



Daniela Aldrich
Dancing Harvest Farm



Abby Sadauckas
Apple Creek Farm



Carolyn and Ramona Snell
Snell Family Farm



Beth Schiller
Dandelion
Spring
Farm



Kathi Langelier
Herbal Revolution



Hannah Hamilton
The Buckle Farm

Celebrating Maine's Female Farmers

2026 is International Year of the Woman Farmer

Here in Maine, female producers make up 43% of the farming population, which is higher than the national average of 36%. Meet just a handful of the many skilled women farmers in MFT's Farm Network included in that 43% who keep our kitchens full of nutritious, local goods, and who keep Maine farms productive and strong.

"We are fortunate to have many incredible women farmers here in Maine and in our Farm Network demonstrating true leadership, building resilient regional food systems, and stewarding thousands of acres of farmland across the state."

— Stacy Brenner, President, MFT



Denise Carpenter
Chellis Brook Farm



Jill Agnew
Willow Pond Farm



Betsy Bullard
Briggen Farms



Batula Ismail and Seynab Ali
New Roots Cooperative Farm



Erica Emery
Rustic Roots Farm



Adrienne Lee
New Beet Farm

FARMLAND PROTECTION

Farms you've helped protect so far this year

Thanks to the contributions of MFT supporters like you, partners including the Ram Island Conservation Fund at the Maine Community Foundation, local land trusts and municipalities, the Land for Maine's Future program, and farmland owners committed to their farms' future, these farms will continue to feed our communities for generations to come. Read more about them at mainefarmlandtrust.org/get-involved/latest-news



For 40 years, Andrea and Allan Smith have raised sheep, goats, and beef cattle and grown organic vegetables for market. They continue to maintain a large market garden, with a portion of the fields managed by Master Gardeners who donate the produce to local food banks, and the remainder is hayed. Andrea says they are “so excited to be able to protect this land knowing that it will continue to be farmed long after we are gone and that future generations will be able to enjoy the views. From the first day we saw the farm we knew it was a very special place that should be protected.”



Randall and Jill Bates have owned and operated an organic dairy for 21 years, where they milk 50 cows and grow ~3 acres of winter squash and pumpkins for sale at their farmstand. Protecting the farm had been on their minds for several years, but it wasn't until recently that the timing was right for an easement (purchased with support from Land for Maine's Future). “I have always wanted to farm since I was old enough to think, and this is where I wanted to do it,” says Randall. “Now the farm will be preserved, and the generations that follow me will have the same opportunity to do so.”



Joan Gordon and her late husband Bill bought the land in 1959. A few years ago, Joan and her daughter Sue Hynes began working with MFT to secure the future of the farm (which has been managed by Sue's cousins at Findview Farm for over 50 years) with an easement. Joan passed away last fall at the age of 95, and Sue continued working with us to get the project over the finish line, with support from the Town of Gorham. “Both my parents loved this land,” says Sue, “and they wanted to make sure it was protected forever.”



The Commons at Morris Farm, Wiscasset



Backed by the incredible support of a broader community of neighbors, partner organizations, and volunteers, MFT purchased the Morris Farm property in 2025 as a Buy/Protect/Sell project. In April, we simultaneously closed on the sale and an easement protecting the property forever. New owners Chris and Terry Baldwin, along with their daughter and son-in-law Lindsay and Ryan Esbjerg, envision the The Commons at Morris Farm as a shared community resource. “It’s a working farm, and also a place where farmers, neighbors, and partners can participate, contribute, and benefit together,” say the Baldwins. “The farmstand is a big part of that – creating new opportunities and markets for Maine farmers and makers to connect with the community.”

Deering Family Farm, Scarborough



The Deering Family Farm, owned by the five Deering siblings (including longtime MFT Lands Committee member Glen Deering) is the latest in a growing cluster of protected farms in Scarborough,

Happytown Farm, Orland



Paul and Karen Volckhausen have been producing organic vegetables, meat, poultry, and flowers since the early 1980s and have been deeply involved in Maine’s local and organic farming movement. Their longtime farm employee, Angelica “Munch” Harwood has taken over operations under a rolling lease agreement, which should allow her to build the equity necessary to eventually complete the purchase of the farm, made more affordable by the easement. Great Pond Mountain Conservation Trust will steward the easement, which includes a trail easement providing public access to the 5,400 acres known as the Wildlands. “It is not easy to give up our farm; it’s giving up who we are and what we do,” say Karen and Paul. “We have appreciated the help and guidance from MFT. We are now assured that our land is protected and will be a forever farm.” As for Munch, “I feel blessed to live here and want to keep the farm organic. I want to feed people, bring people together, and really make it a community-oriented space.”

abutting Broadturn Farm on one side and the Deering family’s larger farm property (protected in 2009) on the other sides. The Town of Scarborough contributed half the funds through the town’s conservation land bond. Glen currently hays about 7 acres and plans to expand the hayed acreage, while another ~10 acres is used by O’Donal’s Nursery for growing nursery trees.



FARM NETWORK SPOTLIGHT



East Forty Farm: Celebrating a Decade as a Forever Farm

Since purchasing and working with MFT to protect 40 acres of farmland in Waldoboro in 2016, Allison Lakin and Neal Foley of East Forty Farm and Dairy and their farm business, Lakin's Gorges Cheese, have seen both the physical landscape and their work on the farm evolve drastically. On a humid day in early July, we sat in on a round of cheesemaking with Allison while reflecting on the decade since becoming a Forever Farm and the future of the land under their forward-thinking stewardship.

At the beginning

East Forty Farm and Dairy was many years of work in the making before it ever came to be. Farmer Neal, or as Allison refers to him, “a one-man-haying machine,” spent decades in farming (largely dairy) before starting their operation in Waldoboro. And Allison, a true Jill of all trades, had a background in anthropology, museums, palm-reading, theatre, sailing, education, and the nonprofit world among other things, before she found her calling in cheesemaking. Allison began leasing space from another cheesemaker in Rockport for four years before seeking a permanent home for the business.

Hurdles to getting on the land

Making the leap into owning their own farm was far from straightforward. Neal and Allison saw upwards of 100 different properties before landing on this rolling 40 acres in Waldoboro, set against the Medomak River. Due to its size and desirable river frontage, the cost to purchase the farm would have been far beyond what's affordable for a working farmer. “We were running out of time to make it happen and it was rather remarkable how hard [the staff at] MFT worked for it to all come together. From my understanding it was, at the time, the fastest easement MFT had ever pulled together.”





Stewarding a Forever Farm

Protecting a farm with an easement isn't a one-time event. The title of Forever Farm is a promise that land will always be available for agricultural use, and for the farmers that work it, it's an ongoing process to steward and strengthen the soil and the farm, in relationship with MFT. Allison and Neal aren't just thinking about what's most beneficial for their operation, but how decisions they make today will impact the next generation of farmers, and those that follow. And at MFT, we think about how we can support farmers in those efforts, whether through our own programs or linking them to other landscape management, climate resilience, and farm business resources.

Ten years ago, East Forty Farm had just 7 acres of open fields, the rest forested with impenetrable brambles and invasives. Employing their pigs as a field management tool to clear invasive plants and brush to open up additional land for grazing and silvopasture is not just a choice that benefits their capacity for cows, but future farmers as well. Allison and Neal have also made investments in their soil health and water management systems to reduce the impacts of flooding, drought, and soil erosion, leveraging support from MFT and federal grants. The same goes for the watershed that their land abuts. They work closely with the local river monitors who oversee the Medomak to ensure their farm has zero negative impact on that ecosystem, including the cove along their property that is home to the most profitable clamming site in Maine.

The landscape shapes the cheese & vice versa

Once Neal and Allison had improved and expanded their pastures and found additional land to lease for haying, in 2021 East Forty Farm made the leap from buying in milk to fully relying on the supply

from their own herd to produce their cheese. Across the pastures, you can see the tall grasses dotted with flowers. Allison says the point of the season directly impacts the flavor notes of the cheese. Earlier in the summer, after drinking a glass of milk from the bulk tank and remarking on its incredible sweetness, she realized the clovers were to thank. Edible flowers and plants growing amongst the grazing grass on the farm add complexity to the cheeses that change through the season, like the red clovers or allium. In their "Rockweed" cheese, the line of dried bladderwrack seaweed infused into the soft cheese can change slightly based on the diversity of the seaweed they harvest from the cove. You can hear more in their Cowside Suppers series, a farm-to-table experience rich with the science and story behind their products.



Looking back, looking ahead

Walking around some of the lower pastures, Neal points to areas that used to be overgrown with *rosa rugosa* and other invasive plants. In the decade since buying and protecting the farm, the physical landscape has changed significantly, shaped by deliberate choices they've made to invest in the land and their business. And as a Forever Farm, their thoughtful stewardship of their farm and its landscape in partnership with MFT will have ripple effects on the generations of farmers to come.



GROWING THE FUTURE FOR FARMING



As Long as There's Cows Going Out to Pasture

Persevering through PFAS for the past six years, the Dostie family hasn't given up on farming – and with support from the PFAS Fund and MFT, a new operation is taking shape.

For the Dostie family, farming is a livelihood – with an emphasis on the live. “All I wanted to do was farm, all my life. Dreaming of how to make it better, making a living at milking cows,” said Egide Sr. in 2019, after working with MFT to protect 650+ acres of the land he and his family has stewarded for decades. His young grandson Egide III declared, “I’m always going to work on the farm because I love to do it, and that’s about it.” As for Egide II, “As long as there’s cows going out to pasture, that would be my hope for the future.”

A year later, in 2020, the Dosties’ milk tested high for PFAS. The fields closest to their milking barn were highly contaminated by PFAS, and their “clean” fields were too distant to profitably sustain a dairy operation. In the six years (and countless obstacles) since, the Dostie family’s deep connection to their land and core identities

as farmers have been the driving force behind their determination to remain in farming. And through the state PFAS Fund, MFT, and other providers, the Dosties have received the resources needed to carve a viable path forward.

Since 2023, the Dosties have worked with MFT and other technical assistance providers to analyze the land and infrastructure available to them and build a dozen financial models for a mix of operations at different scales. Late last year, MFT Farm Business Planning Program Manager Alex Fouliard and Egide II landed on a model combining haying, maple sugaring, and seasonally raising feeder calves for other beef operations that they projected to be profitable.

This spring and summer, with support from the state PFAS Fund, the Dosties have made steady progress, purchasing 26 breeder cows so far, and will soon be installing fencing and a well, plus renovating their barn.

Egide III, now in his 20s, had to take an off-farm job while the future of the farm business was in flux. But under the new operation, he can rejoin his father and grandfather in the farm business where his heart truly lives.



OUR SUPPORTERS



While the herd of breeder cows and calves may not be what Egide II envisioned back in 2019, thanks to the Dosties' incredible determination to continue farming the land that they love, and the robust set of resources and supports behind them (made possible by MFT contributors like you!), there are still cows going out to pasture.

A new chapter for the former Songbird Farm property



In May, the Maine DACF purchased the property now known as Green Earth (formerly Songbird Farm) from MFT through the State's PFAS Fund. When MFT bought the land in 2023, PFAS-impacted farmers needed urgent solutions, and MFT was in a position where we could act quickly and contribute what we learned as the State and countless others worked together to build the robust PFAS Fund supports that exist today. Transferring this property to the State is more than a transaction; it's a celebration of years of collaborative efforts to address PFAS head on, with farmers' voices at the center.

Donor Spotlight: Molly Sholes



Molly Sholes (1930–2026) came to farming late in life – and took it on as fully as her other pursuits. She grew up in Minnesota, North Carolina, and Maine, graduated from Cornell, and worked for the Defense Intelligence Agency in Washington, D.C. before spending 30 years in India, Pakistan, and Turkey as a foreign service wife, raising three children along the way.

When she returned to Maine in 1985, she turned a run-down West Rockport farmhouse into Spruce Mountain Blueberries, restoring its overgrown fields by hand. Practical and inventive to the end, she became the first person in Maine to make wild blueberry chutney, adapting a recipe from a cookbook she'd carried home from India.

Molly gave generously throughout her life, serving on Rockport's selectboard and town committees, showing up for neighbors in need, and supporting MFT for more than two decades. That generosity continued after her passing, with a bequest to MFT and a plan to ensure that her beloved blueberry fields are conserved for future generations.

For more info on planned giving at MFT, please contact Director of Engagement Erin Baltes at (207) 338-6575 or ebaltes@mainefarmlandtrust.org. Thank you!



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

*In this
issue:*



Meet the six
farms we've
protected so
far this year



10 years as a Forever
Farm & why Lakin's
Gorges Cheese tastes
like its landscape



A future
for PFAS-
impacted
farms

*and
more!*

Just as farms are the heartbeat of the local food system, **MFT's Forever Farm Crew** of monthly sustaining donors are the heartbeat of our work: steady, dependable, hardworking, vital.

Donor Spotlight: Paul Wells

"I grew up in a small town, not in Maine, but in Western Massachusetts, on a small farm that's been in the family since 1864. Although neither I nor any of my siblings elected to continue to farm ourselves, we're pleased that cousins are now stewards of the place, leasing much of the land to farmers in neighboring towns and raising Christmas trees. When I was young there were ten or a dozen active dairy farms in town. Now I don't know if there are any. I consider it a privilege to have grown up where and how I did, and it's a privilege that I treasure. My monthly sustaining contribution to Maine Farmland Trust is a meaningful way I can help future generations of Mainers enjoy the same privilege."



Learn how you can join the Forever Farm Crew and easily manage your recurring gift at www.mainefarmlandtrust.org/support-us/recurring-giving



Special thanks to these Fruit Level business supporters for their generous contributions!