



HIGHLIGHTS

THANKS TO CFT DONORS, WE HAVE GOOD NEWS TO SHARE:

3 Farms preserved in 2022 (on track to preserve more than 2021)

67 Farms listed on CT FarmLink

342 Farmers listed on CT FarmLink looking for land

6 Confirmed CT FarmLink matches (just this year!)

YOU

Our Hero (not technically a number, but true!)



PHOTO: CARLA MCELROY

Finding the Next Generation of Farmers

By: Kimball Cartwright, Development Director; and, Maddie Dres, CT FarmLink Associate

“But is there a next generation of CT farmers?” a supporter recently asked me, as we talked about farmland preservation. CFT’s Executive Director Elisabeth Moore tells me that when she first sits down with a farmer to talk about long-term preservation of their farmland, the farmer often tosses in a question along the lines of “Say I preserve my farmland, are there really any people out there wanting to farm?”

Despite the odds, the answer is “yes!”

Thankfully, your support of Connecticut Farmland Trust (CFT) has helped us develop a contract with the CT Department of Agriculture to help farmers find farms

--and farm-owners to find farmers. The CT FarmLink program’s flagship tool is an online database that helps connect farmers to farmland and vice versa. CT FarmLink increases its reach through connections to similar databases throughout New England.

Nate Trojanoski, for example, signed up with CT FarmLink during the pandemic.

Nate has been farming since he was seven years old, when he got his first flock of six Corriedale sheep. At the age of 10, Nate started showing his sheep across Connecticut. By high school, his flock grew to 20 ewes that he managed himself all while participating in the Future Farmers of America chapter, where he was the vice president his junior and senior year, and in 4H.

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Following high school, Nate gained more experience working at a veterinarian's office, selling livestock supplies with his dad at livestock shows, working on a beef farm, and even shearing 6,000 alpacas for two years. Last summer Nate added a haying operation to his resume when he started making hay from 250 acres in Guilford. Nate is currently a board member of the CT Sheep Breeders Association and runs the shearing school at UConn in the spring.

Nate and his wife Melissa, the current president of the CT Sheep Breeders Association, met almost 15 years ago while showing sheep. He commented nostalgically, "She had Romneys. I had Corriedales." They were ready to start their own farm, but everything seemed financially out of reach.

"I came to the conclusion that in Connecticut I would have to leave if I wanted my own farm. Property is just too expensive," Nate offered. Fortunately he signed up for CT FarmLink before leaving.

As with most things farming, the results did not show up immediately. Nate had been on CT FarmLink for about 18 months before he found the opportunity in Middlefield. As he learned what was available on the farm, Nate decided to reach out to farm owner Jon Brayshaw with a vision for the old Pogmore Farm.

On April 1, 2022, Nate got started with Jon, creating a business plan, budget, and site plans; conducting market research; working with a permaculture designer; and applying for a CT Department of Agriculture Farmland Restoration Grant (which they were awarded!).



Nate Trojanoski in front of hay bales.

Nate and Melissa hope to start construction soon on a new farmhouse for them to live in with their two-year-old. "It will be really nice to live where I work," Nate said. He has spent many years commuting over 45 minutes to his various jobs and is excited to now have that time to spend with his family.

Along with a sheep dairy, forest-raised turkeys, an organic market garden, an onsite-composting facility, farm store, and plans for eventually 250 ewes, Nate and Melissa are excited to start an education barn that Melissa will run to serve local youth and Future Farmers of America groups.

Your partnership with CFT means farms will be preserved, and farmers like Nate and Melissa will find ways to connect their dreams to the land. Thank you for making this possible!



Thank you, sponsors!



In 2022, these fine businesses helped us launch our first "Scavenger Hunt" for CT Food and Farms; and, made our 20th anniversary celebration in September a great success.

Thank you! If you'd like your business to sponsor CFT's good work, please contact Kimball Cartwright at kcartwright@ctfarmland.org.

Soil Sustainer Sponsor

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Waller Smith & Palmer

Growing the Next Generation of Farmland Supporters

Do you remember your first scavenger hunt?

This summer, CFT designed one for families with young children and sent them near and far across CT in search of food and farms.

“It allowed our family to connect and be together” one participant remarked. She added, “The scavenger hunt helped our family connect back to where our food comes from and to the importance of agriculture.”

Families embarked on more than 35 different “missions” and were asked to take a photo or video of the answer. You can find some of the same resources families used to tackle their “missions” on our website and take yourself on your own scavenger hunt around CT!

We received many wonderful photos from across the state and thought we’d share a few with you.



Mission: Find something green at a farm.



Mission: Pick your favorite item at a farmer's market.



Mission: Pick your favorite berries at a farm.



Mission: Find Connecticut-grown flowers.



This summer’s Scavenger Hunt benefited from the work of our especially talented intern, Rachael Trowbridge, and multiple community partners who spread the word. Next year, we need more committed volunteers with marketing expertise to broaden our reach for this great event. Are you looking for a unique project for your creative energies? Get in touch with Kimball at kcartwright@ctfarmland.org to talk about this fun opportunity.



YOU CAN PROTECT FARMLAND FOREVER

with a gift in your will.

We are inspired by your stories and reasons for wanting to protect farmland. Please contact Kimball Cartwright at 860.247.0202, ext. 223, for a confidential discussion regarding how you can protect CT farmland forever.

FARMLAND PROTECTED *(thus far in 2022, thanks to YOU!)*



Jared and Kies LaVack with a happy cow and a happy dog at Fort Hill Farms

FORT HILL FARMS 62 acres in Thompson

Your support, two young farmers, their family, the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service and the CT Department of Agriculture, all working together, led to CFT's first agricultural easement of 2022.

Farmers Kies and Jared LaVack lead with their vision of agricultural sustainability for their family's dairy farm. Kies is the fourth generation in her family to farm this land. Fort Hill Farms operates an anaerobic digester, combining its manure with food waste from local institutions, to produce sustainable electricity for the local utility company. Jared took a leadership role in the creation and implementation of their

comprehensive nutrient management plan, using extensive no-till, cover cropping and manure injection methods on their fields. Kies is the herdsman of the farm's 250 milking cows and more than 200 youngstock, as well as regularly teaches the importance of agriculture by sharing their farm and experiences with the surrounding community.

"Without farms, we'd be hungry, naked, and sober," quipped Kies, at the celebration of the farm's preservation. In addition to their popular corn maze and Lavender Creamery, which are open to the public, Fort Hill Farms is a member of The Farmer's Cow and Cabot dairy cooperatives.

BIRKBECK FARM 69 acres in Stonington

Sitting within a five-minute drive from both Eastern Connecticut casinos, Birkbeck Farm was particularly threatened by future development. "I'm very appreciative for the support from so many people to make this happen," said Michael Birkbeck, fourth generation owner of the property. "My father was very conservation-minded and I view my role as a steward of this land and hope to one day in the future see a young farmer carve out their future here. Knowing that the farm is preserved to make that a possibility down the road means a lot." Birkbeck Farm currently serves as hay and beef pasture and is home to a small number of cows, and two horses. CFT preserved the farm with our key partners, the CT Department of Agriculture and the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service.



Birkbeck Farm Cows



Sally and Dick Jaynes on a satellite parcel of Broken Arrow Nursery in Hamden

BROKEN ARROW NURSERY 35 acres in Hamden

At the end of July, Dick and Sally Jaynes donated the development rights on their family's 35-acre nursery and Christmas tree farm in Hamden. Well known for its variety and quality, Broken Arrow Nursery is the 3rd parcel the Jaynes have protected with CFT. They and their family previously donated the development rights on two "satellite" parcels of the nursery. Thank you to Dick and Sally for their commitment to conservation and to protecting their family's farm. After retiring from a fulfilling career at Pfizer, their son Burton recently purchased and is growing the family's nursery business.