

Celebrating Our Farm Families

June 2017

Associated Women NH Farm Bureau Federation

Issue#1



Cynthia Smith
Great Bay Farms
Greenland, NH



Celebrating our Farm Families

A publication of the Associated Women
of the NH Farm Bureau Federation

*Farming is our heritage,
heartbreak, and joy.*

*Nothing – not the land nor the
buildings nor the crops –
is more important than the
farm folks who nurture them.*

*We celebrate our hardworking
farm families in the pages
of this publication.*

Thank you for all that you do.

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Greetings From Us to You

A special “Hello” from the Associated Women of the Farm Bureau. This newsletter showcases the farm folks of New Hampshire. Our goal is to publish stories and histories of farm families for everyone to enjoy – now and for future generations to come.

Our first story is about Great Bay Farm in Greenland (Rockingham County) and the Smith family who run it. We rejoice in the fact that this farm has twice passed through the female side of the family. Cynthia Smith gave a delightful tour of her farm buildings as she went about her twice-daily chores. She also hunted down old photos of the farm that were stored away in the farmhouse attic. Thank you!

We would love to work with you to publish your farm story. Phone calls, visits, photos new and old – whatever works for you, is good with us. With your help, your farm and family history can be featured in an upcoming newsletter. If you are interested, please contact **Lulu Pickering at 603-436-8158 or pickering@informagen.com**.

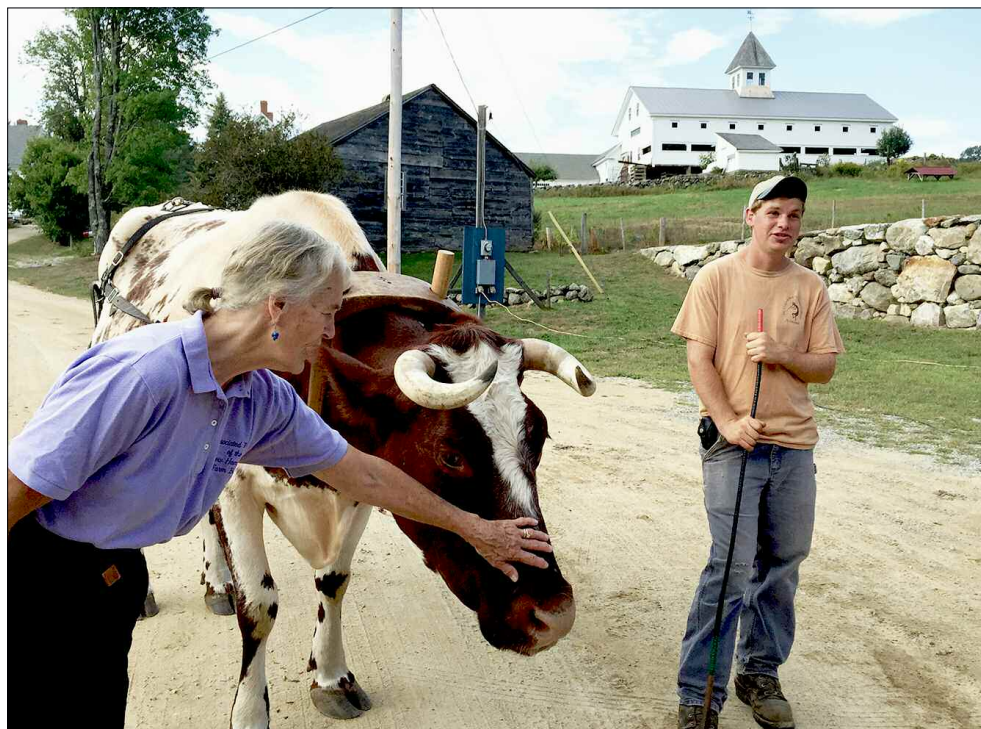
If you have any events, fun photos, or obituaries to share, they are also welcome – just send them to Lulu.

The Associated Women enjoy getting together for monthly meetings to socialize and work on projects. Publishing “Our Farming Heritage Lives On” in 2016 was a major accomplishment for us. Recently we also began work on archiving the Abbie Sargent papers and toured Liliana Flower Farm in Loudon in Merrimack County. This flower farm has over 200 varieties of daylilies in an amazing range of colors (see www.lilianaflowerfarm.com).

You are busy, we are busy, but we are a very informal group! If you can get away from your daily chores, we would love to have you join us at any time. **President Ruth Scruton [travelinbarnyard@aol.com or 603-332-5786]** can add you to her email contact list so you can hear about Associated Women activities in the upcoming months.

For now, enjoy reading about Cynthia Smith and Great Bay Farm. – *lulu pickering*

Visit to Sanborn Mills Farm in Loudon (Merrimack County)



Sandy Salo of Windy Hill Farm in Marlow (Cheshire County) greets one of the oxen and his young handler at Sanborn Mills Farm (www.sanbornmills.org). This farm features activities for learning blacksmithing, logging with oxen, ox yoke making, and basket making, among others. It also runs two historic mills: a water-run sawmill and a water-run grist mill.

Great Bay Farm, 160 and 176 Newington Road, Greenland, NH 03840

About 130 acres along the Great Bay waterfront are now managed by NH Fish & Game as a wildlife management area. These parcels of open land are located in Newington and Greenland. They were purchased by the Great Bay Resource Protection Partnership (GBRPP) using funds available from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and were then conveyed by the Nature Conservancy to the NH Fish & Game in the mid-2000s.

These parcels, which include the old John Mazeau land in Newington, some of the Emery land, and 38.76 acres of the Smith land in Greenland, protect over 4,000 feet of bay frontage and are collectively known as the Great Bay Farms (by GBRPP). The rest of the actual Great Bay Farm is located on the east side of Newington Road and is owned by the Smiths free of any easements.

Along with 160 acres of their own land, the Smiths farm land on Fox Point in Newington and the parcels of farmland along Great Bay under the conservation easements. They used to say that they farmed 365 acres - one acre for each day of the year.

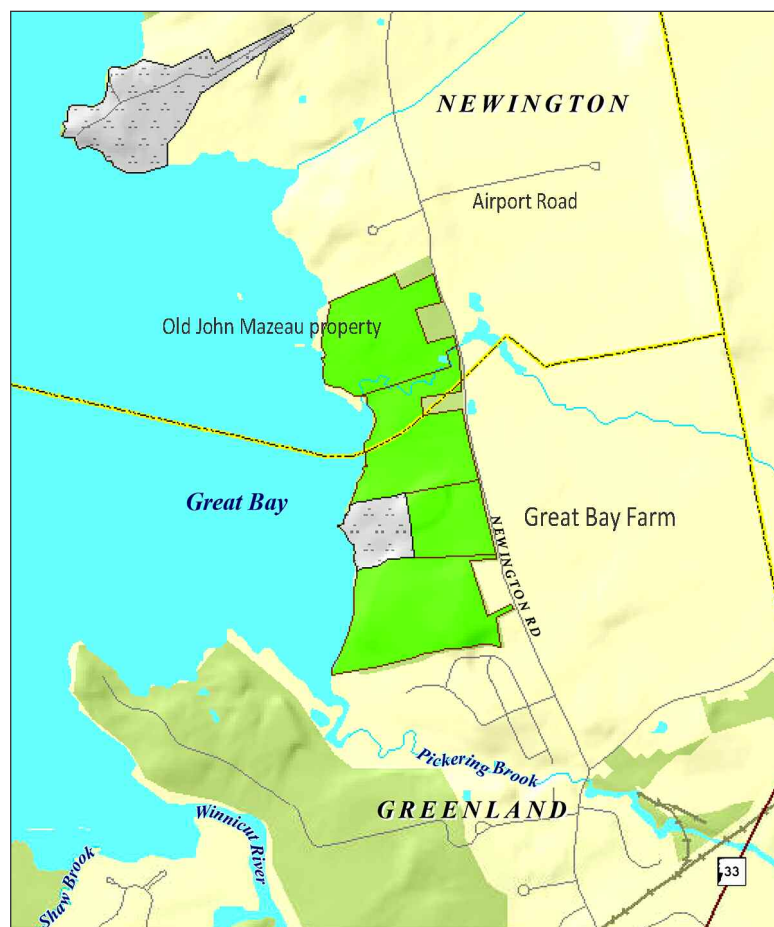
But, their right to continue farming the waterfront parcels could be rescinded with just a 30-day notice. So, they play by the rules of the easements and do not cut any hay or corn crops until after July 15 when the nesting times for certain birds have ended. It can be frustrating to see perfectly mature crops wilting in the sun and be unable to harvest them before the 15th of July but such are the terms of their agreement.

Allen Smith is the fifth generation to farm at Great Bay Farms. Cows on the farm eat homegrown corn silage, grass silage, and dry hay. Their diet is supplemented with a mix of corn meal and pelleted grain, and at one point with spent brewery grain from Budweiser's Merrimack plant.

The cows do not graze because all the land is used to grow feed crops. Plus, the land closest to the barns is heavy clay and not suitable for prolonged grazing. However, the cows are turned out each day to exercise in different paddocks.

The Smiths note that there is no difference in the nutritional quality of milk that is produced from conventional farming using commercial fertilizers and herbicides and that produced organically. Before any milk is unloaded into tanks at the dairy plant, it is first tested for quality. The milk is rejected and discarded if it does not meet strict state and federal standards.

Allen says that it is simply a matter of opinion that organic is healthier, because milk is probably the most thoroughly tested item on any store shelf (www.organicconsumers.org/news/conventional-vs-organic-dairy).



Allen sprays the manure off his bucket truck after cleaning up after all the cows.



Our Hardworking Greenland Neighbors

Less than half a mile from the Newington border is one of the few remaining dairy operations in Rockingham County. It is run by Cynthia Smith and her son Allen, both life-long residents of Great Bay Farm on Newington Road in Greenland.

The Smiths are well known by folks in Seacoast, NH. They have farmed all of their lives, which is a 7-day a week occupation year after year. Their hard work and diligence can be seen from their well-tended buildings, animals, and fields.

Newington is very fortunate to have the Smiths continue to farm the fields at Fox Point to preserve some of that town's rapidly dwindling farming heritage and to keep the fields as open space with beautiful views of Little Bay. It is one of those arrangements that benefits everyone.

The next few pages are filled with photos and stories about the Smith farm. Cynthia was very gracious in showing the farm, answering questions, and hunting down old photos. We appreciate all of her time and help!

Great Bay Farm has three houses and numerous farm buildings on the property, which has a glorious view to the west of Great Bay. The main farmhouse was built about 1830, as was the two story house to the south. The original post and beam barn has been mostly replaced with other buildings, which include about 8 barns of varying sizes, including the barns for the 3-4 month old calves, the heifers, dry cows, milking cows, implements, etc.



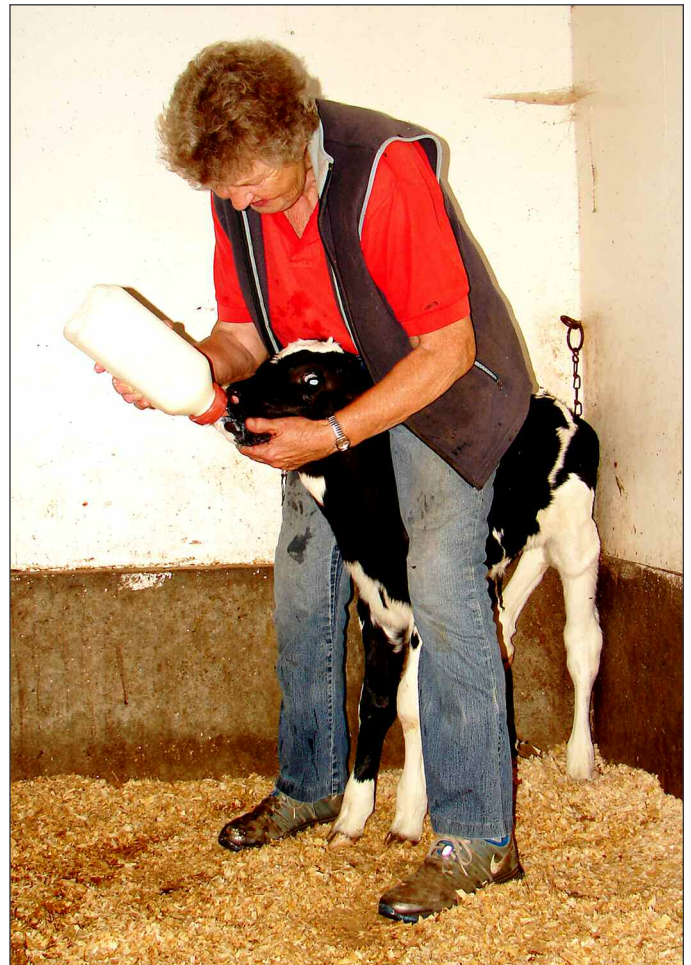
Life on the Farm

In 1880, there were 100 farms in Greenland alone, several with large apple orchards, which could produce up to six thousand bushels per year. The number of working farms declined dramatically in the first decades of the 1900s. From 1926 to 1930, Greenland lost more than half of its active farms as tourism became increasingly important to the New England economy (New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources, Winnicut River Dam: Area form, 2003).

Great Bay Farms in Greenland is one of the seacoast's precious remaining dairy farms. But, dairy farms were hit especially hard in 2016. Much of New Hampshire had a severe drought and milk prices were historically low. Of the 120 dairy farms in the state, 19 of them sold their cows and either went out of business or took up a different, less-intensive type of farming.

Harold "Hal" Bodwell III, for example, sold 370 cows last year and kept just 40. His grandfather started their Kensington dairy farm, which was also operated by Hal's father. But, three consecutive years of drought took their toll. Hal is now planning to raise grass-fed beef.

Watching Cynthia go about feeding the brand new calves was a delight. I remember as a youngster getting head butted and knocked around by a new calf more than once. They are determined and very strong. Cynthia smoothly wrastled the little critter between her legs and backed it into the corner. She is also very strong and determined!





The farm now has about 150 animals, including 78 milking Holsteins. A couple of prize heifers for showing at the fairs as in the top right photo.



If you love farming, talking to the cows as you go about your day can be quite enjoyable!



Cynthia and her son, Allen Smith, operate Great Bay Farm with the help of a fulltime, hired helper and Allen's son Ben.

Allen's brother, Steven, works fulltime at the Portsmouth Fire Department but drives tractors and feeds calves as needed.

Allen's brother, Paul, is busy running a veterinary service in Oakland, Maine, about two hours away.

The Smiths sell their milk to Agri-Mark, which is a dairy farm cooperative that receives milk from farms in New England and parts of New York.

The Smith's milk goes primarily to the Hood Plant in Franklin, MA, but can go to Garelick and Oakhurst plants.

Agri-Mark also sells milk to Cabot Creamery in Vermont for the production of cheese, butter, and other milk-based products.



State Agricultural Commissioner Lorraine Merrill, Governor Maggie Hassan, and local farmers gathered at Great Bay Farm in September 2016 to discuss the Milk Producers Emergency Relief Fund and how feed costs could be better calculated at a regional level

rather than the national level used in the federal Dairy Margin Protection Program. Two years of below-production-cost milk prices and the loss of valuable feed crops due to the drought have been devastating, and certainly have not made the life of

local farmers any easier. The future of farming in our area is hard to predict. 2016 was a severe drought year for nine NH counties. Since 2014, farm milk prices have fallen 38 percent to a low in July 2016 of \$14.80 per 100 pounds.



Harvesting hay on a beautiful summer day. The Smiths say, "Thanks" to everyone in Newington for letting them hay at Fox Point.



At one point in the 1980s, triplets were born at Great Bay Farm and aptly named First, Follow, and Finish.

Filling water buckets in the old stone tub in the calf barn.

The Calf Barn sign below has hung for decades on the wall. The procedure has changed somewhat but is still mostly true today.



Last fall, Cynthia Smith said her calf barn could hold 800 bales of hay but had only about 200 bales in it. She worried where the other feed would come from.

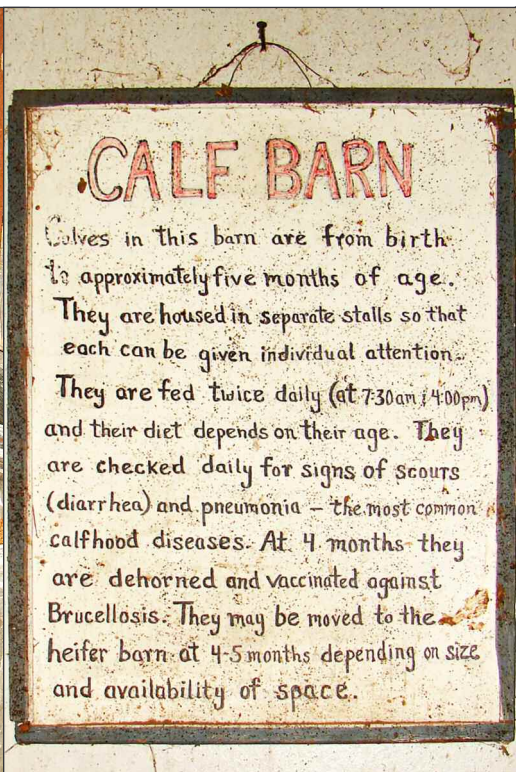
In 2015, the Smiths raised 110 acres of corn, which was not enough, so in 2016, the plan was to plant 120 acres. Unfortunately, the corn did not grow as well in 2016 due to the drought so they still did not have enough to last through the winter.

Lorraine Merrill runs a large dairy operation at Stuart Farms in Stratham and is also the NH Agriculture Commissioner. She, too, experienced severe crop losses of alfalfa, grass, and corn.

The federal government regulates milk prices so, unlike many businesses, dairy farmers are not able to raise prices to cover rising costs. At the end of 2016, the NH legislature debated a bill for \$3.6 million to

help the hard-hit dairy farmers. In February, the amount of funding was reduced to \$2 million but the bill passed the Senate and was signed by the Governor in April.

Cynthia says working around the barns can get cold in the winter but her three sons have left lots of stuff around the house so she always has multiple layers to wear!



A Farming Heritage Embraced by Male and Female Descendants

G. Newton Weeks and his wife Edna B. Weeks



The current owners of the farm trace their ownership back to Cynthia Smith's grandfather, Isaac N. Carr, who purchased the property in the late 1890s. Cynthia believes that the previous owner was a Boston doctor of some sort, not medical, and the farm came with an ox, a couple of cows, a cart, and some chickens.

Part of the wonderful history of Great Bay Farm is that twice it has passed through the female side of the family. Following Isaac Carr, the property passed to his daughter Bessie F. Carr who married William R. Weeks, and next to their son G. Newton Weeks and his wife Edna B. Weeks, and on to their daughter Cynthia.

Cynthia says tongue-in-cheek that her parents sent her off to UNH from 1957 to 1961 to bring home a husband, which she did. Lauren P. Smith grew up on a farm in West Canaan, NH and attended UNH one year behind Cynthia. Lauren passed away from cancer in January 1989. Cynthia and their three sons, Allen, Paul, and Steven, now own the farmland and buildings through a partnership, while Allen operates the farm as a limited liability company, which owns the animals and equipment.

In October 2000, Great Bay Farm received a Century Farm award from the New Hampshire Grange.

The 1830 farmhouse has a wraparound porch and looks similar from the east and west sides. The buildings used to be connected in an L-shape from the farmhouse to a large post and beam barn.





In 1962, when Cynthia and her husband came back to the farm, they were milking about 40 Holsteins in the old barn, which was a post and beam structure constructed with pegged timbers. It had two outside wooden-stave-and-iron-hoop silos close enough to the barn that you could get silage

without going outside. Cynthia remembers tooling around the farm in an old Studebaker doodlebug that was used to rake the field scatterings leftover from the harvesting into windrows for collection. The old rake is still on the farmhouse lawn but is now adorned with holiday lights during Christmastime.

Over the years, the farm grew and prospered, and a new barn was built in 1971. By 1991, the old barn was worse for wear with rotted floors so it was torn down. Cynthia remembers that her dad, G. Newton Weeks, sat on the porch and watched the demolition, which was a sad affair.

Clyde Tupper and G Newton Weeks in the jitterbug about 1943



Donations and Memories, 2017

In our Memories

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Jimmy loved his llamas, Ziggy and Humbug

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Sincere thanks to those who make donations to support this newsletter.

Please let us know if you would like us to remember someone in the "In our Memories Section."

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Gama's Stuffing Recipe

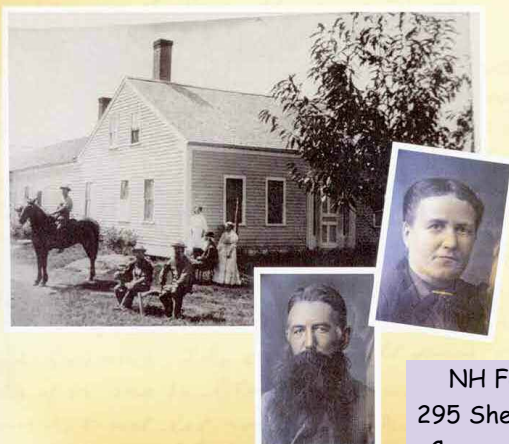
Last Thanksgiving, my kids asked that I write this recipe down somewhere, so here it is. Gama (Marjorie Pickering) undoubtedly learned the recipe from her mom Ida Jackson who learned it from her mom Flora Rawson.... You can make less stuffing by cutting down the ingredients.

- 2 loaves bread cut into about 1/2- to 3/4-inch cubes.
 - 3 sleeves of salted saltine crackers crushed 1 sleeve at a time in a plastic bag using a roller pin. The crushed crackers should be about the size of a dime or less, not crumbs.
 - 12 to 16 ounces of meaty salt pork diced into 3/8-inch cubes. The rind can be cooked and discarded, or kept.
 - 4-5 medium onions diced into 3/8-inch cubes.
1. Put the salt pork in a frying pan and cook until the pieces turn light brown. Add a small amount of oil if needed to keep the pork from sticking to the pan.
 2. When pork is brown, add all the onions to the rendered fat and salt pork. Stir often to keep from sticking. Cook until onions are soft and cooked. Tastes yummy!
 3. Turn the onion/pork moisture off so it will not burn.
 4. Heat about 2 quarts of water to boiling.
 5. In a big metal bowl, put the bread cubes, crackers, black pepper (1 teaspoon) and poultry seasoning (2 tablespoons). No salt is necessary because of the salt pork.
 6. Pour in about half the water and stir. Stuffing should be moist. Add more hot water as necessary so it is easy to stir.
 7. Stir in the cooked onions and salt pork.
 8. Add more pepper and poultry season to taste. Yum.
 9. Stuff the turkey or roosters and cook.
 10. Or put stuffing in a casserole dish covered with aluminum foil and cook for an hour beside a roasting piece of beef or pork. If smaller amounts of stuffing are cooked, decrease the cooking time so it won't dry out. Temperatures are about 300 to 325 or so.

This is the recipe my mom taught my sister Judy and me ... a very New England stuffing. Enjoy, *lulu pickering*

OUR FARMING HERITAGE LIVES ON

CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OF
NEW HAMPSHIRE FARM BUREAU FEDERATION
1916 - 2016



ASSOCIATED WOMEN
OF THE NEW HAMPSHIRE FARM BUREAU FEDERATION

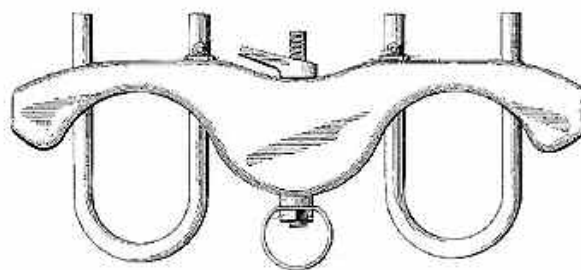
NH Farm Bureau
295 Sheep Davis Road
Concord, NH 03301

These are our stories, our hopes, our dreams. The myriad little reasons we get up in the mornings to work the farm another day. We toil, we laugh. We live, farm, and die. We are the farmwomen and families of New Hampshire and our farming heritage lives on.

Farm life is not necessarily kind. No one said it was easy but it does have its moments. Ever wonder why buffalo on one farm defend their manure pile from the farmer patiently waiting with the bucket loader? or why apples grown on one side of a mountain are sweeter than those grown on the other?

For almost 400 years, folks have farmed the rocky hills and soils of New Hampshire and most of this time, families lived on subsistence farms that grew everything the family needed and perhaps sold one or two products to make the money to buy what they could not make themselves. Our maple orchard farmers say if you can make \$1,000 selling maple syrup, it is worth your time and energy.

Delve into our history of apple orchards, dairy operations, land stewardship & preservation. Centennial farms, bicentennial farms, and farms with 10 to 12 generations of the same family working the land – we have it all. Learn what generations of our farmers yearn for and how deeply they hope the next generation continues the farming way of life.



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The balance of life changed on the farm following the Great Depression. Families began operating production farms that made and sold only a handful of products in bulk to get the money needed to buy everything else. The government sent many New Hampshire men off to fight in World War II, but told others they had to stay on the farm and continue to grow the food needed to feed the country and its soldiers. You either love farming or you do not. But if you love it, you know it in your heart and bones, and you will feel it when reading our stories and gazing at our photos.

In 2016, we celebrated 100 years of the New Hampshire Farm Bureau Federation. We are as happy and content as we have ever been. Farming is morphing, in part, towards smaller, value-added farms that specialize in animal fibers, goat milk products, locally grown food, and community supported agriculture. Smaller, more numerous farms mean more farmers and future stories to tell.

Is there a better feeling in the world than knowing that the barn is loaded with hay and silage, the freezer stocked with meat and produce, the cellar filled with canned vegetables and jams? All is safe and sound, let winter come as it may, we will survive.

– the Associated Women of the NH Farm Bureau