

RIGA MEADOW AT COOLE PARK FARM

by Jessie Smith

It was no secret to the Millbrook community that Coole Park Farm had been on the market for some time, with many wondering what would become of one of the quintessential equestrian properties in the Millbrook Hunt Country. A key equestrian venue to the Millbrook community, including the long-standing Millbrook Horse Trials, and host to many of the Millbrook Hunt's opening meets and famous breakfasts, Coole Park Farm's property is deeply rooted in Millbrook's equestrian tradition.

It was just this past winter that Coole Park found itself changing hands from David and Connie Clapp, who had previously owned the farm, to new owner Riga Meadow Property, another long-standing equestrian operation, which had previously been based just over the Connecticut border in Salisbury.

Catching up with Linda, the head trainer who has been operating the business of Riga Meadow for the past 15 years, we learned more about the move to the new digs, her operation, and her plans.

It was a quick change in circumstances for Linda and her Riga business, as the plan was not originally anticipated, but, in the back end of 2018, she was in a position where she very quickly had to find a new home for her operation, which was not small. Finding a farm that had the capacity to accommodate her own six horses and countless dedicated clients, put her in a situation where she had to think quickly, and, thanks to the kindness and dedication of ten long-standing Riga Meadow supporters, they were able to quickly put the funds together to purchase Coole Park Farm at the New Year, and move in by February. This allowed Linda the opportunity to continue to run her lovely Riga Meadow business.

Since February, Linda has focused most of her time on settling into the new property and adjusting to Coole Park Farm. It is a big change from her previous farm; after having been based out of the same farm for 15 years, it took time to learn the ins and outs, as well as new routines,

of her new venue. She plans on taking some time in the first year to get her clients, horses and business settled and into a routine before delving into other activities.

Linda commented on how welcoming the Millbrook community has been, from other equestrian farms to the local farmers and her neighbors, "everyone has been kind and welcoming, and you can tell how special Coole Park is to the area, so we really want to keep it that way, while incorporating Riga Meadow into the framework of Coole Park." This has made the move much easier, and Linda is looking forward to working with everyone and becoming part of the weave in the tight-knit Millbrook equestrian community. She knows that local riders have loved all the schooling shows previously held at Coole Park, and would like to be able to offer some in the future. She also hopes that she is able to resurrect the USEA-sanctioned Riga Meadow events in the coming

seasons, as she knows how popular and critical the Riga Meadow events are to the Area I eventing community.

Riga Meadow is looking forward to welcoming the Millbrook Horse Trials this year, and having some of the best American riders *literally* in their backyard, alongside the back-bone riders of our sport and our amateur and young riders. Some of her students have competed in the trials in the

past and hope to do so in the future as well. Her operation is based on the ethos of being a farm that is open to all riders, of any level, whether their goal is just to occasionally hack and enjoy their horse or to compete, they are able to do so in a warm, inviting and fun environment.

Anyone is welcome to stop by and say hello. Riga Meadow has six school horses available for lessons, and boarding of all levels and disciplines. Linda and her team look forward to meeting you!

Welcome, Linda, and welcome, Riga Meadow at Coole Park Farm! We are delighted to have you in the community and hope you'll be here for many years to come!

