



# Hunterdon Land Trust Alliance

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Hunterdon Land Trust and local cheese makers work together to preserve historic farmstead in Holland Township, Hunterdon County**

The Stamets Farm sits atop a hill with beautiful views of the Delaware River and has been farmed by just two families since the American Revolution. When William Stamets, whose family had owned the farm for generations, passed away in 2001, many people feared the property would be developed, ending the tradition of family farming on the land that had endured for hundreds of years. On Monday March 29th those fears were put to rest with the culmination of a deal coordinated by the Hunterdon Land Trust.

By purchasing the development rights to the property the land trust simultaneously protected the land, ensuring that it will always be used as a farm, and made it possible for Nina and Jonathan White, local farmers and cheese makers, to purchase the property as the new home for their environmentally sustainable Bobolink Dairy Farm.



View of the farmhouse on the Stamets property, the future home of Bobolink Dairy Farms.

“This project has such a great outcome--the permanent protection of the largest unpreserved farm in the township and its transfer to a farming family with an established commitment to sustainable agriculture”, said Margaret Waldo, Executive Director of the Hunterdon Land Trust Alliance.

Preservationists and farmers both have big reasons to celebrate the successful completion of this deal. The farm has great conservation value given its size, soils and the fact that it is located in

the middle of hundreds of acres of land that has already been preserved. To lose this property to development would have dealt a serious blow to preservation efforts in the region.

Holland Township Mayor Edward Burdzy indicated that the preservation of the Historic Stamets farm represents a milestone in Holland's farmland preservation effort. "The Stamets farm is the largest remaining farm in Holland Township. To preserve land farmed by one family for so many years is a remarkable accomplishment. Bill Stamets would be proud that the land will continue in agricultural use" said the Mayor.

Like many family farmers Nina and Jonathan White have found it challenging to find a farm to buy, given the cost of real estate in New Jersey which is often a significant barrier to farmers. They are well known cheese makers producing high-quality artisanal cheeses from their Bobolink Dairy, established on leased land in Vernon, NJ. For many years the Whites had searched for a farm to purchase as a permanent home for their herd of 100 rustic Bronze Age cattle. Their long search came to an end when the land trust showed them the Stamets Farm in Holland Township. The Hunterdon Land Trust secured grant funding to preserve the farm through the purchase of an agricultural easement from the Stamets' estate and then the Whites purchased the preserved property from the estate.

The deal required the participation of a large group of partners to fund the purchase of the \$1.4 million conservation easement, and a great deal of work to coordinate all of the partners involved. The Hunterdon Land Trust secured preservation grants through a variety of public and private sources. The state of New Jersey's farmland preservation program, the Hunterdon County farmland preservation program, and Holland Township all contributed funds and the New Jersey Conservation Foundation provided \$700,000 in Federal Farm and Ranchland Protection Funds to secure an agricultural easement on the farm.

"We are very pleased to contribute a portion of our federal farmland grant to the Hunterdon Land Trust and support their efforts to preserve this farm," said Michele S. Byers, executive director of New Jersey Conservation Foundation. "Bobolink Dairy is a terrific example of a sustainable dairy operation, and we congratulate the Hunterdon Land Trust on their success in helping the White family find a permanent home for their farm in Hunterdon County."

The Open Space Institute provided a bridge loan which allowed the land trust to close the project in time to meet the March 29 closing date, while the land trust waited to receive a portion of the grant funding.

“Hunterdon Land Trust has a great track record of agricultural preservation in Hunterdon County, and this is a project we’re proud to be involved with,” said Marc Hunt, the Southern Appalachians field coordinator for the Open Space Institute. “The acquisition of this easement will allow the farmer to purchase land that sustains his operation at an affordable price. This is a model for an innovative project by a land trust that really does it right.”

The White’s cheeses and breads are currently sold on their rented farm in Vernon, NJ, in farmer’s markets throughout the NYC region, as well as nationally via their website, [www.cowsoutside.com](http://www.cowsoutside.com). After their move to Holland Township, Bobolink cheese and breads will also be available for sale at the [Hunterdon Land Trust’s Farmers’ Market](#) at Dvoor Farm.

“Bringing Bobolink Dairy together with the Stamets property demonstrates how the preservation and farming communities can work together to keep family farms a part of our county and to build the local food system” said Waldock.

The Hunterdon Land Trust is Hunterdon County, New Jersey’s only countywide land trust. Incorporated as a 501 (C) (3) non-profit organization in 1996, the land trust is committed to preserving and protecting the rural landscapes and natural resources of Hunterdon County. To learn more about the Hunterdon Land Trust, please visit their website at [www.hlta.org](http://www.hlta.org).

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