FARM'S REVIVAL A CHALLENGE AIDED BY NATURAL PRODUCTION, LAND-MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

By Steve Jensen, Office of Commissioner Steven K. Reviczky

NORTH GRANBY - The challenges of reviving crop production and a retail farm stand at Wilhelm Farm were explored on a recent tour that included a look at silvopasture and agroforestry practices being implemented on the property.

The tour by owners Ann Wilhelm, her husband Bill Bentley and grower Sven Pihl drew nearly 20 visitors, including representatives of the state Dept. of Agriculture, the state Dept. of Energy and Environmental Protection, the Connecticut Forest & Park Association, the Connecticut Farm Bureau and the USDA/Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

NRCS has awarded the farm a Conservation Innovation Grant to develop the 46-acre farm into a demonstration site where landowners and professionals can learn about cultivation practices such as agroforestry, silvopasture and related perennial plant production.

Silvopasture integrates forest with fields where crops are grown or livestock forage, while agroforestry involves growing specialty crops like mushrooms or ornamental plants amongst the trees.

The goal of using the farm as a demonstration site is to encourage small farms to employ the techniques as part of their food-production and land-management strategy, fostering a more resilient landscape and a stronger regional food system.

The more than century-old farm has been in Wilhelm’s family since 1936, and for decades fed the family and provided a side-income through the roadside farm stand.

Ann and Bill stopped production and closed the stand about five years ago after their children moved away, while they reconsidered the farm’s future.

Their partnership with Pihl began through Connecticut FarmLink, www.ctfarmlink.org, a web-based program and database administered by the state Dept. of Agriculture that connects farmers seeking land with farmland owners offering to sell or lease acreage.

Pihl’s first task was to plant a quarter-acre market garden in a field along North Granby Road that had not been tilled in perhaps 20 years.

“It was a lot of work initially,” said Pihl, who also runs a “regenerative landscape design” business. “There was quite a bit of compaction so the soil was basically like concrete. Now when you pull up a handful it’s full of life.”

Because the garden site is at the bottom of an open, grassy slope, he dug rows on graduated contours to maximize natural irrigation and help control runoff in the sandy, quickly-draining soil.

Using organic methods, he planted traditional New England vegetables such as tomatoes, peppers and eggplant, as well as some more exotic varieties.

“My goal was to grow historical crops that the

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NORTHEAST EGG/USDA
Per doz. Grade A and Grade A white in cartons to retailers (volume buyers)
XTRA LARGE .93 1.17
LARGE .87 1.01
MEDIUM .68 .81

NEW ENGLAND SHELL EGGS
Per doz. Grade A brown in carton delivered store door. (Range)
XTRA LARGE 1.57 1.68
LARGE 1.50 1.60
MEDIUM .94 1.05
SMALL .57 .69

NEW HOLLAND, PA. HOG AUCTION
Per cwt.
50-56 200-300 lbs 45.00 59.00
48-52 200-300 lbs 45.00 59.00
Sows, US 1-3 200-500 lbs 51.50 59.00
300-800 lbs 49.00 55.50
Boars 400-900 lbs 5.00 7.00

USDA wholesale cutflowers
September 4, 2017. $/pack as noted.
AGREATUM, NENG, /BN, L 7.50 7.50
ALIUM, DRMSTC, NJ, BUNCH 9.00 9.00
AMRTHS,HNG, XL,NENG, /BN 17.50 17.50
ASCLEPIAS, PA, 10/BN, LNG 8.50 10.75
CELOSIA, PA,PLUMOSA,BN, L 8.50 8.50
CORNFLOWER, CA, 25/BN, XL 15.00 15.00
DAHLIA, 5/BN, L, LONG 10.00 10.00
DELPHNY,HGB,NENG,10/BN 14.00 14.00
GLAD,STD,C,10/BN, LNG 13.50 13.50
GOMPHERENA, PA, BN, LONG 8.50 8.50
LAVENDER, PA, PER BN, LNG10.00 10.00
LILY, ASIATIC, ME, 10/BN, XL 13.50 13.50
LISISANTHUS,NENG,10/BN, L 17.50 18.50
QU ANNE LACE, CA, /BN, L 8.50 8.50
RUDBECKIA, PA, PER BN, L 8.50 8.50
SACIBOA, PA, 10/BN, L 13.50 13.50
SEDUM, NENG, /BN, L 12.00 12.50
STOCK, CA, DBL, 5/BN, LNG 12.00 12.50
SUNFLOWER, NENG, 5/BN, XL 6.50 6.50
SUNFLOWER, NENG, 5/BN, L 5.00 5.00
SUNFLOWER, MA, 10/BN, L 10.00 12.50
YARROW, YLW, CD, /BN, L 8.50 8.50
ZINNIA, NENG, /BN, LONG 7.00 7.50
ZINNIA, PA, /BN, LONG 7.50 7.50

CONNECTICUT FARM-TO-SCHOOL LOCAL PURCHASE
Product procured from growers and processors to State of Connecticut school districts during the months of August 2016 to June 2017. $/per case.
APPLES, WHOLE, 44 LB 26.75 29.25
APPLES, WEDGES, 6 LB 38.25 38.25
CAULIFLOWER, 14 LB 28.00 28.00
CARROTS, BABY, 32 LB 30.50 30.50
CARROTS, STICKS, 22 LB 30.50 30.50
CELERY, 22 LBS 41.75 41.75
CUCUMBS, 45 LB 35.00 35.00
KALE, 7 LBS 19.25 25.50
ROMAINE, 12 LBS 19.75 19.75
SPINACH, 12 LB 20.50 20.50
PEPPERS, BELL, 25 LB 16.00 16.00
PEPPERS, OTHER 15 LB 20.00 20.00
SQUASH, 22 LB 13.25 19.75
TOMATOES, RED, 11 LBS 22.95 27.95

WOOLESE FRUITS & VEGETABLES
Boston Terminal and Wholesale Grower Prices
CONNECTICUT AND NEW ENGLAND GROWN

WHOLESALE FRUITS & VEGETABLES
Boston Terminal and Wholesale Grower Prices

MIDDLESEX LIVESTOCK AUCTION
Middlefield, CT - September 4, 2017

Bob Calves:
Low High
45-60 lbs. 35.00 39.00
61-75 lbs. 55.00 60.00
76-95 lbs. 62.00 66.00
91-105 lbs. 70.00 75.00
106 lbs. & up 77.50 82.50
Farm Calves 83.50 86.00
Starter Calves 22.50 34.00
Veal Calves 120.00 175.00
Feeder Heifers 82.00 115.00
Beef Heifers 66.00 82.00
Steer Steers 55.00 92.50
Beef Steers 81.00 85.00
Feeder Bulls 84.00 125.00
Bull Bulls 80.00 89.00
Replacement Cows n/a n/a
Replacement Heifers n/a n/a
Boars 1@ 50.00
Sows n/a n/a
Butcher Hogs 80.00 95.00
Feeder Pigs each 65.00 117.50
Sheep each 60.00 200.00
Lambs each 80.00 220.00
Goats each 200.00 355.00
Kid Goats each 180.00 320.00
Canners up to 57.50
Cutters 58.00 60.00
Utility Grade Cows 61.00 64.00
Rabbits each 5.00 25.00
Chickens each 4.00 50.00
Ducks each 3.00 18.00
(Continued from Page 1)

community knew with a mix of new things," he said.
A cool, wet spring delayed many of the crops, and
he was unable to open the farm stand until mid-July.
"The primary challenges were weather and soil, but
once the system was up it’s been pretty self-
maintaining," Pihl said. "I’m just trying to keep up with
the produce at this point."
The farm created a Facebook page to help in mar-
ketng the stand, and Pihl has been trying to drum up
business wherever he can.
Stopping for lunch at a nearby Ramen noodle res-
taurant before the tour, he struck up a conversation
with the owner about what he may be able to offer
from the farm.
"They’re interested in my Shishito and Togarashi
peppers," Pihl said later.
The farm uses animals to help manage the land
whenever possible, including a pair of goats to clear
brush around the property, which contains about 18
acres of White Pine forest.
"They’re quite efficient at munching," Bill Bentley
did during the tour as the group viewed the Saanen
goats in action. "They love Multiflora rose and Asian
bittersweet. About the only thing they won’t eat is Ja-
panese Barberry."
Pihl uses chickens in the garden to eat insects as
they scratch around the rows, and pigs may be
brought in to help uproot stumps.
"I only have two chickens left," Pihl said with a wry
smile. "I had a lot more until they met the local bear."
Although the partnership and the various projects
and techniques it is employing has not yet concluded
its first season, they consider their progress a suc-
cess that gives them a solid base to move forward.
"This shows what can be done in a landscape in a
very short time," Pihl said. "Our goal was to build soil
health and grow healthy food for people, and that’s
exactly what we are doing."

SAVE THE DATE - Monday September 25th, 2017
Registration at 9:30am, Program 10:00am – 4:00pm

Preventing, Monitoring, and Responding to Poultry and
Livestock Disease Emergencies:
A Workshop Using Connecticut's Avian Influenza Monitoring and
Response Plan as an All-Disease Framework

Location: Legislative Office Building, Room 2C, 300 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, CT 06106
(Parking at the Legislative Office Building Parking Garage, 300 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, CT)
This program is free but we ask that you please register by emailing
mackenzie.white@uconn.edu

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farm insurance and get better protection. References availa-
ble from satisfied farmers. Call Marci today at 203-444-6553.
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84-R. Farm Truck: 1999 Chevy K-3500, 4 wheel drive,
towing package, hydraulic/electric Meyers snowplow. Frame
good. $5,800.00. 860-481-0029.
86-R. Bright, clean ryegrass, round bales ore squares.
Also, rye seed for cover crop. 860-355-1264.
85-R. Willington, 47.29 acres. Two hay fields and pond.
540' frontage on Route 44. Property backs onto Nipmuck/blue
tail and Willington Conservation area. Six-minute drive to
UCONN center. 860-872-6637 or 806014-5954.
87. Registered 5 year old Jersey cow. Would make great
family cow. Calved once already. Bred and due in October.
$1,100. 860-688-2341.
88-R. Beautiful winter squash, Acorn, Butternut, by the box
or bin. East Windsor, Conn. Call Karl 860-268-5931 or Glenn
860-930-4331 to arrange pick up.
89-R. 1/2 bushel apple baskets. Truck load sale: 1,000 or
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FARM-TO- CHEF WEEK: SEPTEMBER 17-23

Connecticut’s annual statewide Farm-to-Chef Week is scheduled for Sept. 17-23, 2017.

Open to all restaurants and foodservice businesses in the state, it invites participants to create a special Farm-to-Chef menu showcasing Connecticut Grown ingredients and beverages.

This promotion is an initiative of the Connecticut Department of Agriculture’s Farm-to-Chef Program, which connects farmers and producers of Connecticut Grown products with chefs and other culinary professionals.

Farm-to-Chef Week is pleased to partner with the Coventry Farmers’ Market at the Nathan Hale Homestead, one of the largest and most diverse farmers’ markets in the state, for this year’s kick-off event on Sunday, Sept. 17 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Chefs from around the state will shop the market and prepare delicious Connecticut Grown bites for market-goers to sample.

To find a participating dining venue, or view participant menus, please visit www.ctfarmtochef.com. Farm-to-Chef Week is made possible by the following sponsors: Connecticut Milk Promotion Board, New Morning Market, Spotlight Theatres/Front St. Bistro, and Skyeline Studios, LLC.

For more information about participating in Farm-to-Chef Week, or being a sponsor of the event, contact Erin Windham at Erin.Windham@ct.gov or 860-713-

Above left: The market garden at Wilhelm Farm.

Middle: A look inside the farm stand.

Left: Goats being used to clear brush on the property.

Page 1 left: Bill Bentley and Ann Wilhelm leading a tour of the farm.

Page 1 right: Sven Pihl on the steps of the farm stand discussing his growing and land-management techniques.