



# Cato Corner Farm, LLC

178 Cato Corner Rd., Colchester CT 06415 \* (860) 537-3884  
Fax (860) 537-9470 \* [www.catocornerfarm.com](http://www.catocornerfarm.com)

## A Letter of Support for Maureen Estony and Woodstock Hill Preserves

May 7, 2020

“Do you have any more of that jam?”

Despite how many times I’ve been asked the question, this time it felt particularly poignant. The scene was a local brewery in the summer of 2019, and the brewer and I had just led 40 patrons through a pairing of distinctive cheeses, full flavored beers, charcuterie and shortbread cookies – accompanied by a dollop of Woodstock Hill’s Smoked Cherry jam. After all the delightful tastes the group had experienced, the one that people wanted more of was Woodstock Hill’s smoked jam! Unfortunately, I had just served up the last jar I owned, and Maureen Estony had recently shut down her business to relocate to South Norwalk.

We have worked closely with Maureen Estony since April 2017. My mother and I own a small dairy farm and make award-winning cheese from our raw cows’ milk. We sell the cheese at our farm shop, via mail order, and to stores and restaurants throughout Connecticut from Boston to New York City. In my work, I have the opportunity to taste dozens of handcrafted local foods every, and I know how rare it is to stumble upon something outstanding. Woodstock Hill Smoked Preserves are truly special. The fruit flavors have tremendous depth, accented with just the right amount of sugar and delicately balanced with perfect degree of smokiness. The freshness of the jams highlights their quality ingredients; these are reminiscent of “real” home cooking that vastly outshines processed items designed cheaply and for maximum shelf life. At the same time, the unusual smoky flavors add a delightful and surprising twist that help Woodstock Hill stand out from other preserves.

Woodstock Hill Smoked Preserves have many uses. I have served them with fish and chicken and enjoyed them on toasted bread and English muffins. Given the nature of our farm, however, we have focused on their superb pairings with cheese. We love the Smoked Pear with our milder cheeses, the Smoked Peach Bourbon with our aged, sharper cheeses, the Smoked Cherry with our higher lactic acid cheeses, and the Smoked Strawberry with our blue cheese. Maureen has created a unique product that grabs everyone who tries it – we’ve found that when we sampled her jam in our shop, we would easily sell several cases on a weekend. I’ve also introduced them to chefs, several of whom have incorporated the smoked preserves onto their restaurant cheese plates.

As the owner and jam-maker, Maureen Estony is the driving force behind her products. She brings a passion for her work and a dedication to excellence – along with discerning taste buds and the discipline to make a consistent artisanal product that is excellent every time. She is organized and focused and a pleasure to work with. Maureen also recognizes that the key to Woodstock Hill's long term financial success will be to scale up her operations, so she can produce more jam at a lower cost per jar. She is aware of her own strengths and of areas where she needs additional support, and she is prepared to bring an individual with strong sales skills onto her leadership team. Most importantly, Maureen has developed a product that stands out from the competition and has broad appeal.

When Maureen briefly shuttered Woodstock Hill last summer, my first thought was “What are we going to do at Christmas?” Woodstock Hill Smoked Preserves have become a huge part of our Christmas offerings, and I knew customers would come to our shop looking especially for them. Without her products in our store and mail order, our jam sales were down fully 40% from the year before even as overall sales increased 15%.

Woodstock Hill needs financial investment right now to make the leap to a longer term, profitable business – and I urge you to support Maureen and her unique business! We still get customers asking, “Do you have any more of that jam?” I hope that soon we will be able to answer yes!

I enthusiastically support Maureen Estony and Woodstock Hill. I would be happy to discuss my recommendation further if you have any questions. You may reach me at 860-537-3884.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Gillman', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Mark Gillman  
Owner