



**FARMING IS
OUR FUTURE**

2019
ANNUAL REPORT



American Farmland Trust
SAVING THE LAND THAT SUSTAINS US



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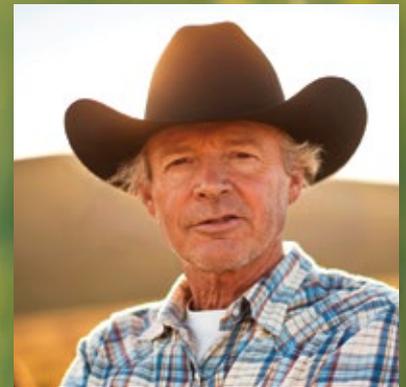
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The mission of American Farmland Trust is to save the land that sustains us by protecting farmland, promoting sound farming practices, and keeping farmers on the land.



On the Cover: Janey Newton (right) and her daughter Maggie Keith are the third and fourth generations of women to run Foxhollow Farm in Crestwood, Kentucky.

PHOTO BY SHAWN LINEHAN



“Food is fundamental. But we need our farms for so much more—from wildlife habitat and biodiversity to the plants and soil that can combat climate change. Our farms hold the potential to restore our planet. Without them, we are lost.”

**— JOHN PIOTTI, President and CEO
American Farmland Trust**

FROM THE LEADERSHIP	THE LAND	THE PRACTICES	A YEAR OF HIGHLIGHTS	THE PEOPLE	FINANCIAL OVERVIEW	OUR SUPPORTERS
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from the leadership

As every farmer and gardener knows, it takes three essentials—seed, water, and soil—along with the magic of photosynthesis to bring forth an abundance of plant life.

At American Farmland Trust, we also know there are three essential elements to a thriving future for farms and ranches in America—the land, the practices, and the people. As the nonprofit organization that launched the conservation agriculture movement 40 years ago, we save farmland from development, help farmers implement regenerative practices, and keep farmers on the land for the benefit of society as a whole.

This is our life's work, because we could not imagine a more important cause. We take a holistic approach to the three pillars of our mission:

THE LAND. In the decades to come, producing enough food to feed a growing population is going to be an enormous challenge. We can't meet that need without securing the very land base that feeds us all. Not only that, farmland is a critical global resource for its ability to sequester carbon and combat climate change. Our approach to saving the land employs a mix of methods honed over 40 years—from agricultural conservation easements and smart land use policies to undertaking the nation's leading research into farmland loss and protection.

THE PRACTICES. There is a growing appreciation for how farmland provides the very ecological services upon which our future depends. These services—from groundwater recharge and flood control

to wildlife protection and climate benefits—can be fully harnessed through the power of regenerative farming practices. American Farmland Trust works on the ground with farmers across America to demonstrate the importance and viability of fundamental practices, like cover crops and rotations, that keep the earth healthy and whole.

THE PEOPLE. It's not just about land and the soil. We can't forget about the farmers and ranchers that we need to grow our food, steward our land, and anchor vibrant rural communities. American Farmland Trust leads a national movement to usher a new generation of farm families onto the land, and to support the current generation of farmers and ranchers who work tirelessly every day to feed and clothe us—while stewarding the planet's most precious natural resources.

In the pages ahead, you'll read about the many ways that American Farmland Trust acted in 2019 to secure a sustainable future for farming and for the planet. We couldn't do any of this work without your support. Thanks for all that you do to save the land that sustains us.

Sincerely,



John Hardin
BOARD CHAIR

John Piotti
PRESIDENT AND CEO



JOHN HARDIN



JOHN PIOTTI

the land

Every time we lose an acre of farmland, we lose the land most needed to heal our planet.

The United States has the world's largest supply of fertile soil for farming. We need every acre to grow food and have the opportunity to prevent the wholesale destruction of ecosystems from climate change. Well-managed farmland captures and stores carbon from the atmosphere and makes our society more resilient by recharging aquifers, naturally managing floods and fires, and providing habitat for wildlife.

Yet farmland around the country is being destroyed at an alarming rate. We are losing our most productive and versatile farmland the fastest—the land best suited to grow food and help restore our planet. The same low-density suburban sprawl that consumes farmland also fuels air pollution and climate change by sending more cars onto our highways for greater distances.

For 40 years, American Farmland Trust has led the way in developing and deploying the essential tools of farmland and ranchland protection—



including agricultural conservation easements, current use taxation, smart land-use planning, and research into farmland loss and protection.

The time is now to accelerate a new wave of farmland protection in America. American Farmland Trust provides resources and expertise to countless communities, landowners, and officials across the nation who recognize the extent of the threat and are undertaking vital actions to save America's farmland and ranchland.





“I am worried for America’s future and farmland. I have seen nearly half the farms in the area disappear, whether to retirement or urban development. I want to ensure our operation can survive for the next generation. I care so deeply for our land and our farmers.”



— **LEE KINNARD**, Kinnard Farms, Kewaunee County, Wisconsin

2019 successes



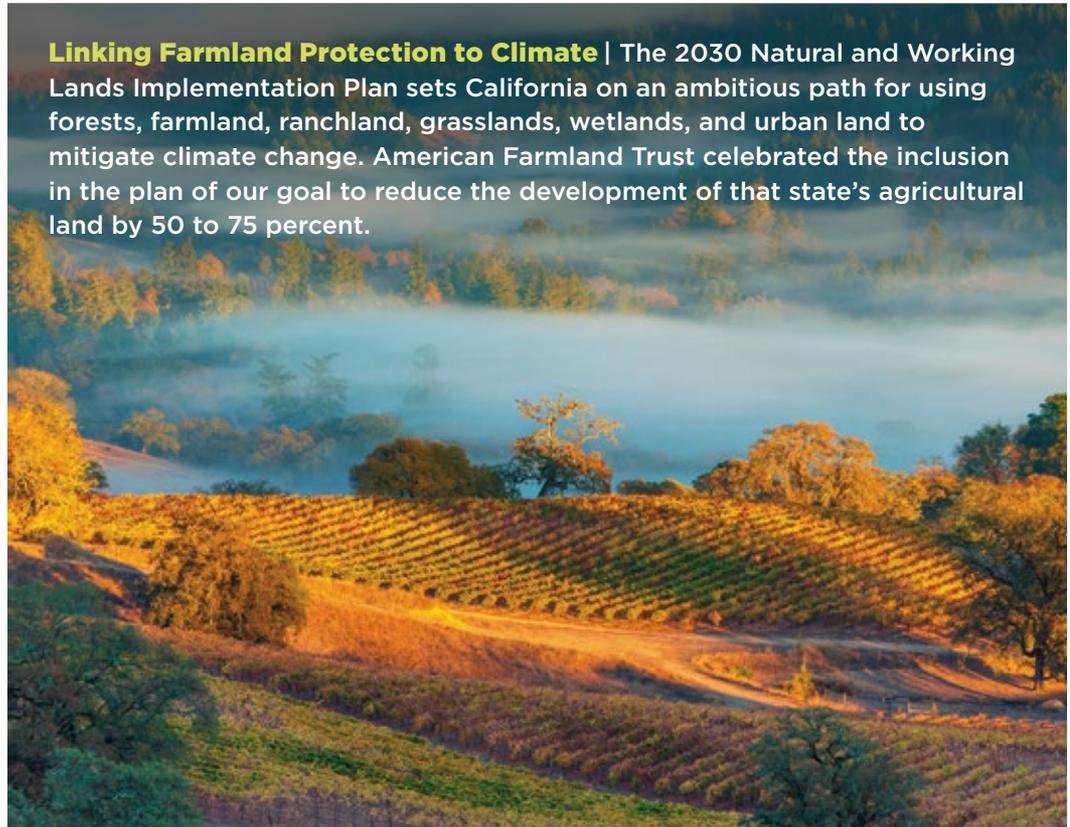
Supporting Dairy Farmers | The United States loses an average of five dairy farms every day, in part from challenging market conditions and an aging farming population. A new partnership between American Farmland Trust and dairy processor Chobani provides support to dairy families, including micro-grants to help them plan for the future of their farms.



Testifying on Farmland's Behalf | Queen Anne's County contains the most agricultural acreage and the largest farmland economy in Maryland. American Farmland Trust provided crucial testimony that led the Queen Anne's County Commissioners to unanimously approve the allocation of \$750,000 for the permanent protection of county farmland.



Linking Farmland Protection to Climate | The 2030 Natural and Working Lands Implementation Plan sets California on an ambitious path for using forests, farmland, rangeland, grasslands, wetlands, and urban land to mitigate climate change. American Farmland Trust celebrated the inclusion in the plan of our goal to reduce the development of that state's agricultural land by 50 to 75 percent.



Providing Resources for People Working to Save Agricultural Land

American Farmland Trust's Farmland Information Center (FIC) guides people interested in protecting the land and supporting thriving farms. With the nation's largest online collection of information on farmland and ranchland protection and stewardship, and a free phone service, the FIC's team of experts has helped more than 12,000 individuals, and close to one million web users, find information to help save the nation's agricultural land.



Strengthening the Farmland Protection Movement | By banding together, we are stronger than if we work alone. In 2019, American Farmland Trust launched the



“Protecting farmland is so important because it allows the generations who come after us to have a place to grow food long into the future.”

— **RON KLEIN**, Silver Meadows Farm, Silver Springs, New York

Promoting Smart Solar Siting

America needs to expand renewable energy, but we can't be placing solar panels on the farmland that we need to grow food and combat climate change. American Farmland Trust worked with New England partners to reach agreements on smart solar siting principles, building them into state policies and local planning. These efforts will guide the expansion of solar energy onto land where it has the least impact on agriculture and the environment.



National Agricultural Land Network to elevate the cause of agricultural land protection nationwide. The network has already been joined by 100 organizations that will benefit

from peer networking, professional development, trainings, and support for public agencies, planning entities, and land trusts working to protect agricultural land.



the practices

Climate solutions start on the farm. Our planet's future depends on helping farmers adopt the kind of good farming practices that conserve water, nourish the soil, and provide low-cost, proven ways to combat climate change. Farmers are on the front lines of climate change and feel its impacts daily. Lesser known is the significant role that farmers and ranchers can play in reducing the amount of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.

Regenerative farming practices like planting cover crops, expanding crop rotations, and reducing soil tillage are proven to improve soil health and, in doing so, they naturally sequester atmospheric carbon.

Because of the potential of farms and ranches to help solve the greatest challenge of our time, American Farmland Trust in 2019 vastly expanded our climate initiative. This initiative has three core goals: promote climate-smart regenerative agriculture, support efficient and renewable energy, and prevent the loss of farmland to more carbon-intensive development.

Our 40 years of experience in pioneering and promoting sound farming practices have



taught us that farmers and ranchers care deeply about their land and want to be good stewards of it. But many face financial circumstances or uncertainties that make it a challenge to transition to new, unfamiliar practices.

American Farmland Trust's work—hand-in-hand with farmers on the ground—demonstrates the value of regenerative practices that boost farm productivity and offer large-scale benefits for the planet. We also work to expand regenerative practices by guiding landowners who lease their farms to other operators.



“When it comes to stewardship of the land, there’s no one better than the American farmer. With the right policy and the right incentives, farmers can produce an abundant food supply, safeguard resources for the future, maintain our businesses, and lead the way on climate solutions.”



— **MATT REZAC**, corn and soybean farmer, Weston, Nebraska

2019 successes

Providing Incentives for Cover Crops

Cover crops are plants grown primarily for the benefit of the soil. Illinois farmers who adopt the practice will benefit from a new state program developed by American Farmland Trust and a coalition of groups. The Illinois Department of Agriculture program rewards farmers for planting cover crops by reducing costs for federal crop insurance.



Testifying to Congress on Climate Solutions

In October, American Farmland Trust's Climate Initiative Director, Dr. Jennifer Moore-Kucera, testified before the U.S. House Select Committee on the Climate Crisis, explaining to legislators that farmland and rangeland offer immediately available, low-cost, and proven ways to combat climate change. Dr. Moore-Kucera called on Congress to support agriculture as a key partner in the fight against climate change.

Doing the Math on Soil Health

Soil health practices produce a real return on investment for farmers, according to research by American Farmland Trust and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. The case studies

demonstrated that healthier soil on farmland brings economic benefits to farmers and environmental benefits to society. 2019 grant awards will also help American Farmland Trust deliver soil health trainings for farmers and agricultural resource providers

in the Pacific Northwest, the Midwest, New York, and California.





“I attended two women’s learning circles hosted by American Farmland Trust and met many other women who own farmland. It’s important to be able to learn from other women and gain a voice for what you want on your farmland.”

— **SUE ZELTER**, farmland owner, Bowling Green, Ohio



Advocating for Climate-Smart Agriculture |

American Farmland Trust’s work encouraging states to take action on climate change paid off in New York with the signing of one of the world’s most ambitious climate change plans, the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act. The act requires the state to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 and sets a framework that includes farms as part of the solution.



Advising the 25 Climate Alliance States on Farming Practices | American Farmland Trust became the first “impact partner” of the U.S. Climate Alliance, a coalition of 25 governors who have committed to meeting the goals of Paris Climate Accord as a way to counter inaction by the federal government. American Farmland Trust is providing research data and direct assistance to help states develop farming-related plans and policies to combat climate change.

Launching Conservation Planning |

In Massachusetts, American Farmland Trust collaborated with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service to launch a new two-year partnership that will help 750 farmers develop conservation plans for over 2,500 acres of land across the commonwealth. American Farmland Trust will also support officials in assessing where resources can be targeted for the greatest possible impact.





AFT launches the New York State Farm to School Institute to help schools provide children with healthy foods while expanding markets for farmers.

JANUARY



Maine Rep. Chellie Pingree, AFT, and farm advocates unveil a plan to support farmers in the fight against climate change at Bumbleroot Organic Farm outside Portland.

MARCH



AFT is featured in a BBC World News documentary series, "Follow the Food," in an episode about bringing the next generation onto the land.

MAY

72% of participants in a women's learning circle are inspired to take action related to conservation on their land, finds an AFT report.

FEBRUARY



APRIL



AFT joins the Ecosystem Services Market Consortium to promote markets that give farmers incentives to adopt practices benefiting soil, climate, and water quality.

JUNE





The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change releases a report stating that agriculture and working lands offer one of the most promising solutions to climate change.

JULY

AFT and partners form the Genesee River Demonstration Farm Network, which reduces pollution in a critical watershed of Lake Ontario.



SEPTEMBER

Three new grants will expand AFT's San Joaquin Valley Land and Water Strategy, which accelerates policies and programs for sustainable water use, improved soil health, and farmland protection.

CNN's Town Hall on climate change features Connecticut dairy farmer and AFT supporter, Amanda Freund, who raises the need to support farmers.



NOVEMBER

AFT releases the results of a survey of farm landowners in 11 states who don't manage the land themselves but support conservation practices on their rented ground.

The Troy Waterfront Farmers Market in upstate New York takes home the People's Choice Award in AFT's 11th Annual Farmers Market Celebration.

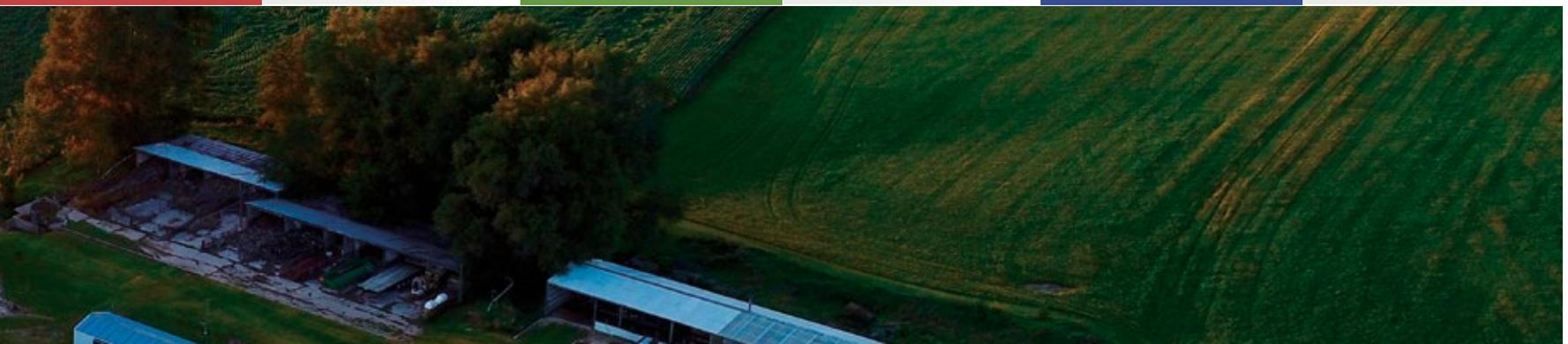
AUGUST



OCTOBER



DECEMBER



the people

How to feed a growing population in the decades ahead is a profound question set to transform the planet. Yet with the average American farmer nearing or surpassing the typical retirement age, the future of our farm communities looks uncertain just when we need them the most.

American Farmland Trust estimates that 371 million acres of farmland and rangeland could be in flux in the next 15 years, given the age of the owners. Much of that land could be lost to agricultural production, unless we can get it into the hands of the next generation of farmers.

The problem of the aging farming population—and how to bring young people back to the land—is a defining challenge, but one that American Farmland Trust is tackling head on. There is only a short window of time to help these farms pass on to a new generation.

Many young and beginning farmers—including veterans, immigrants, and women—are eager to get involved in farming. But one of the biggest barriers to entry is the price of land, with rising real estate values making property out of reach for many.



Protecting farmland with agricultural conservation easements—which makes it more affordable for the next generation—and creating a greater inventory of protected farmland is one of the best tools we can use.

American Farmland Trust works to find new opportunities for farmers—including farmers of color, young people, and women—to enter the business by helping them connect with available land and access the resources they need to be good stewards of the land.





The average California farmer is around 60 years old. Who will fill the void and continue the state's rich legacy of agricultural heritage? There is obviously going to be a big need for farmers in future decades. I saw the possibilities and realized my call to action.

— NELSON HAWKINS, We Grow Urban Farm, Sacramento, California

2019 successes

Bringing Farmers onto the Land | American Farmland Trust's network of professional Land Access Trainers supports beginning farmers and ranchers in their communities. In

2019, our first group of Land Access Trainers were certified to deliver our curriculum to teach beginning farmers and ranchers how to find and acquire land while gaining financial skills. And in

partnership with New York state, we awarded \$170,000 in funds to 20 "regional navigator" organizations that will help new farmers find land and assist retiring farmers.



Supporting Farmers with Regenerative Grazing | American Farmland Trust

launched a Sustainable Grazing Project to promote regenerative grazing practices that enhance soil health, sequester carbon, and increase farm viability. In the first phase, eight farmers from the Rappahannock Region of Virginia received support in improving cattle production practices, business management, and land stewardship.



Reaching Women Landowners |

American Farmland Trust's women's learning circles are a powerful tool for engaging women landowners on conservation and caring for the land. The learning circles form the backbone of our national Women for the

Land initiative, which grew this year from the Midwest and Mid-Atlantic into California, the Pacific Northwest, and the Northeast. A new grant in 2019 is helping expand our work in Virginia, providing funding for learning circles with African American landowners.



Matching Farmers and Landowners |

American Farmland Trust celebrated the five-year anniversary of the Hudson Valley Farmlink Network, a network of 17 New York organizations that has helped 175 farmers find farmland and trained more than 10,000 farmers and landowners about accessing farmland and keeping land in farming. American Farmland Trust has since expanded the initiative statewide with Farmland for a New Generation New York (nyfarmlandfinder.org), which connects farms and farmers statewide.



“I remember my grandmother being a fan of American Farmland Trust. When I moved back home to the farm, I was looking for a community of people related to farming. I found a lot of comfort in American Farmland Trust being there as an incredible guide to how you can transform your farm and be a successful young farmer and entrepreneur.”

— **MAGGIE KEITH**, Foxhollow Farm, Crestwood, Kentucky

Supporting Underserved Farmers |

American Farmland Trust launched a new statewide initiative in California that provides hands-on training to underserved farming communities. The program reaches underrepresented farmers—including veterans, socially and economically disadvantaged farmers, and farmers whose primary language is not English—and provides resources to help them implement regenerative agricultural practices and access farmland.



Connecting Farmers to Consumers |

Farm to Institution New York State, a collaborative initiative led by American Farmland Trust, announced the selection of six schools to the inaugural New York State Farm to

School Institute, an intensive year-long program for New York schools to develop and grow their farm to school programs, which help schools purchase greater amounts of healthy foods grown by New York farmers.



Summary of Activities

*For the fiscal year ending
September 30, 2019*

SUPPORT AND REVENUE

Individual Contributions	\$6,740,980
Foundation Grants	2,008,034
Government Grants	2,204,999
Operating Investment Return	877,619
Non-Operating Investment Gain & Other	
Farm Legacy Contribution	737,183
Other Income, Gains, and Losses	1,250,626
Total Revenue and Support	\$13,819,441

EXPENSES

National and Regional Programming	\$ 8,271,591
Public Education	2,375,186
Outreach and Communications	814,371
Other Programs	681,102
Total Program Services	\$ 12,142,250
Management and General	546,476
Fundraising	2,300,823
Total Expenses	\$14,989,549

NET ASSETS

Beginning of Year	\$33,343,131
End of Year	32,173,023
Change in Net Assets	(\$ 1,170,108)

Complete financial statements are available upon request.

NOTE: AFT was able to spend more than it booked in FY19 revenue because of funding we knew we'd receive in early FY20. In October 2020 (the first month of FY20), AFT received \$3.3 million in grant funds that were awarded and signed for in FY19, but given the nature of the gift, could not be booked until FY20.

Leaving a Farm Legacy

“We couldn’t bear the thought of profiting from selling the land after what Grandpa and Grandma had gone through to keep it,” says Laura Jean Kreissl, whose family donated the Montana prairie land owned by their grandparents, Ole and Ida Hagen, to American Farmland Trust.

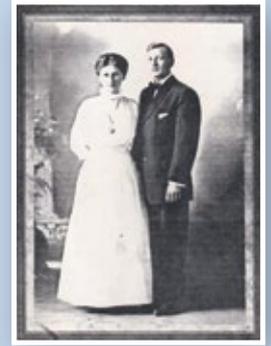
The land is now protected and will continue to be farmed by a neighboring family that has worked the land for decades. “To all of us, the donation is not an end but the continuum of the circle of appreciation for the importance

of that prairie land to our family. As we become increasingly cognizant of the need to protect our fragile earth, we are grateful to be in a position to do this,” says Kreissl.

Betty Phelps-Refor, who passed away this year, also donated her 79-acre farm in Clay Township, Indiana, to American Farmland Trust. “I certainly wasn’t interested in this ancestral farm becoming a community of houses. The farm will belong to somebody who will take care of it,” Phelps-Refor said at the time. American Farmland

Trust protected the property with an agricultural conservation easement that prevents future development and sold it to a neighboring farmer.

For more information about leaving a gift of land or other options for your farm or ranch, please contact Jerry Cosgrove, American Farmland Trust’s farm legacy director, at (518) 281-5074 or jcosgrove@farmland.org.



In Memoriam | Robert Morgenthau

Robert Morgenthau was a legend, serving for more than four decades as the chief federal prosecutor for Southern New York State and as Manhattan's longest-serving district attorney.

A lesser known fact was that Morgenthau was also a farmer. He owned Fishkill Farms, a well-known apple orchard in southern Dutchess County, New York, and served as

one of the first co-chairs of American Farmland Trust's New York Council.

"He blended his experience at Fishkill Farms and political connections in New York City to be a tireless advocate for farmers and farming," says American Farmland Trust president John Piotti. "He was also an amazing human being."

Morgenthau believed strongly that all citizens benefit from having farmers nearby growing healthy food. He also understood the challenges for farmers in growing this food, and that they deserved the public's support. As strong supporters of protecting farmland from real estate development, the Morgenthau family worked with local land trusts and the



state of New York to permanently protect Fishkill Farms, now run by Morgenthau's son Josh.

Robert Morgenthau with his son Josh at Fishkill Farms



Combined Federal Campaign
Number 10631



PHOTO CREDITS: Front cover: Shawn Linehan; Page i: Shawn Linehan; Page iii: Shawn Linehan (barley), fishwork/iStockphoto (girl), Erickson Stock/Alamy (rancher); Page iii: whitewish/iStockphoto; Page 1: Keith Mellnick (Piotti); Page 2: Inga Spence/Alamy; Page 3: USDA (farm); Page 4: Rebecca Drobis (dairy), Edwin Remsberg (barn), Ed Callaert/Alamy (vineyard); Page 5: Preston Keres/USDA (experts), Rebecca Drobis (Klein), Emily Cole (solar), Joesboy/iStockphoto (farm); Page 6: Rebecca Drobis; Page 7: Edwin Remsberg (vetch); Page 8: Edwin Remsberg (inset), Mariah Morrison (Congress), Kevin Keenan (Swede Farm); Page 9: James Brey/iStockphoto (farm), Mir/Alamy (sheep), Rebecca Drobis (squash); Page 10: John D. Ivanko/Alamy (background), April Opatik-Murray (Jan.), Josh Baldo (Feb.), USDA (May), Olivia Fuller (June); Page 11: Rebecca Drobis (July), Lance Cheung/USDA (Oct.) Mark Bauman (Nov.), Rebecca Drobis (Dec.); Page 12: Shawn Linehan; Page 13: Shawn Linehan (family); Page 15: Rebecca Drobis (FarmLink), Shawn Linehan (Keith), Josh Baldo (tomatoes), Nancy J. Parisi (inset); Pages 16: Shawn Linehan; Page 17: Shawn Linehan; Page 19: Shawn Linehan (nasturtiums and farmers); Page 20: Shawn Linehan (beekeeper, beans), Preston Keres/USDA (hawk); Page 21: Cavan Images/Alamy (apples), Design Pics Inc/Alamy (sunflowers), Preston Keres/USDA (chicken); Page 22: Shawn Linehan (beets); Page 24: Iaming/Alamy; Back cover: Shawn Linehan

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