

Most produce for farmers markets starts growing in a greenhouse, such as this one at 7 Acres Produce, long before it is warm enough to plant outside in Minnesota.

Getting crops ready for the farmers market season

By Jennifer Kotila **Staff Writer**

Farmers market season is just around the corner, and those who provide the fresh produce at the markets, such as Bill and Jane Bohn of Darwin, are busy preparing for the spring planting season.

"I've been growing food since I was a kid; we always had a big food plot for family and friends," Bill said.

"I've always had a garden," Jane added. "The bigger, the

Buying the house and land in Darwin in 2009, the Bohns only came out to work on the farm on the weekends before moving to 7 Acre Produce in 2011, from the west side of Eden Prairie.

This will only be the second season the couple is using their passion for growing food to grow enough to sell at the Dassel Farmers Market

They also plan to sell produce at the Hutchinson Farmers Market this year. "We are just getting started in the market thing," Bill said.

Jane noted they are still in the beginning stages of learning what will or will not sell, and what people want.

Last year she kept records of what was grown and what sold, which helped the Bohns decide to eliminate some things, downsize some items, and grow more of some vegetables.

The large green peppers the couple brought to the farmers market last year were a big hit, and the Bohns will be growing them again. Other items the Bohns will have available this year include tomatoes, cabbage, beets, potatoes, onions, and maybe a little garlic.



The Bohns grow garlic to

sell wholesale, and may not have any available for the farmers market.

There are 20,000 garlic plants at 7 Acre Produce, which equates to one acre. A couple of years ago, the Bohns and a number of other garlic growers lost their whole garlic crop.

At that time, the Bohns only had about a half-acre of garlic, which would have equated to 3,000 pounds of garlic at harvest, Bill noted.

The Bohns also raise chickens for eggs, but not enough to sell. They also plan to raise free-range turkeys this year.

Seeds for the farm are bought in bulk from seed catalogs. The Bohns follow organic practices in growing their produce, but are not certified due to the proximity to nearby farm fields.

Although some cold-season plants, such as broccoli, onions, and peas, could be planted already, the field is still too wet for the Bohns to start planting their vegetables.

However, all the plants that will eventually be out in the field have begun to grow in a 21-by-48-foot greenhouse at 7 Acres Produce.

The greenhouse is made of a corrugated, clear plastic and has six 12-foot mesh tables and two 8-foot tables. The metal tubing the frame is made of is sturdy enough to also hang shelves to hold plants, which means three tiers of plants can be grown.

"We will never outgrow that house on only seven acres," Bill said.

Bill uses graph paper to plan out the 2-acre plot of land where the produce will be grown. Eventually, the Bohns hope to increase the acreage they plant.

To get the plants in the field, the Bohns have a two-seater mechanical transplanter, which is pulled behind a "very" slow tractor with one or two people placing the plants in a rotating wheel that transplants them into the ground, according to

Transplanting the plants into the field using the machine is much faster, and easier on the back, than doing it manually, Jane noted.

"You don't have to crawl around in the dirt," Bill added. Last year, the Bohns transplanted 3,000 onion plants in two hours with the machine.

At the time of this interview, Bill was in maintenance mode, and said "Everything needs attention," noting he has 15 pieces of equipment, four of which are tractors, he is getting ready for the spring and summer.

Before pursuing his passion of growing food full time, Bill had worked for 10 years in 3D imaging, or holography, mostly working on commercial, security, and government projects.

Bill is also a woodworker, noted Jane, who was a purchasing agent at Braas, which supplies automation parts to companies like 3M and CGATE. She still does this part time from her home in Darwin.

The land the Bohns purchased to grow their produce had previously been used for corn and soybeans, they noted.

Drunk driving prevalent in rural areas

If you are reading this, you probably live in a small town or rural area of the Tenth Judicial District, i.e., the counties of Anoka, Chisago, Isanti, Kanabec, Pine, Sherburne, Washington, and Wright.

In Minnesota each year, nearly 30,000 (yes, that is thirty thousand) drivers are arrested for drunk driving, many on rural roads. One could reasonably conclude that drunk driving is vastly more prevalent in highly-populated urban areas, but statistics do not bear that out, at least on a national

Here are a few frightening statistics from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA):

 Rural areas account for 80 percent of the total US road mileage, and 40 percent of the vehicle-miles traveled.

• In 2010, 19 percent of US population lived in rural areas. • Rural travel reflects the

rural environment of long distances, relatively low traffic volumes, relatively rare traffic congestion, travelers unfamiliar with the surroundings, and rugged terrain in remote areas. (Also, riskier road conditions: poor lighting, narrower roads.)

It's In Your Court Stephen Halsey Tenth Judicial District

• In 2010, the fatality rate per miles driven was 2.5 times higher in rural areas than in urban areas. (Minnesota Depertment of Transportation states 70 percent of Minnesota traffic fatalities occur in rural areas.)

• In 2010, 10,228 people were killed in alcohol-impaired driving crashes, and rural areas accounted for 55 percent of these fatalities.

• Compliance with seat-belt laws is also less in rural areas, according to NHTSA:

Fifty-three percent of rural passenger vehicle occupants killed were unrestrained, compared to 48 percent of urban passenger vehicle occupants killed.

Nearly two-thirds (65 percent) of rural pickup truck occupants killed were unrestrained - the highest percentage of any passenger vehicle occupants killed among both rural and urban areas.

• Seat belt use goes down as blood alcohol content (BAC)

levels go up: BAC .00 - Belt use 84 per-

BAC .08+ – Belt use 13 per-

No difference in rural versus urban use.

Finally, there will likely be more serious consequences from being injured in a crash caused by a drunk driver in a rural area due to increased response times based on distance to be traveled by emergency response teams.

So, when you are out on a county road during the night, be vigilant, and wear your seat belt. That vehicle coming over the next hill may be operated by a drunk driver, or a deer may be around the next bend. Be careful out there.

We see many drunk-driving cases in criminal court in which the drivers drinking at a rural bar thought they were not intoxicated, and concluded they could drive the few miles home without endangering themselves or others, as well as avoid detection by law enforce-

Bad choices can turn tragic. Call a sober ride. Be safe.

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• Winstock Country Music Festival www.winstockfestival.com

Country music and camping festival featuring national acts

Herald Journal Organizations

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Cokato-Dassel Rotary

Dassel Library

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such as hunting and shooting

· Lester Prairie Youth Baseball

www.lpbaseball-softball.org

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www.cokatodasselrotary.org

Friends of the Dassel Library

www.hjorgs.com/dasselfriends

profit organizations a web site from which they can better communicate with their

Local chapter of Rotary International, an

organization that believes in service above

• Friends of the Howard Lake Library www.hjorgs.com/hl-libraryfriends Group undertake projects designed to

enhance the library's image, materials.

Howard Lake Business Association

ww.howardlakebusiness.com

Directory of Howard Lake business

www.hjorgs.com/hlwwafterprom

to have a fun and safe after prom event to

• Lester Prairie Business Association

www.hjorgs.com/lpba Works with businesses to make Lester

• Lester Prairie Sportsmen's Club

Devoted to promoting outdoor sports

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members, important dates and monthly

• RAM Landscape Services www.ramlandscapeservices.com

hysical, occupational, speech

and communities in the area

• Winsted Chamber

• Waste Management

• City of Winsted www.winsted.mn.us

www.wm.com

WebDirectory

A guide to local area Web Sites

Note: This is a paid listing and does not necessarily include all local sites. To be included, please contact or advertising department, local local manufacturer of engineered, netro (320) 485-2535.

provided on the "Web Directory" page of

Cokato

• Best in Minnesota www.best-in-mn.com A video & book featuring Cokato, voted Dec. 2010, the best place to raise kids in Minnesota

 Cokato Community Guide
 www.cokatoenterprisedispatch.com A guide to the Cokato area

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 Mid-County Co-op www.midcountycoop.com
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 Dassel Community Guide www.dasselenterprisedispatch.com
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• Delano Community Guide www.delanoheraldjournal.com/guide

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• Motzko Well Drilling www.motzkowell.com
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Howard Lake

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Lester Prairie

www.holasekflowerpower.com Greenhouse in Lester Prairie Jilek Insurance Agency www.jilekinsurance.com

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Fred Holasek & Sons Greenhouse

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 Lester Prairie Community Guide www.lesterprairieheraldjournal.com Community guide to Lester Prairie

Litchfield Meeker Memorial Hospital & Meeker Memorial Clinic www.meekermemorial.org

A 38-bed, county-owned hospital located in Litchfield, with a clinic in Dassel R & R Auto and Metal Salvage www.rrautosalvage.com An industry leader in the salvage of

automotive products, industrial, commerical & residential scrap services Maple Plain

www.equipalife.org
Providing equipment and assistive
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 Market Place www.marketplacewatertown.com Local full line grocery store Watertown Chamber of Commerce

www.watertown-chamber.com Links to chamber members, & Watertown Pharmacy

www.watertownpharmacy.com Local pharmacy and gift shop

Waverly Montrose-Waverly Chamber www.montrosewaverlychamber.com

Montrose-Waverly Chamber Waverly Community Guide

www.waverlyheraldjournal.com Community guide to the Waverly area

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 CR Electric www.crelectricinc.com Electrical services for residential, commercial, farm, low voltage, trenching,

aerial truck, wind turbines & lighting

 Crow River Valley Baseball League www.herald-journal.com/sports/ Schedule standings stats and information on area baseball league • Herald Journal Blogs www.hjblogs.com

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on choosing a dating service Dating services appeal to people by offering a prescribed

Better Business Buerau advice

way of meeting new people with similar interests. As with any service that requires you to provide personal information, Better Business Bureau of Minnesota and North Dakota (BBB) recommends a close review of the contract before signing your name on the dotted line.

"Using a company to provide some order to the unpredictable world of dating appeals to both men and women," said Dana Badgerow, president and CEO of BBB of Minnesota and North Dakota. "While such companies can help you narrow your focus, the algorithm of the human heart defies any one formula; a variety of approaches is always your best

bet for finding love." To find the dating service that works best for you, keep

- the following tips in mind: • Consider what you would like to get from the service. Some dating services focus on developing long-term matches, while others assist in broadening your scope of friends, in the hopes of meeting that special someone. Determining what you hope to receive from a service will help you make
- the best choice for your needs. • Research the company's background at bbb.org.
- Read the contract and fine print thoroughly. Be sure the contract outlines payment plans, length of contract and refund and cancellation policies in case you are dissatisfied with the company's service.

Some dating services charge a flat rate for their benefit package, while others may offer a la carte pricing that requires additional payments for access to services tailored to your needs. Make sure you understand what you can reasonably expect from the service balanced against the investment you will be making.

 Select a service that enforces high standards of behavior. Request in writing what guidelines the company follows in screening its applicants. Does the service, for example, conduct a thorough background check of each applicant? Prepare to get personal. Get a sense of the questions the company asks for use in creating your member profile, including your age, profession, likes/dislikes, hobbies, etc. Also, find out if the service requests photographs from you or if they will take pictures/create videos at their place of business. Understand the process. De-

troduced to one another and how many referrals you can expect within a given time period. If the service offers group activities, find out what they are and how often they occur. · Research the demographics. Make certain there are plenty of members within your

termine how members are in-

• Explore the company's website. Carefully review their privacy policy to see how your personal information will be protected.

geographic area and the age

range(s) in which you are in-

