

Grow Your Small Market Farm™

Featured Graduate 2008: Eric Armbrecht & Jason Jones

By Ryan Marquardt

Eric and Jason have just come through the Grow Your Small Market Farm™ Class in 2008 and find themselves at the helm of one of the most unique CSA's around. Not only does their CSA box contain many of the usual garden vegetables, but it also contains large quantities of apples, strawberries, and several other fruits. As if being a fruit and vegetable CSA is not unique enough, Eric and Jason derive much of their labor from individuals suffering from Autism.

Eric and Jason work for The Homestead, a campus-based autism treatment facility, which opened its doors in 1995 and is set on 80 acres of farmland on the eastern edge of Pleasant Hill. Autism is a neurological disorder that impairs how a person gathers and processes information, resulting in problems in communication and social skills. Autism is not mental retardation, although up to 70% of individuals who have autism may also fit the definition of mental retardation. The Homestead's facilities include two greenhouses, an orchard surrounded by a deer fence, and several acres of vegetable production.

Eric and Jason have experienced growing pains this year as shares have risen from 69 to over 100 members. They sell full shares for \$420 and half shares at \$220. According to Eric, "this is the first year [they] had to turn people away." This year they also offered home delivery for an additional \$80 a member. Eric admitted that, "home delivery was tough on the bottom line as I budgeted for fuel at \$2.80 a gallon. Next year we are going to have to focus on more fixed drop-off points."

Labor constraints also limit what can be accomplished on the farm. With a labor force of one full time staff member, one staff member with other responsibilities, and roughly thirty individuals suffering from autism, it is a struggle just to stay on schedule. The autistic employees work half-days or less, and require supervision. Eric admits, "there is only so much they can do." As employees of the Homestead,



Jason is responsible for the farm, and Eric coordinates volunteer activities. As Eric puts it, "the farm is not my responsibility, but it is." Eric's vision for the future and the future of the Homestead includes a much larger CSA with more staffing--a CSA that can help support the non-profit into the future. According to Eric, the state is not building any more of these facilities, and they are not adding beds anytime soon, so the CSA can provide a path forward.

Eric and Jason took the GYSMF class for their present and future fledgling personal operations. When asked about working at the Homestead instead of developing his own operation at present, Eric said, "we don't have any of the risk and our job is completely reliable." Working for the Homestead "has a lot of challenges, but it has lots of advantages." Looking out at the farm, Eric can see the potential for the Homestead in the future and for his own operation down the road.

Contact: The Homestead www.thehomestead.org (515) 967-4369

Grow Your Small Market Farm™

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Featured Graduate	pg 1
Craig's List	pg 2
IA Food Coop	pg 2
Price of Food	pg 3
Bookshelf	pg 4
For Sale	pg 5



Eric Armbrecht outside of a greenhouse at the Homestead

Craig's List: Buying and Selling Locally

by Ryan Marquardt

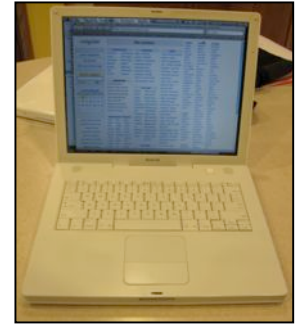
Craig's list is an online local classified listing and forum for more than 500 cities in over 50 countries worldwide. It is community moderated, and largely free. You can find jobs, housing, goods, services, local activities--nearly anything. With over 40 million views per month worldwide, Craig's list is a high traffic area.

Craig's list reminds me of the largely unbridled chaos of true capitalism. If you have something to sell, all you need is access to the internet and you are in. It is a good place to find tractors, bottle calves, ugly lawn ornaments, etc. I myself have purchased a wheelbarrow, lawnmower, two chest freezers, poultry feeders, ducklings, hay, and hog feeders to tear apart and use as a brooder; and have sold a drum compost turner through the site.

Issues for buying and selling on Craig's list:

- There are scammers out there so don't pay up front for items
- Avoid expensive out-of-state items. You still have to pick-up the item unless you arrange delivery
- Be fast! I can't count on two hands the number of sweet deals that have been snatched up before I could get to them. The early bird gets the worm.

What can it hurt? Try it today, as it could help you get rid of those odds and ends on the farm or find the odd and end that you are looking for <http://geo.craigslist.org/iso/us/ia>.



Iowa Food Cooperative: An Update

By Gary Huber

Information about the Iowa Food Cooperative (IFC) was included in the March 2008 Grow Your Small Market Farm™ Business Newsletter. Based on the successful Oklahoma Food Cooperative, the IFC will be a web-based direct-to-consumer distribution system with regular deliveries to distribution sites where consumers pick up orders. Here's an update on recent progress.

- The IFC was incorporated under section 501A of the Iowa Code, which allows both farmers and consumers to be members. There are three farmers and three consumers on its founding board, three of which are graduates of the GYSMF program (Ron Bartelt, Carolyn Ross, Jason Jones).
- Space for the initial distribution was secured with help from LaVon Griffieon, another graduate of the GYSMF program. The space will be in Merle Hay Mall in Des Moines. There are some clear advantages to this space, including easy access and the fact that the space is being donated free of charge.
- The open source software for the web-based inventorying and ordering system is being customized for the needs of the IFC. The website is www.iowafood.org. At present the site is not live, but as soon as the membership page is finalized so that people can join, the site will be activated.
- The IFC's first distribution will occur in October 2008. Between now and October, the IFC will be remodeling the space at Merle Hay Mall, and it will conduct a membership campaign. The other key need is to recruit farmers to become members so there is a good selection of products available.

If you are interested in more information, contact Gary Huber at gary@practicalfarmers.org or 515-232-5661 (x103).

Grow Your Small Market Farm™

Food for Thought: The Price of Food from June 2007- June 2008

http://www.cattlenetwork.com/bayer_Content.asp?ContentID=230814

Meat & Dairy	Unit	May 2007	May 2008	% Change
Ground Chuck	Lb	2.766	2.798	1.16%
Ground Beef	Lb	2.307	2.313	0.26%
Steak Round, Choice	Lb	4.134	4.178	1.06%
Bacon, Sliced	Lb	3.651	3.637	-0.38%
Pork Chops	Lb	3.194	3.268	2.32%
Chicken Breast	Lb	2.312	2.392	3.46%
Turkey, Frozen	Lb	1.146	1.258	9.77%
Eggs, Grade A	Doz	1.504	1.930	28.32%
Milk, Fresh	Gal	3.259	3.760	15.37%
Cheddar Cheese	Lb	3.976	4.397	10.59%

Source: ERS/USDA - Retail Prices

Field Crops	Unit	May 2007	May 2008	% Change
Barley	Bu	\$3.12	\$4.76	52.56%
Beans, Dry Edible	Cwt	\$3.08	\$5.06	64.29%
Corn	Bu	\$3.49	\$5.12	46.70%
Cotton	Lb	\$0.44	\$0.61	37.95%
Flaxseed	Bu	\$7.08	\$16.60	134.46%
Hay	Ton	\$138.00	\$166.00	20.29%
Lentils	Cwt	\$13.20	\$32.70	147.73%
Oats	Bu	\$2.49	\$3.46	38.96%
Peanuts	Lb	\$0.18	\$0.20	12.29%
Peas, Dry Edible	Cwt	\$10.10	\$16.40	62.38%
Potatoes	Cwt	\$7.95	\$9.21	15.85%
Rice, Rough	Cwt	\$10.00	\$15.00	50.00%
Sorghum	Cwt	\$6.49	\$9.18	41.45%
Soybeans	Bu	\$7.12	\$12.30	72.75%
Sunflower	Cwt	\$16.60	\$27.40	65.06%
Wheat	Bu	\$4.88	\$8.80	80.33%

Fruits	Unit	May 2007	May 2008	% Change
Apples	Lb	\$0.27	\$0.34	26.02%
Grapefruit	Box	\$4.49	\$5.12	14.03%
Lemons	Box	\$8.14	\$20.77	155.16%
Oranges	Box	\$11.12	\$6.95	-37.50%
Peaches	Ton	\$820.00	\$948.00	15.61%
Pears	Ton	\$651.00	\$525.00	-19.35%
Strawberries	Cwt	\$68.60	\$66.70	-2.77%
Tangerines	Box	\$17.01	\$5.98	-64.84%

Vegetables	Unit	May 2007	May 2008	% Change
Asparagus	Cwt	\$91.90	\$99.80	8.60%
Broccoli	Cwt	\$26.70	\$27.30	2.25%
Carrots	Cwt	\$32.00	\$25.50	-20.31%
Cauliflower	Cwt	\$24.90	\$37.40	50.20%
Celery	Cwt	\$18.30	\$37.70	106.01%
Cucumbers	Cwt	\$28.50	\$17.50	-38.60%
Lettuce	Cwt	\$13.60	\$16.80	23.53%
Onions	Cwt	\$24.20	\$31.70	30.99%
Snap Beans	Cwt	\$38.80	\$39.60	2.06%
Sweet Corn	Cwt	\$21.40	\$23.10	7.94%
Tomatoes	Cwt	\$35.60	\$40.40	13.48%

Source: USDA/NASS - Ag Prices Received



GYSMF Bookshelf

No Risk Ranching: Custom Grazing on Leased Land

By Greg Judy
ISBN: 0963246089

Women Don't Ask: The High Cost of Avoiding Negotiation--and Positive Strategies for Change

By Linda Babcock & Sara Laschever
ISBN: 0553383876

How are these high fuel costs affecting your business? And how are you coping?

We are looking for tips and cost cutting measures that are making a difference for your business. Let us know your ideas, challenges and we will share them with others in our next newsletter.

Call (641) 793-2444 or email Ryan at marquardt farms@gmail.com.
Thank you!



GYSMF Newsletter: How are we doing?

As you may have noticed we have changed the format of the newsletter and we are interested in your feedback? What do you like? What do you want changed? What would you like to see?

Call Ryan Marquardt at (641) 793-2444 or email at marquardt farms@gmail.com

IRS Notes

Business standard mileage rates increased from \$ 0.505 to **\$0.585** per mile on July 1. More information can be found at <http://www.irs.gov/newsroom/article/0,,id=184163,00.html>

Small business owners can hire their teenage sons or daughters for summer work. Learn more about IRS rules and the importance of keeping good records by going to:

<http://www.irs.gov/businesses/small/article/0,,id=97748,00.html>

For Sale

Chevy 1993 C1500 pick up, half-ton, automatic transmission, 4WD, tilt-box, tool boxes and ladder rack, extended cab - \$4,500 (AND)

Amana Window Air Conditioner, 18,000 BTU, 240 Volt \$150. Contact: Chad or Jean Eells, Webster City, IA, (515) 832-4687 or jceells@wmtel.net

Large round hay bales – 1st cut. \$35 - must be picked-up. Contact: Blue Gate Farm, Columbia, IA, (641) 203-0758 or skeebout@bluegatefarmfresh.com

1938 Hamilton Baby Grand, unique Art Case, acoustic piano, with door opening to the rear instead of to the side. Owned by a music teacher of 60 years and tuned regularly. It has perfect ivory keys. The tuning pins are tight in the pin block. Well maintained. Bench included. \$3200.00. Must sell, price reduced, email for pictures XXVhrsaday@aol.com or call (515) 964-0876, Ankeny, IA

Wanted

PTO Wood Chipper for Cat 1 tractor, about 20 hp (AND) **Hay Dump Rake**, working older model is fine. Contact: Rick Hartmann, Minburn, IA (515) 677-2438 or smpotatofarm@yahoo.com

One or Two Row Green Bean Picker

Contact: Scott Wilber, Boone, IA, 515-432-9038 or wilber67@iowatelecom.net

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