



# HISTORIC O'NEIL FARM REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

PO Box 2755, 146 Winter Street, Duxbury, MA

Version 1.0

Issued on 12/12/2023

# I. Request for Proposal

## A. Background

The Historic O’Neil Farm is a 501 c3 non-profit corporation. The Articles of Incorporation, written in 2004 provide the purpose of Historic O’Neil Farm, Inc. (referred to herein as HOF)

To preserve the O’Neil Farm, located on Winter Street and Autumn Avenue, Duxbury MA, which has been continuously operated as a dairy farm for over 100 years, as a working farm; to arrange for educational programs to be conducted on the farm property designed to educate children and future generations in the importance of agriculture to the New England region’s history and culture; to preserve the historic landscape of the farm; to preserve as open space the farm’s agricultural lands, thereby enabling visitors to understand and appreciate the interrelationships of farm habitat to wildlife supported by it; to provide controlled public access to portions of the farm property not utilized in active agricultural operations, including the provision of one or more walking trails.

The Mission of the HOF is to maintain the 145 –acre farm in agriculture in perpetuity, preserving and protecting the historic landscape and natural habitat, providing educational programs, and offering public access to the farm. At the moment the HOF is at a point of transition. After many decades of his dedicated work as a dairy farmer, Carl O’Neil is considering retirement. Farming is changing across the United States and farmers are now forced to consider new ways to survive. The outlook for a viable wholesale dairy operation, which has sustained the farm, is not good unless that operation is supported in other ways. There used to be lots of O’Neil-like farms, many of which are now housing developments, industrial parks or other "developed" areas of nearby towns. Thanks to Carl’s generosity and commitment the farm will not suffer that fate.

The property has a long history in local agriculture and is a large open space in a town that values its agricultural heritage and open space. Duxbury is an affluent community that has supported endeavors that recognize history and a sense of place. In addition, the farm’s agricultural resources of hayfields, a running creek, segmented grazing areas that lend themselves to sustainable practices, and enough land to support a small herd will all benefit the farm going forward. The HOF must consider looking beyond the current wholesale dairy operation to a future that capitalizes on the location, history, and products to provide to our community.

The HOF recognizes this opportunity and stewardship responsibility. It is the HOF Board’s responsibility to develop a means by which a farmer can earn a living consistent with other elements of the non-profit’s mission.

The HOF seeks proposals from qualified organizations and individuals to farm land for agricultural

use on all or a portion of approximately 70 acres located at 146 Winter Street, and north of Autumn Avenue in Duxbury, Massachusetts. It is the HOF's intent to enter into a partnership with one or more farmers to maintain this property in agriculture and maintain the farming heritage.

The HOF is committed to best management practices as accepted by MDAR that improve the productivity of the land. HOF is also interested in improving the productivity of the land, promoting organic practices and the reduction of chemical fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides to the extent practicable. HOF's desire is for the cultivation of farm products for local human consumption and to invite community engagement to develop a deeper connection with food and where it comes from. Further, the HOF is interested in maintaining a dairy presence to the greatest extent practicable as determined by the applicant farmer.

The HOF's primary objective with this RFP and subsequent license is to ensure the property will be actively farmed and maintained, including possibly cultivation of food, to sell locally grown products and to encourage community engagement.

## B. Property Description

The property consists of approximately 146 acres of land, approximately half of which is wooded and not currently used in agriculture. The area of land currently in agriculture consists of approximately 70 acres and includes fields used for the production of hay, pasture and a barnyard. The barnyard consists of multiple barns and a residence. A Site Plan is provided. At this time, the HOF is considering licensing all of the fields, pasture and barnyard exclusive of the residence. The residence will continue to be occupied and maintained by the current farmer. Also, the current farmer, Carl O'Neil, is considering continuing a lease of up to five acres of field immediately adjacent to the homestead and maintaining limited access to the barns. The current milking barn is no longer viable and the HOF will consider options for its future. Please see site plan for further information.

Information about the property in this advertisement, terms of license, relevant restrictions regarding operations is available upon request. Applicants may propose farming operations for all or a portion of the property described on the Site Map.

## C. Public Notice

This Request for Proposal has been circulated by HOF Board members and was posted on the following websites among others:

New England Farmland Finder - <https://newenglandfarmlandfinder.org>

Northeast Ag Exchange - <https://exchange.farmfreshri.org>

MA Farm Bureau Federation - <https://mfbf.net/classifieds/article/2021/12/for-sale-or-lease>

#### D. Submission Details

Proposals in conformance with the requirements of this RFP will be accepted by the HOF no later than April 1, 2024. Proposals submitted after this deadline will not be accepted.

Questions regarding the Proposal may be submitted via email or in writing (see contact information below) until March 15, 2024

A walk-through of the property will be held at January 15, 2024 and February 15, 2024. It is strongly recommended that any respondent intending to submit a proposal be at this walk-through. An additional walk through may be conducted if requested and if deemed beneficial to the HOF.

The Proposal may be amended based on questions proposed by potential respondents. Any revisions to this RFP shall be provided to all potential respondents no later than March 17, 2024

The license fee will be proposed by respondents to this RFP and will be assessed on an annual basis. NOTE: Massachusetts recommends \$125 per acre. Respondents should also indicate the desired length of licensure. License holders are required to hold liability insurance policy (\$1,000,000) to conduct agricultural activities on the HOF land that names the HOF, Inc. as an additional insured.

Responses will be reviewed by a committee that includes the Directors of the HOF. HOF may also request interviews with prospective candidates. HOF anticipates selecting candidates on or about June 15, 2024. Following selection of a candidate(s), the HOF will work with that party to execute a mutually satisfactory agricultural license. The license will include provisions on operations on the premises, maintenance, reporting, insurance requirements and other matters. The terms and conditions of the licenses will be specific to each candidate and the operations proposed thereon.

Awards are made solely at the discretion of the HOF. HOF reserves the right to reject any and all bids and to request further information to clarify proposals.

Please submit a hardcopy or electronic response to the Proposal to:

Historic O'Neil Farm  
146 Winter Street  
PO Box 2755  
Duxbury MA 02332

historiconeilfarm@gmail.com

## E. Additional Notes and Considerations

The HOF is most interested in proposals that will incorporate at least an element of dairy and that will maintain the current character of the property. The HOF will consider proposals that incorporate all or a portion of the land available for licensing. The applicant should make very clear in the application what portions of the properties are being considered for license and the specific infrastructure requirements that are assumed as part of the provided facilities for their farming operation.

The HOF has recently completed extensive invasives treatment on the fields consistent with Agricultural Preservation Restrictions. This treatment extends across all of the fields. No proposals that jeopardize these restrictions will be considered.

The HOF is currently considering and evaluating options for the construction of a replacement barn. To the extent that the applicant has specific infrastructure requirements the Applicant is encouraged to provide information on requirements of construction in the application.

The HOF is currently considering a project that would significantly isolate Halls Brook, which bisects a field (see plan). If completed, the project would include creating a means of providing water at a rate sufficient for the current dairy operation and herd needs. The applicant must consider how this project would affect their operation and if any modifications to this proposed project would be required.

The HOF is committed to providing educational opportunities and limited access to the farm. In addition, significant portions of the property not subject to agriculture are used as hiking trails by the public and extend along the margins of the fields. In one case the trail extends across the hayfield. The farmer should describe how/if they will participate in assuring that these educational opportunities are continued. At a minimum, limited access to a 4H group is encouraged.

The farm is currently leased to Carl O'Neil who has farmed on this property for many decades. He will continue to live in the homestead but will not continue the farming operation. Machinery may be available for purchase but will be negotiated independently and directly with Carl O'Neil. In addition, all or part of the bovine dairy herd may also be available for purchase from Mr. O'Neil. If the applicant seeks to conditions the license on the machinery or herd, this must be disclosed in the application.

## F. Submission Instructions

NOTE: The HOF does not intend this RFP, or any subsequent Letter of Intent, to be a contract or to be bound by anything contained herein. A contract for the use of the property will not exist unless and until the parties have negotiated and executed a formal license agreement or other contractual documents of the use of the property, approved by the HOF and containing all other essential terms of any agreed upon transaction. Any party submitting a response to this RFP acknowledges and agrees that neither party has set for herein, nor have they agreed upon, all essential terms of any agreement for the use of the property including without limitation warranties and representations, conditions precedent, indemnities and other anticipated terms, and that any such essential term will be subject of further negotiation.

1. There are 2 sections to the Submission Content: Personal and Professional Information and Farming Operations, each containing multiple categories.
2. Several categories have a comparative criteria component. These categories have been identified as having a higher level of importance.
3. The Selection Criteria categories rankings are: Not Acceptable, Advantageous, More Advantageous and Highly Advantageous.
4. If you have any questions regarding the RFP, the requested information, or the License Agreement, please contact the HOF at (insert Email)
5. The Applicant must sign their proposals either on a cover letter, application or other proposal document to certify the information provided is accurate.
6. To submit the proposal, please provide a written hard copy (mailed to HOF Mailing address) and an electronic copy to (Insert email)

## G. HOF Farm RFP Application

Please see Application attached



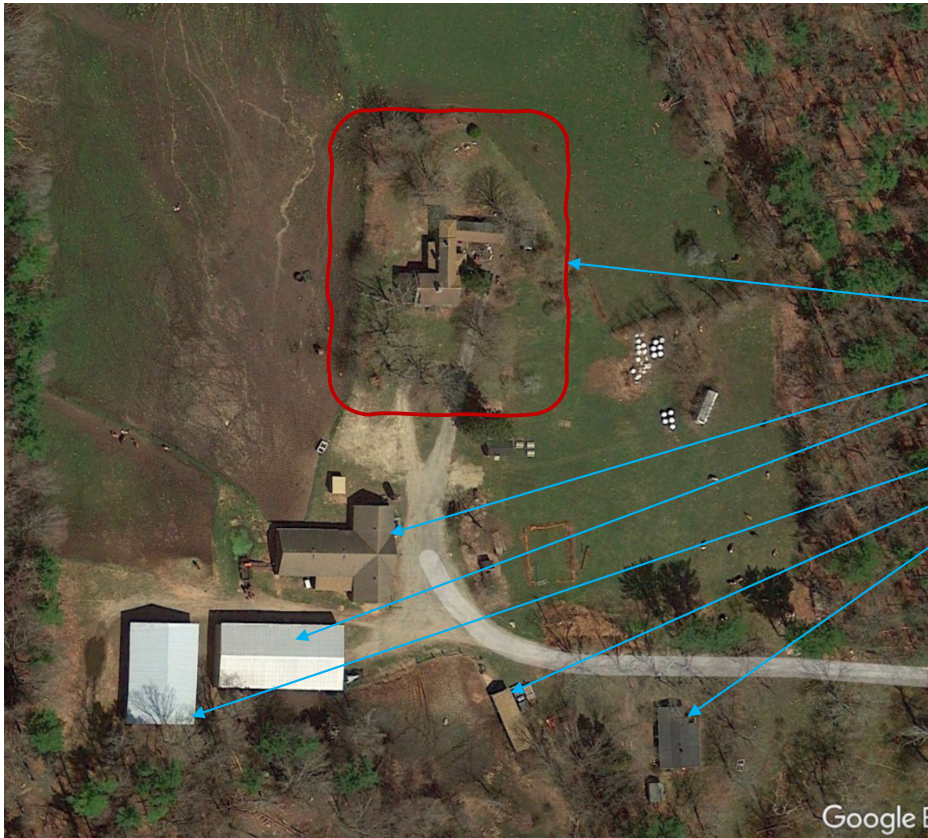


Figure depicts

- Approximate HOF property bounds (white)
- Proposed areas available for lease (yellow)
- Homestead area not available for lease (red)
- Proposed NRCS Project (blue)

See attached figure for barnyard detail





- Barnyard Detail depicting:
- Farmer Residence: Not subject of this RFP (red)
  - Milking barn (limited use)
  - Steel and aluminum storage barn
  - Manure storage building
  - "Heifer barn"
  - "Bungalow" to be demolished