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Dear Farm Credit East Members,

I am seeking your vote and support as I run for the Eastern seat on the Farm Credit East Board of Directors. I grew up in Baltimore, Maryland attending "Friends School". I eagerly pursued an entrepreneurial path landscaping for neighbors when daily school work was complete. This safe environment helped me learn how to interact with adults in our neighborhood and provide an appreciated service, while becoming financially secure as an adolescent. I completed my undergraduate Bachelor of Science degree in Forest Biology at the University of Vermont, where I became an "Outing Club" leader guiding outdoor adventures in the Green Mountains and Adirondacks. Prior to graduating in the spring of 1994, I started working for an environmental consulting firm on the weekends, which developed into a full-time position where I gained professional experience working in a team environment. A theme was developing where I found happiness working outdoors to both responsibly develop and conserve our working landscape.

I soon yearned to make a go at farming the Vermont Landscape. With savings from years of landscaping and environmental consulting work as well as good advice early on regarding investing, I was able to purchase our first of four farms, the 158-acre Larrabee's Point Orchard, at the age of 26. The farm had great ground overlooking Lake Champlain but needed full orchard renovation, cold storage and processing infrastructure, and a new marketing and sales strategy. We renamed the orchard "Champlain Orchards" and quickly gained a following with Vermont food coops who were seeking year-round deliveries of "locally grown" and "ecologically certified" tree fruit. The ability to store tree fruit, deliver directly to wholesale customers, and interact each fall with our PYO customers and farm market visitors quickly enabled us to better understand market opportunities. My wife Andrea, along with our two young children and growing staff, enthusiastically began to diversify the varieties of apples, pears and stone fruit, while modernizing our plantings to prepare for future automation efficiencies.

We have renovated and expanded the orchards to the current 380 +/- acres and built the Champlain Orchards brand with a wide offering beyond fresh fruit to include sweet cider, hard cider, and maple syrup. It has been a wonderful experience to be the founder of a business whose products are sought after in the marketplace. As a result of Farm Credit East support, we have been able to invest to remain competitive, growing from using a walk-in cooler for storage and a personal station wagon for deliveries to year-round specialized CA storage rooms and branded delivery trucks, marketing seven million pounds of fruit annually. FCE lenders have understood our long-term vision and have helped us differentiate our business from the commodity crop sales we experienced when we first started marketing conventional New England apples.

Over the past 5 +/- years I have served on the FCE-Customer Service/Advisory Council, spent two years working on the VT Farm Viability board, and served five years with the Sodexo "VT First" board. I look forward to the opportunity to apply my knowledge as a member of the Board of Directors and help other FCE stockholders pursue their dreams. Thank you for considering voting for me and please feel free to email or call if you have any questions and/or suggestions.

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