



**American Farmland Trust**  
**Working Lands Alliance**  
Winter 2010

**WLA Presents Gov. Jodi Rell with *Farmland Preservation Legacy Award***

Headlining the awards presented by WLA at its annual meeting was retiring Governor M. Jodi Rell, who received WLA's first ever *Farmland Preservation Legacy Award*. WLA Chair Terry Jones praised Rell's strong and sustained support for agriculture and farmland protection. Since the Governor took office in July 2004, the Connecticut Farmland Preservation Program has preserved over 7,500 acres with an investment of nearly \$42 million.



*WLA Chair Terry Jones with Governor Rell at WLA Annual Meeting*

In 2005, Governor Rell was instrumental in enactment of the Community Investment Act, providing a dedicated source of funding for statewide affordable housing, historic preservation, open space protection and farmland preservation efforts. Her support was critical as well to passage of legislation establishing a Farmland Preservation Advisory Board and "lump sum" bond funding for the Farmland Preservation Program, which dramatically increased the pace of protection activities around the state. In addition, she played a vital role in enacting legislation in 2009 providing CT dairy farmers with a needed economic safety net.

WLA's 2010 Legislator Appreciation Award was presented to **Rep. Bryan Hurlburt**, in recognition of his successful leadership on the Food, Farms, and Jobs Bill, enacted during this year's legislative session. In eliminating regulatory barriers that prevented the direct sale to consumers of certain CT-grown food products, the legislation will give producers and consumers more choices in the marketplace and encourage greater local food self-sufficiency.

The 2010 Farmland Preservation Pathfinder Awards were presented to:

- **Faith Middleton:** Outstanding Individual (host of the *Faith Middleton Show* on WNPR)
- **Town of Pomfret:** Outstanding Group
- **Woodbridge Conservation Commission & Massaro Community Farm:** Outstanding Educator

**Keep Connecticut's Farms in Farming**

WLA has an ambitious 2011 legislative campaign to *Keep Connecticut's Farms in Farming*:

- \* **Farmland Protection:** WLA will urge lawmakers to authorize \$22 million in state bonding over the next two years and to restore funding for farmland preservation through the Community Investment Act.
- \* **Farm Viability:** WLA will fight to maintain existing state agricultural programs and services, including those through the Department of Agriculture, the Agricultural Experiment Station, and UConn.
- \* **Dairy Support:** WLA will urge continuation of the state's income safety net for dairy farmers, which will otherwise expire in 2011.
- \* **Keep it Growing:** To increase Connecticut's food self-sufficiency, WLA will urge creation of a task force to identify ways that the state can double the percent of in-state food dollars spent on CT-grown products.

## Connecticut Agriculture is a \$3.5 Billion Industry

The University of Connecticut's new study—*Economic Impacts of Connecticut's Agricultural Industry*—estimates the total impact of Connecticut's agricultural industry has increased to \$3.5 billion. The report also found that 20,000 jobs are directly connected to the agricultural industry statewide. Although the study was confined to traditional economic impacts, it recognizes the non-market social benefits and ecosystem services of the state's more than 400,000 acres of land in farms. The study underscores the vital importance of farmland preservation, which secures the land base for an industry of such robust economic importance to the state while simultaneously maintaining the New England landscape and providing a variety of environmental benefits. The full report is available at [www.WorkingLandsAlliance.org](http://www.WorkingLandsAlliance.org).



## Staff Change at WLA



After eight years serving as WLA Project Coordinator and then Director, Jiff Martin has moved on to an exciting new position as Associate Extension Educator for Sustainable Food Systems at the University of Connecticut Cooperative Extension Service. We are very sorry to see Jiff leave—she has been a tremendous asset, growing WLA from its young roots to an effective and respected coalition with strong ties to the state's agricultural, conservation, and environmental communities. Thankfully Jiff has not gone far. Thank you, Jiff and best of luck!

Taking over the reins from Jiff will be Ben Bowell, New England Field Representative for American Farmland Trust, who will serve as Interim WLA Project Director for the 2011 legislative session. Ben is no stranger to WLA, having worked closely with Jiff and the Steering Committee over the past few years, and is excited to serve in this role. WLA's Steering Committee is looking forward to working with Ben during this transition. WLA and AFT will find a permanent replacement to start in June of 2011.



A project of AFT, the *Working Lands Alliance* is a coalition of caring individuals and more than 200 organizations and businesses working together to raise awareness of the need and importance of saving Connecticut's valuable and vanishing farmland. WLA's members reflect the diversity of people who share a concern about farmland preservation in Connecticut — farmers, municipal officials, environmentalists, anti-hunger advocates, and historic preservationists.

### For more information about the Working Lands Alliance, contact:

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*WLA Chair Terry Jones and grandson Jackson on protected farmland at Pumpkin Seed Hill Farm in Shelton, CT.*

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