

## Featured Guest Interviews

Carrie & Joe Chlebanowski (@the\_looney\_farm, thelooneyfarm.com)

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**Carrie Chlebanowski:** [00:00:00] My name is Carrie, and this is Joe Chlebanowski. We are the owners of the Looney Farm in Alex, Oklahoma, which is just about 45 minutes Southwest of the Oklahoma city Metro area. We are in our fourth year of our market garden here. We have about three-quarters of an acre cultivated that we're growing on about half an acre.

[00:00:19] We participate in two main markets in the Oklahoma city area. One of them is year-round. One of them is a seasonal, April through October market. And then as of last year, we also have an online market that's open that we run, both for a free choice Buyer's Club CSA model and also to the general public as well.

**Diego Footer:** [00:00:38] Okay. Free choice Buyer's Club CSA model. For people that might not know exactly what that is, how would you describe it?

**Carrie Chlebanowski:** [00:00:46] So for us, we didn't want to be able to tell people or want to have to tell people what they got every week. I didn't want the added burden and stress of that, plus I don't want people telling me what to eat.

[00:00:56] So for us with the CSA, we've gone through a few variations. Now, it's currently just a flat level, \$200 buy in at the beginning of the season. And with that, they get a Buyer's Club account and there's a 10% discount that comes with that. And then they get an early day's access to the online store each week, or they can just choose to come to market.

[00:01:17] And they choose what they want. They can spend that \$200 over the course of the April through, what the weekend—

**Joe Chlebanowski:** [00:01:23] December.

**Carrie Chlebanowski:** [00:01:24] December. I think we did the weekend before Christmas is our last week. They can use that all up front to the very beginning of the season. They do get to continue to use that 10% discount even after they've expended that \$200 balance on their account though, as well, so.

**Diego Footer:** [00:01:38] How have you found the market has received that model of the free choice?

**Carrie Chlebanowski:** [00:01:43] I think they like it. The CSA model isn't a huge thing here in the Oklahoma city area. We tend to get things a few years behind the coasts, so there was a few other farms that had a CSA model. I think people liked the idea of being invested in the farm.

[00:01:59] It gives them that freedom. We do suggest new things, new vegetables, the—what's the—like the hakurei turnip. Those were a big ones at the beginning of the season that we tell

people, oh, you've got to try it. Even if you don't think you like turnips, you've got to try the hakurei.

[00:02:13] Same thing with kohlrabi. People around here have not seen kohlrabi. So there's not a pressure, they're not getting a vegetable that I've chosen for them, but I can give them some examples at the market of recipes to use with it. And they were willing, I think, to be adventurous to try things that way, so it seems to have gone over really well.

**Diego Footer:** [00:02:30] From a just a farm planning standpoint. How has that worked for you? Because on the plus side, you're not having to plan out like a traditional CSA. We have to deliver this, but on the negative side, and I know this doesn't all—this wouldn't happen, but like you could have everybody want to redeem it all at once. So how has it actually played out in reality from planning to actual logistics?

**Carrie Chlebanowski:** [00:02:54] So I think from the very beginning, we talked about when we, because when our initial Buyer's Club was started prior to COVID, one of the big selling points we had for it was we had this program called Dibs, which was our online market.

[00:03:07] Initially, our online markets only open to the Buyer's Club members, and we were going to brand it. And we were going to—we were talking about trademarking and everything before COVID hit, we had to backpedal and figure out how to do an online market for everyone. But even at that point, we decided that we were going to set a certain amount of..

[00:03:25] Of the available produce for the week in that online store. So we weren't going to put a hundred percent of what we had available on the online store because we've really still—we're fairly new still in the market space. And so we wanted to build that community around the actual market that you were at since the most of our orders were at that point.

[00:03:42] I think all of them were picked up. I don't think we had delivery as an option prior to COVID. I don't remember, but we really had a great market that we were in. It was like a 30-year-old market, with just amazing other vendors that were local. And so we wanted to bring people into the market space as well.

[00:04:00] It hasn't ever gotten to be an issue. I think I've had one person in a span of the three years that we've done it say something about feeling like maybe that there wasn't enough available on the Buyer's Club. Yeah.

**Diego Footer:** [00:04:13] If you look at the markets that you have, market streams, you have a market farmer's market that you sell into, then you have this free choice, which is I'll call it a lump it in as part of the online store—is one of them more the catch-all? Meaning, okay, ideally, we'd love to sell everything we could online. The rest goes to the farmer's market or vice versa. We'll take whatever we can at the farmer's market, the rest is available online.

[00:04:38] How do you view those two as working together, those two market streams?

**Carrie Chlebanowski:** [00:04:44] I love the market. Joe, I think this point last year, we'd listened to, I don't know if it was your interview with Ray, where he was talking about how he was doing a lot more farmer's markets or he was doing a lot more online.

[00:04:54] And Joe was like, yes, let's get it all online. I want to do all online. He's a data analyst. He lives online. I'm a people person. I need that interaction at the market. And I

really think that that marketing piece of face to face is hugely important, especially being with us. And only in our fourth season, we're still...

[00:05:11] You know, our customer base is still 50% new every week based on our square data. So we're still seeing new faces each and every week at market. Currently, I'm considering like, we're at about 25 to 30%, I think online sales versus our markets. And I'm happy with that. One of our markets, I would say I would be okay with letting go of that sales and maybe taking that over with the online sales, but our big market, I consider that our biggest sales stream. It's definitely taking over probably 50% of our weekly sales at this point.

[00:05:43] That's the one that only runs April through October, though. So that's the tricky, that's the tricky piece is making sure that we keep that going through the fall and winter months.

**Diego Footer:** [00:05:53] And Joe for you, being excited at the beginning about the online store and then launching it, what's been your experience of that?

**Joe Chlebanowski:** [00:06:03] I think overall, it's been really good, and it's been good to see the interest and the traction, growth sales over the last two years now. There's been plenty of pain points along the way from a technical side of it, but it's just really interesting to see people's frame of mind, especially in the, as we call it, the center coast, people's mentality of first off, shopping at farmer's markets, but then also being able to say, oh, there's this other new way of doing it and seeing that traction take hold. And for us, even if it's just incrementally at a time, grow.

**Diego Footer:** [00:06:38] Yeah. What's been interesting from a technical side getting into?

**Joe Chlebanowski:** [00:06:43] I honestly, for me, the most difficult part of blending our Buyer's Club with a traditional retail model of online shopping because we've put all these caveats to our members to say, oh, you get this, as opposed to everybody else gets that, is finding all of the standalone applications and little pieces of plugins to the websites that will work to a T to meet our needs and meet our customer's needs.

**Diego Footer:** [00:07:10] Know, and I love what you're doing, this blend. And I think that's where a lot of farms will end up settling out because the farmer's markets are great, too, to get your brand out there, to make connections, to talk to the people.

[00:07:25] So like even if you're having a pure online store, you need to know who's buying. And part of knowing who's buying is talking to people like them at the farmer's market. So you get, okay, what are they looking for here?

[00:07:36] How have you seen the blend of the two coming together? Do you think it's a nice fit having, not just from a personality standpoint, you had the people person, you had a data person, but just from a business standpoint, having the physical market and the online store working in parallel?

**Joe Chlebanowski:** [00:07:51] Yeah. I'm sure Carrie will have a, maybe a slightly different perspective, but one of the things that we've always said from day one was the markets while yeah, from a sales perspective at the moment, it's our catchall, like you say. It's where we make the vast majority of our revenue.

[00:08:08] But from a business perspective, it's, to us, it's almost purely an advertising and marketing venue, and that's really it because yes, we're making all of our income from there. But beyond that scope of just that particular market, we don't have any possibility of revenue streams from anywhere else. If we don't have that face to face value where we're engaging with the customer, we're getting our brand and our product out there.

**Carrie Chlebanowski:** [00:08:34] Yeah. And I would add to that. I would say, if you've seen any of our displays, Joe, we don't have a typical farmer's market table set up. From day one, we really...I have a photography background.

[00:08:46] Joe has enough business background, and I've also done some retail sales in the past. And so I know people shop with their eyes, and I tell people all the time, I've spoken at a few farm conferences locally. And I say, my farm is a business first, and that happens to be a farm. I gotta be able to grow the stuff, but if I can't sell it, then it doesn't really matter.

[00:09:06] It's all going to go into compost bin. We did a lot of things. I'm in JM's masterclass. I'm working with Ray Tyler's masterclass, working with people like Michael Kilpatrick and his workshops and stuff, to really build our brand. Branding is huge, people. Everything we have has our logo on it, other than the bulk items or bunched greens.

[00:09:23] But that's consistent through everything we sell has the logo. Our display is very vertical, so if people are walking in and they're seeing things that eye level and it looks nice. It doesn't look like I just come and dumped a bunch of stuff on a table. And I think that helps build that rapport.

[00:09:40] People go, oh my goodness, this person cares about the presentation of their food. So then they're interested and they understand that we—the quality carries over to, Hey, if I'm going to, I'm going to spend this much money on a presentation, I'm taking the time to invest and grow these vegetables in a healthy way and make sure that you guys are getting top quality vegetables as well.

**Joe Chlebanowski:** [00:09:58] And we know that branding is working because we'll both get comments from customers who on a Saturday, any given Saturday, we'll be at one market and then jump over to another market and say, oh, we just saw The Looney Farm over at the other market. So we know that there's that mental connection between what they're seeing and our brand.

**Carrie Chlebanowski:** [00:10:17] And just about every customer that checks out, we have a up list saying, Hey, are you aware that we also offer an online store?

[00:10:24] Because Oklahoma weather is Oklahoma weather. And we've had a rain out at one of our markets this year. So there's people that were new enough, too, where they won't follow us. We've got a couple of weeks coming up, but we may not have a market event at the location.

[00:10:38] And that's concerning for some of those farmers that don't have an option for online for us, we can say, Hey, we may not have a stall set up, but if you're on our mailing list, you can get access to the store and still get your vegetables this week. We'll still be harvesting.

**Diego Footer:** [00:10:53] One thing you said earlier, I think it was like 50% of the customers that you get are new each week?

**Carrie Chlebanowski:** [00:10:59] Yeah, at the market I'm at, yeah.

**Diego Footer:** [00:11:02] If I walked around your farmer's market, what do you think is attracting me to your booth? you have this visual display, what do you think you're doing differently to bring in some of these new customers?

**Carrie Chlebanowski:** [00:11:12] I think we're stacking for—first of all, like I said, it's vertical. We have—Joe built rolling on casters. What are they made out of? Fence panels that have, each set, there's four of them that have the panels across the front. So it looks like shiplap almost. And then they've got six big kept cubbies on the top.

[00:11:29] We have shelving that we can add on. So it's very modular, but it's eye level. Like the lowest product we have is at waist height, and we mix and match the different colorings. Like I said, all of our packaging is standardized. We have the clam shells or the one-pound bags, or we have the little gusseted bags for our bulk roots and peppers and things.

[00:11:48] It just looks like it's very clean. We take a lot of care with our wash and pack, the things we've learned from Ray and JM and all that is about, making stack it high watch it fly, and it works.

**Joe Chlebanowski:** [00:11:59] And I think, just to add onto that, that's a constant thought process for me is exactly what you asked, what are they seeing?

[00:12:08] And to me, what's going to draw me into a stall at a farmer's market is if I'm, 10, 20 steps away from the store, I'm not near enough to see what's in the store. If I can see it from that distance and I can see the product from a distance, it's more likely to draw me in, whereas opposed to, if I'm walking right next to a stall, and it's got a table and there's people in there already, it may be blocking partial views.

[00:12:33] I don't really get a good sense of what's there from a distance, whether that distance is small or big. I think that, I think our—what differentiates us at the market physically is being able to see what we have from a distance.

**Diego Footer:** [00:12:46] So just, I look up, I see what you're offering. No question about it. I know what it is.

**Carrie Chlebanowski:** [00:12:52] Yeah. And the signage, we, Joe and I, and you know, I'm the creative, so our initial sign had a fun font, they were kinda curly, and they had different ideas on how to use things. And they were printed and laminated, three by five size, but they were just too, too much.

[00:13:07] And so now, we've gotten down to where we have laminated little pieces of paper, but they're clipped on every single cubby. If we have multiple heads of lettuce of different varieties, every single cubby of lettuce has the sign because people don't know still. It's, the less questions they have, the better.

[00:13:22] Joe gets onto me all the time because I'll want to mix gold beets and red beets, and he's that, how do you categorize that? And I'm like, I don't know, but I wouldn't care. And he's like, you're not normal. So he's very good about keeping me streamlined.

**Diego Footer:** [00:13:38] Sure. And along the lines of streamline, this is something that's came up in another conversation. I have, what goes on the tag?

[00:13:43] There's lettuce, \$3 a head, and then there's lettuce, or then there's Muir lettuce, locally raised, no spray, \$3 ahead, great as a salad, like where you find that balance of...?

**Joe Chlebanowski:** [00:13:57] That's where we started off. Like she said, we started off with every product again, before this season's iteration of our display, we had a little bit more space to play with between, let's say, the space that the product is in, and let's say the tops or sides.

[00:14:13] But we would have a large four by six or five by eight card, sized card, whatever it was. And just like you mentioned, had our logo, had the variety of the crop. Way more information that was pertinent to the customer. If it's good information, thinking behaviorally as a customer, I want to know what it is I can already see, unless I'm not sure.

[00:14:37] Then I can see the name on a small card. So we went from five by eight card to a half inch by four inch card.

**Carrie Chlebanowski:** [00:14:48] And that, part of that was because with our other cards, we had them for the first couple of markets with this display, and it just blocked too much of the product. They were too big. I think the openings, we have the six openings, I think they're 17 by 17.

[00:15:01] And that was strategically done to make sure that it could fit the clamshell stacked up. but they are, they're so flexible, too, where he put in, bracing on the halfway point of the cubby up the sides so that I can slip in slats to make them half size. So things like scallions, or if I don't have a whole lot of something, I can break that seven by seven or 17 by 17 in half and then have two different products there.

[00:15:24] So having a three by five card hovering up half of that space just wasn't practical.

**Joe Chlebanowski:** [00:15:30] I think also for us, Carrie says that she's the people person, I'm not, but I am when it comes to market engagement, I actually really love engaging with our customers. And that's one thing that I think that we both do really exceedingly well at market is engaging with the customer.

[00:15:46] So the decision for us to say less information on a price card was an opportunity for us to be aware of what's going on with the customers that are in our stall and engage with them. If it looks like you see a customer, and they're Ooh, ah, what is that? Or not sure about something. It's always an opportunity for us to say that is such and such a variety of lettuce.

[00:16:09] Or have you ever tried that before? This is how you would prepare that. So it's just another opportunity taking out a little piece of the information maybe isn't as pertinent to a customer, let's say it's a head of lettuce. Okay. But what kind, let me talk to you about that.



**Diego Footer:** [00:16:25] I think that makes sense. I think most people, they just, they're either going to know what it is right away, like carrots, or they might not, kohlrabi or something. They need to know what it is and how much does it cost. And then beyond that, like they can ask. And I think you start to get, information overload if you put too much on. Would you say that the main function of your display is really to get people to stop at the booth?

**Carrie Chlebanowski:** [00:16:49] Yeah. And just like, it makes the product look nice. And I think it just conveys again, that attention to quality that we have for our produce carries the whole message through that brand of, around here anyway, and I don't know how this is everywhere, but around here, there's kind of, organic is still a new enough, not new enough, but there's a lot of connotations that organic vegetables are going to be ugly and dirty and expensive and just not—covered with holes in the leaves.

[00:17:15] And so, when we came to market and we've got these beautiful radishes and we're misting them and everything's looking glossy and shiny and beautiful people are like, oh, wait, what? So yeah, that's a big part for us is to help people understand that we take care to make our vegetables look nice and we want them presented well.

**Diego Footer:** [00:17:34] But if you think about the care that you've put into designing the booth, arranging the vegetables, maintaining them throughout the market, and then conversing with people, you can do...

[00:17:44] You're doing that on the fly. When you move online, you're doing that in advance. How do you translate that same experience online? What have you found has been really important to setting up your store to convey what you think is important?

**Joe Chlebanowski:** [00:17:59] That has been... That's been another, that's been another one of my personal major challenges. I guess collectively, it's all of our challenge. I have my hands so deep in the website that what goes into it doesn't really go beyond my desk, with a certain exception of the obvious things like pictures and descriptions and kind of the ancillary things that go with each individual item on a store.

[00:18:29] So this season, my focus for that has been—she's got the photography background, whether that's with the big, nice camera, or if it's just a really good picture with a cell phone, whatever it is, having pictures that represent what happens on the farm, not just a picture of the item, which is super important, the glossy bunch of beets or carrots or whatever it is really nicely presented really nicely displayed, obviously for that initial catch, but having a picture of...

[00:19:01] Per one of the crew holding that thing or kind of getting a reference of size or the packaging or any of the other things that come along with that that you might see at market are important, but probably even equally as important as the pictures would be the description.

[00:19:17] So when you actually get into the item, things like...the things that you can't tangibly do online that you do in market, like how big is this thing? How much am I getting? How, things like,

**Carrie Chlebanowski:** [00:19:28] What is it used for.

**Joe Chlebanowski:** [00:19:30] What is it used for, yeah.

**Carrie Chlebanowski:** [00:19:31] So he's, and he's—it's funny because I have a journalism degree and he ends up writing most of the copy for the website, but I edit, I have to edit. That's a whole other topic 'cause sometimes he, his fingers get going, and I have to come back and say, you need to go back and fix this.

[00:19:48] But yeah, no, I think the pictures is a huge thing. I think having my background in photography, I would never, in a million years have told you seven or eight years ago that I'd be doing this anyway, but to have thought that, doing on-location newborn and family portraits would lead me to taking vegetable pictures to help sell them is crazy to me.

[00:20:07] But it makes a big difference, and I think integrating our social media with the store is huge. So I use Instagram, which is tied into Facebook, our Facebook is linked. So anytime I post to Instagram, it shares our Facebook. And I try not to overwhelm my newsfeed on Instagram or the feed itself with a whole lot of things.

[00:20:28] I think typically, I usually do one post a week for that. And I try to save that, especially during the summer market season for, Hey, here's a little blurb about something this week, something new coming up, but here's what we're bringing to market so people can see, here's what's available at market this week for the people coming in person.

[00:20:43] I use my stories a lot, though. Just snapshots of our crew working on the fields or what's coming up new or funny family things. I think it's super, super important to tie just enough family aspects of our life in there, since we are, we do have family living here with us still, teenagers.

[00:21:02] So sometimes there's some interesting things and go with that, but I think that's been a huge thing is like just that, and then being able to find the right copy and the words to adequately explain to people what it is they're getting.

[00:21:14] And we've heard that at market. People are like, well, I want to be able to see and pick out my own vegetables. And that's a hurdle to overcome online. I think that comes with building that rapport of them at market and letting them see that we are very consistent in how we do things.

[00:21:32] We have structure and set standards for how we do things. So they don't have to worry about, they come to market getting a bunch, one bunch that's huge and another bunch of teeny tiny. They know they can expect to get a consistent product week after week. And then that translates to online as well.

**Diego Footer:** [00:21:48] Yeah. Let me grab something here because.

[00:22:02] Here's one thing I've thought, and what are your thoughts on this, for copy? Okay. So I have two, two pens here, right? Two different brands of pen. I'm going to buy these on Amazon or something like they're both pens at the end of the day, ignore that one's blue, one's black, but this might have some sort of claims or features that this one doesn't.

[00:22:22] So I'm going to read the descriptions of both and then just say, okay, which one's going to fit my needs better? If I think vegetables and I have carrots and I go to your site to buy carrots, I'm not really comparing it against anything, right? Like I need to know carrots and I know what peas are in that.



[00:22:41] And maybe there's some information to fill in gaps of my knowledge of just what I don't recognize. What I'm getting at is I think sometimes people go overboard and they put too much in the description when it's just, it's carrots or if it was dairy, it's milk, what do you need to say?

[00:23:00] Where have you found that sweet spot of, this is a nice amount of information to convey. So I'm not, cause the other thing is like blocks of text, some people are just like, too many words.

**Joe Chlebanowski:** [00:23:12] Yeah. Yep.

**Carrie Chlebanowski:** [00:23:12] Yeah. So for example, for us, like online lettuce varieties, people around Oklahoma are used to iceberg and romaine.

[00:23:20] That's what they're used to seeing. Maybe bibb, there's, that's a big one. So for us, we grow, in certain parts of the season, we'll grow romaine, we'll grow a bibb, we'll grow a panisse, we'll grow a miur. So how do they know which ones to get? So that's what I'll say on, for example, like a Cherokee, it's a red lettuce that's similar in texture and crunch to a romaine.

[00:23:40] Panisse is tender like bibb but without the cup shape, great for sandwiches or salads. Miur is going to have the crunch like iceberg but a lot more flavor.

[00:23:51] So things like that, very simple. On our other items, it's going to be more of like, our zephyr. Our zephyr squash and our zucchini, courgette size, I don't know if he even has it on here. I haven't looked at the website, but courgette, I could ask that at market, what's a courgette? In the Oklahoma accent.

[00:24:06] And I'm like, it just means baby squash in French. It's just more fun to say than baby squash. And then I'll explain, like we harvest them at this size. They'll be between four and seven inches because they're more creamy in the texture and more flavorful than when they get large, which is what people are used to seeing in Oklahoma.

[00:24:22] Yeah, very basic, not a lot of fluff. I don't know if he has this on there for the carrots, honestly. One of the things I do and endlessly enough, I have one of my coworkers with me at the market. They just roll their eyes cause they hear it so much is when people buy a bunch of carrots, I always tell the person, make sure you Google carrot top pesto, because it's amazing.

[00:24:41] It's life-changing. So something like that might get thrown into the carrot. It's just something different that people haven't thought of. But yeah, not a lot of extra.

**Joe Chlebanowski:** [00:24:49] Yeah, that was the one thing I didn't add in, so I don't, I wouldn't call it a formula, but it's similar with the price cards.

[00:24:55] So less is more sometimes it's just like you're saying, we don't have paragraphs. It's, at the most, it's a sentence or two about a description of if it's a varietal type thing, a very basic description. For instance, the lettuces. But oftentimes it'll be a brief description. It'll be product size or weight. It is in layman's terms as you can online, in ounces or pounds or how many things of things, of a bunch you get.

[00:25:23] You try to convey that in a way that is basic English as possible. But then in addition to that, what I've tried to do starting at the end of last year was at the end of the description is putting a link to a recipe or a collection of recipes. That way, it's not just, here's the thing.

[00:25:40] Okay. Cause it's that same thing at market that's missing online is that conversational piece. So what do you do with it? Here's a link. Here's an idea for a recipe that you can use to make this. Oh, okay. Let's make the decision to buy that.

**Diego Footer:** [00:25:54] What about when it comes to photography? This is where I think a lot of people they struggle on. And I think the struggle for a lot of people is, like I don't know how to take good photos or I don't have a good camera. So I'm a farmer. I have a bunch of carrots here. I want to post it online. What do I do?

**Carrie Chlebanowski:** [00:26:12] What do you do? Your—I would say, I couldn't tell you the last time I picked up a professional camera.

**Joe Chlebanowski:** [00:26:17] You should tell him exactly how we do our main products.

**Carrie Chlebanowski:** [00:26:22] Yeah, so we have this table that was with our house when we purchased it, and it's way too tall to sit at for some reason, I don't know what the table was used for, but it's really cool.

[00:26:30] It's weathered. If you ever go to our website and look at our products, you'll see it behind everything, it's got some great, like biking growing. So you've got that contrast of color. There's some like red bolts, painted red bolts tops. So the trick is, there's a couple of tricks.

[00:26:45] Number one, you don't want full sun. You don't want dappled shade so you got splotchy stuff. You'd really want like a either a cloudy day or overcast day or find some open shade. And so, you can get like a smoother, just a smoother lighting. You don't want sharp lighting contrast.

[00:27:04] The other trick I tell people is, especially for in the field shots, if you're trying to take something that's growing in the ground, turn your camera upside down on your phone. It flips that perspective. And then if you just push your phone and focus, make the focus point on what's ever on the bottom third of the screen and take that picture, you will create an amazing depth of field that just is a totally different vantage point that a lot of people don't even think of.

[00:27:29] I use a very—I use a free Photoshop app. There's tons of photo ones. It takes me about 10 seconds. I don't do anything. I don't like saturation. Number one, I don't want to misrepresent the stuff I'm selling. We'll go see a picture of a supersaturated carrot and come to market, and they don't look like that.

[00:27:47] But I do just play with the adjustment. If it looks good to your eye, then it's going to look good to your customers' eye. I play with the contrast. I play a little bit with maybe de-hazing. And then just the vignette feature that you can do on Instagram, just a little tiny bit of shadow around the edge of that picture will really make that center point focus, pop out, and come into focus and that can make all the difference.

[00:28:10] It's...it doesn't have to be hard. I think the biggest thing is finding, getting your product on a simple background that's not cluttered, that's not busy. It's not blown out with the sun in some areas and shady and others.

[00:28:23] And then just focusing on that product. Having it in your hand is a good thing, too. I've done lots of pictures or bunches of something in my hand because it gives you size reference, things like that.

**Joe Chlebanowski:** [00:28:33] I think as an, as the non-photographer of us, what I take away from that and what I would say to people is that you don't need to hire a professional photographer.

[00:28:44] You don't need to go out and spend thousands of dollars on a camera. Granted, we don't have the best phones in the world, we don't have the worst phones in the world, but they're sufficient to take decent pictures with, and you don't need fancy setups, just a tiny little bit of knowledge about what...

**Carrie Chlebanowski:** [00:28:59] Honestly, the biggest thing is just take something and clean off your lens before you take a picture. So that's the biggest thing I see sometimes. And I'm the worst, I'm guilty of it. I always have to retake pictures because it sits in my back pocket and gets all...

**Diego Footer:** [00:29:13] And just play around, I think. I think a lot of people, maybe they just, they're scared to start, and you never get better if you don't try and then, go in to do it.

**Carrie Chlebanowski:** [00:29:21] Exactly.

**Diego Footer:** [00:29:22] On when you listed on the site, are you going for one hero shot for each thing? And is that something you want, like the product, or do you want, you mentioned, Joe mentioned some things about having the farm in the shot, would you ever have a person in the shot with the product for the main shot or you just want the product so that people can see it?

**Carrie Chlebanowski:** [00:29:45] So he has for the—cause he's very particular about the shop. He's not a fan of dropdown selections in terms of different sizes, so we have a different item for our four ounce clamshells and a different item for a one pound lettuce mix bags.

[00:29:59] So we have pictures for each thing. And I, for the most part, I don't think we have any where there's a person in the background in those. It's primarily just that, that money, like you said, the money shot, that close up.

[00:30:11] And he wants to, what do you call this, that thumbnail has to be a square, so I try to take it so it can be cropped or I crop it and send it to him in the Photoshop app. Yeah, like I said, most of them on that table. There's a few that we've taken in our wash and pack on that stainless steel table, just cause that's where they were. I don't know that we have any in the field pictures.

**Joe Chlebanowski:** [00:30:30] Maybe some, on a very limited basis. A lot of times it would be something like you said, with a product in the hand. So you have a little bit of a size reference.

**Carrie Chlebanowski:** [00:30:38] Is our celery like that, or did you have that on that?

**Joe Chlebanowski:** [00:30:40] I don't recall...

**Diego Footer:** [00:30:43] What's your thoughts on dropdown menus for different products? I asked, you know, I've gone back and forth on this, for paper chains, we sell them in a case, we sell them in a 20 pack. Initially, I had it all on one page. I've broken it up, and now I'm on the cusp of consolidating it back all into one page. What are your thoughts on...?

**Joe Chlebanowski:** [00:31:04] So, I'm really big—it doesn't matter if it's online or in person shopping. I'm really big on analyzing behavioral shopping patterns and things like that. It goes—for me, it goes back to what you'd said about the long, drawn out descriptions for online products.

[00:31:20] If you go to an item, and it's got three paragraphs for the stuff, you've already glazed over and you've moved on, right. It's not—there's too much information to process, I've already gone onto the next thing.

[00:31:32] For me, it's the same thing with dropdowns. Initially, when we had worked with a couple of platforms that were, it wasn't an option easily to do individual items like we had really wanted to. And so, we were forced into having to use the dropdown variations.

[00:31:51] And right off the bat, we noticed that there were items that just weren't getting purchased because either the customer didn't understand how to locate other varieties or just, again, because of the wealth of things to click on and read and do per item, you've skipped over it completely and you've missed the sale.

[00:32:13] So for me, it's each thing has to be its own thing. If I sell a four-ounce clamshell, then it has to be its own thing. If it's the same product in a different form factor, and that's a thing of itself. So when I go to the store, and I see two things, I have two options instead of one thing with maybe one option if I catch it.

**Carrie Chlebanowski:** [00:32:32] And see, I'm like you, Diego, I like streamlined. I'm like, just like, people are smart. And then we had the online store, and I can't even tell you how many people on a weekly basis email us, Oh, I forgot to change the drop down for the pickup location. I need to change to this because they—so I think.

**Joe Chlebanowski:** [00:32:51] People are smart, but visually, going through a website, it doesn't matter how clean of an item you have displayed. There's just too much information on any website for it to be that concise to where you might or might not miss something. I just, I like to make it as fool-proof as possible.

**Carrie Chlebanowski:** [00:33:10] As easy as possible.

**Diego Footer:** [00:33:12] Yeah, along those lines, do you think the function of the store is just to make it easy to purchase the product, not convince someone to buy the product?

[00:33:23] Meaning this, so there's some websites you go on, maybe a lot of fitness stuff, right? Like you go into the landing page is going to tell you like, why it's so great and what's different about it. And then you click on the product page, and that's got some information, but that's mostly a purchase page.

[00:33:40] If you think about vegetables, right? If I land on your online store, I've probably already decided I'm going to buy it. You don't have to sell me on buying the carrots. Now, maybe you have a different landing page that you might send somebody to that tells about the farm, but when it comes to the pure shop page itself, do you see that as just a transactional page? And there's no need to sell on that page?

**Joe Chlebanowski:** [00:34:03] Yeah, we actually maintain two separate domains. So, we have a domain that's strictly for our farm informational. So all of the ins and outs of the business and the farm and the Buyer's Club, kind of the technical, if you will. And then the online store is strictly transactional, or do you go to our web store...

[00:34:25] It brings you right into the grid of items, and that's really all there is to see. There are some—there are some menu items and some other basic functionality that you're going to get in any other store, but there is, there's, like I said, there's no fluff. It's straight to the point.

**Diego Footer:** [00:34:40] So you've broken out quantities into individual items. Is there anything else you've done to the site that you think has really simplified the whole purchasing process?

**Carrie Chlebanowski:** [00:34:58] We grouped, I think we have it grouped by like types, like greens, still. So, if somebody is looking for a certain—if some—cause we had—we were—we got really known for our lettuce things. That's what got us our foot in the door on our first market. So I think having that because there's certain people that's all they want some, so I think you have it grouped by like root vegetables and—

**Joe Chlebanowski:** [00:35:19] Yeah, we do have categorized like, root vegetables, box greens, bagged greens.

**Carrie Chlebanowski:** [00:35:25] So you don't have to scroll incessantly. And we don't offer a ton of different things. Greens, maybe root vegetables, and then we have some seasonal add-ons that we'll add in. So at any given time, there's not more than about 30?

**Joe Chlebanowski:** [00:35:38] Between 30 and 40, depending on seasonality.

**Diego Footer:** [00:35:41] What about this? Has there been anything you thought you would make that would make a big difference on the site and you did it and nobody cared, nobody noticed, didn't make a difference?

**Carrie Chlebanowski:** [00:35:54] That's a definite Joe question. The only thing I could think of is that he was really adamant, are you still do the locks? I guess it's still locks now, but he was really worried when we—last year, when we switched over to having the online store available to the public as well was not having—there was not a—we couldn't find a way at that time with a platform to prevent anybody from coming to the store on the day that only Buyer's Club were supposed to.

[00:36:22] So for a while, we were managing two separate square stores. It was a nightmare trying to manage your inventory, and even our small scale. But I don't think that's now or for a while, at least anyway, we didn't have that capacity with our current platform to do it. And it was never an issue.

[00:36:41] Like we just, people—we had one person who I think did that. But I think we overlooked it because she was ordering like late at night on the early, the day early. And she was ordering like 45, \$50 a week. And we were like, we could look past that.

**Joe Chlebanowski:** [00:36:54] Possible.

**Diego Footer:** [00:36:58] Sure. What about on the flip side? Has there been anything that just is, you think has really made a big difference? Is there one or two things that you think like this has made our store really work?

**Joe Chlebanowski:** [00:37:12] That's hard to say, because the way that the store is segmented between the Buyer's Club and the retail, those two segments from a retail perspective...

[00:37:24] Nothing really stands out in my mind because to me, and it's what I've told a lot of my customers that I've had conversations with regarding the store, is when you go to Amazon to make a purchase, you expect it to just work. You just want to go there and be done. And that's been my philosophy from the very beginning is, simple.

[00:37:46] Point A, point B done, not a lot of—not a lot of trouble in the middle.

**Carrie Chlebanowski:** [00:37:49] Definitely works that way all the time.

**Joe Chlebanowski:** [00:37:52] Sure, and that's where you get into the technical troubles of trying to integrate these two different columns of customers. But I think the big thing that's really made it easy for, from the perspective of the Buyer's Club, are the couple of website ad-ons that we do, like Carrie had mentioned, being able to lock out non-Buyer's Club members for a specific window, I think that's been really successful.

[00:38:16] And then just being able to do like custom payment methods through the website, instead of check—having to check out with Visa or whatever it is that you're, that you might normally do, or rapid pay checkout type situations. Just being able to do custom payments that tailor more towards how we run the Buyer's Club on the background.

[00:38:37] For us, I knew, I don't know about the customer side. I, my hope is that there's not really a difference between Buyer's Club and retail and any other online shopping experience. It's like I said, it's you get in, and you get out, and you get done with it.

**Diego Footer:** [00:38:49] Because the Buyer's Club has access prior to the general public?

**Carrie Chlebanowski:** [00:38:54] Correct, they get access Monday morning at eight, the general public gets access Tuesday morning at eight.

**Diego Footer:** [00:38:58] Do you...so that's a quantity thing, right? Like you, you want a guarantee the Buyer's Club has first access. Do you publish inventory? There's some people that say, I want to show scarcity, I want to show there's five left.

**Carrie Chlebanowski:** [00:39:11] I think ours does. Doesn't it show inventory on the Shopify? Does it show how many is available?

**Joe Chlebanowski:** [00:39:16] It does show quantities available for items, yeah.



**Diego Footer:** [00:39:18] And do you think that's a benefit when things get low that, if you notice some sort of pattern?

**Joe Chlebanowski:** [00:39:25] I do, I do. One of the—one of the things that I'm still trying to figure out, because I do identify with that specific thing is, and we use Shopify for our store, and I don't know if I want to call it a pet peeve or maybe it's just something that I haven't figured out yet...

[00:39:39] But there are certain ways of displaying products on a main page that'll stay in a grid where it shows the quantity of items. And again, this could just be a technical thing with a theme or something that we use.

[00:39:51] There's one way that we'll show all of the items in stock, and sometimes it will also show the items that are out of stock, which to me, goes along with what you said about that scarcity thing of, oh gosh, they have tons of stuff and oh gosh, they're starting to sell out on all these other things.

[00:40:10] I can't consistently display depending on how the customer goes into a view, either all of the things that were in stock or just the things that are in stock and nothing that's out of stock. So if I, that was, that would be one big change that I think I could do from a scarcity perspective is constantly show here's all the things we have regardless of whether they're in stock or not.

[00:40:36] A work in progress.

**Diego Footer:** [00:40:38] And what's the sales window you have? So if you open it up for the Buyer's Club on Monday, when does it close for everybody?

**Joe Chlebanowski:** [00:40:45] Closes Thursday night at midnight every week.

**Diego Footer:** [00:40:48] How have you found that window, I'll call it a four-day window if you include Monday there.

**Carrie Chlebanowski:** [00:40:53] Honestly, like, I think—even—and I will have to look at it, but I'm noticing more and more that most of our orders come in, and we only maybe have one or two orders come in on Thursdays at this point.

[00:41:04] People are generally getting in their orders Monday, Tuesday, and then at a smaller percentage on Wednesday, but we very rarely have more than one or two orders come in on Thursday. This was even—we bumped this up, because it was of our harvest schedule and all of that packing. Last season, we were not getting orders cut off until noon on Friday.

[00:41:25] And that was, that just... I don't even have words, but that was, it was horrible. So this has worked great. Sgain, I think for next year, we may even consider shortening that. We've gone back and forth. I think at one point we opened Buyer's Club on Sunday, but we're really trying to—we're trying to get with—we have full time employees now with us.

[00:41:45] And so we're trying to get our field schedule designed in a way that we can have everything harvested and basically ready for order prep first thing Friday morning, or very early Friday morning. And then that way, we have the rest of the day, Friday to divvy up what's left over for the markets and do some field work to prep us for the next week, is market day.

[00:42:04] And I don't want to do anything on Sunday. Sunday is going to be my day off. So, it's worked really well for us. Our members have seemed to do really well with it. We have an email list, and so that everybody that's in the Buyer's Club, or if they've signed up for our signup list at the market, Joe sends out an email on Monday morning at eight to all the Buyer's Club members, a short little blurb, if there's something new or, Hey, this is the last week for this or something's going on.

[00:42:31] And then the store is open. And then same thing on Tuesday goes out to the general public. So we get a lot—a big influx of orders right after those go out.

**Joe Chlebanowski:** [00:42:38] A I think, maybe just as a kind of an add-on to how is the schedule working, having the orders cut off on Thursday and having the all day on Friday, like Carrie said, we don't want to work on Sunday, but that wasn't always a thing.

[00:42:53] And for years, our goal was, we've got to figure out the work-life balance thing. And so at least having one full day off is a big deal. And I think having that order cutoff on Thursday has made a really big impact on being able to do that because on previous years, packing for orders could have gone in the dark on Friday nights.

**Carrie Chlebanowski:** [00:43:15] 9:30 on Friday night. And, too, having it this way, let's be honest, by Friday afternoon, I should know what's going to be ready the following week. Give or take, a few. I'll usually do a final walkthrough Monday mornings, but for the most part, I can sit down Friday evening with picklist for next week and be like, okay, here's what we're going to have next week for the market.

[00:43:34] So if he wanted to Friday afternoon, Friday evening, he could go ahead and preload the store and have that ready. And then I could just come in Monday morning and say, Hey, add this, or take a few of those off or tweak that or take that whole thing off. We lost it this weekend to some pest or something.

**Diego Footer:** [00:43:50] Let's say you build up a critical mass of customers who are shopping online or in your Buyer's Club. Do you... Could you envision a scenario where you don't sell to markets and you only have that free choice CSA on the online store?

**Joe Chlebanowski:** [00:44:07] Yes.

**Carrie Chlebanowski:** [00:44:12] I love that you asked.

**Joe Chlebanowski:** [00:44:14] I say yes, big aspect of the previous part of the conversation where I say, I understand the enormous value of the face-to-face marketing perspective of the market so.

**Carrie Chlebanowski:** [00:44:28] And that's what's hard. Like for—again, if I could match the sales that I'm doing at my farmer's market in the summer online, I would be more than happy without doing markets all year long.

[00:44:44] But I do think, especially, number one, our market that we're at is very new. So it's still growing. This is only a second season, and we're only in our fourth season, so we're still growing. And I think, we're not there yet. But we also have, we've talked about for this winter, we have staff and my two employees that work with me full time.

[00:45:02] Those girls love coming to market with me, why, they actually were bummed when I said, Hey, I actually, in the summertime, I think I need you more in the field because we were trying to avoid overtime. And so, I thought, instead of taking a half day during the week off, I think I need you to at the field helping get stuff done there.

[00:45:18] And they were like, oh, but that said, that's an option. They love doing the markets they love—and they both commented how much they love seeing the final product, have those interactions, having those conversations and being able to have those discussions with the customers as well. So I think they're open to doing farmer's markets for us in the winter on some Saturdays. That would free us up even more to have some more time off.

[00:45:42] And I think that's where Joe, I think, gets it's like, after a while, and it's December and January and you're doing an indoor market and you're like, you're telling yourself, this is for the marketing. This is for the marketing. This is getting recognition out there for the high season. It can get tough, and it can get really, with cold weather and...

**Joe Chlebanowski:** [00:45:57] The other asterisk that I'll throw in there. I would love to do all online. I think also the nature of the markets in Oklahoma anyway, it doesn't lend itself to online only. I don't—it's hard enough to grow a business and get customer traction and build customer loyalty when your customer base is small. Growing but small.

[00:46:22] It's even harder to do that when you don't have the ability to do any sort of face-to-face marketing relationship building. So if we only did online, I think essentially, we'd be stuck where we're at. There's Facebook advertising, Google advertising, you can use that all you want.

[00:46:38] I don't think, to me, it doesn't seem like for this market in particular, anyway, that would gain enough traction to grow a customer base better than it would just face-to-face.

**Diego Footer:** [00:46:50] Is it fair to say then, in reverse, if you only did markets and didn't do online, you'd be leaving a lot on the table?

**Carrie Chlebanowski:** [00:46:59] Oh, yeah.

**Joe Chlebanowski:** [00:47:00] Oh yeah. Big time, I think so.

**Carrie Chlebanowski:** [00:47:02] Yeah. Again, like, we're doing as much online a week, if not more than he's doing his market every week. His second market. But it's—that market base that, again, that's the indoor market that's year-round that keeps us going through the wintertime when the summer market isn't.

[00:47:21] And I'm hoping there's—we've had a few instances, like I mentioned, we had a market of flooding rain one day. And so, we had a lot of carryover customers that normally, because our—luckily, our markets are very cooperative with each other.

[00:47:35] They get along, there's not a whole huge like animosity or anything like that. And so, when that market had to shut down, they said, Hey, this market's still open. Go get some fresh veggies over there. And so we had a lot of people that had never been to the indoor market, even though it's been around longer, that came over from the outdoor market just because it was closed that day.

[00:47:54] So I think that, and again, like people are saying, they—I tell people, Hey, my husband's down the street where they're year round. So I think building that customer base on a week to week basis, and then also letting them know, Hey, we're also going to be here will just help carry over as well.

**Diego Footer:** [00:48:10] Where do you think you fall on this? You're four years into this, you added online down the line.

[00:48:16] So now your first year. But say I'm starting out a farm now, and I'm learning. I'm learning everything, I'm learning how to grow. I'm learning how to sell. Is the online enough of a, you have to two things going, two things with online: one, it's additional markets. So it's bringing in work, but it's not a free lunch.

[00:48:36] Like you're also doing a lot of work to get those sales. For somebody in their first year who's growing, doing a market. Do you think adding online is worth trying to set that up and just grit and bearing and doing the work in the beginning to build that customer base up?

**Carrie Chlebanowski:** [00:48:54] I'm going to say no.

[00:48:55] And I'm going to tell you why, and I'm going to be really careful here. But, there was a podcast that we listened to where somebody was talking about how they only spend an hour a week on their online store. And when we heard this podcast, he laughed out loud because he's—that's just—that's insane.

[00:49:10] Like to start it, there's no way that's all you're spending as an hour a week to do it. It was literally, he has a full-time job off-farm as well that he works at home on farm, but he was spending as much time just...it's a lot to get that to... And I think as a new farmer, there's so much. Unless you...

**Joe Chlebanowski:** [00:49:31] I would agree with Carrie, I would say no, but I would caveat that with saying, it depends on your background.

[00:49:37] If you're just learning farming, but you come from an IT background or something like that, and you have an extensive knowledge, even if it's not, let's say, it's not my profession, I don't run websites. I don't do e-commerce, but I know enough that I can get it along. I would say maybe. It depends on your market.

[00:49:56] If your market—if you have enough background where you can penetrate into the market through social media or through advertising or something like that, it might be. Personally, I don't think the cost barrier is super high to get in for e-commerce. I think the know-how barrier is the bigger of the two obstacles of getting in online.

**Carrie Chlebanowski:** [00:50:18] Yeah, I would agree. And I think if you're, like you said, if you're just learning farming and you don't have that, I think there's just so much stress that comes with just figuring out—we're in our fourth year. I'm still stressed and figuring out what to do on a weekly basis.

[00:50:32] My employees are always like, oh, you're the boss. And I'm like, that doesn't mean I know.

**Diego Footer:** [00:50:37] Yeah. Yeah. I think that hour a week, it's maybe a deceptive truth because it's...what does that mean? Is that updating inventory? Okay, maybe that takes an hour, but you still got to let people know, you still have to do all the backend fulfillment of orders, all that type of stuff. So it's a partial truth. We're just not telling you the whole story.

**Joe Chlebanowski:** [00:50:59] Yeah, I agree with that.

**Carrie Chlebanowski:** [00:51:00] Yeah. And I think if somebody has a big supportive community behind them, that can rally around that like, we—we are—we have zero ag experience going into this. And we have some support north of here, but not farmer's market type people.

[00:51:16] We weren't farmer's market type people, either, to be fair. And so it's—we didn't have the rallying troops around us that could support. We had to build it step by step, and we did have some people come alongside of us that we knew from our past life that are diehard fans and have been members of our Buyer's Club for three years now.

[00:51:35] But that's few and far between. Most of that's been from establishing new connections and just getting our feet out in the ground and get into those markets and sell them the goods.

**Diego Footer:** [00:51:45] Yeah. Hey Joe, how long would you say you have into, and you might not do all these things, but just say, if you guys think together as a farm, updating inventory online each week, doing any product adjustments each week, emailing customers both to announce and for customer service, getting the list exported for pack and then actually packing and fulfilling. So you have all that stuff. How many hours do you think are in that total basket?

**Joe Chlebanowski:** [00:52:16] Total hours for the week?

**Carrie Chlebanowski:** [00:52:19] He doesn't do packing and fulfilling, that's—we handle that. So that's probably an hour.

**Joe Chlebanowski:** [00:52:22] Well, in relationship to the website with let's say, paperwork or reporting, we do a lot of... I do a lot of custom reporting and tracking and a lot of information that's ancillary to the website, so I would personally throw that in there.

**Carrie Chlebanowski:** [00:52:37] He's doing the math in his head.

**Joe Chlebanowski:** [00:52:38] I would say anywhere between 10 and 20 hours a week.

**Diego Footer:** [00:52:44] Significant, it's almost a position.

**Joe Chlebanowski:** [00:52:46] It is.

**Carrie Chlebanowski:** [00:52:47] Yeah, it really is. And I know, and I tell people all the time like, the people who come to the market or when we do a delivery or if they pick up their order at the market, I will gladly tell them that they're—I'm the face they see most of the time at the big market.

[00:53:02] And so they're like, this is just so amazing. Thank you so much for all you do. And I'm like, we just love this online market. And I'm like, that's Joe. If something happens to Joe,

and this is just—this is—I's gonna throw myself under the bus here, if something were to happen to him right now?

[00:53:15] Yeah, this whole thing? And that's a scary thing. And that's something that I clearly need to—that's one of the things we're working on this winter is getting me more in a management position, possibly hiring somebody part-time on the farm to help more with the field work so that I can get more hands on and at least be a backup for him.

[00:53:32] If something—God forbid—happens because, we were having business meetings weekly with finances and stuff like that, but in terms of the tech stuff, like when we sit down Friday afternoons, we usually go through, and he's not kidding when he says, data.

[00:53:48] Diego, it's ridiculous. How much, I can tell you the percentage, like color coded on every item versus what we brought to market and what we sold and if it's 75% or more, it's green and if it's—yeah, it's crazy.

[00:54:03] But we sit down and do that, and I watch him entering all his stuff. He plays with Excel things for fun. And I look at Excel and see numbers and lines. So it's a total different wavelength than the way we think.

[00:54:16] And I'm trying to get better. I make him incredibly frustrated because he tries to show me, and he's probably showed me some things a dozen times. And I just... It's gone over my head.

**Diego Footer:** [00:54:27] If you look at everything you track, what would you say are the, let's just keep it simple for people. The two most important things you think everybody should track when it comes to data?

**Carrie Chlebanowski:** [00:54:45] We're trying to do our cost to goods sold, which is tough on some of our bigger items. So, what we're trying to do now is he actually has a breakdown of our sales data for every item, so we can get a better grasp of what our top like, maybe 10 items are that are going to stay. And he's also helping us to streamline.

[00:55:01] I think that's important. I think I would do that. I would say your items sold because I don't need to grow regular eggplant ever again. I don't sell it, I sell the fairytale three to one or four to one to the regular size.

[00:55:14] So it's gone. As much as I like growing kohlrabi, and people ask about it, and it sells in first, you know, spurts and fits whatever. No, sorry. No more kohlrabi. So those kinds of things I think are incredibly important. I think you need that hard data. I think you need to know your cost of goods sold, too.

**Joe Chlebanowski:** [00:55:31] Yeah. I think those are the two big ones for me is understanding and seeing your sales data specifically item quantities, that is obvious how it translates into revenue.

[00:55:42] But the one thing, like Carrie said, we're just starting to get a better grasp on, is the cost of the item for us, right? So the overhead part of the running the farm, how much does it—how much does it cost us to grow a box of lettuce? How much does it cost us to grow a bunch of beets?



[00:56:00] And so understanding our costs in that helps us to determine, not just determine, where we can make improvements or where we need to make adjustments in process, but combining all that data, and Carrie said, making higher level decisions, as far as what next season crop list looks like.

[00:56:22] Do we need to have three different varieties of a thing or is—do we only sell that one out of the three items, and the other three items we're actually selling at a loss anyway, so why do we carry that over to the next season?

**Carrie Chlebanowski:** [00:56:36] And for employment. I fought having an employee for a long time. And I came very close to burnout after year two. So I guess it was a year, it'll be two years ago, November that we hired our, is that right? Our first employee part-time, and I fought it.

[00:56:51] And after that first week, I was like, what the heck am I waiting for? This is crazy how much more we're getting done, and I can actually breathe. And so there's still, I think, understanding that cost of the crops, I don't grow tomatoes this year. I've dabbled in some tomatinos just to have something a little different.

[00:57:07] I won't grow those again, in Oklahoma. And, but I think figuring out like, what, how much can I grow? Like our sales this year, we're already almost at last year's sales total this month. And that's crazy to me, but I know wholeheartedly that's because I have two full-time employees who kick butt day after day and love it.

[00:57:27] And I know they're committed to being here. And so, if I can find somebody else, like how much further can we get? What else can I do? Or what crops can I negate and get rid of to be able to make us even more productive just with the three of us?

**Diego Footer:** [00:57:41] There's just a unique question, and maybe there's not an answer to this, is there anything you notice that there's a disparity between online and market sales? Like, it sells great at market, doesn't sell online or sells great online, doesn't...

**Carrie Chlebanowski:** [00:57:55] Yes. It's crazy. I cannot sell—it's—like fairy tale. I think that's because people aren't familiar with it. And so, I think that's one of those cases where we upsell it, we're like, oh my goodness, you've got to try it. And then as soon as somebody does, they come back and buy three bags. Definitely the mini eggplant, things that are not typical for Oklahoma.

**Joe Chlebanowski:** [00:58:14] The non-traditional vegetables.

**Diego Footer:** [00:58:15] Sell better at market.

**Joe Chlebanowski, Carrie Chlebanowski:** [00:58:18] Sell better at market, yeah.

**Diego Footer:** [00:58:19] Yeah.

**Carrie Chlebanowski:** [00:58:20] But again, like that's where I'm really, especially as we get towards the back half of the in-person market, and I'm really going to be pushing, Hey, this market ends in the end of October, but we do have the other market, but we also have online.

[00:58:32] So when it's cold outside, and you don't want to get out, we'll deliver it to your house for \$5, and you can get all of this stuff. So I think that tying that in will help, 'cause we

have started seeing more—and I haven't tracked it, I think that'd be something that'd be interesting to track is how many new customers and which market they're coming from or how they're finding us as doing some surveys on the non-Buyer's Club members.

[00:58:53] People that are, general public people that are shopping with us, how they found out about the online and started doing that. But yeah, it's crazy. Like we—this week, we're like, really? One bag of shishitos?

[00:59:03] And it will sell 40 bags that market, and I'm like, I don't get it. They're amazing, and people know they're amazing. One bag online, what? Yeah, it's crazy.

**Diego Footer:** [00:59:12] This has all been great. For people that maybe want to check out your site, look at how you designed it, where can they go to visit the farm store part of it?

**Carrie Chlebanowski:** [00:59:22] So the farm store is at [www.thelooneyfarm.store](http://www.thelooneyfarm.store), and that is the online storefront. It's only open, Tuesday through Thursday.

[00:59:31] So if you go another time, it'll tell you the store is closed, but you can check out the website at [thelooneyfarm.com](http://thelooneyfarm.com).

**Diego Footer:** [00:59:38] Alright, there we go.

**Carrie Chlebanowski:** [00:59:41] Instagram is [the\\_looney\\_farm](https://www.instagram.com/the_looney_farm). And then also on Facebook, it's just The Looney Farm.

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