

Farms to Food Banks Farmer Spotlight:



Sustainable Harvest Farm donates their USDA certified organic produce to Farms to Food Banks

Author: Feeding Kentucky

First Published: 4/10/18

London, KY – When Ford Waterstrat journeyed to Kentucky to compete as a professional cyclist in 1995, there was no way he could have guessed he'd end up purchasing a farm right there in the

bluegrass. Waterstrat who was born in Seattle, Washington and lived a childhood moving around the country, decided to stay in KY when he was recruited to the cycling program at Lindsey Wilson College in Columbia. It was there that he met his wife, Amanda, and dreams of a life spent outdoors in rural Kentucky first called to them.

Together they moved to Georgetown where Amanda pursued her Ph.D in Physiology at University of Kentucky and Ford spent his days teaching. Their new neighbors were Elmwood Stock Farm, and so, looking to gain a new skill, Ford started working as a farmhand. It was during his time there that Ford realized his love of farming. In 2009, Ford and Amanda moved to London and out of an appreciation for outdoors, a love of wholesome food and respect for the environment, Sustainable Harvest Farm was born. Today they are a USDA certified organic farm with 15 acres of mixed produce that they sell through wholesale, farmers markets and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA).

“We had no money, no farm, no equipment. We saved up money through teaching. Now I've been farming full time for two and a half years” said Ford.

Their CSA program is their most popular selling method with 150 – 200 people buying produce directly from the farm. They deliver to a large service area ranging from Lexington down to Knoxville, Tennessee. The CSA boxes include their mixed vegetables, a farm-fresh cheese share, a fresh-baked bread share, grass-fed beef, and farm-raised pork.





A recent development to the CSA program now makes it completely customizable, allowing the consumer to choose what they want in their boxes as well as the size of the boxes. With this update, their meat shares are now available year round in the CSA boxes, rather than exclusively the winter months.

“I think it’s what the customers want, so we want to change how we are doing things to make it better for them” Ford explained.

In addition to a care for their customers’ needs, Sustainable Harvest Farm is helping to feed Kentuckians in need. They have donated 7,973 pounds of surplus or number 2 grade produce to local pantries since 2014 through the Farms to Food Banks program. This produce is distributed at no cost to those in need. In exchange, farmers are reimbursed for the cost of picking, packaging, and shipping, so that they don’t have a large financial loss on their donations.

“I feel very fortunate because we’ve got the God’s Food Pantry in London. It’s so easy and convenient to drop produce off there. When we know that you all are willing to pay for it, it helps cover some of our costs too” Ford commented.

As can be guessed from the name, Sustainable Harvest Farm is committed to sustainability. Instead of using weed killer to clear the land for harvest, Sustainable Harvest Farm uses a self-sustaining method by rotating their cattle from field to field to clear out and fertilize the land. A large reason that they chose to go USDA certified organic is because they felt it was a way to care for the land, the food they produce, the environment and people. “We feel good about feeding our family the food that we raise.”

The Farms to Food Banks program has also helped further their mission of environmental stewardship through its mission to reduce food waste in Kentucky through buying the “ugly” produce that doesn’t quite make the cut for wholesale markets and would normally be thrown out.

“As we’ve expanded and started selling to the wholesale market, we have found they are very picky about the quality of grade. They only take a perfectly blemish free item, but to get a lot of perfectly blemish free items we’ve got to grow a lot of stuff so it’s nice to know there’s a potential market for the stuff that doesn’t make the number one grade. Even if I weren’t getting paid for it, it’s great to know that instead of composting or going to the animals, it is going to a good home. Farms to Food Banks has been able to take a lot of our extra vegetables.” Ford praised.



You can sign up for Sustainable Harvest Farm’s CSA program or read more about Ford, his family, and the farm on their website at: <http://www.sustainableharvestfarm.com/>

