EQUITY TRUST

Promoting equity in the world by changing the way people think about and hold property



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Advocating for affordable working farms since 1990s

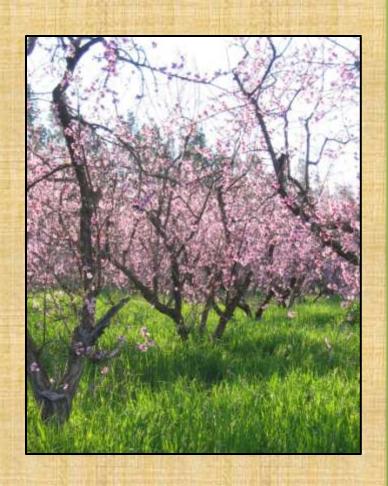
Because

- > Farmers struggle to access land
- Communities want local food and agricultural economy
- > Even CE land often lost to farming

Our roles

- > Facilitate & advise projects
- Help farmers partner with local stewardship organizations
- ➤ Provide resources for farmers, land trusts, & communities (see website)
- **≻** Education

Farms for Farmers



To keep farms part of the food system we need to protect:

- The farmland itself, including soils, water resources, environmental services...
- Farm infrastructure, including housing
- ➤ Affordability to farmers: price can be paid with farm earnings
- Productivity—the continued use of the farm to produce food and other agricultural products



- ► Launched 2013
- Funding from NoVo Foundation to support *permanent*preservation of affordable

 working farms in partnership

 with land trusts and farmers
- Working in fifteen counties:
 Rockland, Westchester, Orange,
 Putnam, Sullivan, Ulster,
 Dutchess, Delaware, Greene,
 Columbia, Albany, Rensselaer,
 Schenectady, Saratoga, and
 Washington



Designed to

- Assist farmers seeking secure and affordable land tenure
- ➤ Partner with local and regional land trusts aiming to protect and steward working farms
- Support communities working to preserve or revive local farms
- Complement existing farmland protection strategies including state and federal programs

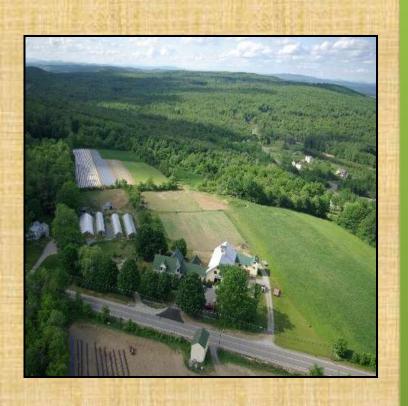
Whole Farm Affordability— 2 Approaches



Specialized agricultural conservation easement

- Farmer owns property subject to restrictions of easement
- ➤ Easement includes requirement for active farming
- ➤ Preemptive Right to Purchase* included in easement ensures future sales will be to a qualified farmer at agricultural value.
- * Similar to the option to purchase at agricultural value (OPAV) used in VT and MA state programs, the PRP prevents sales to non-farmers or at prices farmers can't afford

Whole Farm Affordability— 2 Approaches



Ground Lease

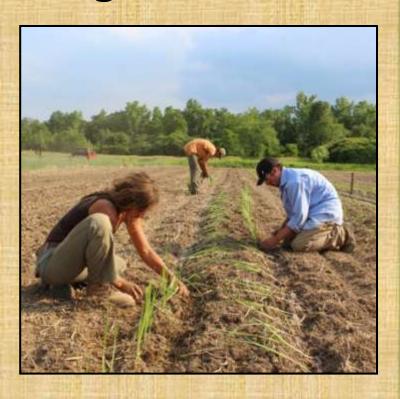
(modeled on community land trust approach for affordable housing)

- Land trust owns farmland; leases to a farmer on a 99-year basis
- Farmer buys farmhouse & other infrastructure at agricultural value
- Farmer pays ground lease fee at based on land's value for farming
- Lease includes active farming requirement & resale restrictions to keep farm affordable
- Third party easement can provide additional protection



Program can

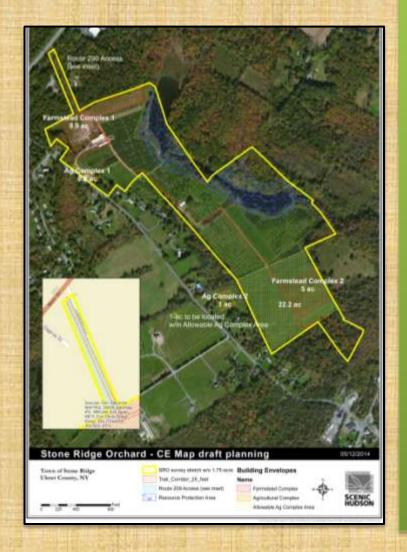
- Partner in the acquisition and preservation of affordable working farms
- Add affordability protections to overlay existing conservation easements
- Develop long-term ground leases for land trust-owned farms



Supports farm protection projects in three ways:

- ➤ Technical assistance for protecting affordability and agricultural use of farms
- ➤ Short-term low-interest loan funds for farm acquisition—can be loaned to farmer or to land trust or used for short-term acquisition by Equity Trust
- Matching funds to protect permanent affordability

Stone Ridge Orchard



Established farm at risk

- ➤ 114 acre commercial orchard in Rondout Valley, Ulster County, with good infrastructure.
- Important watershed and wildlife habitat
- Leased and managed by current farmer for 7 years
- Strong local desire to see farm preserved
- ➤ 400 unit housing development was proposed for site in 2005
- ➤ By 2013, property remained unprotected and on the market for \$1.8M

Stone Ridge Orchard



Farm acquisition

- Farmer signs \$1.25M purchase and sale agreement
- ➤ Equity Trust provides \$1M bridge loan at May 2014 closing

Farm protection

- > Scenic Hudson to hold easement
- Scenic Hudson seeks ACEP funding and commits, w/ Open Space Institute, to provide match
- ➤ Equity Trust to cover cost of additional restrictions with match from local fundraising and SH

Unexpected challenge

> No ACEP funds awarded

Sample projects in progress



- ➤ Columbia Co: Overlay easement with farming requirements and resale restrictions for 70 acre CSA with existing CE
- Washington Co: Diversified, multi-farmer cooperative developing on 100 acre former dairy
- ➤ Orange Co: 120 acre farm serving NYC markets aiming to transition to land trust ownership with long-term leases to multiple farm businesses
- Farmers seeking land in various locations