

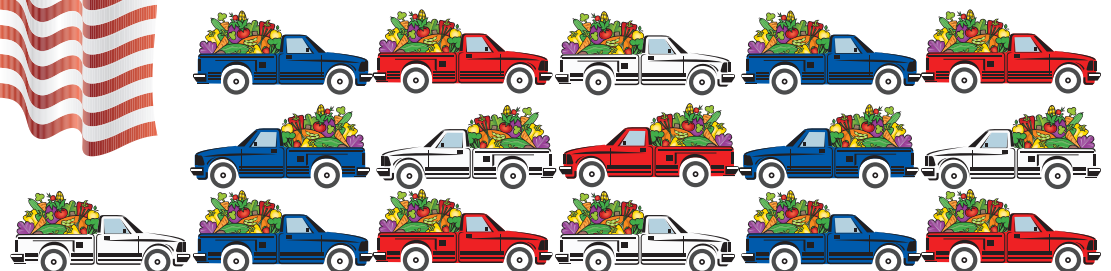


Illinois... Where Fresh Is!

The “Illinois...Where Fresh Is!” logo program was created by the Illinois Department of Agriculture and the Illinois Specialty Growers Association and is made available to producers to use as a tool to help sell Illinois grown produce, fruits and other horticultural commodities. This marketing campaign brands Illinois food products and encourages consumers to buy local and buy fresh. The logo also helps consumers quickly and easily identify their specialty crops at farmers markets and grocery stores.

So why eat more local fresh fruits and vegetables? The number one reason is because it’s healthier. Your body gets more vitamins and nutrients from fresh fruits and vegetables. Flavorings, sugar, sodium and preservatives are added to canned and bagged items, taking out the nutritional value. Also, buying local puts more money back into your community and helps local farmers so they can continue to raise fresh fruits and vegetables for you and your family. So the next time you are at the grocery store with your parents, look for the “Illinois...Where Fresh Is!” logo on your fruits and vegetables. And remember, buy local and buy fresh.

In a lifetime, the average American will consume enough veggies to fill 16 pick-up trucks.



In a lifetime the average
American will consume 2
football fields of wheat.



Prairie Home Herbs

Mt. Pulaski, Illinois

Greetings from Mt. Pulaski in Central Illinois! I'm Mary and I grow herbs for retail and home use. Herbs are used to season many foods. That's how I got started in the herb business. I felt a need to more effectively season foods that I prepared daily for my family. Herbs made our food taste better, but they weren't readily available in the local markets, so I started to grow my own.

Many herbs are grown in greenhouses. However, I do not have a greenhouse, so all of my herbs are grown outdoors in a garden setting, on a seasonal basis, using organic techniques. I harvest them all by hand, then either dry the herbs for storage, or use them fresh as the need arises. When I'm not working with my herbs, I enjoy sharing the knowledge I have gained by speaking and writing about herbs for both children and adults.

Growing herbs requires a strong knowledge base. My classes in biology, science, and health, as well as my participation in 4-H, definitely gave me the necessary background I needed to further my interest in becoming an herb grower. Networking with other specialty crop growers has also helped me gain the knowledge I needed.

Take care!

Mary
Mary L. Buckles

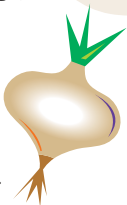
Greetings from Bourbonnais, Illinois! I'm William Olthoff of Olthoff Farms and Dutch Valley Growers, Inc. I currently farm 1,600 acres of corn, soybeans and onion sets. I used to work in banking during and after college but decided to partner with my father because of my love for farming. We had many different crops that we grew in the earlier years including tomatoes, onions, red beets, pumpkins, cucumbers, sweet corn, and more. I am the fourth generation in my family to grow onion sets. I learned a lot about growing onions through my family, but I also use what I learned in my economics, business and marketing classes.

Growing onion sets requires some special care. We use irrigation to water our onions. We also have to make sure that we have crop protection for disease and controlled conditions for storage through the winter. This all helps in producing a quality product and being able to market it to local feed and seed stores, Farm & Fleet and Wal-Mart, all places where we sell our onion sets.

Sincerely,

William

William Olthoff



Hey gang! I'm Dave from Siemer Milling Company in Teutopolis, Illinois. That's in Effingham County. Siemer Milling Company's primary product is wheat flour milled to different specifications for the making of such foods as cookies, crackers, cakes, pretzels, batters and breadings, bread and biscuits. We mill soft red winter, hard red winter, and hard red spring wheat. The type of wheat produced in Illinois is soft red winter. Most of the wheat grown in Illinois is shipped out of the country to help feed people all over the world and is also processed into flour to make cookies, crackers and cakes.

I am a grain merchandiser, which means I buy the wheat and sell all by-products of wheat. By-products are things made in the process of making something else. I talk to feed companies about buying our flour by-products like wheat midds, reddog, bran and wheat germ. I also talk to farmers and elevators about selling their wheat to Siemer Milling.

But, how did I get here? I grew up on a farm near Hammond, Illinois. My dad grew corn and soybeans. I was also involved in 4-H and showed my projects at the county fairs during the summer. I took several agriculture classes in high school and I have a college degree in Agricultural Marketing. I use a lot of what I learned in my Math and English classes every day on the job.

Until Next Time,

Dave
Dave DeVore



Hello from Rendleman Orchards in Southern Illinois! I'm Wayne Sirles. I grew up on the family farm and have always loved everything about it. Our farm is over 135 years old! I oversee the day to day operations of the farm and love to be outdoors raising fruit that people are crazy about. I manage the employees who help me raise peaches, apples and vegetables. Our peaches are sold to grocery stores, fruit stands and various markets. Our own professional pickers harvest them all by hand.

All of our trees need special care all year long. In the wintertime, we fertilize and prune the trees. Fertilize means we add nutrients to the soil that our trees need to grow. Removing dead and unwanted tree limbs is what we call pruning. During the spring, we keep the orchard mowed, plant more trees and spray for weeds and insects. In the summer, we continue to mow the orchard. We also thin out the crop. This means we pick some of the peaches before they are mature to prevent limbs and branches from breaking and so other peaches can grow to full size. In the fall, we clean up broken limbs, mow, remove dead trees and dormant spray to keep pests from damaging the trees. Many of my classes in school helped prepare me for my job. I use a lot of the things that I learned in my soil, horticulture and science classes every day so doing well in school was very important for me, just as it should be for you too!

See you later!

Wayne
Wayne Sirles



RICHARDSON FARM

Spring Grove, Illinois



Hi there! I'm Robert Richardson from Richardson Corn Maze and Richardson Christmas Trees in Spring Grove, Illinois. My brother George and I are partners in the farm. We have about 200 acres of corn and 200 acres of soybeans. We also have a cut-your-own Christmas tree operation and the World's Largest Corn Maze!

I really love that my job has a lot of variety. It changes with the seasons and I do different things on different days, weeks and months. We plant corn, plow the fields, plant Christmas trees and care for them, spray for weeds, trim the trees and get the maze and picnic area ready in the spring and summer. In the fall, we harvest the crops and talk with thousands of customers who come to enjoy our maze. In November, we make wreaths and decorations and open the Christmas tree business and sell trees in December. Talk about busy!

I use a lot of math in my farming operation. Math, geometry and algebra are always used in adjusting the sprayer and planting equipment. I also need good communication skills, so speech and writing classes were very helpful. I talk with a lot of customers and write letters and articles for the newspapers and design advertisements.

Better Get Back to Work!

Robert

Robert Richardson



Illinois ranks among the top ten states in the production of other specialty crops such as asparagus, cauliflower, fresh cut herbs, green peas, lima beans, mustard greens and snap peas.



This issue of Ag Mag has been provided by:



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