

Growing **ND**

FROM WITHIN

Winter/Spring 2025



Pigs on the Hill Farm grateful for new vendor grant support

We are the Fig family at Pigs On The Hill Farm north of Medina, ND. This was our first year selling at the farmer's market in Jamestown. We have always enjoyed gardening for ourselves, and so we thought it might be fun to try to sell vegetables as a family project.

We increased our garden in preparation to join the market. We planted peas, green beans, squash, zucchini, beets, carrots, herbs, potatoes, tomatoes, peppers, rhubarb, cucumbers, and even oyster mushrooms.

After planting in the late spring, we were worried because we had expended our budget on a new tiller for the tractor, irrigation lines, seeds, and tarps for weed control.

When a fellow vendor told us about the NDFMGA grant for new vendors, we were excited that we could afford a canopy,

packaging, tables, and other items for display. When the grant was approved it felt like our summer was rescued.

The vendors at The Jamestown Farmer's Market were so welcoming and encouraging to us "newbies" that we felt right at home. They helped with selling tips, pricing, displaying, and the little things new to someone who hasn't done it before.

We felt like we were a part of the vendor community and have made some good friends. The customers who regularly attend this market are super friendly. It is rewarding to see many of them become repeat customers and to get to know them.

Thank you so much for helping us have "the best summer ever" in 2024.

Matthew, Elie, Kimber, Stine, and Gloria Fig
Pigs On The Hill Farm

From the director

Why would I use succession planting?



Keith Knudson
Executive Director

Succession planting is a fantastic way to get the most out of your garden or farm. You can start with cool weather crops in early spring. Then, as those are harvested, replace them with warm-weather crops

and when those finish up in the late summer, you can return to cool-weather plants again. This means your garden is always producing something.

Another strategy is to plant small amounts of one crop such as beans, every few weeks for a continuous harvest throughout the season. You can also plant different varieties of the same crop that ripen at different times.

Experienced gardeners mix these methods to maximize their harvesting. Activities such as planting early crops replacing them with later ones and staggering plantings of the same crop or

planting early and late varieties of one crop planning is essential to ensure a continuous supply of fresh produce. It helps to lay out your schedule for the year by mapping out your garden and making adjustments as needed.

When planning, remember that cool-season crops include things like beets, carrots, and lettuce, which are replaced by warm season crops such as beans, tomatoes, and peppers. Once those are done, you can go back to planting cool-season crops again. High tunnels extend the season and require a different cropping plan.

Each year mixing crop choices, and staggered planting should result in a steady supply of fresh produce. Rotating your crops can also help maintain soil health and reduce pest issues.

Irrigation increases salt levels in the soil. Check your water for sodium and chloride levels. Rotate vegetables in your cropping system like beets, broccoli, cabbage spinach, and tomatoes with high salt tolerance.

Planting cover crops that are salt tolerant can also help reduce salinity in the soil.

Remember to remove all plant material of high tolerant plants as the plant material will hold the salt.

Challenges like unpredictable weather and pests can be addressed with a proactive and flexible approach and with modern tools, like apps and weather forecasts. Keep a farming journal to learn. Succession planning is crucial to a successful garden or Farm. What tips do you have for a successful planting season?

Southeast Representative QUINN RENFANDT

(Continued from page 4)

As of December 2022, fifteen active producers/members are selling through the online farmers market. In addition to its retail operations, the Red River Harvest Cooperative is beginning to develop its Wholesale process. This includes schools, restaurants, food banks, and institutional buyers. The Red River Harvest Cooperative aims to continue to develop markets and opportunities for producers and customers.

Contact your North Dakota Farmers Market and Growers Association with questions and/or comments

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Baker seeking input

As we begin 2025, we are reminded that last year was successful and we need to build on that.

The North Dakota Farmers' Market & Growers Association is moving forward with some new initiatives that will make our organization stronger for years to come. One of them is something we haven't discussed, at least in recent memory.

During our January board meeting, I told the board I intend to visit farmers' markets this summer. This was an initiative when I was previously president in 2013 and 2014, but it never materialized.

I intend to visit other markets because I've decided to retire from commercial gardening after 20 years in business with 18 of those years being a vendor at North Prairie Farmers' Market in Minot.

I told the board on Jan. 27, that this frees up my time from picking, packing, and going to market to visit other markets to let them know that we know you exist, we know you are important and although it's been cumbersome in the past, we can now open communication links to better understand each other.

This is something I've wanted to do for a long time, but because North Star Farms has been so successful, it wasn't strategic for me to step away from that.

But after having a slew of doctor's appointments since early December, I

have been cautioned to slow my pace or suffer the consequences.

I'm OK medically, there are just several small things that raise red flags; arthritis, blood pressure, lower back pain, etc. None of these are show-stoppers, but it reminds me why I retired from the National Guard for similar reasons.

I intend to continue being your president through this year. And when we have our next conference, the board will be inclined to elect new leadership. In a Christmas email to board members, I directed them to think about new leadership. I'll continue to be a grower, but at my own pace, not the pace the commercial aspect demands.

That said, my gardening job will become more of an advisory role and that's why I believe it's important to visit the markets. I got my first taste of that last year in February when I visited the Twin Towns Market in Wahpeton. Yes, it was the off-season, but to me, the networking was crucial.

I intend to do that in as many places as I can. And that includes independent markets. I would like to know who you are, and where you are and we support you also. This isn't about pressure to join, although I would like the opportunity to explain what the benefits of membership would be. As the old saying goes, there's strength in numbers.

I can't guarantee I'll visit every market this summer, but I'll do my best. That said, let me know if you would like me to stop by. Just send me an email at (mbaker@northstarcario.com). If not, I'll pick

markets at random.

And since my wife Ilene is retiring from her job in May, she intends to make some of those visits with me. She has a storied past in this organization as well, having been treasurer at one time and she spent several years as market manager at North Prairie Farmers' Market.

Not since World War II has locally grown been so important. With food prices on the rise, we can support our own families and support our local communities. Not only is locally grown fresher and better quality, it's cheaper and has a greater shelf life.

In the mid-'90s, I was editor of the newspaper in Langdon and had the opportunity to be on the ground floor to see rapid growth in the Northern Canola Growers Association. It would be great to see similar growth in the North Dakota Farmers' Market & Growers Association.

Let's talk about your ideas, let's talk about the board's ideas. Let's generate some new ideas together and build on them.

And, aside from visiting markets, if you have questions about something else, please feel free to call or email. I posted my email earlier and my mobile is 701-720-2635.

Thanks and I look forward to seeing you this summer.



Marv Baker
NDFMGA President



Save the date for fall conference

The next North Dakota Farmers and Growers Association conference will be held Friday and Saturday, Oct. 17-18 at the Chieftain Conference Center in Carrington.

The NDFMGA board decided to move the conference to the fall. Spring has become too busy, more local produce will be available for meals, and the opportunity for farm tours expands.

Our conference committee is busy planning for the conference. Stay tuned for more information in our next newsletter and visit our website at ndfarmersmarket.org.



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Meet your board of directors

Northeast Representative NDFMGA Vice President DANIELLE MICKELSON



After a 22-year career as an English Instructor in Rolla, ND, Danielle Mickelson left teaching to pursue a love for growing vegetables and processing family recipes into pickles, sauces, relishes, jams, and jellies. Her family began selling at the Rolla Farmers Market in 2015 to share and sell the bounty of their garden, and it quickly became the passion of Danielle and her daughter Rachael.

Each year, Mickelson Tiny Plants expands in size and offerings to their customers. The garden is more than an acre and includes various fruits and vegetables started in their home.

Danielle was taught to grow, can, cook, and bake by her parents and grandparents, and is honored that her daughter is becoming the driving force in keeping the traditions alive and sharing them with their community.

They can be found every Wednesday and Saturday morning, July through October, in Centennial Park in Rolla, ready to share vegetables, fruits, canned goods, and sourdough breads.

Southeast Representative QUINN RENFANDT



Quinn is a grower from Ward County, ND. In 2020, He began to pursue his interest in becoming a local food grower/producer by enrolling in the FARRMS Sustainable Ag Internship and the FARRMS Farmers Market Promotion Program Internship.

These programs provided him with a high-level mentorship experience in partnership with Aspen Hills Farm, the Dakota College at Bottineau Entrepreneurial Center for

Horticulture, and the North Prairie Farmers Market in Minot, ND.

Since completing the internships, Quinn has worked with Farmers Markets and Growers throughout North Dakota, Montana, Minnesota, South Dakota, Iowa, Wisconsin, Colorado, and Washington. As an extension of his farming efforts, He is a founding member and currently the Board Chair of the Red River Harvest Cooperative, founded in 2021. The Cooperative operates an online Farmers Market in the Red River Valley region, primarily serving the Fargo/Moorhead communities by offering Pickup + Delivery of farm-to-table products.

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