

Fox Run Farms

Fox Run Farms is a small family owned/operated farm in Brainard, Nebraska.



We have a 1 1/2 acre vineyard, and a small CSA program of approximately 20 members. We also sell our products wholesale to Community Crops, Open Harvest Co-op, and other small markets around such as East Butler High School (two blocks away!) We farm approximately 3 acres of naturally grown fruits (Asian Pears, peaches, blackberries, aronia berries, table grapes) and a wide variety of vegetables, as well as some herbs and flowers. (There is a list of the veggies we grow on our facebook page:

www.facebook.com/foxrunfarms and our website is:

www.foxrunfarmsne.com/)

We also have another side-business that is not farming: Bailey's Bubbles. This is a business that has stemmed from my love of big bubbles, and we sell our special bubble solution and wands at farmer's markets in Omaha (Florence Mill, Benson, and Aksarben) as well as other events as they come up. We do have a facebook page: www.facebook.com/baileysbubbles

We live on a farm that has been in my family since 1899, my grandmother was born in the old farmhouse in 1906, and my Dad was also born in that house. We continue the tradition of family living and working together, and we currently have four generations living here on the farmyard. My parents (Martha and Leo Kovar) live in a one-room schoolhouse that was moved here from Pleasant Hill in the 70's, which I understand was near the town of Rising City. The Bailey family: Myself, my husband, two of our grown children, and our 3-year-old grandson, Jett, live in a house that was moved here from a farm 6 miles away. Even when it comes to houses, we believe in "Buy Fresh, Buy Local"! Our farm is right on the edge of town, across from the pool, so we enjoy the access of a paved road and country living with a small town across the street. Our farm is anchored by a big, red barn that used to serve as the town livery, and now serves as our "washing station" for our vegetable business, among other uses. Farming has changed a great deal since 1899, but our current operation proves we are growing and changing with it.

Another very important part of our operation is still being developed, but we are getting some help from a University of Nebraska group, Students In Free Enterprise, or SIFE. They are helping us work on our goal to make the farm handicapped accessible, so people with developmental and other disabilities have an opportunity to enjoy the farm and participate in their local food system. We have received donations of CSA shares for a local group in David City, Region V. During the CSA season, they bring clients here to pick up their box each week, and have also participated in helping us plant our pumpkin patch and maintain it this year. The SIFE group is working on designing raised beds for next spring so folks in wheelchairs can help plant, weed, and harvest crops too.



Fox Run Farms believes it is important for them to participate in buying and selling locally for many reasons: Economically, philosophically, and physically.

One way our food system has changed from the past is that we have largely become removed from our source, and that has made it harder to find food that is good quality and affordable for everyone. When our food is grown in other countries we cannot oversee that the inputs and chemicals used are not harmful to us, or the farming methods are standardized or safe. Even when our food is grown in this country where we have some oversight, just putting it in a truck to travel thousands of miles degrades the food quality, and adds to our problems of energy consumption and cost. With small family farms disappearing from our countryside every year it becomes a bigger and bigger problem for everyone involved, including the farmers themselves. When more and more food is being purchased every year by people shopping in big-box stores, then the market begins to disappear for the farmer who cannot produce such large amounts of product. The result is less and less diversity in what food is available to purchase, and the quality of that food is lower, while the price is continuously climbing higher.



In addition to this train-wreck in our food availability, there is a coinciding negative effect in our economy, as the dollars spent on this type of agriculture are not coming from our local economy, and so every time a small farm goes under it starves all the small businesses around that depend on the money the farmer spends to do his job. We believe in putting our money where our mouth is, so we buy whatever we can in Brainard, in David City, in Seward, and in Lincoln--and we strive to sell everything we produce locally as well. Brainard is in what is called a "food desert", as we have no grocery store - the nearest one is 15 miles away. But here at Fox Run Farms we are growing food, and a lot of it, so we are working hard to reverse this trend.

Case-in-point: The other day a neighbor called and asked if she could come over and purchase a couple of gourds from us. We were working in the barn, washing 125 bunches of kale for Community Crops, so I said: "Sure, come on over!" She was here in a few minutes, and a few minutes later I had \$5.00 in my pocket and this neighbor was happily walking away with her gourds. Such a thing doesn't seem like a big deal, but it is. That \$5.00, made here on my yard, didn't cost me any advertising (she saw them out drying as she walked by each morning), didn't cost me any gas, any packaging, and very little of my time. In fact, the time I did spend visiting with her was well worth it; I was rejuvenated by the discussion and interaction and ready to go back to that kale. The way I look at it, that \$5.00 is worth at least \$20.00 - which is what it would cost me to market and deliver those gourds anywhere else. We don't get a lot of sales in Brainard, but we are working on it by having a farm-stand on-site, giving presentations and tours to local groups, and having the kids from school come over and help with our gardens. We do all this because our goal is to be as local as possible, and in so doing, we are participating in a situation where everyone wins.



Our products have been sold to East Butler High School in Brainard, Dales Foodpride in David City, Ideal Market in Lincoln, Open Harvest Food Co-op, and Community Crops. We have had CSA members from David City, Brainard, Lincoln, Fremont, and Omaha.

Fox Run Farms has been a member of Buy Fresh Buy Local Nebraska for a year.

We joined so we could show our solidarity with the local food movement, and have support from an organization that is doing such wonderful things for small farmers. It gives us credibility and visibility in the consumer markets when we display your sign.

BFBL has helped us by existing! This organization's signs, presentations, media attention, and literature make it easy for the consumer to spot local goods. More importantly, it brings their attention to the choice they have between local and not local, and why that choice is so important. Being part of a larger organization that serves both the farmer and the consumer is very positive and motivating for us. There is no way we could have the market opportunities we enjoy today without such support from BFBL, and it is because of the important work you do that this trend is growing by leaps and bounds.

I used to live in Philadelphia, and worked at the Weaver's Way Food Co-op . . . recently I went back for a visit, and was so proud to see the BFBL logo and other information posted all over the store. It was like being home, and I was so happy to see some previous co-workers and tell them that we are part of BFBL too!!

Fox Run Farms is still working hard this year:

Our season is officially over, but folks can always contact us about next year's CSA, grape harvest, open houses, or farm tours for their groups. Of course, we always have bubbles for sale! Next year we hope to have some new products as well, a Black Walnut Tincture, and a castor-oil based liniment for aches and pains, which also serves as an excellent all-natural mosquito repellent!

--Information provided by Yolanda Bailey

