Thanks to the 2020 Kansas Ag Heroes!

Scott Thellman, Juniper Hills Farm

Seeing a loss of marketplace for many of his farm's spring crops at the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, Scott quickly partnered with a local protein distributor to launch an online grocery store for locally and regionally sources products called Sunflower Provisions. Since their launch in mid-March, Sunflower Provisions has served over 5000 customers with non-contact delivery and pickup options and has created a new marketplace for local foods. Sunflower now employees 2 staff and has three contracted staff.

Juniper Hill Farms, also rose to the challenge of sourcing and distributing food to grocers during the pandemic, picking up national and organic National accounts to help distribute to grocery stores in need of additional distributors.

The farm also saw a need to serve its community during this uncertain time and received contracts through the USDA CFAP Farmers to Families good box program to pack and distribute food boxes food insecure individuals and families in the region. By the end of its option 1 contract, Juniper Hill will have distributed 20,000 boxes containing nearly 400,000 lbs. of food. They have worked to source as much local produce as they can for this program and have become a marketplace for many local growers who lost their markets to the Covid pandemic. In a traditional year, Juniper Hill would have about 6 full time people on staff, but with the challenges they have accepted in 2020 to provide their community access to fresh local foods, Juniper Hill now has increased is staffing to 12 full time employees, and is actively hiring.

Juniper Hill hopes that the challenges of 2020 can turn into opportunities in the future through new networks and partnerships with growers large and small across the region.

On top of that, Scott is always willing to speak or host farm tours to share his knowledge with other Kansas growers!

Nominated by Cal Jamerson