

Organic Farm

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market is working on attracting customers from Lancaster city.

Boyer lives the farthest away from the auction. The market is geared to the smaller producers who seek an alternative outlet for their crops.

Growers are livestock or poultry farmers tending a few acres of vegetables on the side, Boyer noted.

For the stand, farm market members try to have corn ready for the July 4 holiday. But Boyer plants a wide variety of heirloom and ethnic vegetables for the market and the CSA.

For the market, the Boyers try to provide continuous corn, tomatoes, potatoes, and other vegetables. The market has had slow but steady growth.

The CSA is positioned the same way, Boyer noted.

"We have seen the bottom line go up each year," she said.

The market is perfect for the small grower, she said, and provides an alternative outlet from the standard run of auctions or typical roadside stands.

One customer was looking for Italian eggplant one day, and was so impressed with what she handed her a large sum of money and didn't want the change. The customer told Boyer that they hadn't seen anything "as good or as fresh as this," she said. "They just hand you the money."

For Boyer, she names the three most important things to satisfying customers:

1. Present the produce in an attractive manner. "Really show it off," she said, with color and variety.

2. Offer free samples. She said that many people became set on yellow watermelon if offered the chance to taste it.

3. Keep recipes at the stand. "It's part of my repertoire," she said. "I collect cookbooks. I have gone out of my way to gather recipes."

She gathers information on heirloom, organic vegetables from Mother Earth News and other publications. She also pointed to several catalogs, including:

- Seeds of Change, P.O. Box 15700, Santa Fe, NM 87506-5700.
- Seed Savers, 3076 N. Winn Rd., Decorah, IA 52101.
- Fox Hollow Seed Company, P. O. Box 148, McGrann, PA 16236-0148.
- Heirloom Seeds, P.O. Box 245, W. Elizabeth, PA 15088-0245.
- The Cook's Garden, P.O. Box 535, Londonderry, VT 05148.

Boyer uses poultry and cow manure. She also makes a manure/compost barrel "tea" with other ingredients, including egg shells and compost materials, for garden fertilizer.

All weeds are hand-hoed. Boyer extensively uses biological insects, including praying mantis, lady bugs, and wasps. "I release them every year," she said.

For the first time this year, Boyer will be allowing beehives at the farm to aid in vegetable and fruit pollination.

"I also cultivate my birds," she said. They include bluebirds, sparrows, wrens, swifts, barn swallows, orioles, and woodpeckers. She maintains bird feeders and boxes. She plants flowers to draw butterflies.

Recently Linda and Leon (who works down the road at Conestoga Custom Kitchens) planted a 60-tree antique orchard, with standard and dwarf-sized trees, including apricots, peaches, apples, sweet and sour cherries, plums, and nectarines. Cherries are big sellers, but the Boyers also sell different varieties of blueberries, raspberries, and strawberries.

For the CSA, the Boyers are willing to be flexible to customer's demand. The CSA will hold its first member meeting on Tuesday,

May 4, at 6 p.m. at the Lambert Farm.

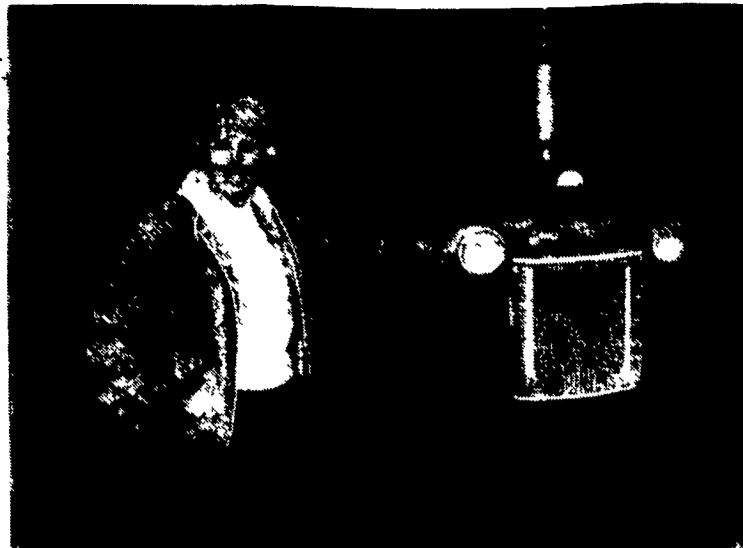
Members will be allowed to pick up their produce every Tuesdays in the evening, from 5 p.m.-9 p.m., noted Linda.

CSAs, Boyer said, allow the family to spend time together and relax in a healthy atmosphere. It also provides an educational experience for the entire family.

Boyer keeps a wide variety of farm animals, including mini-Southdown sheep, a donkey, heirloom geese and ducks, and a 200-hen layer operation with white and brown eggs for customers.

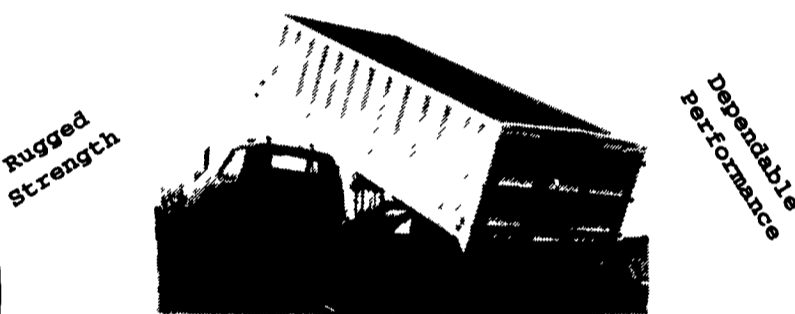
Eventually, as part of the Lambert Farm plan, the Boyers hope to eventually operate a greenhouse and grow hydroponic tomatoes.

She noted that the CSA is one way to keep the heritage of working the land, growing food for the table, alive. Eventually, she believes the CSA itself can feed 50 families — and that would be enough so the Boyers can retire from other work and devote all their time to the CSA.



Growers are livestock or poultry farmers, for the most part, growing a few acres of vegetables on the side, Boyer noted.

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