

# Kurt W. Alstede

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Farm Credit East Cooperative Members  
New York, New Jersey, and New England  
United States of America

Fellow Farmers, Fishermen, and Rural Residents,

I have enjoyed a relationship with Farm Credit East since receiving my first loan in 1986. I was just 24 years old and was only four years into my farming career as a 1<sup>st</sup> generation Garden State producer growing vegetables with a Ford 9N tractor and a Chevrolet pick-up truck. As a young man Farm Credit had faith in me and provided me with a small farm operating loan. It was paid back on time and I have never forgotten that opportunity.

Yet, I actually entered northeast agriculture 6 years earlier. A grandson of German and Czech immigrants I grew up in New Jersey working in our family service station business with my father and grandfather. I envisioned a career in the military and assuming our family business as my future. This changed abruptly during my Sophomore year in high school when I received my inspiration to enter agriculture as my career. I spent that summer working on our friends' dairy farm in Plainfield, Vermont. Three months of milking registered Holsteins, making hay, and cutting haylage further convinced me that agriculture was my destiny. I absolutely loved it! Returning home to New Jersey there were no dairy farms to work on nearby, so I chose to work for our neighbors right here in Chester where I still live and farm today. They were fruit and vegetable growers and it was there that I learned the opportunity and benefits that direct marketing offered farmers in an urban state such as New Jersey. By my senior year in High School I was farming part time on my own.

My farm business has grown and matured greatly in the four decades since I milked cows in Vermont. Today our family farm produces over 600 acres of fresh market fruits, vegetables, and ornamental crops in a vertically integrated business that sells all its output retail directly to consumers. This is accomplished with a team of over 200 staff members (including my wife, children, and other family members) coordinating sales through our year-round farm store, extensive Pick Your Own, Farmers Markets, and a Community Supported Agriculture program. In addition to our extensive crop production, we also offer on farm special life events and farm tours that insure that the public has the ability to access, and understand, both the beauty and the productivity of our real family farm.

There is no question that every director candidate is qualified to serve our association. What sets me apart is my passion for agriculture here in the Northeast. I have a deep and intimate knowledge of the varied commodities that are grown here, as well as the policies and political environment that we are operating our businesses in. I have enjoyed great personal and business success, and I have also experienced the emotional and professional challenges of financial hardship. If you are seeking a farmer that can understand you, and who is capable of representing your interests on the board of our Farm Credit East Cooperative, I am your man.

I welcome your questions! Call me, write to me, email me, friend me on Facebook, find me on LinkedIn. I would love to speak with you and moreover, I hope that you will trust me to represent you and will vote for me this spring for Director of Farm Credit East.

Sincerely,

*Kurt W. Alstede*