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I want to thank Tom Dorr for coming to Vermont to talk with farmers about the issues we face and the Farm Bill. I was not there since like some farmers, I'm just not up on what is coming to town - sorry to have missed such a great opportunity. I read in the Addison Eagle (Sat, Nov 5, 2005) the two articles about this visit - one from Rosalyn Graham and the other from John McClaughry, and I wanted to share some thoughts I had after reading these. John states that "Simply dropping all government support for dairy farms overnight, as New Zealand did, would be too much of a shock. In time, Vermont dairy farmers will prosper from having more freedom to innovate and compete in the marketplace. As their hardy forebears did long ago when the state was new, they will succeed by relying on their own ingenuity and hard work, instead of pleading for an undependable government to guarantee them a special deal."

I agree with John on the Vermont farmers ingenuity and hard work, and rely on our want to succeed that will keep us going. Though without the local control over the price farmers receive for their milk, and the packaging plant that each farmer would need to invest in, this is a hard one to pass over. Without being able to price our own, high quality milk - we then look for some other support.

My main reason for writing though is to agree with the article that Rosalyn wrote and the 16-year-old Savannah Stone "The problems that she brought to the secretary's attention were the difficulty of finding land, and having found land, the difficulty of getting financing with the instability of costs and milk prices."

My husband and I started our small farm 11 years ago and since then we have been looking for a larger piece of land to farm on. We have 9 acres in Middlebury and house 75 dairy cows. its not from lack of want or hard work - since we have no hired help and I have a full time day job as well. Without receiving your farm from inheritance, starting anew is almost impossible. The cost of land and a farm in Vermont is out of control and sadly we can no longer call Vermont our agricultural state - if an Ag business can not purchase and run a business on the land in Vermont. So when John states that our forebears were so successful - they did not have, what we have today to contend with. Low Milk prices, and extremely high land price tags - which is needed in order to diversify and be marketable - with agriculture - land is everything. Though it wont be long before the Vermont land is all covered with houses owned by out of state folks who have moved to our wonderful state because of its openness and Ag. views - they buy what a normal Vermonter would never be able to afford - let alone run an Ag. business on.

Thanks for listening.
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