

Jessica Sanford ([00:00:09](#)):

We are a wholesale, production-oriented organic berry farm in Vermont.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:00:14](#)):

Today's episode comes to you from Charlotte, Vermont, where we visit with Adam Hausmann and Jessica Sanford of Adam's Berry Farm. Today's visit is part two. The previous episode was a farm tour and a field walk through the berry plants and high tunnels and the barn. This episode shares the growing practices, farming history, and steps to the development of this farm business. I'm your host, Andy Chamberlin, and I take you behind the scenes with growers who share their strategy for achieving the triple bottom line of sustainability.

([00:00:45](#)):

These interviews unravel how they're building their businesses to balance success across people, profits, and our planet. If this show has impacted you, I'd love to hear it via email or publicly as a review in the podcast app. The Farmer's Share is supported by the Vermont Vegetable & Berry Growers Association and the Ag Engineering Program of the University of Vermont Extension. If you enjoy this show and want to help support its programming, you can make a one-time or reoccurring donation on our website by visiting [thefarmersshare.com/support](http://thefarmersshare.com/support).

Adam Hausmann ([00:01:22](#)):

So I'm Adam Hausmann, and I operate Adam's Berry Farm with my partner Jessica Sanford. Certified organic, real organic, diversified berry farm that is production-oriented with the goal of feeding our community with delicious, nutritious berries. The farm was started in 2001. I used to live down in the mountains in Lincoln and initially I was working at a different farm and had put in, I guess, going in the direction of wanting my own operation for various reasons.

([00:02:10](#)):

And I experimented with garlic and some other things up in the mountains, and then eventually settled on berries for a number of reasons, I guess. Some of it was market gaps at that point. Some of it was there were a lot of people growing berries conventionally, but very few people that were really concentrating on organic berries. Or maybe a vegetable farm had a little bit of strawberries, a little bit of raspberries or something like that, but there wasn't a true focus, and so it seemed like there was an opening there.

([00:02:49](#)):

And then it was also just an overall interest in perennials, and just a general interest where growing cabbage for life wasn't going to excite me. It just didn't do it for me, whereas the fruit really excited me and the perennials really excited me. So started in Lincoln, and then for various reasons was moving out of Lincoln. And I had a good friend, Abby Nelson, who worked for [inaudible 00:03:29] I guess at that point, suggested looking down at the Intervale for land. I had been looking at land off and on for a little while, and I was at this point where I would find land, but then I couldn't figure out how... I could afford the land, but it didn't have a house on it. And I couldn't figure out how to get established without massive debt really, and it was a hindrance on moving forward, I guess.

([00:03:59](#)):

And so Abby suggested looking down at the Intervale, I knew very little about the Intervale at that point. I knew they did this fall fair where they had this bike-powered Ferris wheel or something like that. And that was about my knowledge on the Intervale, and it was where Gardener's Supply was. That was what

I knew. And I went down there and had my tour, and I guess some brief interviews. And then within probably two or three weeks I had submitted a business plan and gone through the application process, and signed a lease. And so that was 2002, and I started leasing 10 acres down there. And it was a great place to land, and it was a great place where, I think I said it outside, but I'm not sure I would've been farming still if I hadn't ended up down at the Intervale. I'm not sure I would've made it, honestly.

[\(00:05:03\)](#):

Working for other people is wonderful as far as making mistakes and learning as well, but also having some of the support of the Intervale. At that point, it was a true incubator program, there was a lot more of business planning advice that was built into the program and a little more guidance. But then the real benefit was also just being surrounded by a collection of other growers down there, and the community that it provided. And everyone was busy and doing their own thing and had their own businesses, but it kept you motivated. I'd look out and Arethusa would be, they were across the road from us and Half Pint and all these other farms that were around ICF of course, and Diggers. And when you were leaving late at night and there were still people down there, it felt good.

[\(00:05:58\)](#):

You're like, okay, I'm not the only crazy one that's still out here pushing myself. And the other thing that was really valuable about being down there and getting established was just the exchange of information that happened. Whereas if you had a problem with a pest or disease within a day, you could usually find someone that had experience with that and knew how to manage it or could point you in the right direction. And same goes with just the proximity to UVM and people like Anne Hazlerig, you had a lot of community support there. And so for us while we were down there, it allowed us to get established with really minimal debt. But also, it allowed us probably more importantly to establish connections in a community and connections with as far as even a brand as far as a farm goes, where we started to really get to know all the restaurants and all the chefs, and you follow chefs around. Restaurants come and go, but the chefs stay in the community and so you really develop those relationships.

[\(00:07:06\)](#):

And you develop relationships with different buyers at the co-ops and the natural health food stores around. And they probably pushed me along just as much as kind of my own internal push that was happening. But as far as quality and consistency, I give Mary, who was at City Market forever as their buyer, a tremendous amount of credit on she initially, we weren't certified organic. We were doing everything organically, but it wasn't certified. And she pushed me to get certified, and then she pushed me on quality and consistency and all these things that just made me a better grower but also better as far as just sales and relationships within the community, it made the business stronger. So we were there for I think about a decade, and we flirted with leaving a couple of times due to flooding, due to just personal things going on or just wanting change and all these different things. But we were there for about a decade. And then eventually when I truly realized, I was like, okay, I want to keep on going and stick with this operation and I guess more actively started looking at land again, that was pre-Irene, but after many floods. And so we ended up where we are through working with a gentleman that is in this area that owns a lot of land and a lot of farmland and is very supportive of different farmers here. And then also connecting with the Vermont Land Trust and the Farmland Access Program. And that was huge in our transition finding land. We wanted to stay within Chittenden County and the Burlington area just because our markets were established there. And I didn't want to move up to Kingdom or something like that and be driving everywhere and almost feeling like I'd have to start over as far as the market side of things. By the time we moved here, we had pretty strong connections within the community and the markets and farmer's markets and so I wanted to be in striking distance in Burlington.

[\(00:09:50\)](#):

And the challenge with that is affordability of land and land access and affordability is a challenge all the time, but for a grower that's big. And the Farmland Access program made it so that we could afford this land, cut the land price in half, and allowed us to transition here, still make investments in the property and grow and get reestablished here. And now we're a decade into being here and it's home. This is it. I always say I felt like I truly became like a farmer grower when we moved to this property where I was forced to manage in a whole different level as far as the property and think about the farm scape in a different way, whereas it didn't really... I rented the land, I went down there, I worked the land, I went home.

[\(00:10:55\)](#):

And you went home, there's a beauty to that, your brain turned off in a different way. But your brain does not turn off and I look out from here and I can see our high tunnels and I can see the fields, I can see storms rolling in, whatever it is. So you're always thinking about the farm here, but it's also that connection. I love the connection and the life that comes with that as well. So yeah, so that's a little bit of, I guess our history. And then as far as that's the farm history. And then I don't know if Jess wants to touch on anything as well on that.

Andy Chamberlin [\(00:11:35\)](#):

How was it renting land when you were establishing blueberry plants? That seems like a very permanent thing, and I wouldn't think they would want to rent land for something like that.

Adam Hausmann [\(00:11:52\)](#):

At that point, there were a number of growers, including some that were grandfathered into the Intervale. So I had the security. If I wanted to stay there, I could have stayed there, I could still be there. And so when I embarked on the establishment, I knew that as long as I want to be here, this is an option. So it made me committed, willing to take the risk. I knew it kind of evolved from there to more of a loose three to five year lease, I think was the incubator program. And then it seems like now mostly everyone is there, kind of grandfathered back in again. But if I had known, okay, I only have five years here, obviously it wouldn't have been an option. I mean, I guess it could have been an option, but it would've been a crazy option to do.

[\(00:12:44\)](#):

I guess starting off down there, when I started, you had access to equipment, so there are implements, things like that where I had my own tractor, I had some degree of independence that way, but you'd access to plows, discs, whatever, cultivators, whatever you might need. You had access to storage, walk-in coolers, all of these major ticket items that really can set you back as a young grower and you just never come out of that hole, the financial hole, of trying to invest in a walk-in. And you think about all the implements that you use and need, and maybe you only use them once or twice a year, but they're so valuable to you.

Andy Chamberlin [\(00:13:33\)](#):

Were all those wrapped up in your rent, included?

Adam Hausmann [\(00:13:36\)](#):

They were at that point wrapped up in the rent and then at some point it shifted where there was kind of an equipment co-op that was separated from the Intervale center at that point and you at that point

had to buy into it. And I elected not to buy into it actually, because I realized that for the cost of buying into it and running the equipment, for what I needed, I could invest in those implements and not be like, okay, I can use this disc at 3:15 on Thursday and have it for two hours. And for me, I want it... First of all, it's weather. It's like you're a grower, it's like when the time is right, you have to pounce. And then secondly, just wanting the ability of like, I want to do this now. I want to get this done and I want to get the plants in the ground or whatever, the cover cropper.

[\(00:14:30\)](#):

So I wanted that flexibility. And a lot of the equipment too, I feel like sometimes it's always been like there's a lot of the veggie equipment that's out there, and it's throughout Vermont there's a lot of veggie equipment. Same goes down at Intervale where it wasn't necessarily the same equipment that I needed to, so it was easier for me to make that investment. But yes, initially you had access to everything, which was a big deal. When we first got down to the Intervale we planted strawberries, fall raspberries the first year and have put in three thousand blueberry bushes that first year. And so initially it was just maintaining, and that fall, I had a light fall raspberry crop, they tasted great. Autumn Bliss was that variety. It's a really nice variety.

[\(00:15:27\)](#):

But that was kind of the first crop. And the next year I had strawberries, fall raspberries, and a very light harvest of blueberries and then it kind of just grew from there really. And it allowed us, initially I thought I was going to do more pick your own than wholesale, I think when I established, but I realized fairly quickly that we weren't getting the volume that we needed. You had to market yourself, you had to put yourself out there. There were other places that were established, various factors where we weren't getting all of the fruit off the bushes that needed to come off to make it work.

[\(00:16:14\)](#):

And so I think my second year I had one employee, and then third year I had two employees. And then by fourth year, I think I had four people and stayed pretty bare bones when I was down there as far as employees go, I think maybe maximum was maybe six people down there. And a lot of that was so that we could maintain the harvest. We started to enter into the wholesale market more for restaurants and markets, and then also started attending the Burlington farmer's market, which was a really great way to have a retail sales outlet in Burlington and a strong market and a strong way to also just make connections with the community and advertise the pick your own and that side of it. Just kind get word out, we're here and we're open.

[\(00:17:16\)](#):

The Intervale was a great place for us to get established. It truly was. And I'm incredibly grateful for the time down there but we started to outgrow it for be it land mass, flooding, high tunnels were a big thing. There's designated flood zones of where you could have structures and where you could not. We had a couple of high tunnels down there, some old Haygroves that we got through VHCB, and they were technically grandfathered in because if it flooded, those 64 posts were going to raise the flood level up that much further, which was total insanity, but it was what we were told.

[\(00:18:11\)](#):

And so we couldn't put up any more high tunnels. And at that point, things were shifting climatically. Things were getting earlier and earlier, but we were also seeing the extremes in both temperature and moisture happening or drought year, flood year, drought year, flood year. And we were trying to make investments that could give us security and high tunnels at that point were a big thing for us. We were starting to grow strawberries in high tunnels then, June strawberries, but we wanted to shift some

raspberries into them as well. And we felt like couldn't adopt climate change the way we wanted to down there, and then also just didn't have the land mass that we needed. So that kind of sparked the third move.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:19:00](#)):

This is kind of a two part question. Well, first part is what did you envision your farm would look like when you got started? We'll say maybe when you made the decision to get on this land, did you envision it being it the way it is now?

Adam Hausmann ([00:19:18](#)):

This existing property?

Andy Chamberlin ([00:19:19](#)):

Yeah, here.

Adam Hausmann ([00:19:23](#)):

I would say I had the same problem that a lot of farmers have. I wanted to do everything type of thing where I was like, I got his winner. I got really excited [inaudible 00:19:38].

Andy Chamberlin ([00:19:37](#)):

You went to a conference?

Adam Hausmann ([00:19:37](#)):

I went to a conference. Yeah, exactly. So I was like, we're going to do every type of fruit, I think when we moved here. So we moved here, we put in, we had the berries, we had the raspberries. We shifted away from a lot of fall raspberries to summer raspberries because spotted wing was also introduced. Really 2011, 2012 was when it really started to get established and people were just disking under their fall raspberries and getting out. And we scaled back because we weren't quite sure how to handle SWD at that point, but we put in-

Jessica Sanford ([00:20:16](#)):

Currants, gooseberries, peaches, plums, cherries, pears.

Adam Hausmann ([00:20:22](#)):

Yeah, everything.

Jessica Sanford ([00:20:22](#)):

Oh, persimmon,

Adam Hausmann ([00:20:27](#)):

Persimmon, quince. Yeah. I got excited.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:20:35](#)):

Hey, throw it all into the field and see what grows, right.

Adam Hausmann ([00:20:38](#)):

It's like we're going to have a little bit of everything and we're going to figure out, the thought was we'd be a true berry and fruit farm. And we wanted to do it all organically so we had a lot of different varieties as well. We were trying to figure out what varieties worked better organically, which didn't. And then our thought was that with the fruit that was blemished or cosmetically not perfect for direct sales, that we could do more value addeds, make popsicles, freeze it, whatever it might be, figure out kind of an outlet for it as well. And I think fairly quickly we realized that we just couldn't manage the harvest, but also the crops. And so the cherries left first, then the peaches, they became blueberries. That's where the draper blueberry field is. And then we kept the plums and the pears.

([00:21:47](#)):

And the plums, I still am excited, I'm excitable on things like that, but again, we just weren't managing them properly, especially organically. And they flower very early, beautiful flowers, but they get hit by frost or whatever it was we weren't taking care of them the way they needed to be, and it was tying up a lot of land, which became valuable. So we ripped those out, and those are cargo blueberries now. And then pears we held onto because organically they have the most potential and also they can be stored for a long period, and we don't grow anything that could be stored for a long period. Everything we have is highly perishable. And so that was kind of attractive. I was like, oh, we can load up the walk-in and sell these slowly.

Jessica Sanford ([00:22:45](#)):

Then we wanted to do pear cider and pear brandy. A lot was tied up into the pears.

Adam Hausmann ([00:22:51](#)):

Yeah. Too much. And last year we dug them all up and sold them.

Jessica Sanford ([00:22:59](#)):

I think we looked at it as like, okay, if that acre was planted in blueberries, we know we can get X amount of money in return, whereas we're not making anything right now off the pears. It's just tying up land, and we're desperately hoping that something happens with them or will happen with them.

Adam Hausmann ([00:23:19](#)):

Yeah, I was like, okay, I forget how many pear trees we had, 120 pear trees. They're coming into production. Some years they were great, some years they were pretty bad, for lack of better description. But then I looked at that in our return versus I'm like, oh, we could fit 1600, 1800 blueberry bushes there. And you start to do the numbers, and it was like, it's a no-brainer, they were gone. So they left. We sold them, and it was great to see them go to new homes, but their land is free, and it just opened up a new field basically for us.

PART 1 OF 4 ENDS [00:24:04]

Adam Hausmann ([00:24:00](#)):

Lands free. And it just opened up a new field basically for us and a field that our systems were already set up on harvesting berries and maintaining them. And as far as the fertilization, spraying, whatever it might be, it was just, it was almost easier to just expand our acreage in that manner and tie it in to our existing systems than manage a whole different crop. So that was kind of crop wise. I think what we

envisioned and then Pick Your Own focused and creating a destination I think was still important to us and wanting to bring... I guess, we always like bringing people together around food and just the simplicity of food and berries and how we have families that have been coming out since their kids were little or since they're pregnant and they're still coming. And people tell me it's the one thing that they can agree on as a family to do together still, and they still have fun together.

(00:25:03):

And I love that. Our older couples that have been coming out forever and it's just their time together. And so we wanted to create kind of this open farm that way where people could come and pick and relax and feel at ease and welcome at all times. And that was really important. But at the same time, there was the face of the farm, which is I feel like the Pick Your Own side of our farm where it's the very public side of it. But then the reality was our direction was going wholesale and our market was going into a wholesale market. And so I think when we moved here, we knew that that we still had this public face and we needed that and wanted that. But the bread and butter of our farm was becoming a wholesale farm where we were becoming the main berry supplier for the markets and restaurants around here and the farm that could offer the quality and the consistency, which is a big thing I think.

(00:26:05):

And as the manager of the farm as well, it was something I really liked too, and that I could plan. I knew how much we were going to sell wholesale and I could project a lot in a very stable and conservative way. Whereas Pick Your Own, it's like you open up and you're like, "Huh, I wonder if anybody's going to show up today." And then it's during strawberry season, let's say, it was like, for a while we're having these heat spikes where it was like 90 for five days or something like that. Nobody wants to pick berries when it's that hot. And then it throws off all your plans too, where it's like you have early, mid and late season varieties, but when you have these heat spikes, it doesn't matter, all your plannings goes to the wind where everything just comes on at once.

(00:27:02):

And so there's that side of it. And we're seeing it more mid-summer where just the heat spikes where it's like you're busy in the morning and then it's crickets in the afternoon because who wants to stand if it's choice? Who wants to stand out in the middle of a hot, sunny field when it's 90 something degrees? So we just found for us that as far as the stability of our business and planning of our business, that the wholesale gave us more stability. And the Pick Your Own was a great bonus, really. And it is variable year to year too, as far as income also. So we de-emphasized that side of our business where it's still a vital part of our business. And it probably, I always say it brings the joy to the farm, but it's not what supports us. It's not our bread and butter at all. That's for sure. And that's become more so as we've settled here and grown, I mean even after COVID and not having people here for a year, I was like, "Oh, this is nice. You can go swimming in the afternoon."

(00:28:20):

You had flexibility in your day. You can get up early, you can still put in 10 hours, but have time versus we're open until the end of the day type of thing. And it just added, it's simplified our life and added another layer. And I wrestled with like, do we go even towards just total wholesale farm? But I think it's...

Jessica Sanford (00:28:42):

I think Pick Your Own is operating an on farm event every day. The farm has to look nice, everything has to be in place. It's a lot more like land management, people management to uphold that part of the

business. So to not, I think Adam appreciated not having that part of the business during COVID to focus on some other aspects of the farm.

Adam Hausmann ([00:29:05](#)):

And we're also doing that blueberry expansion and all of these things at that point. So I was excited about that and that's what I wanted to do.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:29:12](#)):

It allowed you to focus on turning a chapter and bigger opportunities because like you said, you can only have so many people in this area like, come to your farm. You could market all you want, but there was more opportunity in wholesale and more guaranteed, like you said, you could project that.

Jessica Sanford ([00:29:29](#)):

Yeah.

Adam Hausmann ([00:29:29](#)):

Yeah.

Jessica Sanford ([00:29:30](#)):

Not having Pick Your Own that year gave us a lot more flexibility as a family to go to ice cream at the end of the day or not be bound to the farm as much.

Adam Hausmann ([00:29:42](#)):

Oh, this is what people do in the summer, yeah, type of feeling.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:29:46](#)):

He got to taste of freedom.

Adam Hausmann ([00:29:47](#)):

Yeah, yeah.

Jessica Sanford ([00:29:47](#)):

Yeah.

Adam Hausmann ([00:29:48](#)):

You don't want too much of a taste, it's dangerous.

Jessica Sanford ([00:29:53](#)):

But it's back and we're going to hang on to your own.

Adam Hausmann ([00:29:53](#)):

It is back, It is back.

Jessica Sanford ([00:29:59](#)):

And we love it. And I think staff that works here love it. I think they really get to see why we do what we do and that people appreciate what we're doing. And I think a big part of why we continue to do what we do is really wanting to connect people to their food source. And berries are an easy way to do that. No one's coming out to pick cabbage. So we have a beautiful spot. We have a product that lends itself that people want to come out and pick. So I think that's an important part or mission maybe for us is connecting people to farms and food and sharing not just about food, but land conservation and climate change and pollinator habitat.

Adam Hausmann ([00:30:42](#)):

Some people see how their food's produced. I mean, there's such a disconnect now. I think everyone's behind their screens and it allows people to appreciate the labors that go into it and how much hard work it really is. And hopefully that translates into how people consume and even price of food. And there's constant downward pressure on food pricing and all of that. And when people understand what it takes to grow food, there's less resistance to that, I would say. But yeah, I think we always see it as the gateway to hopefully eating... You're shaping generations and they've picked berries as a kid and they noticed taste and flavor has always been really important to us. And that's something that's so apparent in a fresh berry. And variety by variety has its own flavor and characteristics, but also just the freshness where they have that and then they have something that's been grown in Chile or wherever and shipped here and it looks beautiful, but it doesn't have any flavor.

([00:31:53](#)):

And so we've noticed that people really... And kids notice that too. They're like, "No, a whole neat Adam's Berries or whatever, these blueberries or strawberries." And that's great, that's what you hope. And you hope that starts to translate over like, "Wow, these Diggers' carrots are amazing," or whatever it is. And they just noticing [inaudible 00:32:12]-

Andy Chamberlin ([00:32:12](#)):

Grocery store carrots are not very good. But farm carrot, "Oh yeah, all day long."

Adam Hausmann ([00:32:16](#)):

Yeah, exactly, exactly. So it's a great introduction that way. And it just provides this kind of, for lack of better words, like a wholesome thing to do with your friends and families out here that it's nice to provide the space for it, I would say. Yeah.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:32:40](#)):

What are you excited about in your next year of farming life?

Jessica Sanford ([00:32:44](#)):

I feel like we talked about this the other day and now I can't remember.

Adam Hausmann ([00:32:52](#)):

So there's a number of things that I'm excited about. So when I started, I loved strawberries and I was really excited about the strawberry production, and then I kind of fell out of love with strawberries for a period, and, yeah, for various reasons. And then I was like "Raspberries are good." And then blueberries

really they've come in strong, and I do truly love the blueberry. So I get excited for blueberry season every year and just as varieties come on and learning their characteristics, that's always exciting for me. And just the sheer abundance of food, that's one of our goals. Is really just to offset... To give people a choice in Vermont and for a local organic. So there's the blueberries, which I'm always kind of excited about, but the day-neutral strawberries have kind of helped me fall back in love with strawberries, which is interesting. And some of it's just the new challenge. I tried growing those, growing them a couple times, and I remember saying to Jess, "Don't let me ever plant these again`." I kept on-

Jessica Sanford ([00:34:05](#)):

Because you have one more year.

Adam Hausmann ([00:34:05](#)):

Yeah, and I'm like, I just couldn't figure out. They're hungry, they need nutrient wise, they need a lot and... Hungry and thirsty, basically. And they require a lot of hand holding and they weren't fitting into our systems initially. And I think, I also like someone that I need to do something on a certain scale to focus on it too. Where I need to plunge and have some, like me in the game almost where I'm like, "Okay, I've got to figure that out."

Andy Chamberlin ([00:34:33](#)):

Well, right, you've got markets, you've got customers asking for it. You can't just dabble if you're going to do it.

Adam Hausmann ([00:34:33](#)):

Yeah, going to do it, yeah.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:34:33](#)):

You have have a product to offer.

Jessica Sanford ([00:34:40](#)):

I think we also plan in them like, "Oh, we can grow June strawberries. We can certainly grow day-neutral strawberries." But realizing it's a completely different-

Adam Hausmann ([00:34:49](#)):

Whole different crop.

Jessica Sanford ([00:34:50](#)):

... whole different crop. It's like, yeah, I won't even consider it-

Adam Hausmann ([00:34:54](#)):

The management is completely different.

Jessica Sanford ([00:34:54](#)):

... close to strawberries.

Adam Hausmann ([00:34:56](#)):

Yeah, it's just completely different management. So it took some time to get to know that, and I couldn't figure it out on five, 200 foot rows. For some reason that wasn't enough to keep me-

Jessica Sanford ([00:35:08](#)):

Convinced you to pay attention to that.

Adam Hausmann ([00:35:09](#)):

Yeah, keep me interested. I was like, "Oh, these things just kind of sit here and they're not really fruiting much." The June strawberries come on with this heavy flush, and it's just like the fruit pours on and you can't ignore them. Whereas the day-neutrals initially kind of trickle on and they're flowering and fruiting and they're like, "Oh, there's a red one out there." And then it builds as the season progresses, the production builds, the flavor builds, everything. But I think once I kind of stuck with it and was like, "I'm going to figure this out this year. And I had a good year." I kind of got hooked on it again, and it was just exciting to have something different in the fall, and it's kind of way that we harvest them from August to November, so it's a long season and people are shocked still. They're like, "How do you have berries now?" Or [inaudible 00:36:06] they're shocked by it all.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:36:07](#)):

It's like a magic trick.

Adam Hausmann ([00:36:08](#)):

Yeah, yeah. So it's like, they said to me-

Andy Chamberlin ([00:36:11](#)):

Oh, there's strawberries in June.

Adam Hausmann ([00:36:11](#)):

Yeah, doesn't even know all-

Jessica Sanford ([00:36:12](#)):

You spent all this time educating people on when the seasons of different berries are. And you come in-

Andy Chamberlin ([00:36:15](#)):

Right, your whole logo, it's a calendar.

Adam Hausmann ([00:36:17](#)):

Yeah, it took forever just to get people to recognize that we had raspberries in the fall and then they introduce this just three people off. But at the same time, we had the wholesale market there. We don't have to Pick Your Own with them or anything like that. But as far as the farm stand and farmer's market, it really, it's been...

Jessica Sanford ([00:36:36](#)):

It keeps people coming to the-

Adam Hausmann ([00:36:37](#)):

An attraction. It keeps people coming in.

Jessica Sanford ([00:36:40](#)):

... farm stand and the market, in a different way.

Adam Hausmann ([00:36:43](#)):

Yeah, I would say the strawberries pull people in more, and then obviously it helps a lot. Like at farmer's market, they're like, "Okay, we'll get whatever, two raspberries, two strawberries or something." So helps just with overall sales that way. But to that, I guess that's what I'm kind of excited about. Probably blueberries more than anything. That's really what gets me going right now. But yeah, day-neutrals, it's kind of an annual challenge of getting the nutrients right and getting the water, and just the timing of cutting runners and so there's all these steps that we've started to really dial in, and then I think every year they seem to improve, and so I'm excited to see it through, I guess. What about you, Jess?

Jessica Sanford ([00:37:43](#)):

I'm excited to try and play around with strawberries a little, just sort of extending, can we have them earlier in the season before June? And then can we close that gap between the summer and the fall strawberries to have a smaller gap in our season where we go without strawberries, so can we have them close to May through fall? So we talked about playing around with that a little bit. I'm excited about blueberry season, I think, and having people at the farm, having childcare. I think, I'm excited about. And I'm excited to see how fast I can harvest a tote of blueberries.

Adam Hausmann ([00:38:27](#)):

Yeah, she's a competitive one.

Jessica Sanford ([00:38:30](#)):

I like to time myself on different tasks.

Adam Hausmann ([00:38:33](#)):

It's a daily marathon.

Jessica Sanford ([00:38:35](#)):

To see how fast I can go.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:38:37](#)):

That's right. You're a runner too, aren't you?

Jessica Sanford ([00:38:38](#)):

Yeah, yeah.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:38:38](#)):

Go.

Jessica Sanford ([00:38:42](#)):

I've realized not everyone is competitive, so I try just to compete with myself now.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:38:50](#)):

So what's the metric of...

Jessica Sanford ([00:38:52](#)):

The fastest I have gotten is 16 minutes a hip bucket. So that's my goal.

Adam Hausmann ([00:38:58](#)):

That's about-

Jessica Sanford ([00:38:59](#)):

That's the farm record.

Adam Hausmann ([00:39:02](#)):

... eight pounds so ...

Jessica Sanford ([00:39:04](#)):

Eight pounds. Yeah.

Adam Hausmann ([00:39:05](#)):

Nice.

Jessica Sanford ([00:39:07](#)):

Yeah, I'm just always exciting to open up the farm to people, yeah.

Adam Hausmann ([00:39:13](#)):

Yeah.

Jessica Sanford ([00:39:14](#)):

July seems when we have everything under control, June is sort of just a cluster of trying to figure out what's happening, and then I feel like by July we have a rhythm and then it just feels nice to open up the farm to people.

Adam Hausmann ([00:39:30](#)):

Yeah. I think that was one of the challenges, with even Pick Your Own strawberries in the past, whereas June is, we have obviously the June strawberries fruiting, and so there's that just intensity of that harvest where it's the 25-day just intense go, go, go. Same time everything's waking up and everything's growing rapidly and weeds are growing rapidly and you're trying to make sure everything's fertilized adequately and staying on top of irrigation, whatever it might be. But it's just, I guess the farm always felt a little feels hectic in June. And so to integrate, Pick Your Own, just another layer where it becomes customers always around and they're always... It's wonderful, but grabbing you to talk and you want to

take time, talk to people too, and it's part of the fun, part of the joy, but feeling like we needed to get everything else set in motion before we could really open up on a public level beyond just the farm stand being open.

Jessica Sanford ([00:40:36](#)):

A lot of people come to talk to Adam at Pick Your Own, so he gets pulled out in the fields a lot.

Adam Hausmann ([00:40:43](#)):

Yeah, I-

Andy Chamberlin ([00:40:45](#)):

Got to know your farmer.

Adam Hausmann ([00:40:48](#)):

... love it. I love it. But I also love when Pick Your Own. I'm closest too. All these projects, I'm like, "oh, I can get this done uninterrupted," and it's good. Yeah, it's like people that have been supporting me for a really long time and believed in what we've done and that's going to-

Jessica Sanford ([00:41:08](#)):

And that's why they continue to come here.

Adam Hausmann ([00:41:12](#)):

Yeah, but it's wonderful to have that and that customer connection, but at the same time, you get to that point where you're just like, "Okay, I want to go down to the day-neutral field and see what's going on, or I want to be able to do field work or something like that. And we all have our daily lists that we're trying to check off, and it's harder during the Pick Your Own season to actually check off those lists in completion and gotten much better at delegating and all of those things with time. So things still happen.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:41:43](#)):

Do you think plasticulture berries would work well for Pick Your Own or ever bearing for Pick Your Own or not really, because you'd need that big flush in June to really feel abundant?

Jessica Sanford ([00:41:55](#)):

We noticed that our Pick Your Own traffic dies when Pick Your Own apples come on. So even with fall raspberries-

Andy Chamberlin ([00:42:03](#)):

They switch to fall mode.

Jessica Sanford ([00:42:04](#)):

... they switch to fall mode and still I feel like people are confused, like, Pick Your Own strawberries in fall. So we've done a few pop-up, Pick Your Own fall strawberries, which was really popular. That worked really well. But I don't know if we could do it on a consistent every weekend.

Adam Hausmann ([00:42:21](#)):

Even the way they, yeah, I mean we'd thought about, "Oh, could you do this just on weekends?" Or one day a week or something like that. Because the way that the day-neutrals in particular, how they are ripening, you're not out there every day harvesting every three days or something like that. So you kind of let them ripen, pick. So you could time it well for a Pick Your Own for weekends or flip-flop fields and things like that. But yeah, there is a mental shift that happens in fall where it's squash, pumpkin and apple season all of a sudden. As far as the plastic culture side of things. For Junes, yes, fully could do strawberries on plasticulture for Junes, it becomes like some growers. When I talk to people about it, they say, "Oh, I don't think my customers like it because they didn't like the look of the field or something of matted row."

([00:43:26](#)):

But then even with Junes, we've done occasional pop-ups where it's been really hot and we haven't been able to maintain crop. And we're like, "Okay, we're just going to open up for the weekend and do this random Pick Your Own for the weekend." And people love it, they're like, "Oh, I can see the fruit's clean, the qualities there." So there's something to say for plasticulture and its raised bed, the fruits very visible, it's not sitting in the dirt. And so the fruits more or less beautiful that comes off of it other than when it bakes on the plastic and things like that melts, there's that side of it. But yeah, I guess I see a mix of farms. Obviously the matted rows more traditional. But for us, the earliness of plasticulture, the fruit quality of the clean, dry fruit was really important. And then just maintenance, weeding, not wanting to be out there, hoeing, non-stop and all that. It's easier to motivate a crew to cut runners than it is to weed strawberries any day.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:44:42](#)):

Yep. Yeah, that was my assumption. Not doing that yet. You said you use low tunnels a lot for your day-neutrals, or are you doing them for the June's as well?

Jessica Sanford ([00:44:54](#)):

Just our day neutrals.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:44:55](#)):

Yep.

Adam Hausmann ([00:44:57](#)):

Just day-neutrals. And that's really to extend the season. I think some of it's where we live, we're practically on the Canadian border and it's shorter season. We can't get the plants in the ground as early as maybe other areas. So it condenses it even more. And later you reduce the yields you have. And so the low tunnels, it's like growing anything undercover. It's just a little more protective. The plants are a little bit healthier, a little more vibrant. It gives us the chance to start manipulating the size and closing them and creating a little more warmth. And then on rainy periods or cold periods, just shutting them down completely. And so it allows us to really stretch out the season. We could probably go further, honestly than we have. I mean, this year... I forget what the date was, but we finally had a hard, hard freeze. I think it was like the 8th of November or something like that. And that was green fruit. Everything froze. It didn't matter.

([00:46:05](#)):

But having said that, if we could, we have giant, 60 by 200 foot pieces of Reemay. We sometimes talk about like, "Oh, do you take a section?" And even on those under the low tunnels, drape over a big chunk of Reemay and really stretch it out that way. But having said that, you're also, by then, done.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:46:26](#)):

You're done.

Jessica Sanford ([00:46:28](#)):

Our crew leaves in about 10 days. Do we want to stretch out the harvest?

Adam Hausmann ([00:46:34](#)):

There's been years when our crew's wrapped up and there's still fruit out there, and we're like, "Oh, we'll harvest it." And then we just go down there and graze and it never happens really, it's just, you're done

Andy Chamberlin ([00:46:46](#)):

Switching over to brambles. You grow them both in tunnels and out in the field. Would you lean towards one over the other?

Jessica Sanford ([00:46:57](#)):

For wholesale tunnels, all the way, fruit quality, yields is above and beyond than what comes out of the field. For Pick Your Own, the tunnels get really hot in the summer, so if you have a 70 or 80 degree day, it's a hundred and something in the tunnel. So for families, it's not.

Adam Hausmann ([00:47:18](#)):

We would do morning. So there's one variety that we did. Morning, Pick Your Own scene for a little bit. We didn't do it last year at all, actually.

Jessica Sanford ([00:47:25](#)):

And I think it goes back a little to feel and nostalgia like, "Oh, we're in the fields picking raspberries. We're not in a tunnel picking raspberries." And so some customers have really come to appreciate the quality of the summer raspberries in the tunnels. They're all beautiful, you don't really have to look what you're picking. You don't have to inspect the berries. But a lot of people, it's too hot in the tunnels. And do we really want to have our prime berries for Pick Your Own be tunnel berries, where Pick Your Own customers will sometimes pick anything. So to have them take our tunnel.

PART 2 OF 4 ENDS [00:48:04]

Jessica Sanford ([00:48:00](#)):

Pick your own customers. We'll sometimes pick anything. So to have them take our tunnel berries, which our primo berries, it doesn't make as much financial sense.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:48:11](#)):

So you think that pick your own is almost less fussy in-

Jessica Sanford ([00:48:13](#)):

Oh yeah. I see people come back with white berries. They're like, "Oh, look at these beautiful berries." I'm like, "One, those aren't ripe."

Adam Hausmann ([00:48:21](#)):

You can't say that.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:48:22](#)):

Did you try that?

Jessica Sanford ([00:48:25](#)):

They're happy about it. It's the funny thing though.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:48:27](#)):

That's what they want.

Jessica Sanford ([00:48:28](#)):

Yeah. If I tried to sell a pint that had berries like that in it, they'd be like, never ever would they consider buying it. But if they pick it themselves, they're happy with white berries, orange berries. So yeah, I think they're less fussy when they pick their own.

Adam Hausmann ([00:48:47](#)):

The tunnels, there's no comparison really. I was saying it outside, but it's a different product. And the tunnels, the benefits, the yields go up drastically. It's at least like 30% more. And so in a field you maybe have like 60, 65% marketable fruit. Whereas in the tunnels it's like high nineties. It's pretty much, if it grows there, you can pick it and harvest it. So they increase the yields. There's-

Jessica Sanford ([00:49:21](#)):

Longer shelf life.

Adam Hausmann ([00:49:22](#)):

... longer shelf life. The raspberries are notorious for short shelf life. And so you go from, maybe field is if you're lucky, you're getting two or three days versus you're getting, it basically doubles.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:49:35](#)):

Why do you think the shelf life's that much better?

Adam Hausmann ([00:49:37](#)):

Dry.

Jessica Sanford ([00:49:37](#)):

Moisture.

Adam Hausmann ([00:49:38](#)):

Fruit stays dry. Yeah, that's the big thing. And even out west where it is dry and arid climates, they're still growing in tunnels out there and it's a whole different product really that comes out of there. And then obviously tunnels, it's a focused area, so it's like pests and disease outbreaks you can manage-

Andy Chamberlin ([00:49:59](#)):

Are you screening?

Jessica Sanford ([00:50:01](#)):

The fall ones.

Adam Hausmann ([00:50:02](#)):

Falls we screen for SWD.

Jessica Sanford ([00:50:04](#)):

We don't see the pressure for the summer ones to worry about it.

Adam Hausmann ([00:50:07](#)):

We don't worry about SWD on summer raspberries like blueberries that much. People freak out about it. But timing wise, it comes on later. So you can usually outrun most of the, you don't for fall like raspberries or anything. They love the raspberries, but just the timing of when everything's fruiting, you usually are out running SWD, the majority of it.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:50:32](#)):

And you're being very diligent about a clean pick too, which I think is key.

Jessica Sanford ([00:50:37](#)):

Clean pick is probably almost-

Adam Hausmann ([00:50:40](#)):

Huge. We go through our tunnels every day, pick clean, and then it gets either refrigerated. Or with raspberries, my goal is to get rid of them right away. It's like I want them in the van and in someone's belly that night type of thing.

Jessica Sanford ([00:50:58](#)):

Our crew has gotten really good at the clean harvest where any soft berries, infected berries are going into a bucket on their back and they're picking every ripe berry. So it's helped keep SWD pressure down significantly.

Adam Hausmann ([00:51:15](#)):

Yeah, so I think, I guess the other big thing on the tunnels that because we're so wholesale oriented, the tunnels allow us to harvest every day. Whereas if you have a rainy period, you can't harvest raspberries in the rain. They will just melt in the pints and you'll be delivering mush basically. You can pick them, you can freeze them maybe. But even the frozen quality is not there. Raspberries have to be harvested dry

for any quality in the marketplace. And so the tunnels allow us to do that where we can pick any day really. It's not hindered on weather at all. And that's a big, as far as tying back to consistency in the marketplace, and I know whatever city market is going to want X amount of flats every other day type of thing. And so we can meet those orders and demands.

(00:52:15):

And I have other standing orders with restaurants two days a week or whatever, where the weather, and I guess this all is tied back to trying to adopt climate change as much as possible, but it's the weather. Our goal is to try to minimize the impact of the erratic weather on our crops and business, either by protecting it from the moisture or having enough moisture to add, whatever it might be. It seems to be all water related, but water and heat. But anyway, but that's been a big one for us. So it's allowed us to build up a market because we're there. We have the product.

Andy Chamberlin (00:53:03):

Do you have any high tunnel berries, raspberries for pick your own or they only in the field?

Jessica Sanford (00:53:09):

We open up one house and that's because we're not completely thrilled with that variety for wholesale.

Adam Hausmann (00:53:15):

It's great flavor.

Jessica Sanford (00:53:16):

It's great flavor. The berries a bit too orange for wholesale markets and the fruit's softer.

Adam Hausmann (00:53:22):

It's a softer fruit. It's an older variety. So Killarney is the variety. It's a great, as far as the flavor on it, I love it and customers love it too. And so we didn't open it up this year because our crew was able to manage the harvest honestly.

Jessica Sanford (00:53:41):

And we had a lot of outside berries that needed to be picked.

Adam Hausmann (00:53:45):

Yup. And it was wet and we couldn't get it. So it was like during the summer months when it was so wet here. So this year we didn't, and most of it went either wholesale, or there's a decent amount in the freezer that we're bringing back now and sold as frozen berries.

Andy Chamberlin (00:54:03):

You were talking about how pick your own is not very helpful if it's rainy, but it seems like that would be an opportunity to A, you can pick your berries inside even though it's drizzly out. That's maybe not the picturesque in the field people are thinking of, but another opportunity.

Adam Hausmann (00:54:20):

When it comes to getting out of the house with kids, people are thrilled about it. They're like-

Andy Chamberlin ([00:54:24](#)):

Yes, something to do.

Adam Hausmann ([00:54:27](#)):

... "We're not stuck in this rainy day."

Andy Chamberlin ([00:54:30](#)):

While we're talking about high tunnels, you talked a little bit about it earlier. You've decided to invest in Harnois versus all kinds of ones. What made you decide to go with Harnois and are there any modifications you've made to them or things you would do differently?

Jessica Sanford ([00:54:48](#)):

We don't have to think about them in the winter. I think a lot for snow load.

Adam Hausmann ([00:54:54](#)):

That might be the number one.

Jessica Sanford ([00:54:54](#)):

That's probably the number one.

Adam Hausmann ([00:54:56](#)):

Honestly-

Andy Chamberlin ([00:54:57](#)):

Durability.

Jessica Sanford ([00:54:57](#)):

Their durability.

Adam Hausmann ([00:54:59](#)):

They're solid. First they're construction and you don't have to plow next to them. You don't have to... I was thinking about labor maintenance, all of these things. It's not like with wind storms, have been thinking about them more, but you don't worry about them coming down at all. So they're NRCS tunnels. So that was some decision-making there as far as offsetting costs and all of that-

Andy Chamberlin ([00:55:24](#)):

Qualified. Yeah.

Jessica Sanford ([00:55:26](#)):

I think if we had to do things differently in the raspberry houses, we would add venting on the end walls and maybe a fan system to help with the humidity.

Adam Hausmann ([00:55:35](#)):

Yeah, that's our weak link is our houses are pretty simple. They're not green houses, or not double wall or single-wall poly, this lashing strap system similar to Caterpillar. And then roll-up sides, which we either, you can get them up six feet. It's a high roll-up so you can get a lot of air movement still, but we still, they're long tunnels. They're 30 by 200 is what we have for tunnels. So yeah, increased air movement. More so in the fall is when you see it. In the summer, there's still the air's moving pretty well, and some of that has to do with the fall raspberries and netting, the netting locks down the airflow and we have the netting there. There's bees inside, so it's pretty tight that way.

Jessica Sanford ([00:56:30](#)):

They're at the bottom of the hill so they're not getting some of the-

Adam Hausmann ([00:56:33](#)):

Airflow drains down towards where they are so that we could use better airflow in our houses. And we just skinned a bunch of new houses this year and I'm like, "Oh, why didn't we put in more vents and things and things like that?" It was like, "Oh, we could do this today."

Andy Chamberlin ([00:56:56](#)):

That would've been the opportunity.

Adam Hausmann ([00:56:57](#)):

Yeah, this would've been the chance, but it was also like, we're not going to get this. It was fall and we were racing weather and crops and it was like, okay, this morning we can do this house and then we can harvest later on, and trying to just get everything done. But yeah, our houses need better ventilation. There's no other way to put it. And we manage them so that it's okay, it works for us, but it would be helpful, especially in the fall, just as the day-length shifts and there's more moisture in the air again and all that.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:57:33](#)):

Yeah, dews are heavier. Oh, one question that popped in my head earlier. Do you do anything for frost protection on blueberries or are they late enough it's generally all right? Or you're sweating?

Jessica Sanford ([00:57:48](#)):

Right, pray.

Adam Hausmann ([00:57:48](#)):

Pray.

Jessica Sanford ([00:57:49](#)):

I think this, it was-

Adam Hausmann ([00:57:50](#)):

Oh my gosh.

Jessica Sanford ([00:57:52](#)):

I remember two years. I remember like 2011 or '12 maybe we had one of these late frosts. And this year I think-

Adam Hausmann ([00:58:02](#)):

That was-

Jessica Sanford ([00:58:02](#)):

... we did lose. Actually we did lose.

Adam Hausmann ([00:58:04](#)):

No, we did. This year we lost probably 20% of our-

Jessica Sanford ([00:58:06](#)):

Our crop.

Adam Hausmann ([00:58:07](#)):

... blossoms. So blueberries, luckily their flowers are hardier than raspberries and strawberries. And so our strawberries at first that spring zap, we used a type R reme. So we put on one layer and then at the last second I had us put on a second layer, and I'm so glad we did. Really, it was cold. Raspberries had not started. They were still pretty tight and hadn't really started blooming yet. So they were fine and they were in the high tunnels. We closed down the high tunnels and all of that. Then blueberries were in pretty extensive bloom and they can go down to about 20, it's like 27 roughly. So as far as a flower goes, it's great, but we were colder than that. So-

Jessica Sanford ([00:59:03](#)):

26 or 25.

Adam Hausmann ([00:59:04](#)):

Yeah. The days after that freeze and just walking around and just slowly watching everything turn translucent and then brown and then drop. And you just get terrified, honestly. And I think it was like certain varieties did better than others. It seems like they must be a little more tolerant or location on the field. Top of our field was hit pretty hard, which was interesting because I would think the cold would've rolled down our hills. But top of the field was hit pretty hard, and we had definitely a reduced crop. But balanced out, I would say, I shouldn't say balanced out. We had reduced yields, but where it balanced out for us this year, it was that we had other fields that were coming into production. So what we lost during the frost was balanced out where we had new fields coming in that certainly were thinned and we had good size fruit this year because of the thinning of blossoms and the amount of rain too. It really plumped everything up. But yeah, I think the other fields coming in made it so our overall yields were pretty steady, but that was just dumb luck, honestly.

([01:00:29](#)):

I do know out in Michigan and New Jersey, people are setting up more and more frost irrigation in their blueberries and it wasn't something that people used to think about, but it crosses your mind now. It definitely does.

Andy Chamberlin ([01:00:45](#)):

It doesn't take too many cold nights to start thinking about that.

Adam Hausmann ([01:00:49](#)):

Yeah. But yeah, I think that erraticness of spring is becoming, it seems like it's getting warmer earlier. These periods of warm and dry or early spring, which didn't used to be a thing. And then it's often, I feel like April has been our warm and dry month and then it gets cooler and wetter during May and then goes back, then finally goes into summer and June for us. So I would say it's been more erratic in spring than fall. Fall just slowly just stretched out for us I feel like where it's great, in some ways as far as production and harvesting deep into the fall. Think of it, when I first started growing, it was like sometimes mid-September for us and definitely by 1st of October or something like that. And we often, there's some years where we've been getting through October without frost, or we have a light one mid-October or something like that. And then if you can protect your crops, you can still harvest for another couple of weeks. So those are the positive parts of climate change.

Andy Chamberlin ([01:02:04](#)):

The falls have been nice to us lately.

Adam Hausmann ([01:02:06](#)):

These extended falls have been great. And for us what we're growing too or ever-bearing, so the raspberries and strawberries are continually flowering and fruiting, so it really is added to the production and yields for us. And if you've had a challenging, let's say June strawberry season for be it moisture or whatever it might be, it's balanced things out for us, I would say.

Andy Chamberlin ([01:02:40](#)):

What does sustainable farming mean to you and what are you doing to achieve it?

Jessica Sanford ([01:02:43](#)):

I guess we think of sustainable farming like a lot of other people. One, what are we doing to protect our environment and our resources? What are we doing to ensure that we're being kind to ourselves in terms of can we run the business for another 20, 30 plus years. Oh, and are we making money?

Adam Hausmann ([01:03:11](#)):

Yeah, there's the viability of course.

Jessica Sanford ([01:03:13](#)):

Are we able to support our family of four off of the farm and provide a livable wage for the employees that work here?

Adam Hausmann ([01:03:23](#)):

Yeah, I would say it's pretty layered as far as what is sustainable farming. And I, 20 years ago probably would've had a different answer than I do now. And there's certainly, being a perennial farmer is part of that for me of just like, I love that we have a biologically active soil and just our hedgerows are intact and we have a pretty active ecosystem. Birds love what we do. It's healthy that way. And we are doing a

lot where we work with EVM on pollination plannings and different pollination studies here. And it's fascinating to see all of the native bees that are here. And just to see that intact is really important to me, and it's something that truly believe in. So there's that side of it.

(01:04:28):

But then I think over time, personal and crew sustainability is important. When I think about trying to make investments back in the farm every year, a lot of it has to do with how can we do this easier? How can we save our bodies? How can we make this a simpler task where it doesn't bog people down or something? If there's certain tasks that just seem to weigh on people, those are the investments. I'm like, how do we just get that done and make it so that our crew is happy and that we can move on to the work that seems to excite people and sustain them as well. Because obviously we're nothing without our crew.

(01:05:09):

And then on a personal level, I think it ties in where I think younger, you're more willing to sacrifice body, time, all of those things, all of that's starting to catch up. And I think the time wasn't as big of a deal until we had kids. And then that was a huge shift as far as where you want your time. And yeah, you want to be on the farm and you love the farm, and that's like its own child to you. But you want to be with your family too. And it's more and more I'm like, how do you carve out more time and how do you make it so your kids don't resent the farm? And can they love it the same way you love it, and you want it to be positive for them. So that's really important to us, I would say.

Andy Chamberlin (01:06:05):

Was there any big game changing things that you did when you decided to have kids to free up time? Or was it a whole bunch of incremental little investments and tools and equipment and systems that-

Jessica Sanford (01:06:18):

I don't think we've gotten there yet.

Adam Hausmann (01:06:19):

Yeah, I was just trying to fix it.

Jessica Sanford (01:06:25):

I think what feels like we have a lot of time together as a family is that our kids are on the farm. During the summer they're on the farm. So even though if they're not with us or they're not with Adam, he can grab them to help do tractor work or go on deliveries. So he gets time with them.

Andy Chamberlin (01:06:45):

It's still family time.

Adam Hausmann (01:06:47):

They find me at lunch with the crew.

Jessica Sanford (01:06:49):

It feels like family time, but I think at some point we will get to the period in life where they're like, "Why can't we take a summer vacation? Why can't you both come to my soccer game? Or why is the

farm taking precedent over family?" And I've worked on farms like that and I've seen kids resent their parents and their farm for the time it takes away. So hopefully we'll get to the point in figuring that out before they start.

Adam Hausmann ([01:07:18](#)):

And lifelong goal for everyone is balance I would say. But it's why it's a lifelong goal. It's a challenge but I think we're trying to make it still fun for them, and that's part of it. But it's a unique profession. The intensity and seasonality of the work is challenging, and you have a period where the business, because it's what sustains us and what we live off of takes... It's like, "No, I'm working tonight. I'm doing tractor work, I'm doing whatever. It's dry right now and it's going to rain for four days. This has to happen now." And that's really hard and hard to explain to a family and hard to have any balance honestly. It's like you can have the best plan in the world and try to implement it, but then we have a weather based nature-based business that really dictates-

Andy Chamberlin ([01:08:22](#)):

You miss that opportunity, it ruins your whole world.

Adam Hausmann ([01:08:25](#)):

Yeah, it's like this has to happen, and you can't explain that to kids exactly at this point. And even as a couple it's hard at times where there's this beast that is moving forward like it or not. And it impacts, yeah, it definitely impacts our time. But then what I remind myself, I try to remind myself that a lot of people leave at 7:00 in the morning and get back at 5:00 at night and they don't see their kids at all. And here I am, I have a relationship with my kids and I see my partner and all these things and that's great. And then there's also right now where we're able to do a little vacation this winter altogether. We skip school and go skiing sometimes. We're around, we can go to soccer in the winter. Whatever it is. I say it's like you go from super dad to deadbeat dad at times it feels like.

Andy Chamberlin ([01:09:38](#)):

You can give a little more family time in the winter.

Adam Hausmann ([01:09:40](#)):

Yeah, you're present.

Jessica Sanford ([01:09:41](#)):

The kids have a hard time in the spring-

Adam Hausmann ([01:09:43](#)):

The transition is hard.

Jessica Sanford ([01:09:48](#)):

All of a sudden, well, right now I am the caretaker. So when Adam leaves in the spring to do the farm, they have a really tough time. It's a lot of tears in the beginning, and then-

Adam Hausmann ([01:09:58](#)):

It's hard for everyone. Since having kids, I notice, I push doing certain things. I'm like, oh, because I know once you start, it grabs a hold of you. And just wanting to savor that time together, yeah, it's important to me. But yeah, we foolishly haven't made drastic changes, I feel like. And some of that was like we had kids, COVID happened. It's like where there's lockdown and just, it slowed some of the transition of figuring out how to balance the farm and family life a little bit because of what was going on in the world and now we're addressing it. We also made conscious decisions, right or wrong, to have one of us home with our kids just because of cost of daycare and all these things that are real where you're like, "Oh, we're just going to be working to pay for daycare." But-

Jessica Sanford ([01:11:07](#)):

And I think we naively, maybe I naively thought that I would be able to farm more with a kid on my back or something.

Adam Hausmann ([01:11:17](#)):

That doesn't work.

Jessica Sanford ([01:11:18](#)):

That doesn't work. One, our kids didn't like being in carriers. They didn't like bottles, so no one else could take care of them. If they were in a carrier, they don't want to be tipped over. They have to eat every two hours. They can't be in the sun, which I knew none of that. So I think I was more shocked by how much care they needed.

Andy Chamberlin ([01:11:43](#)):

Ah, kids need care.

Jessica Sanford ([01:11:44](#)):

Adam was like, "I don't know if that's how it's going to be Jess." I'm like, "Yeah, yeah, fine."

Adam Hausmann ([01:11:51](#)):

Yeah, reality hit pretty quickly I think.

Jessica Sanford ([01:11:55](#)):

But that being said, they're in the fields with us a fair amount, a fair amount of the time, helping.

Adam Hausmann ([01:12:00](#)):

Wilder, our oldest loves to go out and be with our crew and harvest-

PART 3 OF 4 ENDS [01:12:04]

Jessica Sanford ([01:12:00](#)):

Helping-

Adam Hausmann ([01:12:00](#)):

Wilder, our oldest loves to go out and be with our crew, and harvest berries with them.

Andy Chamberlin ([01:12:04](#)):

Once they're mobile on their own-

Adam Hausmann ([01:12:06](#)):

Yeah-

Andy Chamberlin ([01:12:07](#)):

It got a little easier.

Adam Hausmann ([01:12:08](#)):

Yeah. What's wonderful is they have a relationship with our crew, and feel connected to other adults out there, and that's great for them to have that connection. There's other people that they grow to trust and have little jokes with and it's fun to see that side of it.

Jessica Sanford ([01:12:27](#)):

Sometimes they're off, I don't know where they are, but I'm like-

Adam Hausmann ([01:12:29](#)):

Yeah, we have feral children, which is great.

Jessica Sanford ([01:12:32](#)):

They're somewhere, someone's watching them.

Andy Chamberlin ([01:12:35](#)):

They're in eyesight.

Jessica Sanford ([01:12:36](#)):

It's been two hours, but-

Adam Hausmann ([01:12:37](#)):

Yeah-

Jessica Sanford ([01:12:38](#)):

They're okay, I'm sure.

Adam Hausmann ([01:12:39](#)):

Yeah, there's a lot of eyes on them, which is good. A lot of eyes that are nurturing them too, which just great.

Andy Chamberlin ([01:12:49](#)):

Right. Jess, what is your farming background? How'd you get into it?

Jessica Sanford ([01:12:55](#)):

My high school job was on a farm, it was a farm down the road not too far from us. I started there when I was 14. I did a lot of the bedding and the nursery sales and then I did a lot of the landscape, taking care of all the seedlings and the perennials and would be in the fields occasionally. It was primarily like an H2A crew for that farm. So we'd go in the fields when there was a huge bumper crop and then I'd work in the farm stand there. So I did that all through high school. Then I went to college at UVM. After that my involvement with the farm and food world was I was the produce buyer at Healthy Living, that's how we ran into each other.

[\(01:13:40\)](#):

I went to grad school, worked on various farms while I was in grad school. Came back, I worked at the Intervale managing their gleaning and food rescue program. So I always knew that I had wanted farming in my life and I think I had personal aspirations to own a farm before meeting Adam. Then after grad school my goal was to work with a program like the Farmer Training program. I think we realized, well, it doesn't make sense for both of us to be managing farms. We'll never see each other, we'd never be able to have a family. I think that's maybe when we decided to farm together. I don't know, just sort of happened. But before we decided to join together, I was at the Intervale Center managing their gleaning and food rescue program.

Adam Hausmann [\(01:14:39\)](#):

And you were teaching up at UVM-

Jessica Sanford [\(01:14:40\)](#):

I was teaching at UVM-

Adam Hausmann [\(01:14:41\)](#):

Vermont Food Systems class and dabbling at other farms as well.

Jessica Sanford [\(01:14:47\)](#):

Yeah, I've done a lot in the food system, waitressing, cooking, farming, education.

Andy Chamberlin [\(01:14:58\)](#):

All important stuff.

Jessica Sanford [\(01:14:59\)](#):

All important stuff.

Adam Hausmann [\(01:15:01\)](#):

Yeah, I think you knew early on that you wanted to be probably connected to farms and food from early on in life. I think it took, it was a later, I don't want to say a later discovery for me. But yeah, I think in some ways it was like ... I had after college hiked the Appalachian Trail and had a lot of time, it's this luxury of time to think. It's a rarity to have this six month chunk of time where you're in your head and really old memories, whatever it might be, like coming up. But it's also, it was this major transitional period of my life. I kind of came out of it just really wanted to believe in what I was doing.

[\(01:15:50\)](#):

My parents had sheep and a garden and some basic things, but wasn't a farm, it was a gentleman's farm. I just knew that I was like, "I need to do work that I truly believe in. I can't just ... Whatever, be a cog." I thought I wanted to teach. Then first of all, I felt like I couldn't take care of myself in some ways, was like, "What am I teaching people for?"

(01:16:20):

But also with that, I had exposure working two different places in Vermont where I was doing outdoor and environmental education in places that had farms as an educational component and I found I was really drawn to that. It was a new discovery for me. Food growing up was really important, come from long line of passionate cooks and gardeners and all of that. Food has always been the center. But yeah, certainly first generational farmer didn't expect that this was the path that I was going to be on. It was more discovering it and falling in love with it and realizing that I was really drawn to it. It was really perennials that pulled me in interestingly.

Jessica Sanford (01:17:13):

I don't think I think if we were together and I didn't want to be a farmer, I think it'd be very challenging to be a partner with a farmer. I don't know, just always being like-

Adam Hausmann (01:17:29):

That's what I hear on your podcast.

Jessica Sanford (01:17:31):

Always being like, "No, I can't do that, I have to go out and disc tonight." I think it'd be really hard to not-

Adam Hausmann (01:17:32):

You don't understand.

Andy Chamberlin (01:17:41):

You have the buy-in and the understanding.

Jessica Sanford (01:17:42):

Yeah, the buy-in and you understand, "Okay, I get it. One of us has to be out there, one of us has to be with the kids and whatever." It's eight months out of the year, 10 months out of the year and the other two, we have a lot of family time. So I feel like maybe if I wasn't interested in farming, it would be harder to be with a farmer.

Andy Chamberlin (01:18:04):

Knowing what you know now, what advice would you give your beginning self or a new beginning farmer now?

Adam Hausmann (01:18:12):

I always say, have a plan. I know it seems so basic and there's layers to that. But I watch a lot of people, I don't know, work with the farmer training program and other things like that and it's like everybody's going to start a-

Jessica Sanford ([01:18:30](#)):

Diversified veggie CSA-

Adam Hausmann ([01:18:33](#)):

Veggie CSA-

Jessica Sanford ([01:18:33](#)):

With one acre.

Adam Hausmann ([01:18:33](#)):

Sell out of the co-op. There's obviously a lot of ways to do things and everything. But I think coming up with a clear idea, clear business plan, having a sense of how to run a business. I mean, that's something that so many people-

Jessica Sanford ([01:18:53](#)):

Business education?

Adam Hausmann ([01:18:55](#)):

Yeah. I think there's a lot of people that are good growers, but they don't know how to market things or don't have a market and they're just planting and then they're trying to get in and they don't understand their business so they're undercutting themselves or undercutting other growers. I think that's something that's not stressed enough where farming restaurants, all these things, it's a lot of hours, tight margins. You really need to know your costs, know what you're doing, and have a clear avenue for where that product is going to. If it's not going, what are you going to do there? Where are you going to send it? Can you preserve it in any way? Can you create a value-added product? Whatever it might be. It's the only profession where I see people just haphazardly just be like, "I'm going to start a farm and do this without any planning."

([01:20:00](#)):

Whereas I'm like, what other profession would you'd be like, "I'm going to become a doctor and start operating on people."

Andy Chamberlin ([01:20:07](#)):

That's true, there's not a lot of industries [inaudible 01:20:09]-

Adam Hausmann ([01:20:11](#)):

Whatever. I'm like, why is it okay? I don't know if that's stigmas around, people think farmers are not intelligent or whatever. But farmers are some of the brightest people I know out there where they're a jack of all trades, they are constantly adjusting to the day's environment and tasks. You have to be an accountant, you have to be a-

Andy Chamberlin ([01:20:36](#)):

Yeah, right, everything-

Adam Hausmann ([01:20:37](#)):

Bookkeeper. Yeah, exactly. A marketer, whatever it might be. So I always tell people, "Take the time, work on other farms, make mistakes from other people. If you have a chance to be somewhere like the Intervale it's great. Or lease land." Especially if you're not growing perennials, do that. Make sure you really want to do it. Because you don't know right away. It's one thing to work for someone, it's another thing to grow food for ... Have your own operation for a couple of years and really get to know the lifestyle and what it's truly about.

[\(01:21:13\)](#):

I think that's where somewhere the Intervale was really positive, where I watched growers come in and realized, "This is great, but not for me." They learn that without, they didn't drop a couple hundred thousand dollars on land and equipment and all these things and were able to pivot and hopefully they're doing meaningful work that helped ... It's part of the process of where they are now. But gain as much experience as you can and then have a plan and then try to execute the plan as well as you can. But obviously that changes. Have a plan, but be flexible.

Andy Chamberlin [\(01:21:57\)](#):

Yeah, exactly.

Jessica Sanford [\(01:21:58\)](#):

Yeah. I would echo, work on a lot of different farms and feel what scale, what business model works well for you. I think for a long time before meeting Adam, I was like, "I want a CSA." Quickly realized that I'm not the person to have a CSA. The interaction and relationships with people is not something I'm particularly good at. Then figuring out scale. Small scale farms are, I found to be, really challenging for me. Whereas large scale, fast-paced farms is where I thrived. Then also if you do want to start your farm, think about what you want in your life and fit your farm in around that, instead of starting your farm and then try to fit your life into your farm. If you know you want the winters free, then figure out a business model that works with that.

[\(01:22:50\)](#):

If you know that you don't have childcare in the summer, figure out how to go heavy on roots or winter greens. If you know need the month of July off because your family goes to whatever, Cape Cod for the month. Figure out a business model that still allows you to do those things, are important to you to feed the other parts of self. As a perennial farmer, I think we're trying to ... Because we have less control over when we can have our crop and when we don't have crop, I think we're trying to figure out how can we mold the business to work with our family since we can't be like, "Oh, we're just going to do winter greens and have our summers free." So what else can we shift to sort of meet halfway?

Andy Chamberlin [\(01:23:41\)](#):

What do you do outside of farming that brings you joy or de-stress? Do you have things, I mean a family I imagine is a large part of that answer, but is there any other hobbies or anything in particular?

Adam Hausmann [\(01:23:55\)](#):

The kids, yes, certainly-

Jessica Sanford [\(01:23:56\)](#):

Adam likes to drink coffee.

Adam Hausmann ([01:23:58](#)):

I do like that.

Jessica Sanford ([01:23:58](#)):

Drink coffee and read.

Adam Hausmann ([01:23:59](#)):

Yeah, I do like to drink coffee and read. That is a joy. That is a joy.

Andy Chamberlin ([01:24:05](#)):

That sounds like a way to spark new ideas though.

Adam Hausmann ([01:24:07](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. Sometimes it's a rabbit hole.

Jessica Sanford ([01:24:10](#)):

Don't spill his coffee, you're instantly fired from the crew.

Adam Hausmann ([01:24:14](#)):

Yeah, I think that's in our employee manual.

Jessica Sanford ([01:24:17](#)):

We had one employee, it was their first day, and they spilled Adam's coffee and Adam came in and he was like, "We have a real problem." I was like, "What?"

Andy Chamberlin ([01:24:17](#)):

Off to a bad start.

Jessica Sanford ([01:24:17](#)):

Off to a bad start.

Adam Hausmann ([01:24:27](#)):

"I don't think this is going to work out."

Jessica Sanford ([01:24:27](#)):

A new employee.

Adam Hausmann ([01:24:33](#)):

I mean our kids, for me, bring utter joy and love and warmth in life and there's no greater pleasure. But beyond that, things have shifted. I would say time used to be spent more like being in the mountains and biking and doing things like that. Now I'm lucky if we get down to the lake and go for a swim and stare at the ducks and skip some rocks and go get a sandwich on the way home. Expectations of what we can accomplish now are simplified. But I mean there's things like, like I was saying earlier, we've

been teaching our kids to ski this winter. It's something we can do all together and you're outside, it's wonderful. So that's been great. Winter around here, for me, I love to walk around the farm. I love to walk into the woods here and just listen and bird watch and just be in my head a little bit. That brings certain joy. Then attempt to get healthy again. I feel like physically, you fall apart all winter, or all summer season and then it's more and more, it's harder to recover. So trying to just take care of yourself a little bit. I don't know if that's a joy or if that's just a need.

Jessica Sanford ([01:26:09](#)):

That's what you like to do in your free time.

Adam Hausmann ([01:26:11](#)):

Yeah, I know. That's kind of what happens though. It's like trying to take care of self a little bit. But a lot of it's just, I feel like with the younger kids, life is pretty basic right now as far as what happens for me.

Jessica Sanford ([01:26:25](#)):

I like to run, Adam doesn't like to partake.

Adam Hausmann ([01:26:31](#)):

Once a year I get to the end of the road.

Jessica Sanford ([01:26:37](#)):

If I'm not moving, then I go a little bonkers. So my free time is still moving, where I think Adam likes to stop in his free time. So we're trying to find where we can meet with that. I think bringing bike rides back into our time together is a goal for this season.

Adam Hausmann ([01:26:56](#)):

Yeah, I mean I think it is different. My days during the summer start running and basically until the end, so in downtime, yeah, I crave stillness in a funny way. I can't necessarily turn off at home during the season, especially. So if we need a day off, we try to do Sundays off as a family day or personal day or whatever, and so it's like we go somewhere. We go to the river or we go whatever, it's some sort of an adventure and that's like I can-

Andy Chamberlin ([01:27:35](#)):

Be low-key just off the property.

Jessica Sanford ([01:27:37](#)):

Yeah, just off the property.

Adam Hausmann ([01:27:38](#)):

Yeah, just leave the property. That's all that needs to happen.

Jessica Sanford ([01:27:40](#)):

Otherwise it turns into another work day.

Adam Hausmann ([01:27:42](#)):

Yeah. I'll go over to the barn and be like, "I'm just going to go grab something." Three hours later. "Well I ran into this person and then whatever-"

Andy Chamberlin ([01:27:52](#)):

Started puttering on this-

Adam Hausmann ([01:27:53](#)):

Yeah, "Hector had a question about this." So I just get sucked right into it. So best to leave and most enjoyable. River, creamies, what else do you need?

Andy Chamberlin ([01:28:08](#)):

We covered a lot of ground. Those were the basis of my questions. Is there anything else that you wanted to share that we didn't discuss?

Jessica Sanford ([01:28:16](#)):

I think if I were to describe us, I would incorporate more of the social component of what we do in terms of getting people onto the farm, the events on the farm, the relationships with customers, in addition to the whole scale production oriented farm. Even though the pick your own and all the social components and events is probably 10% of our business, but I feel like that's what a lot of people know us for. They don't realize that we have 13, 14 acres of blueberries and are really hustling and getting a lot of fruit into the community. So I think I would highlight some of that if I were to describe us.

Andy Chamberlin ([01:29:05](#)):

If people want to find or follow your farm or reach out, how can they do that?

Jessica Sanford ([01:29:10](#)):

We have a website and we do have a minimal amount of presence on Instagram. So [adamsberryfarm.com](http://adamsberryfarm.com) and [Adamsberryfarm-](#)

Adam Hausmann ([01:29:21](#)):

[Adamsberryfarm](#), Instagram and Facebook. Yeah, we have waves of activity. So word of mouth has always been very important to us.

Andy Chamberlin ([01:29:29](#)):

There you go. And that was The Farmer's Share. I hope you enjoyed this episode with Adam and Jess of Adam's Berry Farm. They're on Facebook and Instagram as well as their website, [adamsberryfarm.com](http://adamsberryfarm.com). The Farmer's Share is supported by a grant offered by the USDA Specialty Crop Block Program from the Vermont Agency of Agriculture Food and Markets. This funding helps to cover some of my time and travel in order to produce these podcasts for the next two and a half years. The USDA Agricultural Marketing Service supports projects that address the needs of US specialty crop growers and strengthens local and regional food systems. I have no doubt that this podcast will meet those needs and help educate growers to support the industry. This show also is supported by the Ag Engineering Program of the University of Vermont extension. If you enjoy the show and want to help support its

programming you can make a one-time or reoccurring donation on our website by visiting [thefarmersshare.com/support](http://thefarmersshare.com/support).

[\(01:30:40\)](#):

We also receive funding from the Vermont Vegetable and Berry Growers Association. The VVBGA is a non-profit organization funded in 1976 to promote the economic, environmental, and social sustainability of vegetable and berry farming in Vermont. Their membership includes over 400 farms across Vermont and beyond, as well as about 50 businesses and organizations that provide products and services of all types to their members. Benefits to members include access to the VVBGA Listserv to buy, sell plants and equipment, share farming information, and tap the vast experience of our growers. Access the Community Accreditation for Produce safety, also known as CAPS. This program is designed for growers by growers to help you easily meet market and regulatory food safety expectations. You can access the VVBGA's Soil Health Platform where you can organize all the soil tests and create and store your Soil Amendment plans and records. Access to webinars for growers in the VVBGA annual meeting, an email subscription to the Vermont Vegetable and Berry Newsletter, camaraderie, enhanced communication and fellowship among commercial growers.

[\(01:31:57\)](#):

Memberships are on a per farm, per calendar year basis, and annual dues this year are \$80. These funds pay for the organization's operating costs and support educational programs and research projects. These funds also support projects that address grower needs around ag engineering, high tunnel production, pest management, pollinators, produce safety, and soil health. Become a member today to be a part of and further support the veg and berry industry. You can visit [thefarmersshare.com](http://thefarmersshare.com) to listen to previous interviews or see photos, videos, or links discussed from the conversation. If you don't want to miss the next episode enter your email address on our website and you'll get a note in your inbox when the next one comes out.

[\(01:32:45\)](#):

The Farmer's Share has a YouTube channel with videos from several of the farm visits. We're also on Instagram, and that's where you can be reminded about the latest episode or see photos from the visit. Lastly, if you're enjoying the show, I'd love it if you could write a review. In Apple podcast just click on the show, scroll down to the bottom, and there you can leave five stars and a comment to help encourage new listeners to tune in. I'd also encourage you to share this episode with other grower friends or crew who you think would be inspiring for them. Thanks for listening.

PART 4 OF 4 ENDS [01:33:24]