

DATE

Mr. David Behm
Farmland Protection Program Manager
NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets
10B Airline Drive
Albany, NY 12235

Dear Mr. Behm:

On behalf of the Town of New Lebanon, I would like to express our strong support for the grant application being submitted by the Columbia Land Conservancy to the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets for the purchase of development rights on Shadowbrook Farm, that is owned by the Benson family.

Shadowbrook Farm is a third generation family farm in our Town. Once a dairy operation, the Bensons have recently opened a popular farmstand to sell their diversified livestock products directly to consumers. The Bensons currently raise cattle, pigs, and chickens on their pastureland. The land considered in this application is composed of prime agricultural soils and soils of statewide importance. The updated Town of New Lebanon Comprehensive Plan (2021), states we should, "Encourage the preservation of existing farms, open farmlands and the creation of new sustainable and economically viable farms."

We strongly urge you to consider funding the protection of this important farm property to help further our town's vision for agricultural protection. We fully support the Columbia Land Conservancy's application and are hopeful that it will be awarded funding. If you have any questions, or if I can provide you with any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Tistrya Houghtling
Supervisor
Town of New Lebanon