

Hi my name is Kies Orr and I am a fourth generation of Fort Hill Farms in Thompson CT. I became motivated to work on my family dairy farm, Fort Hill Farms, when I was very little; I have always loved animals. Daily chores always needed to be done on the farm, and I was always happy to help. I rose to the challenge of living on a dairy farm, and found that the more I helped, the more responsibility I was given. I loved being included in the day-to-day activities, such as milking and moving cows, feeding calves, and washing water tubs, and through all this I learned a tremendous amount, and gained an impressive work ethic. I got involved in every aspect of the farm-- I was curious about how everything worked. I first started my work feeding calves, and gradually worked my way up to milking and tracking production. Every day my grandfather pushed me to do more on the dairy farm, and my love for it only grew stronger. He would say to me "Kies, you need to start milking cows, and scraping the pavement because you are the future of this dairy farm." He motivated me to help more around the farm, and I was encouraged because I knew our farm depended on me. The joy, the pride, the peace I feel when standing on this land, is huge. I do plan on taking over the dairy farm in the near future, and I'd like to see this farm operate for many years to come. The Connecticut Dairy Farms have survived because of the price safety net known as the Dairy Sustainability Account in the Community Investment Act (CIA). CT Dairy Farms are transitioning to the next generation at a healthy rate. We are preserving farmers and that preserves farmland and farm value in our State. We are in the midst of a record breaking price decline and need the program now more than ever. Most consumers are unaware that milk prices are not set by supply and demand, rather are set by the federal government. Because the government looks at milk prices on a national level, farmers in the Northeast are at a disadvantage due to higher costs of operation, fuel and feed than farms in the Midwest. Connecticut consumers want to know where their food comes from and often seek to buy local when possible. Keeping farms in the state provides these types of social benefits but also a degree of food security for its citizens.