

Looking Out for PEC's Farmland Heritage, One Farm at a Time

(Continued from page 1)

ry day in Ontario 175 acres of agricultural land are converted to non-agricultural use, a rate which the organization says is unsustainable if future agricultural needs to produce food and contribute to employment opportunities are to be met.

The Hudson's children, grown and getting on with their lives, are currently established in other careers.

But that's okay with Deb and Don. Their shared love for nature and living close to the land includes keeping the farm as a natural habitat for wildlife and a critical part of a corridor that enables important wildlife movement patterns.

"We also believe in keeping the cost of farmland lower so that future farmers can afford to buy a farm. It helps to keep farms intact and farming viable for the future," Deb said.

Deb, whose maiden name is Grimmon, holds the lineage of the generational farm. She and Don live in the house where her grandparents lived. She grew up in the small house next door. Her ancestor, James Grimmon, a descendent of a United Empire Loyalist acquired the

original 170-acre land in 1833. It is bounded by the Morrison Point Road to the south and by the boundary of North Marysburgh to the north. James married Mary Akerman of South Bay, another familiar name with deep roots in the County.

Don has roots in the County, too, though not as deep. He moved to South Marysburgh when he was a youngster when his father bought a farm on South Bay. Active in 4-H with a keen interest in how things run, he took home a first prize trophy in tractor mechanics diagnostics at an all Ontario 4-H contest. He pursued a career first in teaching before turning full time to farming when he and Deb married.

After 10 or so years of dairy farming, the two saw an opportunity to turn to organic grain farming as the market for all things organic



Ontario Farmland Trust says that every day in Ontario 175 acres of farmland is converted to non-agricultural use. —Ontario Farmland Trust postcard



Don Hudson has charted a map of South Marysburgh showing acreage protected from development.

—Don Hudson map

bloomed. They started growing buckwheat, red fife wheat and rye in quantities sufficient to supply a commercial specialty bread maker, keeping back just enough to provide grain to a small selection of local bakers.

"We're strong believers in supporting the local food economy as much as we can," Don said, "especially in supporting efforts to go organic."

Not ones to simply sit back on the deck admiring their heritage and the impressive butternut tree in the side yard (although they clearly enjoy its presence, as it happens), Don and Deb are talking to other farmers in Prince Edward County about the advantages of protecting family heritage and

investments in farmland, and sustaining farming in the community. Don has mapped out parcels of land in South Marysburgh that are now protected and he is enthusiastic that more acreage is being considered for designation. He sees this as insurance that the rural, farming community in Prince Edward County will survive as the demand for housing and a tourism economy grows.

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