



Grower Profile

Coloma Farms

Interviewed: Andy Diercks



Grower's Picture

Ben Diercks and his sons started farming in Antigo Wisconsin after World War II and it was not until 1960 that one of his sons, Robert, and his son Steve, moved into the Central Sands Plains of Wisconsin to establish today's Coloma Farm. The farm is currently managed and owned by 3rd and 4th generation family farmers, Steve and Andy.

Stats

Size- 200 to 400 acres

Crops- Reds, Whites, Yellows, Snowdens, Russet Burbank, and Bannock Russet

From the beginning, the Diercks have been a proponent of the "Healthy Grown" process; they were involved in the research and education that is the basis of the method. Andy says that "through our research with the UW Potato Team, we started to realize we could be doing things differently, while still maintaining our yields and quality, but have significantly less negative impact on the environment."

Location



Coloma Farms' shares "Healthy Grown's mission for environmentally sound production, and Andy explains, "We have always wanted to grow under the most environmentally beneficial way possible while maintaining some economic stability. 'Healthy Grown' allows us to do that and gives us a way to express those concepts to our customers."

When asked about the changes in their growing patterns since adopting "Healthy Grown," Andy mentions how they are now more reluctant to follow the conventional path of growing, "we really question whether certain sprays are necessary. The work with our research team has taught us to really challenge the conventional way of thinking and that's a wonderful thing for everyone."

As for the future of farming, Andy thinks that "Healthy Grown" is the answer, noting that "from the beginning we have wanted a way of producing food that could be adopted and accepted across the country without sacrificing the amount of food that we can produce."

Coloma Farms
136 South Street
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In the marketing of "Healthy Grown," the Diercks have come to realize that there is a gap between the buyers and the growers that creates a challenge of selling their product as a premium. Andy is still positive about "Healthy Grown," and goes on to say that "We are known as the 'green' state now in the potato industry and we are very proud of that."