

SHARON

THE COMMUNITY INVESTMENT ACT SUCCESS STORIES

No.
374



WIKE BROTHERS FARM

Sharon, CT

Agriculture & Dairy



One of Sharon's oldest and largest family farms, **Wike Brothers Farm** has been owned and worked by the same family for almost 150 years. In recent years, the 276-acre farm has evolved from a dairy operation to a **diversified agricultural business**. The owner's son-in-law, daughter, and grandson, have cleared and revived pastures that had been idle for nearly 30 years and are reseeding and naturally fertilizing hay lands for improved production.

The farm's products — including cuts of beef and pork, sausages, eggs, apple-smoked bacon, hot dogs, and maple syrup — are in high demand. Customers from the surrounding area and some from New York City and New Jersey come to buy the products at the farm stand or order grass-fed beef online. The owner's granddaughter and family have recently



returned to the farm, are planting an orchard, and will soon add organic

fruits and vegetables to the farm's product list.

144 acres were permanently protected in 2010 through the work of many partners and residents committed to the future of the popular farm. The State, through the **CT Farmland Preservation Program**, contributed \$201,490 in funding from the **Community Investment Act (CIA)**. This was matched with \$155,924 raised by the Connecticut Farmland Trust and the Sharon Land Trust, as well as \$448,257 from the federal Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program. Proceeds from the sale of the



property's development rights have been used to make improvements to the farm, such as replacing the roofs on barns. The permanent protection of the land will ensure that the Wike Brothers Farm operation can continue to provide fresh local food to consumers in the region.

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The Community Investment Act, enacted in 2005, stimulates private investment to protect our natural, agricultural, and historic resources, and to assist affordable housing. CIA funds come from a surcharge on real estate document recording fees. They are then invested in agriculture viability, dairy farm support, historic preservation, open space, farmland, affordable housing, Local Capital Improvement Projects and Town Clerk records management.