

# East Wilton: Dunlookin Farm leaving the milk business

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By Nicole Carter Advertiser Democrat

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Richard Corey at Dunlookin Farm on Temple Road in East Wilton. While the farm will continue, Corey and his wife, Dr. Michelle Mosher, have decided to leave the dairy business. Nicole Carter/Livermore Falls Advertiser *Nicole Carter/Livermore Falls Advertiser*

EAST WILTON — After almost 50 years of milking cows, Richard Corey and his wife, Michelle Mosher, have decided to leave the dairy business.

Their herd of 40 cows at Dunlookin Farm in East Wilton were to be gone by Wednesday.

Corey shifted the farm's business in 2009 to focus on organic milk, and for several years that market served the farm well. Over the past five years, however, Corey and Mosher have seen a decline of about 30% in the average price per gallon.

Profits have been further hurt by unpredictable and fluctuating expenses.

Those challenging trends, coupled with health issues, led the couple to decide to sell their milk producers and downsize their operation. Some of the cows will be sold to another dairy farmer, others will be shipped to the organic meat market.

"We have always utilized the meat market as part of our farm management," Corey said. "As a matter of fact, we will completely shift to selling beef going forward.

"Seasonally, that market slows down starting in September. It made sense that we rightsize our farm to our new model while we can maximize on the price of beef for this year."

The farm, purchased by Corey's father, Leigh, in 1947, produced milk for four decades until the dairy herd was sold off in 1986. Richard Corey spent the first part of his career focused on his graduate education and then spent several years working at the University of Maine at Farmington. In 2009, he returned to his family's dairy farm heritage, selling his milk to a national organic brand.

"My estimate is that my girls produce over 600,000 pounds of milk each year," which equates to about 73,200 gallons, Corey said.

"Our herd has maintained that production, but with prices declining from a high of about \$3.30 a gallon in 2015 to the current \$2.25 a gallon, it just doesn't make sense to keep doing it."

He credits wife Michelle Mosher's position as an osteopathic doctor — specifically, a hospitalist — at MaineGeneral Medical Center in Augusta as the main reason they have been able to stay in the business the past few years.

While the future will be milk-free, Corey said, he will continue to work the family farm, harvesting hay and silage and raising a small herd for beef production.

Anticipating a bit more free time, Corey has joined the board of directors of the Wilton Historical Society, and plans to preserve and write about the history of East Wilton, the community where he has lived all his life.

And to ensure their farm will always be used for agriculture, Corey and Mosher are taking steps to preserve it under the Maine Farmland Trust program, a statewide, nonprofit organization that seeks to protect farms and farmland to ensure the future of agriculture.

They say when they are finally ready to call it a day, they want to know their farm will endure.

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Richard Corey, left, stands with his father, Leigh, at the start of Richard's career in farming.

*Submitted photo*