

Sustainably Grown Goodness. Those are the words on the front of the brochure from Rail Fence Farm. Our insured Ken Vanhoy is a member of the family that owns Rail Fence Farm and as such, he grew up raising sheep, growing Christmas trees and growing vegetables. Ken is the subject of this month's Hobby portion of my blog.

I met with Ken and his partner Laura recently to learn what goes into organic gardening. I was corrected about being an organic gardener by Ken, who says without approval and certification from the USDA, you cannot classify your produce as organic. This is where the words sustainably grown goodness comes in. Another word used to describe Ken and his gardening would be naturally grown or chemical free. Ken first got into the natural part of gardening about 15 years ago. He and his partner try to use as many naturally grown foods as they can. This includes everything from the side of beef he gets from his cousin to the chickens from his own farm to the sheep he gets from the family farm.

Ken grows a myriad of produce every year and for the last 3 years he has attempted to be self-containing. Times however did get tough so he took a job as a school bus driver in the winter. This is perfect because there is not much farming that needs done during the winter months. Ken & Laura have a full time operation between all the planting seasons and greenhouse seedlings that he grows for the local hardware store to sell. Laura raises Icelandic sheep for her needle felting business. You will hear more about her and her business in next month's Hobby Blog.



Ken has recently been selling his wares at the Cobblestone Farmers Market in Old Salem. My husband and I had the chance to go this past weekend and were very pleased to see the interest in home grown natural produce. I did notice that Ken's booth was one of the busiest. He was selling everything from hot banana peppers to eggplant to tomatoes. I know for a fact that in a short time, he will also be offering beans. I did see those in his garden. The Cobblestone market is for growers only and most are local to Winston Salem. The Market runs until the middle of November so it is a good bet that whatever the seasonal produce is, you will find Ken & possibly Laura there to sell their results.

Come spring if you are interested in some home grown seedlings, visit Webster Bros Hardware in Walkertown as that is where Ken sells the starter plants that have come from his greenhouse.

I want to thank both Ken & Laura for their hospitality as well as their donation of some patty pan squash. It was excellent, as was the eggplant we bought from his stand. So, if you enjoy supporting local farmers, take yourself down to Old Salem on a Saturday morning and look for the Rail Fence Farm Banner. Tell Ken that Gina sent you.

Happy farming

