

This month I interview Dawn Kirsch from Kirsch Gardens. Kirsch Gardens is located at 2404 240th Ave in Wesley, Iowa. Dawn and Darrel started growing in 1991. Dawn wanted to be able to stay at home with her 3 children and still bring home an income so she started growing and attending farmers markets. She now has 2 acres of garden and grows everything such as tomatoes, sweet corn, green beans, radishes, cucumbers, strawberries and raspberries just to name a few. With growing fruit she is able to make and sell jams. Dawn also has laying hens and is able to sell eggs.

Do you have a green house?

"I do have a green house, I start all my plants in the basement. I have one side with all shelves with florescent lights so I start all my seeds. They get moved up the green house around April 1st, it's about 12x24 and they stay there till I can get them to the garden. I do also have a high tunnel that I'm not using at the time. That's about a 30x72 high tunnel and that would give me the opportunity to start in March."

What is your favorite part of doing this?

"Getting to talk to the people. You get to see a lot of different people and they ask you questions, being able to share my knowledge and gardening with other people."

What are your day to day responsibilities?

"In the summer time we get up and do our chores we have livestock besides just the chickens we have hogs and cattle. Earlier in the spring we do the planting and working the garden up. Right now we try to get out there early enough to get stuff picked and get it ready for market or ready to put into the store."

Why did the Friday farmers market in town stop?

"I had people telling me that they were unable to make it to the farmers market, its only one hour and they can't make it on Friday nights. I thought well if I start the little store up there they could come all the time. I'm open from 8:00 AM till 8:00 PM. They see what I have on Facebook and are able to come in anytime."

What are the biggest issues for running this business?

"It's a lot of time and its hard work also weather issues. This spring there were times when I would go out there to check on plants and I would have to hold on to my boots to walk through."

What is your advice for someone starting a garden?

"Start small, choose some of your favorite foods. As you gain experience and can continually add something different and seek out advice from someone who has been gardening for a while."

Anything you would like to tell your customers?

"I appreciate them, without them I wouldn't have the business that I have so my customers are the most important thing."