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| Munson’s Pickle and Preserves Farm | |
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# our Story

The Munsons have been raising crops and honeybees on their farm since the mid-1800s.Twenty years ago, they planted a few rows of sweet corn alongside the road so they could have fresh corn for their family. The few rows produced more corn than we could eat, so we put a sign along the road and sold the extras to neighbors passing by. Eventually, other vegetables were added to the garden and Munson’s pickles and preserves prepared from the produce became very popular.

Today, they raise over 100 acres of fresh vegetables and 40 hives of honeybees. The produce and honey are sold through a variety of venues. They just recently ventured into new opportunities for selling wholesome food, as well as events offering farm fun. Munson's employs 20 field and processing employees and welcome the help of dozens of volunteers who help with everything from planting and harvesting to helping customers in the Pickles and Preserves Garden Shop and managing the behind-the-scenes business details.

There are four distinct seasons in the Munson’s year. The first season begins well before the first leaves turn green. Agriculturists plan out the fields, order seedlings, as well as the supplies for processing and marketing. Event planners are busy planning for the many special events to be held throughout the spring, summer, and fall.

The spring season includes planting…much of it done by volunteers. Strawberries are the big seller during the spring. And there is a lot of work in managing the sage and wildflower fields and the 40 beehives that produce honey and wax for the farm shop.

Summer is busy with harvesting the vegetables and fruits for the farm market, local fairs, and the in-house preservation of pickles and jams.

Munson’s goal is to produce top quality produce and provide families with something they cannot find anywhere else.

A highlight of the summer is the Balloons and Blueberries festival which is attended by thousands and includes opportunities for family fun and good eating. Several local restaurants host farm-to-table menus and events that keep everyone busy with planning menus and promoting events. The Honey Fest in another growing attraction for Munson's that requires a lot of planning and volunteers to manage

Autumn is a special time for Munson's. Even though the days are shorter it doesn’t mean there is less work to do. Everyone is busy harvesting the end-of-summer produce, preserving the harvest, and planning special fall events. One of the highlights of the fall is the Harvest Fest that includes wagon rides, corn mazes, pumpkin patches, apple picking, and hands-on apple pressing for cider. Munson's is a destination for school trips and family “agricultural tourism.”

Munson's Pickles and Preserves are investigating new agricultural ventures.

## Strategic Highlights

* Digital transformation is occurring in every industry and agriculture is no exception. Munson's is exploring how to modernize their production plans, communications, and record keeping ensuring they are competitive in today’s economy.
* Munson’s is a green solar powered facility.
* Conservation and being a good land steward are top priorities for Munson's. Agriculture is a water-intensive industry. Monitoring and controlling water consumption and recycling waste are not only an economic necessity but also the right thing to do.

## Looking Ahead

The Munson's are developing a wider online presence for communications with customers as well as an online market to distribute their products and gift certificates.

## Munson’s Pickles and Preserves featured staff

### Eugenia Austin: Soil Scientist

Eugenia Austin grew up in Boulder, CO, the daughter of an elementary school teacher and a postal administrator. A shy, disciplined student, she became interested in biology in high school. Her class took a field trip to a farm in the 10th grade. "Of course I'd seen a farm before, but really only out the window of a car. I didn't know anyone who lived on one. So here we were in all our edgy high-school glory and the man showing us around, this was a flower nursery, he makes us dig our hands into the soil and cup our hands full of dirt and lift it up and smell it! It hit me in a second. This is why we can survive on this planet." She eventually got an PhD in Agronomy. When she's not at work, she enjoys crossword puzzles, photography, and is a ferocious scrabble player.

### Hilary Brennan: Greenhouse Manager

She was always moving from army base to army base as her dad’s military assignments changed. She started keeping small potted plants indoors at an early age. "We couldn't have a garden because we weren't in any one place long enough to make it worthwhile." She discovered she had a knack for making plants grow. Her first job at a flower stand led to work at a plant store, a nursery, and now Munson's Farm. Her second year at the greenhouse was the most productive in Munson's history. Despite the rootless feeling of her youth, Hilary loves to travel and recently returned from two weeks in Iceland.

### Danielle Gousse: Agricultural technologist

Daniele Gouss grew up in Minnesota on a dairy farm. From her earliest days she was aware of technology and how it made productive farming possible. The understanding that her family's farm couldn't have run without milking, homogenization, and pasteurization equipment made her a natural to continue exploring the role of technology in modern farming. An Associate of Science in Animal Science and Management and a Master of Science in Computer Science gave her the educational foundation to really enact new ways of using technology in the daily operations of the farm. "I've always thought that farming should be just as progressive technologically as any other field. Why should farmers be any less willing to take advantage of technology than garbage collectors or taxi drivers? When Danielle's away from the farm, she enjoys whitewater kayaking and her burgeoning tropical fish tank.