

Lisa MacDougall ([00:00:09](#)):

We grow food because we love to do it.

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

Today's episode comes to you from Shaftsbury Vermont, where we visit with Lisa MacDougall of Mighty Food Farm. We start off the episode with a tour through her seven greenhouses and glance at some of the equipment she's using to farm over 14 acres of vegetables. We then pull up a stool in the greenhouse and have a deeper conversation about how she got started farming and what she's done to maintain employees and customers to run a business for over 18 years. Well, operating a business for 18 years sure sounds like a success, but after a wet season like 2023, it will make a seasoned grower question what they're doing. Lisa is a kick butt woman farmer who knows how to lead a team and slinging crates and crates of produce. I hope you enjoy this episode.

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

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. These interviews unravel how they're building their business 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. Just scroll down to the bottom, and that's where you can leave a review right in Apple Podcasts. The Farmer's Share is supported by the Vermont Vegetable and Berry Growers Association and 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.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:01:49](#)):

This is one of the prop houses here. We buy cases of this for the crew. Everybody loves seltzer, so.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:01:55](#)):

Of course.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:01:56](#)):

There's just seltzer everywhere all the time. Yeah, so this is one of the warmer houses, and we don't do a lot of plant sales, but we have some going here. We just have one plant sale day and we're pretty much, we're going to start planting in the field tomorrow. We're held up for a week, but.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:02:24](#)):

Because it was cold?

Lisa MacDougall ([00:02:25](#)):

Yeah. It ended up being a good thing. We made some last minute adjustments to the crop rotation that made sense. It always does. I'm always hemming and hawing about where to put stuff for the rotation, and then there's always last minute changes, which is fine.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:02:46](#)):

You like the hose trolley. That seems to be a new thing people are getting into.

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

Oh my God. Oh man, we just try to make things easier, all the tasks make them easy. I don't mind coiling a hose, but when you're watering two or three times a day sometimes, so that's a bunch of hardening off stuff. We just have a bunch of trailers, and those are harvest wagons and so before harvest season, they just serve as plant holders basically. Yeah, just another prop house, sticky cards, seedlings. We do all of our own little flower starts for all of our planters and stuff around the farm. That's a new hobby of mine. Yeah, growing flowers. Yeah. I didn't do it for a long time and I was like, oh, this is quite nice. These look so good.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:03:43](#)):

Not too hard. You have the systems.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:03:45](#)):

Yeah, I know, right? I was like, why? Yeah. Go to Andrew's and buy flowers, and I should just do my own probably. And some of them, the Ageratum and some certain ones, they're particularly tasty to aphids, so sometimes they make for good scouting plants. She's extremely photogenic.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:04:07](#)):

Oh, yeah.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:04:08](#)):

She's such a good girl. We all love her. This is our water tank that we use to fill the transplanter tanks. We just have a water pump hooked up to it and then we fill.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:04:20](#)):

You fill that from a well?

Lisa MacDougall ([00:04:21](#)):

Yep.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:04:22](#)):

Yeah.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:04:22](#)):

We have two wells. Yep, two good wells.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:04:26](#)):

You can fill these super fast then because you're using a transfer pump or something.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:04:29](#)):

Yeah, we have this transfer pump just hooked up to it, so it's just like, I mean, it takes a minute to fill this.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:04:35](#)):

No, that's super smart. Otherwise, you're standing around with a garden hose.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:04:37](#)):

It's the worst. Yeah, it's the worst. I used to have to come up with projects for people to do while they were waiting for the tanks to fill. I'm like, we should just do this.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:04:46](#)):

Right. Fill the tank, whatever.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:04:49](#)):

And then when we had in Pownal, I was in Pownal for 10 years. In Pownal, we had that on a trailer, that system, and so we would just bring it with us because I had remote fields. It was good. It worked out well. Yeah, portable water. We have a lot of water wheel transplanting.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:05:11](#)):

Tell me more about them. You have, how many acres are you doing?

Lisa MacDougall ([00:05:15](#)):

We're doing 14.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:05:16](#)):

Wow, that's quite a few. That's a lot.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:05:21](#)):

Yeah. I am working towards doing less, but it doesn't seem to happen.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:05:25](#)):

And you've got two water wheels.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:05:28](#)):

We've got two water wheels. I want a third. We have one set up for three row, 12 inch spacing, three row, six inch. There are interchangeable spikes on the wheels, and that's what a lot of our succession stuff is, lettuces and head lettuces, scallions, whatever. And then we have a two row, which we do two row or single, and that's for all the plasticulture stuff. We do our kale and chard on plastic and then all the summer fruiting crops, summer squash, zucchini, and we like to do cabbages on plastic. We do a lot of things on plastic, white plastic, metallic plastic, black plastic, all the plastics because the crops just seem to really like them.

([00:06:15](#)):

So I really hate changing out the wheels to make it like one wheel. So sometimes I think about getting a third just so that we don't ever have to change wheels. I find it to be such a pain in the butt, but for right now, it's pretty sweet. And then we have two tractors with creepers, so then we can have two tractors going at once and that's pretty sweet. That feels like you're winning when you have a couple of transplanters out at one time.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:06:44](#)):

Yeah. You're really slinging the plants.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:06:46](#)):

Yeah, really slinging the plants.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:06:47](#)):

Holy cow.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:06:50](#)):

This is as long as you have enough people to do it.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:06:52](#)):

Conditions are right. Go.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:06:53](#)):

Yeah. I know, for sure. Everybody loves a good planting day, almost mowing season.

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

Yeah, almost.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:07:02](#)):

So we just do a little bit of early heated tomatoes, and they're looking pretty good for, right now. It's just a 30 by 48 house. And we've had some instances of whitefly, so we get a lot of encarcia and stuff in and they just stick on the plant like that. We try to do as much beneficial insect stuff as we can, but sometimes if we get an outbreak that's bad, then we do end up having to spray, but we try to really stay on top of it. I have a couple of people on the crew who are really good scouters, and they're really good at scouting and seeing all the bugs. And so that was part of our plans of action for this year was three days a week of designated scouting time and just really staying on top of it because we had a couple of things get away from us last year. And that never feels good to come across, stumble across some sort of insect or disease thing. We got all these plants from Jack over at Walker Farm.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:08:23](#)):

Yeah. All grafted?

Lisa MacDougall ([00:08:25](#)):

All grafted. We just don't start quite that early. We start our houses around March 10th, and so we like to have the tomatoes in generally by the last week of March or so.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:08:38](#)):

Are you running all four lines of drip?

Lisa MacDougall ([00:08:40](#)):

Yeah.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:08:41](#)):

Wow.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:08:43](#)):

Yeah. Then we don't have to water for very long. And then...

Andy Chamberlin ([00:08:48](#)):

So are you watering frequently? Short spurts?

Lisa MacDougall ([00:08:51](#)):

Yeah. Right now, like every other day maybe for... And this is six inch line too. And then also too, one of the things that sometimes we struggle with because the plant's can be so heavy might be a potassium deficiency, which is from potassium likes water to be absorbed or whatever, and so we'll spread the lines out on the bed. Right now they're kind of near the root zone, and then we'll go from there. It was one of the things I think that came out of a study that Becky did running more lines of drip, so right now we're just... Lettuce is kind of spent. We lost a greenhouse. It was right there where that row cover is. We just replanted the pad. And that windstorm and snowstorm, you guys got a bunch of snow for that on April 4th and fifth, and we had sustained 70 miles an hour for about four hours with 90 mile an hour gusts.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:09:57](#)):

That's a lot of wind.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:09:58](#)):

I was just thrilled that it was only one house was gone. I literally came out. It was still really early in the morning, it was dark, it was storming. And I came out and it was almost this feeling of bliss, and I was like, it's just one.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:10:20](#)):

And that's it.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:10:20](#)):

That's it. Oh, man.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:10:20](#)):

It's a good day.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:10:20](#)):

It's a good day. We only lost one greenhouse to that shit. Little warm in here.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:10:26](#)):

Oh, yeah. Nice.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:10:27](#)):

The insect netting... My grant for ADG is, or the ADR, I forget what the acronym is for peak beds and then several of those vertical airflow fans, which are super cool, but I haven't heard back about that grant. When I talked to, I think her name is Stephanie, who is running it, I was like, "Well, how many people do you think are going to do this?" And she's like, "Well, so far, me personally, I've talked to 100 people."

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

Holy cow.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:11:01](#)):

There were 172 applicants.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:11:03](#)):

Whoa. And I know that money was going to go real fast.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:11:09](#)):

According to my calculations, I mean, really, everybody's going to be going for minimum 50 grand or \$50,000.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:11:17](#)):

Right.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:11:18](#)):

And so for 1.6, I think I did the calculation that there'd be anywhere from 15 to 20 recipients, basically out of 172 probably very well written, very needy applications. At the end of it's like, let's just pull straws here.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:11:40](#)):

Yeah. How do you whittle that down?

Lisa MacDougall ([00:11:42](#)):

Spinach and things.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:11:45](#)):

Nice.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:11:46](#)):

Red Russian kale. I like to grow it, but it is not that popular, but I still am trying to win people over with it. It's delicious.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:11:54](#)):

Hey, they don't know they like it if you don't grow it.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:11:56](#)):

No, exactly. Yeah, right. Insect netting...

Andy Chamberlin ([00:12:02](#)):

So you got netting on many sides. All of them?

Lisa MacDougall ([00:12:05](#)):

All of them are netted. We just net everything either to keep bugs out or keep beneficial in. We don't have an issue in this house right now, so the door is open. And it's not 100%.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:12:21](#)):

Yeah, your doors are usually screened too?

Lisa MacDougall ([00:12:23](#)):

Yes. Yeah. We get real serious about it with cucumbers and the cucumber beetle. We just find that that's the only way to keep them out, because I'm certainly not going to be spraying Pyganic in the houses for those guys. Yeah, bugs. But it's been going so far. I recently got heaters installed in these larger houses a couple of years ago, mostly just to melt ice and snow. That was primarily the reason because I moved from Pownal. We took down and rebuilt all of these greenhouses in one season. As soon as tomatoes were out at the old farm when we were moving, we'd take the house down, bring it up, rebuild it, and then plant winter greens.

([00:13:13](#)):

That winter we got this gnarly ice storm, and I went out in the morning or I saw from my house. I was like, oh man, all the polys deflated. There must've been... All the bubbles are gone. They went out. And it was a gnarly ice storm. The wind blew, and the polys were shredded beyond. And we had just poly-ed them all. This was in January, and we had just poly-ed them in July through September. They were all new polys, and so next year we replaced all the polys in all the houses. So anyways...

Andy Chamberlin ([00:13:58](#)):

So you got real good at that.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:14:00](#)):

So I got really good at polys. I definitely know how to do greenhouse stuff.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:14:06](#)):

So you've got all ledgewoods, all inflated.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:14:09](#)):

Yeah, we have all ledgewood, all inflated. Yep. We do double plywood end walls because the wind gets so bad here. And we do two 12 baseboards. And I get different hardware than what Ed supplies for his frames. I get a heavier duty hardware for the baseboards and the hip boards, and sometimes I splurge on heavier duty eye bolts because we get 90 miles an hour up here.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:14:43](#)):

That's crazy.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:14:45](#)):

It is crazy. And from the move from Pownal, which we did not get 90 miles an hour there, I had to up the game with some greenhouse construction. So we've got it figured out now, and that's good. What a nice day.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:15:06](#)):

Yeah, I know.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:15:08](#)):

We can check out the equipment barn.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:15:11](#)):

Sure.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:15:12](#)):

This was the horse barn that was here when I got here, which was beautiful and it's so nice. I had a team of draft horses that I used a lot in the fields, but it just got to be too much, and I sold them. And I sold them last spring.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:15:37](#)):

Oh, recently.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:15:38](#)):

Yeah, it was super sad. I had them for seven years and oh, but they are now with this great woman up in Stowe and they do sleigh rides at the Stowe Mountain Resort.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:15:50](#)):

That's a pretty good retirement opportunity.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:15:53](#)):

Totally. So that's super great. So this was the indoor riding arena. And we have shelving for all the equipment supplies, row covers, shade cloth, all the plastics, miscellaneous equipment. This is the G. I have an Allis- Chalmers I'm picking it up on Wednesday. I got a bunch of work done, but that's all the little G equipment basket weeder. I got a Finger Weeder from Kress, but I ended up taking the fingers off, and I just liked the sweeps. I don't really like the fingers because they just didn't do it for me. And miscellaneous stuff, and then these are our tractors. We got this tractor last year. I had a real issue with getting 100 horse tractor with a cab, but it's been really good.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:16:47](#)):

Coming from a horse.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:16:48](#)):

Yeah, I know. It was this big, it was this thing for me. I was like, oh my gosh. I sold my draft team. That was just like all you ever heard when you were working them was just like the clanks and the clings of

the implement and the metal on the harnesses. But my tractor guy, Rob, who's great, is super psyched about the cab and just loves that thing.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:17:17](#)):

Oh, yeah.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:17:20](#)):

And fertilizer, shop area...

Andy Chamberlin ([00:17:26](#)):

You're making good use of your covered space.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:17:28](#)):

Yeah. No, totally. Inner crates, we use these for onion storage, which those are just the bees knees. Love those. We wrap those with plastic for storage.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:17:41](#)):

They've got the flip top bales, right? Yeah.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:17:43](#)):

Yeah, I mean, I cannot say enough good things about those. Love crates, love containers. This is a basketball hoop that we need to put up. The crew wanted a basketball hoop, so we'll do that. Yeah. And this is just the little shop area here, all the extension cords, all the fluids and all the things, quicksand in the winter, tires. Not a real farm, I guess if you don't have tires sticking around. Should we look at the equipment a little bit?

Andy Chamberlin ([00:18:23](#)):

Yeah.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:18:25](#)):

I don't have a lot. I try to be really minimalist when I come to equipment, maybe to a fault sometimes. I feel like we're pretty conventional in the tillage realm. We have a moldboard and we got a new disk last year. The sale from the draft horses went to buy a disk, so that was good. That felt great.

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

Can't use those old equipment anymore.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:19:02](#)):

It was like in one hand out the other. Flail, we have 9J cultivator, which their stuff is just great, and a couple mowers, time meter, undercutter bars in various states of disrepair, a little chisel, plastic layer, but pretty basic. Nothing super fancy or anything.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:19:27](#)):

I know they all have a role.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:19:31](#)):

They do all have a role except for that bench warmer I got.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:19:34](#)):

Do you have one that you just like using the most?

Lisa MacDougall ([00:19:38](#)):

In implement?

Andy Chamberlin ([00:19:39](#)):

Yeah.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:19:41](#)):

Gosh, well.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:19:42](#)):

Or one you're really glad you invested in.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:19:44](#)):

Oh, man. That Kverneland plow, if you're going to get a moldboard plow, that's a really nice plow. And I got that on Craigslist. And a guy had bought it for clown plowing competitions, which I didn't know that's a thing.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:19:59](#)):

Nope, I didn't know.

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

And it's like a \$9,000 plow new, and I got it for four grand.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:20:07](#)):

There you go.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:20:08](#)):

I had to pick it up in two trips. It wouldn't fit in my truck. For all I feel there's so much, we try our hardest to do minimal till and all those things, but sometimes.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:20:23](#)):

Sometimes you just got to flip it over.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:20:25](#)):

Yeah. And that's a good one. I love my plastic layer. That was one of my first. I think I got that my second year used. No bells and whistles really, but totally does the job. I do all the plastic laying. I don't want to burden anybody else with that. And I like running an undercutter bar. That means we have things to

harvest. So undercutter bars are sweet. Yeah, they're all useful. And that time meter when you use that right, that's pretty sweet. Sometimes I wish I could just do all my farm work just with the time meter.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:21:10](#)):

Blind cultivate.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:21:11](#)):

Yeah, blind cultivate everything, even till with the time meter. Just scrape the bag, then come back and weed them.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:21:18](#)):

I feel like it has a very narrow window of usefulness.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:21:21](#)):

It does. It does. But if you hit it right, it can be really nice. We like to use it on carrots. We use it on head lettuces and beets, things like that. Yeah, the window is narrow. And then we're going to put up a new green. We're going to rebuild the greenhouse, and that's going to go here. So we just took down a bunch of trees on that hedgerow there. It looks pretty ugly, but I think the birds will like it.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:21:55](#)):

Remove the hazard.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:21:56](#)):

Yeah. Yeah, no branches. No sticks into the poly. And then did you see, I don't think you've been here since we put up the extension on the pack shed building?

Andy Chamberlin ([00:22:06](#)):

No, that overhang is new.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:22:07](#)):

Yeah, so we did that in 2021, I think, and it's so awesome. It's so nice to unload here for harvest. And you get out of the sun. You get out of the rain, you get out of the wind, also loading for deliveries or loading for market, crate storage. We'll move the root washer out here and do root washing out here for the storage crops, like the big carrot washing for storage and stuff like that. So yeah, that's pretty sweet. A lot of [inaudible 00:22:52].

Andy Chamberlin ([00:22:52](#)):

Ceiling fan.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:22:53](#)):

Yeah, I don't know. That felt necessary at the time. We're always like, where are the tiki torches? We haven't had a party out here yet, but we will.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:23:04](#)):

It'd be a good spot for one. Yeah.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:23:05](#)):

It's a great spot for a party. Yeah.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:23:07](#)):

Pull the picnic tables over. Yeah.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:23:10](#)):

Yeah.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:23:10](#)):

That's a lot of bulb crates.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:23:13](#)):

We have a lot of bulb crates, all freshly cleaned. Nothing really to show in the fields right now except for seed in the ground. This is the pack shed, which you're super familiar with and continues to just be a really great space for us. We recently invested through Robert Arnold, a lot of the Buckhorn crates, and we drilled holes in the bottom of all of them and that's been really, really great. And yeah.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:23:53](#)):

Upgraded to Trusscore. I think that's new. Your coolers are new.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:23:56](#)):

Yeah. The Trusscore is sweet. We had some serious moisture rotting behind that wall, so we did that last spring and that stuff is awesome. Love it. And yeah, we'll probably make plans to do the other side at some point also.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:24:22](#)):

That's good. That's always good to hear.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:24:24](#)):

That's a great product. Yeah. Chris pointed me in that direction. Yeah, that's nice. All the water goes through the drain instead of just splashing on your feet.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:24:35](#)):

Just a little direction there.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:24:36](#)):

Yep, yep.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:24:37](#)):

This is nice. Still continues to be a role model. What are the TV mounts for on the ceiling?

Lisa MacDougall ([00:24:42](#)):

They were for hose rails, and we're not going to use them. We like the simplicity of this, and it works well. So yeah, we put them up and we were using them. And we didn't like them, so we took them down. We're like, we really just like our hose.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:25:05](#)):

Lesson learned.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:25:06](#)):

That works well for us. Yeah, it's a small space relatively, but we like it because we can see every corner and everything just stays really organized. I think that's the benefit of not having enormous spaces is it forces you to keep tidy, and there's nothing in here that isn't used regularly.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:25:33](#)):

Yeah. Your layout is the same from when it was five years ago or whatever.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:25:38](#)):

Yeah, yeah.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:25:40](#)):

Guess it was good from the start.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:25:42](#)):

It was, yeah, it worked well.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:25:42](#)):

Mostly.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:25:48](#)):

Bibby. And this is the staff area. And then we've been doing some pop-up farm stores, so we have some farm store stuff out. So kind of a multi...

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Lisa MacDougall ([00:26:01](#)):

And yeah, so kind of a multipurpose space, but the crew break area is pretty nice.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:26:08](#)):

Still CSA pickup too?

Lisa MacDougall ([00:26:10](#)):

Yep.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:26:10](#)):

Yep.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:26:11](#)):

Yep, yep. Yeah. Yeah. We do the CSA pickup over here actually in the pack shed. And then the sort of people sort of funnel through here.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:26:22](#)):

It's like an amusement park. You get to see the activity and then you finish in the gift shop.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:26:22](#)):

Yeah, I know. Right, right, right. Totally, totally. Totally.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:26:22](#)):

And here's the shirts and the merch.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:26:34](#)):

Yeah. Yeah, yeah. Yeah. Totally. It's a good analogy. Yeah.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:26:39](#)):

Nice. This is a nice space.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:26:40](#)):

Yeah, it is. Thank the crew. We got toasters and microwave and coffee machine and inspirational quotes and rules posted, and just all the things.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:26:40](#)):

Supplies, the working stuff.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:26:54](#)):

Yeah, supplies, first aid stuff, notebooks, resource labels. I supply snacks and all the cleaning supplies, sort of all those things, but it's a nice place for them to land. And then in the summertime it's air-conditioned, which is-

Andy Chamberlin ([00:27:11](#)):

You need.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:27:14](#)):

... huge. Which is huge.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:27:17](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. It's cool or warm. It's dry.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:27:19](#)):

Yeah. Totally.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:27:21](#)):

Enough elbow room, you can take your layers off.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:27:24](#)):

Yeah. And I have somebody come in, one of my crew right now, she runs a CSA, but we don't have CSA, so she comes in and she cleans the whole place on Fridays, and then that's really nice. Everybody comes in on Monday and it's nice and clean.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:27:39](#)):

Well, that one's mega inflated.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:27:41](#)):

That is a problem. That one, so that's a plastic I don't like. They shipped me the wrong plastic at Griffin, it's Sun Master and we put shade cloth on it and it freaking stretched out.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:27:59](#)):

Weird.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:27:59](#)):

And it's all looks like it's gotten growths on it, and the blower is actually slightly disconnected, and so it's usually even bigger.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:28:11](#)):

That's like a balloon that's going to pop.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:28:13](#)):

I know. I know. You should see it when it's deflated. It's so bad.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:28:18](#)):

Well, that concludes the walking tour portion of our show, and once we wrap that up, we figured where should we sit down and chat. It was the last week of April and a beautiful, warm, 65 sunny degree day. So we looked around a little bit and decided, you know what, let's sit in the greenhouse where there's a whole bunch of starts. So you can hear the fan running in the background and that's where we're at. We're sitting in the greenhouse with a whole bunch of greenery behind us, just enjoying this warm spring day. Enjoy part two of the conversation where we learn more about Lisa and her business. Well, welcome to the show. If you could start off by introducing yourself and your farm, that'd be great.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:29:06](#)):

Great. Yeah. Thanks so much, Andy. My name is Lisa McDougall. I run Mighty Food Farm. We are in Shaftsbury, Vermont, and we do a lot of different vegetables, a little bit of strawberries, and we market through CSA. That's mostly year round. One local farmer's market up in Dorset, Vermont, and a pretty nice little wholesale route.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:29:32](#)):

Nice. When did you get started farming?

Lisa MacDougall ([00:29:37](#)):

I got started farming when I was down at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. I was undeclared and I got a job for the summer in 2003, working for the fabulous Nancy Hansen at the Hampshire College Farm. And I just totally fell in love with it. I loved the work, I loved producing food, just pretty much everything about it just really clicked with me. I had always sort of been a super outdoor person my whole life. I grew up riding horses, working at horse farms, and I thought that that's what I was going to do, until then all of a sudden it wasn't. And that had been sort of who I was and what I did up until about, I was 18 and then worked at the Hampshire College Farm at 19 and just got into the plant and soil science major at UMass, which was a totally phenomenal program.

([00:30:47](#)):

And if you don't know where Amherst Mass is, it's in the Pioneer Valley, which is just loaded with lots of different vegetable and agricultural production and some of the most beautiful soil in the world and was just surrounded by the buy local movement, CSA community involved in sustaining agriculture was getting going, and there's just a lot of excitement in the early 2000s around agriculture in that area. And finished getting my degree down there. Worked for Jeremy at Simple Gifts Farm over in North Amherst, which was super great. Gained a lot of experience there, had a lot of great responsibilities.

([00:31:40](#)):

And in my last year of school, which was like 2005, 2006, about that, I was dating somebody and he was into agriculture, and we ended up renting a farm together in Pownal, Vermont and starting Mighty Food Farm in 2006. So we moved up to Pownal, had a little Troy-Bilt rototiller, and just a lot of ambition and drive and stubbornness. And we went whole hog into doing a small CSA, did some local farmer's markets wholesale, and sort of took off from there. And I think we did about four acres our first year, which was a tremendous amount. I really never want to have to work that hard again in my life, ever. It was quite a lot. And we produced a decent amount of food that first year. So yeah, that's sort of how I got started is I just stumbled into working at a farm and just was like, yes, this is it. Yeah.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:32:59](#)):

That's unique. Not many people come out at the gate being like, I want to farm.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:33:05](#)):

Yeah. I don't know. I think my first experience, Nancy's a fabulous grower. I was also the crew that year was super awesome. There was Rowan White who was on the crew that year, and she does a lot of, she's Native American and does a lot of work with saving indigenous seeds, and her work was super inspiring. And another woman who had grown up on a large potato farm in Maine and then Tim Wilcox from the Kitchen Garden Farm was also sort of in and out that year and there was a lot of really great energy and I just loved it. I loved the long days, I loved the hard work. I loved eating the food. I was just all about it. It was great. Yeah.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:34:03](#)):

Going into your first year doing four acres, what was your vision like going into that?

Lisa MacDougall ([00:34:10](#)):

There was no vision. It was just, we had a small crop plan. It was like, we're going to do a CSA. We did a 60 person CSA and we were doing the Bennington Farmers Market, which was on Tuesdays and Saturdays. Then we started doing the Dorset market in the winter, that first winter. And yeah, it felt like there was a great need. We could sell anything that we grew, and so then it just of lended itself to expansion.

(00:34:43):

And then the next year we brought on a larger team. We were working a lot, just like staff hours were 60 to 70 hours a week. And yeah, it was a lot. I keep saying that, but it was really good. And I think the second year we were probably up to six or seven or eight acres or something like that and added more CSA members and another farmer's market and just were sort of doing a winter CSA and building greenhouses, and stuff like that. Yeah.

Andy Chamberlin (00:35:28):

That's not dabbling. What made you decide to grow five to 10 acres fairly soon, just because you wanted to live off of it?

Lisa MacDougall (00:35:38):

Yeah, yeah. Yeah, it seemed like that's what we needed to do monetarily to make it work was reach a certain level of revenue. And also too, coming down from in the Pioneer Valley area, there were just a lot of larger farms, and that's what I had worked on visiting, doing some stuff over at the Food Bank farm and some work at Red Fire Farm. And yeah, it's just sort of what we were around was larger farms. There weren't a lot of smaller one, two, three acre farms like there are now.

Andy Chamberlin (00:36:24):

Yeah.

Lisa MacDougall (00:36:25):

Yeah.

Andy Chamberlin (00:36:26):

Going with what you knew.

Lisa MacDougall (00:36:27):

Yeah, I know. Pretty much. There really was no plan. So I suggest that you do have one. Now I have a better vision, but early on, it was just like, let's just work super hard and grow a lot of food and sell it. And that was sort of how we began.

Andy Chamberlin (00:36:46):

Was your first farm in Pownal there a good land?

Lisa MacDougall (00:36:53):

It was a hill farm through and through, a lot of slope. The soil was nice. It was a nice, it's actually the same soil at my farm down here in Shaftsbury, which is a Stockbridge silty loam, and then some Georgia loam. And we grew some nice crops there. The barns were very old and falling down and we just had

extension cords running everywhere, and it was a total fire hazard, but whatever, we didn't know any better. And the house was old and whatnot, falling apart, but they had some decent soil and we made it work.

(00:37:41):

And then I was leasing another farm a mile or two down the road that had decent soil and some acreage, so we were traveling all over the place. I was doing more acreage, growing more when I was down in Pownal than where I am here now in Shaftsbury.

Andy Chamberlin (00:37:42):

So what brought you up to Shaftsbury?

Lisa MacDougall (00:38:09):

The opportunity to purchase land. I was in Pownal for 10 years with no ... We had talked about an option to purchase, but it just really wasn't going to work out. And I was land seeking, I would say super hard and with the Vermont Land Trust and looking at farms and applying for all the farms. And I wanted to stay in this area. I didn't want to go up to Burlington or the Rutland area or over to the eastern side of the state. I wanted to stay in Bennington county, and there wasn't a lot of things available. It's a narrow valley. It's like the Green Mountains are right there, and then you have some land, and then boom, it's New York.

(00:38:58):

And I had stopped seeking, I was seeking land really hard from 2011 to 2014, and nothing was really working out, and I was getting pretty discouraged. So I was like, all right, well, I've got a good thing going in Pownal, so I'll just kick it here for a while and just keep doing what I'm doing. It's working. And then the Vermont Land Trust approached me and they were like, "Hey, there's this farm in Shaftsbury. You should probably go check it out." And so sort of reluctantly, I drove up there. Fine, I'll go look at it. And I looked at the soil maps first, and it had the same soil as in Pownal and an appropriate amount of acreage and less slope than what I was farming on. So I was like, oh, that's sweet.

(00:39:49):

And it has a house that's cool and a bar and that's great. And then I came up to visit it. It was late February 2016, and I mean, yeah, I just pulled into the parking lot and was like, yep, this is it.

Andy Chamberlin (00:40:07):

We'll make it work.

Lisa MacDougall (00:40:08):

Yeah, we'll make it work. There's a house that has the acreage. The water was good, and the price was right. That was the other thing. It was just like I knew what I could finance, and I really wasn't willing to go over that. I wasn't going to get in over my head. And so it was really hard to find, but that's the story of every farmer trying to find affordable land, and I wasn't going to get in over my head. I was like, I'm going to get something that I can make a living off and-

Andy Chamberlin (00:40:40):

And feel good about.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:40:43](#)):

Yeah. I didn't want to saddle myself with a payment that was too big. And I also was hoping for some sort of infrastructure, because I looked at a lot of farms with either dilapidated infrastructure, which I was like, God, I really don't want to have to repair all of this. That's really expensive, or can be. This place had a house and that was a bonus. The horse barn is 72 feet by 150, and the indoor storage space is just, it's really pretty great.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:41:21](#)):

Yeah, for your equipment, fertilizer, row covers, everything.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:41:25](#)):

Everything's dry.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:41:25](#)):

It's out of the elements.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:41:26](#)):

Yeah, it's good.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:41:27](#)):

And easy to access. It's not packed.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:41:29](#)):

No. Yeah, it's a nice open space. Yeah.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:41:32](#)):

Tractors, keeping them out of the sun.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:41:35](#)):

So nice.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:41:35](#)):

So when you landed on this land, did you change up your business structure at all or pretty much keep the same thing just in different fields?

Lisa MacDougall ([00:41:45](#)):

Yeah, I pretty much keep on keeping on. Pownal, Vermont is right on the border of Williamstown Mass, which is a super wonderful community that I had a lot of clientele down there for CSA. So just one of the things we did is we ended up doing a remote CSA pickup down there, which we still do. And we just have this core group of members down there who are super wonderful, and some of them have been with us for as long as we've been going, 18 years, and-

Andy Chamberlin ([00:42:23](#)):

That's incredible.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:42:23](#)):

Yeah, no, they're-

Andy Chamberlin ([00:42:24](#)):

Talk about retention.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:42:26](#)):

... diehard. They're like, "Are you sure you want to join again?" And they're all so wonderful. And yeah, we still supply to the co-op down there, which is great, and Mezza Bistro, and we have transitioned. The only transition really we've made, we've expanded our wholesale route to Manchester, endorse it a lot, which has been really great. And we love our customers up there, and we still do the Dorsett Farmer's Market, so I've sort of just maintained the same markets, which has been really nice.

([00:43:02](#)):

The only thing I did drop when I came up here was we had this really wonderful account down right outside of New York City. It was called The Good Table, and it was farm to corporate cafeteria. And so we were driving down there once a week and we were supplying these office buildings with veg for their salad bar and hot bar for staff, their huge office buildings. It was a super fun account. And we also did pre-packed CSA boxes down there. Our CSA is free choice. Those were not, those were just like, this is the box of stuff that you're going to get. And that was really great.

([00:43:55](#)):

I started doing that in 2012 and stopped doing it in 2017 or '18 maybe. And that really sort of pushed me to up my game a little bit in terms of production and consistency and quality, because they were expecting a certain thing, these larger office buildings and everything. So it pushed me in a really good way. And at first I was like, oh man, holy shit, I'm in over my head. But we were able to meet those demands, and that was really a really great opportunity. And I guess I decided to get out of that at a good time, because then in 2020 when Covid happened, all the office buildings closed.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:44:53](#)):

You quit on your own terms.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:44:54](#)):

Yeah. It would've been something to have lost all of that revenue so suddenly, so yeah.

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

Yeah, it turns out that was good timing.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:45:02](#)):

Yeah.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:45:03](#)):

How did you find that opportunity? That seems like a unique one.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:45:10](#)):

The woman who was running it is from Pawlet and had been working with the Denisons over at the Denison farm, and they no longer wanted to have that account. And she knows somebody from Vermont Land Trust, and that person recommended me and so she just called me. It was early in the spring March, stuff is getting seeded and crop plan is finished and called and talked to her. And she's like, "Do you want to supply these office buildings? And this is how much it is, and can you do a CSA?" And I was like, "Okay, sure." And we did it, and I'm really happy that I said yes to that. It was a lot, but I'm really happy that I, yeah.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:45:59](#)):

Like you said, it pushed you to grow in many different ways.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:46:02](#)):

Yeah. Yeah, definitely. A lot of head lettuce. They went through a lot of lettuce at those places, which is great.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:46:09](#)):

Interesting.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:46:10](#)):

Yeah.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:46:11](#)):

You said you wanted to stay in this southwest corner of Vermont. What makes this area feel like home to you?

Lisa MacDougall ([00:46:21](#)):

It's really that I like it down here, and I like the fact that I feel really needed. From just the moment we started the farm in Pownal it was just people were stoked and they were so happy that we were here, and I have so many dedicated customers, and I just felt needed. And that feels good. And just sometimes everybody knows that sometimes the southwestern corner is a little bit forgotten about sometimes, I guess. And yeah, it's a great little area.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:47:05](#)):

What did you envision your farm would look like when you started?

Lisa MacDougall ([00:47:08](#)):

Not much of a vision really. And now I just wanted to grow a lot of vegetables really, and felt like I've just made a lot of mistakes and learned the hard way, but no vision really. Now it's much clearer heading into year 18, I finally have an idea. I really, I guess one of the things I just try to be is a steady Eddie, be really consistent with the crops quality. We're maintaining our current markets, and we just sort of try to do what we do better, but we're not stagnant, and we're not complacent. We're always looking for opportunity or seeing how to tweak systems or what trends are or whatever. But I guess I try to just do what I do, but just a little bit better. And we're always tweaking production in the field and in the greenhouses so we can increase yields off of the same amount of space is what we think about a lot.

How can we do this better with spacing or fertility or whatever, all of it, insect management, disease management, and just do what we do better. Yeah.

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

How has the market shifted in the last 18 years? Has it really changed up your crop mix?

Lisa MacDougall ([00:48:53](#)):

I think I've gotten, or I haven't gotten, I guess what they say is you want to have what people want when they want it and the quantity they want it in. And so I'm always thinking about that, and it's like we can't grow enough salad mix and spinach and arugula and all those salad greens and stuff. And I know not to do a quarter acre of Kohlrabi, right? Kohlrabi is always the one that gets singled out, and yeah, we just sort of trends and vegetables. Things come and go, but you just have your classics, your salad stuff, and gold potatoes and cucumbers and carrots. There's just certain things that we know that we really pay attention to those crops that we know that we can sell as much as we are able to grow, able to produce and if that crop is profitable for us or not. Yeah.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:50:03](#)):

Well, it sounds like both your production has been consistent and your customer base has been relatively consistent too, which is great.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:50:10](#)):

Yeah, consistency just makes it feel like agriculture is, it can be so unpredictable, just obviously with the weather and everything else. So we try to mitigate fluctuations in sales and in production as just as much as possible.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:50:35](#)):

Along the lines with that, I was glancing at your website, and I know you've had employees for many years. Can you share a little bit about how you've been able to retain your employees year after year and your crew?

Lisa MacDougall ([00:50:52](#)):

Yeah, my team ... Yeah, my crew culture is, God, it's going to sound so corny but it is a love based crew culture. I focus a lot on employee wellbeing. I try to be really organized so that everybody knows what they're doing. I try to have good training, comfortable workspaces, have work be manageable, not have any tasks that just feel unnecessary or it's too much, or people are going to die by the end of the day or whatever.

([00:51:24](#)):

And gosh, I feel like I have a lot to say about that. I've given several presentations on that. But for me, always, I'm constantly thinking about their wellbeing because I feel like the farm itself, if they're not happy and cohesive and working together, and if things aren't laid out, expectations need to be really clear like when we take break, when we take lunch, and how many hours are we working and what are we getting paid and when do we get a raise? And just all these things from just your employee handbook down to your daily interaction.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:52:00](#)):

Just like your employee handbook down to your daily interactions, letting people know that you care. And I'll sort of attribute to that and making sure that you're keeping all of your expenses in check and your sales up so that you're charging the right amount so you can afford to pay people a somewhat decent wage, and doing things like paid sick days and paid vacation and personal days. And knowing that nobody is ever going to care as much about your farm as you do, and that's totally fine.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:52:49](#)):

Right, remembering that.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:52:50](#)):

Yeah, totally. And it's like, okay, 3:30, we stick to the hours. We have weekly staff meetings every Thursday after lunch where we go over next week's tasks, anything that needs to be wrapped up from this week. We have a star system, which is people give each other stars for like, "Hey, Richie and Sage, you guys totally nailed all that summer squash zucchini planting," and then star. And then stars are worth two bucks credit at the farm store. And then you can also cash out your stars and get some cash if you accumulate a bunch. And so that's super fun. The stars are great. Everyone wants a star. And yeah, I think that weekly meetings, morning meetings, afternoon meetings, quarterly reviews, check-ins, end of season reviews, just all of those things, really making it a comfortable place to work is just really important. You want people to show up and they want to be here.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:54:11](#)):

So do you think people come back year after year because it's fun and they like it? What makes it a career for them? Because you've had people here for more than five years, right?

Lisa MacDougall ([00:54:20](#)):

Oh yeah. I mean, I think David's been with me for 12.

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

That's insane for farm help.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:54:28](#)):

Yeah, and we go all winter. We do quite a lot of storage crop. Our sales are pretty steady and pretty good. That's been a goal is to have sales through the winter time and the early spring be pretty steady. We're not trying to make all of our money just in a six or seven month period. And yeah, I feel very fortunate that people want to be here.

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

Yeah, that's awesome.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:55:01](#)):

Totally, I feel very lucky.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:55:02](#)):

You've mentioned consistency has been kind of your jam, having stuff when you want it and whatnot. What's the next 10 years look like for you?

Lisa MacDougall ([00:55:14](#)):

I'm thinking a lot about that right now. That's... not a loaded question for me... but I've had this sort of recent epiphany about I've been pretty much... like all farmers do, I am not different, but all farmers feel like we surrender to our farms. And we're just like this is what the crops need, this is what the cows need or whatever. I've sort of lifted my head up a little bit over the past six months I'd say, and I hadn't been home to see my family in almost five years and I just went home recently and I was like, "Oh my God."

Andy Chamberlin ([00:55:59](#)):

There's life outside the farm.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:56:00](#)):

Yeah, totally. I'm not in a relationship. I don't have kids. This is just what I do. I'm here with my dog and just farming all the time, or in the winter doing office work, or I like to go on walks and runs and stuff. So over the next 10 years, I go back and forth about sometimes thinking about wanting to downsize a lot. I don't get to let my fields rest as much as I would like them to and so I think about that, my soil quality an awful lot and letting some fields rest more. But as of now, we continue to get good production and weed control out of our fields. I think that's one of the things I have the hardest time with is the long term vision for the farm. I kind of just want to keep doing what I'm doing.

([00:57:03](#)):

I have a lot of ideas generating all the time, even for other businesses, just constantly. But my plan is to just be here and just keep improving as I can. And sometimes I think about putting up a lot more greenhouses and sometimes... we had one blow down this winter... and then like maybe not. So a lot of it to different ideas, but I haven't really nailed anything down. One thing I do know, the only goal I really have is to be spending some more time with my family because I've really, over the last 20 years I haven't, and this will be my 20th year farming full-time, 18 years doing Mighty Food Farm. And I'll be 40, which is super young, I think. And so it's all I've been doing.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:58:05](#)):

Right, on one hand, 40 is really young and there's so much life after that. But on the other hand, you've been in a 20-year career which is also a significant contribution and chunk of work.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:58:20](#)):

Yeah, and I love what I do. I still get so Jones-ed about it. Like, "Oh, we're going to plant soon."

Andy Chamberlin ([00:58:29](#)):

Well, that's good.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:58:30](#)):

Yeah, no, totally. I have so much excitement and all of it. I could just talk to other farmers forever. But just having that, and not having to feel like I'm in the place where I have to work 80 or 90 hours a week.

And sort of just refining, I'm really just trying to refine things so that it's a little bit easier and maybe I don't eat dinner at nine or 10 o'clock at night and all those things.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:59:04](#)):

But it's not the 60 to 80 hours that it was in the first few years?

Lisa MacDougall ([00:59:09](#)):

Oh, it was like a 100.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:59:12](#)):

Your crew was at that.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:59:14](#)):

Oh yeah, the crew was at 60 to 70, which was like nobody should ever have their crew work that much. That's a recipe for disaster.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:59:25](#)):

Those crew members aren't here 12, 18 years later.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:59:28](#)):

No, they left mid-season, yeah, for sure. I'm out there by myself pulling plastic in the fall. Oh shit, you know?

Andy Chamberlin ([00:59:36](#)):

Not a good day.

Lisa MacDougall ([00:59:37](#)):

No. So long-term vision is hard, but really I just want to refine my systems and continue to just improve on crop quality and see my family more. Those are my goals right now.

Andy Chamberlin ([00:59:54](#)):

Was there any change of practice or equipment that really allowed you to relax a little bit and get a few more hours in the day? Or has it just been 20 years of incremental change that has made it more sustainable?

Lisa MacDougall ([01:00:11](#)):

Oh, I still work quite a bit.

Andy Chamberlin ([01:00:17](#)):

It's still borderline burnout.

Lisa MacDougall ([01:00:18](#)):

Yeah, oh totally. Last year, 2023, was really hard. And that's sort of what caused this sort of thing where I was like, "Wow, I am just working a lot." And really I started to feel... I'm definitely type A, I guess, if

you could label me as that, if you want to label people as A, B, C or whatever... but what I started to notice last year in 2023, and I don't know if it was the rain, I don't know what was going on, but things like equipment breakdowns or this or that, there's always that stuff. There's always crop shit. There's always equipment stuff. It happens. And my threshold of sort of mentally, emotionally sort of dealing with that stuff was really low.

[\(01:01:10\)](#):

And I don't get angry really, but it really raised my anxiety and I was starting to get a lot of physical symptoms of stress. Dizziness, and nausea and just sort of bouts of just really not feeling physically well and I attribute it to stress. And so I was like, "Wow, this is different." And so I've sort of had this focus a little bit on stress management a lot because if I need to make good decisions I need to set the vibe for the crew, all these things. So if I'm not totally... I don't have to be totally great... but able to manage all the things, then I just need to be able to manage it.

Andy Chamberlin [\(01:02:13\)](#):

You've got to have your game on.

Lisa MacDougall [\(01:02:14\)](#):

For sure, every day.

Andy Chamberlin [\(01:02:15\)](#):

Like it's you, you don't have a farm partner, right? Not at all.

Lisa MacDougall [\(01:02:18\)](#):

No, so you can't really have a bad day. You've just got to keep on going. And so I used to have this philosophy of, and I still have it, but do as much as you can every day no matter what, just go do it. Because sometimes you do and you can't do it tomorrow, but it's like that philosophy sometimes doesn't always serve me super well because I'll just keep going and sometimes you have to stop. And so that stop is important that I'm getting sleep.

Andy Chamberlin [\(01:02:56\)](#):

It's often when things break too, when you're pushing.

Lisa MacDougall [\(01:02:59\)](#):

Totally.

Andy Chamberlin [\(01:03:00\)](#):

Or tired.

Lisa MacDougall [\(01:03:01\)](#):

Totally. Yeah, yeah.

Andy Chamberlin [\(01:03:05\)](#):

So what have you done to manage that stress either over the last 18 years, like what do you do for hobbies or relaxation or what have you done this last six months to de-stress or relax a little and manage that?

Lisa MacDougall ([01:03:28](#)):

Well, I've always had a daily yoga routine. I started doing yoga when I was 13, pretty young. I was a pretty anxious kid and so my mom was into meditation and things, and so she was having me do breath work and meditation exercises as a little girl. Anyway, so I try to incorporate some of that into my daily routine. I run every day. I also go on a walk with my dog. And those two times, those things are important no matter how short they are. And really I think just quality sleep is really important. Eating regularly and eating balanced meals and all those things. Not hammering the pot of coffee at 5:00 PM to keep going, that isn't going to work out.

Andy Chamberlin ([01:04:35](#)):

It kind of throws a wrench into your sleep.

Lisa MacDougall ([01:04:39](#)):

Oh yeah, just all the things.

Andy Chamberlin ([01:04:40](#)):

Throws everything out of balance.

Lisa MacDougall ([01:04:41](#)):

Yeah, yeah. So meditation, yoga, and also just working on trying to see people more. I can be kind of a recluse up here. And usually during the season I'm just leaving the farm once a week to go to market, so making considerations to see some local friends more or whatever. Just all those things that we know that we're supposed to do.

Andy Chamberlin ([01:05:12](#)):

It's hard to do when the to-do list grows every day and so many things need your attention.

Lisa MacDougall ([01:05:17](#)):

Totally.

Andy Chamberlin ([01:05:17](#)):

And your life depends on it.

Lisa MacDougall ([01:05:19](#)):

Totally. That's a big thing. It's like I need to make money off of that.

Andy Chamberlin ([01:05:25](#)):

These plants cannot die.

Lisa MacDougall ([01:05:26](#)):

Yeah, exactly.

Andy Chamberlin ([01:05:27](#)):

I need them to do well.

Lisa MacDougall ([01:05:28](#)):

That is a huge driver. Yeah, for sure. So I do whatever I can. And one saying that I love is... I have so many little sayings and stuff... is just it's only as big of a deal as you make it. So sometimes it's the stress of that one thing you need to go do or this or that. It's like it's only as big of a deal as you make it. Just take a deep breath and just go hook up to that implement or go do that paperwork or whatever you need to do, and just mindfully move through those motions and get your work done. One of the things I've started to do also is, and I don't know if other people do this, but I'll write down my task list and then I'll put how much time I think it'll take next to it.

([01:06:32](#)):

So I have to go prep those beds, that's 30 minutes, then I have to lay some plastic that's an hour, and then I have to water the greenhouse or do this or blah, blah, blah. Then what can I possibly have somebody else do? And if those add up to 10 hours, and there's always something else that pops up and so it's like what can I take off and what's prioritized? But it also keeps me... I wear a watch and I'm like, "Okay, I better keep boogieing if I want to... this should take me 30 minutes so don't dick around. Keep your focus and just do your work and then be done."

Andy Chamberlin ([01:07:10](#)):

Yeah, it's interesting because you can shoot yourself in the foot by over-committing like, "Oh, it's only going to take a half an hour to do that," but on the other hand work tends to fill the time that you give it so by giving yourself that little bit of deadline, you're like, "No, I should have had this done in half an hour."

Lisa MacDougall ([01:07:24](#)):

Totally.

Andy Chamberlin ([01:07:25](#)):

So that makes a lot of sense if you look at that way.

Lisa MacDougall ([01:07:27](#)):

That's something that has been really helpful for me. I don't have crew in on Saturday and Sunday, and so Saturday I do a lot of whatever needs to be done, whether it's cultivating or some bed prep that didn't get done during the week or just whatever, seeding some stuff. And that list is generally pretty long. Saturdays I always say I can get a little wild when I'm here by myself.

Andy Chamberlin ([01:07:59](#)):

Stand back.

Lisa MacDougall ([01:07:59](#)):

Yeah, it's like all the tractors running, just all the things happening. So especially for my Saturdays I really make that list on Friday night or whatever, and I put in a lot of time. I'm not racing the clock but I'm mindful of what I'm doing and where I'm going and all those things.

Andy Chamberlin ([01:08:27](#)):

I try to be mindful of taking time away from farm tasks and whatnot and spending some time with friends because I know they're talking about moving away and it's like they're not going to be here forever so I've got to make time to enjoy some time with them and whatnot. I've been trying to learn that balance because it's hard trying to do farm stuff and whatnot. And recently I've been looking at the list and think, "Well, what needs to be done today and what's going to be okay if it waits till tomorrow?"

Lisa MacDougall ([01:08:58](#)):

Totally.

Andy Chamberlin ([01:08:59](#)):

And then it's like, "Okay, yeah, that can wait another day." Of course I've got 15 things that I really want to do but only two of those really need to get done right now.

Lisa MacDougall ([01:09:07](#)):

Totally.

Andy Chamberlin ([01:09:07](#)):

And that helped this last weekend.

Lisa MacDougall ([01:09:10](#)):

And sometimes... and I got this from Stephen Covey, he's an author, I mean he's just like a god, right, Seven Habits for Highly Effective People, I've read that book so many times. It's on my counter next to my coffee mug in the morning. And one of the things, he has the four quadrants, and is it urgent and important? Is it important and not urgent? It's like what is this? What do I need to do? The greenhouse needs to be watered, that is urgent and it's important. And the plastic needs to be laid, it's not urgent but it's important. And so you can sort of prioritize your tasks.

Andy Chamberlin ([01:09:54](#)):

And if it falls off the list, then I guess it wasn't that important right now.

Lisa MacDougall ([01:09:56](#)):

Exactly, yeah, yeah. No, totally. And if it's not on the list then maybe you probably shouldn't do it.

Andy Chamberlin ([01:10:04](#)):

There are two books that I think kicked off my adult life as a teen when I was weeding strawberries or picking strawberries, either way, as a teen I listened to his audiobooks and it was The Four Hour Work Week and The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People. It just opened my world and totally shifted the way I think about work. And so to listen to those as a late teen, amazing.

Lisa MacDougall ([01:10:32](#)):

I listened to the Four Hour Work Week also and that was a total game changer. And one of my favorite quotes from that, which you might know, Andy, which applies to every single area in life, is, "Your quality of life is dictated by the difficult conversations you're willing to have."

Andy Chamberlin ([01:10:56](#)):

Yes.

Lisa MacDougall ([01:10:58](#)):

And it's so true. That's one of our mottoes on the farm is do the hard thing. When we're looking at the game plan for the day and da-da-da, we're like, "Okay, let's do the hard thing. Do the hard thing."

Andy Chamberlin ([01:11:10](#)):

And it never hurts to ask. That gets you far as well.

Lisa MacDougall ([01:11:15](#)):

Totally, totally.

Andy Chamberlin ([01:11:18](#)):

Along the lines, who or what has been an inspiration or mentor or influence for you?

Lisa MacDougall ([01:11:24](#)):

In the farming community?

Andy Chamberlin ([01:11:26](#)):

Sure.

Lisa MacDougall ([01:11:27](#)):

Oh, mentor, influence, just all the things. Well, gosh, I guess first my parents. My mom was a single mom and worked super hard just working during the day and going to school at night and just seeing how much she worked to support my sister and I was always apparent. My dad, who also worked super hard, he did golf course greens maintenance, which is like agriculture, but not, but it is. He knows all the things. The hours are still super long and grass is important to play golf on. And so he gets all the things. Like if it's super humid and hot in the middle of the summer, he's like, "How's the disease pressure, Lisa Grace? You got those fans on? Did you check on this crop?" And "Yes, Dad, I'm on it." Or he'll text me, "This is disease weather, Lisa Grace, go check," or whatever.

([01:12:46](#)):

So they're inspiring. My horse trainer growing up, Jerry, was just an insanely hard worker and so thorough and so specific, and pushed me really hard both working and in my riding capabilities, and I'm grateful for him for establishing a super solid work ethic in me. And then in the farming community, there's just so many. I'm really close with Andy at Clearbrook Farm. And we talk, we were just talking earlier today, and just all the things and his operation is so inspirational. And gosh, there's such a long list. There's so many, I was telling you earlier, like Mark and Chris's operation, and there's Andy Jones, and just everybody, and Becky Madden, there's so many people, Jack.

Andy Chamberlin ([01:13:43](#)):

What do you think has built that community of farmers or the comradery that you're speaking of?

Lisa MacDougall ([01:13:52](#)):

I think there's such a willingness of sharing knowledge and being so open, and it feels like everybody's farm seemingly is an open invitation to visit or call or email, and all the work that the VVBGA does with the listserv and meetings, and it just seems like everybody wants everybody else to succeed, and that's really wonderful. There's just a great wealth of knowledge around and people are so willing and happy to talk to you about it.

Andy Chamberlin ([01:14:35](#)):

It's a unique thing to have an industry that collaborates like that.

Lisa MacDougall ([01:14:40](#)):

And geographically we're all so close.

Andy Chamberlin ([01:14:43](#)):

Relatively speaking.

Lisa MacDougall ([01:14:43](#)):

Relatively speaking. There's a lot of farms in Vermont, and it's like, yeah, three and four hours is far away but it's not like you're in one of the big Midwestern states where it's six hours. A lot of people are just down the road from each other. And then the farmer's market community, there's so many growers that do local farmers' markets, and I think that since so many of us sell locally everybody kind of meets each other too.

Andy Chamberlin ([01:15:19](#)):

Yeah, it's unavoidable.

Lisa MacDougall ([01:15:20](#)):

Yeah.

Andy Chamberlin ([01:15:32](#)):

It's time for our special segment, what's in your pocket?

Lisa MacDougall ([01:15:36](#)):

Right now?

Andy Chamberlin ([01:15:37](#)):

Or just on the daily, what do you carry around, what are your go-to tools?

Lisa MacDougall ([01:15:42](#)):

Right now just a basic Swiss army knife. You can't beat it. A Swiss army knife, cell phone, and as of right now it's springtime and my lips are like sandpaper and split and so I have some Burt's Bees usually. And

usually I have a thermos of coffee or a seltzer pretty nearby. Oh, and a game plan. I make game plans for the crew every day, type it out and everything, and everybody gets a copy to put in their pocket, and so usually the game plan.

Andy Chamberlin ([01:16:24](#)):

Okay. Let's dive a little bit on that. How do you collate your game plan for your crew from your long list? Do you share the big long list and star the items that you really want to get done? Or do you just give them the areas of focus?

Lisa MacDougall ([01:16:43](#)):

Everything's pretty well planned out for the day. I send out a weekly email on Sunday nights, it's an Excel spreadsheet that has Monday through Sunday, it has the crew schedule and then it has tasks broken down into... which varies during the time of the year. This year it's like greenhouse task, field work, wash pack, transplanting, seeding, potting, and all of the tasks are then categorized underneath that. And then from that, I then take those tasks, which are categorized, and put them on the day of which they'll be done. And then from there I make up daily game plans which will have... the team is broken down into wash pack and field crew mostly, and there's crossover between both of those teams. And so then it's just a list of tasks. Generally I'm pretty specific about who's doing what, but sometimes I let them decide. But mostly I'm just like, "You're doing this and we'll do that." Yeah.

Andy Chamberlin ([01:17:57](#)):

That's unique. I haven't ever heard on a podcast someone talk about their work plan.

Lisa MacDougall ([01:18:03](#)):

Yeah, I-

PART 3 OF 4 ENDS [[01:18:04](#)]

Andy Chamberlin ([01:18:00](#)):

... heard on a podcast, someone talk about their work plan.

Lisa MacDougall ([01:18:03](#)):

Yeah, I have it pretty planned out. I'll have to forward you one of my emails.

Andy Chamberlin ([01:18:07](#)):

Oh, that'd be awesome.

Lisa MacDougall ([01:18:08](#)):

Yeah, you can see how I-

Andy Chamberlin ([01:18:09](#)):

Or a template, I could include that in the show notes, yeah. An example.

Lisa MacDougall ([01:18:14](#)):

Yeah, it's super helpful for me to think about it. It's a lot of work to get all of that preconceived and planned out. And sometimes it changes, and then for Rob, I make a... It's called the tillage chart, which has all the blocks, and then it's disc, plow, perfect, flail mow, or cover crop this, or cover crop that, and then what field needs what, so I just make an X next to "disc this" and then whatever. And so then he has all of the work that needs to be done for the week on a spreadsheet, and then I put notes on it, and then we also take a weekly field walk on Thursday afternoons and talk about what needs to be done in the fields for the following week.

Andy Chamberlin ([01:19:06](#)):

Nice. Tell me about a time when you felt really successful farming.

Lisa MacDougall ([01:19:10](#)):

Gosh, the first thing that came to mind was just the farm move. And I don't even know if that's really farming, but that was, like I had mentioned earlier, it was March of 2016 where I was like, "Okay, I'm going to move the farm this year and keep farming at the same time," and so coming up with a plan for that, with moving all the greenhouses and maintaining markets and building walk-in cooler storage up here and just moving everything and getting fields prepped and in cover crop, that was a lot. And it went really well, and that just felt so huge.

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

It felt so good to not feel like I was like... I didn't know year to year if I was going to be there or not, and it really made me a little stagnant, particularly my infrastructure. It's like I have a very nice wash-pack area now, but our systems and what we were doing in Pownal, it was so brutal. I mean, I just had so many days in the pack shed and other people did too, of just you're just wearing crampons because like everything is, it's an ice rink because we were root-washing earlier and everything's frozen, and oh, the cooler froze over with all the shit in it because our cooler sucks. Just all the things.

[NEW_PARAGRAPH]It was just hard and it felt just really great to find a place where I can actually be and that it all kind of worked out because it was a big financial jump for me too. It's taking out the mortgage and the expense of moving and all the things, and it felt like a big leap of faith and it worked out. Yeah, that felt pretty successful.

Andy Chamberlin ([01:21:33](#)):

If you could tell 22-year-old Lisa either something to focus on or some advice, what would you say?

Lisa MacDougall ([01:21:42](#)):

Oh, geez. 22-year-old Lisa? Oh, gosh. Well, maybe I'd let her know that it'll get a little easier because there were some really hard, long days in the beginning that just seemed really insane. And gosh, that's a hard question, Andy.

([01:22:04](#)):

I also want to say that to not take everything so seriously and there's joy in everything, if you can find it and see it from a different way.

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

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

Lisa MacDougall ([01:22:25](#)):

Well, there's the triangle of social, environmental, and economic sustainability, and for us, sometimes I look around and just think about how unsustainable we are. I'm like, "Wow, look at all that plastic I just laid and look at all that chicken-shit fertilizer and all this diesel fuel and all the things." And really, it's like we try to just... I try to, I don't know if this is going to sound bad, I try not to do any harm while I'm farming, and I try to create biodiversity as much as I can within our cropping systems and maintaining good soil health and being smart about production and numbers so that there's money left over in the bank account at the end of the year and we can give people raises, but at the same time, keeping the food somewhat affordable so people have access to it and just all the things. It's a lot to manage and they're all intertwined.

[\(01:23:45\)](#):

It was like I was telling you earlier, last spring when I sold my draft horse team, that was always my dream. I was like, "Oh, I'm going to do..." Eventually, that was my thing. I was like, "Eventually, I just want to work towards being two acres and with my draft team and whatever because that seems pretty sustainable on the front of there," but really, that wasn't going to work out.

[\(01:24:11\)](#):

And so it's hard. I guess sometimes I get down on the lack of sustainability I actually have, if I can be super real about it, and we just find that crops like to grow on plastic and that we do as much low-till, no-till as we can, but we're still doing a lot of moldboard plowing and discing and all the things, and I guess it's just trying, and that's all we can do really is thinking about how can we do this differently? And...

Andy Chamberlin [\(01:24:48\)](#):

But you also mentioned earlier how you're focused on your soil health and your fertility and your pest management. And yeah, you're using plastic, but you're keeping an eye on your farm, all your land with a very close eye about how it's performing and its health.

Lisa MacDougall [\(01:25:10\)](#):

Yeah, yeah. We love insect netting on the greenhouses. We release a lot of beneficial insects and sometimes we spray and just all the things. We do what we have to do on all fronts and we can always do better, and we know that, in all realms. It's like you can always make more money. You can always work on your food accessibility and you can always work on your management to manage your insect and mammalian population and just all the things.

[\(01:25:49\)](#):

I have a deer fence now, so I love deer. They're gorgeous.

Andy Chamberlin [\(01:25:54\)](#):

Outside the fence.

Lisa MacDougall [\(01:25:55\)](#):

Outside the fence.

Andy Chamberlin [\(01:25:56\)](#):

Yeah, have they ever gotten into your fence?

Lisa MacDougall ([01:25:58](#)):

Oh, yes. I was just... Oh, of course. It's usually because it's usually on a Saturday after a wild Saturday and I forget to close the gate. It's usually my fault. Usually, mostly all the things are my fault.

([01:26:14](#)):

But yeah, they've gotten in a couple times and usually most of the time we have to shoot them. Sometimes the game wardens will make me try to chase them out, which is the most frustrating thing in the world, but usually we get a tag.

Andy Chamberlin ([01:26:33](#)):

Yeah, nice. You're horses, you've always been a horse girl, so to speak. How did you balance utilizing them, and like you said, the peace and quiet, the only thing you hear is the clack of the feet and the chains and stuff, versus firing up the tractor and just getting stuff done? You seem to have balanced both of those for quite a long time, so what made you decide to use one tool over the other?

Lisa MacDougall ([01:27:00](#)):

A lot of it came down to time and expense, where usually I'm with the crew most of the day unless I'm bopping off on a tractor or something, and so I was usually working them at the end of the day, either doing some tillage work or spreading compost or perfecting or doing something like that, and I guess there was a point where it just felt like I got busier somehow and I wasn't making the time as much. And also too, one of the horses, he had a hind leg issue, and so they were getting, they weren't old, but they were 14 and 15, which is plenty of good working years left, but they're not five or eight, and so that became a bit of an issue as he had a bit of a hind leg issue, super able to work, but really had to watch it with certain implements.

([01:28:14](#)):

And yeah, God, I really miss it. I really miss working with them. It just brought me so much joy. Tractors are great. I love the efficiency. I love what they can do. I love what I can get done. I love bucket loaders, but there was just something that really filled me up when I was working with the team, and Red and Malcolm were their names and they were so great and they were so good, and it was just this partnership. There's also this thing about working with animals like that and with a draft team where it's like you can work horses however you want to, but it's like, "Okay, they're done." They're done working, and so you're done. Right? It's like I can only do so much work with them because they-

Andy Chamberlin ([01:29:25](#)):

They get tired too.

Lisa MacDougall ([01:29:26](#)):

... they can only do so much, and so there's this element of just humanity and just being like, "That's all. That's all there is," and that's fine. Whereas you're on a tractor and you're just cruising.

Andy Chamberlin ([01:29:42](#)):

There's no stopping them, yeah.

Lisa MacDougall ([01:29:43](#)):

Yeah, yeah. You just have to go fill up the tank.

Andy Chamberlin ([01:29:46](#)):

Right. Versus the horse is going to get tired at the end of the day and need food and this part of this cyclical nature of the day and energy levels.

Lisa MacDougall ([01:29:58](#)):

Yeah, you got to take care of them.

Andy Chamberlin ([01:30:00](#)):

The Kubota doesn't do that, yeah.

Lisa MacDougall ([01:30:00](#)):

Yeah, you got to take care of them, harness them, and harness, and bed them down, and just do all the things, and there's this whole other element to actually the care.

Andy Chamberlin ([01:30:14](#)):

I bet the horse has really crafted your character as well. Like you said, you don't really get angry.

Lisa MacDougall ([01:30:20](#)):

No.

Andy Chamberlin ([01:30:20](#)):

And I bet working with them has kept your emotions in check because it's a relationship with the working team.

Lisa MacDougall ([01:30:28](#)):

Totally, yeah. And even with riding horses and everything else, it's just like... Or parents deal with that all the time. It's just like being a parent. I don't have children, but I can imagine, and yeah, it just... I mean, they're so good anyways. It was hard to ever get upset at them or anything like that. Yeah, they were super, super special guys, yeah. I miss them.

Andy Chamberlin ([01:31:01](#)):

What's a time when you felt really challenged farming?

Lisa MacDougall ([01:31:07](#)):

Every day. No, no, no.

Andy Chamberlin ([01:31:10](#)):

You've mentioned several low points.

Lisa MacDougall ([01:31:12](#)):

Yeah. Oh, you know, really challenged farming? I mean, most recently, often we remember events that happened most recently, really challenged farming. I think that because I mentioned I had a farming partner for the first four years, and then we split and farmed and lived and worked together for a season. That was challenging and that was a really big shift for me to be doing all of the business stuff.

That was one just massive anxiety attack every day for 10 months, but I got through that and that was great.

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

And challenges? I mean, challenges great and small just present themselves on a daily basis, just circumstances. Last year's rain was challenging. We're not on river bottom, but we certainly dealt with saturated soils, and that coincided with seemingly a number of different equipment breakdowns. That was challenging.

[\(01:32:22\)](#):

Gosh, there's just little things all the time, and I guess, yeah, really I just try to meet things pretty with immediacy as they come up because that always feels good. I guess with any challenge, I just try to take care of it, and so maybe I'm most challenged when I cannot take care of it right then, which is probably a lot of the time.

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

When it builds up?

Lisa MacDougall [\(01:32:46\)](#):

Yeah. But gosh, nothing really stands out. The business division was quite difficult.

Andy Chamberlin [\(01:32:54\)](#):

I bet.

Lisa MacDougall [\(01:32:55\)](#):

But weathered that and...

Andy Chamberlin [\(01:33:00\)](#):

You still farmed together for a year after you decided to split?

Lisa MacDougall [\(01:33:03\)](#):

Yeah. We were living together and farming together and we were... What's a really awesome thing through the state is the environmental mediation services that are offered through the state for ag, and so we had free legal and mediation services to help divide assets because we had accumulated assets, for sure, and all the things and equity. And so yeah, we did that and that was good.

[\(01:33:39\)](#):

Yeah, but there's just always challenges, but I guess the business division stands out in my mind. I'm sure there'll be more. We had onion maggots last year. That was a challenge, but we weathered that.

Andy Chamberlin [\(01:33:58\)](#):

Yeah. See, my next question is... It doesn't feel like anything to me because in our veg-growing VVBGA community, there are so many badass women farmers, but if you step back and think about it, farming as an industry is such a narrow niche. I mean, only 1% of the population farms now, and in your situation, if you think about it, not only are you farming, you're women, you're single, doing it yourself in Vermont, there's a lot of people like you in our community, so it doesn't stand out to me, but if you think about it, no, that's huge, and I imagine your circumstances is also a challenge as well.

Lisa MacDougall ([01:34:48](#)):

I guess?

Andy Chamberlin ([01:34:49](#)):

Or no, because it's just been the way it has been?

Lisa MacDougall ([01:34:52](#)):

It's just been the way it has been.

Andy Chamberlin ([01:34:52](#)):

That's awesome.

Lisa MacDougall ([01:34:55](#)):

Yeah. I guess that's always what I've really, I've never... I guess it's a veg community and where we are, there's always just such a huge element of I never felt like people treated me like, "Oh, you do not know as much." It was mostly me just being like, "Oh, Lisa, you do not know as much." It was mostly down self-talk as opposed to other people being like, "Oh, man, you have no idea what you're doing," but they might have been saying that, for sure.

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

Just not to you.

Lisa MacDougall ([01:35:28](#)):

Yeah, just behind my back. I don't know. No, it's always been really great. Everybody's always just been so willing to share knowledge and helpful, and I've always have felt treated like a total equal, which is super awesome.

Andy Chamberlin ([01:35:45](#)):

That's great, yeah. I've heard of some horror stories of other women farmers where it's like, just last week, she said, "The delivery driver came over and put his hand on my bucket thing" as she was taken off with her pallet forks. It's like, "What are you doing touch with my tractor?" Again, she is the one who runs the farm, or people who routinely ask, "Can I talk to the farmer?" Or, "Where's your husband?" And she says, "No, it's me. I'm doing it."

Lisa MacDougall ([01:36:09](#)):

Yeah, yeah. No, oh, I've definitely gotten my share of that, for sure.

Andy Chamberlin ([01:36:18](#)):

I can't imagine how infuriating that must be.

Lisa MacDougall ([01:36:20](#)):

Yeah. I'm just like, "Okay." Maybe it has to do with the not-getting-angry thing.

Andy Chamberlin ([01:36:26](#)):

Maybe.

Lisa MacDougall ([01:36:26](#)):

I'm like, "They could just not know," I guess. I always say, "I can do things. I can do stuff." You know?

Andy Chamberlin ([01:36:33](#)):

Yeah. They don't know how awesome you are.

Lisa MacDougall ([01:36:34](#)):

Oh, thanks, Andy. That's nice.

Andy Chamberlin ([01:36:37](#)):

Is there anything else that you wanted to share that I didn't ask or bring up?

Lisa MacDougall ([01:36:41](#)):

No, I don't think so. I think that we had a really great conversation and I'm just super thrilled and honored that you asked me to do this. It's super fun. Yeah.

Andy Chamberlin ([01:36:57](#)):

Well, good. I'm glad you were excited. I always love it when a farmer's excited to chat.

Lisa MacDougall ([01:37:05](#)):

Oh, yeah. No, it was great.

Andy Chamberlin ([01:37:05](#)):

And if people would like to follow up or learn more about your farm, how can they do that?

Lisa MacDougall ([01:37:11](#)):

Yeah. I love talking to people and farmers@mightyfoodfarm.com is my email. We're on Instagram, @MightyFoodFarm. Yeah, email, Instagram. You can call me (781)307-6801. Yes, that is a Boston number. Yeah, just whatever, call, text, email. I love letters.

Andy Chamberlin ([01:37:44](#)):

There we go.

Lisa MacDougall ([01:37:46](#)):

I write a lot of letters to people.

Andy Chamberlin ([01:37:48](#)):

Nice. Well, it's been awesome chatting and getting to know you, your farm, your history, so thanks for coming on the show.

Lisa MacDougall ([01:37:56](#)):

Thank you so much, Andy. This was just super fabulous.

Andy Chamberlin ([01:37:59](#)):

Awesome.

Lisa MacDougall ([01:38:00](#)):

Yeah, thank you.

Andy Chamberlin ([01:38:07](#)):

And that was the Farmer's Share. I hope you enjoyed this episode with Lisa as we got to know a little bit more about her and her farm.

([01:38:17](#)):

The Farmer's Share is supported by a grant offered by the USDA Specialty Crop Block Program from the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & 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.

([01:38:49](#)):

This show also is supported by the Ag Engineering program of the University of Vermont Extension.

([01:38:55](#)):

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 the farmersshare.com/support.

([01:39:05](#)):

We also receive funding from the Vermont Vegetable & Berry Growers Association. The VVBGA is a nonprofit 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.

([01:39:33](#)):

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 & Berry Newsletter, camaraderie, enhanced communication, and fellowship among commercial growers.

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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.

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You can visit the farmersshare.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. 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.

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Lastly, if you're enjoying the show, I'd love it if you could write a review. In Apple Podcasts, 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 it would be inspiring for them. Thanks for listening.

PART 4 OF 4 ENDS [01:41:48]