Produce to Schools

A growing opportunity

June, 2022

Coveyou Scenic Farm     Petoskey         David Coveyou     Farm Owner/Manager
The Farm

Farmed by our family over 148 Years

The Farmer

David & Kathy Coveyou

5th Generation farming this original homestead

Kathy and David Coveyou
20 Years of transition to economic viability

330 Acre farm

~30 acres in organic vegetable production

3 Greenhouses
9 high tunnels

On Farm Market
Multiple sales channels

- On farm market
- CSA Program
- Open Market Program
- Restaurants
- Resale stores
- Institutions
- Schools
- Wholesale
On Farm Market; Bringing People to the Farm
Direct to consumer farm sales peak in the summer and decrease after Labor Day.

Produce is outstanding in September and October.

We started exploring farm to school to develop new markets for our produce and help improve the quality of food being served at schools.
10+ years ago we started knocking on school doors

Lots of reasons why schools didn’t want to use local produce:
- “We just heat and serve”…no equipment to cook
- “We don’t have staff for the extra prep”
- “I’ve been cooking my way for 20 years”
- “My budget is really tight…”

Success came from schools with food service staff who wanted to change…Inside advocates.
The Michigan Health Department gave small grants for kitchen equipment upgrades; Salad bar lines; lettuce spinners; remote food carts.

“Michigan 10 cents a meal” funding helped motivate schools to buy produce from local farms.

- “10 cents a meal” is state funded with participating schools receiving 10 cents per school meal to purchase fresh produce from local farms.

Programming to engage kids to try and eat more produce.
School produce sales are now very significant
Over 10 schools buy from farms just in our local area
COVID created opportunities

- COVID significantly impacted our restaurant sales
- We were one of a few actual small farms to participate in the “Farmer’s to Families Food Box Program”
- Packed nearly 18,000 food boxes for distribution through Food Pantries, Schools and Senior Centers in 2020.
Boxes had 7-10 different items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Asparagus</th>
<th>Broccoli</th>
<th>Yellow Squash</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cherries</td>
<td>Cauliflower</td>
<td>Spinach</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peaches</td>
<td>Green Beans</td>
<td>Beets</td>
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<td>Apples</td>
<td>Tomatoes</td>
<td>Pac Choy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Head Lettuce</td>
<td>Cabbage</td>
<td>Onions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sweet Corn</td>
<td>Peppers</td>
<td>Lettuce Mix</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zucchini</td>
<td>Carrots</td>
<td>Snap Peas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potatoes</td>
<td>Cucumbers</td>
<td>Mushrooms</td>
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“Local” Food Box Opportunity

- Working with local partners and private or local funding to keep the best aspects of the food boxes
  - Local food for local families
  - Truly fresh produce with good variety

- 2021 Emmet County Senior Center
  - Weekly luncheon shut down due to COVID concerns
  - Purchased fresh produce boxes for a weekly delivery all summer

- Presently no funding for this program
What’s Next

- Produce for Schools
- Produce for Seniors

Next up….Produce for Health

Our Open Market Produce program has significantly improved the health of some members
  - Eating more produce does lead to better health outcomes
Here is the model:

- Identify individuals through the medical community who would see significant benefits from a change in diet
- Medical community “Prescribes” a Produce for Health 25 week membership…Individual agrees to participate.
- Group meeting of participants led by health coach with social media engagement to share eating ideas/encouragement/support for struggling members.
- Individual is given a weekly box of fresh produce and potentially other healthy local foods
- Check up with medical professional at end of session to track outcomes
- Funding for such a program not developed at this time
Questions??

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