

FREE

LOCAL

Food Guide

For Reno County
& Surrounding Areas

May 2024



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LOCAL FOOD



reno.k-state.edu

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LOCAL PRODUCERS

LOCAL PRODUCE-DAIRY-MEAT-BAKED GOODS PLUS FARMER'S MARKETS



Welcome to the Reno County Extension Office! Your local Extension Office is a tremendous resource for finding information you need. Located in South Hutchinson, KS right off the Woodie Seat Freeway, we are here to help answer your questions about Lawns & Gardens, 4-H & Youth Development, Crops, Livestock, Wildlife, Health, Nutrition, and Community Development.

K-STATE RESEARCH AND EXTENSION VOLUNTEERS

<p>82 Master Food Volunteers</p>	<p>647 Extension Board Members</p>	<p>Contributed 167,222 VOLUNTEER HOURS in 2020-21</p> <p>Equivalent to \$4.2 MILLION worth of service to Kansas communities!</p>
<p>1,201 Master Gardener Volunteers</p>	<p>8,456 Kansas 4-H Volunteers</p>	
<p>480 Kansas PRIDE Volunteers</p>		

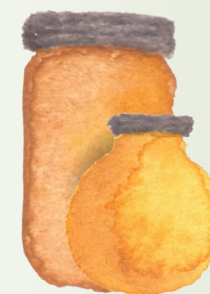
AMAZING BENEFITS OF EATING LOCAL

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO EAT LOCAL? IT MEANS EATING FOOD THAT IS GROWN, RAISED, OR PROCESSED BY PEOPLE IN YOUR OWN COMMUNITY OR NEARBY COMMUNITIES. THIS INCLUDES MORE THAN JUST SEASONAL VEGGIES. RENO COUNTY AND THE SURROUNDING AREAS OFFER LOCAL MEAT, CHEESE, MILK, EGGS, BAKED AND CANNED GOODS, HONEY, AND EVEN READY MADE MEALS!



EAT FRESH & GET THE BEST NUTRITION

LOCALLY PRODUCED FOOD IS CONSUMED MUCH SOONER AFTER IT IS HARVESTED AND THEREFORE RETAINS MORE VALUABLE NUTRIENTS. THESE NUTRIENTS ARE VITAL TO GOOD HEALTH.



EAT LOCAL FOR THE EARTH

LOCAL FOOD IS MORE, WELL, LOCAL. IT DOESN'T HAVE TO TRAVEL AS FAR TO REACH YOUR PLATE SO THERE ARE LESS CARBON EMISSIONS CREATED IN TRANSPORT. IN ADDITION, MANY LOCAL FARMERS EMPLOY SUSTAINABLE METHODS OF GROWING PRODUCE AND RAISING ANIMALS.



BUY LOCAL, SUPPORT LOCAL

BUYING LOCAL FOOD KEEPS YOUR MONEY IN THE COMMUNITY, SUPPORTING THE LOCAL ECONOMY. RATHER THAN GIVING YOUR MONEY TO CORPORATIONS, YOU ARE GIVING IT TO YOUR NEIGHBORS TO SUPPORT THEIR FAMILIES AND TO ALLOW THEM TO KEEP PROVIDING GREAT LOCAL NUTRITION.





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Produce

- CORN FAMILY FARMS-(620) 960-1416*
- DON'S PRODUCE PATCH-(620) 728-1678*
- GAEDDERT FARMS-(620)931-7667*
- HARE'S PRODUCE-(620)669-7796*
- J&J CORN FARMS-(620)504-8236*
- MILLER'S PRODUCE-(620)662-4303*
- MOORE'S FARM-(620)200-5522*
- POLK'S FARM MARKET-(620)543-6628*
- RABBIT PATCH*
- RR LEIS FARMS-(316)833-6478*
- SCHOEVILLE FARM-(620)899-9220*
- SPARE'S PRODUCE-(620)282-4162*
- TECK FARMS-(620)200-6997
- TIN BUCKET FARMS-(620)755-2084

Quick Guide to Local Food

Honey

- BONE SPRINGS FARM-(620)860-9664
- GG'S HONEY BEEZ-(620)960-9578*

Meat & Dairy



- BASINGER'S BEEF-(620)532-1581
- BLAZEFORK FARM FRESH LAMB-(620)755-9120
- BORNTRAGER DAIRY-(620)615-2259
- CRAG FARMS-(620)875-2411
- JBH MEATS-(620)200-8319
- ZAO LIFE FARMS-(620)755-3194

*THESE PRODUCERS CAN BE FOUND AT THE RENO COUNTY FARMERS MARKET. -MOST PRODUCERS CAN BE FOUND ON FACEBOOK

Baked Goods



- ALLEY BAKED GOODS-(208)344-0107*
- BAKED BY ANNA-(620)200-8319
- MILLER'S HOMESTYLE MEALS-(620)662-4224*
- ROSE'S PASTRIES-(620)200-8319*
- RR LEIS FARMS-(316)772-8607*



Alley Baked Goods

Carol Groat of Alley Baked Goods was “born in Coldwater, and been in hot water ever since”. As I sat in her living room with her and her son, Jeff, I looked around at the many family pictures on the walls, and they all had a story. Carol is a lifelong servant of God, family, and any others who may need a loving hand of nurturing. Jeff commented that hosting and feeding people is Carol’s love language. We visited for a while, discussing everything from our experiences with tornados growing up in Kansas, to our experiences with living in aging bodies.



Contact Info:
(208) 344-0107
Facebook
Reno County Farmers
Market



Carol is the last remaining of four sisters and one brother, and twice widowed. She has had a lifelong passion for cooking and baking for friends, family, foster children, rehabilitated convicts, church groups, and undoubtedly many others. She has spent most of her days living in various towns here in Kansas, but has also lived in Idaho, Texas, and 37 years in Colorado. The barn you see above is an artistic recreation of a barn on her father’s farm where Carol grew up. That barn was taken by a tornado after she had grown up and moved away with her first husband, who she married while young. Her parents allowed her to get married, as her husband to be was about to be stationed in Germany while serving in the military. Fast forward many year later, and Carol is still grounded in family, faith, and food.

Carol strives to honor her family and its history. This is illustrated by her business name, Alley Baked Goods. Alley is her maiden name. She incorporates family everywhere she can. Now she is a part of the Reno County Farmers Market family where she comes on Saturdays during the open season to sell her baked goods. She also takes orders for pick-up over the phone. See her contact info above. Carol specializes in cookies and banana bread, but she also makes chocolate candies like those pictured above. In addition, she can create gift baskets for any occasion.

Baked by Anna

Meet Anna Stafford. Anna attended Hutchinson Community College and then went on to get her Bachelor’s Degree in history from the University of Kansas before coming back home to pursue her passion for baking. For now, she is living at home with her mom and dad while she builds her business, although, I doubt she will need to stay long. Anna’s baked goods are in a league of their own. Her passion for baking is reflected in the unique flavors she incorporates into her treats, and the care she gives to the aesthetic of the final products.

I met with Anna at her home kitchen for our interview. The kitchen looked like it was right out of Better Homes & Gardens, and the cool spring breeze was gently drifting into the room. We met just two days before Easter and she was making a batch of monster cookies with pastel M&Ms. She described her cookies as “meaty”, and after watching her make them and learning her secrets, I can understand why. They were thick and chunky, with both M&Ms and chocolate chips, and thick, rich cookie dough. Now, I can’t divulge any of Anna’s baking secrets, but I can tell you that this young lady knows her stuff. She goes the extra mile when it comes to all the little details that add up to an exquisite final product. We got acquainted while she mixed them up. Anna said that her ultimate dream is to have her own storefront downtown, and by my estimation, she is well on her way. Her treats are elegant in appearance and flavor alike. If you are looking to impress, she’s your gal. Weddings, birthdays, anniversaries, retirement parties, baby showers, or holidays, Anna has your special occasions covered and your guests will be in awe.

Growing up, Anna has always enjoyed baking and learning about baking by binging on Food Network. She enjoys being in the kitchen and cooks for the family often. Her kitchen ritual is to listen to music or podcasts and just get lost in the process. Anna’s Baked Goods are available by ordering directly from her. She is very flexible and will deliver.



Contact Info:
(620) 200-8319
Facebook & Instagram



Contact Info:
 (620) 532-1581
 WWW.localkansasbeef.com
 Facebook

Basinger's Beef

I happened upon Basinger's Beef through a recommendation from a friend on Facebook. I was happily surprised to find that they live right out in my area. When I got to the Basinger farm, I was welcomed in to sit down at the family table with Chad, Cassondra, and their four children Wyatt, Aubrey, Kinley, and Barrett. Wyatt was in coveralls and had just come in with his dad from doing chores, while the other three appeared to be ready for the photo opp in their Sunday best. The Basingers are clearly a close family, and part of what they love about cattle farming is that it is flexible, so they are able to arrange their schedule to be present for the children's sports events, school activities, and family time.

Chad started working with his grandparent's cattle as a young man, and that's where he "caught the bug". These days, Basinger's Beef is still very much a family business. Cassondra takes care of the bookkeeping and marketing, and Wyatt seems to have "caught the bug" too. When it came time to head out to the pasture, he seemed eager and ready to go.

We took off in the truck to go meet the Basinger's cattle out in their native environment, the pasture. As we pulled up to it, Wyatt hopped out of the truck to open the gate and close it behind us. He appeared to have done this a time or two because he was out of the truck and back in before I really knew what was going on. We drove out a little way before Chad slowed the truck down and pointed out a newly born calf lying down in a patch of tall grass. He stopped so I could get out and take a picture, but that mama cow looked a little unhappy about me getting too close to her baby so I decided to save my own hide and get back in the truck.

The Basinger's livestock is comprised of Black and Red Angus cattle. They are born and raised right on the Basinger farm, and they select the strongest and most hardy calves to raise for breeding. The cattle are also fed with grains and grasses grown by the Basingers, for the Basinger livestock. Their farm provides it all, and you can tell that they take pride in that. Check out the contact info above to place an order or to find out where you can pick up some Basinger's Beef.



Blazefork Farm Fresh Lamb

The day I drove out to meet with LaRon Nikkel of Blazefork Farm Fresh Lamb couldn't have been more lovely. The sky was blue, the sun was shining, and the temperature was just perfect for driving with the windows down on the country roads just North East of Inman. LaRon met me near the driveway upon my arrival, and we made our way to the barn area. It was my lucky day! There had been about 3 or 4 baby lambs born just a couple of hours before I got there. We were accompanied by LaRon's oldest daughter, Kinley, who was clearly excited to show off the new babies. The slightly older babies were running around and playing in a bigger pen. Folks, you have not seen cute until you have seen a dozen or so baby lambs running and playing together on a sunny day. The cuteness didn't end there! The Nikkels also welcomed a new litter of kittens within the 24 hour period, and they were nested in the straw right near the lambs. As we took in our adorable surroundings, LaRon filled me in on how they got started, life as a lamb producer, and all the details of their operation and distribution.

LaRon had been a truck driver and a farmer, and in 2016 he decided to quit trucking and shift his sights to livestock. He didn't feel like cattle were a good fit for him and his family, so he decided to focus on sheep. He started out with 45 bred ewes. At first, he sold the lambs into the sale barn market, and eventually decided to switch to a Polypay breed and started selling the females for breeding stock replacements. He wanted to add value to the males and that's when he began to have them processed for meat sales. Blazefork got its meat sales license from the state in 2019, and have since added a walk-in freezer to allow for greater storage.

LaRon showed me into their garage which houses the walk-in, and a couple of other smaller deep freezers. I peeked my head into the walk-in freezer, but I can assure you, I did not stay long. That might be the coldest 24 seconds of my life. As we wrapped up our visit, he sent me home with some jalapeno cheddar summer sausage. It had plenty of time to thaw as I had another farm tour after that one, and the drive home after that, which meant it was ready to dig into by the time I got home. It was my first time eating lamb summer sausage, and it was a whole different experience from the beef or pork summer sausage that I'm used to. It had a great depth of flavor that is hard to put into words, but I guess the only word I need is YUM! I will definitely be going back for more.



Contact Info:
 (620) 755-9120
 &
 Facebook



Bone Springs Farm

Bone Springs Farm was born from the love of gardening, homesteading, and the self-reliant lifestyle of Amy and Keith Seck. Keith and Amy met in Oklahoma. The couple started gardening together after they met. They married and moved to Pittsburgh, PA after welcoming their two children, Brayden and Kyler. Gardening slowly transformed into homesteading for the whole family. At 9 years old, Brayden became fascinated by tiny houses and was determined to build one. She began collecting materials to build her tiny house right then. Brayden is now 20 years old and she now lives on the family property in the tiny house that she built. And then there's Kyler.

Contact Info:
(620) 860-9664
www.bonespringsfarm.com
Facebook & Instagram



At age 7, Kyler became interested in bees. That year he started his first hive, with the help of mom and dad, of course. He even taught honeybee classes in local communities while selling his honey. Ten years later, "Ky's Honey Hives" has become one of the family's main businesses. The Secks are diligent about taking good care of their bees. They are provided with plenty of water and are fed pollen patties. The family makes sure to leave at least 100 lbs of honey in the hives over the winter to nourish the residents.

Although honey is their main business, the family has now branched out to growing garlic and other produce, offering chicken and quail eggs, baked goods, canned goods, and growing medicinal hemp for use in CBD products, which they also package and produce themselves. You can find Bone Springs Farm online and at the Sterling Farmer's Market.

As you can tell, the Seck family is dedicated and passionate. Keith and Amy were determined to teach their children to enjoy learning and connection with God's creation, and they certainly succeeded in that endeavor. They want people to know where their food and medicine come from, and for children to find their passion in life and go for it.

Borntrager Dairy

Upon arrival at the Borntrager's Dairy, located a few miles Southwest of Yoder, I was transported back to a simpler time. Children outside playing baseball is not often seen in these busy times of deadlines and screens. Farm kitties run about doing their jobs as pest control agents while the heads of the farm, Loyd and Arlene Borntrager are hard at work with the nitty gritty of running a grass-fed dairy. Arlene was kind enough to give me the grand tour.

We began in the cattle barn...which was empty with the exception of some kitties and a wooden cow with rubber teats, used for giving demonstrations on milking. Next, Arlene took me to see the pigs and explained how they are fed, in part, with the leftover whey from the cheese and butter making processes. We made our way to the fodder sowing room where they sprout barley grains to keep the cattle fed during the winter. We then went to the chicken coop and pasture area. Here, Arlene explained, over many "cock-a-doodle-doo"s, the method they use for pasturing their cows and chickens. Finally, we made our way back to the retail shop and milking/processing facility, where we met McKenna. She is responsible for making the cultured products and other foods. Our tour was complete and it was time for me to grab a gallon of milk and head home.

The Borntragers are second generation dairy farmers who took over the farm from Loyd's parents. It began as a conventional grain fed dairy with a herd of Holstein cattle. They realized the conventional dairy wasn't financially viable and began to search for other ways to keep the farm going. Soon after, they found out that they were expecting their first child. As most new parents do, they became adamant about researching how to nourish the mama and subsequent new baby in the best way possible, and that's when Loyd & Arlene stumbled across the grass-fed/raw milk movement. They were sold! They began to replace their Holstein cattle with Dutch belted cattle, taking a hit on production but replacing quantity of production with the high quality of the Dutch belted milk.

A side note: I have been drinking this stuff for about 15 years now, and I tell you truly...there is absolutely NOTHING like it! Its high fat content gives it a deep, rich flavor that needs no pairing. nineteen years and 5 kids later, Borntrager Dairy now offers raw cheese of many varieties, and a barrage of dairy products geared toward good health (yogurt, kefir, etc) along with pastured chicken, beef, pork, and rabbit, butter, small batch ice cream, home baked goods, canned food, produce, and raw honey, and more! Nowadays, the children: Melissa 16, Rosalyn 13, Breanna 11, Wendall 9, and Josiah 6 all help out around the farm, including maintaining their new farm stay cottage. The Borntrager Dairy is a great one-stop shopping experience for the good of your health and your taste buds.



Contact Info:
(620) 615-2259
info@borntragerdairy.com
Facebook

Corn Family Farms

Sheila Corn of Corn Family Farms is a long standing institution in the Reno County food movement. In 1980, she and her husband David bought their first property 9 miles outside of Hutchinson and started growing sweet corn. In the beginning while working their 30 acres of land, they sold their produce from local parking lots and the Newton Farmers Market. As they expanded their produce selection to include tomatoes, green beans, eggs, and other items, they felt that there was a need for a place for local producers to sell directly to consumers. In 1985, they joined with Earl and Pam Polk, and some other local producers to create the Reno County Farmers Market.



Contact Info:
(620) 960-1416
Cornfamilyfarm@gmail.com
Reno County Farmers Market

Sheila and David kept growing and expanding their produce and their family. They have 8 children: Josh, Becky, Sarah, Rachel, Leah, James, Jon, and Dan, who were all raised at the farmers market. David was not a farm kid or a farmer, but he lovingly supported Sheila's dreams and was always willing to help with anything that needed to be done. Their children had the opportunity to learn valuable skills that other kids their age didn't know, like how to keep books, count change, and tend to living plants and animals.

44 years later, Sheila still lives a life of service to her community. David passed away in 2017, but the love and support he gave still lives on. Sheila is an educator at heart and serves as a board member to the Reno County Farmers Market, and the Reno County Food Policy Council. She helps run the food bank at Our Redeemer Lutheran Church in Hutchinson, has served on the McPherson County Extension board, participates in 4-H activities, coaches for FFA, educates community members on how to raise sheep, and teaches Agriculture at some of our local schools. Sheila also loves to educate others on local foraging and sustainable farming practices, as she is concerned about the loss of nutrient density in our food supply and about the environmental impact of synthetic inputs on farmland.

You can find Sheila and Corn Family Farms at the Reno County Farmers Market during the market season. She is a sweet soul with a loving spirit who is always happy to share her knowledge for the good of the community. She offers homemade jams and jellies, eggs, live plants, homemade herb & spice blends, and more.



Crag Farms

I met with Elijah Crist on a cold foggy morning in February. Crag Farms is located just outside of Hutchinson on East 30th Avenue, a little bit past Prairie Dunes Country Club. My first impression? Wow, this guy has a killer beard! The very next thing I noticed were his cool "toe shoes". It was like he was walking around barefoot, but with shoes on! We started our walk and talk with a brief discussion about feed. Elijah explained that their birds are fed organic feed from a local provider. He started with a small flock of around 25 birds at a time, and has added more space for more birds over time using as much repurposed/salvaged material as possible. They are working with roughly 200 birds at a time at present. The chickens are moved around the property to fertilize the grass and eat bugs in different areas. Their chickens are Cornish Cross and Freedom or Red Rangers. Elijah is wanting to focus on heritage birds going forward, as the Cornish Cross breed tends to get too big too fast and consume a crazy amount of feed. He said at one point, 120 birds consumed 600 lbs of feed in two weeks. Yikes!

We walked a little further on the property to see the Crist's newest project, two hives of Carolinian bees tucked into a clearing at the North edge of the property. They don't have honey for sale yet, but they are excited about the venture.

I think Elijah noticed me shivering so he kindly offered to take me back to the house to see the newly hatched chicks living in the garage, and then we went in to meet his wife Tara. The Crists have 4 children: Kyran, Gabriel, Amber, & Nathaniel. Tara, Elijah, and I had a great time chatting about life, work, kids, technology, education, and more. These folks were people after my own heart, with many interests and hobbies that gave us lots to talk

about. For instance, Elijah and Nathaniel both do Jiu Jitsu at a local studio, which I thought was pretty cool! You can find Crag Farms online or by phone. If you're in the market for naturally raised chicken and eggs, free from antibiotics and hormones, Crag has you covered! They are passionate about raising healthy poultry for healthy families, allowing their chickens to live free range and happy lives. Check out their website at campingrecreationagriculturegoods.com to learn more and to place your order.



Contact Info:
(620) 875-2411
Facebook, Instagram,
Twitter

Don's Produce Patch

If you ever get the opportunity to visit the farm store of Don's Produce Patch at 10305 South Whiteside just outside of Hutchinson, I highly recommend it! The property is beautifully kept, with colorful gardens and several greenhouses, along with the quaint farm store attached to the Miller's home. You can really tell that Don, Donna, and their children, Jenni, David, Emily, Daniel, Samuel, Kristi, and Julie have put a lot of love into their farm over the years.

Don and Donna Miller started growing food so that they could spend time with their children in nature, and give their children jobs as they got older. Don's mother grew tomatoes while he was growing up, and Donna's mother grew strawberries, so the pair already had knowledge of how to grow plants and a solid

Contact Info:
(620) 728-1678
Facebook & Instagram
Reno County Farmers
Market



foundation to build on. Don kept a job in the beginning, and then was able to phase out over time, dedicating himself to the farm full time. It wasn't long before they were able to expand their operation to include a wider variety of fresh produce as well.

These days, all but two of the children have married and moved away from the farm. Daniel serves as the farm manager and oversees much of the production side of things, and Kristi handles the social media advertising. Samuel and Julie still live at home and seem to really enjoy working in the gardens. In fact, Samuel has started growing oyster and lion's mane mushrooms to add to Don's Produce Patch's line-up of fresh produce. Julie said the part she enjoys the most is harvesting the bounty of colorful tomatoes and peppers at the peak of the growing season.

The family sells their produce at the Kansas Grown Farmers Market at 21st and Ridge Road in Wichita, and at the Reno County Farmers Market at 103 West Second Avenue in downtown Hutchinson. If you're looking for aesthetics and variety in your produce, these folks have you covered. They offer tomatoes, onions, greens of many varieties, squash, beets, radishes, carrots, herbs, live plants, and more.

Gaeddert Farms

Like so many of the producers represented here, Gaeddert Farms is a family operation. It started with a small lemonade stand in Buhler run by Tonya (Gaeddert) Martisko and Julie (Gaeddert) Ball in their grandparent's front yard when they were still in grade school. Today, Gaeddert Farms operates 11 stands and attends the Reno County and Wichita Farmers Markets. What makes them unique? They grow their corn for flavor.

During the growing season, the operation starts at 3:00 a.m. Tonya's son Zachary begins the day by harvesting the corn using a 4-row Pixall harvesting machine. About two hours later, the rest of the crew shows up to sort and package the corn. By 7:00 a.m. the fresh corn is on its way to you at the farmstand. Gaedderts never sells day-old corn, so you can rest assured that what you buy from them was plucked off the plant that morning. The specific variety you get will depend on the time of the season. Tonya and Julie carefully select varieties of sweet corn based on the quality of flavor first, and the time of harvest second so that they can extend the growing season as much as possible. For example, they may plant varieties with a shorter growing cycle to allow for a harvest by the end of June, and then plant varieties with a longer growing period to be harvested later in the season. The plantings are staggered so that there is a continuous harvest during the growing season. But corn is not their only business!

When they aren't busy with the sweet corn business, Julie and Tonya both have their own side ventures. Julie creates incredible metal artwork through her business, Sunflower Metal Designs. Tonya is a budding graphic designer, producing laser engraved treasures for the home and customized items made to order under the company name This Little Light, Inc. The family created the Kansas Maze in 1999 which originally featured a corn maze. During the pandemic in 2020, the ladies coordinated their first annual craft market, and converted the corn maze to a sunflower maze instead, which then became the Kansas Maze Sunflower Festival. The festival takes place mid August through mid September right on the Gaeddert's farm just outside of Buhler. It includes special weekend events such as a 5K run and craft market. You'll definitely want to check out the Kansas Maze Sunflower Festival website at www.kansasmaze.com, and try their sweet corn from any of their convenient locations. Visit them on Facebook or at www.gaeddertfarms.com to learn more.

Contact Info:
(620) 931-7667
gaeddertfarms@gmail.com
gaeddertfarms.com
Facebook &
Instagram





Contact Info:
 (620) 960-9578
 Facebook & Instagram
 Reno County Farmers
 Market

GG's Honey Beez

I'd like you to meet Mark Mounce of GG's Honey Beez. Mark started keeping bees about 10 years ago. It started as a hobby, with only two hives. He wanted to get away from processed sugars in his diet and replace them with raw, local honey for better health outcomes. As time went by, Mark became more and more fascinated by his bees, and his hobby became something of an addiction, you know, the good kind. He added more hives with each passing year. After the first year, Mark's family started using their honey. By the third year, he had enough to sell, and by year four, he had started making other products out of his honey and beeswax.

Nowadays, GG's Honey Beez has multiplied their hives by, well, a LOT! Mark has won Best in Show at the Kansas State Fair three times, and has won 1st and 2nd place prizes in other product categories. His list of products made from the offerings of his bees has grown exponentially, along with his hives. He offers handmade soaps made from scratch using his honey that are so beautiful to look at you almost don't want to use it. However, you really want to use it because it smells incredible and feels great on your skin. In addition, he offers natural body care items like deodorant, beard oil, and skin care bars. His edible honey products include, but are not limited to: chocolate honey (which makes a fabulous glass of chocolate milk), creamed honey spreads in flavors like raspberry, maple pecan, jalapeno, and pineapple express, flavored honey sticks, and of course, good, old fashioned, raw honey.

Mark's passion for his bees and honey has only grown with the passing of time. He enjoys mentoring young honey bee enthusiasts and inviting them to his property to learn the ropes. He keeps the raising of his bees as natural as possible to keep providing natural, healthy products. GG's Honey Beez is in its 4th or 5th season of attending the Reno County Farmers Market. You can find Mark there just about every Saturday morning during the market season. You'll be able to find him again this year at the Kansas State Fair, as well. When you see him, stop and say hello, bring your bee curiosity with you, and take home something unique and delicious.



Contact Info:
 (620) 669-7796
 You can buy Hare's
 Produce at the Reno
 County Farmers
 Market

Hare's Produce

The Hare family consists of Christy and Ray, and their two children, Jacob and Emily. The gardening bug started with Ray who grew up growing produce with his dad. Once he grew up and had a family of his own, he started his own garden and continued contributing to his dad's produce business. When his dad passed away, Ray suggested to Emily that she could continue the family tradition and grow and sell produce as an FFA project, which she did.

I paid a visit to the Hare's family garden and took a tour guided by the whole family. We began on the eastern portion of the property where they had tomatoes growing in well kept rows with neat black ground cloth. Adjacent to the tomatoes were several long rows of potatoes, with a row of onions in between the two. Next, we walked over to a smaller bed toward the back of the property containing strawberries, asparagus, and garlic. As we made our way to the back garden, I asked Emily what she enjoys aside from gardening. She explained that she really enjoys playing her trumpet in band and loves participating in FFA activities.

By this time, we had made it to the area behind the family home where they had several heads of cabbage growing in pots, and heads of lettuce, spinach, and celery growing under white cover cloth to protect against intense sun and pests. I was also very impressed with the Hare's two vertical garden towers bursting with colorful leaves of lettuce. After pausing for a family photo, we wrapped up our visit and Ray walked me back to the front side of the house. On the way I had to stop and admire a few galvanized tubs

packed with bright green and red lettuces growing in them. They looked so lovely that I thought they were ornamental plants for a moment. You can find Hare's Produce at the Reno County Farmers Market most Saturdays during the open season. They will be there with a great variety of fresh produce, and you can feel good knowing that you are supporting a budding entrepreneur and no doubt, a lifelong gardener.

J&J Corn Farms

Jon and Jess Corn were born into farming life. Jon's mother, Sheila, of Corn Family Farms, was a founding member of the Reno County Farmers Market back in 1985. He was raised raising animals like sheep, cattle, and pigs, tending gardens, and processing jams, jellies, and more. Jess grew up in an agricultural family, growing typical Kansas crops (soybeans, corn, wheat, milo, etc) on a large farm. Now as a couple with two small children, Jane age 2, and baby Jolene, who was born only days before our interview, they are working to grow their small farm. They are passionate about teaching their children self-reliance through hard work and dedication.

Little Jane was having the best time bringing me one toy after another while Jon and Jess explained how important it is for their children to learn how to care for

Contact Info:
(620) 504-8236
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other living creatures and plants. This is why Jane already has her own cow to learn to tend to, and they are in the process of finding one for baby Jolene as well. The livestock not only serves to teach the children responsibility, but they are also a savings account, of sorts. When the animals are raised, they can be sold as processed beef and the girls can use the profits to pay for their education or whatever other needs they have in adulthood. This is just one way in which the Corns are teaching the spirit of self reliance.

Jess enjoys nourishing her children with home made foods prepared without preservatives, or artificial ingredients. Her next mission is to recreate cheddar cheese crackers at home because those are one of Jane's favorite foods. The Corns raise meat, potatoes, and various other kinds of produce such as garlic, tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, etc. They also hope to add fruit trees in the future. It's safe to say that Jon and Jess have every intention of keeping the family farm business growing into the next generation and beyond. If you want to support their mission and put some homegrown goodness on your plate, check out their contact information.

JBH Meats



Contact Info:
(620) 200-8319
Facebook

JBH Meats is a small, mostly beef, operation just a few miles north east of Yoder run by Matt and Becky Mullins, their two boys Denton and Chase, and their "other son" Frankie, the blue heeler/Australian shepherd. Frankie met me at the car and welcomed me warmly as soon as my car door opened. Soon after, Becky came out to greet me. She gave me a relatively quick tour of their livestock area as we chatted. It was a cold and windy Kansas morning so it didn't take long for us to make our way into the big garage where the freezers are located. Frankie, of course, escorted me throughout the property.

The young Mullins boys were roaming about the property doing chores as Becky and I talked. Both boys are heavily involved in the family business. In addition to helping with labeling and other aspects, they both own and care for their own cattle, and they are fully responsible for raising all of the family's chickens. They managed to evade my voice recorder and, mostly, my camera. Still, I did manage to sneak a shot of each of them before leaving.

Matt and Becky are both "skipped generation" farmers, meaning their grandparents were farmers but their parents were not. Both learned about farming from their grandparents. They started raising cattle and chickens at first to supply the family with meat. The production grew and they decided to start an LLC. Becky explained to me that most of their meat comes from cattle that are pasture raised, then grain finished. They do offer some 100% pasture finished meat as well. I was hoping to get a taste of that for myself by picking up a good ribeye (my favorite), but sadly a regular customer had cleaned them out of ribeyes for a Valentine's Day dinner shortly before our visit. Not to worry! Becky sent me home with some of their biggest sellers, ground beef and all beef hot dogs. My family is eagerly awaiting a warm day off so we can enjoy both hot off the grill!

You can get your hands on some JBH beef by contacting Becky at the number listed or you can pick some up at Yoder Discount Grocery in Yoder, or Meridian Grocery in Newton.





Miller's Homestyle Meals

The second I opened my car door outside the Miller's home/kitchen facility, I could smell the warm aroma of fresh baked bread. I arrived on Wednesday, which is when the Miller's and their three employees make bierocks, also known as my lucky day! Arno met me at the front door and showed me through the house and into their licensed kitchen which is a small area partitioned off of their garage. Inside, I met Arno's wife Linda, their daughter, Melanie, and their other two employees Mindy and Janelle. The ladies had an efficient assembly line going. Mindy was minding the dough, rolling it out into small rounds and then passing it to Linda who was stuffing it with whatever was in the delicious filling, and then passing the stuffed bierock to Melanie, who was shaping them and then passing each one to Janelle, who was arranging them all on a baking sheet, putting them in, and then taking them out of the oven. While the ladies baked we all chatted and got to know one another.

Somewhere around the fall of 2012, a friend suggested to Linda and Arno that home cooked, frozen meals would work well, as they were looking for a venture that the family could work on together. In May of 2013 their kitchen was completed and inspected and they set out on their big adventure. They began at the Reno County Farmers Market that spring and have been going strong since. I enjoyed hearing about each individual's personal adventures too. The three young ladies in the kitchen had lived and/or taken mission trips to Kenya, Thailand, and Haiti. Linda and Arno told me of their adventures with raising children and Linda's current battle with cancer. I was inspired by each of their spirits of teamwork, service, and kindness.

Judging by the taste and smell of the fresh baked bierock they sent me home with, that spirit is definitely translated in the taste of the food they provide. In the fast paced lifestyle in which most of us live, convenience foods are an inevitability. How cool is it that we can still have convenience with home cooked flavor? The Millers will even deliver right to your door!



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millershomestylemeals@gmail.com
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Facebook & Instagram



Contact Info:
(620) 662-4303
You can find Miller's Produce at the Reno County Farmers Market

Miller's Produce

Roman and Ruth Miller met many years ago in Paraguay, nearly 5,000 miles from Hutchinson. Ruth was a nurse with a mission group, and Roman had come to Paraguay with his family years before by way of Michigan. The two married and decided it was time to come back to the States and put down roots with family, community, and church. They inherited a plot of land from Ruth's family and put a mobile home on the property. The Millers attribute the farmers' market years for the ability to build a new home on their property for their children, grandchildren, and other family to enjoy now, and for years to come.



Ruth enjoys keeping her home and attributes most of the hard work of growing the food to her husband. Although she said she does help with washing, packaging, and selling at the farmers market, she likes to spend most of her time there. Roman is still hard at work at 82. He grows their crops in several greenhouses which he built himself, and in a large outdoor garden. He keeps the greenhouses warm in cold weather using wood burning stoves which he also built himself out of steel barrels.

All the years of homesteading in Paraguay clearly made Roman a very resourceful and hard working man. Ruth and Roman attended the Reno County Farmers Market for 22 years and then left for 2 years. As a regular patron of the market, I am thrilled to say that they will be returning this year. After having gotten the grand tour of the Miller's gardens, I can't wait to get my hands on some of those beautiful veggies! It was a gardener's paradise. Perfect rows of spinach, lettuce, peppers, cucumbers, green beans, beets, onions, and more. Come down to the Reno County Farmers Market and check them out!

Moore's Farm

Moore's Farm was born of the desire to live life to the fullest, to seize the day and follow one's dream. Adam Moore's dream, to be exact. Adam was working a conventional job before his daughters were born. He had married his wife, Jeanne, in 2011 and their daughters Raina and Vella, respectively, came soon after. When Raina was still a baby, the couple's daycare closed and they found themselves without childcare, which meant someone was going to have to stay home. Fortunately, Adam's boss was a very kind and generous man who allowed him to take a leave of absence and still keep his benefits. During this time, Adam started gardening. He wanted to make a little money to contribute to the family expenses, and since he now had produce and had already been keeping chickens for eggs, he decided to take his goods to the Reno County Farmers Market to make a little extra money for the family.

Eventually, Adam had to go back to work and his boss was so inspired by and supportive of what he was doing that he allowed him to take Fridays off so that he had time to tend the garden and continue to attend the market. Soon afterward, his boss passed away suddenly and unexpectedly. The business was taken over by someone less supportive, and Adam was told that he would have to go back to working 5 days a week if he wanted to keep his job. Tragically, around the same time, his uncle also passed away and left an inheritance with no beneficiaries, and a note expressing how he regretted not following his dreams. Adam was one of the next of kin.

He saw the sign. He went home with the inheritance, handed it to Jeanne to be used for expenses, and said he needed to quit that job and pursue gardening full time. 7 years later, he is making a full time income and loving his time spent outside in his garden, with his chickens, making his soap, and spending time with his family. Adam and I had to do our interview by phone due to time incompatibility, which is probably for the best because I had tears rolling down my cheeks as I listened to his story. I started tearing up as he was telling me about the tragic passing of the boss who believed in him so enthusiastically, and the uncle who felt he never really lived, and then the tears turned into ones of hope and inspiration.

Adam is a dedicated local producer and has served on the board of the Reno County Farmers Market, and currently serves as the Market Manager on Saturdays. He feels it is so important for us to be connected to our community, especially through food. He wants others to know that if the garden is calling you, the farmers market is a great way to get started with your business and nurture your spirit. You can find Moore's Farm at the Reno County Farmers Market nearly every Saturday, or contact him by the avenues listed.



Contact Info:
(620) 200-5522
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Phil's Farm & Butchery

Phil's Farm & Butchery is a specialty meat shop just off of highway 50, on Whiteside Road. They raise, butcher, process, package, and sell their own livestock. I met with Phil one afternoon in his retail shop, and I feel like we could have "chewed the fat" all day. Turns out that when it comes to food, Phil and I share a lot of the same convictions. Most of all, we are both passionate about the benefits of eating locally raised/grown foods that are produced with love and care. Rest assured that if you buy Phil's mango habanero chicken, for example, the mangos and habaneros were sliced, diced, or pureed right there by Phil's Farm family members. They take pride in using freshly prepared ingredients when processing their locally sourced meats and meals.



Contact Info:
(620) 200-8319
Facebook & Instagram

Like so many of our local producers, Phil's Farm & Butchery is family owned and operated. Phil, his wife, Lucy, and their son Jordan and his wife, Lisa are the primary employees. They have extra employees that come in on Wednesdays for the big work of processing. The family started out with chickens before expanding to beef and pork. Every member has their special jobs. Jordan and Lucy work out the flavors and recipes to create Phil's Farm's signature sausages. Jordan likes the hot stuff. They also make specialty items such as black sausage for Halloween, Jerk seasoned pork chops, and jalapeno bacon.

As Phil and I talked, we connected on the topic of how food can spark joy and bring us together. The simple things like making a new recipe, sharing a meal with friends and family, and having discussions about what we like or don't like can bring us together and help us to be joyful in the present moment. That was fitting considering that Phil's is the perfect place to pick up something different for your backyard barbeques or picnics this season. Your guests will be delighted by the different flavors and unique pairings found in Phil's meat selection. They also carry ready-made meals if you are a go-getter with no time for cooking.



Polk's Farm Market

Polk's Farm Market is a small roadside stand located at 8315 Old K-61 Highway N in Medora, Kansas. It was created by Earl and Pam Polk. Earl was a 5th generation produce farmer and he learned the ropes from his grandfather, Earl Stoughton of Riverbanks Orchard. He graduated from Kansas State University with a degree in fruit science and met the love of his life, Pam, while working side by side at the orchard. They were married in 1965, and they opened their farmstand in 1977.

In 1978, they planted 1000 apple, 1000 peach, and 100 each of cherry and apricot trees on their property in Burrton, and in 1981, they welcomed their only child, daughter Sparkle. Soon after, in 1985, Earl was a founding member of the Reno County Farmers Market, and worked diligently to build it into the market we know and love today. He was passionate about growing produce and interacting with his customers. Poetically, and tragically, Earl passed away on Wednesday, July 7th, 2021, while working his booth at the farmers market.

Today, Pam, Sparkle, and Sparkle's husband Luke continue the family tradition of growing produce, running the farm market in Medora, and attending the Reno County Farmers Market. Due to the 1980's farming crisis, weather, and drought over the years, only 125 of the original fruit trees on the Polk's property remain.

Even so, the family business and spirit endure. Sparkle now serves as Chairperson on the board, and she and Pam, and sometimes Sparkle's daughter Sophie, are at the farmers market most Saturdays during the open season. Polk's Farm Market is still open in Medora, just off of old K-61 highway, in its original location mid-August through December. They offer Native American decor, nostalgia toys, chocolates and candies, dried fruit, nuts, jams and jellies, apples, potatoes, onions, peaches, pears, plums, sweet potatoes, local honey, cherry cider, cider slush (in season), gourds, and pumpkins. The roadside market is in its prime in the fall and is a great place to take your family photos at no charge.

Contact Info:
(620) 543-6628

Facebook & Instagram
Reno County Farmers Market



Rabbit Patch

Allow me to introduce you to Marilyn Johnson of Rabbit Patch produce. Her story begins in New York City by way of Topeka, Kansas. Marilyn moved to New York as a young adult. Before long, she established a career as a paper engineer. Now, I'm sure your first question is the same as mine: what on Earth does a paper engineer do? She answered me by explaining that it is a paper engineer that designs things such as children's pop-up books. Marilyn's job, however, was to design boxes for product packaging. She worked for the company we now know as L'Oreal, and Godiva Chocolate designing those oh, so satisfying boxes that we're all familiar with. She was given a choice by her first interviewer to work with her hands or on a computer, and she chose to work with her hands.

Contact Info:
Reno County Farmers Market.



While living in NYC, Marilyn got involved in urban gardening because, well, she likes to work with her hands. Subsequently, an opportunity presented itself back in Kansas and she decided to take it. She bought a home in Hutchinson and set to work transforming her typical Kansas backyard into a large and quite efficient urban garden. As you might imagine, her organization and process are very impressive. She has built small arches along her bed which serve as mini greenhouses when needed, to keep her plants warm when it's cold, cool when it's hot, and safe from pests and inclement weather. She uses no chemicals on her plants. Every row is equipped with drip irrigation hoses that lay right on top of the soil to minimize evaporation and maximize water efficiency. She offers colorful lettuce mixes, beets, radishes, carrots, arugula, herbs, garlic, and more. You can find Marilyn and Rabbit Patch veggies at the Reno County Farmers Market where her display is just as appealing and meticulous as her urban farm.

Rose's Pastries

Rose's Pastries is a long time favorite in Reno County. For 25 years, Rose Eash has been cooking up sweet treats and other baked goods from the bakery attached to her home just outside of Yoder, and she's still having just as much fun as ever. She started when her youngest child was two years old, attending the Wichita farmers market, and then moved to the Reno County Farmers Market around 2017. Now Rose has grandchildren and they LOVE to help out in the bakery. They are learning important skills like how to work as a team, how to be a good steward of a shared space, how to follow a recipe, and so many other jewels of wisdom that grandmas are so good at teaching. They even have handmade bracelets in the shop which they are selling to save money for their individual wants. For instance, young Jaden, who was accompanying us for the interview, is saving to buy a race car-the full sized kind.

I came into the bakery from a cold and windy day outside, and as I stepped through the doorway, I was hit by the warm smell of rising bread and cinnamon, a remnant of the cinnamon rolls that Rose and Jaden had just finished baking as I arrived. We visited in the bakery, and as the clock struck the hour, it gave off a loud "Choo Choooo, Choo Choooo". I found it interesting and, of course, had to ask. It turns out that this clock was a reminder of Rose's father who loved to ride the train. Now she gets a reminder of him every time the clock rolls forward to another hour. Rose was born in Ohio and then moved to Florida as a teenager. Finally, she landed in Kansas and this is where her business began to blossom or "flour", if you will.

It wasn't long before another little person appeared, and then a little while later another. Some more time went by before Rose's daughter came in to join us. There is no doubt that Rose's family connections are as warm, rich, and sweet as her treats. If you pay a visit to her bakery, you will see photos of her children and grandchildren all over, as well as recipe cards hanging on the wall, and, no, you can't have the recipes. Those are guarded family secrets, and for good reason!

Rose's Pastries offers items such as cakes, pies, bread, rolls, cookies, and more. She even offers gluten free options. She usually has some gluten free items ready made, and can make other items with advance ordering. Rose can be found on Wednesdays and Saturdays at the Reno County Farmers Market, and at her home bakery just north east of Yoder on Longview Road. You may also contact Rose using one of the options listed for advance ordering.



Contact Info:
(620) 200-8319
Facebook & Instagram
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Contact Info:
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Reno County Farmers
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RR Leis Farms

RR Leis Farm began as a way for Rusty Leis to stay busy after retirement. After working for Textron Aviation for 34 years, he was ready for some "R & R", so to speak, and what better way to rest and relax in retirement than to start gardening. He was also looking to keep busy, active and healthy, and the garden checks all of those boxes as well. The Leis had always kept a small garden for the family, so it felt like a natural transition.

The other "R" to this operation is Rusty's wife, Rose. Rose is not yet retired. She drives a van for Hesston School District, and when she's not working, she enjoys baking yummy treats to add to Rusty's produce selection. She makes sweet breads like banana, pumpkin, and lemon poppyseed, as well as cinnamon rolls, coffee cake, cakes, and cookies.

I paid a visit to the Leis' home on a sunny and windy Kansas day in May. The Leis gave me a tour of their garden, which was so picturesque sitting in front of an old barn that was starting to fall down on the adjacent property. Even though it was dilapidated, it was still such a perfect backdrop for an idyllic garden in Kansas and I couldn't help but notice its beauty. I was impressed with the size of the Leis' garden and the variety contained within it. It was still early in the growing season at the time of my visit, so the plants were small. Even so, they had tomatoes, peppers, squash, zucchini, beets, turnips, okra, cucumbers, and onions, all looking like they couldn't wait for the summer heat to show up so they could explode into production.

Rose and Rusty invited me into their home to get out of the sun and wind, and offered me a cold bottle of water to finish our chat. Rose had just baked a fresh batch of sugar cookies. They were star shaped with a pale blue icing. As we were talking about all manner of things, I was having a hard time not being distracted by wanting to eat one. Even though I stay gluten free most of the time, I was tempted to speak up and ask if it would be okay to snatch one right off the pan. Not wanting to be rude, I refrained and stuck to the topic at hand.

You can find RR Leis Farm at the Reno County Farmers Market nearly every Saturday during market season, and on Wednesdays during peak growing season. Rose and Rusty find great joy in attending the market and interacting with their community, so be sure to stop by their table and say hello while you peruse the colorful fresh produce and delectable baked goods they offer. You can also contact them as listed for special orders.



Sasnak Farm

Upon turning into the driveway at Sasnak Farms, I came across my first photo opportunity. This big beautiful cow was laying in the sun and looking like she was enjoying the day as much as I was. I continued down the driveway to the retail/milking building and met with Merle and Karen Thiessen. I dug right in asking how the Thiessen's got started in the dairy business. Turns out, Merle has been a dairy farmer since he was 12 years old. His family has been doing it for 87 years. To say that he's a seasoned pro would be an understatement. When his older brothers set out for the wheat harvest in his 12th year, it was up to Merle to take over the care of the cattle and the milking. He had been showing cattle for 4-H and already knew the ropes so he jumped in with both feet. He calls his life's work "a 4-H project that went crazy". At first they ran the cream separator and sold the cream to a creamery while giving the skim milk to hogs and calves. Merle and his brother Kelly decided to upgrade their facility so they could start selling grade milk at their grandfather's place. They sold milk from there for about 2 years until the barn caught fire and burned down. Fortunately, no livestock was lost, so Merle began the search for a new location. They found their current location shortly after and have been running the dairy from there since. They are a state inspected facility producing grade A raw milk.

Merle explained to me the degree of labor involved in being a dairy farmer. The work is constant. To quote him warmly "Why a person dairies, don't ask me!" He asks himself on a weekly basis, if not daily, but he keeps showing up every day. The couple have two children who they hope will take over the dairy one day, but for now, Merle is the man on duty. And as for the woman on duty, Karen sticks to making her sandhill plum jelly and leave the cattle to Merle.

Having visited several farms by now, I began to notice that when it comes to livestock, everyone seems to have their favorite breeds. Merle's grandfather registered their first Milking Short Horns in 1937 and they have been raising them ever since, mostly due to their hardiness and the high level of butterfat. The Thiessen's were kind enough to send me home with a gallon of milk, and I can attest to the delicious creaminess of their milk, which goes great with chocolate chip cookies, by the way! Merle also gave me a good tip for keeping your raw milk good longer: he said that if you shake the jug every time you get into the refrigerator, it helps keep the fats incorporated in the milk and helps to extend its life. You can find Sasnak Farm on Facebook or at the number listed.

Contact Info:
(620) 960-1331
Facebook

SchoeVille Farm

SchoeVille Farms is a small family farm owned by Jordon and Eric Schoenecker and located east of Hutchinson on 4th Ave. The day of my visit I had the pleasure of being joined by Amanda Lindahl, our sponsor from Kansas State University. We all met in the Schoenecker's driveway and quickly got started with our tour of the property. Jordon walked us over to the large garden just a little way beyond their home.

As we walked, I began with my typical opening question of "How did you get started doing this?" Jordon explained that she started with two small raised beds which are no longer in use. She found that she was quite good at growing plants and that gardening is quite relaxing. Using as many reclaimed/



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Facebook & Instagram



repurposed materials as possible, she and Eric continued to build more raised beds. The garden is in the sandhills which means that they needed to cover the area with cardboard and then build up with compost. And that's what they did. They added a very nice wire trellis archway to the center row for climbing beans and peas that gives the garden a festive feel. In the garden, they had plenty of greens, pansies and peas coming up. They also had pinwheels spread out around the garden. I kind of assumed that they were the contribution of the Schoenecker's daughter, but it turns out that the movement and reflections coming from them serve to deter squirrels that like to eat young vegetable sprouts. After visiting the gardens, Eric and Jordon showed us to the chicken coop. We looked at the chickens for a moment before peeking in at the roosting boxes to check for eggs. Inside, we found another of Jordon's resourceful ideas. She uses paint pans to line the roosting boxes. This makes collecting the eggs easy because the eggs roll down into the paint reservoir once they have been laid.

Jordon is inspired by gardening and hopes one day to offer on farm visits with local school children to educate them about their food and where it comes from. The Schoeneckers are starting that tradition at home with their daughters, Naomi and Sophia. Naomi loves to help mom and dad pull weeds and even has her own pretend farmstand on the front porch. You can find SchoeVille Farms at the Reno County Farmers Market or see the contact information listed.

Spare's Produce

Who says you can't go back home? That's exactly what I did when I went to St. John to visit with Tim and Felicia Spare. To date myself a bit, Tim was one of my grade school students while I was an aide to the art teacher as a senior at St. John High School. I did not remember this, but Tim did. In fact, my parents used to buy produce from Tim's grandparents when I was in grade school. I pulled into the driveway that led to that original farmstand I used to visit as a child, about 30 years ago (maybe a little longer). I sent Tim a text saying that I had arrived. It was nostalgic sitting in front of the old building with the stone front porch that I used to sit on as a child, cooling myself while my parents gathered bushels of tomatoes to take home and can. Turns out they don't use that old farmstand anymore, and he was at the new location just a bit down the road. The first sight upon pulling into the drive were the two large greenhouses which contain a portion of the Spare's produce, herbs, and flowers. The outdoor gardens lay just outside the greenhouse.

I drove to the right down the gravel driveway to the warehouse where I met with Tim, Felicia, and their daughter Myra. These days, Timothy and his mother, Melodie, run the produce operation. Felicia and other family members help out too, in between working other jobs and caring for children. The Spares grow their produce from seed to harvest. The greenhouses and gardens are filled with incredible variety. At the entrance to the first greenhouse, Tim pointed out some twine that went from ground to ceiling and explained that it was for the cherry tomato plants to climb. I couldn't believe that they would grow that high, but he assured me that they absolutely do and sometimes beyond. This place was really a delight for the eyes. There were differing shades of green, red, and purple in the lettuce patches, curly kale leaves, blooming zinnias, some kind of tiny blue flowers, perfect rows of tomatoes, and cucumbers.

I couldn't help but think about the amount of work involved in raising these plants from start to finish, harvesting, washing, packaging, transporting, and selling them. That takes a dedication that clearly has a generational impact. Tim and Felicia seem just as passionate about growing food as Tim's grandparents were all those years ago, and they are excited to extend that into a fourth generation with baby Myra. In addition to a huge variety of fresh produce, live plants, cut flowers, and herbs, the Spares also sell eggs. Spare's Produce is also available at the farmers markets in Pratt, Great Bend, and St. John.



Contact Info:
(620) 282-4162
Facebook
Reno County Farmers
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Teck Farms

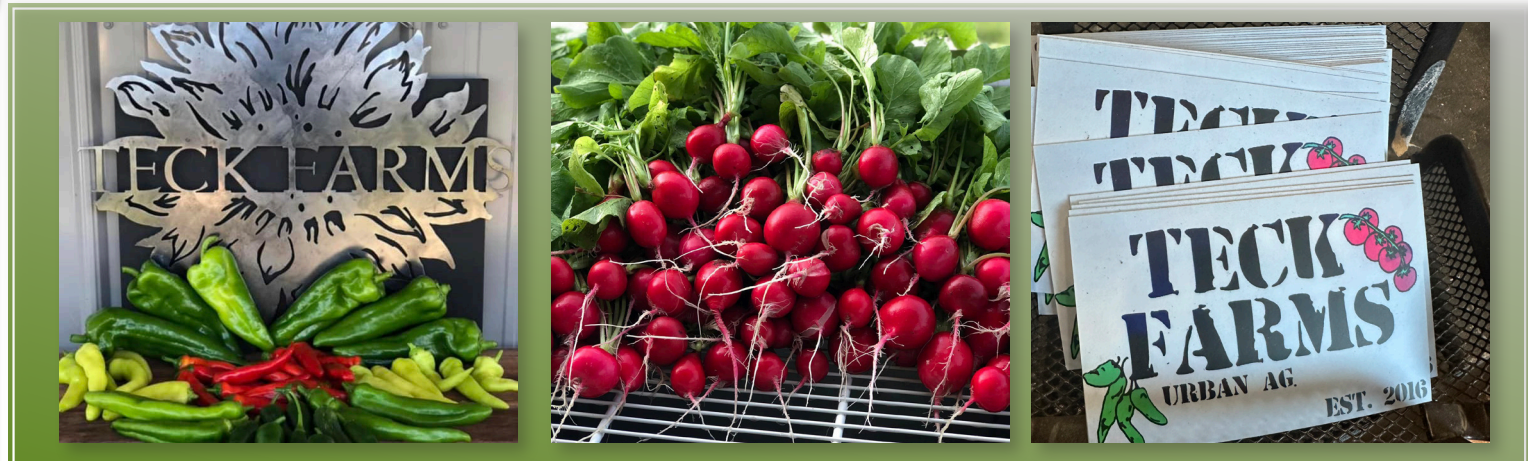
What can I say about Chris and Shawna Tecklenburg? Well, I can definitely say first and foremost that these two have passion, vision, and drive to literally make this world a better, stronger and more sustainable place! I met with Chris to take a tour of the grounds and boy was I impressed! Teck Farms covers 6 acres of land with a number of high tunnels for growing produce, a home for the Tecklenburgs, and one for Chris' parents, an area with chickens and a goat, several utility buildings, a small farm store, and the largest compost pile I have ever seen. I could hear the enthusiasm in Chris' voice as he told me the story of how they acquired the land and got started, even though it was the afternoon and I'm guessing he had been working since early morning. No matter, they are driven by purpose.



Contact Info:
(620) 200-6997
Facebook & Instagram
Teckfarms.com

Chris and Shawna started out living in the house across the street from where Teck Farms is now located. When the plot went up for sale, the owner wanted to sell it to someone who would use it to better the community. As it turned out, the Tecklenburgs were ready to step into that opportunity. Both Chris and Shawna caught the gardening bug from their grannies who were strong and resourceful. They knew this was what they were supposed to do. They purchased the land and on September 1 of 2016, Tecklenburg Farms, LLC was born. Their produce is certified organic and they use a variety of sustainable growing practices to keep their soil healthy, which means more nutritious food! They use low till methods which protects the soil biodiversity, drip irrigation to reduce water usage, and as I mentioned before, lots and LOTS of compost!

The plants are grown from seed. Once they sprout and grow a little, they are brought out of the nursery area to be hardened off. Once they fully mature in the greenhouse, they are harvested and brought back in to be washed and prepared for sale. I found it interesting that they have jacuzzi type jets which dip down into large industrial sized sinks to jostle the greens, cleaning off any sand or debris (and yes, bugs because it's organic). Once the greens are clean, they are moved to a washing machine, like the kind you wash your clothes in, which has been turned into a large salad spinner. As impressive as Teck Farms is now, it's still growing! Chris and Shawna are hard at work constructing and improving the farm store, and plan to add a certified commercial kitchen. In the meantime, they offer a variety of products including a wide array of fresh produce, soaps, and freeze dried eggs and produce. They even had freeze dried ice cream sandwiches. Check out Teck Farms on Facebook, Instagram, and at Teckfarms.com.



Tin Bucket Farms

Welcome to Tin Bucket Farms. A family produce operation consisting of Troy Koehn, his wife Kayla, their three children: Sally, Kinsey, and Bentley, and of course we can't forget the fur babies: Ritzy, Bailey, and Stella. My visit to their farm was packed full of oohs and ahhs as I took in the bright colors and varieties that they had growing both in their outdoor gardens and in the high tunnels. Little Bentley accompanied Troy and I as I was given the grand tour.

Our first stop was a peek in one of the high tunnels where the Koehns were growing their signature salad blend of lettuces. The way that the different colors of lettuce were cuddling one another was just so lovely to look at. Bright greens, rich greens, reds, and purples exploded in splashes of colors and textures that really made me want to eat my "greens". I was excited by the amount of variety that they had growing already in the beginning of April. They even had strawberries growing in one of the high tunnels! Troy picked a big, ripe one off and handed it to me to try because I had mentioned that I had heard that everbearing strawberries had less quality of flavor than June bearing varieties. Boy was I wrong about that! That was one sweet, flavorful, juicy strawberry.

To wrap up our tour, Troy led me into the propagation room where Kayla was tending to the newly sprouted plants, which included herbs and decorative plants as well as fruits and vegetables. The couple explained that Troy had been a conventional farmer previously, but he wanted to farm a different way. He also wanted to work at home to spend more time with Kayla and the children.

I had to ask about the name "Tin Bucket". Prior to this venture, the family had had livestock, and were really taken by the galvanized buckets used in the care of the animals. They liked the way they looked as decoration in the gardening areas and wanted to have a name for their business that focused on more than just the produce. Tin Bucket Farms is located about 5 miles northeast of Inman. They attend the Old Town Farmers Market in Wichita which operates from 8 a.m.-1 p.m. on Saturdays during the season, and they are working on a farm store which will be open 5 days per week once completed.

Contact Info:
(620) 755-2084
tinbucketfarms.com
Facebook & Instagram

Zao Life Farms

Jennifer Wilson loves goats. She loved them as a kid (pun intended) and even though her parents wouldn't allow her to have goats when she lived at home, her fascination with them never subsided. As soon as she had the opportunity as an adult, she scooped up her first round of goats around 30 years ago; pygmies to be precise. She has had them off and on ever since. After the pygmies, she tried Nubian goats, and then Saanens and Sables. She loves the milking and kidding, even though it can be emotional at times when babies or mamas don't survive. And then several years ago, her connection with the goats got a little more personal.

In 2010, Jennifer had to have emergency surgery and was diagnosed with Crohn's disease. She knew that she didn't want to live with this disease for the rest of her life, so she began researching how to heal herself of it. Among her lifestyle changes was the elimination of bovine dairy. She turned to her goats for her dairy products instead. Goat cheese, milk, yogurt, and even ice cream, the goats could provide everything she could want in the dairy department. Fast forward to 2022, Jennifer paid a visit to her doctor who then cleared her of having Crohn's disease. Today, Jennifer is symptom free and enjoys her goats as much as ever. One might say it was serendipitous that she had developed her love of goats as a child so that they could help her heal as an adult.

Zao means "blessed life" and that's how Jennifer feels to be living a healthy, busy life with her family, their different businesses, and their goats. Her husband, Sean, and oldest son Cooper help out by hauling large round bales for feed. Daughter Sophie, and youngest son Kanon help out too.

Zao Life Farms offers raw goat's milk and cheese, and they offer ice cream and yogurt by special order. Farms can be found on Facebook and Instagram, or you can contact Jennifer at the number listed. If you are nervous about trying goat dairy, I can tell you that the cheese is amazing on pizza, pasta, salads, hors d'oeuvres, and so much more. Jennifer says that the milk is very similar to almond milk, with a slightly sweet taste. And I'm sure the ice cream and yogurt are just as delectable. ww

Contact Info:
(620) 755-3194
zaolifefarms@gmail.com
Facebook



Farmers Markets



Every Thursday from 4-7 p.m.
June-September
304 West Main Street, Arlington, KS
Find on Facebook



Saturdays from 8-10
Starting in June
101 East Ave B, Buhler, KS
In the Jack's for All Trades parking lot.
Find on Facebook



Saturdays starting in May from 8-11 a.m.
Tuesdays starting in June from 5-7 p.m.
406 West Cole Street, Moundridge, KS
Find on Facebook



Saturdays from 8 a.m.-12 p.m. June-October
710 West Woodside, McPherson, KS
In the blue roundtop at the McPherson County 4-H
Fairgrounds
Find on Facebook
McPherson.k-state.edu



Saturdays from 7:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., May-October
Wednesdays from 10 a.m.-1 p.m., June-October
103 West 2nd, Hutchinson, KS
Find on Facebook
rcfmks.com

YODER FARMERS MARKET

Fridays from 1-5 p.m.
May-August
Main Street Pavillion, Main Street, Yoder, KS
yoderkansas.com

Community Gardens

HUTCHINSON COMMUNITY GARDEN

Hutchinson Community Garden is located on the corner of Severence & Wall Street and has been active for 44 years. They provide a supportive and uplifting environment for gardeners who don't have room to garden at home. Food grown on the property can be shared, but not sold. To learn more, contact Ron Burlie at (620) 727-1069, or Lydia Broyles at (308) 380-0665.

McPHERSON MASTER GARDENERS COMMUNITY GARDEN

The Master Gardener program is sponsored by K-State Research and Extension. They provide education and training in horticulture and cultivation techniques. To learn more about the Master Gardener program, call (620)241-1523 or visit McPherson.k-state.edu.

HUTCHINSON NAACP YOUTH GARDEN

The NAACP Youth garden was started in 2021 by the local chapter to give local minority youth a place to experience an urban garden and learn how to grow food. They raise New Zealand and Netherland Dwarf rabbits, ducks, bees, chickens for meat and eggs, and grow various produce. To learn how to get involved, contact Heather Jobe at (620) 474-0823 or find them on Facebook under Hutchinson NAACP Youth.



Food Pantries & Resources

- *Meals on Wheels (620) 665-5711
Home lunch delivery service 5 days per week (M-F) \$5 per lunch
- *Child Care Links (620) 669-0291
Reimburse childcare providers for meals and snacks that meet USDA guidelines
- *Bread and Cup (620) 662-6665
Free meals on Fridays at 5pm
- *Women, Infant, and Children (620) 259-8442
Income eligible food benefits for women and children up to age 5, and breastfeeding support.
- *Friendship Meals (620) 669-2801
Seniors age 60+, hot noon meals (M-F), frozen meals, weekends/holidays for \$3 per meal or donation.
- *Reno County Food Bank (620) 665-4076
3-day emergency supply of food, clients can utilize services 1 time per 60 days. Pick-up 1:30 to 3:30pm (M-F) via appointment.
- *Pretty Prairie Food Bank (620) 664-7102
10 day supply of food, clients can access 1 time per month.
- *Christian Soup Ministry (620) 899-3912
M/T/Th/Sa 5pm meal with 4:45pm devotion with home delivery services available.
- *Head Start (620) 615-5750
Nutrition services, preschool nutritional meals and snacks.
- *The Emergency Food Assistance (620) 662-8622
USDA food distribution for low income households 1 time per month on varied Sundays.
- *Senior Food Assistance (620) 662-8622
Monthly food boxes for seniors 60+ - advance application, 1st Monday each month.

What's Going on @



K-STATE
Research and Extension

Reno
County



DID YOU KNOW???

The Reno County branch of K-State Research and Extension offers services to protect your home, family, and property such as:



Radon Testing



Plant Identification & Diagnosis



Soil Testing



Water Testing



Insect Identification

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**Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and
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K-State Research and Extension is an equal opportunity
provider and employer.

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Kelli is a graphic designer, writer, Yoga Instructor, NASM Certified Personal Trainer & Nutrition Coach, full-time Outbound Sales Agent, and Media Manager for the Reno County Farmers Market. She is also serving her second term on the board for the RCFM.



**Artwork
by
Kelsi Depew**

Kelsi is a graphic designer, booking agent, artist manager, and homeschool/Roadschool mom. She serves on the Leadership Reno County Alumni Board and the Arlington Community PRIDE Group Board. She is also the coordinator for the Arlington Farm & Art Market. Kelsi spends about a third of her time on tour with her husband, John Depew, a local musician, and their three daughters in their converted van.



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