

Written Profile

Farm: Bartlett Farms

Location: Salisbury, Massachusetts

Date of Origination: 1638

Industry Sector(s): sweet corn, vegetables, hay, beef cattle, lumber



"There is something to be said about learning farming growing up," shares Donna Bartlett of Bartlett Farms. "Maybe there is something in the bloodline - the hardy farmer that stays with it!" Donna knows what it takes to 'stay with it'; after all, her family farm has been in operation on the same land for nearly 400 years! We are excited to share the story of Bartlett Farms and celebrate their conscious contribution to **Agriculture's Lasting Heritage**.

In 1638 the founding Bartletts journeyed to the New World from England. Most were artisans and had specific skill sets other than farming. The Bartletts were known as blacksmiths, but became involved in agriculture production as a matter of subsistence. Like many of the immigrants in the wooded area of Massachusetts, the Bartletts also became involved in the lumber industry. Skilled ox teamsters, the Bartletts would drive teams of oxen from the forested area to the coast, hauling the lumber that was in high demand. The lumber was then used to make ships and barrels.



Edmund Morrill Bartlett on steel wheel tractor hauling loose hay.

Today Donna and her brother Robbie Bartlett operate a diverse farming operation just a few miles from the Atlantic coast. They farm 50 acres of sweet corn, 20 acres of other vegetables, and operate a wholesale farm stand. They farm hay that is sold to local horse-owners and raise about 20 head of beef cattle which are harvested. The meat is sold locally. Robbie also runs a saw mill. "The area is big on local farms," explains Donna. Consumers in the area appreciate the opportunity to buy locally grown and raised agricultural products, and the Bartletts play an important role in filling this need. "There is only about one farm per town in this area," Donna continues. "People want to keep them. It is our goal to keep our farm in the family."

Farming the same land for a period longer than the established history of our nation has taken hard work and sacrifice by all involved. Today the greatest challenge stems from the close proximity of urban development. Situated just two miles from the coast, the farm has little room to expand even if the Bartletts wanted to invest in the high-priced real estate surrounding their farm. Political challenges are a constant struggle, as the Bartletts strive to educate others about sustainable agriculture production so that voters make wise decisions in the polling booths. Donna credits the Massachusetts Farm Bureau for providing help and information when legislation affecting producers is being considered.



Two teams of horses hitched to wagons on Bartlett Farms.

As you could imagine, the farm has seen great change over the course of time. Technology has played an important role in keeping the farm efficient. "When I was growing up we used to pick corn by hand. Now we have a machine that picks it for us, which is a huge difference!" shares Donna. Donna and Robbie have also invested in bean harvesting, vegetable washing, and rock picking machines.

It is truly an honor to have the opportunity to share the story of a farm that has weathered the change and growth of our nation, while embracing the agrarian values we hold in such high regard. We congratulate the Bartlett's on their commitment to sustainability, and we celebrate their contribution to **Agriculture's Lasting Heritage**.