

**Dharma Farm questions and answers written by the owner, Eric H. Helt  
June 10, 2025**

Q. Where does the drinking water and barn and hydrant water come from?

A. There are two water wells on the farm. Both are in the front yard. One well feeds the house and one feeds the barns and pastures. They can be switched back and forth. They are both fed from a very large aquifer that runs under the entire County.

Both run on fairly new submersible pumps, not jet pumps.

Q. What is the source of electricity on the farm?

A. The farm is on the Energy Cooperative (formerly Licking Rural Electric) system but almost all of our electricity comes from our own solar system. Our system is on a net metering agreement with the Electric Cooperative where when we have an excess of solar power the Coop takes the excess and when we are not producing (like at night) we take power from them. Most years it balances out and we end up even. There is a standard \$30 monthly fee to maintain the poles and wires to the house.

Q. What is the condition of the many roofs on the farm?

A. The house roof was replaced in 2024.  
The barn roofs are all high quality metal and all were installed at various times during the 25 years.  
There are no leaks.

Q. How do you deal with a power outage?

A. We have a 20 kW generator that will run the whole farm. The generator comes on automatically when the power goes down and goes off by itself when the power comes back on. It has about 150 hours of use, mostly from the weekly test run.

Q. What is the condition of the basement?

A. The basement is dry and does not receive any water no matter how much rain.

Q. How is the farm divided up in terms of pastures?

A. There are nine grazing paddocks each with their own water hydrant. Each pasture is fenced with woven wire high tensile fence that is in excellent condition. There is an electrified top wire, although no cow, sheep or goat has ever jumped the fence,

that I can recall.

Two of the paddocks are large, one 20 ac. and one 13 ac. Most of the time we use these two for hay in the summer and graze them in the fall.

Q. How is the house heated?

A. We have a gas well on the farm that provides heat for the house. We also have a back-up electric furnace. The electric furnace has only been necessary for one day in the last 10 years.

We also have a wood burning stove in the living room that we use much of the winter because we like wood heat. There is a steel fire place insert in the bedroom fire place, but we seldom use it. We cut and split our own fire wood from dead trees on the farm.

The chimneys are all lined with stainless steel dual wall inserts.

Q. What other uses are there for the gas well?

A. There is a gas heater in the garage and the green house. Gas from the well also runs the emergency generator.

Q. Is there revenue from selling gas from the well?

A. We get 1/8 of the revenue from the gas sold by the owner, Knox Energy, but with current prices this is only about \$80 a month.

Q. How does the Agricultural Easement work?

A. The critical components are the requirement that the land be farmed. "Farmed" is very broadly defined and includes tree farm, grazing land, etc.

The existing primary residence and the Yurt can be modified, updated, enlarged or replaced. Also, any customary rural enterprises such as food processing, machinery repair, roadside markets, riding stables can be added. Additional barns and other agricultural structures can be added. In addition, another gas well could be added.

Q: How does the farm owner benefit from the Agricultural Easement?

A: Most of the farms surrounding the property also have Agricultural or Conservation Easements, and this is very unusual. It the result of a big push by the Philander Chase Land Trust at Kenyon College over the past 25 years to enroll most of the farmland around the College (4 miles

from this farm) in either Agricultural or Conservation Easements. The long and short of it is that there will be no new homes built anywhere close by.

Q: What are the annual property taxes?

A: For 2025 the annual property tax is \$5,300.

Q: Is the farm machinery available for purchase?

A: Yes, and every piece of machinery needed for grass farming is available and in good repair. With the excellent condition of the farm including fences, water hydrants, mowers, haying equipment barns and much more, a new buyer could start farming the day after taking possession.

Q. What does it mean to be an “organic farm?”

A. The Federal Organic Certification rules require three consecutive years without pesticides, herbicides or commercial fertilizer.

Our farm has met these requirements for 26 years. The only soil amendments we have ever used are agricultural lime, a small amount of rock phosphate and composted manure. Of course, animal manure gets on the fields also. And no hay has ever been sold off the farm.

We don't have USDA Organic Certification because we always sold locally to people who knew how we farmed. Organic certification is only used by grain farmers and produce or livestock farmers who are selling in regional or national markets. Certification is expensive and the paper work is onerous.

Q: What is the state of soil drainage on the farm?

A: Deep sod like we have drains well on its own and we have no problem wet spots.

Also, in 2016 all the land suitable for row crops was newly tiled by Cochran Farms. The newly drained acreage consists of about 35 acres. (a map of the tiling is included on the web site).

For five years Stuart Veatch rented our 35 acres and grew organic wheat, soy beans, and corn. For this period the land was USDA certified organic. We stopped it because I felt there was too much soil runoff. It has been in grass ever since.

Stuart also rents the contiguous farms to the north and south of us and still raises organic certified grain on both these farms.