

# CLEMEDOW FARM MONMOUTH MEADOW BROOK FARM FAYETTE

CLEMEDOW FARM OWNER: JEREMIAH SMITH  
MEADOW BROOK FARM OWNERS: BERNDT AND ELAINE GRAF



Smith Farm (Jane Davis)

Jerry Smith's great-grandfather and grandfather purchased Clemedow Farm in 1911. "When I was growing up in Monmouth, there were a lot of farms," he remembers. "At first we grew mostly apples, but sometime in the 1930's a bad freeze killed most of the apple trees. That looked like a good time to switch to dairy!"

Clemedow sells milk to Oakhurst Dairy, a Maine company that buys from small farms. "We have about 100 milkers and about 80 young cows." The first milking session goes from 3:30 a.m. until about 7:00. Jerry is back at 2:00 in the afternoon for round two. He and the farm's other full-time employee milk the cows "twice a day, 365 days a year. It's hard work, but it's what I want to do."

He feeds his cows only grass. "It's basically a grass farm, which means there's very little erosion. In return the cows make organic fertilizer. It's a good cycle."

Elaine and Berndt Graf started their Fayette dairy farm, Meadow Brook, in 1983. Berndt comes from a long line of farmers, and although he trained as a structural designer, farming was the only thing he ever wanted to do. Elaine's Maine roots go back to the 1960's when her father, Standish Bachman, was the Economic Development Commissioner for then Governor Reed.

Like Jerry, Berndt and Elaine believe that rural lands should be protected for the next generation. Their 245-acre organic dairy farm consists of 30 milking Jerseys plus young stock. They have a small fiber business from eight Romney/Finn sheep and two angora goats. Open land is devoted to pasture, though hay comes from distant fields they do not own.

In March, 2010, the Grafs acted on a long-held vision and purchased 90 acres that were contiguous to their current farm. They plan to return 65 acres to hay production; the eventual savings in time, fuel, and wear on equipment would allow them to expand into a small cheese and maple sugar business. With this purchase, the Grafs will not only be more self-sufficient, they will own more land than was part of their farm at the time of Fayette's settlement. "Having witnessed unplanned development of the wonderful rural places we grew up in, we have a great desire to do what we can to protect farmland."

The Grafs and Jerry Smith want to provide for recreational access to their properties. They see great value in the large wetlands that provide excellent habitat for birds, mammals, amphibians, and other wildlife on their farms. Jerry Smith is developing a plan whereby he will sell a conservation easement on 280 acres, enjoy a well-

earned retirement, and help a new farmer get acquainted with the farm. The Grafs look to conserve 230 acres of their enlarged property and diversify their business. The properties will be monitored to ensure that they remain in agriculture, an ideal outcome for small Maine farmers who want to do what is best for the land.



KLT Abigail Holman Agricultural Education Program (Karen Simpson)



Elaine and Berndt Graf (Contributed)



Jeremiah Smith (Jane Davis: 2009)

*Land conservation projects involving working landscapes — both farms and woodlots — are particularly challenging and immensely rewarding. These projects not only protect special places — they also provide for people's livelihoods, preserve a rural way of life, and support sustainable local economies.*

— Jerry Bley, Creative Conservation

