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Conservation Helps Bean Family Purchase Farmland

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Charlotte — Patricia Bidingher conserved 75 acres of fertile farmland with the Vermont Land Trust, allowing the Bean family to purchase the land for their dairy business, the Vermont Land Trust announced today.

Pat and her late husband, Francis Bidingher, bought their land in 1967 after finishing graduate school at the University of Vermont. They had hoped

to build a house there, but their careers took them to India. While the couple worked for nonprofits abroad, they rented their Charlotte land to the Bean family.

Joe Bean, his wife, June, and their son Mark run Twin Oaks Farm. It is primarily based out of their home farm across the road and it is considered a "Dairy of Distinction" by the VT Agency of Agriculture.

They milk 60 cows and have another 80 young stock. Over the past 45 years, they have produced hay and corn on the former Bidingher property to help feed their herd.

During this time, property values in Charlotte skyrocketed. Pat's land, with its scenic views of Camel's Hump, was especially attractive for housing developments. When Pat eventually decided to sell the land, she worked with the Vermont Land Trust to conserve it. By selling a conservation easement Pat protected the land from development and made it affordable for the Bean family.

"Conservation has done a lot to help agriculture in Charlotte," said Al Karnatz of the Vermont Land Trust. "The sale of development rights on productive farmland keeps the land more affordable for today's farmers and for the next generation."

Pat was thrilled to learn that conserving her land offered an alternative that would allow the Beans to purchase it while simultaneously providing for her retirement.

"Vermont is such a forward thinking state," said Pat. "It makes good sense to protect a scarce resource like productive farmland, and I'm glad Vermont supports land conservation. It's good to know the land will be protected by the Vermont Land Trust and used and cared for by the Bean family."

Funding for the purchase of the conservation easement was provided by the Vermont Housing & Conservation Board, whose contribution was matched by the federal Agricultural Conservation Easement Program managed by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. Financial assistance from VHCB and NRCS help make it possible for Vermont to permanently protect the state's highest quality agricultural resources. The Town of Charlotte also contributed

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towards the easement purchase.

The Beans are now proud owners of the land they know so well. "Many neighbors thought we owned the land because we've farmed it for so long," said Mark Bean. "We couldn't afford to buy it without help from the Vermont Land Trust and the Town of Charlotte, and we thank Pat for her patience as we worked through the process."



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