

BIODYNAMIC FARMLAND CONSERVATION TRUST, INC.

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WWW.BROOKFIELDFARM.ORG INFO@BROOKFIELDFARM.ORG

NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2022

OUR FARM YEAR

A Year Of Transition

What an amazing year for Brookfield Farm. The transition in leadership from Dan and Karen to myself and Kerry went about as smoothly as anyone involved could have hoped for. While it wasn't without some bumps and mishaps, we have settled in nicely after taking over day to day management of Brookfield a little over a year ago.

The first season at a new place is always going to be a challenge and this season was especially challenging. We were hoping for a nice easy growing season to settle into our new roles, but mother nature had a different plan. An incredibly cold, windy, dry spring, record setting rain over the summer, and a seemingly endless slew of new corona virus variants kept us on our toes.

Despite its soggy, 2021 was a really great year for us, for Brookfield Farm, and we hope for our greater community. Even with literal lakes in some of our fields for much of July, we managed to grow over 170,000 pounds of food. We had great crops of parsnips, onions and strawberries to name a few. The watermelon surprised us all by producing a great crop despite the weather. We lost some crops due to weather, and yields and harvests weren't always what we planned for but we're feeling optimistic for the future.

We were excited to return to almost normal share distributions with relaxed Covid protocols, tables set up like pre-Covid times, children and members socializing and playing in the barn backyard, and even a momentary break from masking during the summer time. It was truly refreshing to see everyone's smiles again, many we even recognized from 10 years ago when we were last at Brookfield!



The Farm Shop from above

Farms never exist in a stable state; if they're not improving, they're declining. We continued to improve the farm and help facilitate its evolution. We added several new tractors and tools to the farm fleet, both to

replace tired equipment but also to improve our capacity to do certain jobs. Notably, we replaced one of the 1940's gasoline powered Allis Chalmers G tractors with an Allis G that was converted to electric. This involved replacing the 80 year old gasoline engine with an electric golf cart motor and batteries. It allows us to seed better and quieter while not burning fossil fuels and charging it with our solar panels.

Using seed money from the Grinspoon Foundation, we purchased and fabricated a tractor mounted flame weeder. A slightly intimidating piece of equipment at first, this proved to be a game changer and is single handedly responsible for one of the nicest parsnip crops Brookfield Farm has seen in years.



Getting ready to plant sweet corn



Harvest Morning

“Our Farm Year,” cont.

We applied for and received several grants from the state to improve farm infrastructure and improve our climate resiliency. The first is to install an irrigation well on our Warren Wright property. The second grant is to install a new cooler on the farm to increase our cooling capacity.

5 piglets came to the farm in May and our herd of beef cattle resided on the Snyder property this year. Kerry wears the herds(wo)man hat and updated the electric fencing with stronger energizers and solar panels. We reduced the size of the beef herd to reduce the grazing pressure on our pastures and spent the summer getting to know our new herd and pastures.

Our attempts to make compost were repeatedly stymied by a very wet year, but we were able to clean out the barn yard of our cows’ manure to be used for future compost. We continued to receive leaves from the town and shareholders, and stand at the ready to make compost when we have a window of opportunity. Our compost is the basis of our farms nutrition and 125 tons were spread in the spring across our fields.

Share sales for 2021 were strong and we met our summer and winter sales goals and maintained a waitlist. Early renewals going into the 2022 season were strong and comparable to 2021.



Harvesting Storage Cabbage

FARM FINANCES

Farm Finances Strong!

The farm ended the year in strong financial standing. Though income was slightly down by 3% primarily due to the lack of a meat sale, expenses were also down by 6% (primarily due to budgeting high for labor to help with a challenging transition year). After paying our loans and completing capital improvements we were able to grow our Capital Account to \$50,572 which will be used for future capital improvements. Our balance sheet showed positive growth at 87% both from the receipt of COVID relief funds and the Land Legacy Campaign.

SPECIAL THANKS

*to our neighbor & welder
Bob Gray for completely
overhauling our plow this
summer (and so many other ge-
nius repairs over so many years)*

BIODYNAMIC FARMLAND CONSERVATION TRUST (BFCT), INC.

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Website: www.brookfieldfarm.org



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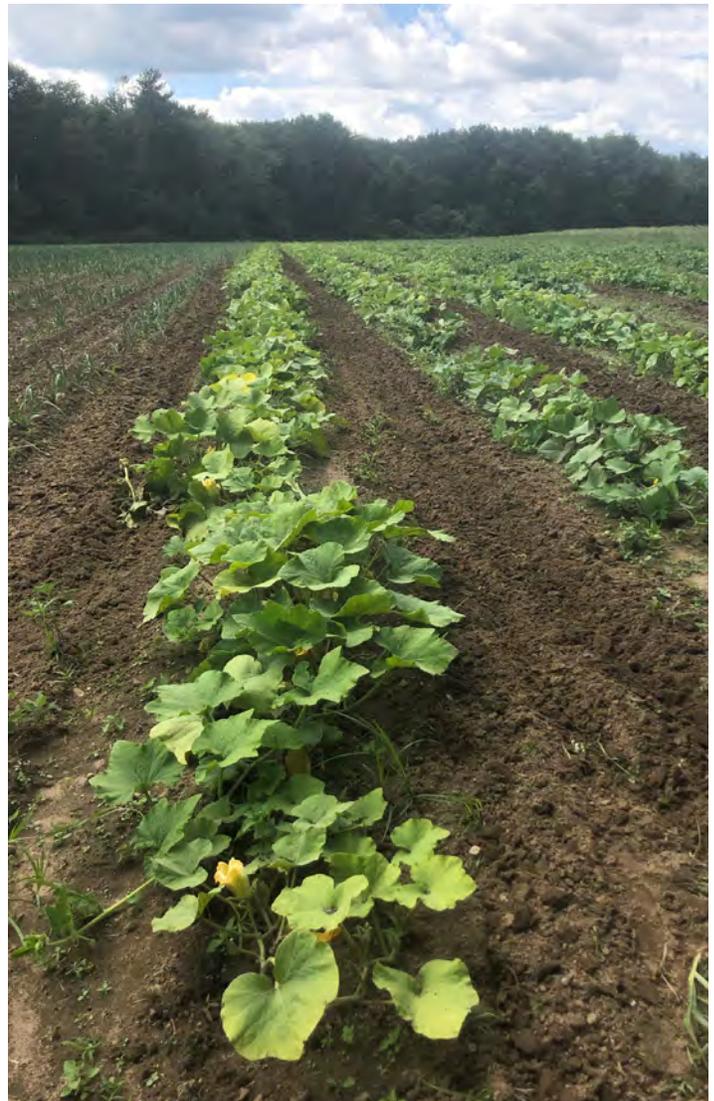
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Max Taylor	General Manager
Kerry Taylor	General Manager
Abbe Vredenburg	Administrator
Leila Tunnell	Farm Educator
Bonnie Lathrop	Assitant Manager

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Winter Squash before it started raining

LAND LEGACY

A Successful Campaign

After an amazing year of transition at Brookfield Farm, this is a good time to reflect on our project to protect all the tillable land Brookfield Farm stewards for future generations to use and enjoy. We set ambitious goals for this campaign, knowing that to be competitive in this market we would need to bring in at least \$550,000.

The campaign turned out to be as successful as it was ambitious. By the time we reached our Campaign Celebration on July 31, we had \$559,383 in pledges to secure the long-term home of Brookfield Farm. 350 individual gifts were made from a wide variety of current & past shareholders, past apprentices, relatives, employees, friends, and unsolicited donors alike. This was truly a group effort and the celebration on a beautiful summer evening was a high-energy, farm-affirming tribute to the place that this enduring land-connection holds in the hearts of a multi-generational community of people.

Since that time, the pledges have rolled in; Despite not needing to be paid for up to three years, our administrator Abbe reports that \$499,518 has been received into the Trust account to date. The first step in securing the land was taken in November, when the \$85,197 loan on the Warren Wright Rd parcel was paid off. This brought the total of tillable acreage owned by the Trust to 58%. In addition, it freed up over \$9000 of operating income for Brookfield Farm each year.

The recent sale of Small One's Farm to a local family reminds us of the shifting landscape of farm land in Amherst and speaks of the importance of having funds on hand so that we can move quickly and decisively when land becomes available. The campaign was a success, the funds are secured and the leadership at the farm has the resources necessary to move forward. We will continue to keep you up to date as news develops.

This has truly been an inspiring effort for all who participated and reminds us of all what we can do when we have a goal and work together to achieve it.



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Harvest morning

donors cont.

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Anonymous - 27 Gifts



Fall Brassica

Vegetable Production 2021

	unit	per share	2021	2020
BEEF	LBS.	4.0	2125	3850
BEEF W/TOPS	BU.	3.3	1740	1270
BROCCOLI	LBS.	1.2	640	1555
BRUSSELS' SP.	PC.	2.6	1385	1415
BRUSSELS' SP. TOPS	LBS	1.1	570	1730
CABBAGE	LBS	19.5	10232	14040
CABBAGE, CHI.	HDS.	11.4	5970	3285
CANTELOUPES	PC.	5.1	2700	7705
CARROT	LBS.	21.0	11010	19380
CARROT W/TOP	BU.	2.1	1112	940
CAULIFLOWER	LBS.	2.3	1190	775
CELERIAC	LBS.	2.4	1280	1200
CELERY	PC.	2.1	1080	1435
CHARD	LBS.	2.0	1073	1350
COLLARDS	LBS.	0.8	398	2095
CORN	DZ.	9.2	4850	9060
CUCUMBER	LBS.	4.2	2180	6455
EGGPLANT	LBS.	6.5	3395	5425
GARLIC	LBS.	2.1	1125	0
GREENS	LBS.	2.3	1193	3075
KALE	LBS.	12.3	6450	9195
KOHLRABI	LBS.	1.4	725	725
LEEK	PC.	3.3	1750	8020
LETTUCE	HDS.	9.8	5156	7620
LETTUCE	LBS.	2.9	1525	2455
ONION	LBS.	20.4	10700	9575
PARSNIP	LBS.	4.7	2485	225
PEPPERS, HOT	LBS.	2.1	1097	995
PEPPERS, SW.	LBS.	8.0	4178	3925
POTATO	LBS.	32.7	17175	14335
POTATO, SW.	LBS.	15.3	8040	16580
RADICCHIO	LBS.	1.0	500	510
RADISH	BU.	1.4	269	2175
RADISH, DAIKON	LBS.	1.4	720	2560
RADISH, STORAGE	LBS.	3.1	1620	3210
RUTABAGA	LBS.	4.4	2285	3675
SCALLION	BU.	1.2	613	2090
SPINACH	LBS.	0.0	0	1200
SQUASH, S.	LBS.	6.5	3420	8400
SQUASH, W.	LBS.	10.7	5600	21250
TOMATOES	LBS.	11.1	5850	13480
TURNIP, HAKUREI	BU.	1.0	525	640
TURNIP	LBS.	4.4	2295	4530
WATERMELONS	LBS.	21.9	11500	17115



Catch!

IN MEMORIAM

We remember longtime friend of the farm **Beth Cook** who passed away in the early fall. Beth and Gordy Cook have been friends and farming neighbors of Brookfield Farm since the beginning. "Beth was always ready with a warm smile, great sense of humor, unfailing generosity, and a good story from her long experience within the farming community of the Pioneer Valley. We will miss her presence but always remember her kindness in helping our family and Brookfield Farm settle in and become a part of this wonderful community." - Dan Kaplan



Harvesting Storage Cabbage

A LIVING CLASS ROOM

Education continues to be one of our core principles and reasons for farming the way that we do. We were thrilled to welcome back groups of students from the Amherst Public Schools and other local schools. After a year long hiatus from school group visits, it was incredibly heartwarming to see Brookfield Farm once again become a living class room. We saw 4 Amherst elementary school grades visit the farm this fall to dig carrots, learn about compost and visit the pigs. In addition, we had the Amherst middle school after school program VELA spend afternoons on the farm where students harvested and cooked produce.

Former apprentice Leila Tunnell continues to do a fantastic job as our education coordinator. She makes the farm come to life for the students, and ensures that their visits to the farm are educational, enriching and engaging for everyone involved.

This year Leila received the Kale Blazer Award for demonstrated excellence and leadership in farm to school activity from Mass Farm To School for her outstanding work with farm-based education. It is well deserved and we are so proud of her and happy to have her on our team.



FARMER TRAINING

Alicia watering the greenhouse

Providing aspiring farmers with a practical agricultural education experience is the foundation of our education mission. Our farm apprentices perform vital work on the farm while getting an in-depth look at a complex, working farm. This year we were lucky to have two apprentices with a solid base of farm experience and an indelible appetite for learning.

Alicia McCarthy came to us from her hometown of Philadelphia PA. She had spent a season at Penny Pack Farm, a diversified vegetable CSA just outside of Philly before arriving at Brookfield. Alicia brought a great sense of humor and a tremendous work ethic to the farm. Alicia spent much of her time here getting plants and seeds in the ground, she drove the electric Allis G to direct seed and drove the Landini to pull both the mechanical and water wheel transplanter. The allure of home and South East PA is strong and Alicia is headed back to Penny Pack to continue her agriculture career.



Education on the farm



Jumping for joy



Rye killing weeds with the Allis G

Rye Lyzcak spent the previous season at Indian Line Farm outside of Great Barrington, a fellow Western Massachusetts CSA. He brought a wealth of mechanical knowledge and experience to Brookfield Farm. Rye performed the bulk of mechanical cultivation, killing weeds with the gas powered Allis G. He also spread compost, made beds and mowed down old crops with the John Deere 2355. Rye is continuing to pursue his passion for agriculture at Oechsner Farm, an organic grain farm outside of Ithaca NY.

Not an Apprentice in the true sense of the word, our assistant manager Bonnie Lathrop found herself in the difficult position of having to teach, train and manage while also doing so many new things for the first time. Typically assistant managers at Brookfield Farm have been apprentices themselves so they are familiar with the farm. Bonnie arrived with us from Connecticut, having spent her previous season working at Provider Farm in Salem CT. She did a stellar job of stepping into her role as assistant manager here at Brookfield. She plowed, harrowed, cultivated and basically did whatever we needed her to do when we needed it. She made our life easier on a daily basis and made the transition in management much smoother. We are thrilled that she is staying on for another season as assistant manager.

Special thanks to our Holyoke Community College Sustainable Agriculture intern Cameron Sullivan-Daley who spent June-August working alongside us and getting a taste of sustainable farming.



That's a lot of sweet potatoes



Bonnie picks a beautiful bunch of radishes



Beets!

FOOD ACCESS AT BROOKFIELD FARM

Spread the word!

At Brookfield Farm, we want everyone to have a share within their reach! In 2014, the Donor supported share program was established to help achieve this. This fund helps self-identified shareholders meet their budgetary needs to secure a CSA share. In 2021, 10 shareholders accessed these funds. At the close of the year, the fund sits at \$9,526.

Brookfield Farm also participates in the state HIP program which matches all SNAP dollars paid to local farms dollar to dollar. In 2022, 17 shareholders were able to use this program to secure CSA shares.

Brookfield Farm partners with the Survival Center to receive excess produce donations. In addition, Rachel's Table, which brings groups out to glean leftover harvests from the field, gleaned 176 pounds of food in 2021 for local food banks.

We are always seeking to increase our outreach of these programs in order to get those in need enrolled. Please spread the word! Anyone interested in these programs can email us at info@brookfieldfarm.org.

Donations to the Donor supported Share Fund to increase food access in our community can be made online at brookfieldfarm.org/donate or sent to: Brookfield Farm, PO box 227, Amherst MA 01002



Carrots on a rainy July day



Pigs enjoying some clover for breakfast 8

THE ANNUAL FUND

While the Land Legacy Campaign really took up the bulk of our fund raising energy this year, we still held a modest annual fund campaign. While our CSA share fees pay for the operating expenses of the farm, our education and outreach efforts are funded in part by donations made to the annual fund.

We expected the annual fund to be reduced this year due to the generous and substantial giving made to the Land Legacy Campaign. We put out an appeal for funds in December and received 84 gifts totaling \$2430 once again proving the generosity of our community.



Transplanting leeks



PARTY TIME

All Work and No Play.....

We were thrilled to have a break in the pandemic to return to many of the traditions of Brookfield Farm including hosting events on the farm. We were fortunate to have Zoe Abrams return ('12-'18) as our events coordinator. She brought with her a wealth of information about events on the farm of previous years making hosting events a cinch for us newbies this year. Thank you Zoe!

We kicked off the season with our spring planting event where we planted our flower garden and tomato hoop houses. We had a very soggy garlic harvest in July, followed by a lovely Land Legacy closing event on a (unusually for this year) lovely dry July evening.

Though our pumpkin patch was hit hard by the rains, we had enough pumpkins to host a delightful pumpkin painting event where young and old alike enjoyed decking out their pumpkins.

We rang in the fall with a potato pick on a beautiful fall day. We picked clean the potato field at Small Ones Farm bringing in 5000 pounds of spuds in one day! Once the harvest was in, everyone enjoyed some fire baked potatoes and chili around the fire. I can not express how affirming the community spirit was as we celebrated fall around the fire. The events season wrapped up again with our "virtual harvest celebration" where Max presented a slide show of the year in review. While things haven't totally returned to the normal of earlier years, we were happy to have threaded our way through the pandemic ups and downs of the season to gather with you.

A great group helps us get our garlic out of the field



The Great Potato Dig, 5,000 pounds in 2 hours!



**THE BIODYNAMIC FARMLAND
CONSERVATION TRUST, INC.**

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SPECIAL THANKS

To our Farm Angel - Chris Zobel, for the donation of a van which came with a stove stuffed in it for the apprentice house and the myriad of other odd jobs he does around the farm.

To Jason Edwards who makes all our hay and helps out with all the cow things and keeps the farm driveway sanded and salted in the winter.

To our farming neighbor Gordy Cook who cuts all our straw and supplies us with manure to make compost.

Thanks to the weeder crew, without them there would be no food: Becca, Gabe, Oliver, Rachel, Jana, Spencer, Angela, Caleb, Lukas, George, Stefan, Sarah Van Horn and Sarah Kennedy, Big special thanks to Sydney who crushed her role as weeder leader this year and to Angela for staying on through the fall to bring in the fall harvests.

To Abbe Vradenburg for keeping the books in order, the CSA sign ups organized and for her treasure trove of historical information to guide us through the transition year.

Thank you to all the volunteers who lent a hand this year: Larry Manire, Carol Wood, Becca Nicholson and the Nuesslein Saturday crew, Chris and Veralin Vriezen, Marcei Muehkle, Gabriel Proia, Gabriella Griffin, Caroline Keppler, Galia Pakar, Madison Cushing, Erin Cleary and the Wheelhouse Crew.

Thank you to our farm landlords and neighbors who tolerate the everyday workings of a sometimes noisy and smelly farm: Elaine Kenseth, Joanna and Victoria Hubbs and families on Hulst Rd. To the Snyder family, Bob and Sally Fitz, and Bob Gray.

FARMING FOR THE FUTURE

As the next farmers at Brookfield Farm, it was our intention when we arrived to make the farm feel like home while respecting and honoring all the amazing work of Dan and Karen and all those who have put so much of themselves into the farm. We have been overwhelmed by the tremendous amount of support we have received from this community upon our arrival at Brookfield. We are excited for the future of the farm. It is our vision to honor Brookfield's history while addressing emerging challenges like climate resilience and infrastructure challenges, a constantly changing marketplace and increasing food accessibility in our community.

We also wanted to express our deepest gratitude to Dan and Karen for their tremendous amount of help, support, advice and humor this season. We are truly standing on the shoulders of giants farming at Brookfield.



Our first week on the farm