



Grower Profile

Okray Family Farms

Interviewed: Jim Okray

Grower's Picture

Stats

Size- 1,975 acres

Crops- 15 varieties, including Red, White, Russet, Yellow and several exotic varieties

Location



Okray Family Farms
PO Box 489
Plover, WI 54467

Okray Family Farms is what its name implies, a family ran business. Jim Okray and the generations that have come before have been involved in the running of the farm in Plover, Wisconsin. Currently there are six family members involved in the day to day operations of the farm; Joe Okray and his three sons, Chris, Joe the 3rd, and Dick and Jim Okray and Mike Finnessey, who are cousins. Jim excitedly adds, "We just celebrated our 100th anniversary!"

The Okray's decision to join the "Healthy Grown" program came with the realization that they had already been following many of the same processes and protocols necessary to become certified. According to Jim, they also wished to "create a demand for a new brand that would hopefully result in achieving higher prices."

The mission of "Healthy Grown" to improve the productivity of potatoes while reducing the destruction of the surrounding ecosystem was something that the Okrays shared as a goal. Jim also believes that "Healthy Grown" can be a part of the overall future of farming. He says, "I think there could be a place for it. It all depends on marketing. It probably fits well into certain niche markets."

Like many of the other growers, the Okrays find the marketing of their "Healthy Grown" potatoes one of the hardest parts of the process. Though not involved in the marketing of the product, Jim believes that "it is something that needs to be addressed if 'Healthy Grown' is going to take off as a brand."

With over a thousand acres of certified land, the Okrays are one of the largest producers of "Healthy Grown" potatoes. They are growing over 15 varieties of potatoes, including red, white, russet, yellow, and several exotic varieties such as blue, red/yellows, and fingerlings. All of their potatoes are sold on the fresh market to customers east of the Mississippi river.