



Building successful small, specialty & niche farm businesses

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Featured Graduate 2008

Wilbur's Northside Market

By: Ryan Marquardt

You want to do what?!" thought Julie Wilber in early 2008. This after Scott Wilber had just told her that he wanted to take the business full time and leave his town job. Needless to say, Julie was concerned about the financial well-being of her family. With two kids, a house, and a land mortgage, there was a lot on the line. Together they took the Grow Your Small Market Farm class in the spring of 2008 to prepare themselves and Wilbur's Northside Market for their leap of faith ahead.

Scott grew up farming and had helped a local farmer north of Boone with his produce operation for several years. Scott was paid in produce, which led to the creation Wilbur's Northside Market in 2000 and a booth at the Boone farmer's market, and later a small CSA. As things progressed, Scott and Julie began to experiment with agrotourism with the addition of a corn maze.

In 2008, Scott and Julie set out to raise a variety of fruits and vegetables for their 22 member CSA, the Boone Farmers' Market, and on-farm retail. They had also expanded into several wholesale outlets including Iowa State University, local schools, Hy-Vee, and Fareway. They approached Hy-Vee and Fareway in the off season to talk with them about what they were planning. According to Julie,

Julie believes that emerging interest in local products is definitely having an influence on retail food buyers

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all though June and July. With all of their sweet corn and 300 tomatoes underwater, Julie thought, "there was no way without the sweet corn that we could do a fulltime year, how much money can we seriously make without it?"

With almost all of the sweet corn completely lost, Scott and Julie soldiered on. Many people were disappointed that they could not get the sweet corn that the Wilburs were well known for. According to Scott, "the melons saved us."

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Featured Graduate 2008 Continued

They planted their melons on May 15th and had a great melon crop in October with the late mild weather.

Scott and Julie learned a lot in 2008. They could really see the advantage to having some diversity in their wholesale crops. Julie said that the local farmer's market was not a very profitable venue as they were always guessing at supply and demand. The market is also quite time consuming with transporting goods, but Julie felt that, "it was a worthwhile way to connect to some of [their] customers," and without it she "worried that some customers would not get fresh produce in their diet." Julie did not see the on-farm sales as a viable replacement for the farmer's market connection to their customers. Both Julie and Scott enjoy the

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CSA as they know exactly what to harvest and clean, and they are looking forward to the possibilities in 2009 with the Iowa Food Cooperative.

All and all, 2008 was a struggle. With large crop losses and a never-ending battle with the weeds, the farm kept Scott, Julie, their two children and a friend busy from sunup to sundown. That being said, they are trying to find ways to improve their operation in 2009. They are considering acquiring land, but are struggling with the balance between improving rented land, the distance from the farm to the land, and finding that the land closest to them has development rights inflating the price. One thing is for certain: both Scott and Julie are looking forward to 2009 and growing Wilber's Northside Market. You can reach Wilber's North Side Market at (515) 432-9038 or www.wilbersproduce.com



Internal Revenue Service Notes

Business standard mileage rates decreased from \$0.585 to \$0.505 per mile on January 1, 2009. More information can be found at <http://www.irs.gov/taxpros/article/0,,id=156624,00.html>

Risk Management; Not Your First Thought An Interview with Kathy Leinenkugel , Iowa Department of Public Health Community Health Consultant

By Ryan Marquardt

Roughly 30% of all work related deaths in Iowa are agricultural related. When you consider that according to the 2000 US Census only 4% of Iowa's workforce is employed in agriculture, a disproportional amount of accidents are occurring on farms. "Unfortunately," says Kathy Leinenkugel, "many of these deaths are children, young adults, and those over 65." Kathy Leinenkugel works for the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) Occupational Safety and Health Surveillance Program (OSHSP) where she is working to coordinate the complicated and often confusing network of existing state and federal occupational health and safety programs.

According to Kathy, "OSHSP is a non-regulatory program that is collating, tracking, and evaluating work-related illness and injuries in Iowa. One of our major priorities is identifying trends and patterns in worker injuries and illnesses and then working to disseminate information to prevent future accidents." Kathy works closely with the Fatality Assessment Control and Evaluation Program (FACE) out of the University of Iowa Department of Public Health. FACE collects information regarding work related fatalities and investigates some in greater detail. For more information regarding the FACE program go to <http://www.public-health.uiowa.edu/face/index.html>. Links to the left of the page have directories

of investigations that have been conducted.

According to Kathy, "We find that most of the farm related deaths involve a tractor, ATV, or other kind of self-propelled machinery. Tractor roll-overs are the most frequent type of accident, with runovers being the second most common. Often these accidents occur when someone is using the tractor to perform utility duties around the farm rather than field work." One of Kathy's goals is to develop informational material regarding the risks on small market farms. Kathy's key message to farm operators is "investigate and know your risks. Even if you are farming without a tractor, you need to be concerned about possible muscular and skeletal damage that can occur by the way you do specific tasks."



Kathy also warns that many operators need to be more aware

of respiratory damage and disease. Infections like Q fever and Histoplasmosis may not kill you, but they can have a serious effect on your quality of life. Kathy wants producers to ask themselves, "if you get sick or injured, what happens to your family and farm?" Kathy sums it up by saying, "preventing financial ruin and the loss of a dream is what I want to do."

You can contact Kathy Leinenkugel at (515) 281-4930 or kleinenk@idph.state.ia.us.

Occupational Safety Links and Information

FACE Program: <http://www.public-health.uiowa.edu/face/index.html>

Farm Safety 4 Just Kids: <http://www.fs4jk.org/>

AgriSafe Network: <http://www.agrisafe.org/>

Iowa State University Extension Publication: Keep active farmers safe in later life:

<http://www.abe.iastate.edu/fileadmin/www.abe.iastate.edu/safety/PDF/PM1841a.pdf>

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<http://www.iowasbdc.org/Categories/Urbandale/tabid/1771/Default.aspx>



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GYSMF Website Notes

Our new website is a work of art in progress, if you know what I mean. We have an exciting new section called Classified Ads, for selling and buying farm equipment, supplies, or anything you want or need in your farm business. Take a look at: <http://www.growmarketfarm.com/classifieds.html>

There is an easy to fill out form which helps you outline what you wish to buy or sell, and we will get it on the web site in five working days. We hope this section of the web site will be a place for all of us to re-distribute what we don't use and to acquire what we need. Give it a try!

