



**American Farmland Trust**  
SAVING THE LAND THAT SUSTAINS US

October 1, 2018

Mr. Jeffrey Scales

Rhinebeck, NY 12572

Dear Jeffrey,

Sometimes the passing of farmland to a new generation can bring together a farm family that didn't exist before.

Larry and Betti Steel were living in New York City when they took a leap of faith and moved to their weekend home in the Hudson Valley, bringing with them a vision to return that land to its farming roots.

They could have kept those 90 acres for themselves, but they had bigger plans. They knew it needed to be farmed, and by offering a flexible lease, made the land affordable for an ambitious young farmer.

Anthony Mecca spoke with nearly 60 landowners up and down the East Coast and visited more than 30 farms before he found the Steels. And since, Great Song Farm, through its Community Supported Agriculture program, has built a community around it.



"Instead of having a nuclear family of four or five," explains Larry Steel, "you now have a hundred people that you care about."

In my role at AFT, I often reflect on my family's dairy farm in Washington County, New York. It shared a similar overlap of family and community. It was a busy hub each day for my dad and his brothers as they managed the business and attended to chores. The farm was also a favorite lunch time stop for the milk truck driver or veterinarian as everyone gathered around my grandmother's table to share a hearty meal and friendly conversation.

It was at that same table, however, that my family decided it was time to sell the farm.

Because of your support, American Farmland Trust is offering an opportunity to keep farm families – of all shapes, sizes and makeup – on the land. Since 2014, we have coordinated the Hudson Valley Farmlink Network, a partnership of 14 organizations that has trained more than 2,000 people and supported 135 farmers in finding land.

Now, in partnership with the State of New York, American Farmland Trust will soon be launching the ***Farmland for a New Generation New York*** program. *Farmland for a New Generation New York* will provide services to help new farmers and younger generations of farm families access land across New York, like Anthony Mecca, while supporting retiring farmers and landowners in making land available for farming and successfully transferring their farms. It's a win-win scenario for many, and we feel strongly that it's a critical time to invest in accessible resources that offer concrete guidance and options to farmers and landowners.

Jeffrey, together with friends and allies like you, American Farmland Trust is creating a brighter future for farming in New York. As a result, New Yorkers will see more locally grown food, cleaner water, scenic landscapes, vibrant communities and the many other positive impacts that farms can generate.

Thank you for being a part of our community and extended farm family!

Warmly,



Erica Goodman  
New York State Deputy Director

P.S. Visit [farmland.org/newyork](http://farmland.org/newyork) to see more stories of American Farmland Trust's exciting work with partners in helping farmers and landowners like Anthony, Larry and Betti!