

# Whispering Winds Farm Turns Hillborns' Dream Into Reality

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PIPERSVILLE (Bucks Co.) - "This is our dream come true. We are so happy and blessed," Barry Hillborn said as his eyes swept across the terrain of Whispering Winds Farm.

Two new barns and a house have been erected and productive fields nursed from land previously said to be overrun with every weed known to Bucks County.

Acres of tripost and rail fence line the pasture used for grazing horses. The fairly level acreage is edged with trees, ravines, and deep valleys on all four sides. Behind the tree line are acres of neighboring farms. It's an idyllic spot preserved for farms in rapid developing Bucks County.

Hillborn and his wife Jeannette waited more than 18 years for their dream to farm to become reality.

Raised on a dairy farm, Barry had continued to farm with his dad after high school. But his dad died, and his mother had to sell the family farm because of heavy taxes and expenses.

Hillborn was devastated. Determined that he would not lose sight of his goal to farm again, his motto became: "A dream without a plan is just a dream, but a dream with a plan becomes reality."

He kept his dream alive by continuing to subscribe to agriculture newspapers and magazines to keep abreast of the newest farming techniques. He remained a member of Pennsyl-

vania Farm Bureau.

Because his wife's job required her to live within Philadelphia city limits, the Hillborns settled in the city, where he maintained a garden. Daughter Connie said, "We ate eggplants four seasons because he grew so many."

During his "city" years, Hillborn wrote a letter printed in this paper in 1982. In it, he encouraged young people to use the opportunities they have to farm before they regret it. He also voiced his hope to someday return to the farm life he loves so much.

Hillborn said that in his favor was a wife who shared his dream. "She was a city girl. At first I had reservations about her, but she surprised me," Hillborn admits of her tenacity to hang onto the dream for so many years.

Hillborn, now 55 years, said, "My friends say, 'This is the time you should downscale, not take on such a big venture.' I've heard it a thousand times, 'you can't go into farming in this day and age.' But it's the love of my life. Somehow we will make it work."

Jeannette is every bit as enthusiastic as her husband. "Age doesn't matter, if it's what you love," she said.

They purchased the property two years ago. They contracted with Agway to have the shell of a barn and machine shed erected. Hillborn built eight horse stalls.

Because the acreage had laid



"Never lose sight of your dream," Barry and Jeannette Hillborn and daughter Connie tell others. For 17 years, the Hillborns dreamed of owning their own farm. Hard work and setbacks did not dim the dream they shared together. Whispering Winds Farm has been erected on land that lay dormant for more than 30 years and overrun by weeds.

dormant for more than 30 years, a heavy growth of multiflora infested the hard, shaley ground. When the county extension agent came out, he shook his head and said, "I wish I could hold classes here. You have every weed known in the county growing here."

After several mowings, spraying, and 40 tons of lime and fertilizer applications, the Hillborns were looking forward to a good hay crop last year. They worked 24 hours straight to put in the seed in late May, then not a drop of rain fell for months.

"It was a rough start, but I didn't lose heart," Hillborn said. "We figured it couldn't stay dry forever and it didn't."

This year the rains have yielded hay that proves the soil is being revitalized. "The first cutting, we got 1,700 bales," Hillborn said. They'll be keeping it to feed the four horses they have.

"After the drought last year, I think it's a good idea to keep a reserve," he said.

Hillborn did not go into farming blindly. In his favor, he can fix anything, according to his daughter.

He restored two dilapidated Farmall tractors and a 1950's hay baler he purchased for \$50.

Jeannette and Connie laugh

joyously whenever they see Hillborn in the fields. Connie said, "When you see him driving tractor, even from a distance, you can tell he's happy."

He's like a kid opening up Christmas gifts. Every day is like a new present.

At this point the Hillborns raise horses and hay, but Hillborn's dream includes adding a few cows and a flock of chickens.

Both Hillborn and his wife of 21 years continue to work full-time, off-the-farm jobs. Hillborn works as a campus police for a

nearby college. Since Hillborn was 16 years of age, he has volunteered as a fire police at local, county, and state levels.

Jeannette is a mortgage banker. A married son and two grandchildren live in Virginia.

Connie, who is single, lives in New Jersey but returns to the farm whenever possible to drive tractor, throw bales, ride horse, and help wherever needed.

"Tell young people that if they want to farm, it's not impossible. Follow your heart and dreams, and never let it go."

Barry Hillborn's letter to the editor appeared 18 years ago in February 13, 1982

As a former farmer of Bucks County who is still a member of the Pennsylvania Farmers' Association, and who still loves all types of farming but to this day has had very little success at being able to get back to the life that I love so much, I would like to say that I am so glad for the paper that you people put out. It keeps me in such close touch with all the things that I love and that make this world a better place to live.

I also would like to add that any young person who has a chance to get into farming but who doesn't will, in time, be very sorry for not doing so, when they had a chance. I think farmers are a very great and special breed of people and there are not too many of them left.

Maybe someday I will be able to get back to the farm life that I love so much. That is, if the good Lord is willing and with a lot of luck. In the mean time, I hope that all of you at Lancaster Farming will keep up the good work and continue to publish for years to come. Thank you for your paper.



Hillborn restored this Farmall H with lots of parts, labor, and love. When his wife and daughter see him working in the fields, they often pause, laugh, and remark, "Look at him. You can tell even from a distance, he's so happy."



"We took a Chance on Chance," Jeannette said of the horse purchased from an Amish farmer. Chance is now her favorite riding horse.



Daughter Connie returns to the farm as often as possible to ride her horse and help wherever needed on the farm.

