

Please run in your publication prior to Oct 30. Thank you.

For more information contact Kelli Boylen at boylenover@gmail.com or 563.880.1753

Backyard Flavors to offer salsa samples at local food festival Nov. 2

Imagine an amazing salsa, one which every jar tastes fresh, like the vegetables were just picked, full of flavors straight from the garden in the back yard. Now imagine sweet jalapenos sliced and marinated in sweet brine, the perfect blend of heat and sweet.

Once you meet Dan and Julie Beougher of 7 Pines Farm and Backyard Flavors of Maxwell, Iowa, you won't have to imagine any longer.

"We started marketing our salsa and sweet jalapenos in 2008. We felt we had an exceptional product and decided to see how far we could take it," Julie says.

Their salsa is made in small batches with fresh ingredients from their own "garden."

Dan and Julie purchased their farm in 2003, consisting of a house, ten acres of hay fields and an outbuilding. "Several years went by before we added some fencing and starting raising a few goats just to keep the grass down," she recalls.

In 2010 they decided to start using their land for income. "We became a certified organic farm, put up a high tunnel and tilled up one acre of ground to start growing vegetables for our salsas and sweet jalapenos. Each year we tilled up more ground and now grow 30 varieties of organic vegetables on approximately four acres," Julie says.

They also diversified their livestock, and now raise several hundred free range meat chickens and are expanding into pasture raised pork.

Before starting their farm, Julie worked as a computer programmer for an insurance company and Dan owned his own insurance agency in Ames. They now make most of their income from the farm, although both have seasonal part-time jobs during the winter.

Sustainability is very important to the Beoughers. Julie explains, "We believe we put more back into the land than we take out. We make the most of on-farm resources and the quality of life it provides for us."

They started offering a small CSA in 2012. CSA, commonly known as community supported agriculture, is basically a subscription to fresh produce. Families join their program for a fee, and in return they receive a weekly box filled with the produce that is deliciously ripe at that time.

7 Pines Farm and Backyard Flavors sell their produce, meat, salsa and jalapenos at Valley Junction Farmers' Market on Thursday, Downtown Des Moines Farmers' Market, Ankeny Farmers' Market and Ames Farmers' Market on Saturday They also sell through the Iowa Food Coop in Des Moines and Farm 2 Folk in Ames.

Their salsa and sweet jalapenos are currently available in Whole Foods in West Des Moines, Fareway stores in Ames, Ankeny and Altoona, Heart of Iowa in Valley Junction, and Story City Locker in Story City.

The Beoughers future plans are to continue to grow gradually. “We don't want to get to big too fast. Our focus for the next several years will be to get our products in the hands of more people,” she says.

You'll have a unique opportunity to sample 7 Pines Farm and Backyard Flavors products at the *Feast! Festival & Tradeshow* in Rochester, MN on Sunday, Nov. 2.

The *Feast! Festival* is your prime stop to satisfy your curiosity about local foods. Visitors will be able to taste and purchase a variety of foods that are locally made throughout Minnesota, Wisconsin and Iowa from more than 100 exhibitors. Meet the farmers and artisans and hear the stories behind their foods. Admission to the festival is \$5 for adults and \$2 for children. There is an additional charge for beer and wine tasting.

“We are always looking at new avenues to market our products, says Julie. “*Feast!* offers an excellent opportunity for us to network with other entrepreneurs and buyers. You never know when the right person will taste your product that can help you put your product in the hands of more people.

Following the *Festival*, the *Tradeshow* on Nov. 3 will offer an exclusive experience for exhibitors to network with buyers.

For more information about the *Feast! Festival & Tradeshow*, please visit www.local-feast.org. To keep in touch with the latest updates, like *Feast! Local Food Network* on Facebook, follow @Local_Feast on Twitter and use #localFEAST to make sure your voice is heard.

###