

Brownback family finds dreams in Perry County

Mike and Terra Brownback, two young Montgomery County natives with backgrounds in livestock and green-housing, saved enough money to buy a farm in Western Perry County.

“We wanted to do something positive,” said Terra. “Our goal was to farm economically and organically correct.”

For the first 15 years of operation of Spiral Path Farm, Mike and Terra focused on livestock and grew organic crops in their personal garden. In 1990, they decided to transition out of livestock and expand their family garden to be the main focus of their farm. Over a three year period, the whole farm became Certified Organic. Currently, the farm consists of 250 acres including 90 Certified Organic acres, mostly used for growing a variety of vegetables.

The Brownbacks sell their produce to the Wegmans vegetable warehouse, which reaches stores in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Maryland, and Virginia. This began in 2003 when the family reached out to a representative at Wegmans headquarters. They have also been a CSA farm for 21 years, supplying fresh produce for Central PA and parts of Maryland. Lastly, they attend two farmers markets in Bethesda, Maryland and Silver Spring, Maryland every weekend.

Mike and Terra’s sons, Will and Lucas, are very involved on the farm as well. Will assists his father with the general farm management, the fields, the fertility, and Wegmans sales while Lucas works on farm management, the greenhouses, and CSA management. Terra mostly works in the office, but has also been mentoring Lucas with CSA management.

Mike and Terra’s move has indeed turned out to be positive, as first generation farmers now are mentoring their second and third generations. The family continues to achieve their goal of practicing organically correct farming methods, as they intended to from the start.