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FARM INSTITUTE HAS NEW HOME AT KATAMA FARM

FARM Institute Site at Herring Creek Farm Sold

The FARM Institute's 10-year lease for restoration and revitalization of the 200-acre former dairy, Katama Farm, was approved on February 14 by the Selectmen of Edgartown. The FARM Institute closed on the sale of its current location, a seven-acre site at Herring Creek Farm, on December 31, 2004 and will be moving to the Katama Farm in the spring of 2005. The purchaser of The FARM Institute site at Herring Creek Farm is Herring Creek Acquisition Company, LLC, whose Manager, Robert Hughes, is an owner of adjacent farmland. Hughes will, according to the deed on the property, preserve the site as a working farm.

Since the autumn of 2003, The FARM Institute and the Town of Edgartown have been working together to create a partnership to renovate and reinstate operations on

Katama Farm in order to revive an important piece of the island's heritage. Katama Farm played a significant role in the history of farming on Martha's Vineyard. Its history goes back to World War I when families grew army and navy beans there. Arthur Hillman brought sheep in to the northern fields after buying the property for \$5,000 in the 1930's. Elisha Smith started with 6 dairy cows on the farm when he first rented from Mr. Hillman in 1943. Shortly thereafter Elisha was able to purchase most of the 50 by 100 foot lots of the southern pastures for \$20,000 and assemble the complete farm as we know it today. As part of the 35-farm Martha's Vineyard Dairy Cooperative, it remained a highly productive 50-cow dairy, and also helped fill the shelves of island grocers with corn and potatoes. (contin. on page 2)

SPRING LETTER FROM THE FARM from John Curelli

April 18, 2005

Greetings from the farm:

It is hard to imagine that the blizzard conditions of an extreme winter are already 2 months past as we enjoy the brilliant blue of the sea and sky of a Vineyard spring. Even with the worst of winters or the harshest droughts of summer there is always the never-failing hope and promise of a new season. It is the anticipation of these seasonal rhythms, the tasks of the months ahead that we most reflect on and plan for.

For The FARM Institute we begin our

fourth spring on the land under the watchful eyes of the hovering ospreys: tilling the soil, adding the rich amendments of compost, planting the seeds, and preparing for the harvest of the coming months. We are soon to witness the best of Mother Nature's performances with calving and lambing on the pastures. All of this we are blessed to be able to share with our excited students.

This is a very special season for The FARM Institute. We are beginning a new stage of our growth as we move to Katama Farm to rebuild and reshape a

tired but worthy farm. It is the hope and promise of our students that helps to create this new farm at a time when each day countless farms across this country lose ground and end their life. We anticipate a unique Vineyard resource for all to enjoy, a place where all can share the excitement, the dreams and the vivid connections to the earth, nature and each other. We have sprouted from the seeds of dreams. It is now time to be firmly planted in the earth.

Please stop by the farm and share in the excitement.

Spring at the Katama Farm Garden

It has been so exciting and exhilarating breaking the ground over at Katama Farm with the children. If you think about it too much the possibilities are certainly there to get overwhelmed, but I always tell the kids its spring and we don't have time to worry, only time to work. We certainly have our challenges ahead of us but the adventure keeps tugging us along.

Just yesterday we were removing sod from an area where we want to make a moon garden. I showed the kids the bamboo that we were going to use to erect the giant tee-pee for the moon flowers. They were excited. A tee-pee covered and surrounded by flowers that like to open up at night. I could see the look in their eyes - it said "magical." As a reward for the hard work ahead of us, I promised to take the children down to the pond to look for otters after we finished preparing the moon garden.

We had the spaders, the shovelers, the dirt shakers and the wheelbarrowers. Three young women were in charge of the wheelbarrow. They waddled their way back and forth from the compost, rewarding themselves for their efforts by giving each other rides in the wheelbarrow on the way back to the garden spot. It was perfect. The group was large and the children that were not with me were over in the "pumpkin patch" area spreading compost. I could see them but I could not hear them so I went to check in. I found them like little elves relentlessly working away. They were singing "Old MacDonald had a farm E I E I Oh and on his farm he had some dirt." Every time they said "dirt" they laughed hysterically and contagiously.

These days have been filled with hope and new beginnings. Every time a task is completed a great feeling of pride enters your heart. Just a couple of weeks ago the farm seemed hopelessly abandoned and now there are children running around laughing and working. A beautiful little greenhouse has been built and it is filled with delicate seedlings that are reaching their bodies up towards the sun and in our garden's first couple of beds lay peas, spinach, lettuce, onions, carrots, beets and potatoes. Where there was nothing now there is something and that something is life springing forth with a harvest to nourish not only our bodies but our hearts and our souls. What an honor it is to be able to be involved with the earth in such a way.

Due to our efforts now in early spring, throughout the season one should be able to reap from our garden's soil a variety of flowers, carrots, peas, lettuce, arugula, fresh herbs, zucchini, crookneck squash, beets, beans, eggplant, cucumbers, tomatoes, watermelon, corn, soybeans, pumpkins, potatoes, radishes, chard, peppers, brussel sprouts, broccoli, kale and so much more.

by Robyn Hosey, educational coordinator

FARM HAS NEW HOME AT KATAMA

(continued from Page 1)

In 1979, with remarkable foresight, The Town of Edgartown and the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs jointly purchased the entire property for the purpose of agriculture, conservation and passive recreation. Since then, the Conservation Commission has leased the property to farmers for dairy and beef production. The FARM Institute now holds a 10-year lease on the land where it will conduct its educational programming for children and restore the historic public space as a working farm and community agricultural resource center.

"We are excited to have this opportunity to work with the community in bringing new life to this vital resource", said John Curelli, executive director of The FARM Institute.

The FARM Institute signed a 10-year lease for Katama Farm which allows for three successive 10-year renewal periods. All

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The FARM Institute is directed by Guiding Principles for the methods and practice of sustainable agriculture.

We commit to the best appropriate organic practices for all plant & animal care (including soil life, health, fertility).

We insist upon the humane treatment of all animals.

We strive for minimum impact on the environment and natural resources by practicing responsible conservation practices for the land, air, and water.

We strive to model the ideal in land stewardship.

Our Guiding Principles for Education:

We commit to providing programs that aim to help shape the lives of children.

We teach harmony, peace, respect and humane treatment of all living things.

We nurture students by honoring achievement, unique learning styles and individual problem solving.

We model a dynamic learning process by providing place-based experiential learning that fosters enduring connections with the land.

We provide the knowledge and tools for students to make strong, wise choices for the health and future of their community and the environment.

We teach sustainability and the interconnectedness of all living things through modeling good practices in the production, preparation and consumption of food grown and grazed on an organic farm.

A Nature Walk on the Farm

inspired these notes in Chris Pitt's journal

Call of the Wild	weeds
peaceful	duck tracks
silent	osprey nest
muddy	grass
mooooo	water
wet	gray skies
smelly	swans
cow pie	thorns
slippery	sea otters
greenhouse	amazing

permanent farm structures will be limited to a 5-acre parcel on the northeast portion of the property, near where the current buildings exist.

The FARM Institute will remain at Herring Creek Farm until April 30 while it prepares Katama Farm for operations and will move its cattle, goats, sheep, chickens, offices and classrooms to Katama Farm this summer.

"The re-opening of Katama Farm as a working farm calls for a community celebration", said Sam Feldman, chairman of the board of The FARM Institute. "Through the efforts of The Town of Edgartown and The FARM Institute, everyone can enjoy a preserved public space and piece of island heritage. Children will have the opportunity to experience a working farm."

The FARM Institute was one of the parties involved in the purchase and preservation of the 215-acre Herring Creek Farm in 2001, which remains the largest conservation real estate transaction on the island and in the state.

FARM RECEIVES \$5,000 GRANT FOR STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS

The FARM Institute was recently awarded a \$5,000 grant from the Farm Neck Foundation, a private foundation funded by the members of the Farm Neck Golf Club, towards establishing a scholarship fund. The new scholarship fund will enable qualified island students, ages 4-14 years, to participate in the After School On The Farm program offered year-round by the FARM Institute.

"We are extremely grateful to the Farm Neck Foundation for their generosity," said John Curelli, Executive Director of The FARM Institute. "As we strive to increase the educational programs and creative options for island children at our working farm, we are excited to introduce more kids to the farm and to the unique learning environment here. Kids love it here...caring for the animals, the garden, and experiencing first-hand the disappearing traditions and culture of farming."

Throughout the school year, the After School At The Farm program operates Monday through Friday, with students from all the island elementary schools. Each day, the teacher-farmers at the FARM Institute work as partners with the children, tending to the needs of an operating farm and learning the life lessons

which abound there. The children gain hands-on experience of working with rare breeds of cattle, sheep chickens, goats and dairy cows as well as practical knowledge while growing and harvesting food in the organic garden. A high point of the day is the preparation of a healthy snack with products from the farm.

Although The FARM Institute is a non-profit organization and aims to keep the tuition as low as possible for students in the After School At The Farm program, for many island children, a scholarship provides the only way they can participate on a regular basis. The scholarship fund established with the grant from Farm Neck Foundation will provide full or partial scholarships to cover enrollment fees for qualifying children.

In addition to the after-school program, the FARM Institute provides daily programs on the farm including field trips and day sessions with public schools, preschools, and home-schooled children. Regularly scheduled classes with elementary and charter school students, a summer day camp and a program for middle school students with learning and social skill limitations are also part of the operation.

Over 200 people attended FARM's Spring Celebration & Easter Egg Hunt on March 26! Thanks for coming and happy spring!



CHECK OUT OUR WEB SITE - WWW.FARMINSTITUTE.ORG

In an effort to expand communication with parents, children, supporters and the island community, The FARM Institute launched its web site -- www.farminstitute.org -- in February.

"Like our children's programs, our website is as fun as it is informative," said John Curelli, Executive Director of The FARM Institute, "We hope the community enjoys it and uses it as a tool to connect with the living tradition of farming on the island."

In addition to providing general information about The FARM Institute, the site is designed to inform, educate and entertain browsers with information about the operations of the farm, philosophy of farming, schedule of events and activities, recipes, recent news, resources for learning and details about children's programs at the farm.

Parents interested in FARM Institute programs for their children will find scheduling and subject information on the site for after school programs, winter and spring break camps and summer camps.

The site is designed to be user-friendly for children as well as adults. "Kids Place" is a special section for children that features a photo gallery of kids on the farm as well as information on the "Animal of the Month" and "Plant of the Month".

Tips on How to Create Harmony in Your Garden:

Companion Planting

Know your Friends

Melons & Sunflowers are friends - they help each other grow



Beans & Potatoes are friends - growing Bush Beans next to Potatoes helps repel the Colorado Potato Beetle

Know your Enemies

Melons & Potatoes are enemies - they hinder each other's growth

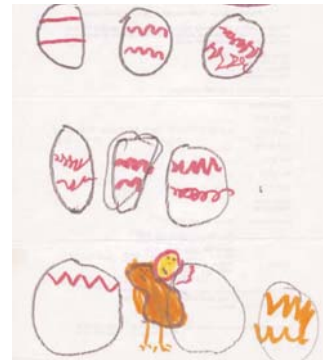
Another "friendship" tip: Valerian is a best friend of soil. Valerian attracts earthworms to your soil.



Leeks & Carrots are friends - Leeks are benefitted by growing next to carrots (carrots give vitamins to leeks)



Children's Art Gallery



PO Box 1868
Edgartown, MA 02539

In order to conserve natural resources...

PLEASE NOTE: THIS IS OUR LAST NEWSLETTER VIA U.S. MAIL.

If you'd like to continue receiving news from The FARM Institute,
please sign-up for newsletters online at www.farminstitute.org
or, email office@farminstitute.org and let us know. Thanks!

FARM CALENDAR

MAY 1

First Day at Katama Farm

JUNE 27

Summer camp begins

JULY 4

Farm float featured in parade



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Sign up online to receive this newsletter via email!