

January 2025

>>> NEWSLETTER <<<

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CLEAN ACRES FARM

Woman owned, woman farmed. Locally grown and chemical-free. Established 2015.



Our 50-foot cattle panel tunnel serves as a great trellis for 75 tomato plants.
Photo credit Krista Appenzeller.

2024 YEAR IN REVIEW

A YEAR OF PROGRESS

I hope you had a great year! We did and are glad to report that we made more progress and reached more people in 2024 than we have any other year. While I still miss both my bank and Master Gardener families, it seems the transition out of full-time employment is paying off.

Asparagus and strawberries continue to be popular spring favorites at the local grocery store, JTA Foods and Grill. In fact, we haven't been able to keep up with the local demand. To increase yields for 2025, we built two hugelkultur beds and transplanted a couple hundred strawberry plants. We are constantly experimenting with methods that are sustainable for the environment and our business. The hugelkultur beds are constructed with a layer of rotting wood, sticks, leaves, grass clippings, and compost. As it ages, it will naturally decompose and be full of rich nutrients for the plants. It also sequesters carbon, retains moisture, and is a natural raised bed.... which means back-breaking savings coming in 2025!

SPRING
2024



THE GREENHOUSE

A majority of our business focuses on salsa and Bloody Mary Mix sales, our value-added products. The greenhouse continues to mitigate costs and gives us a head start on annual transplants that we need, including Roma tomato, green pepper, and jalapeno. It's always fun caring for the little sprouts, watching them grow, and is a great way for the whole family to get involved!



Husband David and farm dog Stella help prep seed pots for planting.



Sprouts spritzing sprouts! Nieces Kate and Kallie help water the greenhouse.



Sister Chelsea helps with watering tasks on a sunny yet chilly March day.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS



IN 2025 LOOK FOR:

- Strawberries mid-May through mid-June
- Asparagus end of May through end of June
- Sunflower sales mid-July
- Garden Salsa and Bloody Mary Mix sales begin in August

We participated in Bement's "spring fling" and the fall farmers' markets in downtown Monticello last year. It was great reaching new customers and being a part of the small farm/small business community! Customers also found our salsa and Bloody Mary Mix at the farm stand on the edge of our property.

We held our second annual sunflower arrangement sale at JTA Foods and Grill in July. It's always fun to see the smiles and happiness a sunflower arrangement can bring!

IN OTHER UPDATES...

We continue to wait for an update from the USDA on the Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure grant application that we submitted last spring. This year, we plan to "graduate" from a cottage food business to a wholesale operation. At least 3 retail shops are interested in buying our Garden Salsa and Bloody Mary Mix for resale! I said "yes" to hosting a family wedding at the farm in June 2026. This is an area of small farm operations we had been considering and will be a great first-run. We update our Facebook page regularly with farm happenings. Follow us to stay informed at facebook.com/cleanacresproduce!

Tabitha Elder