

# Beth Kreider Plants A Growing Business

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Lancaster Farming Staff

**LEBANON** (Lebanon Co.) — Many 16-year-olds would love to have their own business — be their own boss and have money to tally at the end of the day's sales.

Beth Kreider is one of the lucky ones. But what lots of her peers do not realize is that the perks of having one's own business are not without their price.

Her growing business — raising produce and operating a roadside stand — requires outdoor work in all kinds of weather and at inopportune times. While having her own business enables her to pocket profits, her peers would be surprised that this makes spending money more difficult.

When contemplating a purchase at the mall, Beth is prone to groan and remark, "Do you realize I must sell 20 boxes of tomatoes to buy that?"

During the recent Lebanon Area Fair, Beth needed to get up at 5 a.m. to pick produce before hurrying off to the fair to fulfill fair queen duties.

Beth grows vegetables and flowers to sell at a roadside stand at the edge of the family's farmland. Located next to the Lebanon Country Club and Golf Course, Oak St., Lebanon, the roadside stand attracts many passersby.

Beth said that she grew up helping her grandmother in the many gardens surrounding her home. Her grandmother sold produce from her garden until two years ago, when she passed away.

Beth took over the produce business on about 2,000 square feet of ground. Although she receives some help from her parents, the majority of work is Beth's responsibility. She plants cucumbers, tomatoes, zucchini, watermelon, cantaloupe, bell peppers, corn, and a variety of flowers. Her dad spreads manure of the ground and helps with rolling out black plastic to help with weed control.

Last year, Beth spend a lot of time watering the produce, but this year's generous rainfall saved her hours of heaving buckets of water to the garden.

"Even though it was dry last year, I almost got a better crop than this year," she said.

In the best two years, Beth has noticed that demand for cut flowers is increasing, which is fortunate since flowers and tomatoes are her favorite crops. Raising flowers requires deadheading the blooms to encourage continual blooms and daily cutting.

The garden is located next to the roadside stand, and as long as Beth is working in the garden, she can assist customers. But when the daily chores are done, Beth returns to the family farm, which is back a long lane beside the garden and not within view of the farmhouse.

Beth continues her grandmother's tradition of having customers pay by the honor system. Customers pay for produce by depositing money in a jar.

Although some farm stands have trouble with kids and adults stealing cash boxes, Beth said, "We rarely have



**Bright, bold sunflowers capture the attention of customers at Beth's roadside venture. Raising and selling produce next to a country club and golf course brings heavy traffic and potential customers.**

had trouble with people stealing. The honor system seems to work well, although sometimes it's difficult to determine exactly how much money should be in the jar."

Parents Harold and Barb Kreider have a poultry and beef operation on the farm's 200 acres. Beth's parents and brothers, Dan, 20, and Kevin, 13, take care of the broiler houses and the crops. The broiler houses are fully computerized.

A telephone sensor measures electricity, temperatures, water, and ventilation and other indoor conditions and will alert the family of extreme conditions that require attention by dialing them on the phone.

Beth said, "Because the chicken houses are fully computerized, they don't require a lot of work. I help out occasionally by going through the house to pick up dead birds, but most of the time my parents and brothers take care of everything."

Beth, a junior at Cedar Crest High School, uses her produce business as an FFA project. She said that FFA is popular at Cedar Crest and has one of the largest chapters in the county. Beth holds the office of reporter for her chapter and participates in all the public speaking events.

"I'm not very shy. Speaking always

comes easy for me," she said.

Beth plays volleyball on church, school, and community leagues. The school team requires practice from 6 p.m.-9 p.m. daily before school is in session and 5 p.m.-7 p.m. during school days.

"I love volleyball. It's so competitive," Beth said.

Beth also raises a calf or two for an FFA project but never got into showing.

Beth plans to continue her roadside stand as long as possible.

She is undecided about college. Previously she eyed a career as a veterinarian, but six years of schooling seems a bit overwhelming at this stage in her life. She said that if she goes to college, it will probably be for ag science.

"If I go to college, I might not be able to continue the roadside stand, but it's something I could do if I got married and had children," she said.

Even if the venture ends when she graduates, Beth perceives the lessons she learned from having her own business will stay with her for a lifetime.

"Having my own business has really helped me to grasp the concept of the value of money," she said. In addition, she's learned responsibility, time management, and the secrets to growing healthy produce and flowers.



**While Beth runs her own produce business, the remaining Kreider family members operate a poultry and beef farm on 200 acres. Parents, Harold and Barb Kreider, have the help of their sons Kevin, 13, and Dan, 20, who missed the photo session.**

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