

BUY-PROTECT-SELL

ecga.org/Stories-Brown-Spring-Farm



“The biggest challenge facing young farmers is affording farmland. Land trusts are uniquely positioned to help make farmland affordable, and that’s critical to keeping local farming viable into the future.”

Vanessa Johnson-Hall
*Assistant Director of
Land Conservation*



CHRIS GRANT



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**DO YOU HAVE A CONSERVATION VISION FOR YOUR FARM?
GREENBELT CAN HELP.**



GREENBELT CONSERVATION CHRONICLE

Brown Spring Farm | WEST NEWBURY

PAUL CARY GOLDBERG

HISTORIC WORKING FARM

Preserving Agricultural Heritage, Making Farmland Affordable

In 2019, Greenbelt partnered with the town of West Newbury and a local farmer to conserve the iconic Brown Spring Farm. This bucolic 10-acre property, with its white Victorian home surrounded by fields of hay and vegetables, was beloved for its roadside stand where families found fresh produce for generations. The farm had been for sale and was threatened by residential development. Now this land will remain a farm forever. Conserving Brown Spring Farm protected an important cornerstone of West Newbury's agricultural heritage and a source of fresh, local food, and made land ownership a reality.

“We’ve seen tremendous support from the community. We’re excited to be meeting everyone who values this piece of land as much as we do. The house is well under way to being brought back to her original glory.”

Chris Grant
Farm Owner





PAUL CARY GOLDBERG (2)



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The farmland conservation model that Greenbelt applied to this purchase was Buy-Protect-Sell. It's an important tool land trusts can use to protect agricultural land and help make farmland more affordable for farmers to acquire.

How does it work? The sale price for Brown Spring Farm was \$703,500, with \$403,500 of that attributed to the right to develop three additional house lots on the land.

BUY

Greenbelt and the Town of West Newbury purchased an Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) on the land for \$403,500 which extinguished the right to develop three house lots on the property. The APR was purchased with \$200,000 in West Newbury Community Preservation Act funds and \$203,500 in private donations.

PROTECT

The APR not only protects the land from future development, but also ensures that it will always be available for farming.

SELL

Once the land was restricted by the APR, it was valued at just \$300,000, which made it affordable for a farmer to purchase.



PAUL CARY GOLDBERG



CHRIS GRANT

The sellers received their total sale price of \$703,500, the land is permanently protected for farming and a local farmer is able to own and operate his own farm.

\$703,500	Starting land value
\$403,500	Value of development rights/ cost to purchase APR to protect land from development
\$300,000	Value of land subject to the APR

A Firm Foundation

Now that Chris owns Grant Family Farm at Brown Spring, his aspirations for growing his business are taking off. “After farming on borrowed or rented land for so long, it feels good to be able to set up simple things like a greenhouse, irrigation, and deer fencing that will be permanent and not worry that we might have to remove them after a season or two because of shifting land,” say Chris and his partner Alice Tonry.

It will take more than Brown Spring Farm to feed Essex County, but at Greenbelt, we remain committed to doing what we can to keep farmers and working farmland a part of Essex County’s life and landscape.

GOALS

Farmland Conservation & Affordability
Ongoing, Agricultural Production

TOOLS

Agricultural Preservation Restriction
Community Preservation Act Funds
Greenbelt Private Fundraising

BENEFITS

Working Farm Preserved
Historic Landscape Permanently Protected
Farmland Soils, Critical Habitat and Water Quality Preserved
Land Ownership for a Local Farmer