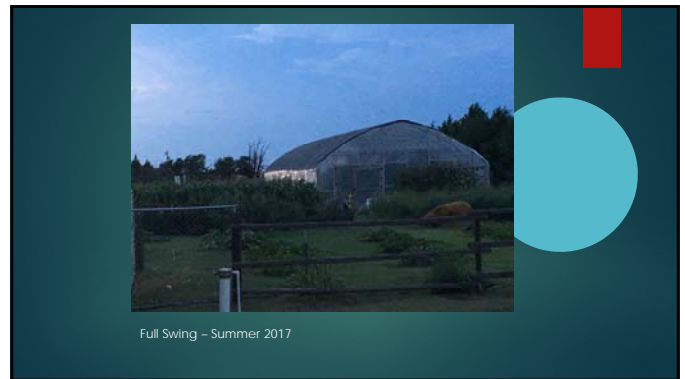




## Locally Grown Vegetables

JAMES & ANN MARIE JENNINGS  
303 S. 5<sup>TH</sup> STREET  
DIGHTON, KS 67839  
620-397-8068  
FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK

EST. 2016



## Starting Out

Broke ground Spring 2016 after purchasing our property in Fall 2015

Beginning Growers with no previous horticulture experience

**Garden Location:**

- North & South Windbreaks
- Private Water Well
- No surrounding crop ground – or chemical drift

**Set up seed starting shelves & lights**

- Cost prohibitive to buy plants
- Allows you to grow whatever you want, that's legal anyway!





## Immediate Hurdles

Rabbits, rabbits & more rabbits. No longer cute & cuddly.

- Fort Knox type rabbit fence built out of square horse fence with chicken wired "J" trenched around the 160' x60' garden.

Unprotected from the west

- Trees planted to eventually provide a windbreak. In the meantime we use pallet walls & plant so tall crops protect sensitive crops and do use low tunnels

Bindweed (aka devil weed)

- Have to use weed barrier. While effective against any weed is also time consuming to plant & weeds do still come-up in rows and planting holes
- Surrounding pastures are full of it
- Underground root structure is un-killable
- Tried spot applying Tordon, killed everything, sterilized ground until next season





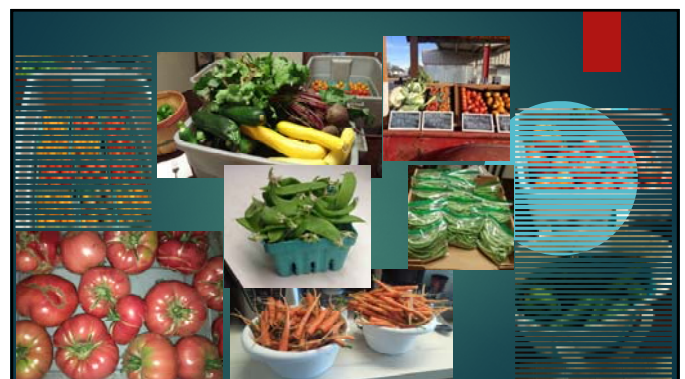
## What We grow

- Right now we grow a little bit of everything since selling mainly in our hometown. Approx. 1000-1200 people in the entire county, our consumer base is probably less than 100 people.

Tomatoes	Cucumbers	Squash	Okra
Asparagus	Potatoes	Green Beans	Cauliflower
Broccoli	Garlic	Onions	Herbs
Watermelon	Cantaloupe	Edamame	Peas
Spinach	Some lettuce	Carrots	Beets
Raspberries	Pumpkins	Radishes	Sweet Corn

- In the future we hope to consolidate and grow more of fewer crops
- Not the most efficient or profitable way to operate!





## How We Sell

- Pay on your honor vegetable cart

Pros:

- ✓ Cost efficient: Built by the high school shop class for \$100
- ✓ Convenient for us & customers
- ✓ Recognizable
- ✓ Allows us to sell during off market season
- ✓ Park anywhere

Cons:

- ✓ Some theft
- ✓ Weather's a factor, especially for cool season crops with no refrigeration
- ✓ Some waste of what doesn't sell



## How We Sell

- Local Farmer's Market on Saturday morning in the summer
- Via Facebook, mostly when we don't have enough to put on the stand or weather's unfavorable
- Will be selling with the High Plains Food Coop this season

## High Tunnel

- Constructed the winter of 2017 for production during season 2
- Received financial assistance through NRCS – High Tunnel Initiative
- Constructed a 30'x72'x8' tunnel from Morgan County Seed Company
- The struggle of growing tomatoes and other sensitive crops in the Western Kansas weather was our main reason for wanting one



## Construction

- **Difficult to say the least!**
- Helps to be handy & instructions are vague (regardless of what anyone says)
- Consider the height of your structure and what equipment you have available to build
- End walls are very important. We made our own from wood, but steel ends are available. When we build our next one we WILL use steel!
- We set our end posts in concrete... thank goodness!
- Without west protection, it survived 70 mph straight west winds. However, my nerves did not!!!
- When putting up plastic, make sure it's calm!



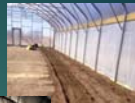
## Pros vs. Cons

• **Pros:**

- ✓ Everything grows better
- ✓ Plants are protected from the wind
- ✓ Drop down sides are great for ventilation
- ✓ Trellis system for tomatoes & cucumbers
- ✓ Favorable working conditions (most of the time)

• **Cons:**

- ✓ It is plastic, plastic does tear
- ✓ No leaching, salinity build-up
- ✓ Lack of rotation options
- ✓ Does not keep air warmer unless alternate heat source is put in
- ✓ Lack of moisture – favorable conditions for certain bugs
- ✓ Going to be constant maintenance & continued expense
- ✓ You have to be available to roll up & down sides



## What We've Learned

- End wall ventilation would be helpful especially on hot days when it's too windy to roll down the sides
- Double plastic with a blower would probably make the structure stronger and warmer
- Steel end walls would be helpful if in windy areas
- Shade cloth is a must if growing during the summer
- Temperatures can swing as much as 40 degrees when the sun's out
- Snow load is an issue



Pro & Con – Longer working hours!

## Pests

- Smorgasbord of bugs: squash bugs, aphids, two spotted spider mite, grass hoppers, cucumber beetles (love pumpkins too)
  - We have learned that using a Kill-All pesticide like 7 is not the answer. We only used when we had to, to the point of losing a crop, but after application they only got worse.
  - Spider mites, aphids & cucumber beetles became an issue in the high tunnel
  - Spider mites really threw us for a loop and we about lost our whole tomato crop. By the time the visible webbing showed up the plants looked like this.
  - Grasshoppers destroyed our entire Fall cauliflower and broccoli crop
- Solutions...????
- ✓ Early detection / Know what to detect
  - ✓ Beneficial plantings
  - ✓ Beneficial insects early on
  - ✓ Disease resistant plants
  - ✓ Going to try to incorporate chickens as best as possible without free ranging. Building a chicken tractor. Will also help with fall cleanup!

Questions, Comments  
Suggestions?