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## 2013 Cooperator of the Year

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### *Windyhurst Farm of Westmoreland NH*

Each year the Cheshire County Conservation District honors an individual, business, or organization with the “Cooperator of the Year” award. This is done to celebrate the efforts the recipient has undertaken to steward the natural resources on their land in cooperation with the Conservation District and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). This year we are happy to announce that Windyhurst Farm Partnership LLC is the 2013 Cooperator of the Year.



Windyhurst members consist of Roger & Ellie Adams and their son Stuart. Stuart’s wife Robyn is actively involved in managing the restaurant, Stuart & John’s which also houses the sugaring operation owned by Stuart and a longtime friend John Matthews. Windyhurst is a working dairy farm with 180 milk cows and as many young stock for a total of around 360 Registered Holsteins. Their land base which started with 18 acres in 1951 has grown to 225 tillable acres near the main dairy, 70 located in Swanzey and an additional 120 rented acres within the county. The home dairy is just east of the Connecticut River and is some of the richest agricultural land in the country. Although living along the river affords you quality soil it also comes with a great cost as seen in the recent years of excessive flooding. In 1988 Windyhurst Farm and its surrounding acres was put into a Conser-



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vation Easement, protecting the land from ever being developed.

The intensity of managing a high producing milking herd is a constant challenge. Some of the areas being addressed with help from our partner, NRCS include: Forage & Biomass Planting, Fencing, Watering Facility, Prescribed Grazing and Nutrient Management Planning. Windyhurst has worked with NRCS to develop a grazing plan for their dry cows which they plan to further develop next season. The farm is developing a Nutrient

well-known Stuart & John's Restaurant has become an icon for local pancakes and waffles featuring their own maple syrup. The restaurant built in 1975 by Ellie and Roger, has grown to include lunch & dinner. Cruise night has become a popular weekly celebration of good food and old cars. It is a choice location for workshops and trainings put on by the Cooperative Extension, the Cheshire County Conservation District and other agricultural organizations. The Adams' have been gracious in allowing their space to be used for crop trainings, soils workshops, implement training and field meetings.



Management Plan with funding help from NRCS to better understand their fields, crops and manage their manure with the hopes of a two-fold betterment- increased crop yields and decreased nutrient losses.

Roger and Ellie raised two daughters and their son Stuart on Windyhurst and have been active members of their community participating on boards of organizations like Farm Bureau and the Cheshire Fair. As the tidy, manicured grounds surrounding Windyhurst tell you the Adams care about their land and their community. The

Stuart's adult son Chad works in the restaurant and his adult daughter, Alicia, although married and living in Henniker has a special kinship to Windyhurst where she grew up. Stuart and Robyn's children Breezey, Chesy, Nathan and Garret often help out on the farm or in the restaurant. The boys are often seen on four wheelers helping put up fencing.

Windyhurst's land base is 180 acres of corn silage with the remainder in alfalfa and mixed grasses. As with any high producing milk herd the energy demands of the milk cow warrant a lot of corn. It is a constant balance between what the land can produce and what the cow demands for its milk production. When Ellie and Roger began farming grain prices were \$67/ ton now it is \$500/ton, increasing the need to manage the cropland to reach its fullest potential without depleting the soil. Stuart

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has been working to understand the full spectrum of his soils by participating in a special Cornell Soil Health Testing trial where a Soil Health Management Plan has been developed and is starting to be implemented. As a result more land at Windyhurst is being cover cropped to decrease soil erosion and increase organic matter, with the help of NRCS funding, and there is a focus on decreasing soil compaction. The farms' forward thinking and partnership in this grant funded project will help lead the way for other farms in NH to get assistance on soil health management planning.

We are thankful for the beautiful vista Windyhurst provides when travelling north on Rt. 12 and the hard work and dedication this partnership, their family and employees have given to it. Celebrate Windyhurst Farm's award as 2013 Cooperator of the Year and pay tribute to not only good land stewardship but community involvement and local agriculture.

**" One of the great things about Windyhurst Farm is that they take land stewardship seriously, because they understand that keeping their land healthy is one of the best ways to keep it productive. And in the years I've worked with them, they've shown a willingness to try new things - everything from using cover crops to using computer models to monitor fertilizer needs - that enable them to maintain high crop yields without compromising soil conservation or water quality. On top of all that, they're always willing to collaborate on field research or host events, so they help me carry out my work too."**

**- Carl Majewski,  
UNH Cooperative Extension**

