



CHRISTINA LYONS PHOTOS, DAILY SUN STAFF WRITER

Farmer Katie Jantzen checks on a strawberry plant. West End Farm near Plymouth follows a community supported agriculture model.

# Local CSA farmer prepares for growing season

Fifth generation farmer Katie Jantzen plans vegetable crops

**CHRISTINA LYONS**  
Daily Sun staff writer

Katie Jantzen of West End Farm is getting ready for another season using the community supported agriculture model.

Jantzen is the fifth generation on the family-owned farm near Plymouth. Unlike her parents and grandparents, she plants and cultivates over 50 different crops of vegetables, herbs, berries and melons. The farm has been in the family since 1891. She started the CSA in 2017.

CSA is a farming model that provides customers with a weekly vegetable box subscription.

Jantzen said it's a way for the community to support the local farmer.

"It's a way for a community of people to directly support the local farmer who grows their food," she said. "Being a part of a CSA gives people a sense of confidence about where their food comes from."

In the spring, customers buy "shares" of the harvest and then as the crops are ready, they can pick up or have their weekly box delivered of fresh vegetables all season long.

She said it's a win-win model.

"Customers share the risk of production with the farmer by providing payment early in the season, and then they receive the freshest produce from the farm throughout the growing season, along with other perks like recipes and tips, and a direct relationship with the farmer. It's a win-win model," she said.

Although ground temperatures are still too cold to plant, Jantzen is preparing

for the growing season with spreadsheets.

"I like to have people sign up early in the spring, so I know how much to plant," she said. "I have had about 30 members in previous years but would like to have more."

Jantzen also sells produce at the Beatrice Farmer's Market through the entire season.

She said some of her customers like to have fresh produce from the garden, but don't have the ability or time for a garden. Some of the customers like the traditional garden vegetables carrots, potatoes, and tomatoes. Each week there is also an unusual vegetable such as kohlrabi.

Inside the plastic covered high tunnel she will till and plant some early vegetables. She is planning to plant lettuce, spinach and beets.

This year she is experimenting by growing turmeric.

"I love to cook and although I don't always have time, I love trying new foods and that is one of the reasons I do this," she said.

In addition to the garden produce, Jantzen has five bee hives that survived the winter. She said February and March were the hardest time of the year for the bees. Throughout the last few years, she said she has been learning.

"I still feel like I'm learning about bees," she said. "My experience with livestock has been ear tagging and herding them, so I'm learning. They're fascinating creatures."

Jantzen also sells homemade jams, granola and other baked goods using produce from the farm. Her parents also sell eggs through the CSA.

To learn more about the CSA or to sign up for a subscription go to westendfarmne.com or their Facebook page at West End Farm NE.



Farmer Katie Jantzen will till and plant early crops in the high tunnel soon.



Five bee hives at West End Farm are still dormant but will be producing honey in the spring.



West End Farm received a grant from the Center for Rural Affairs for a conservation project.

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