



DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE



CONNECTICUT
FARMLAND
TRUST
PRESERVING CONNECTICUT FARMLAND FOR FARMERS



United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service



Birkbeck Farm in North Stonington Permanently Protected *Federal, State, and Nonprofit Partnerships Ensure Farmland Remains for Future Generations*

(Hartford, CT) – The Connecticut Department of Agriculture (CT DoAg) is pleased to announce the preservation of Birkbeck Farm in North Stonington. This 69-acre farm was protected in concert with Connecticut Farmland Trust (CFT) and USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS) bringing the tally of farms protected this fiscal year by CT DoAg to 15 farms and 1,400 acres.

“I’m very appreciative of the support from so many people to make this happen,” said Michael Birkbeck, fourth generation owner of the property. “I view my role as a steward of this land and am delighted that for generations to come there will be opportunity for others to farm here. Knowing that the farm is preserved to make that possible is a dream come true.”

Birkbeck applied to the CT DoAg Farmland Preservation Program following the passing of his father who left instructions in his will that the farm was to be preserved. Birkbeck inherited the property that has been in the family since the 1920s, at one point a dairy farm, and currently the fields are used for hay and beef pasture for the small herd of cows and two horses.

“It’s an amazing testament to the commitment of farmers that they would express their desire to preserve their land in their will. We are honored to have worked with the Birkbeck family to honor his father’s wishes and protect this property in perpetuity, ensuring it is available for future farmers forever,” said Agriculture Commissioner Bryan P. Hurlburt. “This wouldn’t be possible without the support of the family, and our local and federal partners.”

The location of Birkbeck Farm, within a five-minute drive from both Eastern Connecticut casinos, makes the land particularly threatened for future development.

“Protecting our state’s valuable working lands is critical,” said Thomas L. Morgart, Connecticut State Conservationist for the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). “The recent conservation easement placed on Birkbeck Farm in North Stonington through this partnership ensures almost 70 acres will never be subject to development. Approximately 62% of this land is comprised of prime, statewide, and local important soils – meaning high yielding soils that are key to meeting short- and long-term needs to clothe and feed a hungry world,” he said.

Through the NRCS Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP), agricultural land easements protect the long-term viability of the nation’s food supply by preventing the conversion of productive working lands to non-agricultural uses. Land protected by these types of easements provide additional public benefits including environmental quality, historic preservation, wildlife habitat, and protection of open space. Connecticut Farmland Trust assisted to secure funding through the USDA-NRCS ACEP-ALE program.

“We are so grateful to Mike Birkbeck for his commitment to preserving his family's land. When you visit the farm, you can see his love for the property in the amount of work and care he pours into it. Mike and his family can now rest assured that the land will remain available for farming in the future,” said Kathleen Doherty, Connecticut Farmland Trust Senior Conservation Manager.

For more information on Connecticut’s Farmland Preservation Program, visit [our website](#) for program overview, frequently asked questions, and contact information.

Connecticut Farmland Trust is the only land trust in the state dedicated solely to the protection of agricultural land. Since its founding in 2002, CFT has protected 69 family farms, covering more than 5,200 acres. CFT, a private accredited nonprofit, works with farm owners, community organizations, and local, state, and federal agencies to protect the best Connecticut farmland for current and future generations of farmers. Learn more at CTFarmland.org.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service – an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture – helps America’s farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners conserve the nation’s soil, water, air, and other natural resources. All programs are voluntary and offer science-based solutions that benefit both the landowner and the environment.

The Connecticut Department of Agriculture mission is to foster a healthy economic, environmental, and social climate for agriculture by developing, promoting, and regulating agricultural businesses; protecting agricultural and aquacultural resources; enforcing laws pertaining to domestic animals; and promoting an understanding among the state's citizens of the diversity of Connecticut agriculture, its cultural heritage, and its contribution to the state's economy. For more information, visit www.CTGrown.gov.

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