



# SAVE THE STRONG FARM PASTURES!

*Photo by Scott Lent*

Dear Neighbor,

We need your help to save one of Vernon's last working farmlands – the Strong Farm pastures in Vernon Center!

For the last five years a group of concerned citizens and local organizations have been working hard to raise the \$1.1M needed to purchase and preserve 51 acres of farmland in Vernon Center. We are almost there!

We have raised 90% of the \$1.1M from state and federal grants. By state statute, the remaining 10% has to come from the community. So we have one last hurdle - *we need to show that our community wants to preserve the pastures!* We need to raise the \$110,000 in time for an early September closing.

With YOUR help we can do this! Your tax-deductible donation will preserve one of the most treasured lands in our town!

**How did the pastures leave the Strong Farm?** When Norman Strong passed away in 2010, the pastures were willed to a trust. In 2014 the members of the trust voted to sell the pastures. Housing developers immediately began calling! Quick action was needed to take the pastures off the market, so the group of concerned citizens cobbled together their own funds to purchase the pastures (and temporarily take ownership) until grants could be obtained to preserve the farmland.



*Photo by Judy Anderson*

**If we don't save the pastures, what will happen?**

The pastures are in a desirable residential zone. *They will quickly become housing developments.* We will lose the rural character of Vernon Center forever. We will lose a piece of our heritage, the historic path and field known as Meetinghouse Hill. Most importantly, we will permanently lose a disappearing resource - prime farmland soils and the ability to produce locally grown foods.

## Where are the pastures?

You probably pass by them every day!  
The largest pasture (33-acres) is between Route 30 and Cemetery Road, across from Vernon Center Middle School (VCMS). The other pasture (18-acres) is across from the Garden Barn on West Street; it abuts VCMS.

**What are the future plans for the pastures?** The pastures *will be preserved forever as open space and agricultural land*, per the requirements of the protective easements placed on the land by the state and federal grants. Yes, the scenic character of Vernon Center will remain unchanged into the future!



*Painting by Hans Weiss*

Strong Family Farm, Inc., a 501(c)3 non-profit organization that has created a community farm on the site of the historic Strong Farm, will take ownership. The non-profit will ensure that this land will always be productive farmland and grazing pastures.

**How do I contribute?** You can send a check in the enclosed envelope to Strong Family Farm, Inc., PO Box #2253, Vernon, CT 06066. Make the check to Strong Family Farm, Inc, and notate “Pastures” on the memo line. You can also donate on-line on the Strong Family Farm, Inc. website: [www.strongfamilyfarm.org](http://www.strongfamilyfarm.org). *Contributions are needed by September 10th.*

Please contact us if you have any questions. You can send an email to [info@meetinghousehill.org](mailto:info@meetinghousehill.org) or call 860.875.4623. To learn about Meetinghouse Hill and its history, go to the website: [www.meetinghousehill.org](http://www.meetinghousehill.org).

Thank you for caring and for investing in our community!

Sincerely,

The dedicated citizens and organizations that have made this project happen:

*Ann Letendre*

*Jon Roe*

*Lisa Moody*

*Karl Hasel*

*Hans Weiss*

*Mark Summers*

*Nancy Strong*

*among others and —*

*The Connecticut Farmland Trust*

*Town of Vernon Open Space Task Force*

*Northern Connecticut Land Trust*

