

Dream Small

Sheila Corn, owner operator
Corn Family Farm

Philosophy of 1970's Ag

- "Get big or get out..."
- "Plant Fencerow to fencerow."

-Earl Butz
Secretary of Ag
during Nixon and Ford
administrations

Farming like Grandad

- Small acreage
- Hand labor and small tractor
- High value crops
- Sell retail
- Set my own prices
- Family operation where the children are involved

My Operation

- Started 1980
- 65 Acres plus some rented ground
- Rotationally grazed with sheep and cows
- Perennial hay ground managed to double crop
- Extensive use of cover crops
- 3 acres of gardens, double and triple cropped
- 3 hoophouses
- 2 small greenhouses
- Laying flock of chickens and ducks

First attempt

- Cash Crop was Sweet Corn; small family garden



Front Garden

1/2 acre
Crops grown
Broccoli,
cabbage
summer
squash,
tomatoes,
onions,
peppers,
green beans,
okra,
cucumbers



Bad year(s) 1993

- There are 450 tomato plants out there somewhere!



High Ground Garden



2 acres
Crops grown
potatoes
more green beans
watermelon,
cantaloupe,
pumpkin,
sweet corn

Small Greenhouse



160 sq. ft. attached to house, starting plants, holding mother plants



Adapted Shed Greenhouse

480 sq. ft.
Used to grow herbs, prairie perennials, and bedding plants, as well as my vegetable transplants
Doubles as my incubator room where I hatch 200+ chicks each spring.
Supplemental wood heat



Farm Built Hoophouse



These farm built hoophouses were built from plans from the Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture, Poteau OK. The cost for each 14 ft x 50 ft hoop house was approximately \$500. I use them to grow salad crops and summer squash. I tried strawberries the second year but the day neutral berries did not produce multiple crops, probably due to the heat, and it seemed a waste of a controlled environment for a single crop.

Hoophouse –NCRS project



Hoophouse production



30 ft x 84 ft, cost \$7000- double cropped, "walkways" are planted to potatoes, salad greens and broccoli, which are harvested before the tomatoes, summer squash, peppers and cucumbers are in full production. Plans are to use a stake-and-weave system on tomatoes and trellis the cucumbers

Drip Irrigation



Farmers' Market



Other Markets:
Local groceries
Specialty Markets
Restaurants
Farm to School
On farm sales
Value Added
Subscription sales (CSA)

Small Dreams

- Allow you to start where you are
- Low initial investment
- Allows experimentation and gain experience
- Creates a sense of community

Before you start- THINK!

- What you want to accomplish?
 - Income
 - Quality of life
 - Amount of time invested
 - Own your own business?
 - Address a need- food insecurity, child health etc

Before you start – Think!

- What are your skills? How can you address weaknesses?
 - Experience gardening or food service
 - Labor
 - Marketing
 - Management
 - Consider continuing education, seminars, apprenticeship, volunteering

Before you start- Think!

- What crop or product are you experienced growing?
- What niche exists that you can fill?
- What tools do you need?
- What do you already have?
- Is there an option for a value added product?
- What resources are out there that I can use?

The most important question-

- **Where and How will you sell it?**

Resources

- www.kansaruralcenter.org
- www.k-state.edu
- www.sare.org
- www.kerrcenter.com
- www.610kirby-permaculture.org Dr. Will Hooker
videos and link to distance education lectures

Books

You Can Farm Joel Salatin

Compact Farms Josh Volk