, **Grazers: A Cooperative Story** follows a group of fiercely independent farmers in upstate New York as they create a beef cooperative to hold on to their failing farms. Directed by documentary veterans **Lisa F. Jackson** and **Sarah Teale**, **Grazers** explores the demise of the family farm and rural landscape and the emergence of a new, local food movement that links country and city in an effort to improve food quality and retain local farms.

Part rural drama, part organizing hand-book, **Grazers** delves into the upstate farm life, from the gorgeous landscapes of the southern Adirondacks to the more mundane basement cooperative meetings where farmers argue pricing and discuss the benefits of fresh versus frozen meat. "It is a celebration of life and farming," said Teale, who was herself one of the founding members of the Cooperative. "Beneath the grime of farm work there's a grit that hints at survival." Jackson added, "We hope this story encourages other farmers to take a different approach, finding in the city and neighboring communities new markets that will allow them to maintain their lifestyle and provide for the rest of us better quality food. They need to know that they can survive."

Farmers are known to be notoriously camera-shy but Jackson and Teale had unprecedented access into lives that are rarely filmed and to voices that are rarely heard.

Teale's husband, writer Gordon Chaplin, has had a farm in the area for thirty years and for seventeen years Teale has come to know her farm neighbors well. It was in frustration at watching so many people that she knew lose their farms that led Teale to form the cooperative. She had not planned on taking three years out of her documentary film career working to ensure the Co-op's success, nor had she planned on becoming a major character in the film.

The film's background could not be more stark: New York State loses a farm every three and a half days, and with it a way of life, generations of farming knowledge, small town infrastructure and a whole landscape.

Grazers highlights the fragility of the local food movement, the plight of small farms and communities, and the impact these challenges have on our food systems and on our environment.

Grazers: A Cooperative Story is a character-driven chronicle of the group's struggle and illuminates timely issues regarding our food system. It is an unprecedented look into a rapidly declining way of life in the United States – the family farm – and an insight into the fragility and importance of our local food systems.

SARAH TEALE has produced a number of films for HBO including the recent four part series *The Weight of the Nation*, which was nominated for a Primetime Emmy; *Dealing Dogs* (Emmy nominated for Best Investigative Documentary) and *Hacking Democracy* (Emmy nominated for Best Investigative Documentary).

LISA F. JACKSON has been making documentary films for over 35 years, work that has brought her awards that include two Emmy awards, a Muse Award from New York Women in Film & Television, and a Sundance Jury Prize; her films include *Sex Crimes Unit* and *The Greatest Silence: Rape in the Congo*, both for HBO.

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