



## Grower Profile

Prairie Star Ranch

Interviewed: Ron Wolosek

### Grower's Picture

### Stats

Size: 550 potato acres; 15-20% "Healthy Grown"

Crops: Red Norland, Goldrush, Norkota, Silverton, yellow fleshed varieties

### Location



Prairie Star Ranch  
5554 Monroe Ave  
Plover, WI 54467  
(715) 344-8036

The Wolosek family farm, Prairie Star Ranch, located in Plover, Wisconsin, has been in operation since 1934. Brothers Ron, Connie, and Frank, as well as nephews Terry, Jan, and Nathan and Ron's sister-in-law Margaret run the farm, splitting duties of growing and marketing, but always sharing the focus of getting the best product to the consumer. On their farm they produce sweet corn, snap beans, field corn, alfalfa, and potatoes, including "Healthy Grown" potato varieties. According to Ron, the decision to adopt "Healthy Grown," was based in "growing a quality crop using less chemical input and fine tuning their IPM skills."

He also thinks that "Healthy Grown" is a realistic path for the future of farming, because "the consumer is becoming more conscientious about what they are consuming and it fits the niche market that falls between organic and conventional product."

When Ron was asked how "Healthy Grown" has changed his growing process, he said that it "teaches a grower to be more aware of what is going on in the production process, creates more intense management, and hopefully produces a better product that is safer for the consumer;" effectively making the consumer the first priority at every step.

While using the "Healthy Grown" process, the Wolosek's have worked closely with the WWF/WPVG/UW Collaboration to ensure complete compliance, but also to create a relationship where "both learn from each other" and are able to fine tune the process. According to Ron, meeting the "Healthy Grown" standards is both the biggest challenge and biggest draw, because without them "it would be too easy and that is what makes this product special."

Even though their potatoes are going to a diversified group of consumers in the big cities primarily east of the Mississippi, they have yet to market the "Healthy Grown" potatoes. This last test produces the biggest obstacle that Ron thinks "Healthy Grown" has yet to overcome, that is getting "the consumer knowledgeable about the product," but he is hopeful that the marketing will catch up with the production.