



LANDTRUST, TOWN AND FEDS WORK TOGETHER TO SAVE BRANFORD FARM

Hartford, Connecticut March 31, 2011 – The Branford Land Trust, the Town of Branford, and Connecticut Farmland Trust have collaborated to preserve Branford’s Johnson Farm – one of the last remaining farms in the Town of Branford.

Johnson Farm has been farmed by the Johnson family for over 90 years. In the past, the family grew a variety of fruits and vegetables and raised dairy cows, chickens, and horses. Currently, they harvest hay from the land to support one of the owner’s dairy farm in North Branford. Their milk is processed by Guida’s Dairy and provides locally produced milk and other dairy products to Branford and surrounding communities.

The Branford Land Trust, the Town of Branford, and Connecticut Farmland Trust will jointly hold an agricultural conservation easement on 37 acres of Johnson Farm. Agricultural conservation easements prohibit residential and industrial development, but may allow for construction of agricultural structures on designated areas of the land. This easement on Johnson Farm was purchased with contributions from the Town of Branford’s Open Space Acquisition Fund and General fund, the Branford Land Trust, and Connecticut Farmland Trust through a grant from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

The Johnson family has also agreed to sell 4 acres of the land to the Town of Branford as open space. These 4 acres connect the Supply Pond/Queach Preserve and the Pisgah Brook/Saltonstall Mountain Preserve and will provide a public trail for hikers, birders, mountain bikers, and cross-country skiers.

Kip Kolesinskas, State Soil Scientist with NRCS said, “The Natural Resources Conservation Service is excited about helping protect this farmland because of all the different ecosystem goods and services it provides. For example, not only does it provide support land for a larger food-producing farm, it will also help protect the water quality and quantity of the Pisgah Brook Watershed and it’s recently restored anadromous fishery.”

“The protection of Johnson Farm is a wonderful example of a successful collaboration,” said Henry Talmage, Executive Director of CFT. “The Branford Land Trust, the Town of Branford, NRCS, and Connecticut Farmland Trust were all essential to the protection of this important farm.”

The Connecticut Farmland Trust is the only private statewide conservation organization dedicated solely to permanently protecting Connecticut's farmland. Established in 2002, CFT holds agricultural conservation easements that protect 2,033 acres of farmland on 24 farms around the state, has assisted partners in the preservation of 602 additional acres, and serves as a leading resource on conserving Connecticut’s working farmland.

“We thank Elisabeth Moore and the rest of the folks at Connecticut Farmland Trust for all the time and work that they put in to get this project done,” said Anthony “Unk” DaRos, Branford’s First Selectman. “The grant from the Natural Resources Conservation Service was a key to making this happen, and we have them to thank for that. Branford is very lucky to have partners like Connecticut Farmland Trust and the Branford Land Trust to help with projects like this that will make such a difference for Branford for many years to come.”

Meg Kilgore, Branford Land Trust President, said, “Branford Land Trust is delighted to have partnered with Connecticut Farmland Trust and the Town to protect Johnson Farm. Johnson Farm and the nearby Pieper property, which Branford Land Trust is also acquiring, are critically important additions to Branford’s protected largest natural area.”

Branford Land Trust has worked for over forty years to preserve open space in Branford. BLT now owns 870 acres and protects another 375 acres with conservation easements.

About the Connecticut Farmland Trust

The Connecticut Farmland Trust (CFT) is a non-profit organization that was formed to preserve and protect Connecticut's working lands through the acquisition of farm property and easements. The group works with farmers, landowners, land trusts, town officials and state agencies to protect agricultural land. Since its start, CFT has protected nearly 2,100 acres of farmland on 26 family farms, assisted partners in the preservation of over 800 additional acres, and has become the state's leading private resource on farmland conservation. For more information visit www.CTFarmland.org

■ Johnson Farm

