



"Preserving Family Farm History"

# Strong Family Farm 2017-2018 Annual Report



**274 West Street, Vernon, Connecticut**

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**www.strongfamilyfarm.org**

## ***A Word from our Executive Director***

Over the past 6 years and with the invaluable help of so many friends, family, neighbors and strangers (now good friends), I have worked diligently to preserve the Strong Family Farm and my family's legacy as well as every family farm's legacy for future generations to experience. I am incredibly proud of all that we have accomplished as an organization, not to mention the major repairs to the 100-year-old barn.

As the Board of Directors is aware, I have faced some personal challenges in 2017-18. The farm has progressed and future organizational tasks are outside of my capabilities. This is good news! With growth comes new challenges and necessary change. We look forward to an exciting year of growth with a new vibrant, energetic, capable leader at our helm. **I am not leaving** by any means – just transitioning to the Board of Directors. I will become a “worker bee” and be part of the collective hive to pollinate and collect the nectar for the farm's future!

I give my heartfelt thanks for all that you have done for Strong Family Farm and for all that you continue to do to preserve this farm. You have made Strong Family Farm the wonderful community farm that it is. We have accomplished all of this because of you, my dear friends. On to the future!

Nancy Strong, Executive Director

*“When a farm is sold, for whatever reason, a part of the community and a part of the family are lost. Farmers who live and work the land do not easily sell and move. Too many emotions are involved and too much history. Usually several generations have grown up and worked the same acreage. To sever a relationship with the land is like losing a child. It is more difficult than words can express.” (Anonymous)*



## ***A Word from our President***

Dear Fans and Supporters of Strong Family Farm-

Another year of success and progress for the Strong Family Farm! A wonderful and dedicated group of volunteers led by the untiring Nancy Strong has brought us further down our path. It's unbelievable! Nancy's leadership has created a healthy, focused and energetic organization.

- We have entered the third year of our Farm Store! We are open more days and longer hours, extended the store to include local arts and crafts and created a "Sunday Fun Day" with animals and activities gracing the farms' grounds.
- The barn continues to receive some tender loving care.
- Many of our own events, the Harvest Festival, the Chicken Run, the Civil War Kids' Camp and our other events are past their initial years and provide enjoyment for attendees and activities that bring new visitors and perhaps inspire future farmers.
- Our biggest news for the coming year is that the Board of Directors has hired an Executive Director. After going over 25 applications and conducting interviews with 5 candidates, Melissa Arnold has been named to the ED position and will begin her tenure in August. Channeling Nancy's experience, excitement and vitality, and with our guidance and support, Melissa will move the Strong Farm forward to realize the dream Nancy envisioned.

We will continue to progress. When we do, let us remember what came before us and bring that strength, direction, focus, hard work and thought into the future with us. We have an organization that we can be proud of, the Town can be proud of and, if I dare say, Norman Strong would be proud of, too. Truly, the Strong Family Farm has become the result of what has been sown before. We reap what we have sown and continue to sow and we see the truth of this statement in the Strong Family Farm! Here is to a wonderful and vibrant future.

Brian Motola, President

### ***Our Mission***

The mission of Strong Family Farm is to preserve a seven-generation farm and provide educational, historical and agricultural experiences to adults and children in perpetuity.



*N. Morgan Strong*

With the increasing break-up and sale of family Farms and farmland both in Connecticut and the rest of the country, it is imperative to save every farm possible, including the Strong Family Farm.

## ***The Year in Review***

In its fifth year of events and programs, the farm continues to find new ideas and interests for programming. The farm motto is to keep open the barn doors to agricultural history and preservation, as well as create a special place to learn and have fun. ***The list of programs and activities from this year include:***

**Farm Store** – Opened the day of the Chicken Run and then officially for the season on June 20 this year, the store itself is off and running. Last year Tracy, Keela, Javon and Quinn (who is now doing our wonderful newsletters and marketing) took care of the store. This year we have Judy taking on the task and we are looking for volunteers to help. Stop in and say hi! We are here when you need a tomato and much more, straight from CT farms!

**Farm Volunteer Work Days** – The work on a farm never ends, nor does the farm's ability to attract volunteers to help with the chores. The annual spring farm spruce-up day, just before the *5K Chicken Run*, got things rolling in early April. Volunteers put in several hours of work in the morning and then enjoyed chatting about the farm over a potluck lunch. New ideas come out of volunteer days when the farm puts on its face. We give special thanks to volunteers who showed up on such a COLD day – they did 4 hours of work in 3 hours!!! Volunteers will join us again in October to set up fifth, annual *SFF Harvest Festival*.

***A young girl at the farm noticed a volunteer moving along the garden dumping something from a large bucket. "What are you doing with that stuff?" asked the girl. "Putting it on the strawberries." replied the volunteer. "What is it?" asked the girl. "Fertilizer" said the volunteer. "You ought to come to my house," said the girl, "We put ice cream on our strawberries."***

**Backyard Chicken Program** (formerly *Adopt a Chicken*) – In its fifth year, this highly successful and nationally recognized program (thanks to Quinn's beautiful, feature article in *Backyard Poultry* magazine) offers young and old alike the opportunity to adopt a farm chick (which remains on the farm), see it grow into a laying hen and attend events every other week. The activities include chicken visits, farm oriented crafts, sample farm chores, games and an education series.



**Civil War Kids' Camp** – In its 2<sup>nd</sup> year, the Civil War Day Camp had a full regiment of 24 enlistees – both boys and girls. Organized by Frank Niederwerfer, the Civil War Re-enactors of the Alden Skinned Camp of the Grand Army of the Republic and the 14<sup>th</sup> CT Volunteer Infantry Co. G, all enjoyed a day of full enlistment and Civil War experiences. Discharge papers are given at the end of the day. This will be held again in September, 2018.

**Scarecrow Contest** – This annual contest, now in its sixth year of fun, invites businesses, groups, families and individuals to express their creativity by decorating the Peterson Road and West Street farm fences with sensational, seasonal scarecrows. Local judges award prizes for a variety of categories and the community gets to view the scarecrows for several weeks. It never gets old!

**Farm Fencing** - The new perimeter post and rail fence on West Street hosted an array of scarecrows last year. That completed portion of the fencing is lined with commemorative plaques purchased by fence sponsors to remember and honor. The Peterson Road section of the fence is slated to be installed soon, but there are still many rails and posts that will need plaques for that long and beautiful section of quiet roadside fencing. Each rail and post can be a memorial to a loved one or honor a friend or family member. The cost of a rail is \$50 and a post is \$100, including the memorial plaque. Take a walk along the completed portion of the fence and experience fond memories with a beautiful view of the farm in the background.

**Harvest Festival** - Held on October 21, 2017, the annual *Harvest Festival* continues to be a growing attraction at the farm with attendance estimated at over 400. The event offers a visit with farm animals, demonstrations of farm activities such as canning, working tractors, a corn box, seasonal craft projects for children, pumpkins checkers and a hay bale pyramid. It also provides a platform to meet local farmers and non-profit organizations in Vernon as well as crafters and artisans. There was also music by our friends, *Gypsy Hearts*, and a raffle that supported our Gold Girl Scout project of bees on the farm by Jasmine Kermode. It is the last day of the store and is one of our best sales days. For 2018, new food vendors and attractions are being planned.

**Chicken Race** - The fifth annual 5K Chicken race was held on a **COLD** Sunday, April 7, 2018. Over 100 runners, 27 kids, 18 walkers moved their feet to the farm and were, once again, welcomed to the farm by our new buff “Clucky” the chicken mascot. The race was recorded by the Community Voice Channel and is shown with images of past years on its local television station. It is also available to watch on YouTube, along with the *Harvest Festival*. The event was another great fundraiser for the farm and attracted a record number of sponsors.



Walk a mile with us next year – you do not need to run to enjoy the fun. We want to thank our 46 volunteers including Vernon Police Explorers and Vernon CERT! It was 29 degrees that morning with a nice northerly breeze! This year we opened the farm store for race day. There is always something for everyone!

**Of Bees and Pollinators**– Center Road School parents, led by Lea Castle, secured a Pratt & Whitney grant to plant pollinators and put blue bird houses up at SFF and at the Belden property in Vernon. Families came to the farm on Earth day and planted pollinator plants and cleared the invasive plants on our joint fence line with the help of

Jane Seymour of the CT DEEP and our faithful volunteer, Loyd Johnson. This makes “Jasmine’s Bees” happy. Jasmine Kermode was awarded her Gold Girl Scout award this spring and her project was bringing bees to the farm under the mentorship of our apiary specialist Walt Moody. We are currently in search of a new volunteer to pick up this project under Walt’s mentorship.

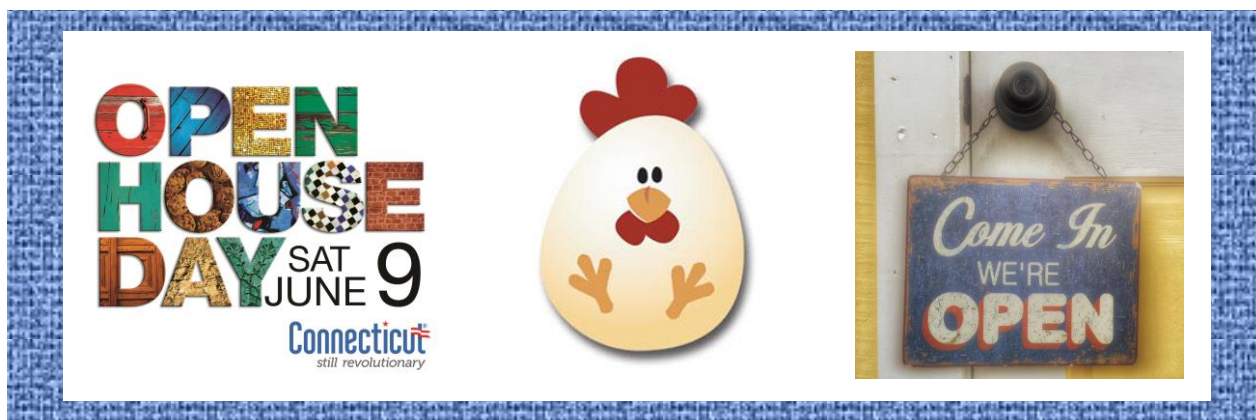
**Co-op Gardening** – A goal here at the farm is to engage the community in vegetable gardening. A grant from the Connecticut Department of Agriculture to create accessible, raised bed planters enables all members of the community to enjoy this activity. The purpose of the traditional vegetable garden on the farm is to create gardening experiences and produce vegetables for both the community gardeners and the farm stand.

**Community Service Host** – The farm continues to host many Vernon youth groups. The farm also invites many different schools students to perform their community service learning and practicing farm-related activities. RHS Agricultural Education students, in particular, have become a fixture at the farm. Each year new and returning students help with all manner of farm projects from preparing planting beds and harvesting crops to painting, creating signs, helping with craft projects, as well as volunteering to assist with events, programs and the farm store.

**4-H Meetings Host Site** – The farm is an ideal place for animal and agriculture oriented 4-H groups to hold their meetings. Our *Hop-A-Long Gang 4-H Club* meets on the farm and learns how to care for their animals and prepare them for shows. Norman Strong was an active 4-H member and leader and would be proud!

**Stepping Out!** - SFF goes on the road to promote the farm in many different venues. This past year we participated in the Vernon Historical Society’s *November Craft Fair*, Community Voice Channel’s *Meet the Easter Bunny* with our new “Clucky”, the 2018 Vernon *Healthfest*, *LiveFitCT* at Mt. Southington, and Rockville Community Alliance’s *National Night Out* – to name a few!

**CT Open House Day** – SFF participated in the CT Department of Tourism’s *Open House Day* in June, collaborating with the Vernon Historical Society and the Vernon Garden Club. Sixty-eight visitors came to the farm and enjoyed free seeds and garden advice from the Vernon Garden Club volunteers. Antique farm tools were on display and visitors enjoyed talking with Vernon Historical Society’s tool expert Paul Magelony. The Strong Family Farm opened the store for the day and did farm tours.



## ***Vision for the Farm's Future***

The SFF enthusiasts continue to spend time creating a vision of what the farm will look like, how it will best achieve the project's mission and how it will become a self-sustaining enterprise.

We have enlisted the help of a Master Gardener student and the input of countless professionals and visionaries. This is how we are beginning to see the farm. Take moment to review the vision and give us your feedback. We want to embrace our mission of keeping the historical aspects, yet embrace the future.

**Hay barn** - The hay barn, the largest section of the barn complex now has its new floor. A large door is now being added to the back of the hay barn, allowing the barn to be flooded with light when opened along with adding stabilization to the west wall. Descending from the new door will be a broad set of stone stairs which will lead into a large stone landscaped terrace with room for dining and gathering. The barn will be available for weddings and other formal and informal events. It can also host farm-to-table dinners and other dining experiences.

**Commercial kitchen** – At the opposite end of the hay barn is an existing chicken house shed row. It will become a commercial kitchen with a classroom and restrooms. The commercial kitchen will be used by the community to rent so they can do canning, make jams and other produce other marketable products. This can be for farm sales, home consumption, or other commercial uses. Workshops and classes will be held in the kitchen and the classroom. The kitchen will also serve as the staging area for farm dining experiences and/or for caterers to support other events.

**Landscaping and gardens** – The six acres of farmland will be transformed into both commercially viable gardens as well as beautiful native wildflower and cultivated flower landscapes. A memorial orchard now stands at the west end of the field. A pond might be carved and landscaped from the lowland section of the pasture to attract native birds. Walking paths, sitting areas and livestock viewing areas will be added so that the entire property can become a destination, natural experience. Tall plantings on the edges of the pasture will camouflage the outside structures to make the property picture perfect.

**Parking lot** – A modest, landscaped, pea gravel parking lot will be added in the pasture off Peterson road to blend with the rest of the landscaping while adding a safe and inviting entrance to the farm.

**Pavilion** – At the corner of Peterson Road and West Street, a gazebo-type structure will be built on the existing stone foundation. This will give provide an elevated, restful viewing area of the entire property.

**Community garden** – A community vegetable garden will continue to exist in its current location on West Street but it will be expanded and a new fence next to the garden on

West Street will be installed to both highlight the garden and make a new staging area for sun flowers and the farm's annual scarecrow contest.

**Memorial Orchard** – Over two years old now, the young orchard is bearing its first fruits. Not yet mature, the orchard is also a place to reflect.

**Infrastructure** – A new electrical system was needed at the barn to accommodate all of the new projects. A commercial meter and wiring was installed, and will pave the way for future electrical and plumbing projects.

**Museum Area** – We envision a history of the Strong farm and family farms museum area in the dairy barn area.

We need an architectural drawing of all of the proposed changes to the property in order to bid the project.

ADA accessibility is a priority and it is hoped that funds and grant money can be obtained to make as much of the property accessible as possible.

### ***In Memorium***

This past year we lost so many good friends to the farm.... Gerry Davies, our facilitator and friend from the beginning of the SFF idea; Rena Schwarz, “Carpenter Lady” for the farm and dear friend to all; neighbors and members Brian Andresen, Dorothy “Mother” Wheelock and Whitney Ferguson. Then in March, Mrs. Strong passed away quietly in the house where she and Norman had lived their entire married lives. There is an emptiness and all will not be forgotten!







## ***Board Members***

**The Board of Directors is looking for individuals who feel strongly about our work, to serve with the members of the Board on the Steering Committee, Programming Committee, Building/Grounds Committee, Garden Committee, Store Committee, Marketing/Publicity Committee and Fundraising Committee. If you are interested in joining any of these committees, please call or email [info@strongfarm.org](mailto:info@strongfarm.org) for more details.**

### **Board of Directors 2018-19**

- President: Brian Motola
- Vice President: Amy DeBaun
- Treasurer: Claudia Steele
- Secretary: Nancy Strong

### **Board members at large:**

- Michael Nelson
- William Nicholson
- Ellen Marmer
- Wendy Wanchak
- Carl Schaefer
- Victoria Alexandra

### **Steering Committee:**

- Richard Steele
- Roger Mooney
- Alexis Carmicheal
- Lynn Johnson
- Loyd Johnson
- Ellie Swan
- Lisa Moody
- Theona Wheelock
- Alexis Carmicheal

**(Always looking for members!)**

**Executive Director – Melissa Arnold**

# Financial Statement:

## Strong Family Farm Statement of Financial Position As of June 30, 2018

9:12 PM  
07/16/18  
Accrual Basis

	Jun 30, 18	Jun 30, 17	\$ Change	% Change
<b>ASSETS</b>				
Current Assets				
Checking/Savings	784.47	877.48	-93.01	-10.6%
Paypal Strong Family Farm	114.90	276.90	-162.00	-58.5%
Petty Cash	56,331.13	76,183.78	-19,852.65	-26.1%
United Bank				
Total Checking/Savings	57,230.50	77,338.16	-20,107.66	-26.0%
Accounts Receivable				
11000 · Accounts Receivable	200.00	100.00	100.00	100.0%
Total Accounts Receivable	200.00	100.00	100.00	100.0%
Other Current Assets				
12000 · Undeposited Funds	-193.60	-96.80	-96.80	-100.0%
12100 · Inventory Asset	552.02	552.02	0.00	0.0%
Total Other Current Assets	358.42	455.22	-96.80	-21.3%
Total Current Assets	57,788.92	77,893.38	-20,104.46	-25.8%
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>57,788.92</b>	<b>77,893.38</b>	<b>-20,104.46</b>	<b>-25.8%</b>
<b>LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>				
Liabilities				
Current Liabilities				
Other Current Liabilities				
24100 · Payroll Taxes	22.00	0.38	21.62	5,689.5%
24101 · Federal Withholding	-1.46	0.00	-1.46	-100.0%
24102 · Connecticut Withholding	23.83	3.90	19.93	511.0%
24103 · Employee FICA	1.03	0.91	0.12	13.2%
24105 · Employee Medicare				
Total 24100 · Payroll Taxes	45.40	5.19	40.21	774.8%
Total Other Current Liabilities	45.40	5.19	40.21	774.8%
Total Current Liabilities	45.40	5.19	40.21	774.8%
Total Liabilities	45.40	5.19	40.21	774.8%
Equity				
30000 · Opening Balance Equity	39,795.66	39,795.66	0.00	0.0%
32000 · Retained Earnings	38,092.53	-422.09	38,514.62	9,124.7%
Net Income	-20,144.67	38,514.62	-58,659.29	-152.3%
Total Equity	57,743.52	77,888.19	-20,144.67	-25.9%
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>	<b>57,788.92</b>	<b>77,893.38</b>	<b>-20,104.46</b>	<b>-25.8%</b>

## **Members**

Kimberly Ackerman  
George & Joan Apel  
Fred & Cheri Artz  
Susan Bair  
Tom & Donna Barnas  
Carol Barry  
June Bray  
Carol Brennen  
Laurie & Duffy Brookes  
Carol & Ronald Burke\*  
Barbara Campbell  
Carol Chappel  
Tony & Nancy Choma  
Richard & Julie Clay  
Amy & Sadie Conger  
Tom Connelly  
Mary DalPorto  
Dottie Davies  
Lindsay Dunlap  
Martha Fowler  
Mary Gelezunas  
Gordon Gibson  
Ginny Gingras  
Daryl and Eric Gottier  
Barbara Greenleaf  
David Gutzmer  
William & Diane Gutzmer  
Susan Ham  
Judy Hany  
Phil & Cindy Hays  
Cheryl Hazen  
Nancy Herold  
Virginia Hickton  
John & Marcia Horan

Nancy & Richard Huebner  
Bob & Lorraine Hurd  
Charles Iadaresta  
Claire Janowski  
Edith & Stephen Johnson  
Kurt & Ann Johnson  
Joyce Jordan & David Conant  
Barbara & Richard Jubinville  
Heather & Josh Keton family  
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Robert & Suzanne Langone  
Deborah Lavoie  
Daniel Leblanc  
Ann & Bob Letendre  
Jean & Bruce Luddy  
Bob & Kathy Lyle  
Steve & Candy Malinoski  
Ellen Marmer  
Jim & Gail Martello  
Karen Meehan  
Gail Meyers & Ed Jaworski  
Lisa Moody  
Walter and Erin Moody  
Meredith & David Moseley  
Brian & Penny Motola  
Barbara Muldoon  
Jan & Tony Muro  
David Murphy  
Mike Nelson family  
Frank & Claire Niederwerfer  
Merrilyn Niederwerfer Cummings  
Richard & Bunny Oltedale  
Eileen & Dick Phelps

Michalina Pietras  
Alan & Joyce Pouliot  
Bill Prenetta  
Karen & Karl Prewo  
Judy Putnam  
Richard & Barbara Quinby\*  
Richard Jr. & Lisa Quinby\*  
Wayne Reiske  
Jaime Rizner  
Chris & Sue Robare  
Jon Roe  
Carl & Polly Schaefer  
Tom Schirmer & family  
Paul Shimer  
Ed & Carole Slattery  
Rose Spafford  
Sheril Stanford  
Nancy Steffens  
Richard & Claudia Steele  
Catherine Steinnagel  
Nancy Strong\*  
Bob & Kathy Sumislaski  
Elly Swan  
Don Tenerowicz  
David & Brenda Trespacz  
Vernon Police Association  
Beth Villodas  
Doreen Ward  
Wendy Wanchak  
Nancy Weissmuller  
Steven Westerberg Family  
Theona Wheelock  
Dan & Isabelle Whelton  
Joanne Wright

 **\*Blue Ribbon Life Members**



## Special Thanks to our faithful SFF Volunteers!

All the BOD & Steering Committee  
 Michalina Pietras, CPA  
 Jon Roe & Vernon Volunteers Collaborative  
 Lea Castle & Center Road School Families  
 Jane Seymour CT DEEP  
 Cathy Testa – Container Crazy CT  
 Judy Hany – Chicken Promotion & Supporter  
 Kris Viens and Family  
 Dave, Bill and Diane Gutzmer  
 Jim Martello and Carl Schaefer – weed whackers  
 Jon Roe and Vernon Volunteers Collaborative  
 Theona Wheelock and Nancy Rowe Huebner  
 Vernon Police Department  
 Lt. William Meier & Vernon Police Explorers  
 Vernon Community Emergency Response Team  
 Gypsy Hearts  
 John Andresen – Andresen Electrical  
 Bill Daugherty, Builder  
 Robert Hurd, Architect  
 All at CT Dept. of Agriculture  
 SFF Proof Readers  
 Quinn Eurich - Marketing specialist  
 SFF RHS Ag Ed crew  
 Barbara Jubinville – Garden Advisor  
 Walt Moody – Walt's Bees  
 Jasmine Kermode – Girl Scout Gold Bee Keeper  
 Josh Virkler – LuAnn's Bakery  
 David Murphy – dahlia man  
 Clucky T. Rooster people  
 Roger Barker  
 Chris Caldwell  
 Tom Barnas – painter extraordinaire  
 Richard and Claudia Steele  
 Frank Niederwerfer & Civil War re-enactors  
 Ann Johnson  
 Loyd Johnson, Plumber/Gardener, and Lynn  
 Katie Riordan  
 RHS AgEd former/present students & parents  
 Green Meadow Lawn Care and Bob Arthur  
 All our Harvest Festival Vendors and volunteers!!!!

### Our Farmer Friends

Hop-A-Long 4-H Club  
 RHS Ag.Ed. Department & Students  
 Tracy & DJ – Aussakita Acre Farm  
 Burbank Bend Farm - Adam  
 Driggs Hill Farm – Amy & John  
 Smyth's Trinity Farm  
 The Farmer's Cow

### Farm Photographers

Dan Villeneuve  
 Andre Garant  
 Elana Owens  
 Michael Nelson  
 Community Voice Channel

Thanks to all our  
**5K Chicken Run Sponsors**  
 and **ALL the many helpers!**



	LEIGHTON, KATZ & DRAPEAU CT INJURY LAWYERS	
		
		
Ellen L. Marmer, M.D., F.A.A.P., F.A.C.C. PEDIATRIC & YOUNG ADULT CARDIOLOGY		

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Dan Villeneuve  
 Farm Photographer

**AND ALL  
 OTHERS WHO  
 HELPED MAKE  
 OUR YEAR A  
 SUCCESS!!!**